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China will never forget support given by Pak in difficult time
Mankind so unprepared for COVID-19: UN
Pakistan gets license to make virus medicine

ZHAO LIJIAN says

China will never forget Pak support

China appreciates the relevant resolution. Since the start of the outbreak, China and Pakistan have supported and worked closely with each other to jointly fight the virus

DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson on Friday highly praised a resolution unanimously passed by the Senate of Pakistan and said that China would never forget Pakistan's support and medical supplies in a critical moment in its fight against COVID-19. "China appreciates the relevant resolution. Since the start of the outbreak, China and Pakistan have supported and worked closely with each other to jointly fight the virus. We will never forget that," Zhao Lijian said while responding to a question asked by APP during his regular briefing held here.

He said that in a critical moment in China's fight against the virus, Pakistan poured in its domestic resources to help China with medical supplies. The spokesperson said that China had also provided batches of grants to meet Pakistan's needs, sent experts and mobilized all sectors of society to donate supplies and goods to help Pakistan battle the novel coronavirus. "This again proves that China and Pakistan are true friends and good brothers sharing wheel and woes," he added. He remarked that the virus knew no borders and races. To smear and stigmatize other countries was to interfere with international cooperation against the virus. The right and

the wrong were very clear and the justice always prevailed. "We highly appreciate Pakistan's objective and just position on this issue and we will like to continue to uphold the vision of a community with shared future for mankind, strengthen cooperation with international community including Pakistan and work together to win this fight against the virus," he added. It may be mentioned here that the Senate of Pakistan had unanimously passed a resolution expressing its gratitude to China, led by President Xi Jinping, for its decisive and timely measures to combat novel coronavirus and appreciating China's support to Pakistan in the fight against COVID-19.



ISLAMABAD: UNICEF procured PPEs for Pakistan government. The equipment arrived on Friday. – DNA

UNICEF procures PPEs

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: 8 Metric Tons of much-needed Personal Protective Equipment for health workers ordered by the Government of Pakistan arrived at Islamabad airport. The N-95 masks and surgical gowns were procured by UNICEF on behalf of the Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with financial support from the World Bank. UNICEF thanked the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan and the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan for facilitating the shipment. UNICEF supports the national response to COVID-19 through Risk Communication and Community Engagement; Infection and Prevention Control in health care settings; Psycho-Social Support and Procurement of essential supplies.

Lockdown not a viable Solution: PM

Says virus will not go away till the time vaccine is prepared; we have to live with the virus; assures all support to medical staff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has emphasized on a friendly awareness campaign about COVID-19. While addressing nation on Friday the Prime Minister said that virus will stay there until and unless vaccine is prepared. The Prime Minister said instead of forcing the people to adopt precautionary measures, there is a

need of creating awareness among them. Imran Khan also advised media to pursue the people in a more effective way about adopting precautionary measures and implementing the guidelines regarding containing the virus. He said imposing lockdown is not a solution to the coronavirus and the government is taking its decisions according to the ground realities and condition of the people.

However, due to the unprecedented situation, the government is also maintaining balance between hunger and the lockdown. The meeting deliberated upon various matters regarding future number of COVID -19 cases and availability of beds in hospitals in this situation. The meeting also reviewed various steps about the health facilities and increase in capacity of hospitals

Briefs

Uzbek to resume air, rail links

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan has extended quarantine measures until the end of May, while lifting a number of restrictions imposed earlier, the Special Republican Commission to Combat Coronavirus said Friday. The quarantine measures to counteract the spread of COVID-19 are extended until June 1, while domestic air and rail links will be partially resumed starting on May 18, the commission said. – APP

Emirates resumes flights

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DUBAI: Emirates has announced its plan to operate scheduled flight services from 21 May to nine destinations: London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Paris, Milan, Madrid, Chicago, Toronto, Sydney and Melbourne.

Inside...

Balanced, skillful diplomacy essential for Pakistan: Khokhar

– Page 02

Dynamics of COVID-19 in the Era of Fourth Industrial Revolution

– Page 03

Shavkat Mirziyoyev: We will mitigate quarantine requirements

– Back Page

Domestic flights from May 16

Int'l flights to remain suspended till 31st

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday extended the suspension of international flight operations till May 31 in line with the national strategy to contain the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Domestic flights will resume on May 16 only from three main cities to begin with. "As per the government decision, the suspension

of international flight operations, as effected earlier, has been extended up to Sunday, May 31, 2020 at 2359 hours PST," a spokesman for the Aviation Division said. Remaining provisions as applicable to the suspension of international flights, reflected in the previous orders, would remain unchanged, he added. On March 21, the government had suspended

the operation of all international passenger/chartered and private flights to Pakistan initially for a period of two weeks. Diplomats and special/cargo aircraft were exempted from the suspension with certain conditions and preventive measures against the virus. Domestic flights will resume on May 16 only from three main cities to begin including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar.

Over 4,700 Canadians return home

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The COVID-19 pandemic is a fast-evolving crisis, which has left thousands of travellers stranded around the world. Since the suspension of all regular international flights in Pakistan, the High Commission of Canada has worked closely with the Government of Pakistan and PIA to return home over 4,700 Canadians and other eligible travellers stranded in Pakistan. To date, 16 special PIA direct flights to Toronto have

departed from three major Pakistani cities - Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore – with Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and other eligible travellers on board. Between 16 March and 14 May, the Government of Canada has facilitated the repatriation of approximately 32,000 Canadians from 90 countries on 264 flights. These efforts were led by Global Affairs Canada (Canada's Foreign Ministry, with combined responsibility for diplomacy, international trade and international development), in partnership with foreign govern-

ments and airlines around the world. These efforts followed Canadian Government travel advice, which advises all Canadians to avoid international travel and return home on commercial means when available. "With thanks to Pakistan International Airlines and the Government of Pakistan, we have been able to support the safe return of thousands of Canadians home to Canada as a result of travel restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic," stated the High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, Wendy Gilmour.

New UNHCR Rep arrives

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ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency has appointed Noriko Yoshida as its new Representative in Pakistan. Yoshida recently arrived to take up her responsibilities. She succeeds Ruwendrini Menikdiwela who has become the Director of UNHCR's Office in New York. Before taking up her assignment in Pakistan, Yoshida served as UNHCR Representative in Sudan.

'Mankind so unprepared for COVID-19'

DNA

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says mankind is so unprepared for COVID-19, while there is not enough humility, unity or solidarity in the world. He was speaking at a virtual meeting of UN

System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the longest-standing and highest-level coordination forum of UN system. Guterres said with all the scientific progress we still do not know how to deal with a virus emphasizing strengthening the fundamental role of the UN as a global platform.

China sharing all info about virus

BEIJING: China had carried out research about the novel coronavirus at the fastest possible speed under existing conditions at the early stage of its anti-epidemic work and has been unreserved in sharing information, a Chinese official said Friday. Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health Commission, made the remarks at a press conference in response to a question regarding the time interval between the reports of the earliest cases in the country and the official announcement of the human-to-human transmission of the virus. Zeng said the novel coronavirus disease is a completely new one threat to humanity and China did not make a premature announcement of its transmissibility because its knowledge about the virus was still "on the way" at the time and yet to be sufficient to draw a conclusion. "Theoretically speaking, all viruses and bacteria can be transmitted from people to people."

Qureshi thanks Japan for assistance

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ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday telephoned Japanese counterpart, Toshimitsu Motegi, on the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath and thanked for support. Underscoring that the Pandemic was the gravest challenge to confront humanity this century, the Foreign Minister offered condolences over loss of precious lives, and

commended the effective measures being taken by Japan to contain the outbreak. The Foreign Minister thanked Japan for its assistance to Pakistan to combat the pandemic, as well as in dealing with the desert locust attack. While conveying his confidence that Pakistanis in Japan will be looked after, he assured Foreign Minister Motegi of all possible facilitation of Japanese nationals in Pakistan. The two Ministers exchanged views about the socio-economic ramifi-



cations of the pandemic. Highlighting that the developing countries had to fight on two fronts, i.e., containing the virus, and staving off starvation, the

Foreign Minister briefed Foreign Minister Motegi about Prime Minister Imran Khan's "Global Initiative on Debt Relief" for developing countries.

The Foreign Minister underscored that without immediate, coordinated and comprehensive actions to create fiscal space, the developing world may have to contend with dire social, political and economic consequences. Touching upon the situation in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IO-J&K), the Foreign Minister highlighted that human rights violations were continuing unabated and concerns had intensified about spread of the infection due to restrictions on

information dissemination and unfettered access to medical and other essential supplies. There were also concerns about demonization of Indian Muslims in the context of Covid-19 and growing Islamophobia. Both Foreign Ministers expressed commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations. It was agreed to commemorate the 70th anniversary of establishment of Pakistan-Japan diplomatic relations in 2022 in a befitting manner.

Briefs

Public advised to follow ministry's guideline

ISLAMABAD: Medical experts on Friday urged upon the public to follow health ministry's guideline (SOPs) and exercise more discipline and responsibility to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Talking to Radio Pakistan, the experts called upon the public to stay at home and do not go out except for getting daily routine essentials such as food and medicine or going to offices for work. "Public should continue to abide by social distancing measures, wear masks while going to markets for shopping as data of confirmed COVID -19 patients is increasing in the country after lockdown ease for public. Medical expert Dr. Hassan Abbas Zaheer said that it is prerequisite for common masses to adopt cautious behavior with each other in current covid-19 circumstances. The Covid-19 pandemic has turned out to be an humanitarian catastrophe. The preparation process of COVID-19 vaccine will take some time, he said. Dr Hassan also appreciated government's best possible efforts to increase the testing capacity and informed that over 300,000 coronavirus suspects have been tested so far. – APP

‘Anti-corona steps’ seriously defended

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Railways Farukh Habib on Friday said that an extended lockdown due to COVID-19 could impact the economy and would have knock-on effects on poor people's health and life. Talking to a private news channel, he said there was a dire need to create a balance between the lockdown and saving vulnerable people from starvation, adding that the shutdown of businesses has caused unbearable losses to the country's economy as well. He said that the opposition parties should refrain from politicizing and point-scoring based off of a very serious global pandemic. The opposition had no programme or agenda against coronavirus rather criticizing government with its non serious irresponsible behaviour, he added. Regarding availability of ventilators, he said the government is now starting its local production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and N95 masks to effectively combat coronavirus and country would be able to manage its demand and supply in wake of prevailing high risk corona situation. He also mentioned the latest survey, that around 82% people in country are satisfied with the efforts of government during this coronavirus situation. – APP

Pakistan Post continues services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post has refuted news published in section of press and social media regarding the provision of pensions at doorsteps to 1.5 million elderly retired employees. Spokesman of Pakistan Post said in a statement that a fake news campaign was being carried on social media against the successful initiative of pension provision at doorsteps due to risk of COVID-19, adding that this initiative was acknowledged internationally. He said that Pakistan Post would continue to provide postal services in every nook and corner of the country during risk of COVID-19 pandemic. He said that the department was providing delivery services to about 20 million households and businesses as community service without any cost considerations. – APP

Exports increase 12.71%

ISLAMABAD: Exports from the country, in rupee term, increased by 12.71 per cent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last fiscal year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The exports from the country during July– April (2019-2020) were recorded at Rs 2883,787 million as against Rs 2,558,582 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 12.71 per cent, according to provisional data released by PBS. – APP

KPK donation for relief fund

ISLAMABAD: Speaker Pukhtunkhwa Assembly Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani on Friday presented Prime Minister Imran Khan a donation cheque of Rs 0.5 million on behalf of Ibrahimi Trust Peshawar for the Corona Relief Fund. Khan Zaman Sarwar, Chairman of Al Ibrahimi Group of companies and also member of AbuDhabi Chamber

of Commerce, had pledged the donation in a live telethon held for the Prime Minister's fund-raising to fight COVID-19. The prime minister appreciated Ibrahimi Trust for contributing towards the Corona Relief Fund. Mushtaq Ghani also briefed the prime minister about KPK Assembly's annual audit of public ac-

counts committee where Rs 5 billion were fixed as recovery in audit paras with different departments. He said during last fiscal year, Rs 120 million were saved under the government's austerity drive. The prime minister lauded the efforts made by the KPK government to save public exchequer. – APP



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The present world order is at stake due to the coronavirus pandemic and the new world order is apparently starting to take shape with China taking the lead. Pakistan however should not opt to pillion-ride with China on every issue and must engage in skillful balancing of its relations with other important countries as well. The thoughts were shared by former foreign secretary Riaz Hussain Khokhar in a webinar titled 'Impact of Covid-19 on Pakistan's International Relations at Regional and Global Levels'. The online session was organized by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, as part of its ongoing webinar series 'Covid-19: Global Challenges, National Response'. The discussion was jointly chaired by former secre-

tary finance Dr Waqar Masood Khan and Executive President IPS Khalid Rahman, whereas the discussants included Ambassador (r) Tajammul Altaf, IPS' senior research associate, Syed Muhammad Ali, senior research fellow and Ambassador (r) Ayaz Wazir. Regarding the Covid-19 outbreak, Khokhar stated that Pakistan's friendship with China has once again withstood the test of time. This strong relationship could also prove vital in bringing much-needed reforms to the weak health infrastructure in the country as well as the vulnerable sectors of education, agriculture, science and technology, and environment, which have been exposed in the wake of the pandemic. Pakistan's Covid-19 graph for positive cases as well as for deaths is expected to go up with time and so it must put its act together at the earliest as failure to do so will make things very diffi-



cult for the country to handle. The speaker advised Pakistan to maintain balanced relations with other countries such as the US alongside China in view of its own national interests. He warned that the US president is trying to whip up hysteria about China ahead of the US elections, and the tussle between the two countries including the issue of South China Sea could may well make the US pile pressure on Pakistan. Talking about the current global scenario, the speaker said that a lot of economic disruption is going to take place due to Covid-19

whereas Pakistan's gap between the haves and have-nots is also expanding rapidly. China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, just like all other countries, are faced with tough times themselves due to the pandemic and may not be able to reschedule their loans to Pakistan very favorably. Throwing light on the developing scenario in Afghanistan, Khokhar said that he ethnic mosaic of the country has been damaged considerably and there could be no peace until it is repaired. Pakistan could play a role in further facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban, but it is not in a good position to do so because of the mistrust by both the entities. The spread of coronavirus in Afghanistan is also going to increase, and this will cause problems for Pakistan as well due to the flow of people crossing the border, he said.

Having spent about ten years of his service engaging directly with India, the former foreign secretary said that India is already making war sounds even in the current situation and may forge an attack on Pakistan. It would however want Pakistan to escalate the situation to shift the blame and justify its attack. He was sure that there were least chances of the two countries to engage in any meaningful dialogue in near future due to the distrust factor, and the gap, according to the speaker, was widening due to the attitude of the current government in India. Speaking of the Kashmir issue, Khokhar said that it is nearly a non-issue for the international community just like Palestine. Pakistan does have an option to take the issue to international organizations but the problem is that the major powers operate as per their own interests and would not stand by our side.

Quarantine Center in Faisalabad district Jail

MUHAMMAD TAHIR

FAISALABAD: The Only way to prevent the Spread of the Measles Virus is Through Precautionary Measures that have been made globally, including hand Sanitizer masks, Caution and Social distance in social interactions. Superintendent Jail Ali Akbar Gujjar told that inmates of Faisalabad District Jail are incarcerated for various crimes and security arrangements have been made to save them from the current epidemic. Corona filter counters at the entrances and exits of the prison have been set up. Than 25 corona wards have been set up in the jail. Newly arrived inmates are kept in these wards for 14 days separately and tests are conducted. He further said that random and complete corona tests have been conducted on the inmates of the jail and the staff has not been tested for corona virus in any of them yet.



Women-led businesses facing severe financial stress



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ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, founder President, Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) has said the prolonged lockdown has damaged the businesses of women and they are desperately seeking help.

Women running small businesses are among the hardest hit their plight is not being taken seriously by the policymakers, she said. Samina Fazil said that majority of the population comprises of the women but they are subjected to negative treatment announcements regarding helping out businesswomen never got implemented. She added that the government officials are not taking issues confronting women seriously while the central bank is not genuinely interested in helping them ride out of the crisis.

She said that SBP is only interested in supporting commercial banks and big corporations while the stringent terms and conditions for forwarding loans to small businesses, cottage industry and microfinance sector are impossible to meet. The SBP should announce interest-free loans for small businesses, cottage industry and microfinance sector if it is interested in an economic revival, she underlined. Majority of women earn their bread and butter through the services sector which has been badly hit by

the lockdown therefore the government should allow re-opening of beauty parlours, boutiques, saloons, home kitchens, handicraft centres and consultancy services etc., she demanded. The business leader said that many businesses run by women have collapsed while others will also fail soon if the government failed to come to their rescue. Sources of income of women should be protected as they are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 lockdown with thousands of them getting unemployed, she informed.

Int'l family day observed

ISLAMABAD: International Family Day was observed globally including Pakistan on Friday with an aim to spread awareness about the importance of families and the role of the international community in the development of the families. This day provides a chance to government, organizations and individuals to encourage knowledge of the troubles, strengths and issues relating to families, Prof. Dr. Shahid Khan said. He said that there was

dire need to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families and finding a solution for its improvement. Millions of people around the world lack decent working conditions and the social support to care for their families, while a number of countries offer generous leave provisions for mothers and fathers, however paternity leave provisions are still rare in the majority of developing countries, he added. – APP

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NFC talk

WITH the constitution of the 10th National Finance Commission (NFC) by the president of Pakistan, a new resource-sharing formula between the provinces and the centre is on the cards. Though it is called the 10th NFC, it is noteworthy that the Eight and the Ninth NFC Awards were just a continuation of the Seventh NFC Award delivered in 2010 during the PPP government. That was perhaps the best award since the inception of Pakistan, as it incorporated the recommendations made after the consensus of the 18th Amendment. It is unfortunate that in the 10 years since the Seventh NFC Award, the stakeholders have failed to improve it. By improvement we mean a better and improved formula where the concerns of all federating units are paid due attention and human development takes precedence over all other considerations. In the prevailing Covid-19 crisis, this dimension of human development has become even more imperative. As the new clauses introduced by the president are likely to set the agenda for deliberations, there appears to be a strong desire within the federal government to reformulate the award, not for human development but to meet its debt obligations. The government has been on a borrowing spree ever since it came to power in 2018, even before Covid-19 hit the country. Now it is struggling immensely to meet its debt obligations. It has been a matter of grave concern that most of the funds of the federal government are spent on non-development expenses. After debt-servicing and defence, it hardly has any financial freedom to undertake other projects. The Covid-19 crisis and our inability to handle it properly has once again exposed our poorly funded health sector. We should be spending much more on our health and education rather than competing with our neighbours in non-development expenses that have been sapping the strength of our economy for decades. The federal government must not try to cut provincial shares to fill the financial gaps created by ill-planned policies and mismanagement. There are well-defined constitutional parametres in place that are part of the 18th Amendment. There are clear outlines for all branches of the state to function in accordance with their own jurisdiction, and parliament is the only appropriate forum for any legislation that affects the constitution. The NFC is bound by constitutional rules and any Terms of Reference (ToR) that tend to violate the constitution will create more hurdles than harmony. In any case, the NFC has limited scope and is not a supra-constitutional body. Loss-making public-sector enterprises (PSEs) such as Pak Steel and PIA are the responsibility of the federal government and the provinces must not be burdened to share these losses. Let us hope that the new NFC Award is an improvement on the Seventh Award and does not result in even more regressive resource allocations.



Depressing times

UN health experts have warned that alongside Covid-19, the mental illness crisis that has hit the world is a major hazard to humans. The issue arises from a situation in which people are surrounded constantly by death and disease, forced into isolation, stalked by poverty and pushed into severe anxiety. Healthcare professionals are as badly or worse affected than the rest of the population since they must deal with the terrible situation in hospitals. The new UN report notes the huge upsurge in the severity of mental illness and warns that while entire societies are being affected, children, young people isolated from friends in school and those vulnerable to mental distress may be at particular risk. The increase in domestic violence and the sense of a world that no one recognizes anymore adds to this. Doctors and nurses in the US have said they have experienced a combination of panic, anxiety, grief, numbness, irritability, insomnia and nightmares. Steps are now being taken to support healthcare professionals who cannot escape Covid-19. Frequent misinformation and rumours about the pandemic and uncertainty about what lies ahead in the future add to the anxiety of people and their difficulties in navigating a longer term plan. The UN has advised providing 'emergency mental health' to people, preferably via remote therapies such as telecounselling for frontline health workers while also catering to the needs of others in most despair. Pakistan's high rate of mental health issues makes our people especially vulnerable to depression, anxiety and other issues. We have no idea of how many are currently suffering panic or severe depression as they plummet into poverty and a situation where they cannot manage food for their families. There obviously needs to be an immediate and large-scale effort to help. We do not know how many of our young doctors are handicapped in their work by mental illness. The Sindh government has led the way forward by setting up a free helpline which people can call and be connected to a therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist who can help meet their needs and possibly refer them for further treatment if required. This initiative, supported by overseas Pakistanis and local psychologists and psychiatrists who are working voluntarily, is an excellent one. We badly need it to prevent a new crisis from emerging alongside Covid so that as many people as possible can be spared the severe suffering poor mental health causes, especially in a situation where it is so poorly understood.

Dynamics of COVID-19 in the Era of Fourth Industrial Revolution

Fauzia Nasreen



The impact of COVID-19 is compelling states and societies to reorient their development plans in an effort to address imbalances in social sector allocations. Attention to the healthcare system and creation of corresponding infrastructure has perforce become a priority for the planners. The inadequacy of digitalization is additionally limiting new approaches to conducting businesses of daily lives.

DURING the current phase of history defined as the fourth industrial revolution, different assessments have been proffered about its impact on sustainable development. Concerns range from widening of gap and inequality within and among states to a more opportune environment for the developing countries. The adoption of 2030 Global Development Agenda with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is meant to address some of

the dire inequalities in a spirit of international solidarity. The overarching ambition of these goals is to ensure that "no one is left behind" and make these interdependent goals inclusive especially in reaching out to "the furthest first". The socio-economic aspects of the targets have been interwoven under such rubrics as eradication of poverty, hunger, good health, access to information and digital technology, combating climate change and food insecurity. The novel corona virus has, without doubt, exposed in varying degrees the vulnerabilities of states and international system's ability to manage shocks of the scale of the current pandemic. The outbreak of the contagious disease has multiple dimensions at the national, regional and global levels catapulting health and digital technological transformations as meaningful aspects of sustainable security. The health challenges have impacted rich and poor, developed and developing countries alike. However, the absorbing cushion and capacities of countries that are already confronting socio-economic fragility is extremely narrow compounding the systemic and structural issues. The situation in weak societies where deprivation is endemic and employment and livelihood openings are severely constrained, the protective measures against the spread of the infectious disease becomes a colossal challenge. The curtailment of mobility and almost a halt in economic activity is a double whammy for the underprivileged and marginalized segments of society. Protection against the virus and making the two ends meet acquires a threatening dimension for these communities. The constricted fiscal space available to the governments aggravates the situation further. The impact of COVID-19 is compelling states and societies to reorient their development plans in an effort to address imbalances in social sector allocations. Attention to the healthcare system and creation of corresponding infrastructure has perforce become a priority for the planners. The inadequacy of digitalization is additionally limiting new approaches to conducting businesses of daily lives. It is hampering online education, online businesses and most importantly telemedicine and tele health. Adaptation to new approaches is constrained because of lack of broadband facilities and national telecommunication coverage. In a way the social stratification in terms of access to technology are complicating the already limited opportunities. At the same time there is an increasing recognition that the core aspects of computer science, artificial intelligence,

nanotechnology and data computation have been instrumental in managing the COVID-19 health and medicinal problems. The effective use of combination of the technologies available in the era of the fourth industrial revolution has provided dividends for healthcare system and management. It is expected that these new tools will help in finding drugs and vaccine that would help in prevention and treatment of the virus. A study jointly conducted by Centre for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, University of Minnesota and Harvard School of Public Health has dispelled "the idea that this is going to be done soon (as it) defies microbiology" (CNN report). The study has talked about three scenarios all pointing out that COVID-19 in one form or another will dog humanity for the next 18 months to two years. If the current situation is the new normal for the world population then what should be the long term response at the national, regional and global levels. These are times that demand international solidarity and united action against the pandemic. So what are the challenges and possible way out especially for Pakistan in overcoming the health hazards? The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) has over the years smartly used its Internet Services (CIS) for providing telehealth services in remote and far flung areas of Pakistan. This is being done through the Basic Health Units (BHUs) where staff has been trained to manage the service linked to a team of doctors based in the CIS Secretariat in Islamabad. Necessary equipment is also providing the end users in BHUs. This has enabled in a modest way reaching out to the "furthest" communities in the country. Briefly challenges and suggestions for future planning are enumerated below: **Challenges:** • Balancing between safety measures and livelihoods • Revamping the healthcare infrastructure • Universal health cover that may include a combination of insurance cover for poorer communities and support for private welfare oriented initiatives as well government interventions (a kind of hybrid variant) • Allocation of adequate resources to create smart healthcare infrastructure • Bottom-up approach that would involve strategies developed through participation of localized structures • Strengthening the role of BHUs in monitoring the

local health conditions especially early warning about infectious diseases and disaster response. Integration of healthcare workers would provide the kind of outreach needed for early warning

- How to make ICT provide wide digital coverage to inaccessible and remote as well as rural areas.
- How can the marginalized communities get integrated in the response mechanisms
- Given the lockdown situations, OPDs operating at minimum level how can telehealth/telemedicine fill the vacuum in reaching out to people without discrimination

Suggested Measures for Future Planning:

- The historical neglect of the healthcare system can be rectified through a well thought-out strategy and targeted policies
- Allocation of more resources for health needs to be ensured. Spending should be smart to avoid wastage
- Covid 19 has shown how every individual in the humanity is interconnected. Infection contracted by one individual has implications for the entire world health. People oriented responses must be at the heart of public policies and strategies
- R&D has been catapulted as a priority field improving chances for more regional and international cooperation to fight infectious diseases
- Measures to upgrade ST&I as well as invigorated efforts are needed to achieve SDGs especially those related to health and wellbeing as well as alleviation of poverty. SDG 16 and 17 should form the basis of interventions at the local, regional and global levels. Removing inequalities within and among countries as the major objective as 16 and 17 have acquired more relevance and importance particularly in the context of post-COVID-19 environment
- Smart collaboration at the regional and international levels can be strengthened diverting attention from conflicts meeting the collective challenges of peace and security. UN Secretary General's call for pause in global conflict is pertinent and worthy of global attention and response.

Fauzia Nasreen is from foreign service of Pakistan and remained posted as ambassador of Pakistan in many countries. Presently, she is working as Advisor COMSATS Headquarters as SDGS

Palestinian people around the globe celebrate Nakba Day

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



The Israel forces have been wagging unstoppable human siege, cruelty, brutality, drastic demographic decomposition, social and political marginalization, alienation, and ruthless killing in its home land

ON May 15, Palestinians living around the world commemorated 72nd Nakba Day. It represents massive displacement of real owners of holy land, the Palestinians. It showcases colossal pains, grieves and sorrows of native people of Palestine. It upholds unshakable peaceful resolve of helpless Palestinians against vicious forces of Israel, the champion of illegal occupier on the lands of Palestinians. Last but not least, it also portrays unfinished struggle, uncompromised commitment and unfading desire of Palestinians to reclaim their lands from Israel.

Due to ongoing deadly and infectious coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the state of emergency announced in the West Bank, Palestinians marked this year's "Nakba Day" with statements and speeches. Palestinians on Friday marked the 72nd anniversary of "Nakba Day" ("Day of Catastrophe") by vowing to thwart Israel's plan to apply sovereignty to parts of the West Bank and US President Donald Trump's plan for Mideast peace, also known as the Deal of the Century. Abbas said that "despite all the obstacles, and despite all the aggressive occupation policies, measures and violations, we are proceeding with confident steps towards the restoration of our full rights and the removal of this hateful occupation." The Palestine President again repeated his threat to renounce all agreements with Israel if the Israeli government implements its plan to apply sovereignty to any part of the West Bank. On its part, Fatah faction said in a statement that it would not abandon the goals of its "revolution, particularly achieving the right of return [for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to their former homes in Israel, self-determination, and national independence]." PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said that the "biggest challenge the Palestinians are facing today is the Israeli threat to annex" parts of the West Bank. The move, he said, "constitutes the last chapter of a systematic campaign to destroy the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state." A Palestinian state can't be established without Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and all of the West Bank, including Area C and the Jordan Valley, Shtayyeh emphasized he added. He further warned that the Israeli plan would not only end the two-state solution, but also pose a threat to regional security and stability. Palestine the land of unlimited prophecies and prosecutions, holy consensuses and modern day conspiracies, existence of divinity and manmade destructions last but not least mercy and mercilessness have been hub of power struggle and domination of national narratives since centuries. In this connection, Nakba Day is commemorated by Palestinians on May 15, the day after the Gregorian calendar date for Israel's independence.

"Nakba" is the Arabic word for "catastrophe" or "disaster" and the occasion remembers the 700,000 Palestinians forced to flee as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and seek refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, often without citizenship being granted. However, this year the rallies have been cancelled amid the coronavirus pandemic. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas has officially authorised digital activities to observe the anniversary, with many planning to join virtual reality tours and Zoom video chats. This year's is the 22nd since Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat inaugurated the day in 1998 in response to Israeli celebrations marking half a century of independence, but it had been unofficially commemorated as early as 1949. Till day, more than 5.3 million Palestinian refugees live outside of Israel were victims of ethnic cleansing during the 1948 conflict and insist on their right to return to territory they consider their homeland. Israel refuses to meet the demand because doing so would compromise the Jewish nature of the state defying Resolution 194 passed by the UN in 1948, siding with Palestinians on the issue. As Palestinians around the world mark the 72nd year of their resistance to Israeli dislocation and dispossession, thousands gathered online for a virtual rally to commemorate Nakba Day and stood in opposition to land theft and annexation. Justice, equality and dignity in Palestine/Israel must include Palestinians realizing their right to return home. Nakba means catastrophe in Arabic, and Nakba Day refers to the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages and the violent expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians that began with Israel's founding, and that continues to this day. The catastrophes of the Nakba continue through ongoing land theft and expulsion. Israeli annexation means more deeply entrenched apartheid, more home and village demolitions, and the further loss of Palestinian land, livelihoods, and connections. All Palestinians stand together in resistance. Palestinians suffered the pain of displacement between tents and camps and used to sleep on ground under the sky since 1948. Their original homes were stolen and they were left to live in crowded camps.

According to the Gaza Health Ministry, at least 47 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli soldiers during the latest protests. Witnesses said the soldiers fired live ammunition, tear gas canisters and rubber coated steel bullets to disperse protesters and keep them away from the fence. From ancient prophecies to modern profit orientation of modern state, politics and economy, unending struggle of Palestine people against aggression, political isolation economic marginalization and social alienation is still alive and sustainable. The loyal Palestinians have been confronting the Israeli occupation since 1948. It has been unending journey during which hundreds of thousands innocent people have been martyred, wounded and kept in prisoners. Unfortunately, Palestinians have also been victim of state terrorism and racist policies of Israel. Constant apartheid policies of Israel has badly damaged basic core of the society. Nevertheless, it has been vivid reflection of its collective struggle, determination, nationalism, patriotic spirits and above all political means to defend its rights of independence despite all hurdles. With the passage of time, Israeli occupation has been further strengthened which is still being implemented and making lives of common Palestinians miserable and crestfallen. Israeli policy of annexation and grabbing of land from the real owners (Palestinians) have been creating havocs in the lives of our people. The Israel forces have been wagging unstoppable human siege, cruelty, brutality, drastic demographic decomposition, social and political marginalization, alienation, and ruthless killing in its home land. Israel forces are also engaged to destroy limited resources of human survival in shape of SME, agriculture, demolition of comfort zones (houses/homes) and building, massive displacement, harming natural harmony and racist separation walls etc. According to World Bank report restrictions on Palestinian movement and access have serious repercussions on its fragile national economy. Despite all hurdles Palestinians are still fighting against all odds and hold the flag of steadfastness and hope that one day siege of darkness and injustice may be over and they will reclaim their lost paradise from illegal occupier Israel in the days to come.

Briefs

Uzbek govt to privatize banks

DNA

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree "On a Strategy for Reforming the Banking System of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2025". The main directions of reforming the banking sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan are: increasing the efficiency of the banking system by creating equal competitive conditions in the financial market, lending exclusively on a market basis, reducing the dependence of banks on state resources, modernizing banking services, creating an effective infrastructure and automating the activities of banks, and phasing out non-core functions of banks.

E voting in US ruled out

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly will cast ballots in-person for five new non-permanent Security Council seats, its president said Thursday, effectively ruling out electronic voting despite the coronavirus pandemic. In a letter to UN members obtained by AFP, President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande said that voting members would be "invited to visit the venue at the designated time slot communicated to them in advance" in order to cast their ballot. Mexico and India are guaranteed a spot on the Council as the only countries in the running to represent Latin America and Asia respectively. — APP

Germany goes into recession

BERLIN: German output shrank by 2.2 percent in the first quarter of 2020, official data showed Friday, as the coronavirus pandemic tipped Europe's top economy into a recession. The quarter-on-quarter contraction is "the worst since the financial crisis" in 2009, federal statistics office Destatis said. The agency also revised its gross domestic product (GDP) figure for the final quarter of 2019 from zero growth to a contraction of 0.1 percent, meaning Germany has now experienced two consecutive quarters of contraction — the technical definition of a recession. — APP

S.Korea reports 27 more cases

BEIJING: The following are the updates on the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. SEOUL — South Korea reported 27 more cases of COVID-19 compared to 24 hours ago as of 0:00 a.m. Friday local time, raising the total number of infections to 11,018. The daily caseload hovered around 30 for six straight days as a cluster infection was found from clubs and bars at the multicultural neighborhood of Itaewon in Seoul. — APP

Shavkat Mirziyoyev: We will mitigate quarantine requirements

We should accept some rules of the quarantine period as part of our daily lives. In particular, strict observance of personal hygiene, frequent washing of hands with soap, disinfection, holding various family ceremonies in a very limited composition, wearing masks in the presence of an infectious disease should become the norm

DNA

TASHKENT: A video-selective meeting was held under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on measures to further mitigate quarantine requirements while maintaining a high level of vigilance, phased revitalization of economic sectors, increasing employment and increasing population incomes. At the beginning of the meeting, the head of state noted that the pandemic is still ongoing in the world, but a number of countries are gradually loosening quarantine restrictions. - The international community comes to the final conclusion that it is necessary to learn to live and work in a pandemic, since the vaccine and the cure

for coronavirus have not yet been found. We also began to soften the quarantine requirements, while maintaining strict control over the epidemiological situation, and we will consistently move in this direction. We do this, first of all, to ensure employment and increase incomes of the population through the resumption of economic activity. In this regard, we are studying the real situation in our country and international experience. A preliminary analysis shows that good results are achieved where khokims take full responsibility and act in consultation with people. But in some places, due to a misinterpretation of the regime of mitigation of quarantine measures, the population, especially young people, take to the streets en masse without



any need. This state of affairs, coupled with the increase in the number of people infected with infection in recent days, calls on us all to be vigilant. In general, even after the threat of the coronavirus disappears, we should accept some rules of the quarantine period as part of our daily lives. In particular, strict observance of personal

hygiene, frequent washing of hands with soap, disinfection, holding various family ceremonies in a very limited composition, wearing masks in the presence of an infectious disease should become the norm. We all must be clearly aware of one fact: how efficiently the new system that we introduced because of the pandemic will

work depends only on us, said Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The meeting also touched on the work done to combat the pandemic and support the population and enterprises in quarantine. For this purpose, 3 trillion soums were allocated from the Anti-Crisis Fund. In addition, to ensure economic activity, new investment projects have been launched in the amount of more than 1 trillion soums. In addition, a delay was granted for the repayment of bank loans of 87 thousand business entities for a total of 18 trillion soums and about 2 million citizens in the amount of over 5 trillion soums. Last month alone, 250 thousand entrepreneurs and enterprises, 83 thousand farms received a deferral of taxes and other payments totaling 400

billion soums. More than 11 thousand entrepreneurs using state property are exempted from paying rent. Taking into account the precautionary measures, 10 thousand out of 14 thousand industrial enterprises that suspended their activities for the period of quarantine earned. 178 thousand employees returned to their places. The Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction has been instructed to carefully study together with the khokims of the regions the problems of 4 thousand non-working industrial enterprises and to establish their activities until the end of May. The President noted that support for entrepreneurs and the public in a pandemic will not be limited to previously provided benefits and will continue.



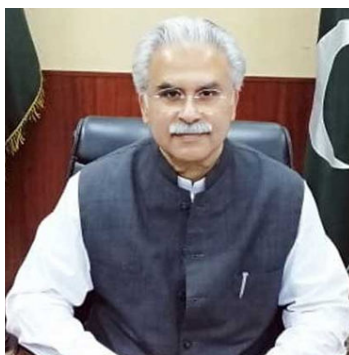
WASHINGTON: EU ambassador Ambassador Kaminara Androulla met with Interior Mr Ijaz Shah to discuss issues related to EU - PK relations relevant to his Ministry and GSP+. DNA

‘Pak gets license to make medicine for corona patients’

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has got license to make newly developed medicine for treating the coronavirus patients, Dr Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services announced on Friday. The drug named Remdesivir will soon be manufactured locally under license from Gilead Sciences Inc, an American research based pharmaceutical company, he said addressing a press conference at the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). "This is a major success on public health and diplomatic front, as under the agreement Pakistan will supply this medicine to 127 developing countries hit by the coronavirus pandemic." Remdesivir will be registered on fast track basis by Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) after fulfilling legal requirements. Rem-

desivir was granted emergency use authorization by the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) on May 1, and approved by the Japanese authorities on May 8, Dr Zafar said. "The production could commence as early as eight weeks, after necessary regulatory approvals are obtained, and the manufacturer is confident that it will produce sufficient quantities over time to serve the needs of the patients in Pakistan and abroad." Dr Mirza said globally only two countries, including Pakistan, have been



allowed to manufacture this medicine. He said that on May 12, Pakistani manufacturer BF Biosciences Limited, a subsidiary of Ferozsons Laboratories Limited, successfully concluded its voluntary licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences, Inc, for the manufacture and sale of 'Remdesivir' under Gilead's Global Patient Solutions Program to supply the product to affected developing countries. The Gilead has signed non-exclusive voluntary license agreements with five South Asian manufacturers including BF Biosciences Limited from Pakistan. Under the agreements, the companies have a right to receive a technology transfer of the Gilead manufacturing process for Remdesivir to enable them to ensure product quality and to scale up production quickly. Dr Mirza pointed out it was for the first time that a manufacturer from Pakistan had been included in a global supply solution of this nature.

PM lauds KPK govt steps

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad today. Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani presented a cheque of five million rupees to the Prime Minister for Prime Minister Corona Relief Fund on behalf of Ibrahim Trust Peshawar. Apprising the Prime Minister about the annual audit report of Public Accounts Committee of KPK Assembly and the performance, the provincial speaker said five billion rupees have been recovered from different departments under audit paras.

7000 Pakistanis to be brought back: NA told

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed on Friday that seven thousand stranded Pakistanis will be brought back home before Eid. This was informed by Minister for Aviation Division Ghulam Sarwar Khan, while responding to various points raised by the parliamentarians. He said thousands of stranded Pakistanis, including students, workers, members of Tableeghi Jamaat, and pilgrims, from across the globe have been repatriated. He said Pakistani prisoners from Oman and the United Arab Emirates were brought back free of cost. He said Aviation Division operated 181 inbound flights and took over 25,000 passengers to their destinations in 27 countries. He said around 250 students from Wuhan and China will be repatriated through special flight on Monday. Taking part in the discussion, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Amir Dogar said the government should announce support prices for agricultural produce. He said seeds and fertilizers should be provided on subsidized rates. He said giving priority to agriculture is vital to uplift economy of the country. Amir Dogar said health workers and members of district administrations, who are on the forefront in dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, should be awarded civil awards. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Ahsan Iqbal said serious and collective efforts are needed to prevent spread of the Coronavirus. He said the government should have evolved a comprehensive policy to combat COVID-19. He said chartered planes should be dispatched to repatriate stranded Pakistanis from various countries.

Pak imports from china decrease

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's imports of goods and services from China witnessed decrease of 6.84 percent during the first three quarter of financial year (2019-20) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall imports from China into the country were recorded at \$6973.167 million during July-March (2019-20) against the imports of \$7485.193 million during July-March (2018-19),

showing decreased of 6.84 percent, SBP data revealed. The overall imports into the country decreased by 16.22 percent, from \$39.312 billion to \$32.935 billion, according to the data. On the other hand, the exports to China during the period under review were recorded at \$1298.259 million against exports of \$1310.136 million during same period of last year, showing negative growth of 0.90 percent. — APP

Rupee recovers 1 paisa

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee strengthened by 01 paisa in the interbank on Friday against US dollar to close at Rs 160.09 compared to the last closing of Rs 160.10. However, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of Dollar in open market were recorded at Rs 160 and Rs 161 respectively. The State Bank of Pakistan reported that in interbank, the price of Euro depreciated by 01 paisa to close at Rs 173.13 against the last day's trading of Rs 173.14. — APP

China builds digital system to improve Thar coalfield efficiency

The second phase of Thar coal mine project is expected an annual output of 7.6 mln tons. Regarding that the system is able to improve productivity of Thar coal mine more than 15%, In other words due to the digital automatic system, now the annual output of the second phase of Thar coal mine project presumably could be increased

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Railway 19th Bureau Group has established 4G and GPS automatic dispatching system for the second phase of Thar coal mine project. This aimed at ensuring cost reduction and efficiency improvement of Thar coal mining, Gwadar

Pro reported on Friday. The second phase of Thar coal mine project is expected an annual output of 7.6 million tons. Regarding that the system is able to improve productivity of Thar coal mine more than 15%, In other words due to the digital automatic system, now the annual output of the second phase of Thar coal mine project presuma-

bly could be increased. It is the first GPS automatic dispatching system of Pakistan. Up to now, total 13 excavators, 74 dumper and 12 relative apparatuses of the coalfield installed GPS and concluded in this system. Coverage has exceeded more than 80% of whole the second phase of Thar coal mine project. Due to the harsh climatic conditions

and complex geographical situation, traditional manual scheduling mode limited capacity of coal mining to a huge extent. According to the mining personnel, this system is able to improve productivity effect of Thar coal mine more than 15%. The utilization of 4G and GPS automatic dispatching system can automatically trace the pro-

ductive apparatuses through collecting the dynamic information and identifying the operative situation. Therefore, a constant real-time tracking of coal mine production could be realized, which can effectively reduce the possible errors caused by manual scheduling meanwhile improve the accuracy of information. Thar coal mine

project is the first integrated project of coal and electricity under the CPEC and even in the whole of Pakistan. Located in the south-east of Sindh, Thar coalfield is the seventh largest brown coal mine in the world and the largest in Asia. The project will alleviate Pakistan's energy shortage and high dependence on import, the report added.