



# Daily Islamabad POST

Wednesday, June 03, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

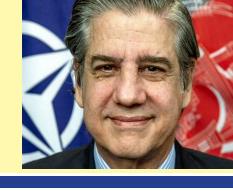
Price Rs. 20

Noose around sugar mafia to be tightened, says PM Imran Khan

Statistics system being reformed, says Shavkat



Amb. Stefano assumes charge at NATO Kabul



## PM CHAIRS CABINET MEETING

# Noose around sugar mafia to be tightened

A policy for non-declaration of mobile phones import will also be done away with; mobile phone device manufacturing policy apprved

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad on Tuesday said that the federal cabinet has decided to tighten the noose around the sugar mafia. In a conversation with the media, following a federal cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad, the minister vowed that the sugar mafia "will not be spared".

"The arrest proceedings of these evil doers will be based on actions dating back to 1985," he added. Rasheed said that it was also decided that an investigation based on the sugarcane report will be

carried out. "We will expose everyone's unlawful deeds." We are going to close in on all those who flout the law, the sugar mafia, money launderers, and smugglers. The cabinet has avowed no one will be spared," he said. "I said that those who present a clash of interests must not be in attendance during the meeting," he added.

**Mobile phone device manufacturing policy:** The cabinet also accorded approval to the country's first mobile phone device manufacturing policy, according to a notification by the Ministry of Industry and Production. Under the policy, the assembly of mobile phones valued

under \$350 will be exempt from fixed income tax. Additionally, according to sources, an increase in the fixed income tax of phones in the \$350-\$500 category by Rs2,000 was approved. Phones valued more than \$500 will also see a rise in fixed income tax by up to Rs6,300, said the sources. A policy for nondeclaration of mobile phones import will also be done away with, according to the policy.

Local manufacturers will be allowed a 3% R&D allowance for export of phones. The sale of these phones will be provided a 4% reduction in withholding tax. PTA approved manufacturers will be

exempt from regulatory duty for CKD/SKD manufacturing.

The government will keep a distinction between end-to-end manufacturing and assembling. The EDB will act as the secretariat for the manufacturing policy implementation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Yao Jing in a meeting with Dr. Hafeez Shaikh. - DNA

Hafeez thanks China for help

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh Tuesday thanked Chinese government for supporting Pakistan in its fight against coronavirus pandemic by providing medical equipment and helping in treatment of COVID-19 patients.

The advisor was talking to Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing, according to press statement issued by the Finance Ministry here. During the meeting issues of mutual interest came up to discussion while both the dignitaries agreed to further enhance cooperation in different fields of economy.

Virus is not over: Italian PM

ROME: The coronavirus crisis is not over in Italy, President Sergio Mattarella warned on the country's national day Tuesday, a day after a leading doctor created a furor by claiming that the virus no longer "exists" in the country. The latest figures in Italy continue to show a downward trend in new cases as it prepares the next stage of its gradual easing of a national lockdown, after nearly 33,500 people died over three months from COVID-19.

Italians were celebrating Republic Day with "feelings of uncertainty and reasons to hope," Mattarella said. - APP

HR abuses in IOJ

## EU MPs urged to take cognizance

EP members call upon European Commission to immediately intervene over human rights violations in IOJ&K

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Over a dozen members of the European Parliament (EP) have written a letter to President of the European Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen and Vice President Josep Borrell to immediately intervene over the alarming situation in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where intolerable suppression of freedom and fundamental rights over the past seven decades continued unabated.

In their combined letter bearing signatures of fifteen Members of EP, they called upon the Commission on behalf of the European Union, to express their concerns with the Indian government on these issues and ask for fulfillment of her International legal obligations by responding and adopting the recommendations in the UNHRC reports. They said due to the continued tensions, the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir had been subject to intolerable suppression of their freedom and fundamental rights as it was shown by the accounts of many human rights organisations and the 2018 and 2019 reports of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

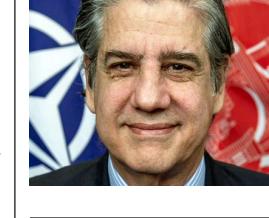
"The struggle for control over the region has led to a great number of civilian deaths and displaced people, the numbers rising in recent years as shown by the report of the Srinagar based Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society: generation after generation of Kashmiris have witnessed nothing but unending oppression," the contents of the letter said.

## Japanese envoy condoles demise of Asif

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Matsuda Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has expressed heartfelt grief and sorrow over the passing of Asif Aslam Farrukhi, on June 1, who had contributed significantly towards enhancing Urdu literature and strengthening relationship between Japan and Pakistan especially in the field of literature. Expressing his condolences to the family and the people of Pakistan, Am-

**Amb. Stefano assumes charge at NATO**



DNA

KABUL: Ambassador Stefano Pontecorvo the former Italian Ambassador in Pakistan and a seasoned diplomat has assumed the role of the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Flag of Afghanistan.

The Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Jens Stoltenberg had appointed senior diplomat and former Italian ambassador to Pakistan Stefano Pontecorvo as Senior Civilian Representative of NATO in Afghanistan. In a communication addressed to Ambassador Stefano the NATO Secretary General said that he was glad to appoint you as the senior civilian representative of the Organisation in Afghanistan.

'I look forward to working closely with him at this critical juncture for Afghanistan's future where all actors need to come together in the interest of peace and to fight the COVID 19 pandemic.'

*Picture on Back Page*

## Briefs

### South Korea's GDP shrinks

SEOUL: South Korea's economy contracted slightly less than expected in the first quarter, when the coronavirus outbreak hit consumer demand and economic activity, revised central bank data showed Tuesday.

The world's 12th-biggest economy shrank 1.3 percent in the January-March period over the previous three months, the Bank of Korea said. It was a slight improvement from its first announcement in April of a 1.4-percent quarterly contraction, but still the biggest decline in gross domestic product since the 2008 global financial crisis. South Korea endured one of the worst early outbreaks of the coronavirus outside mainland China. - APP

## Statistics system being harmonized: Shavkat

DNA

TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN): President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a meeting on measures to improve the national statistical system. Objectivity and transparency of statistics are the key to error-free and effective reforms. Over the past three years, a number of work has been carried out in this direction. In particular, the methodology for calculating inflation

has been brought into line with international standards, and the list of statistically observed goods has been expanded. Publicly published financial and economic indicators for the state budget, external debt, gold reserves and natural resources.

It was noted that it is necessary to bring the definition of unemployment in full compliance with the standards of the International Labor Organization,

to improve the procedure and expand the scope of

### Pak virus cases nearing 75,000

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported a total of 74,788 cases of the novel coronavirus so far. The total number of fatalities in the country have amounted to 1,576. For the past few days, the country's highest number of cases and deaths reported in 24 hours has been increasing. On Monday, Sindh reported a total of 500 deaths ever since the pandemic first started – the highest in any province. Sindh is also the province that has the highest number of active cases.

*Here is the province-wise breakdown of COVID-19 cases:*

Islamabad – 2,893 Punjab – 26,240 Sindh – 29,647 Balochistan – 4,514 KP – 10,485 AJK – 271 Gilgit Baltistan – 738

According to medical experts, KP has the highest death rate of the virus as compared to the number of cases it has reported. - DNA

## Punjab govt descends into political chaos

Jehangir Khan Tareen who recently was at the receiving end of the Sugar subsidies inquiry report and has been sort of a fall guy for the whole sugar industry machinations hold a considerable influence in the PTI MPAs in Punjab

**EXCLUSIVE**

Nehal Miraj

ISLAMABAD: As the country battles the challenges posed by COVID-19 epidemic and its economic crisis, PTI led Punjab Government may well be heading into a political crisis as well, which may ultimately destabilize the federal government also. Sources confirmed that PML (N) President Shahbaz Sharif, Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Pervaiz Illahi and sugar tycoon Jehangir Khan Tareen in the recent days have held a closed door meeting and chartered a course of action to launch a bid to remove Usman

Buzdar as the Chief Minister of Punjab. PML (N) President Shabaz Sharif has already hinted that his party will give unconditional support to Chaudhry Pervaiz Illahi to lead Punjab province. Jehangir Khan Tareen who recently was at the receiving end of the Sugar Subsidies inquiry report and has been sort of a fall guy for the whole Sugar industry machinations hold a considerable influence in the PTI MPAs in Punjab. In the current scenario PTI hold 181 seats in a house of 369. It is just short of simple ma-

jority in the house. PML (Q) holds 10 seats the opposition holds 174 seats in the house and there are 4 independents. If PML (Q) and independents are flipped and Jehangir Khan Tareen manages to flip some of the PTI MPAs, Usman Buzdar may not be able to counter the political moves by three very shrewd political operators. Many of these MPAs were elected as independents and later joined PTI.

Tareen was the main PTI handiwork who worked to get these independents in the party. Many even who contested elections on PTI tickets were picked up by Tareen and owe their career to him. A slight indication of that came out when at least three MNAs of PTI openly supported Tareen when the first phase of Sugar Subsidy report was released. If the move to remove Buzdar takes shape, Jehangir Khan

and his buddies in the Sugar industry will be well set to use their clout. Needless to mention that scion of the Chaudhry family's heir apparent Monis Illahi is also named in the Sugar Inquiry. In the upcoming Flour crisis report, Monis may again be implicated. Chaudhrys of Gujrat are also upset over some of the moves to pin Chaudhrys down in some reference. They have already approached the high court to challenge the powers of the accountability czar.

**Inside...**

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- Cuba condemns terrorism and political manipulation - Back Page

# Daily Islamabad POST METROLITE

Wednesday, June 03, 2020

## Briefs

### Pak condemns extra-judicial killing of thirteen Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemned the extra-judicial killing of thirteen Kashmiris in a single day by the Indian occupation forces in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K). Pakistan is deeply concerned over unabated extra-judicial killings of Kashmiri youth in fake encounters and so-called "anti-infiltration" operations.

While the international community is pre-occupied with fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, India is busy intensifying its brutalization of the Kashmiri people. The fact that 13 Kashmiris were extra-judicially killed in a single day speaks volumes about Indian Government's continuing crimes against humanity. To hide these crimes, the Indian authorities use the oft-repeated, unsubstantiated allegations of "training" and "infiltration" of Kashmiri resistance fighters. India must realize that its malicious propaganda carries no credibility with the international community.

The RSS-BJP combine stands exposed before the world for its illegal and inhuman actions and extremist "Hindutva" agenda. India must realize that neither can its brutalization break the will of the Kashmiri people nor can its anti-Pakistan propaganda divert attention from India's state-terrorism and egregious violations of human rights in IOJ&K. - DNA

### Pakistani molecular virologist contribution

ISLAMABAD: In the treatment of viral infections, Pakistani molecular virologist, Professor Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar's scientific contribution "Antiviral Potentials of Medicinal Plants", has been ranked No.1 by the Google Scholar. A search for "Antiviral Plants" in this world's top-ranked scholarly database retrieves around 234,000 scientific contributions from researchers/professors worldwide, working on the use of traditional medicine, including plants or their products, in the treatment of viral infection.

However, on top of the list is an article jointly authored by Pakistani and American scientists in which Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, currently serving as Vice Chancellor, the National Skills University, served as principal author.

This widely read and ranked on top of the list scholarly contribution across the globe describes the potential of plant-derived constituents in the treatment of viral infections. However, their discovery path should be through establishing modern drug discovery practices.

Worth mentioning here is that Prof. Mukhtar is recipient of an outstanding scientist visa (O-1 visa) award from the American government for his contributions towards understanding the passage of viruses into the human brain. The preliminary condition for this award is that the recipient is a Nobel Prize awardee or have equivalent credentials. - APP

### SOPs violation posing threat to commuters

ISLAMABAD: Intercity transportation has posing a serious threat for the residents of Islamabad due to non-compliance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for prevention of coronavirus pandemic by the transporters. Different means of transportation including local vans and cabs crammed with the passengers without adopting prevention measures to stay safe from the coronavirus can adversely impact the authorities' efforts to contain this deadly virus spread. "Majority of the passengers are not even wearing face masks which are most essential to avoid the risk of catching this virus what to expect about other precautions", Ali Khan, a traveler going to his office through a local van said. He said "no one was observing social distancing in the local transport and the transporters were just concerned about earning money through accommodating huge number of passengers".

Zunaira Aslam traveler said passengers must sit at a distance of at least three feet in public wagon in order to avoid coronavirus and passengers need to wear mask and gloves. No preventing measures followed by conductors and drivers, she added. - APP

### Rs 69,567.359 mln for water projects

ISLAMABAD: The government has released a sum of Rs 69,567.359 million for various water resource projects under annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for fiscal year 2019-20 so far. According to the data of Planning Commission, an amount of Rs118,627.359 million was allocated for various water resource sectors in the current fiscal year.

A sum of Rs16,000 million has been released for Diamer Basha Dam (Dam part), Rs 10400 million for Diamer Basha dam (Land Acquisition & Resettlement), Rs 1320.960 million for Kachhi Canal Project Dera Bugti, Rs1,321.780 million Lower Indus Right Bank Irrigation & Drainage Project (RBOD-I) and Rs 2,700 million for construction of 100 dams in Balochistan. Similarly, an amount of Rs8,510 million has been released for Mohmand Dam (Dam Part), Rs1500 million for Balochistan Effluent Disposal into (RBOD-I, RBOD-III), Jafarabad, Rs 1,775 million for construction of Bassool Dam (Ormara), Rs201.20 million for construction of Khazeena Dam Zamri, Rs 1,100 million for construction of small dams in Sindh, Rs 700 million for construction of small dams in Mansehra district, Rs1,748.184 million for Garuk Storage Dam Kharan, Rs426.330 million for Remedial Measures to Control waterlogging (Muzaffargarh), Rs1,500 million for Balochistan Effluent Disposal into RBOD.I (RBOD-III), Jafarabad, Nasirabad, Rs 700 million for small dams in KPK and Rs 900 million for raising of Baran Dam Bannu. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz chairing high level meeting to review water supply situation. - DNA

### SOP's violations

## Punjab govt to seal shops, impose fine

The federal and Punjab governments have set safety/health protocols for the masses and exhorted them to adhere to the rules to the latter for their safety, but all these SOPs are being flouted by the people

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab government spokesperson Musarrat Jamshed Cheema on Tuesday warned that provisional government would seal shops and impose fine over violations of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in markets, bazaars and other outdoor activities.

Talking to a private news channel, she said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government had serious concerns over the violations of coronavirus Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in markets, bazaars and other outdoor activities.

She said the government would take strict aggressive measures in case people violate standard oper-

ating procedures (SOPs). She said people should not avoid precautionary measures and take responsibility for protection of themselves and their loved ones.

"Every step of the government was for the safety and protection of the people of the province", she maintained.

Shopkeepers would have to pay a fine if so-

cial distancing would not be followed, adding, shopkeepers are asked to refuse customers if they would not wear face masks while shopping.

She also urged all the political parties including opposition to play their effective role to combat spread of COVID-19 in the country.

The federal and Punjab governments have

set safety/health protocols for the masses and exhorted them to adhere to the rules to the latter for their safety, but all these SOPs are being flouted by the people, she lamented.

Anybody who is found without wearing a mask would be fined and in case of severe violations, the violators can be sent to jail as well, she informed.

## RCCI shows dismay on setting 5100 bln tax revenue target

RCCI President Saboor Malik in a statement said that it's totally illogical under current circumstances and this has sent a negative wave among the business community

### ABID RAZA



RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has shown strong resentment on increase of tax revenue target by 30% in the next financial year.

RCCI President Saboor Malik in a statement said that it's totally illogical under current circumstances and this has sent a negative wave among the business community. The proposed tax target, Rs

come FBR set a huge tax target if it already failed to collect last year targets, he questioned. We are expecting big reliefs from the FBR and finance ministry on existing tax targets. He said RCCI has proposed budget proposals which can be set as a guideline in the formulation of next year budget. We have proposed that sales tax to be dropped to 5 percent from 17 percent and interest rate to be further reduced to 4 percent.

## 'Government to revive virus-hit tourism sector'

ISLAMABAD: Labour and Culture Minister Shaukat Yousafzai Tuesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government planned to revive virus-hit tourism sector soon as it was also affected due to coronavirus pandemic.

Talking to a private news channel, the government had approved a number of protective measures in coordination with the ministry of Tourism and Health, and in accordance with the directions of the World Health Organization. Yousafzai stressed all the precautionary measures that were discussed during the meeting regarding the said matter must be implemented. Around 2 million tourists had descended on tourism spots of Malakand and Mansehra last year, he added. He further said tourism is a huge industry that rakes in millions of rupees in government revenue.

He underlined the importance of the tourism and hospitality sector in providing job opportunities and as a vital source of income for the country. He said the country was keen to alleviate the negative impact of the coronavirus on the tourism sector and its employees.

Shaukat Yousafzai said 80 per cent of the total industries in the province have reopened, underscoring that the only way to keep the deadly virus at bay is to follow preventive measures. - APP

## Renowned Comedian 'Nana' remembered

This reportedly and allegedly drove Nanha to commit suicide by shooting himself with a shotgun on 2 June 1986.

ISLAMABAD: The 34th death anniversary of famous film star and comedian Rafi Khawar, popularly known as Nana was observed on Tuesday to pay rich tributes for his unforgettable services in the entertainment industry. Nanha got a breakthrough from film "Noukar" in 1976. He played the lead role in film "Tehka Pehlwan" in 1979, and in the same year his film Dubai "Chalo" was a super hit at the box office. His pairing with fellow comedian Ali Ejaz was popular since film "Insaniyat"

(1967 film). Ali Ejaz and Nanha, as popular pair of comedians, were seen together in more than 50 films.

He was regarded as an exceptional comedy talent and for many years was the star of the widely popular Pakistan Television Corporation's TV show "Alif Noon" that ran for three television seasons during the early 1980s, private channels reported. Rafi Khawar was a familiar face, well-known and loved by all. Nanha acted in Alif Noon with his fellow comedian Kamal Ahmed Rizvi bet-

ter known as Allan in the TV show.

A supporting actress and a then popular film dancer named "Nazli" usually appeared with Nanha as his love interest in those movies. They were also often seen

together in public and became romantically involved in real life. Nanha's success in films and celebrity status was at an all-time high. So money was never an issue with Nanha during his love affair with Nazli.

He even pressured his film producers to cast Nazli with him in many films and the pair became inseparable in the early 1980s. This was not to last after Nanha's films started to flop and he fell on hard times financially. Then Nazli also started to lose interest in him. This reportedly and allegedly drove Nanha to commit suicide by shooting himself with a shotgun on 2 June 1986.

His final resting place is in a cemetery located in Karim Block, Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore, Pakistan. - APP

### FM Qureshi condolences death of MNA Orakzai

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Tuesday expressed his condolence over the death of member of National Assembly (MNA) Munir Khan Orakzai, who was elected from district Kurram, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In his condolence message, the minister prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with patience, a press release said. Foreign Minister Qureshi said that late Haji Munir Orakzai was a seasoned politician and very sociable and a general person. - APP

### CDA prepares PC-1 for fly over

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority has prepared PC-1 for construction of fly over at Sihala - Kahuta Road which will be constructed over Railway line at Sihala-Kahuta Road. Capital Development Authority has submitted the PC-1 for construction of fly over at Sihala-Kahuta Road to Ministry of Interior for approval. The fly over will be constructed at distance of around 6 kilometers at Kahuta Road from Kakpul. PC-1 cost of the project for construction of fly over at Sihala-Kahuta Road is 483.00 million rupees. The length of the fly over will be 1800 feet while the length of approach road will be 900 feet. The project for construction of Railway Line fly over at Sihala-Kahuta Road will be completed in 12 months. The project is PSDP funded.

### ATC to resume hearing

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: An anti terrorism court (ATC) here issued notices to parties for appearance in a case pertaining to mixing poison in Rawal Lake for catching fishes. The hearing will be resumed by the court of ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan. The secretariat police had registered three FIRs against the accused Jahangir Ahmed Abbasi and four others, allegedly involved in catching fish after mixing poison into the Rawal Lake water.



## NFC issues

**A**FTER the formation of the 10th National Finance Commission by the president of Pakistan earlier in May, there have been multiple controversies regarding its membership and the terms of reference (ToR). The latest is the petition filed in the Islamabad High Court by a PML-N leader. The issue raised in it is that according to the 1973 constitution, elected representatives should be running the affairs of the country including all economic matters – whereas in the recently formed NFC the finance adviser to the prime minister has been assigned to lead the commission.

Since the court has summoned the respondents and sought replies, the case is sub judice and we cannot comment on this aspect of the matter, but there are certain issues that need highlighting. The first is the debate on the constitutional and financial powers of the federation and its units according to the 18th Amendment approved unanimously by parliament in 2010.

The 10th NFC should have been strictly in accordance with the constitutional obligations of the federal government and should not have overstepped in a domain not falling under its jurisdiction.

It appears that the architects of the new commission did not take proper cognizance of the sensitivity of this matter. The NFC primarily has to do with sharing of the federal divisible resources between the centre and the provinces; anything going beyond this mandate was likely to be challenged by not only provincial governments but also questioned by constitutional and economic experts in the country.

The eleven-member commission has been given ToRs that is beyond the pale of its mandate per Article 160 of the constitution. Secondly, the authorization given by the president to the advisor of the prime minister on finance and revenue to chair meetings of the NFC in the absence of the federal finance minister is highly contentious.

Constitutionally, there appears to be no room for this. The inclusion of the four provincial finance ministers is an ex-officio matter, but the nomination of four non-statutory members representing the provinces also created controversy.

Even if the Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments had agreed to the nominations of persons belonging to other provinces, such members should ideally have been experts in economics and finance to play a productive role in the discussions.

Irrespective of who represents whom, the ToRs will be a major concern for all provinces, and a strictly constitutional way forward is called for so that a mutually beneficial 10th NFC Award is concluded.

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## Brave new world

**T**HE coronavirus pandemic has already changed the world. According to the UN and the ILO in a fresh study, its impact has most widely affected young people with a possible influence on work opportunities and career options for decades to come. The ILO chief has said that as the world gets over the pandemic, a lot of people are simply going to be left behind – especially the young. He has also warned of permanent scarring as a result of their isolation and the rising unemployment rate. Unemployment around the world stood at 13.6 percent for the youth in 2019, far higher than for any other group. 267 million young people were neither employed nor in education and training; the ILO believes the coronavirus will now reduce working hours by 10.7 percent globally during the second quarter of 2020 compared to the final three months of 2019. This is the equivalent of 3.5 million jobs. Young women, among the young people who it is predicted will be worst hit, have most to lose. In Canada, for example, the overall jobless rate rose six percentage points from February to April. For young men, it swelled to 14.3 percentage points and for young women by 20.4 points. This is a significant difference. It means it may take years, even decades, for women to catch up and regain their place at workplaces. The survey by the ILO has found that of the people aged 29 and under who had been working before the pandemic hit, 17 percent had been forced to stop as a result of the crisis. For others, working hours were cut drastically. The ILO warns that young people are facing a triple shock from the crisis, destroying their employment, disrupting education and training and making it more difficult to enter the labour market or move between jobs. It has noted that around half of the world's students expect their education to be delayed while 10 percent believe they will now be unable to complete their training at all. Sixty percent of young women and 53 percent of young men who were surveyed viewed their career prospects with uncertainty or fear. The report notes that in countries where testing and tracing of Covid cases has been strong, it helped prevent market disruption with a lower average fall in working hours. This is linked to greater public confidence while the process of testing and tracking also created new jobs which could be targeted by young people. The survey is just one insight into the possible changes the Covid-19 crisis could bring for all of us. We do not know what other changes will come. But certainly, young people everywhere, most at the starting mark of their careers, are most at risk of losing jobs or being laid off while the disruption in education has forced millions to either turn to online classes or possibly delay higher education or drop out of it as the job market shrinks and families search for more income.

## Combating COVID-19: One Step Forward and Two Backward

Iqbal Khan

**L**ockdown in the country remained lacklustre, with the government and public remained divided on its necessity and futility. To cover-up inability of enforce an effective lock-down, a term "Smart Lock-down" was coined.

**N**onetheless, the number of patients and deaths have remained well below projections. Alarming thing is that curve is still in a climb, even though not in a sort of European or American style. Whatever style of lockdown we may chose during various staged of epidemic, it should be implemented effectively

**A**s we are learning the ropes, approach towards dealing with Covid-19 is becoming pragmatic. Fear of the unknown is shedding and blanket approach is giving way to specific measures. Weakest link has so far been public apathy towards safety measures. This combined with pop-

ulist approach by a narrow segment of leadership has caused an uptick in the reported cases. Judicial interference in healthcare matter is emerging as single most cause in post Eid surge of patients, whose full impact would be quantifiable only by end of next month. It appears that some of the restriction may soon be back.

Notwithstanding, Pakistan has so far done reasonably well in handling Covid-19 at domestic level. It has sent anti-Covid-19 related aid to many countries including the United States. Pakistan is now on its way to play a vital role in the global effort to scale up production of the potentially lifesaving drug—Remdesivir.

The US based pharmaceutical firm that manufactures this medicine has entered into a non-exclusive licensing agreement with one of Pakistan's leading pharmaceutical concern. I will manufacture and distribute Remdesivir to 127 nations to fight the pandemic. Under the licensing agreements, Pakistani company shall receive a technology transfer of the Gilead manufacturing process for Remdesivir to enable them to scale up production more quickly. With support of International community, Pakistan's Pharmaceuticals would be able to manufacture different drugs via technology transfer. Earlier Chinese Pharma companies had also offered Pak with such technology transfer.

Constant strengthening of health system, quality observance of quarantine SOPs and availability of Personal Protection Equipment and testing facilities is working against rise of positive cases in Paramedic staff in Pakistan.

However, all is not well. Efforts needed by all provinces for lab capacity optimization and enhancing capacity to train technical manpower to manage quarantine and treatment centres leave much to be desired. Also grass root level outreach needs augmentations and expansion to dispel misperceptions about the pandemic.

There is also acute shortage of ventilators and the staff required to operate it. Stimulus programme for the poor masses has serious weaknesses, however, non-public sector philanthropy—a hallmark of Pakistani society—did the hard lifting—during initial re-

sponse—in reaching out to rescue the downtrodden. Under the same spirit people in private sector chose not to entrench their employees and some went beyond call of duty to pay them salary plus. However, private citizens' effort is not expected to sustain forever: fatigue signs are now visible; and State has to take over its duties more effectively.

State officials can't keep harping on one time Rs12000 per family and project as if it would take care of the people for entire duration of epidemic. Lockdown in the country remained lacklustre, with the government and public remained divided on its necessity and futility. To cover-up inability of enforce an effective lock-down, a term "Smart Lock-down" was coined. Nonetheless, the number of patients and deaths have remained well below projections.

Alarming thing is that curve is still in a climb, even though not in a sort of European or American style. Whatever style of lockdown we may chose during various staged of epidemic, it should be implemented effectively.

Public warning are being modified every other day with regard to what causes and what does not cause and/or spread the disease.

It is now well established that Corona virus is self-mutating and thus resistant to vaccines. It is also well known that evolution of virus was a natural phenomenon; yet, the US and some European countries continue to blame China; 62 countries have joined anti-China campaign in this regard. President Donald Trump is threatening to permanently freeze the US funding of WHO, mainly for not joining his anti-China bandwagon.

We daily have headlines about development of vaccines. Vaccine launch is months away, yet all kinds of anti-vaccine campaigns have surfaced which may result into millions volunteering to stay out of vaccine net, they may opt to die out of Covid-19 rather than suffering from ill-perceived—mostly fictional—side effects of would be vaccine.

The silver lining is that during the 73rd World Health Assembly on May 18-19, unprecedented solidarity as demonstrated by the heads of government from around the world beaming into the Assembly to discuss lessons, challenges and collective next

steps to tackle the pandemic, they signed up to a historic consensus resolution on COVID-19 and the way ahead.

The resolution sets out a clear roadmap of the critical activities and actions that must be taken to sustain and accelerate the response at the national and international levels. It assigns responsibilities for both the WHO and its member states, and captures the comprehensive whole of government and whole of society approach WHO has been calling for since the beginning of the outbreak. If implemented, this would ensure a more coherent, coordinated and fairer response that saves both lives and livelihoods.

Resolution underlined WHO's key role in promoting access to safe, effective health technologies to fight the pandemic, that lifts all barriers to universal access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

An important collaborative response to this resolution will be the COVID-19 technology platform proposed by Costa Rica, it aims at lifting access barriers to effective vaccines, medicines and other health products.

WHO Assembly outlined the primary goal of suppressing transmission, saving lives and restoring livelihoods. The progress is now visible, at least theoretically on the research and development agenda. We have a long way to go in overcoming Covid-19 pandemic. Rising numbers of cases in low- and middle-income countries is a matter of concern. How and where the novel coronavirus originated has now become a highly debated political issue.

Nonetheless there is continued hope. The last person who was being treated for Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo recovered and was discharged on May 14. On that day, the DRC Ministry of Health announced the beginning of the 42-day countdown to the end of the outbreak.

A typical pandemic teaches many lessons like: Health is not a cost; it's an investment; to live in a secure world, guaranteeing quality health for all is not just the right choice, it's the smart choice. There is need to heed to such lessons, lest one ends up relearning them every time.

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## The decline of Europe's strategic Middle Eastern role

Kerry Boyd Anderson



**E**urope maintains important economic and cultural relations in the MENA region. However, this is insufficient for it to remain a key strategic actor. For Europe, the consequences are negative. The MENA region poses important risks and offers opportunities, and Europe's ability to shape those is diminishing

**T**HE last couple of weeks in Libya have demonstrated the role of hard power in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as Turkey and Russia have increased their military support to rival factions. These developments have highlighted the growing role of Russia and regional actors at the expense of Europe, as Europe's role as a strategic actor in the region declines.

Europe has long been a key player in the MENA region. In recent history, European countries acted as colonial powers, drawing the Middle East's modern borders. That era gradually ended, marked by the UK's withdrawal as the primary naval presence in the Arabian Gulf in 1971, but Europe continued to be an important strategic actor in the region and maintained significant political influence. In the last decade, Europe's role in the MENA region has significantly declined, even while it retains economic and cultural influence. The European response – or lack thereof – to events in Libya, Syria, Iran, and Israel and Palestine has undermined its role.

European countries played a major part in the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, but Europe has lost much of the influence that intervention might have brought to the Western powers. European powers have supported different groups in Libya, while Russia and regional actors have provided military support to opposing factions, sidelining Europe.

Europe has also become nearly irrelevant to the civil war in Syria. It was unwilling to provide significant support to pro-democracy Syrian rebels early in the war or to impose military consequences on the Assad regime for its use of chemical weapons. When the conflict created a historic refugee crisis, European leaders responded in different ways, lacking a continent-wide strategy and tending to focus on keeping refugees out rather than addressing the root causes of the crisis. European countries participated in the coalition to fight Daesh and, while this was very important, it reinforced the message

that Europe is only willing to use hard power to deal with terrorism and not to support its values or broader strategic interests. While Barack Obama was US president, Europe remained influential, if only because Washington wanted European partners to support its actions in the MENA region. Europe played a role in US policy toward Libya and Syria and particularly toward Iran. Europe helped to negotiate and implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. When Donald Trump became president, he soon withdrew from the JCPOA despite European objections.

Europe's efforts to salvage the JCPOA appeared feeble. Tehran hoped that European leaders would take effective action to circumvent the US sanctions. However, the combination of Europe's economic and financial integration with the US market and a lack of political will soon demonstrated that it would not act as a counterweight. Europe took a long time to set up INSTEX – a mechanism to allow some European trade – and its scope is far narrower than Iran had hoped. European leaders were mostly unwilling to take actions that might have shielded more European companies from US sanctions, and European companies demonstrated that maintaining access to the US market was more important than business opportunities in Iran.

For years, Europe appeared to be important in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, playing a role in some negotiations and providing significant aid. However, the Trump administration's approach again demonstrated that much of Europe's past influence depended on its proximity to Washington. The Trump administration moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, cut nearly all US aid to the Palestinians, and supported Israel's perspective in its proposed peace plan, ignoring European concerns. Europe's attempts to maintain neutrality in this environment effectively render it irrelevant.

Multiple factors have led to Europe's loss of political and strategic influence. The Trump administration has made

it clear that the US does not need Europe, which damages the latter's influence globally. European countries have often failed to coordinate their foreign policy, undermining their potential leverage and complicating the EU's ability to act effectively. In a world with diminishing space for political moderation, Europe's efforts to be a balancing influence gain little traction. Europe's reluctance to use hard power has undermined its influence at a time when Russia and MENA's regional powers are more willing and able to deploy military power.

The Trump administration's approach demonstrated that much of Europe's past influence depended on its importance to Washington.

Europe maintains important economic and cultural relations in the MENA region. However, this is insufficient for it to remain a key strategic actor. For Europe, the consequences are negative. The MENA region poses important risks and offers opportunities, and Europe's ability to shape those is diminishing. It has less ability to prevent or respond to refugee and migration flows, nuclear weapon threats, terrorist risks, and more. For those who share similar values around human rights and democracy, Europe's declining influence is also a negative development.

However, for those who see Europe's legacy in the MENA region as a mixed bag or mostly having negative impacts, Europe's declining power is a positive development. It leaves more room for regional powers to act independently and with more influence. However, Russia is trying to fill the power vacuum, which may raise new concerns for regional actors.

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## Briefs

### US records 743 deaths in 24 hours

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday recorded 743 new coronavirus deaths in 24 hours, according to the Johns Hopkins University tracker, bringing its total to 105,099 since the global pandemic began. The country has officially logged 1,809,109 cases of COVID-19, the tracker set up by the Baltimore-based university showed at 8:30pm (0030 GMT Tuesday).

The death toll and number of cases in the United States are by far the worst in the world.

The virus has killed at least 373,439 people around the world since it appeared in late 2019 in China, according to a report compiled by AFP from official sources.

In the United States, states have begun relaxing confinement measures intended to slow the spread of the virus in varying degrees.

### Trump threatens military action

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump vowed Monday to order a military crackdown on once-in-a-generation violent protests gripping the United States, saying he was sending thousands of troops onto the streets of the capital and threatening to deploy soldiers to states unable to regain control.

The dramatic escalation came a week after the death in Minneapolis of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was killed when a white police officer knelt on his neck, leading to the worst civil unrest in decades in New York, Los Angeles and dozens of other American cities.

After being criticized for his silence on the worsening crisis, Trump struck a martial tone in a nationwide address from the White House garden, as police fired tear gas on peaceful protesters outside the fence. – Agencies

### Opera returns to Vienna

VIENNA: Deserted by tourists, a hotel in Vienna gave itself a temporary one-night-only makeover, turning itself into an outdoor concert hall. The guest bedrooms, which have stood empty during the coronavirus lockdown, were transformed into opera boxes for an evening, and the hotel courtyard into a stage to create a rare moment of joy in the city of music on Saturday.

Two opera singers and a string ensemble were invited to play at the Hotel Zeitgeist. As they performed in the courtyard, the spectators looked on from the windows of 40 or so rooms which they had rented for the evening. And they approved, showering applause on to the head of the tuxedoed conductor and his elegant soprano Monika Medek. – APP

# UN chief appeals for restraint as US protests intensify

The fallout over the killing of Floyd continues, with leaders around the country taking various steps to respond amid nationwide mostly peaceful protests, some of which have led to fatalities, injuries and property damage. Curfews have been placed in several cities across the country that have experienced violent protests

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on American protesters participating in demonstrations over the killing of George Floyd, an African-American man, to do so peacefully and that authorities respond with restraint. The fallout over the killing of Floyd continues, with leaders around the country taking various steps to respond amid nationwide mostly peaceful pro-

tests, some of which have led to fatalities, injuries and property damage. Curfews have been placed in several cities across the country that have experienced violent protests.

"Grievances must be heard, but they must be expressed in peaceful ways and authorities must show restraint in responding to demonstrators," the spokesperson for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Stephane Du-

jarric, told reporters at a virtual news briefing in New York on Monday.

"In the U.S. - as in any other country in the world - diversity is a richness and not a threat, but the success of diverse societies in any country requires a massive investment in social cohesion," he added.

The protests were sparked off after Floyd died in police custody on Monday after a white police officer, Derek

Chauvin, knelt on his neck for nearly 9 minutes in Minneapolis.

Chauvin was charged on Friday with third-degree murder and manslaughter. The other three officers at the scene have also been fired and could face charges. Spokesman Dujarric explained that the U.N. has repeatedly advocated that "police forces around the world need to have adequate human rights training, and there also

needs to be an investment in social and psychological support for police so they can do their job properly."

The demonstrations have spread overseas as major metropolitan cities including Berlin, London and Dublin have seen protests calling for justice in the death of Floyd. And in cases of instances of police violence, Dujarric reiterated the UN's stance, calling for thorough investigations.



**KABUL:** Newly appointed NATO Senior Civil Representative Stefano Pontecorvo meeting with Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan. – DNA

### Saudi seeks to raise \$2.3 bn in Yemen donor conference

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia seeks to raise \$2.3 billion from an emergency donor conference Tuesday to support war-torn Yemen as it faces a coronavirus catastrophe in the sixth year of the kingdom's military intervention.

The virtual conference, which Riyadh is co-hosting with the United Nations, comes as aid groups warn that the fast-spreading virus could wreak havoc after years of war and amid crippling funding shortages.

"A total of \$2.3 billion is being sought to cover emergency requirements in Yemen across

multiple humanitarian sectors, including medical, food and shelter assistance," a Saudi government statement said. Britain, stepped in Tuesday with a new aid package for Yemen worth £160 million (\$200 million).

"This targeted UK aid package will mean the difference between life and death for thousands of Yemenis who now also face the threat of coronavirus," Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in a statement. "Our support will help ensure families can feed themselves and access clean water and medical care," he said. – Agencies

### WHO warns of pressure on Latin American health systems

RIO DE JANEIRO: Health-care systems across Latin America risk being overwhelmed by the coronavirus, the World Health Organization has said, as the death toll from the disease in hard-hit Brazil nears 30,000.

The warning from the global health body came as a sister UN agency issued new guidelines for pandemic-hit airlines that reveal what flying might look like when passenger planes take to the skies again in earnest.

The march of the illness across the Americas comes as other parts of the world return to relative normality after weeks of restrictions on daily life that have wrecked economies and left millions jobless.

Schools, swimming pools,

pubs and tourist sites have begun to throw open their doors again in Europe as the continent continues easing lockdowns despite the threat of a second wave of infections.

The pandemic has now killed more than 377,000 people and infected at least 6.3 million since erupting in China in late 2019.

Four of the 10 countries across the globe with the greatest number of new COVID-19 cases on Monday were in Latin America, WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said.

Brazil, Peru, Chile and Mexico are suffering the highest daily increases but numbers are also on the rise in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Haiti.

"Countries are having to work very, very hard to

both understand the scale of infection but also health systems are beginning to come under pressure," said Ryan.

The region has logged one million cases and recorded more than 50,000 deaths, with Brazil accounting for more than half of those cases and close to 60 percent of the fatalities.

The mayor of Rio de Janeiro said Monday however that the popular tourist city would start gradually easing lockdown measures from Tuesday, beginning with the reopening of plazas of worship and water sports.

Mexico also began reopening on Monday, reactivating the automotive industry, mining and construction even as the country recorded more than 10,000 deaths.

– APP

### Turkey's flag carrier to increase flights

DNA

ISTANBUL: Turkey's national flag carrier Turkish Airlines (THY) on Tuesday announced that it would increase its domestic flights across the country. "As of June 4, we are coming back to skies with flights from Istanbul to 40 domestic destinations," the THY said on its website. On Monday, the carrier partially resumed its domestic operations with flights to four major cities from Turkey's biggest city Istanbul, noting that it would launch its international flights on June 10.

### US negotiator upbeat on Afghan talks

"There's been a lot of progress in the last few days," said Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy who negotiated a deal with the Taliban in which Washington plans to end its longest-ever war

WASHINGTON: The US negotiator on Afghanistan voiced optimism Monday that the Taliban and government would begin peace talks and said President Donald Trump could pull US troops ahead of schedule if all goes well. The Afghan government has been speeding up the release of prisoners, a key condition for the Taliban, after a ceasefire for the Eid al-Fitr holiday followed by a continued lull in fighting.

"There's been a lot of progress in the last few days," said Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy who negotiated a deal with the Taliban in which Washington plans to end

its longest-ever war. "A lot of people have been pessimistic that we could get to this place where we're discussing where and when inter-Afghan negotiations would begin and that there would be enough progress on the prisoners issue," he told reporters.

But he did not set a date and cautioned that "still more needs to be done" on freeing prisoners. Abdullah Abdullah, who heads the government council on the talks, said Saturday he was ready for talks "at any moment."

Under the agreement with the Taliban, the United States will pull troops out of Afghanistan by mid-2021 in exchange

for the insurgents' commitments to keep out Al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists.

US officials have said that the withdrawal is already ahead of schedule due to coronavirus concerns and The Wall Street Journal reported last week that the Pentagon had drafted plans for Trump to leave late this year – coinciding with the US election.

Khalilzad said the withdrawal was "the prerogative of the president, and if he thinks that the conditions have been met, then we could do it faster, but the key thing is whether the conditions have been met."

– Agencies

### Cuba condemns terrorism and political manipulation

DNA

HAVANA: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has rejected the slanderous inclusion of Cuba in a US State Department list of countries, which are allegedly not cooperating fully with US efforts against terrorism that was made public on May 13, 2020 and that was strongly rejected by President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez.

It is a unilateral and arbitrary listing without any base, authority or International support whatsoever which, as it is known, only aids to the intentions to defame and pressure countries refusing to bend to the will of the US government in their sovereign decisions. The main argument given by the US government was the presence in Cuban territory of the members of the delegation to the peace talks of the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Colombia. As it is widely known, the delegation to the peace talks of the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Colombia are in Cuba because Ecuador suddenly renounced to continue being the venue of such talks and, at the request of the Colombian government and the ELN,

the venue for the peace process was transferred to Havana in May 2018.

These peace talks had begun on February 7, 2017 in Quito, Ecuador. Cuba, together with Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela and Norway, has been a Guarantor of the peace process as requested by the Parties.

After Mr. Iván Duque Márquez was inaugurated as president of Colombia on August 7, 2018, the representatives of his government, beginning on August 8 that year until January 2019, had several exchanges with Cuba and the ELN delegation to the peace talks so as to continue the dialogues that had started during the Santos presidency – a process in which our country observed due discretion and acted strictly in its capacity as a guarantor.

Immediately after the bombing of the Police Cadet Academy in Bogota on January 17, 2019, the president of the Republic of Cuba and his minister of foreign affairs immediately expressed their condolences to the Colombian government and people and particularly to the relatives of the victims in the bombing, and they restated Cuba's strong position of rejecting and condemning all terrorist acts, methods

and practices in all their forms and manifestations.

Then the Colombian government took political and legal actions against the ELN delegation to the peace talks that was in Cuba and stopped the peace dialogue. Additionally, it decided to ignore the Protocol in Case of Rupture, thus openly abandoning and violating the commitments made by that State with the other six nations that had signed it. The Colombian government has embarked on a series of hostile actions against Cuba, including public statements, threats and summons, through an ungrateful and politically-motivated manipulation of the unquestionable contribution of Cuba to peace in Colombia. Among such actions, there was a change in the historical position of Colombia in support of the Resolution that has been passed every year in the United Nations General Assembly demanding an end to the US economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba which is bringing damages and suffering to our people. Such action ostensibly changed the consistent and invariable position all Colombian governments had been assuming since 1992.

Cuba has invariably supported peace in Colombia and worked as a guarantor for the implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Colombian Revolutionary

Armed Forces-People's Army (FARC-EP), even when the Colombian government has not guaranteed protection for or ensured the strict implementation of such agreement.

As requested through diplomatic channels, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is asking the government of Colombia to explain its position as to the role of the guarantors of the Colombian peace process, particularly that of Cuba. Equally, it requires to be informed about the position of the government on the enforcement and implementation of the peace agreement between the government of Colombia and FARC-EP.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges the government of Colombia to state its official position as to its reasons concerning the inclusion of Cuba in the list made by the US State Department and explain which was the role and posture of its officials during the previous exchanges that took place with the US concerning such matter. As a country which has been a victim of terrorism, Cuba deplores any form of manipulation and political opportunism when dealing on such a sensitive issue.