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SCO Secy General calls for collective efforts to fight drug trafficking

Brotherly ties between Pak and Saudi Arabia vital



Ahsan Iqbal slams govt fiscal policies



Briefs

PIA grounds 150 pilots

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Thursday said it had grounded 150 pilots with "dubious licenses", a day after the preliminary report of the Karachi plane crash blamed the pilots and the air traffic control (ATC) for the incident.

A spokesperson for the national carrier said those pilots who get their licenses verified will be allowed back on duty. "Grounding so many pilots will affect the PIA flight operation," the spokesperson said. The spokesperson added they have already dismissed six pilots with fake degrees. "We have asked the Civil Aviation Authority to send the list of the remaining licenses," the spokesperson said. "We acknowledge the report and are working on making our standard better."

In a letter to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), PIA chairman requested the aviation authority for details of the remaining pilots with dubious and fake commercial licenses.

"Action will be taken against all those pilots with fake licenses," PIA chairman said, adding they will take all the necessary steps to make the commercial operation safe.

Drop in COVID-19 deaths

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The "smart lockdown" across the country to combat the spread of the COVID-19 has seen a drop in the number of infections and deaths in the country.

According to the national COVID-19 portal, the number of confirmed cases in the country has reached 191,022 with Sindh reporting 74,070 cases, Punjab 69,536, Balochistan 9,817, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 23,887, Islamabad 11,483, Gilgit-Baltistan 1,337 and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) 892.

The country recorded 4,283 recoveries in the past 24 hours, taking the number of cured cases to 77,754.

The death toll reached 3,808 with the reporting of 78 more deaths in the last 24 hours - a considerable drop in the death toll compared with the usual over 100 deaths in the previous days.

Punjab reported 1,228 new cases and 21 new deaths in the past 24 hours. The province has so far recorded 1,516 deaths. Islamabad, Gilgit Baltistan and AJK collectively reported 298 new cases and four fatalities.

PM shelves Opp criticism on lockdown

Dispels impression that there was any confusion on part of the government in taking measures to cope with the challenge of coronavirus

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has once again emphasized the need to create awareness among masses to strictly follow standard operating procedure to prevent spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking in the National Assembly Thursday, he said our health system can cope with the challenge of pandemic if people strictly follow the preventive measures and burden on hospitals will increase if SOPs are not adhered in letter and spirit.

The Prime Minister said that it is an obligation on us to protect our elderly and sick people, patients of heart and blood pressure

and chronic diseases.

Imran Khan said that Tiger Force has been deployed to convince people to observe SOPs to prevent contagion. Imran Khan said we introduced smart lockdown instead of complete lockdown to protect our people from the disease and hunger. He said thirty-four per cent people have gone below the poverty line in India due to complete lockdown which vindicate our stance of not going for complete curfew. The Prime Minister dispelled the impression that there was any confusion on part of the government in taking measures to cope with the challenge of coronavirus. He said we enforced lockdown as soon as we detect just twenty cases in Pakistan but it has been

my consistent fear that corona is a phenomenon that nobody can predict anything about it.

He said in view of high density population in Pakistan we cannot enforce complete lockdown for longer period of time as we have to protect our people both from coronavirus and hunger. He said the government established National Command and Operation Centre to gather data, get expert opinion from doctors, input from provinces and evaluate world's trends in dealing with the pandemic. He said now we have verified and updated data about corona patients and availability of necessary medical equipment, including personal protective equipment, ventilators and beds in hospital.

China demands India's withdrawal from valley

DNA

BEIJING: China has demanded a withdrawal of Indian personnel and facilities from Galwan valley, and this was conveyed at the Corps Commander talks on June 6 and June 22, Indian media quoted officials from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The statements from Beijing came as both sides "agreed to resolve the existing situation peacefully," following talks through video conference on Wednesday under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on border affairs, Indian media reported.

India's Ministry of Exter-

nal Affairs (MEA) said both sides "discussed in detail the developments in the India-China border areas in particular the situation in Eastern Ladakh." India "conveyed its concerns" on the June 15 face-off that claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers and "emphasised that both sides should strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control (LAC)", it stated.

China's statements, however, pointed to sharp differences on where the LAC lies in Galwan valley. The valley begins from the confluence of the Galwan and Shyok rivers, and the LAC that both sides had been observing runs east of the confluence, in the valley. China, however, is demanding an Indian withdrawal from

the entire valley and limiting India's presence to the "Galwan estuary", where it meets the Shyok.

Statements from Beijing appeared to describe the LAC at the "estuary" of the river. The MEA said last week China's claims over the entire valley were "exaggerated" and "untenable". The MFA, in a statement, said both sides would "actively cooperate with the armed forces of the two countries to implement the consensus from the two rounds of military leaders' talks on June 6 and 22, strengthen communication and coordination between military and diplomatic channels, and peacefully resolve relevant issues in border areas through bilateral dialogue and consultation."

FATF asks Pakistan to amend forex laws

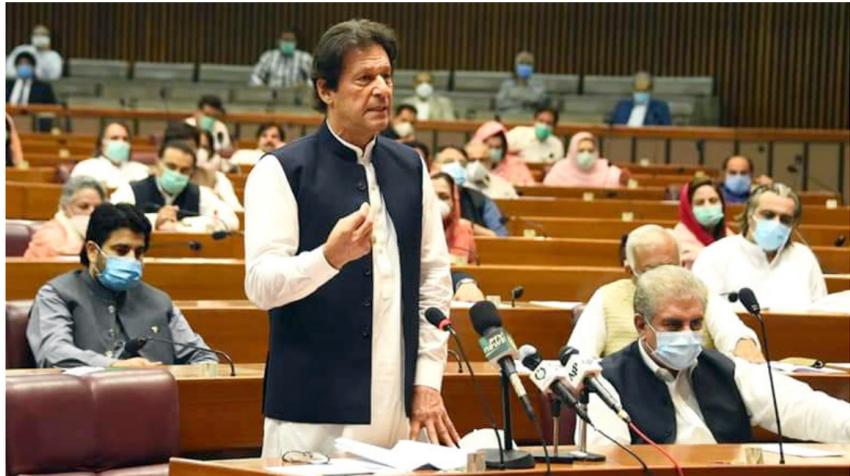
ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan will have to pass amendments into Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Foreign Exchange Regulation laws within the next three months to comply with the conditions set forward by the Financial

Action Task Force (FATF). The financial watchdog has extended deadline for Pakistan till next plenary meeting expected to be held in October 2020, media reported.

After the tragic demise of DG Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU) Mansoor Hassan Siddiqui a few months back, the post was fallen

vacant but now the government-appointed Lubna Farooq Malik, Executive Director SBP, as DG FMU. There was a proposal on the eve of the budget-making process for 2020-21 to incorporate some amendments related to Anti Terrorism Act (ATA) and AML as part of the Finance Bill but it was rejected.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan addressing the National Assembly session. - DNA

PM talks to Sri Lankan President

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan held a telephonic conversation with Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations, regional situation and a broad range of other issues. Prime Minister Imran Khan commended the efforts made by Sri Lanka to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. He briefed the Sri Lankan President about the latest situation in Pakistan and the steps taken by the Government to contain Covid-19 and efforts to save lives, secure livelihoods, and sustain the economy. The Prime Minister apprised the President about his "Global Initiative on Debt Relief" for developing countries to mitigate the severe socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. The Prime Minister underscored that developing countries were particularly vulnerable. Stressing the need for a holistic solution, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of the developed and developing countries growing together.

China's vaccine enters phase 3 trial

The Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences said that Chinese authorities approved the phase one trial of the nation's first recombinant protein vaccine against COVID-19

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD, China reached an important new level of vaccine development with the start of the phase three clinical trial of an inactivated vaccine candidate against COVID-19 in the United Arab Emirates. It is the first vaccine of its kind to reach a late-stage, mass-scale human trial, according to China National Biotec Group. The Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences said in a state-

ment that Chinese authorities approved the phase one trial of the nation's first recombinant protein vaccine against COVID-19. The recombinant protein vaccine is the nation's third type of vaccine, after an adenovirus vector vaccine and the inactivated vaccine, to enter clinical trials in China, the statement said. The Wuhan and Beijing units of the CNBG each developed an inactivated vaccine candidate, and one or the other of these vaccine candidates were tested on a group of 2,240 people dur-

ing phase one and two clinical trials, the CNBG said. The Wuhan vaccine was found to be effective and safe, with no serious adverse effects, according to trial results published on June 16. Various dosages and timings were tried. Those who received two doses at an interval of 28 days, all in the 18 to 59 age group, tested positive for neutralizing antibodies against the novel coronavirus. The Beijing vaccine's test results will be published on June 28, the CNBG said.

Pak rejects US terrorism report

SHEJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected US state department's annual report on terrorism, stating that it failed to recognize Pakistan's efforts for countering terrorism. Foreign Office on Thursday said that we are disappointed with the U.S. State Department's Annual Country Report on Terrorism for 2019, which is self-contradictory and selective in its characterization of Pakistan's efforts for countering terrorism and terrorist financing. While the Report recognizes that Al Qaeda has been seriously degraded in the region, it neglects to mention Pakistan's crucial role in decimating Al Qaeda, the threat that the terrorist group once posed to the world. Similarly, the Report acknowledges the sharp decrease in the incidence of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. However, it neglects

to explain that this was only possible because Pakistan's resolute counter-terrorism operations have targeted proscribed groups and outfits without discrimination. It further added that Pakistan is fully aware of its responsibilities as a sovereign state. We reject any insinuation about any safe haven. Pakistan will not allow any group or entity to use its territory against any country. The Report is again either silent or vague on the origins and locations of these terrorist groups. Pakistan remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the UNSC 1267 sanctions regime for the freezing of assets and denial of funds and economic resources to all designated entities and individuals, it said. Pakistan said that the Report also fails to acknowledge the full extent of Pakistan's support for the Afghan peace process, which has created a historic opportunity for lasting peace in the region.

25 Taliban Killed in airstrike

DNA

KABUL: The Afghan Air force has killed at least 25 Taliban militants during the airstrike in Dawlatabad district of Balkh province. According to the details, the Afghan Air Force targeted the militants who had gathered in one of the local villages late on Wednesday night.

Meanwhile, reports also suggest that the airstrike also killed at least four civilians including a woman and a child. However, the Afghan military and local government rejected that the airstrike killed civilians, emphasizing that only militants were killed in the airstrike. The Taliban group has yet not commented regarding the airstrike so far. Previously, Afghan forces suffer heavy casualties in Taliban attack in Badghis province.

Countless graduates unemployed

FAIZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed Thursday said the federal government is doing nothing except making statements as countless graduates are unemployed, media reported.

The Supreme Court conducted suo motu hearing on case pertaining to coronavirus and the CJP said in his remarks that people will not get food by the government's statements. The federation should bring forth any economic plan to provide jobs to the unemployed if it holds any, Justice Gulzar Ahmed said. "Health and education sectors have downgraded and the country's economy has fallen. People need food, health, education, employment and petrol", he said.

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Chinese company donates five drones to Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: China's Shenzhen Sunwin Intelligent Co., Ltd. (Sunwin) donated five Industrial drones (UAVs) to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). On behalf of NDMA, Muhammad Irfan, Trade & Investment Counsellor of Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou attended the donation ceremony held here, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. Addressing at the ceremony, Irfan said Pakistan and China are as close as brothers. No matter what challenges confront, the two sides have been always offering selfless help and support to each other at the earliest opportunity. He expressed that the friendship between the two countries will be even stronger.

The donation of Sunwin, which occurred when Pakistan is fighting fiercely against both COVID-19 and the locust attack, is just a proof of the "iron-clan" friendship between Pakistan and China. Zhou Yong, Chairman of the Board of Sunwin, said that China and Pakistan are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and the China-Pakistan friendship has always been unbreakable and rock-solid. Zhou recalled that right after the breakout of the COVID-19, Pakistan mobilized the whole nation to support China. He added, "You throw a peach to me, and I give you a white jade for friendship. Now, as Pakistan is in trouble, Sunwin, a Chinese sci-tech enterprise, should embrace our responsibility. We would like to bring our good products in agricultural crops



protection to Pakistan and share their experiences in the pandemic control and prevention with the local government and people." Sunwin told CEN that the five Industrial UAVs, with a total value of 200,000 RMB (about \$28,291), will depart from China's Guangzhou and be sent to

Pakistan soon. They will assist Pakistan's fight against the pandemic and locust attack. Sailing, a type of drone made by Sunwin, has been used to kill locusts in Pakistan's Dera Ismail Khan and other places since February 2020, according to Zhou. This drone has become a spe-

cial instrument with super power to destroy locusts for its high efficiency of spraying and disinfecting, strong adaptation and remarkable effect. With the COVID-19 pandemic spreading in Pakistan, unmanned aerial vehicles could also play an important role in disinfecting, monitoring and temperature measurement. After knowing that Pakistan is still in need of drones, Sunwin contacted both of Chinese and Pakistani embassies and made production and donation plans. Sunwin was established in 1997 and listed in Shenzhen Stock Exchange in January 2010. Sunwin is a leading enterprise in the field of smart city and also a leader in artificial intelligence in China. Its main business covers four sectors, namely, smart city, big data, artificial intelligence, and culture and education.

Briefs

FATA, PATA areas need more relief

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Vice President FPCCI KPA Qaisar Khan Daudzai said Fata Pata, Tribal Areas (Now Merged in KPK Province) need more relief as requested to relevant department in Pre Budget request from FPCCI. It is appreciated that income tax relief which reduced from 5.5% to 2% in Oil sector, where as in steel sector 5.5% in role able, and 3% on shredded and bundle has been reduced to 0% on both, which is appreciable for settled areas businesses, he added. The government had promised with us to provide tax immunity (in an agreement) till June 10th 2023, instead of providing the relief you remove GST but impose FED (Federal Excise Duty) especially on Ghee sector, which is continued in this budget from Financial Bill, 2019 which is not justified in this environment, this was stated by Qaisar Khan Daudzai, Vice President FPCCI & Incharge Capital Office, Islamabad. Due to Talibanization and war on terror issues mostly population of the said areas were disbursed in nearest settled areas, but from 2017 till now no proper data collection has been done in this regard.

270 flights expected from June 26 to 30

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Security Division Dr. Moeed Yusuf on Thursday has expressed hope that all Pakistani laborers, especially in the Gulf countries, will be able to return to the country in next few weeks. Giving a media briefing in Islamabad, the special assistant said all airlines have been allowed to enter into Pakistan and 270 flights are expected to land in the country from 26 to 30th of this month. Dr. Moeed Yusuf said screening process will be started from Saturday for outbound passengers from Pakistan. During this process, the passengers will be checked for body temperature and other ailments, he added. The assistant also advised the outbound passengers to travel only if they are completely healthy in order to satisfy the requirements of their destination countries. He said Prime Minister has given special instructions to take care of overseas Pakistanis.

Petroleum Division resolves 135,308 complaints

ISLAMABAD: The Petroleum Division (PD) and its attached departments have so far resolved around 135,308 complaints, out of 140,082 received at the Pakistan Citizens Portal, launched by the Prime Minister in October 2018 for prompt redressal of grievances against the public sector organizations. "The complaints were resolved without any delay, and complaint resolution rate stood at 97 percent with absolute satisfaction of complainants," the PD said in a news release. The portal management placed recently PD in a list of top 10 public organizations/divisions, who resolved maximum number of complaints registered with their organizations. The Petroleum Division has also refurbished the mechanism of the public complaint resolution especially for gas sector amidst challenging time of the coronavirus pandemic through e-kutcheris and online services which are regularly being organized by both gas utilities, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and Sui Southern Gas Company.

RCCI pays rich tribute to doctors in fight against Covid-19



ABID RAZA

RAWALPINDI: The business community salutes the role of doctors fighting on the front lines against Covid-19. The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is going to launch a campaign that includes all schools

of thoughts aimed to pay rich tribute to doctors, health-workers. Twin Cities (Rawalpindi, Islamabad) All doctors and paramedics will be given a special discount of 10% on the purchase of medicines. All doctors and paramedics will be given a gift hamper in addition to this discount. A welcome banner will be

placed at the chemist's shop. Today's announcements are the beginning of this campaign. Further programs and measures will be taken. RCCI President Saboor Malik's along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf, PCDA Punjab President Zahid Bakhtawari in a media briefing at chamber house on Wednesday, announced

that this facility is valid till 31st August. A flag march is also part of the campaign. White flags will be hoisted on RIPDA vehicles in which doctors will be greeted. He said, "Just as a man in a khaki uniform fights against the enemy on the border, so these men in white coat are fighting for all of us today. We are indebted to the spir-

it and service of the soldiers in white coats". RCCI president said that District Administration, Station Headquarters, Cantonment Board, Civil Forces, Police, Traffic Police, 1122, RWMC, Volunteers, Academia, Anjuman-e-Tajir and Pharma Trade all are on board and we aimed to promote message of one-

ness in this drive. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that doctors and paramedics are our front line soldiers in Corona epidemic. The entire nation, especially the business community, pays heartfelt tribute to their role. I also appeal to my media friends to take part in this campaign by considering it as a National Cause.

AIOU sends roll number slips to students

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced that roll number slips, instruction material and question papers regarding end term assessment (Semester Autumn 2019) has been sent to students via Pakistan post through prepaid.

No post office or postman is authorized to take charges on the time of delivery to students in this regard. The AIOU has already paid postal charges to Pakistan Post for the purpose. If there is any wrongdoing / or complaint to this effect, it should be brought to the notice of concerned regional office/Exam Department along with proof for neces-

sary action. As per the announcement, the question papers are also being uploaded at the University's official website, with necessary guideline to solve them. It will be mandatory for the students to send back the solved papers of their relevant courses to the address given on their date sheets, on or before July 20.

Graduation ceremony of Air War Course held



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The convocation & graduation ceremony of No 33rd Air War Course was held at Air War College, Karachi today. Air Marshal Ahmer Shehzad, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the Chief Guest at the occasion. Addressing the graduating officers, the Chief Guest said, "You must be aware of the contemporary geopolitical and strategic environments since it would not only have a deep influence on the overall security calculus, but its sound understanding would also facilitate better preparedness and timely response to emerging threats."

He further said that in South Asia context, the situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir and the emerging developments between China and India are precarious for the region. He added, that in today's warfare, both conventional and unconventional, no service could achieve success single-handedly. Jointness remains central and cross domain deterrence is the need of the hour; while, cyber, space and hybrid warfare are the avenues to be explored and mastered. Later on, the Chief Guest awarded certificates to the graduating officers. Top graduate trophy was awarded to Group Captain Tanveer Ahmed. PAF Air War College is a

premier institution of Pakistan Air Force, where senior and mid-level officers of Pakistan Armed Forces and friendly countries are prepared in domains of Air Power doctrine, strategy and employment for higher Command and Staff appointments. The officers from tri-services of Pakistan, along with the officers from thirteen allied countries including Bangladesh, Bahrain, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe were amongst the graduates. The ceremony was also attended by various high ranking Civil & Military Officers and diplomats from allied countries.

Pakistan to head SAARC Chamber third time

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan after eleven years will head third time the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry for two years term next week. Veteran Pakistani business leader Iftikhar Ali Malik will be the next new President SAARC Chamber whose nomination was unanimously endorsed at Presidium virtual meeting held recently attended by outgoing President SAARC Chamber Ruwan Edirisinghe, Khairuddin Mayel Ahmadi, VP Afghanistan, Mahbubul Alam VP Bangladesh, SVP Designate and former President, Dasho Ugen Tschup

Porji, Vinod Juneja VP India, Chandri Raj Dhakal, VP Nepal, and Dr. M. Rohitha Silva, VP Sri Lanka. It was also decided simultaneously with consensus to convene an online video link handing over ceremony along with a joint session of Executive Committee and General Assembly of Chamber on June 30 and July 1. Malik a seasoned business figure of Pakistan has been associated with this Chamber its inception and served for regional integration and economic cooperation for 25 years. Apart from it he also served as Presidents of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1990 and Feder-

ation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 2000. Malik currently SVP SAARC Chamber will be the third Pakistani to become its president and he also enjoyed vice presidency of chamber for five consecutive terms. Iftikhar Ali Malik Group Chairman Guard Industries is a renowned Philanthropist, running two modern state of the art Mumtaz Bakhtawar Memorial Trust Hospitals is a magnum-opus for the welfare of public. Both hospitals contributed a lot for providing free treatment to victims of earth quake, flash flood affectees and donation to hard hit people in the wake of Corona.

"Black sheep not to be allowed"

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Thursday said that a few black sheep would not be allowed to spoil reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police which were introduced by PTI led government from 2013 to 2018 and onward. He stated this while speaking here at the floor of the National Assembly in context of an incident of police torture on head waiter of a marriage hall and later parading him naked after he abused senior police officials in an intoxicated state. The minister said that PTI government led by former chief minister Pervaiz Khattak introduced police reforms in the province from 2013-18 which were successfully implemented by the then IGP Nasir Durrani. Despite the reform process, he said there were still a few black sheep in police department and they would not be allowed to spoil the efforts made during last seven years by PTI led governments. - APP

DC visits lockdown areas

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Maghis Sanaullah Thursday paid a surprise visit to the Smart Lockdown areas and reviewed the measures being taken for prevention of COVID-19. The DC visited Mohalla Qila Nawanshah, Sihti Colony Supply and Al-Jannat Masjid Street Jhangi Qazis where he reviewed the measures taken in connection with the implementation of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by provincial government. Abbottabad AC Dr. Mujtaba Bharwana, Additional Assistant Commissioner-Revenue and other revenue staff were also present on the occasion. - APP

Agrisurge 2020 Innovation Challenge Launched

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Consequent to the framework collaboration agreement signed between Ministry of IT and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on 25 March 2020, to jointly work for the acceleration of development of agriculture sector of Pakistan, using technology. Agrisurge 2020 Innovation Challenge was virtually launched by Mr. Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui, Federal Secretary IT and Ms. Min Dowlatchahi, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative. This is a particularly relevant action, at a time when Pakistan is confronting the COVID-19 pandemic and related socio economic impacts, as well as an unprecedented Desert Locust threat. Under the Agrisurge 2020 Innovation Challenge, Ignite in collaboration with FAO, has called for innovative solutions that can revolutionize agriculture in Pakistan, and increase the resilience of food systems and help the rapid transformation of small holder agriculture systems, through 4th Industrial Wave (4IW) tech. The competition is open for all with no age limit. There will be a special cash prize for women majority teams, conditional to the solution presented. The winning team will clinch a cash prize of PKR 500,000/- while first and second runner-up teams will receive PKR 300,000/- and PKR 200,000/- respectively. The proposal submission deadline is set for July 14, 2020. Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui said that ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, Ministry of IT is consistently launching ICT centric initiatives in sectors that are critically devastated by the pandemic, may it be health, education or agriculture.

Enabling business environment vital to revive economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The experts on business and economy have termed the evidence-based policy making and establishment of a level playing field for all as imperative step to ensure a better business regulatory environment in Pakistan. They said this while sharing their views with the participants during online dialogue 'The prerequisites for a better business environment' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Wednesday. Mr. Sohail Qadri, Director

Policy at Punjab Board of Investment and Trade, on the occasion said that the Punjab government has taken several steps to ensure a better business regulatory environment. He said that evidence based legislative and policy direction setting is required for all future endeavors to ensure ease and low compliance cost for businesses. He said that the government aims to create an enabling business environment by, identifying gaps, mapping of requirements and the removal of anomalies as well as reforming the regulatory architecture and other similar measures. - APP

Drink Plenty of water: Dr. Sohail Ejaz

DNA

ATTOCK: Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Sohail Ejaz has advised the people of twin cities of attock for taking precautionary measures to beat the heat as it is very essential to drink plenty of water even if they do not feel thirsty. He said they should stay cool in summer and drink plenty of water as the temperature was rising. He said one should cover the head while going outside or working in the open places. The summer season is on its peak, he told heat stricken patients have increased with rising temperature. Cases of soar throat, tonsils were being witnessed because of using cold water who were visiting hospitals. He advised to use watermelon, juices and cold drinks to avoid the heat. Be calm, take proper rest and protect yourself from scorching heat.

Citizens file petition against Zoo admn

PESHAWAR: Various citizens of Peshawar have filed a writ petition through Ali Gohar Durrani Advocate in Peshawar High Court seeking Investigation and fixation of responsibility for what they termed negligence at Peshawar Zoo that has resulted in the deaths of various animals. They have also sought directions that the conditions at the zoo be raised to international acceptable standards and animals not suited to the environment at Peshawar be returned to their natural habitats or suitable sanctuaries, with further directions to the effect that animals that are not suited to the environment at Peshawar be prohibited from being kept at the zoo altogether.

Motorbike sales fall by 25.72 %

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three wheelers witnessed 25.72 percent decrease during the eleven months of financial year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. During the period under review, as many as 1,221,943 motorbikes and three wheelers were sold in July-May (2019-20) against the sale of 1,645,229 units in July-May (2018-19), showing a decline of 25.72 percent, according to latest data of Pakistan automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). The sale of Honda motorcycles went down by 23.81 percent from 1,028,945 units in last year to 783,863 units during current year whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also decrease by 25.07 percent from 21,549 units to 16,145 units. Similarly, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes also went down from 21,973 units to 18,191 witnessing decreased of 17.21 percent while the sale of Ravi motorbikes witnessed a sharp decline of 56.55 percent from 24,220 units to 10,522 units during the period under review.

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Fading optimism

THE early belief that South Asia may escape the worst ravages of Covid-19 as inflicted on Europe and the US has long disappeared. In fact experts warn that South Asia, from Kabul to Dhaka, is turning into a hotspot for the virus with the congested conditions in which people live, the lack of healthcare facilities, high levels of illiteracy and confusion over whether official figures are accurate adding to the problem. Certainly, the predictions that the BCG injection almost all South Asians receive soon after birth or the anti-malarial drugs they swallow would save them along with the hot weather have proved completely inaccurate. As temperatures soar, so do the number of cases. Pakistan now has more than 190,000 cases and over 3500 deaths. In India, there have been over 14,000 deaths, while the number of cases continues to rise rapidly and in Dhaka, doctors complain of packed hospitals and graveyards which have no space to accommodate more bodies. The WHO recommendation of a lockdown in Pakistan came earlier this month. Doctors suggest it should have been imposed earlier, and this may have saved us from the newest spike in cases, the deaths which come with it, the hoarding of medicines and overcrowded, overwhelmed hospitals. India had imposed one of the toughest lockdowns in the world, but was partly defeated in this effort to ensure social distancing by the millions of people left homeless and jobless with no choice but to try and walk back to their native villages, in some cases located hundreds of kilometres away. The movement of people seen in that country is estimated to have been the largest since Partition in 1947. Experts agree that in conditions such as those that prevail in South Asia, lockdowns are not easy to maintain for prolonged periods and exponential growths are equally difficult to deal with. Bangladesh did attempt a lockdown, beginning on March 26 and continuing through the end of May, and attempted to take other measures such by evacuating all its citizens from China and then reintegrating them after quarantine, but these steps were not entirely successful. Some reasons are the sheer poverty which forced people to leave their homes and the holding of Eid gatherings by some popular clerics which contributed to the spread of Covid-19. Global health experts also say the recovery rate in Bangladesh has been slow. The reasons would need further scientific study. South Asia is now caught up in the midst of a crisis. It is a unique crisis and perhaps the worst the region has ever seen. There is no immediate solution. In some cases, the opportunities for containment have been lost, and now families must watch loved ones suffer and die as the pandemic continues to take its toll and cripple economies that already are at the brink of disaster, with more than 30 percent of people living below the poverty line.



Pakistan tours England in COVID 19 fears

PAKISTAN cricket team is heading for England to play 3 tests and 3 t20's. The tour was rescheduled after the coronavirus outbreak in Europe worsened. Pakistan cricket board has now announced that the England tour will go as planned, after the corona tests of at least 10 players came positive. The PCB, in its press release, said that seven players Fakhar Zaman, Imran Khan, Kashif Bhatti, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Rizwan and Wahab Riaz tested positive on Tuesday, taking the infected players' count to 10 in total. Haris Rauf, Haider Ali and Shadab Khan had tested positive on Monday. Although Muhammad Hafeez announced that he has tested negative from a private lab just after a day his report from PCB came positive. Although most of the European countries are relaxing the restrictions and withdrawing travel bans, it is still not very wise to let the cricketers and staff travel abroad, now that their initial tests have come positive. New Zealand has cancelled its upcoming Bangladesh series, even though the Island had announced it has wiped the deadly virus off their country. The West Indies were to tour England in June but their three-Test series has been postponed. Many t20 leagues could not take place at all, even PSL couldn't finish its 2020 season, then why is PCB so desperate to make this test series happen? Why put the health of dozens of players and staff at risk? Perhaps it's just the matter of time when the England and Wales Cricket Board cancel the home series themselves. On one hand England is opening its various sectors of economy despite the fears of a second wave. On the other hand, the premier league has started its matches in empty stadiums. Museums and parks are being opened gradually. The country is in the process of resumption. Pakistan, however, is still among the countries with growing cases of coronavirus. Daily deaths are being reported along with thousands of new virus cases. The country is under the smart lockdown and experts fear that virus might be at its peak in July. It still shows no signs of slowing down. Will it be wise to tour England when thousands of stranded Pakistanis all around the world are hoping for measures to return? It's the PCB and government's decision. We only hope that all measures for players' safety will be taken and this tour should not come out in jeopardy.

OIC contact group meeting on Kashmir

Ali Sukhanver



Every day, countless Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Dalits have to pass through a grind just because they do not belong to the Hindu community. The Christian Post recently published a report which says that the early quarter of 2020 had been a very frightening period for the Christians in India

SOME people are misguided by the notion that violation of the human rights is limited only to the Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir but facts are altogether otherwise; situation is the same throughout India particularly for the Muslims and in general for all minorities. Recently the Contact Group of the OIC held a meeting to discuss the cruelties and brutalities of the Hindu extremists faced by the India Muslims.

The meeting was attended by foreign Ministers of the Azerbaijan, Niger, Pakistan, the KSA and Turkey. The member participants warned India to halt security operations against people of IO-J&K immediately, respect basic human rights, refrain from changing the demographic structure of disputed territory and settle the conflict under relevant UNSC's resolutions.

Experts are of the opinion that such meetings of the OIC have no practical value because the OIC has never succeeded in proving itself a powerful and effective organization.

Once proud of its secularism, India has become a land only for the upper-caste Hindus; others are not allowed even to breathe freely. This is purely an inhuman approach and it must have been discouraged but unfortunately the members of the UN Security Council appreciated this approach by electing India as a Non-Permanent member of the Security Council.

The UN Security Council is one of the most sacred bodies responsible for maintenance of peace and harmony all over the world. Whenever there is a situation of anarchy or civil war or

any other type of disturbance in any country, it is the UN Security Council which decides about the deployment of UN peace troops in the troubled area.

The Security Council is a very sensitive body of the United Nations, so the member-countries must be those having an unblemished reputation. In case of India, the situation is altogether otherwise.

Those who voted for India in UN Security Council's elections were well aware of mistreatment and injustice; the religious and racial minorities have to face in India. By supporting India they have done nothing but lent a helping hand to extremism.

Every day, countless Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Dalits have to pass through a grind just because they do not belong to the Hindu community. The Christian Post recently published a report which says that the early quarter of 2020 had been a very frightening period for the Christians in India.

Attacks on Christians and their places of worship in India continued to escalate in both number and severity in the early months of 2020 with 27 violent incidents reported in March alone. The report referred to a document prepared by the United Christian Forum which pointed out 56 threats against Christians as well as 78 incidents of violence against the Christian community between January and March of 2020.

The UCF said that all these attacks took place in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Ma-

harashtra, Telangana, and Goa. In most cases, the attacks were perpetrated by mobs objecting to Christians holding worship services. There are countless examples of forced conversion of Christians to Hinduism. Hindu extremists are threatening the Christians that they would have to face serious consequences if they do not change their religion.

Same horrible situation is being faced by the Sikhs and the Muslims too though they have never been an easy pill to swallow but the worst of all are the Dalits. Most of the Dalits or the Untouchables belong to the low-caste tribes.

Their fate is to face violence and forced 'social distancing' at the hands of the upper-caste Hindus. Even their shadows are not allowed to touch the people from more privileged castes but when the matter comes to the rape of a Dalit woman, the Upper-caste Hindu men try to ignore all that 'untouchability'.

On 13th January, 2020 an article of Sumanti Sen was published in The Logical Indian which said, "Four Dalit women are raped every day in India. Every time a Dalit woman or a woman from any so-called lower-caste is subjected to sexual violence, it becomes clear that the prevailing structure of caste and the status of women in society are largely responsible for the violation of their human rights."

From the Dalits to the Muslims, BJP's India has become a blazing hell for all minorities. It is simply the callousness of the world that such a 'dangerous' country has been prized with Non-Permanent membership of the Security Council.

Pandemic within Pandemic: an in-depth analysis

Asra Ayaz Ansari

Currently education system is facing major mishaps around the globe. Education institutions shutting down, online tutoring being enforced, students of each grade (school, collage and universities) are house bound, role of the teachers moved online, through an untried and unmatched spectrum. As per UNICEF reporting, 134 countries currently enforcing national closures while 38 involve implementing local cuts, affecting around 98.5% of students worldwide

2020, perceived as among the worst years in history; has brought misery but mostly catastrophic circumstances to the people of this world. One after another situation worsens and people of this world suffer a great deal. Deadly virus, violence, uprising in suicides, unexpected insect infestations, economic disparities, education system dysfunction as well as mental health crisis sprang up.

Covid-19 Pandemic

It all began when the deadly virus first encountered by China in 2019, spread to the world. Covid-19 name was given to an airborne virus which transmits through contact with an infected person directly or indirect-

ly. In the early months of 2020, indescribable rapid transmission of such a viral disease managed to generate international headlines. The fatal virus took hundreds and thousands precious lives and it still is incurable. Globally almost 462k individuals lost the battle of their life with recovery rate of 4.27 million so far, which makes Covid-19 a pandemic. The second layer of this virus attacked in March, 2020; creating more panic in the world. Virus displays no genetic variation, suggesting that perhaps the outflow occurrence has strong manifestations as the virus may stay unidentified within the human body for so long.

Education System Dysfunctioning

Currently education system is facing major mishaps around the globe. Education institutions shutting down, online tutoring being enforced, students of each grade (school, collage and universities) are house bound, role of the teachers moved online, through an untried and unmatched spectrum. As per UNICEF reporting, 134 countries currently enforcing national closures while 38 involve implementing local cuts, affecting around 98.5% of students worldwide. Cambridge International University announced cancellation of Cambridge IGCSE, O' level, A's and A' level, AICE Diploma and Cambridge Pre-U examinations throughout all states for the May / June 2020 sequence. First country to take this initiative was China in 26 January, 2020 when they extended the spring festival holidays. On 13 March, national governments in 49 countries announced or implemented school closures, including 39 countries closing schools nationwide and 22 countries closing schools locally.

Economic Disparities

World economy has been a hot topic every single time something big hits the world. Currently during the pandemic situation world is facing major economic drawbacks. The world's largest economies such as United States, China, UK, Germany, France, Italy, and Japan as well as are mostly on brink of collapse. In top of that, financial sectors of the economy were hammered and fuel prices dropped like a stone. Within only a week 3.3 million Ameri-

cans adapted joblessness and also another 6.6 million quickly started seeking employment a week afterward. Several economic and financial analysts have even cautioned about the deteriorating state of the financial system. Consequently, the human expense of the Covid-19 contagion, it is immeasurable, so all countries ought to cooperate and coordinate in order to protect human life forms and also to constrain economic harm.

Unexpected Insect Infestations

The world is not just struggling against pandemic (Covid-19), because a new way of devastation also faced in the form of Locust Attack. Locusts are an omnivorous however migration pest able to migrate in massive numbers for hundreds of meters that quickly pass geographic borders. It's often found in the Middle East, as well as in Africa and Asia, and infests approximately 60 countries. Officials announced that Locust first attacked India taking over regions like Northwestern Rajasthan, Punjab, Western Gujarat and Central Madhya Pradesh and to control the attack Britain provide 60 sprayers to help India in Locust attack. From there the huge numbers flew from across Pakistan around 30 April. Growing one-square-kilometer horde comprises up to 40 million organisms and flies quickly, often up to 400 kilometers (248 miles) per day. The whole country appears under the risk of an assault by tropical locust however about 37% region of Pakistan is highly susceptible to the attack, which comprises 60% area of Balochistan, 25% area of Sindh and 15% area of Punjab.

Violence

Pandemic and insect infestation is not the only cause of panic. Recently news of George Floyd's death came, putting a question mark on authorities. A brutal act of inhumanity where a white Minneapolis Officer presurized a black man's neck so hard that he couldn't breathe and lost his life, thus creating a cyclone of violence in the United States. Protests broke out demanding justice for Floyd's death, which even made the state of President of United States Donald Trump miserable; provoking a flight or fright situation to leave or stay. In Middle East, Ac-

tion on Armed Violence (AOAV) registered 1,322 fatalities from 243 explosive violence incidents all over the globe which accounted almost 50% of civilian casualties by using 41% of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in April, 2020. Not just that but also indications of domestic violence have reportedly increased this year.

Mental Health Crisis and Suicide

The misfortunes of the prevailing year are not only decreasing physical fitness but also endangering mental wellbeing. Not only Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Sleep Deprivation/Insomnia or Panic Attacks but also creating Eating Disorders, Obesity, Phobias and major Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD); specialists have also noticed the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress in Individuals. The recent circumstances expose different sides of psychological implications like: Mood swings, Aggression, Over-Thinking, Loneliness and even causing Anti Social Behavior in Individuals. American civilization suffering from mental health crises, which is reported approximately 100% increase in April as compared to last year. During the Covid-19 maximum in China, half of the recorded depression, 45% anxiety and 34% insomnia were detected. Worst case scenario of 2020, is the massive rate of suicidal attempts and death. A recent research conducted inside an international journal reported a high prevalence of suicides among adolescents, proposing that nearly 60% had suicidal tendencies, demonstrating a need to sustain mental healthcare support for students only at level of control.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of year till now, 2020 has put many thoughts in consideration which in fact brings out the best and worst part of human race. The current situation's unimaginable occurrence of events not only bring loss to one's motivation to move and be productive but also question the authorities that what measures are being taken to prevent these miseries to spread more. Precautionary measure have been taken but by far nothing seems to be in control which makes it even more hard for public to survive in current situation.

Briefs

ADB retains top spot in aid transparency index

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) retained its first place ranking in the 2020 Aid Transparency Index (ATI), an independent measurement of aid transparency released at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. In the index, spearheaded by British nongovernment organization Publish What You Fund, ADB's sovereign portfolio is ranked in the "very good" transparency category of the ATI with the top score of 98, according to a press release issued by the ADB. "I take great pride in ADB's first position in an index that is playing a key role in helping to promote greater transparency and openness among international agencies," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "ADB has continuously worked to improve the disclosure of its aid data in terms of quality and scope. Our top ranking reflects the dedication of staff, across the organization, to ensure adherence to aid transparency standards." - APP

US hits record 39,000 cases in one day

NEW YORK: The United States has seen a major surge in coronavirus cases, weeks after many areas reopened their economies. Seven states, mainly in the south and west, and including Texas, California and Arizona, reported record increases on Wednesday with the nationwide tally rising by more than 38,600. Texas, Florida and California all reported record increases, with 7,100, 5,550 and 5,510 new cases, respectively, over the preceding 24 hours. The number of cases worldwide is expected to reach 10 million next week, the World Health Organization has said, warning that the virus has yet to peak in the Americas. More than 9.4 million people around the world have been diagnosed with COVID-19, with over 4.7 million have recovered, and nearly 483,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Ahsan slams govt policies

ISLAMABAD (DNA): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Member of National Assembly (MNA) Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday has expressed concern over devastating country's economy due to wrong decisions of incumbent government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Speaking in the House, the PML-N leader suggested that national effort can revive the economy as no single party can tackle the current challenges. He said that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is continuously decreasing from past two years. Economic targets set for the next year are unrealistic, he told. Ahsan Iqbal further stated that we need to invest in science and technology to take forward the country.

Court acquits Raja Pervez

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court acquitted former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in the Rental Power Plant reference on Thursday. The accountability court hearing the reference against Ashraf and other suspects had reserved its judgment in the case during the last hearing. The court announced that it had accepted the former prime minister's acquittal plea in the case. Ashraf was charged by NAB on three counts in the Rs22 billion scam. The ex-premier has maintained throughout that he did not cause any loss to the national exchequer and had not indulged in any corruption. - APP

SCO Secy General calls for collective efforts to fight drug trafficking

The priority for SCO is to curb drug trafficking from Afghanistan. Our states are forming a single barrier to fighting the global drug aggression, which threatens not only them, but also much more distant countries in Europe, North America, Africa, Australia, and Oceania: Vladimir Norov

DNA

BEIJING: The Secretary-General of SCO Vladimir Norov has said that 26 June is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The establishment of this remarkable date on 7 December 1987 by the decision of the 42nd session of the UN General Assembly was an important step in securing the world drug problem on the global agenda. This day is of special importance for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He said the problem of not medical consumption of drugs and psychotropic substances becomes increasingly relevant. According to the World report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for 2019, the number of persons using drugs was more than 270 million people at the age of 15-64 years (5.5% of the world population) that is 30% higher in comparison with 2009. The number of consumers of opioids alone grew up by 1.5 times between 2016-2017, reaching 53.4 million people. The income of the shadow market of drugs is estimated by about US \$ 320 billion. The threatening dynamics of drug trafficking and drug abuse in recent years have had a profound negative impact on virtually all spheres of society and the State, undermining the institutions, social foundations, and especially the gene pool of nations. In the context of unprecedented openness of the modern world, when trade, economic and humanitarian ties between states, regions, enterprises and even individuals have been "streamed", transnational criminal communities involved in the illegal production, smuggling and trade in drugs have also begun to take advantage of these opportunities.

Therefore, the way to a successful fight against drug trafficking lies not only in improving the efficiency of law enforcement structures but also in consolidating multilateral efforts of states through the exchange of experience, information, harmonization of legislation, national strategies, and approaches to solving this problem. At present, it is safe to say that SCO is one of the authoritative regional associations involved in anti-drug issues. We have a common legal and regulatory framework and a flexible institutional framework for cooperation that covers all aspects of the anti-drug policy without exception, from joint operational and investigative activities to the implementation of a whole range of preventive, medical, and rehabilitation measures. The three-tier mechanism of regular consultations of the competent bodies implements the updated SCO Anti-Drug Strategy and the Programme of Action for its implementation. Thanks to their joint work, up to 40% of the opium drug drugs intercepted throughout Eurasia are withdrawn from the illegal trade. At the same time, the interaction of the SCO member states on the anti-drug track is not standing still and is systematically adapting to new emerging challenges. This is especially noticeable against the background of the changes that are taking place in the illicit drug market under the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic. Above all, forced restrictive measures imposed by states have increased the already growing share of digital communication in society, which has consequently affected the channels for the sale and acquisition of drugs. At the same time, practical responses to new risks are being developed. Particularly, more than 10 tons of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have been



detained as a result of the last two SCO "Web" anti-drug operations aimed, inter alia, at interrupting the supply of synthetic drugs and countering the use of virtual payment systems in the drug business. The priority for SCO is to curb drug trafficking from Afghanistan. Our states are forming a single barrier to fighting the global drug aggression, which threatens not only them, but also much more distant countries in Europe, North America, Africa, Australia, and Oceania. Interaction with our Afghan partners is being developed, including through mutual participation in relevant events. At the same time, we are recording new trends in illegal drug smuggling. In particular, the suspension of international land and air traffic leads to a greater concentration of drug production within domestic markets, as well as to a shift of drug trafficking southwards to

wards shipping routes. In the first half of the year, Indian and Pakistani law enforcement agencies detained large quantities of drugs entering through ports. Also, drug trafficking from the Golden Triangle region, including India and China, continued. In this regard, we see prospects for expanding the horizons of our cooperation in the SCO-ASEAN-UNODC format. I must stress that the SCO member states support the inviolability of the three UN anti-drug conventions, considering them as the cornerstone of the modern system of international drug control. We proceed from the imperative of strict compliance with their provisions, including regarding the use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances solely for medical and scientific purposes. At the same time, we regret to note that the current trends towards the legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes contribute to the erosion of established international anti-drug law. We fundamentally oppose calls for the legalization of drugs in violation of existing international legal obligations and fundamental human rights, including the right to life and health care. We recall the importance of implementing the SCO concept adopted in 2018 on the prevention of the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to reduce the scale of the consequences of their illicit trafficking on public health and the security of society and the State. We intend to improve medical and rehabilitation care for people suffering from drug addiction, to carry out joint research and development work in the field of narcology, to develop new methods of chemical and toxicological analysis, and to improve methods of treatment for people suffering from drug addiction.

Brotherly ties between Pak and Saudi Arabia necessary: Ghulam Sarwar

RAJA FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan has emphasized the necessity of strengthening the brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan received the Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to Pakistan Nawaf Saeed A. Al Malkiy at his office in the National Assembly. Ghulam Sarwar Khan acknowledged the effective measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to prevent the spread of Covid-19. He expressed his desire to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia especially with respect to aviation, in the strenuous Covid-19 circumstances. Ghulam Sarwar Khan and Nawaf Saeed A. Al Malkiy agreed to increase collaboration between the Aviation Industry of the two countries in order to provide better ser-



services to the people of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Al Malkiy apprised the Federal Minister of the current status of the spread of Corona Virus in Saudi Arabia. He said, "Lockdown in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been completely lifted with strict

implementation of SOPs". Ghulam Sarwar Khan told ambassador that the government of Pakistan are not laid off due to the Corona Virus as has been done around the world. Nawaf Saeed A. Al Malkiy also stated that the government of KSA has also not laid off any employee of the state airline due to Corona Virus. Nawaf Saeed A. Al Malkiy told Ghulam Sarwar Khan that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to limit the number of Hajjis to ten thousand keeping in view the pandemic of Corona Virus. He said that the government of KSA has allowed special quota of around 500-600 to the children of shuhda of the Army of KSA, medical professionals who have served to fight Covid-19 and military personnel who have been injured on official duty. The remaining seats will be open for the foreigners already working in their respective embassies in Saudi Arabia.

Chinese capital reports 13 new local COVID-19 cases

Cao Cong, deputy director of health committee in Fengtai District, and Yang Jijun, deputy head of Huaxiang Township in Fengtai District

ISLAMABAD: The Beijing Health Commission said on Thursday that 13 new COVID-19 cases, all locally transmitted, were recorded on Wednesday, raising the total infections related to a local market cluster to 269 since June 11, when the first case was detected. Those 13 cases were reported in two districts in Beijing: nine in Fengtai

and four in Daxing. There were no reports of suspected cases or asymptomatic cases in the Chinese capital during the period, it added. One case was registered in neighbouring Hebei province. The infected person in Hebei has had close contact with a patient related to Beijing's Xinfadi market cluster, according to local health authorities.

Meanwhile, according to the municipal authorities, three officials have been punished over dereliction of duty during the containment of COVID-19 in the capital city. Jia Qi, deputy director of the market supervision administration in Beijing's Fengtai District, was removed from the intra-Party post and received administrative dis-

missal, the city's discipline inspection and supervision authority said in a statement. Cao Cong, deputy director of the health committee in the Fengtai District, and Yang Jijun, deputy head of Huaxiang Township in the Fengtai District, were given serious intra-Party warnings as well as administrative demotions. - APP

Eiffel Tower reopens

PARIS: Tourists and Parisians will from Thursday again be able to admire the view of the French capital from the Eiffel Tower after a three-month closure due to the coronavirus - but only if they take the stairs. Visitors to the city's most famous monument won't be able to take the lifts until July 1, to ensure a safe distance between people to limit infection risk. The very top of the iconic monument will remain off limits to the public for now. - APP

Businessmen want tax refund

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Business community Thursday demanded immediate payment of pending income tax refund to save them financial crunch and bankruptcy. Talking to media here today Mian Faiz Bukhsh, most senior member of tax bar said it is very unfortunate that most of the times FBR and federal Government do not fulfil their promises made with the business community and this practice is continued in crucial times even in the wake of Coronavirus. He further stated that under the instructions of honPrime Minister FBR asked the covid stricken tax payers to apply for due refunds. The RTOs were instructed to forward the amount of refunds to the

extent which were verifiable through the system and some cases were sent to FBR while others are lying with the RTOs and still are on hold till further instructions from FBR. The business community mostly manufacturers are under agony and facing extreme difficulties because the callous behaviour of FBR inspite of the clear cut instructions by the Prime Minister Mian Faiz Bukhsh hoped that lawful due refund amount of the tax payers will be released soon for the sake of justice and to save the taxpayers from bankruptcy. It is pertinent to mention that these amounts are refundable from the FBR and if these payments are made to the taxpayers it is not an extra favour rather the FBR will be doing which should have been done long ago.

Sheikh Rasheed tests negative

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid tested negative for the coronavirus on Thursday, after he had undergone self-isolation for two weeks since contracting the infection. The minister was under treatment at the Combined Military Hospital and was

discharged from the hospital today after the negative test results. Rashid tested positive for COVID-19 on June 8, the railways ministry had reported. According to a statement by the ministry, Rashid was showing no symptoms of the virus. However, he had undergone self-isolation for two weeks.

Rouhani urges implementation of Iran-Pak accords

The President emphasized on deepening of Iran-Pakistan relations in all areas, expressing hope that the border crossings between the two countries would reopen after they were closed due to coronavirus outbreak

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's President Dr. Hassan Rouhani has called for reopening of Iran-Pakistan borders and urged implementation of bilateral agreements. President Rouhani made the remarks while receiving a copy of the credentials of new Pakistani ambassador to Tehran Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi. He emphasized on deepening of Iran-Pakistan relations in all areas, expressing hope that the border crossings between the two countries would reopen after they were closed due to coronavirus outbreak.

Mentioning his meetings and calls with Pakistan's President and Prime Minister, President Rouhani called on implementation of bilateral agreements, saying that this would help to the expansion of economic ties between Tehran and Islamabad. Pakistan's new Ambassador to Tehran, after submitting his credentials to President Rouhani, said that ties with Iran is of great importance to Pakistan as all Pakistani officials confirm the fact. Qureshi said that Pakistan would continue to support Tehran in the international arena, as it considers Iran's security as its own.



LHC issues notice to NAB

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday issued notices to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for July 13 on a petition filed by PML-N MNA Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha challenging call-up notices by the bureau in an assets beyond means inquiry. The bench comprising Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi and Justice Sardar Ahmad Naem heard the petition filed by the MNA. A counsel on behalf of the petitioner argued before the bench that the bureau had launched an inquiry against his client on charges of amassing assets beyond means. He submitted that the bureau repeatedly issued call-up notices to his client without providing him copies of any complaint or material against him. - APP