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Pakistan, Indonesia ties discussed at webinar: Iwan S. Amri

Stranded Pakistanis to return from India

Australia helping Pak fight locust: Geoffrey Shaw



Briefs

Stranded Pakistanis to return from India

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A group of 82 Pakistanis stranded in India due to COVID-19 travel restrictions will return to Pakistan on July 9, the Foreign Office said on Tuesday.

The Indian government on Monday asked local authorities to assist the movement of Pakistani nationals to the Attari-Wagah border crossing from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The Pakistani government has also directed Rangers to help repatriate Indian citizens via Wagah, while following "necessary health security protocols." Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said: "We are expecting our stranded nationals to return on July 9." She added that 114 Indian nationals would be repatriated to India that day, while 82 Pakistanis would cross back into Pakistan. About 500 Pakistanis stranded in India have returned home through the Attari-Wagah crossing since March 20, according to the Foreign Office. It said the process will continue until all remaining nationals have returned. "In these extraordinary times defined by the pandemic, Pakistan believes that international cooperation and collective action as one big human family is the need of the hour," Farooqui said.

120 new accountability courts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday has announced to establish 120 accountability courts for early conclusion of pending corruption cases. According to details, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed has directed to wind up the under-hearing cases within three months. The purpose of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law will fade away if the cases face delay, the top judge added. Justice Gulzar also expressed resentment over ineffective performance of anti-graft watchdog and warned of closing its courts and declaring its law as unconstitutional. The SC has strictly ordered to appoint judges in five accountability courts and speed up the proceedings. Subsequently, the CJP has summoned attorney general, prosecutor general and law secretary in next hearing and also sought suggestions from NAB chairman regarding unsolved cases.

Pak grants 2nd Consular access to Kulbhushan

Pakistan has taken all the steps regarding Kulbhushan case in the light of International Court of Justice's decision

DNA / SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday announced to grant second consular access to retired Indian Navy officer and spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was found involved in several terrorist activities in Pakistan. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Additional Attorney General Irfan said Jadhav has been offered to meet his father on humanitarian grounds, adding that the Indian spy has refused to file review petition against his sentence. Pakistan has taken all the steps regarding Kulbhushan case in the light of International Court of Justice's (ICJ) decision. Our law allows to review the decision but Kulbhushan has refused to avail this right, he told. Ahmed Irfan further said that Pakistan is well informed about its duties and ready to act as per ICJ instructions.

India invited to file review

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday that that Pakistan has invited India to file review and reconsideration petition after refusal by Commander Jadhav to do so. The Spokesperson elaborated that mercy petition in Commander Jadhav case is a separate process that has nothing to do with the review and reconsideration. The review and reconsideration petition can be filed by (a) Commander Jadhav himself, (b) legally authorized representative, or (c) a consular officer of the Indian High Commission.

Pakistan, Spain officials discuss various issues

Foreign Secretary highlighted Pakistan's concern on temporary suspension of PIA flights into EU as follow up to EASA's recent decision

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood held a video conference with Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ms. Cristina Gallach on Thursday. They exchanged views about subjects including response to Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral relations, close cooperation in multilateral fora, and regional situation. The Foreign Secretary extended condolences over the loss of precious lives in Spain due to Covid-19 and commended Spain's efforts to contain the virus and steps to revive the economy. He briefed his Spanish counterpart on the measures be-



ing taken by the government of Pakistan, with central focus on saving lives, securing livelihoods, and stimulating the economy. The two sides exchanged views about the socio-economic effects of the Pandemic. The Foreign Secretary apprised his Spanish counterpart of Prime Minister Imran Khan's domestic stimulus package as well as his call for "Global Initiative on Debt Relief" for developing coun-

tries. The Foreign Secretary expressed appreciation for Spain's support for the initiative both in EU and G20. The Foreign Secretary highlighted Pakistan's concern on temporary suspension of PIA flights into EU as follow up to EASA's recent decision and called for its review. He underlined that all necessary steps were being taken by the government to ensure the highest

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PM for dealing with fallout of coronavirus

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has called for a joint strategy to deal with the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and to soften impact of the virus especially on the labourers. Addressing an online summit organised by the International Labour Organisation on coronavirus, the prime minister said the labour class has been the most impacted due to the coronavirus and the lockdowns imposed around the world. "This is what makes this summit so important," PM Imran noted. Speaking about the efforts done by his government to stem the spread of the virus and to make sure the labour force of the country does not

go hungry, the prime minister said, "We decided that the government needed to transfer cash to the informal part of the labour. Those who were registered, we asked the employers to keep them employed. But the ones who were not, we helped them through Ehsaas programme." "Never in the country's history was so much money transferred to so many people in a short time," he remarked. "This saved us from some of the worst aspects of the crisis. Unlike in India, where they imposed a curfew which pushed people into deeper poverty." The prime minister continued, "No one is sure when the coronavirus will end." - DNA



ISLAMABAD: President of AJK Sardar Masood Khan and Ambassador of China Yao Jing in a meeting. - DNA

Army chief briefed about tribale areas

DNA

PESHAWAR: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Corps Headquarters Peshawar today. COAS was given detailed briefing on prevailing security situation, progress on development works & socio economic uplift in Tribal Districts. COAS appreciated improved security situation and measures for better border management including fencing. COAS lauded security forces in assisting civil administration for fight against COVID-19; particularly the effective containment efforts. Earlier, on arrival at Corps Headquarters, COAS was received by Commander Peshawar Corps Lieutenant General Nauman Mahmood.

Educational institutions may re-open in Sept

The education minister had added that the education ministry, through UNICEF, was in consultation with those countries which had opened schools under various SOPs

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Education institutes across the country will reopen in the first week of September; media reported on Wednesday. According to sources, the decision was made in a meeting presided by the Federal Education Minister Shafiqat Mehmood along with the provincial education ministers. Sources said the meeting

decided to reopen schools with all the COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place. "Schools will be reopened after taking a look at the coronavirus situation in the country. The final decision to reopen schools will be taken by the National Command and Control Centre," sources added. Last month, Mahmood had said the government was considering opening schools with implementation of SOPs and sugges-

tions had been sought from the seminaries (Madaris) and private institutions of all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. The education minister had added that the education ministry, through UNICEF, was in consultation with those countries which had opened schools under various SOPs. He added that consultations were also being held with the UNICEF on the policy of the government.

Trade deficit registers decline

Exports stood at \$22.958 billion in the previous fiscal year 2018-19, however, they declined by 6.8% in the fiscal year 2019-20 compared to 2018-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's trade deficit shrank to \$23.18 billion during the last fiscal year against \$31.8 billion in 2018-19, registering a 27% decline, data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed. According to the data, exports fetched \$21.387 billion in the last fiscal year ending on June 30, 2020, against the desired target of \$24 billion. Exports stood at \$22.958 billion in the previous fiscal year 2018-19, however, they declined by 6.8% in the fiscal year 2019-20 compared to 2018-19. In the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, it was projected that the exports would decline by \$4 to \$5 billion in the last fiscal year. The imports stood at \$44 billion in the last fiscal year

2019-20 compared to \$54.7 billion, registering a decline by 18.6%. The import bill got compressed owing to tariff and non-tariff barriers as well as reduced oil prices in the last quarter of the fiscal year 2019-20. The overall trade balance decreased to \$23.183 billion in the fiscal year 2019-20 compared to \$31.805 billion, registering a decline by 27.11%. The exports stood at \$1.592 billion in June 2020 compared to \$1.703 billion in the same month of the last year 2019, registering a decline of 6.52%. The imports were standing at \$3.715 billion in June 2020 compared to \$4.353 billion, registering a decline of 14.66%. The trade deficit in June 2020 stood at negative \$2.123 billion compared to \$2.650 billion, registering a decline by 19.89%.

Australia helping Pak fight locust



Sharing expertise is a key part of our agricultural cooperation

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Geoffrey Shaw has said that they are helping Pakistan fight its locust threat. In an expert's webinar, the Australian Plague Locust Commission shared with Flag of Pakistan. In a Tweet he said their approach was to protect farms and the environment from locusts. Sharing expertise is a key part of our agricultural cooperation with Pakistan, the high commissioner added.

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Export opportunities for PPE's must be enhanced, says Nafees Zakaria - Page 08

Pakistan, Indonesia ties discussed at webinar

Lion Air of Indonesia wants to start flights from Pakistan and negotiations with the aviation officials are already underway. Lion Air wants to start from three cities of Pakistan. The plan is still on the table. Let us hope that negotiations between the Lion Air officials and Pakistani aviations officials make some early headway

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Though, COVID 19 continues to play havoc with human lives and global economies, nevertheless, simultaneously the damage control efforts are also in full swing to minimize the devastating socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. To contain and fight off the financial downturn the friendly nations through consultations are identifying ways for mutual cooperation for the enhanced sustainable economic activities between them. These views were expressed by Ambassador of Indonesia Iwan S Amri during a Webinar with leading Pakistani journalists. Denny Tri Basuki, Counsellor at the Embassy moderated the webinar. The Indonesian embassy held a me-

dia webinar inviting leading journalist of the country to express their views about bilateral relations between the two countries and as to how this relationship can further be strengthened. Both Pakistan and Indonesia enjoy excellent relations. These relations witnessed remarkable improvement in the last few years, especially ever since the incumbent Ambassador Iwan S Amri took charge of the office. Since then bilateral relations are constantly on the move. Iwan S. Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia further said it was a unique interaction between the Indonesia embassy and the media fraternity on the issue of COVID-19 and assured to continue such interactions. He said the Indonesian embassy highly valued warm ties with the friends in



Pakistani media and acknowledged the role they have been playing in promoting the goodwill between the people of the two countries. Therefore, the prime objective of this meeting is to maintain cordial relations and to discuss in light manner the COVID 19 pandemic socio-economic impacts on the society. The ambassador told the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad had also organized a virtual meeting with the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) which is headquartered in the Pakistani economic hub of Karachi. It represents country's leading Corporate and Business Groups and as an advocacy forum work to improve the general business environment of the country. Through its research projects, it also provides valuable input to the Government of Pakistan for bilateral agreements such as the

Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and other countries. During the course of discussion with the PBC he had highlighted the current issues concerning the bilateral economic cooperation between the countries and stressed on the significance of fostering the sustainable bilateral trade relations. "Indonesia and Pakistan must work together for the sustainable trade relations between them," Ambassador Iwan Amri observed. The Envoy believed that the concerted communication and consultations with the various stakeholders in Pakistan will certainly build greater confidence and improve environment for the both countries to uplift business, economic and other aspects of the bilateral ties. Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Nausheen Hamid urges nation to follow SOPs

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of National Health Services Dr Nausheen Hamid Wednesday urged the public to follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha to contain the spread of COVID-19. The government has issued guidelines and SOPs and it is the responsibility of people to comply with these guidelines in order to stay safe from COVID-19, she said while speaking in a Radio Pakistan's current Affair program.

She feared that unfortunately, if people do not comply with the SOPs, we might see another peak of COVID-19. "We should take care of the poor and needy people on the occasion of Eid," she added. "We understand the importance of socializing and meeting family and friends during special occasion of Eid, but due to the exceptional circumstances, let's share the sense of responsibility for everyone's safety", she added. Eid-ul-Azha is coming and previous surge in number of cases was because of Eid-ul-Fitr when people went for shopping and did not care about the guidelines", she said. — APP

Pak-USA trade surplus decrease by 12.16%: SBP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's goods and services trade with United State of America (USA) witnessed decrease of 12.16 percent in trade surplus during the eleven months of ongoing fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to USA were recorded at \$3588.819 million during July-May (2019-20) against exports of \$3727.390 million during July-May (2018-19), showing a decline of 3.71 percent, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed decline of 6.77 percent in eleven months, from \$22.457 billion to \$20.936 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from USA into the country during the period were recorded at \$2050.170 million against \$1975.687 million last year, showing an increase of 3.76 percent in eleven months of this year. The overall imports into the country decreased by 18.72 percent, from \$47.831 billion to \$38.877 billion, according to the data. The trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$1538.649 million against \$1751.703 million during same period of last year, showing decline of 12.16 percent, the data revealed. — APP

IT export remittances surge to 20.75%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled Services (ITeS) export remittances comprising of computer services and call center services surged to US \$1.11 billion at growth rate of 20.75% over the first 11 months of Financial Year 2019-20 (July-May), in comparison to US \$917.875 million during the same period in Financial Year 2018-19. According to performance report of Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), an organization under Ministry of IT and Telecommunication IT Industry has been a star in Pakistan's economy and has achieved positive year on year growth as a result of strong government support, skilled entrepreneurs and a talented workforce. The Ministry of IT is taking all possible steps to ensure sustainable growth of Pakistan's IT Industry and to ensure close coordination with the IT industry and associated stakeholders. The generous incentives from the government, and various projects to enhance capacity and capability of the IT Industry have resulted in strong industry growth rates. Incentives to the industry include zero income tax on IT & ITeS exports till June 2025, tax breaks for PSEB registered IT start-ups for 3 years, up to 100% foreign ownership of IT & ITeS companies, up to 100% repatriation of profits for foreign IT & ITeS investors, tax holiday for venture capital funds till 2024 among other incentives. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mahmood chairing the 18th meeting of Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference to discuss prospects of opening educational institutes in the country. — APP

Pakistan utilising less than 42% of its testing capacity

The largest drop in diagnosing samples was witnessed in Punjab, where only 7,659 tests were carried out on Tuesday, 44% of the province's capacity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ministry, which provides daily statistics of the outbreak, noted that on July 7 Pakistan carried out 21,951 tests across the country, which is only

30% of its total testing capacity. As per the National Command Operation Center (NCOC), Pakistan has a testing output of 71,780 tests per day for the virus at its 133 laboratories. A further breakdown of the testing numbers highlights that Pakistan

tested its highest coronavirus samples to date on June 19, of over 31,000. Since then, the test numbers have dropped daily, tumbling to its lowest on June 29, of only 20,930 tests. While on other days, Paki-

stan utilized between 29 to 42%

of its testing capacity across the country. The largest drop in diagnosing samples was witnessed in Punjab, where only 7,659 tests were carried out on Tuesday, 44% of the province's capacity. Testing in Sindh also slid, falling

to 9,317 tests per day, compared to the previous day when it tested over 12,000 specimens. The province's testing capacity has continued to fluctuate between over 13,000 in late June to more than 9,000 tests per day on Tuesday.

'FBR harassing people who availed amnesty scheme'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the business community and former President ICCI Shahid Rasheed Butt on Wednesday said mafia gangs have become a threat to the system and masses which must be controlled. Government should stop taking notice on every move of mafia and take stern action to stop them from fleecing masses, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that poultry products have become more expensive in summer as compared to the last winter; therefore, its exports should be banned and smuggling should be stopped to stabilize prices in the market.

He noted that poultry lords have manipulated the market to bankrupt small poultry farmers and started looting masses. Eggs which were available at Rs80 and 90 per dozen in the last winter are now being sold for Rs130 to 150 per dozen while the chicken is being sold at Rs230 to Rs260 which was almost Rs110 few months back. He said that inaction against wheat, sugar, pharma, IPP, LPG, petroleum and other mafia groups have emboldened the poultry mafia that has added to the problems of masses facing high inflation. Others mafias are also initiated their activities as they are sure that they will evade any meaningful administrative and legal action which

is evident from shortage of wheat, flour and tomatoes in different cities. The business leader said that some FBR officials have started harassing people who declared their hidden assets in the tax amnesty scheme announced in 2018 which is a violation of Voluntary Declaration of Domestic Assets Act of 2018. The government should step in immediately and restore order before further erosion of its credibility takes place, he demanded. He said that the move may not improve tax collection but it will widen the gulf between taxpayers and tax collectors resulting in the failure of tax targets for the ongoing fiscal.

Sindh CM slams Ali Zaidi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The war of words between the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf after Uzair Baloch's JIT report continues as Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has hit out at the 'irresponsible' behaviour of a federal minister over the report. "There was a lot of irresponsible behaviour on the part of [PTI MNA] Ali Zaidi, who himself is admitting that the current report is missing the required signatures," said Shah. CM Murad was responding to questions put to him by media persons outside the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) office in Islamabad, where he appeared before a combined investigation team of the bureau for questioning in a graft case. The Sindh CM also questioned the authenticity of the report. "He claims that someone dropped off the report at his house on a motorcycle," he said with a chuckle. "I think, and this is my opinion, that they want to help the culprits." Shah seemed almost in disbelief at the whole situation. "Nobody shows such irresponsible behaviour in normal circumstances, let alone in such an important case," added the Sindh CM. "He said yesterday that there are six signatures even though there are seven needed. It does not suit a federal minister, an MNA, someone who is a political and sensible man, to be acting in such an irresponsible manner," said Murad. He scoffed at the manner in which Zaidi received the report and said if he had told everyone how he got it from a random man on a motorcycle initially, no one would have taken him seriously.

Chairman Senate, NA Speaker enquire after FM's health

ISLAMABAD: As Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi continues carries on with his quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19, wishes for his early recovery continue to pour in from around. The latest parliamentarians who enquired after the health of Foreign Minister Qureshi and conveyed their prayers were Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser, Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandiwala. The Foreign Minister thanked them all for their warm wishes and prayers. — APP

Anti-locust action completed over 2.606 million acres

ISLAMABAD: The anti-locust operations have been carried out in 10,545.51 square kilometers, approximately 2.606 million acres of land across 32 affected districts of the country in order to eradicate the locust swarms. As many as 1,028 joint teams comprising over 5,336 people took part in the anti-locust operations across the country, according to details released by the National Locust Control Center (NLCC). The joint teams of the Ministry of National Food Security, provincial agriculture departments and the Pakistan Army were conducting a comprehensive survey and control operation against the locusts in different districts and so far 400,504.7 square kilometers (90.89) million acres had been surveyed. About 5,336 people and 676 vehicles took part in the anti-locust operation, the NLCC data said.

In the Punjab province, about 250,735 acres had been surveyed during last 24 hours and control operation was performed over effected areas. More than 2,554 people and 349 vehicles took part in the exercise, it added. So far the survey was completed over an area of approximately 20.95 million acres and anti-locust operation carried out on 1,131,347 acres. In Sindh province the survey was conducted over 100,414 acres and the locust presence was confirmed in six districts, while anti-locust operation was carried out on 2,634 acres. More than 114 vehicles and 627 people, including the Pakistan Army personnel, participated in the campaign. So far, the survey was completed on 20.05 million acres of land in Sindh, with locust control operation carried out on area of 168,674 acres. — APP

NCOC forms body to prevent dis-information

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Wednesday formed a committee under chairmanship of Interior Minister Brig (Retd) Ejaz Ahmed Shah to prevent spread of dis-information and fake news about COVID-19 pandemic on social media. The committee will prepare legal framework to prevent and counter dis-information and suggest action against those involved in spreading false information about the pandemic. Representatives of ministries of Information and Broadcasting, National Health Regulation and ISPR and other related departments will also be part of

the committee. The first meeting of the committee will be held in few days to finalize modalities and measures for preventing dis-information about COVID-19 on social media. The NCOC panel was also apprised the United Nations has also made an appeal to stop spreading dis-information about COVID-19. The NCOC meeting chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Asad Umar reviewed comprehensive death data analysis, Epi Curve Chart and, update on committee countering COVID-19 related dis-information and provincial visit of NCOC team. Speaking on the occasion,

Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said that NCOC would also visit all provincial headquarters besides holding meetings there in order to further enhance coordination among NCOC and provinces. He directed for preparing a comprehensive scheduled in this regard. The minister said they would change the current crisis into opportunity to bring further improvement in health sector of the country. The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar, Interior Minister Brig (Retd) Ejaz Ahmed Shah, focal person for COVID-19 Dr Faisal Sultan and other senior officials.

UN may meet League of Nations' fate: Shehryar

"The illegal act of fascist Indian regime has pushed the region towards a nuclear war. If the world fails to intervene now, the implications of a nuclear conflict would go beyond region," he said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Parliament's Special Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi on Wednesday said that India's unilateral action of annexing Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK) was in blatant violation of United Nations charter and it may trigger a new conflict in the region. Addressing a seminar on New Domicile Law in the IOJK, Shehryar Afridi said that India's unilateral action of annexing IOJK through military force had already triggered a new border conflict in Ladakh and this may jeopardize the regional stability. "India's actions are tantamount to jeopardizing the world peace as China, Pakistan and India, the three countries who have a claim on Kashmir, are nuclear-capable countries. India can't get away with Kashmir occupation," he added. He said that the Indian occupation of Kashmir had sent a mes-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Shehryar Khan Afridi addressing during Kashmir Conference organized by Jammu and Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International (JKSDMI) at NPC. — DNA

sage of 'might is right' to the world and if the United Nations fails to intervene, its fate would

not be different from League of Nations which had failed to resolve disputes and conflicts.

Afridi urged the people of Pakistan to take to the roads to lodge their protest on India's illegal oc-

cupation of Kashmir. "If the Americans can take to the streets in huge numbers despite the spread of Coronavirus epidemic on the murder of George Floyd, why can't Pakistanis lodge their protest? We need to engage our youth on Kashmir issue and build new narratives on Kashmir by exposing the Indian atrocities against helpless Kashmiri people through social media," he said. "The illegal act of fascist Indian regime has pushed the region towards a nuclear war. If the world fails to intervene now, the implications of a nuclear conflict would go beyond region," he said. Afridi said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had advised him to prove myself as a son of Kashmir and I would leave no stone unturned to raise my voice at all forums to help resolve the Kashmir issue. He assured the Kashmiri people that Kashmiri Committee would raise Kashmir issue at all forums. He said that he would reach out to all Kashmiri leaders.

Gold hit record high

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold jumped by Rs2,400 on Wednesday and was traded at Rs108,300 as against its trading at Rs105,900 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported.

Likewise, the price of 10 gram gold also witnessed an increase of Rs2,058 and was traded at Rs92,850 against its sale at Rs90,792. The price of per tola silver increased Rs 10 and was traded at Rs 1060 and that of 10 gram silver was recorded at Rs 908.78.

In international market, the price of per ounce gold also jumped \$26 at \$1802, Karachi Sarafa association reported.

PHC orders 21 employees to refund BISP grant

DNA

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has ordered its twenty-one employees to refund Benazir Income Support grant. Taking disciplinary action against the employees who had illegally drawn benefits from BISP, the court ordered them to deposit two point six million rupees in the state exchequer. It also withheld their increments for three years.

Ministry seeks CII's advise for temple issue

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Wednesday sought Council of Islamic Ideology's (CII) advise on issuance of funds for construction of temple in the federal capital. In a letter written to CII, the ministry asked "Whether government funds could be used for the construction of new worship place for minorities or otherwise". The letter says that Capital Development Authority (CDA) had allotted a four kanal plot for construction of a Hindu temple in Sector H-9/2, Islamabad on Dec 26, 2017. On Dec 10, 2019 the Ministry of Religious Affairs had received an application from Islamabad Hindu Panchayat to fund the construction of new temple. Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Lal Chand Malhi and some minority legislators also requested the ministry to allocate funds for construction of temple. — APP

OGRA announces compensation

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) Wednesday announced compensation for the victims of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) bowser fire incident, which had taken place at Shahdara Morr, Lahore on March 25 this year. In the unfortunate incident, a LPG filled tanker had overturned at the road, causing a raging inferno that engulfed a nearby petrol pump, markets and vehicles parked in the close proximity. — APP

PFF appoints Daniel as tech director

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalisation Committee has appointed Daniel Limones of Spain as its technical director. Limones was previously associated with Spanish La Liga giants Club Atletico de Madrid and was working with the club's academy in Lahore as head coach and academy manager. A UEFA Pro Licence coach, he has also worked at other Spanish clubs including Rayo Vallecano. "As PFF's Technical Director, Limones will design and execute strategies, which will lead to the development of football in Pakistan", PFF Normalisation Committee Chairman Humza Khan told media during an online session. He said the appointment was a step in the right direction and would help promote the game of football in Pakistan. "We're excited to have Limones aboard. We fully believe his addition to the setup will help Pakistan football flourish," Humza added. — APP

Briefs

Raja Pervez Ashraf's plea dismissed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court here on Wednesday dismissed applications of former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf and ten other accused seeking acquittal in the Naudero II power plant case. Judge Muhammad Bashir announced this verdict on the applications filed under NAB Amendment Ordinance, 2019. The anti-corruption watchdog had filed a reference pertaining to Naudero II power plant case in 2013, according to which, Former Prime Minister Pervez Ashraf and other accused allegedly misused their powers, inflicting a loss of Rs7.5 million on the national exchequer. On June 30, the accountability court had acquitted the former prime minister, former finance minister Shaukat Tareen and other accused in the Piraghaib Rental Power reference. Other accused whose acquittal pleas were approved included Shaukat Tareen, Ismail Qureshi, Shahid Rafi, Tahir Basharat Cheema, Muhammad Saleem Arif, Chaudhry Abdul Qadreer, and Iqbal Ali Shah. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had filed the Piraghaib Rental Power reference in 2014, accusing Raja Pervez Ashraf of misusing his powers in his capacity as water and power minister to gain financial benefits in the project.

83 more virus deaths, Pakistan's total 4,922

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The country reported 2,980 coronavirus cases and 83 deaths over the past 24 hours, taking the national tally of cases to 237,489 and fatalities to 4,922. 2,980 new cases were detected after 21,951 tests were conducted in the previous 24 hours, according to the National Command and Operation Centre. 91,602 COVID-19 patients are undergoing treatment while 140,965 patients have recuperated from the disease thus far. 97,626 cases have been detected in Sindh so far, 83,595 in Punjab, 28,681 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 10,919 in Balochistan, 13,650 in Islamabad, 1,419 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and 1,595 in Gilgit Baltistan. Some 400,000 new cases of Covid-19 were reported over the weekend and the new coronavirus pandemic shows no sign of slowing down, the World Health Organization said. "The outbreak is accelerating and we've clearly not reached the peak of the pandemic," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference.

PEIRA to counter harassment issues

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government has taken the task to address the longstanding harassment and quality related issues in educational institutions. The Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) in that regard, has constituted a Committee on School Education Reforms keeping in view the policy gaps and lack of implementation frameworks for already existing policies such as Harassment at Workplace Act of 2010 and HEC's policy on addressing harassment issues in Universities. According to a press release issued by PEIRA on Wednesday, it was stated that an emergent meeting of the School Education Reforms Committee- SERC was called in response to the recent harassment issues reported in educational institutions. — APP

India continues to follow its aggressive policy: President CGSS

It is clear that China is no longer reluctant to act militarily if its core interests are threatened; Webinar on "China-India border standoff"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad organized a Webinar "China-India Border Standoff & Strategic Implications for Islamabad". The aim of the Webinar was to discuss the recent border tensions between China-India and its impact on regional security and stability. Maj Gen Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery (Retd), President CGSS commenced the webinar and stated that China has never been an expansionist state and has never followed an aggressive policy. However, India has continued to follow its traditional policy of absorbing territory gradually. They have been doing this to Pakistan and now China. It is clear that China is no longer reluctant to act militarily if its core interests are threatened. Ambassador Riaz Khokhar, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan stated that India came up with new maps, thereby prompting the whole crisis. It has been vocal about not only recovering Azad Kashmir but GB and Aksai Chin as well. India is now projecting itself as a victim and seeks attention from western powers especially the US, as in US there is mounting anti-China sentiment and China is seen as a challenger to its global status.



Mr. Victor Zhikai GAO, Chair Professor Soochow University & Vice President, Center for China & Globalization, Beijing, China mentioned the Tonya-Harding syndrome in China-US relations. He stated that the goal of whacking Chinese kneecaps to prevent China's steady rise, is a futile attempt by US. China will be significantly larger and more impactful than US in next few years and US will have to accept this reality. He further said that war is against China's fundamental interests of peace and mutual peaceful coexistence, and India's fundamental interest of industrialization. Moreover, any military escalation will be a drain on resources for both the countries, though

more detrimental for India.

Lt Gen Tariq Waseem Ghazi, HI (M), (Retd), Former Defence Secretary of Pakistan stated that China has the capability to respond to India's aggression both diplomatically and militarily but it has refrained from doing so, keeping in view its diplomatic and strategic domain in the region. India has been falsely propagating against China. Pakistan and China need to further strengthen and build a greater collation, partnership and mutual relations. Ambassador Zamir Akram, Former Permanent Representative to the UN, stated that a new cold war has been initiated hinting towards a tri-polar world. America has been promoting and supporting Indian aggression in the region causing a threat to regional peace. He stated that the immediate trigger to re-surface the issue was Modi Government's decision to change the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The danger of standoff escalating into wider confrontation cannot be ruled out. Prof. Huang Yunsong, Associate Dean, School of International Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu, China stated that India has over estimated their military strength imagining that China will succumb to its tactics but our message to India is very clear.

Abdul Sattar Edhi remembered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The fourth death anniversary of prominent philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi was observed on Wednesday. Abdul Sattar Edhi started welfare services in 1951. He later established world's largest volunteer ambulance network alongwith homeless shelters, animal shelters and orphanages across the country. Many international and national awards, including the Asian Noble, the Lenin Peace Prize and Nishan-e-Imtiaz were bestowed upon him in recognition of his services for humanity. He passed away on 8th of July in 2016.

RCCI donates Oxygen kits to RIU

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) visited Rawalpindi Institute of Urology (RIU) and called on MS RIU Dr. Khalid Randhawa. The delegation included Chamber President Saboor Malik, Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Former President Najam Rehan and Senior Vice President Nosh-erwan Khalil Khan. Dr. Khalid Randhawa gave a short briefing to the delegation on the Corona epidemic and facilities being provided to the patients. He appreciated the donation of oxygen gas cylinders by the RCCI and said that many patients were on ventilators. With this donation, the hospital will get a lot of relief and the patients will not have to face any problem. On this occasion, the President of the Chamber, Saboor Malik, said that the Rawalpindi Chamber has been at the forefront under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) and always take lead on key challenges including earthquakes and natural calamities.

ITP issued 58,600 fine tickets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has launched an aggressive crackdown against those involved in careless and negligent driving on roads and issued 58,600 fine tickets during the ongoing year. Reviewing the performance of ITP against those involved in negligent driving, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed said that a total of 58,600 fine tickets have been issued during the last six months. He said that special squads have been constituted to take action against careless drivers putting the lives of others at risk.

26 outlaws including six POs held

DNA

ISLAMABAD, July 8, 2020: Islamabad police have arrested 26 outlaws from various areas of the city and recovered stolen vehicle, hashish, wine, valuables and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. Following the directions of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed, all officials of Islamabad police has accelerated their efforts to curb activities of anti-social elements and drug pushers. Secretariat police arrested an accused Chan Zaib and recovered 1.115 kilogram hashish from him. Bhara Kahu police arrested Tariq Mehmood and Tariq Shabbir and recovered stolen vehicle from their possession. CIA police arrested Abrar Khan and recovered 470 gram hashish and 10 gram ice from him. Tarnol police arrested Nawaz and Irfan and recovered 270 gram hashish and 165 gram heroin from their possession respectively. Industrial-Area police arrested Jawad Khan and recovered iron punch from him.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor busy in preparing summer drink (lemon soda) for customer at his stall. — DNA

Asad Umar directs timely water supply to Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Wednesday directed for early completion of process for improving water supply to Islamabad and Rawalpindi. He was chairing a review meeting on Water Supply Project to Islamabad-Rawalpindi from Khanpur Dam here. Special Assistant to PM on CDA Ali Nawaz Awan, and senior officials of

CDA, RCB, WAPDA and Ministry of Planning participated in the meeting. The meeting was briefed on the progress of various initiatives aimed at addressing the issues of supply of water to Islamabad & Rawalpindi. Representatives of MCI informed that water supply to various sectors of Islamabad had been considerably improved through a number of maintenance and rehabilitation

activities which had been pending for quite some time due to shortage of resources. The SAPM on CDA apprised the Minister of the efforts being made to enhance the supply of water to the twin cities from Khanpur Dam. He said that work was on going on signing an inter-departmental agreement which would facilitate the regular maintenance of the water channel

Gangs of car lifters busted, cars recovered

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Car Lifting Cell (ACLC) of Islamabad police has busted two gang of car lifters and recovered eight cars from it worth hundreds of thousands of rupees, a police spokesman said. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan, DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed assigned task to SP (Investigation) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer to accelerate efforts against auto-thieves and car-lifters. Following his directions, special team was constituted under supervision of In-charge ACLC Sub-Inspector Liaqat Ali, Sub-Inspector Sarfraz Ahmed, ASIs Waheed Ahmed, Muhammad Sharif, Sajid Mehmood, along with other officials. This team achieved success and apprehended four members of two car lifters' gangs. The gangsters have been identified as Zubair Khan resident of Khanna Dak, Waheed resident of Khanna Dak, Kamran resident of Charsada, and Zahoor Khan resident of Peshawar. Police team recovered eight stolen car from their possession. During the preliminary investigation, they confessed to lift these vehicles from various areas of twin cities and later to sell them in KPK. Cases have been registered against the nabbed persons and further investigation is underway from them IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed have appreciated the performance of ACLC police team and directed the officials to intensify efforts to curb car and motorbike lifting incidents. — DNA

Monitoring team visits health institutions

ATTOCK: In compliance of guidelines from Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) Punjab and Directorate General Health Services (DGHS), monitoring team Wednesday visited Health Institutions for the purpose of monitoring and supervision of healthcare activities. The team comprised of Dr So-hail Rana, Pharmacist Shar-jeel and Finance Manager Ali Raza which was also accompanied by CEO Health Attock Dr Sohail Ijaz Awan. The team visited different health facilities in Attock, Hazro and other tehsils of the district specifically DHQ Hospital Attock and other health centers to check and monitor the health facilities being provided to the people and the functionality of the health equipment. — APP

Sanitary workers refuse safety kits

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) Wednesday claimed that most of the sanitary workers, who had been provided complete safety kits to prevent risk of catching the coronavirus (COVID-19), had refused to don it due to prevailing hot and humid weather. "About 600 staff of the IMC Sanitation Department has been given the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), but the staffers cannot wear it in current hot weather as they (PPE) are made of hard and thick stuff," said a senior officer of IMC, requesting anonymity. He said the Inter-faith League Against Poverty

(ILAP), which provided the PPE, had asked the IMC to ensure wearing of the PPE by force or return the kits. Some of the workers were compelled to use the safety kits but they became unconscious on wearing it during the duty hours, he noted. The officer said about 40 per cent staff of the sanitation department comprised of women who had never expressed willingness to utilize the PPE. Out of the complete safety kit, which included gloves, protective suits, masks and face shields, he said the staff had been using only head caps. Some of the suits had huge sizes or not fit to wear, he added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Members of civil society hold a protest in favor of their demands outside NPC. — DNA

ICCI demands construction industry package notification

ICCI President said that construction industry played a key role in the economic development of the country as growth of over 50 allied industries depended on this industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had announced an attractive incentive package for the construction industry that aimed to stimulate economic activity in the country and boost investment, but despite the passage of three months, no relevant department in Islamabad has issued its notification due to which its implementation was still at halt.

He said that Punjab Government has issued the notification and timeliness for the construction industry and federal government should do the same at the earliest to realize the benefits of construction industry package. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that about 3 years ago, CDA Board had approved the amended industrial building bylaws, but CDA has not issued their notification as yet due to which not only the industrial growth was suffering, but CDA was also losing significant revenue. He said that business community

was also facing problems in lease renewal from CDA and this situation was affecting business activities. He urged that CDA should issue notifications of amended building bylaws and construction industry package. He further stressed that CDA should streamline the lease renewal process to facilitate the growth of businesses. ICCI President said that construction industry played a key role in the economic development of the country as growth of over 50 allied industries depended on this industry. He said that acceleration in construction activities would give

boost to business and investment activities besides creating plenty of new jobs that will reduce poverty and unemployment. He said that construction of houses under Naya Pakistan Housing Program will also benefit the low-income people for which materialization of the said package was important. He stressed that the Prime Minister should issue directions to all concerned departments for issuance of early notification for implementation of construction industry package so that businessmen and people could realize its benefits.

Tahir Abbasi Senior Vice President and Saif ur Rehman Vice President ICCI President said that Covid-19 pandemic have caused devastating impact on business and industrial activities and in these conditions, the growth of construction industry would help in reviving the business and investment activities in the country. They further said that Punjab Government has issued notification and timeliness for construction industry and federal government should also do the same in order to give boost to economic activities.

Briefs

AIU uploads
challan on its
website

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has uploaded the challan form on its official website in a bid to facilitate students in depositing the second installment of their admission fee. According to the Director Admission on Wednesday, the university has decided the 17th July would be final deadline for those students who have still not submitted their second installment of fee. Mian Muhammad Riaz, Director Admissions, stated, "In the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum, Vice-Chancellor, had provided the facility of depositing admission fee in two equal installments to the candidates interested to get admission in the programs offered in the second phase of Spring 2020 Semester". — APP

Rupee
strengthens
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee gained 19 paisas against US dollar in the interbank on Wednesday to close at Rs 166.76 compared to the last closing of Rs 166.95. However, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of Dollar in open market were recorded at Rs 166.7 and Rs 167.7 respectively. The State Bank of Pakistan reported that in interbank, the price of Euro depreciated by 11 paisas to close at Rs 188.18 against the last day's trading of Rs 188.29. The Japanese Yen remained stable at Rs 1.55, whereas an increase of 68 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound which was traded at Rs 209.00 as compared to its last closing of Rs 208.32. — APP

Swiss
professor
to deliver
online lecture

ISLAMABAD: In view of dire need for new educational strategies due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Academic Leaders Academy (GALA), Inter-University Consortium for the Promotion of Social Sciences (IUCSS), and National Skills University Islamabad joint initiative on "Sharing Best Academic Practices" is receiving great appreciation and acceptance across the world. In continuation of knowledge sharing series Prof Dr Klaus Oestreicher, Vice President International at E.H.E. Europa Hochschule EurAka CH, Therwil, Canton of Basel-Landschaft, Switzerland will deliver a lecture Thursday. The title of Prof. Oestreicher's talk is "Innovating the Higher Education landscape and will be delivered via Zoom on July 9th 2020 at 3:00 pm Pakistan Standard Time. The lecture will outline challenges and opportunities for both learners and the teaching community to adapt to generating a skilled workforce ready to work at workplaces with different environments. — APP

Two drug
peddlers
arrested;
charras
recovered

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in their ongoing drive against narcotics and anti-social elements on Wednesday arrested two drug peddlers besides recovering over two kg charras from their possession. According to a police spokesman, in a raid, Jati police arrested Muhammad Abbas alias Basa for having over 1680 grams charras. In another raid, Kotli Sattian police managed to net a drug peddler namely Yasir Mehmood and seized 1100 grams charras. The police registered separate cases against all the accused under Narcotics Control Act while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the performance of Jati and Kotli Sattian police and directed the police officials for high vigilance and monitoring against those involved in anti-social activities, the spokesman added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Maulana Tariq Jamil meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

Islamabad administration lifts
lockdown from three sub-sectors

As per a notification issued by the Islamabad administration late on Saturday, sub-sectors including G-9/2 & G-9/3 and Karachi Company will be unsealed on June 28

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Smart lockdown strategy yielding positive results in Islamabad bringing the tally of novel coronavirus cases down by 90 percent in the capital

Islamabad administration in a notification today announced end of smart lockdown in three areas of the federal capital. The authorities have de-sealed Sector G-VII-I, G-VII-II and G-VII-III today after positive impact of the lockdown.

"These areas are being de-sealed after decline in number of cases," Deputy Commissioner of the capital Hamza Shafiqat said. Strict implementation of SOPs by the administration have yielded positive results in tackling COVID-19 cases

in the federal capital. It is pertinent to mention here that the Islamabad administration in end days of June de-sealed two sub-sectors of Sector G-9 and Karachi Company commercial area, which had been sealed after a sharp increase in

coronavirus cases. As per a notification issued by the Islamabad administration late on Saturday, the sub-sectors including G-9/2 and G-9/3 and Karachi Company will be unsealed on June 28. Smart lockdown is being lifted from the localities after

a detailed survey, ground surveillance, and testing of suspected patients, a notification read. However, the de-sealed areas will remain under strict supervision and section 144 would remain enforced there, it added.

Tourist spots to remain
closed: Sadaqat

We wanted to reopen the tourism sector, but meanwhile we were afraid that rush at the tourist spots on Eid could cause further spread of the virus

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sadaqat Ali Abbasi Wednesday said that as part of precautionary measures against coronavirus, the government had no plan to reopen the country's tourist spots which would remain closed during Eid-ul-Azha. Talking to a private news channel, he said government had been deciding to keep all tourism spots closed at least till Eid-ul-Azha because we did not want people to come in or go out frequently since that may worsen the coronavirus situation over.

He indicated that after Eid when the graph of coronavirus cases comes down, the government will frame a strategy to jump start its tourism industry that had been affected due to the pandemic. He said we wanted to reopen the tourism sector, but meanwhile we were afraid that rush at the tourist spots on Eid could cause further spread of the novel coronavirus. We were trying our best to overcome the challenges to revive the economy, he said, adding, everything was on hold, and we were waiting for the final decision to re-

open the tourism industry. Abbasi said that the condition of business in Murree was very different from the rest of the country amid coronavirus situation. "The problems faced by business community and workers associated with the tourism and their demands had already been forwarded to the government and the final decision would be made after the Eid with the consultation of other provinces", he added. He said tourism industry had suffered immense loss amid COVID-19 this year where white collar people were mostly suffered. — APP

NCHD to train households
in preparing sanitizers

DG NCHD Hassan Baig told APP that it was a joint initiative of NCHD and PHDF

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) in collaboration with Pakistan Development Fund (PHDF) would arrange special training programme to train 96,100 households in "preparing sanitizers at home" as a pilot project in 16 districts.

Director General NCHD Hassan Baig told APP that it was a joint initiative of NCHD and PHDF to support the government and people to fight COVID-19 pandemic. He said that NCHD was going to utilize the services of its 2,929 volunteers in 16 districts (pilot). "96,100 households of Muzaffargarh, Sargodha, DG Khan, Khairpur Shikarpur Sukkar, Mardan, Lakki Marwat,

Buner, Kech, Zhob and Washuk, Kotli Muzaffardabad, Sakuru and Gilgit will receive training to prepare sanitizers at home," he said. He said that this project would benefit 672,700 community members in 1,922 locations identified in 16 districts as a pilot project. "2600 goodie bags containing masks, soaps and sanitizers and 400 ration bags to needy people will also be distributed among general public under the project", he claimed. He said that there was a dire need that all the stakeholders including government departments, NGOs, INGOs donors as well as individual contribute and extend their support to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

Ehsaas
launches
web portal
to facilitate
applicants

Ehsaas Emergency Cash initiative has so far disbursed an amount of over Rs. 151.952 billion among over 12,556,492 lockdown affectees under different categories

ISLAMABAD: The pro-poor initiative of Ehsaas Emergency Cash program Wednesday launched its web portal to facilitate the registered applicants for verifying their eligibility to get financial assistance. The people who registered through 8171 or Prime Minister Labour Portal can find their eligibility by entering their Computerized National Identity Card number through the web portal.

The link to the portal is as follows: <https://ehsaas.nadra.gov.pk/ehsaasTracking/>. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash initiative has so far disbursed an amount of over Rs. 151.952 billion among over 12,556,492 lockdown affectees under different categories. The programme was initiated to disburse cash amount of Rs. 12,000 among those affected from the Coronavirus lockdown. The payment process under different categories of the programme was continued across the country. — APP

Entrepreneurs must tap
opportunities in AJK
tourism sector: PBF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) on Wednesday has stressed upon the need to chalk out a comprehensive strategy to turn the Azad Jammu Kashmir into "economic engine" of Pakistan through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects. Under the CPEC, nine special economic zones would be established across the country, including one in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir for which 1,185 acres of land has already been identified, said the president, adding that 571 acres of land would be acquired in the first phase and 614 acres in the second. President PBF Sahibzada Mian Usman Zulfikar said the Azad Jammu Kashmir owing to its huge youth bulge, high literacy rate, growing purchasing power parity, skilled workforce, and availability of raw materials, makes it fertile for economic investment. He said that currently, Azad Kashmir's local industries are producing textile, paper, pharmaceuticals, automobile tires, rubber, plastic, piping, shoes, furniture, construction material,

edibles, and handicrafts. The PBF asked Pakistanis investors from specialized industries to explore the potential of AJK's growing market. He said that under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, a state of the art Special Economic Zone will be established in Mirpur which will facilitate investors and budding entrepreneurs including to explore opportunities in AJK's growing tourism industry. He also highlighted that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) must be a priority for private sector corporations and 2% of their net profits should be allocated for social welfare projects, especially poverty alleviation, skill development, health, and hygiene, and setting up programs for providing safe and clean water in AJK. Though numerous fledgling small and medium-sized industries producing a wide variety of end products. PBF said that corporate enterprises of Pakistan must invest in AJK in the area of innovation, promote practices for conservation of land, water, energy, minerals and ensure effective disposal of waste. — DNA

Lok Virsa to hold 'Protection
of Balochistan's Culture'

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold a dialogue session titled "Protection of Balochistan's Culture" on July 11. In collaboration with institute of Arts Hast-o-Neest, there will be conversation

with esteemed scholars and artists to discuss the ways to protect culture of Balochistan. Jamil Hussain, Deputy Director Archaeology, Government of Balochistan said here on Wednesday. He said that Baloch culture and its significance would

be highlighted and strategies would be discussed for safeguarding and conservation of Balochistan culture. He said that there would be a holistic review of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Balochistan in different sessions. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Ajmal Balouch, President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran along with Khalid Chaudhry and Zahid Rafique presenting flowers to Sardar Tariq Mehmood, President IEAA on recovering from corona virus. — DNA

Medical experts
advise people to
use time fruitfully

Medical Specialist Dr. Salimullah Khan said that corona pandemic had badly affected all aspect of life

ISLAMABAD: Medical Experts on Wednesday advised people to use their time fruitfully by reading books and minimize the use of smart phones during stay at homes due to COVID-19 pandemic to avoid the mental health problems. Psychiatrist Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Dr. Rizwan Taj said that COVID-19 pandemic was causing serious problems for the older and adult people due to pressure of different mental health anxiety, depression and mental illness. Medical Specialist Dr. Salimullah Khan said that coronavirus pandemic had badly affected all aspect of life and mental health problem was one of the serious issues these days. Older, adults, children in isolation having no social activities with others and remained stick to phones and television news which was causing depression and serious mental illness. He said that people should avoid watching news all the time but should manage indoor exercise. Zunaira Akram a student of 9th grade said she always played different online games on android and watching television and later resulted in depression. She said that earlier she had been playing sports outside in parks but now her parents not allow her to go out in park. — APP

Saira
Peter to
perform
in online
concerts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan first Opera singer Saira Peter would perform in online concerts to raise funds for artists facing financial problems due to COVID-19 pandemic. Preparations for these virtual charity concerts were in the final phase, as the donations generated by these online concerts will be used to artists, performers and other individuals such as cameraman, technicians and others, that are associated with this industry and are daily wage earners, said a press release. Expressing her love for Pakistan and its people, Saira Peter who is Pakistan's first globally recognized Sufi Opera singer, stated that though she lives in London, her heart thrives for Pakistan and she'll be visiting Pakistan as soon as the COVID-19 situation stabilizes. — APP

IRSA releases
300,100
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 300,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 324,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1462.02 feet, which was 76.02 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 156,400 cusecs and outflow as 160,000 cusecs. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 213,900, 190,200 and 81,600 cusecs respectively. — APP

PTDC issues

THE Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has been in the news for all the wrong reasons lately. The latest is that the PTDC has reportedly shut down the operations of 36 of its motels and fired as many as 450 employees. The reason given is the financial losses aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of these PTDC units had already been declared unfit and closed for over a year now. This is despite the PM's announcement about his vision to revive the tourism sector in the country. Ever since changes at the National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB), we have been hearing about plans to attract millions of tourists to Pakistan. There has been grand talk about facilitating visas and providing first-class reception to foreigners visiting Pakistan, and now suddenly we hear that the government has had another U-turn with its promises.

Government representatives have repeatedly rubbished rumours of the PTDC shutting down and have even promised that a restructuring is underway to transform the corporation into a vibrant organization with a better workforce and improved policymaking. In the latest development, the Pakistan Hotels Association (PHA) has offered the federal government its partnership to prevent the closure of the PTDC motels especially in northern areas.

It is true that the PTDC had been facing a financial crunch even before Covid-19 hit the country, but the way it is being handled is pretty unfortunate. While the intentions of the PHA cannot be doubted, there are certain points that must be raised before a final decision is taken in this regard. First, the PTI-led government has been blaming the previous governments for failing to revive the public sector, and it assumed power with a promise to improve the lot of the state-owned enterprises.

Second, so-called public-private partnership usually ends up in the usurpation of precious government assets by the private sector with the connivance of bureaucrats and public officials. The governments make public organizations dysfunctional and become keen on partnering with the private sector, which is even more eager to lap up the assets that essentially belong to the public.

Let it be clear that the private sector has an essential motive of profit-making while the public sector has at its roots the public interest first. We have seen privatization of banks, educational institutions, K-Electric, PTCL, and many others which have resulted in a huge bonanza for the buyers and exploitation of public land and other assets. What the government needs to do is rehabilitate the PTDC with efficient planning and management which has been the weakest point of the present government.

In two-years' time, the government should have come up with a thorough planning process resulting in a viable strategy, but be it PIA, Pakistan Railways, Pak Steel, and now the PTDC, no revival is in sight, no plans ready and no strategy developed. What we have had is just talk and more talk.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Website: www.islamabadpost.com.pk

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Electronic waste

HUMAN beings around the world discarded 53 million tonnes of electronic waste in 2019, an amount that weighs as much as all the humans of Europe put together. The e-waste means more precious minerals including gold have to be mined to meet the demand for replacement products while some of the waste which includes tossed away smartphones, computers and electronic car parts also present a potential threat to the environment and human health as they degrade. The UN has said that materials worth more than \$55 billion are being wasted each year and there has been a 20 percent increase in just five years. This makes e-waste one of the biggest waste issues in the world. One of the problems is that devices are being replaced more quickly than ever before, often because of their shorter lifespans or the pressures of consumerism.

There is also a lack of infrastructure for the e-waste problem. Asia generated the largest volume of e-waste in 2019, with 24.9 million tonnes, followed by the Americas and then Europe. The problem is one that seems likely to continue to grow. A global mechanism to recycle e-waste could possibly help, but would need to be set in place quickly and in a fashion that would encourage consumers of these goods to utilize it.

At present, people simply feel there is no option but to discard used products including refrigerators, washing machines and other appliances as well as computers or phones. The number of these devices is growing rapidly around the world. This means the problem of disposal will increase too and become a further source of pressure on the planet and its systems as human demand pushes it towards destruction.

It is notable that compared to Europe and the Americas, waste from Africa and Oceania is negligible. The problem then is one linked also to wealth and purchasing power. In the past, there have been reports of dumped computers deposited in areas that include the coasts of Pakistan leaking radioactive waste.

The problem is an immense one. In poorer countries, many of these items are recycled far more commonly than is the case in the West.

Perhaps in this case, the West could learn from the poorer nations of the world and develop systems where discarded phones or other devices could be recycled and used by those unable to buy their own and computers put to use at underprivileged schools and zones where children from low-income groups acquire their education.

Prepare for the worst in post-pandemic world

Luke Coffey



COVID-19 has fundamentally altered the way of life for billions of people. In the foreign policy community, there has also been a lot of speculation and debate about what the pandemic means for geopolitics and international affairs. The truth of the matter is that it is probably too soon to tell. It is likely that the full economic situation resulting from the virus has not yet materialized. Some of the world's greatest destabilizers

WE are now six months into the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Despite lockdown measures, cases continue to rise drastically in some countries. The global economic outlook is bleak. The death toll continues to mount.

There has been a massive mobilization by countries around the world to confront the pandemic. Huge sums of money and massive scientific and logistical efforts have been made to deal with the virus.

COVID-19 has fundamentally altered the way of life for billions of people. In the foreign policy community, there has also been a lot of speculation and debate about what the pandemic means for geopolitics and international affairs. The truth of the matter is that it is probably too soon to tell.

It is likely that the full economic situation resulting from the virus has not yet materialized. Some of the world's greatest destabilizers, such as Russia, are still in the midst of their outbreak – so who knows how it will end for them. Even the Chinese, who were the first to suffer from the virus, are not yet out of the woods.

Even though there are many uncertainties pertaining to the geopolitical impact of the virus, policymakers can make assumptions on which to base and develop policy. In terms of the long-term impact of COVID-19 in international affairs, there are three assumptions that foreign policy practitioners should base their assessments on.

The first is that many of the challenges that existed before the pandemic will continue to be a problem well into the future. Russia will still be a revisionist power eager to exert its influence on the Eurasian landmass and beyond. China will not stop its predatory investment practices in places like Africa and Central Asia. In fact, it is likely to take advantage of the terrible economic situation in these regions to do so. Iran will continue

to export terrorism across the Middle East. These pre-existing challenges will be made more difficult by the fact that the world will likely face economic recession for the foreseeable future. The drop in the price of oil will put even more pressure on those countries relying on the export of hydrocarbons to balance their budgets.

The second assumption is that rogue and autocratic regimes will become even more desperate as their struggle against COVID-19 becomes harder. Unfortunately, autocratic leaders know that one of the fastest, albeit short-term, ways to restore legitimacy and faith in the ruling elite is to get a desperate population to rally round the flag.

Too often, these regimes resort to military adventurism to accomplish this. This is what Russian President Vladimir Putin did in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Iran does this in places like Syria or with its aggression in the Gulf. So it's only logical to assume that, as the global pandemic makes such regimes more desperate, they are likely to become more belligerent in response. The third assumption is that the international community will have to do more with less to confront these challenges. Huge amounts of national resources have been devoted to confronting the virus.

Trillions of dollars have been spent on bailing out and propping up economies. Billions of dollars have been allocated to fight the virus and search for a vaccine. In some cases, militaries have been used for domestic responses to the crisis. Put simply, the economic fallout from the pandemic still has not been fully felt. Adding to the problem is that hundreds of millions of workers are without a job, people are having trouble paying their bills, and a global recession is looming. Even though many of the same geopolitical challenges that were around before the pandemic will remain, there will be less money and fewer resources to confront them.

The wildcard in all of this is China. A month ago, one could assume that China would benefit greatly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was able to stockpile its strategic reserves of crude oil at dirt-cheap prices. It was coming out of its lockdown and reopening its economy at a time when many across the world were just starting theirs. China was also gaining a considerable amount of goodwill by sending personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators to countries struggling to cope with the pandemic. And Beijing was running a very smooth and sophisticated disinformation campaign on the origins and history of COVID-19 to divert any culpability it might have had over the spread of the virus.

But already the cracks are beginning to show. Beijing this month canceled 1,200 flights and closed schools due to a sharp increase in cases. A lot of the PPE support that was given by China to struggling countries has now been proven to be faulty and useless. Few are buying Chinese claims that the US is responsible for the spread of the virus. Places where China had been building reservoirs of goodwill and influence in recent years, like in Central and Eastern Europe, have become increasingly skeptical of Beijing's motives.

Perhaps the one thing that is made certain by the pandemic is that the era of big power competition is alive and well – and that this is not going to change soon. So, as policymakers develop national strategies to navigate the post-COVID-19 world, they should prepare for the worst and not even bother hoping for the best.

Whether it is in day-to-day life, the global economy or geopolitical challenges and threats, the world has fundamentally changed in ways we still do not fully understand.

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Uzbekistan efforts for managing economic challenges

Dr. Ulugbek Saydiev

The social protection measures have been undertaken by the government to support the groups of the population whose wellbeing is affected by the pandemic. The people quarantined with infection and suspected with infection, as well as persons with children under the age of 14, are paid temporary disability benefits in the amount of their average salary. A simplified procedure for issuing the document on a temporary disability is set. The allowances to families with children and childcare benefits, which terms ended in March-June, are extended by six months

FOR the last three years, Uzbekistan is progressively implementing its new development strategy, initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The strategy embraces five priority areas: public administration and civil society, rule of law, economy, social issues, and international relations.

The global pandemic crisis led to a situation where the Uzbekistan government had to align the strategic development plan with the emergency measures to mitigate the pandemic effect on the health and wellbeing of people and the economy as a whole.

The first cases of infections with COVID-19 emerged in the country in mid-March. In response to the challenges associated with the spread of the pandemic, in March 19, the President signed a decree on priority measures to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic and global economic crisis. A special state commission headed by the Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov and Anti-Crisis Fund of 10 trillion UZS were created by the decree.

The first measures included:

- financing the measures to combat the spread of coronavirus infection;
- supporting entrepreneurship and employment;
- expansion of social support for the population;
- ensuring the sustainable functioning of the economy.

To avoid panic among the population, all necessary measures have been undertaken to prevent the dissemination of false and inaccurate information in media. Since March 16, Uzbekistan closed all its transport connections with foreign countries except cargo transportation. All incoming vehicles are treated with special disinfectants. Charter flights are arranged for citizens who want to return home from abroad. All mass events, including sport, cultural and religious, have been suspended. Wedding events have to be held observing the necessary sanitary measures. Most public organizations and all educational establishments were recommended to transfer their work and external connections into the on-line mode.

More than 5,5 thousand specially trained health care professionals are mobilized to combat the spread of infection. Two national level, 14 regional hospitals, and 216 sanitary and epidemiological establishments provide health care measures to combat the pandemic.

The epidemical situation is being assessed based on hourly and daily data.

The social protection measures have been undertaken by the government to support the groups of the population whose wellbeing is affected by the pandemic. The people quarantined with infection and suspected with infection, as well as persons with children under the age of 14, are paid temporary disability benefits in the amount of their average salary. A simplified procedure for issuing the document on a temporary disability is set. The allowances to families with children and childcare benefits, which terms ended in March-June, are extended by six months. The number of beneficiaries who receive financial support is increased by 10 percent, up to 60 000. Employees of budgetary organizations who suspended their activity get their salaries in time. The basic foodstuffs and hygiene products (masks, antiseptics, etc.) are delivered to lonely elderly and disabled people. Extraordinary interventions have been undertaken to ensure the stability of prices in the foodstuffs market.

The stability of the banking and payment systems has been provided by means of monetary policy instruments. By October 1, 2020, commercial banks deferred a total sum of 5 trillion UZS loan repayments for tour operators, hotel business entities, transport and logistics firms, and other enterprises, including those who are experiencing difficulties due to restrictions on trade. Also, tax holidays were granted to these business entities. Recently, due to the relaxation of quarantine measures, 17 thousand manufacturing and 10 thousand construction enterprises resumed their activity. In most of them, cash flows decreased by 3 times compared to the period before the quarantine regime. The Government and Central Bank of Uzbekistan make the appropriate measures to provide these enterprises with liquidity.

According to the preliminary estimates, the pandemic affected on the level of unemployment in the country and led to reduction of the income of about 450 thousand families. Appropriate measures are being undertaken to mitigate these challenges on the national and regional levels. An additional 1 trillion UZS were allocated for the implementation of the state family business program. In total, 4 trillion UZS to be allocated for the family business programs this year. To date,

540 thousand families got support from the nationwide charity fund "Generosity and Support" in the amount of 307 billion UZS. In Uzbekistan more than 5.5 thousand medical staff were involved to stop pandemic situation. It was entrusted to provide them with extra 120 percent of salary.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard are monitoring the observance of quarantine by citizens. There were defined special tasks of providing tax holidays and preferences for credit debt, the allocation of budget loans to sectors most exposed to coronavirus. For example, there are growing risks of non-repayment of loans in the amount of 90 billion UZS in the hotel business, in 650 billion UZS in the transport and logistics sector, by 180 billion UZS in the catering sector, by 3.6 trillion UZS in foreign trade enterprises. Travel agencies and hotels continue to pay a tourist fee of \$ 2-3 per day.

In this regard, an instruction was given to extend the maturity of loans of these enterprises, temporarily suspend the collection of tourist fees.

In the regions the governors are authorized to provide deferred enterprises with payment of local taxes for up to 6 months. Along with this, tax rates on personal income for individual entrepreneurs and tax on the use of water resources for farmers are reduced by 50 percent. In this case, the loss of local budgets will be reimbursed from the republican budget.

A moratorium on tax audits will be announced before the end of the year, accrual of interest on tax debt of enterprises are suspended.

Given the situation in international trade, it was instructed not to apply fines in connection with overdue debts on export-import operations, to increase the product pass through the "green corridors", and to promptly solve the problems associated with cargo transportation.

Solving the tasks set in this direction will not only significantly mitigate the social consequences of the global economic crisis but will also help expand the country's economic potential by creating new jobs and increasing output, which in the long run will increase incomes and living standards of the population.

– *Center for Economic Research and Reforms under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

Briefs

'US has not sought meeting with N Korea'

SEOUL: US Deputy Secretary of State and North Korea envoy Stephen Biegun on Wednesday poured cold water on reports Washington had sought a meeting with Pyongyang officials, with nuclear discussions at a standstill. Biegun is on a four-day trip to Seoul and Tokyo to discuss North Korea's denuclearisation. The visit triggered speculation in the South that Washington was trying to rekindle diplomacy with Pyongyang ahead of the US presidential election in November, even though the North has repeatedly said it had no interest in talks. "I've seen some press comments that the North Koreans are not prepared to meet with me on this visit," Biegun told reporters after talks with his South Korean counterpart. — APP

Golf's Ryder Cup to be postponed

LOS ANGELES: The 2020 Ryder Cup will be postponed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic, ESPN reported Tuesday, saying an official announcement is expected Wednesday. Citing a source not authorized to speak publicly, ESPN said the biennial match play showdown between the United States and Europe, scheduled for September 25-27 at Whistling Straits in Wisconsin, will be delayed until a similar date in 2021. "There will not be a Ryder Cup this year," the source told the US sports news outlet. "The Ryder Cup will go to 2021, the Presidents Cup to 2022 and then they will alternate from there." The PGA of America and European Tour are expected to release the information officially on Wednesday. The news comes as no surprise in a sports year turned upside down by the coronavirus pandemic. — APP

Pak, Spain officials discuss various issues

From Page 01

level of flight safety in PIA operations. PIA remained committed to maintaining the highest standards and quality in its operations. The two sides also discussed bilateral trade and economic ties. The Foreign Secretary conveyed appreciation for Spain's support for GSP Plus for Pakistan and also underlined the hope that concerted efforts would be made to safeguard Pakistan-Spain bilateral trade against the challenges posed by Covid-19 in the shortest possible time. The Foreign Secretary shared Pakistan's perspective on the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK), moves to change demographic structure of occupied territory in violation of international law, and threat to peace and security in the face of intensified ceasefire violations on the LoC and belligerent actions from the Indian side. He stressed the importance of international community's role in preventing escalation of tensions and facilitating peaceful resolution of Jammu & Kashmir dispute in accordance with UNSC resolutions. The two sides reviewed the situation in Afghanistan and progress in the Afghan peace process. The Foreign Secretary highlighted Pakistan's positive contribution to the U.S.-Taliban direct talks culminating in the Peace Agreement of 29 February 2020. He stressed that the Afghan leadership must seize this historic opportunity and work together through intra-Afghan negotiations to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement. He reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to support Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process as part of a shared responsibility for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

President Ilham Aliyev, UN Secy General Guterres hold phone talk

The head of state noted that Azerbaijan had donated \$10 million to the World Health Organization and provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

DNA

BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has made a phone call to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. During the conversation, President Ilham Aliyev underlined Azerbaijan's support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations, including multilateral cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The head of state noted that Azerbaijan had donated \$10 million to the World Health Organization and provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of member states, President Ilham Aliyev, as chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, thanked the Secretary-General for his prompt response to the



UN General Assembly's request to convene a special session on COVID-19, emphasizing that more than 130 UN member states supported the initiative.

The head of state pointed out that the Secretary General's leadership is of

crucial importance in convening the UN General Assembly's special session in

response to COVID-19. President Ilham Aliyev affirmed Azerbaijan's readiness to contribute to the solution of technical and logistical issues relating to the special session.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres thanked President Ilham Aliyev for the phone call. Expressing his support for the initiative of the UN General Assembly to hold a special session in response to COVID-19, the Secretary-General said that the UN is ready to work with the Azerbaijani side to resolve technical and logistical issues. The Secretary-General also hailed Azerbaijan's active work to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals. President Ilham Aliyev and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed their confidence that the special session to be held would be a significant step in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Milan stun Juventus in a 4-2 win

DNA

MILAN: Zlatan Ibrahimovic's penalty sparked a remarkable AC Milan comeback victory against title-chasing Juventus at the San Siro. After an uneventful first half, Milan scored four unanswered second-half goals having gone 2-0 down to Juve strikes from Adrien Rabiot and Cristiano Ronaldo. Ibrahimovic's 62nd-minute penalty offered hope, before Franck Kessie and Rafael Leao completed a five-minute turnaround. Ante Rebic added a fourth to secure a memorable victory with 10 minutes remaining. Defeat sees Maurizio Sarri's side miss the chance to move 10 points clear of second-placed Lazio, who lost 2-1 to relegation-threatened Lecce earlier on Tuesday. It took Maurizio Sarri's visitors until first-half injury time to register their first shot on target, but Rabiot's spectacular finish from the edge of the box — after running with the ball from his own half — sparked the contest into life. Ronaldo, who became the first player to reach 25 Serie A goals in a season for the club since 1961 on Saturday, met Juan Cuadrado's pass to score for a fifth successive game and leave Juve in control. However, Ibrahimovic's spot-kick, which was awarded after Leonardo Bonucci was penalised for handball, flipped the momentum. Milan were soon level after Kessie wriggled through the Juventus defence unchallenged, while Leao beat Wojciech Szczesny at his near post from a tight angle. A fired-up Milan continued to attack Sarri's shell-shocked side and were rewarded as Rebic swept home to seal three points which send a resurgent Milan up to fifth.

Dutch police discover secret torture site

DNA

AMSTERDAM: Authorities in the Netherlands have discovered an apparent torture site hidden inside shipping containers, which were lined with sound-proofing material and filled with assumed torture devices, the country's National Prosecutor's Office has said. Officers raided the site at Wouwe Plantage on the Dutch-Belgian border on June 22, arresting six men suspected of kidnapping and hostage taking. They found six shipping containers which had been converted to what are believed to be "prison cells," as well as a stash of weaponry including pruning shears and loppers. "In each of the cells, handcuffs were attached to the ceiling and floor, in order to be able to chain someone standing up with their arms raised," the statement said. "The rooms were finished with noise isolating panels and heat-insulating foil." One of the units also contained a dental chair, with straps for feet and arms. "The sea container with the dental chair contained bags with objects that were presumably intended to torture or at least put pressure on victims," the statement added. "The police found, among other things, pruning shears, loppers, a branch saw, scalpels, pliers, extra handcuffs, fingercuffs, tape, balaclavas, and black cotton bags that can be pulled over the head. During a search at a home in Rotterdam, 24 kilos of MDMA was also found."



LONDON: Hector Bellerin of Arsenal and Marc Albrighton of Leicester City battle for the possession of ball as Leicester City manager Brandon Rodgers watches from the sideline during a Premier League match at Emirates stadium.

Pak, Indonesia ties discussed at webinar

From Page 01

"We would like to encourage and elevate bilateral trade and overall economic cooperation between the two countries that was sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial corresponding to their respective supply & demand potential," remarked Ambassador Iwan Amri. To a question about possibility of air links, the ambassador said they do not have any aviation contract with PIA. However Lion Air of Indonesia wants to start flights from Pakistan and negotiations with the aviation officials are already underway. Lion Air wants to start from three cities of Pakistan. The plan is still on the table. Let us hope that negotiations between the Lion Air officials and Pakistani aviation officials make some early headway.

Repatriation of citizens: To a question about repatriation of Indonesian citizens, the Ambassador Iwan said that the tracking and data collection process of the Indonesian citizens for their repatriation was a daunting task because of the reason that they were located in various cities and regions of Pakistan. Especially those of Tablighi Jamat were hard to track and contact as they would move from a region to another for their Tablighi activities, he added. The Ambassador said that limitations of movement resulting from the lockdown and physical distancing policies by the Pakistani authorities, the Embassy adapted to the evolving situation and through innovative ways and tireless efforts managed to contact its nationals spread over different parts of the country. Sharing some details the Ambassador informed that as per our multiple pronged strategy the Embassy established intensive coordination with the Pakistani authorities, management of the Tablighi Markaz Raiwind and Islamabad, IUII management and the students, Markaz Jamat Tabligh back in Ancol, Indonesia, and the Pakistani friends to ensure that the repatriation was complete and successful. At the end of the day we all emerged successful and were able to repatriate over 180 people to Indonesia. The Ambassador also thanked Pakistani govt and PIA authorities for facilitating the repatriation. The ambassador also talked about steps taken by the Pakistan government for the well being of diplomatic community in Islamabad. He also cited a letter written by the dean of diplomatic corps to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thanking it for ensuring security of the diplomatic corps. The ambassador also lauded efforts of Pakistan government for effectively dealing with the COVID 19 situation. He also mentioned latest statement of the WHO chief in which is recognized efforts of Pakistan government in this regard. Ambassador Amri praised government Ehsas program and they way poor people were helped thru this program. He lauded efforts of the government in this regard. The ambassador also talked about CPEC project and termed it beneficial for the people of Pakistan and this region as well. The ambassador could not resist himself to praise various packages offered by the government of Pakistan for the people affected by COVID 19. He especially mentioned govt construction and tourism packages. He termed govt decision to open the tourism sector a welcome development. Ambassador Amri said Indonesia will take part in upcoming virtual Rawal Expo expected take place in August this year. Indonesia has regularly been taking part in Rawal Expo.

Azhar Ali reviews Pakistan's first week of training

The Pakistan captain is optimistic that his players will be ready for the challenge when the series arrives

SPORT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan men's national cricket team have started their preparations for the Test and T20I series against England, which commence from 5 August at Old Trafford. "We are playing cricket after a long time and it is not going to be easy to start at full-strength," Azhar told PCB media, "We have to go step-by-step and I am very happy that the boys utilised their practice time of four days well." "No matter how much you practice, playing matches is always more beneficial. If you spend half of your prac-

time's time in scenario-based matches, it gives you a lot more confidence. Playing this scenario-based match was very important for us." In what will be their third Test series in England in the last five years, Pakistan will take on the hosts in a three-match series. The first match will be played at Old Trafford, Manchester, followed by the last two Tests at Ageas Bowl, Southampton, which start on 13 and 21 August. The Pakistan captain is optimistic that his players will be ready for the challenge when the se-

ries arrives. "Both batsmen and bowlers have adapted to the conditions. The wind was troubling the bowlers initially but they overcame it, which was heartening. Definitely, the players are going to need some time to adjust. Despite the break, they are in good shape which is a positive sign for us. "All the batsmen batted quite well especially Babar Azam, Asad Shafiq and Abid Ali seemed in total control, Shan Masood adapted well to the conditions and Mohammad Rizwan looked in good shape.

Pakistan will continue to play its role at UNESCO: Moin ul Haque

DNA

PARIS: The Ambassador of Pakistan to France and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UNESCO Mr. Moin ul Haque has called upon UNESCO to reject policies pursued by certain countries to exploit COVID 19 health crisis to stigmatize some ethnic and religious minorities in their countries in contravention of the principles and values of UN Charter and international humanitarian law. This was stated by him while addressing the 209th virtual session of UNES-

CO Executive Board conducted by UNESCO headquarter, Paris last week. The Ambassador lamented the flawed and exclusionary policies of certain countries to curb the fundamental human rights of people and communities in a systematic and brutal manner. He emphasized that the UNESCO members countries should continue to promote peace, tolerance and respect for diversity and universal human rights, and should strongly reject any form of racism, discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice. He assured the UNESCO



Executive board members that Pakistan would continue to play an active and

constructive role through dialogue and collective action in the spirit of multi-

lateralism to build mutual trust and collaboration to achieve UNESCO's goals.

Briefs

NASA hits Boeing with 80 proposals

WASHINGTON: NASA has drawn up a list of 80 recommendations that US aerospace giant Boeing will have to address before attempting to re-fly its Starliner space capsule, following the failure of an uncrewed test last year.

The recommendations primarily concern the on-board software, which was the main problem with the flight test last December. The capsule could not be placed in the correct orbit, due to a clock error, and a had to return to Earth after two days instead of docking with the International Space Station as planned.

Boeing subsequently learned that other software problems could have caused the capsule and the rocket to collide at the time of separation, a potentially very dangerous event if the flight had been crewed.

Most of the problems identified run deep and are organizational, for example NASA's verification procedures. The space agency has been a client of Boeing's for decades, but seems to have placed too much faith in its historic partner.

"Perhaps we were a little more focused on SpaceX," said Steve Stich, manager of NASA's Commercial Crew Program, in a call with reporters. — APP

US sees record 60,000 cases as tally crosses 3M

DNA

HOUSTON: The US reported a record of more than 60,000 daily confirmed cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The previous highest tally was 55,220, which the US recorded on 2 July. Earlier, The United States passed the grim milestone of over three million confirmed coronavirus cases as several states reported record numbers of new infections.

Authorities have reported alarming upswings of daily caseloads in roughly two dozen states over the past two weeks, a sign that efforts to control transmission of the novel coronavirus have failed in large swaths of the country. California, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma and Texas on Tuesday shattered their previous daily record highs for new cases.

The biggest jumps occurred in Texas and California, the two largest US states, with more than 10,000 each. About 24 states have reported disturbingly high infection rates as a percentage of diagnostic tests conducted over the past week.

In Texas alone, the number of hospitalized patients more than doubled in just two weeks.

France rules out 'total lockdown'

PARIS: The French government said Wednesday it is preparing for a second wave of COVID-19 cases that could emerge in the coming months, but will not respond with another nationwide lockdown to contain the outbreak.

"My aim is to prepare France for an eventual second wave, while preserving our daily life, our economic and social life," new Prime Minister Jean Castex said in an interview on RTL television.

"But we're not going to impose a lockdown like the one we did last March, because we've learned... that the economic and human consequences from a total lockdown are disastrous," he said.

Instead any business closures or stay-at-home orders would be "targeted" to specific areas, he said. "The coronavirus is still here," Castex warned, adding that he would travel Sunday to France's South American territory of French Guiana, which is reeling from a surge in cases.

Officials reported 124 new cases in the territory on Tuesday, bringing the total to nearly 5,200, and the government has dispatched dozens of health workers from the mainland to reinforce hospital staff. — APP



BAKU: A view of oil field in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani oil is selling for \$44.46 in market. — DNA

US begins formal process of withdrawing from WHO

Letters sent to US Congress and the UN trigger a formal one-year process of withdrawing from the international agency

DNA

WASHINGTON: Following through on a threat he made in May, the Trump administration on Tuesday notified the United States Congress that it is formally withdrawing from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, announced the move on Twitter.

"Congress received notification that POTUS officially withdrew the U.S. from the 'WHO' in the midst of a pandemic. To call Trump's response to COVID chaotic & incoherent doesn't do it justice. This won't protect American lives or interests - it leaves Americans sick & America alone," he wrote.

A State Department official confirmed to CNN that the administration has also sent a notice to the secretary-general of the United Nations stating its intention to

withdraw effective July 6, 2021. The letter triggers a one-year timeline for the move.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticised the WHO, claiming that China has "total control" over the organisation and allowed itself to be misled during the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. The virus first emerged in the Wuhan province of China.

"Because they have failed to make the requested and greatly needed reforms, we will be today

terminating our relationship with the World Health Organization," Trump said in late May. He said the US contributes about \$450m to the WHO while China provides about \$40m, adding that the US will be "redirecting those funds to other worldwide and deserving urgent global public health needs". In a May letter to WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Trump threatened to halt funding altogether if it does not commit to reforms within 30 days.

The WHO has since bowed to calls from most of its member states to launch an independent probe into how it managed the international response to the pandemic, a probe that is expected to shed light on the origins of the virus and China's early handling of the outbreak. Observers noted that because the process takes one year to complete, a successor to Trump could conceivably reverse the decision if he is not re-elected in the November general election in the US.

'KOICA contribution to social initiatives significant'



DNA

TASHKENT: The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sardor Umurzakov, discussed issues of financial and technical cooperation and its expansion in the near future with the President of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Lee Mi-kyung, in Seoul.

During the dialogue, the Uzbek side noted the Agency's significant contribution to the implementation of socially significant

initiatives in Uzbekistan. Since the opening of KOICA office in the country, 31 projects worth \$107 million have been implemented, more than 2 thousand internships for Uzbekistan specialists in Korea have been organized and a trip has been organized for more than 500 expert volunteers in healthcare, education, information technologies, communal services, agriculture and water resources, energy and transport.

The active nature of the current cooperation was emphasized. Currently, within the framework of

the Partnership Strategy for 2016-2020, 7 projects worth \$30 million are being implemented in the country, while in the second half of this year it is expected to launch 3 new projects in the amount of \$27.5 million in such priority areas as education, healthcare, water management and public administration. In addition, thanks to the consistent joint work on implementation of the medium-term Program for 2020-2022, signed between MIFT and KOICA during the state visit of the President of Korea to Uzbekistan in April last year, 5

projects worth \$45.5 million have already been approved.

In this context, a number of issues related to successful and timely implementation of the planned projects were discussed.

Prospects for implementing, together with Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH), the Program for comprehensive advanced training of medical workers of Uzbekistan in 2021-2024, which provides for the organization of training programs in quality systems of medical care and ensuring patient safety, were considered.

UK Finance minister wants youth jobs

LONDON: British finance minister Rishi Sunak will announce on Wednesday his next moves to prevent a wave of job cuts from snowballing into a full-blown unemployment crisis in the world's sixth-biggest economy. Sunak is already on course to take the United Kingdom's borrowing to World War II levels as he subsidises nine million jobs - equivalent to more than one-third of private-sector employees - alongside other emergency measures. The 40-year-old former Goldman Sachs analyst, who only became finance minister in February, has won plaudits for setting aside the pro-market instincts of his Conservative Party and putting the state at the heart of the UK's coronavirus response. Now, with a string of companies announcing redundancies - from the publisher of the Daily Mirror newspaper to jet engine maker Rolls-Royce - he is facing calls to do more, including cuts to employers' social security contributions. Sunak's announcement in parliament - expected around 11:30 GMT - will include a 2 billion-pound (\$2.5bn) fund to create six-month work placement jobs for unemployed 16 to 24-year-olds and the largest ever rise in partly government-funded apprenticeships. — DNA

Italy promises 'mother' of economic reforms

FOREIGN DESK

ROME: The Italian government has approved a package of measures aimed at cutting the complicated red tape that has long been blamed for crimping growth in the eurozone's third-largest economy. The "simplification decree," approved on Tuesday after weeks of fraught political negotiation, has been touted by Prime Minister Giuseppe

Conte as "the mother of all reforms" to help relaunch an economy brought to its knees by the coronavirus.

It was approved in a preliminary version at a late-night cabinet meeting, leaving some final details still to be hammered out. The legislation, which runs to 174 pages in a draft seen by the Reuters news agency, covers a raft of sectors such as public tenders, digitalisation, rules for corporate capital increases.

Russia charges space chief's aide with treason

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian security forces have arrested a former journalist who works as an aide to the head of Russia's space agency on treason charges, accusing him of passing military secrets to an unnamed NATO power. Footage released by the FSB security service on Tuesday showed Ivan Safronov being arrested outside his Moscow flat by armed plain-clothes agents who searched him before putting him into a van. Safronov, who has covered military affairs for two national newspapers, faces up to 20 years in jail if found guilty. His trial is expected to be held behind closed doors because of its sensitive nature. Roscosmos, Russia's space agency, said the case against Safronov was not linked to his work as a media adviser to Dmitry Rogozin, the agency's director-general. Safronov started work there in May. Rogozin told the TASS news agency Safronov did not have access to secret information. The FSB Security Service accused Safronov of working for an unnamed foreign intelligence service. "Safronov, carrying out tasks for one of the NATO countries' intelligence services, gathered and handed over to its representative state secrets and information about military-technical cooperation and about the defence and security of the Russian Federation," the FSB said in a statement.

Victoria coronavirus cases surge

DNA

MELBOURNE: The Australian state of Victoria has confirmed 134 new cases of coronavirus in the past 24 hours, as its borders were closed and it moved to impose a six-week lockdown in Melbourne.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has tested positive for COVID-19 after months of downplaying the virus as a "little flu".

The United States has officially notified the United Nations secretary-general of the country's withdrawal from the World Health Organization even as it grapples with nearly three million cases of coronavirus.

A group of opposition supporters stormed the Serbian parliament on Tuesday night in a protest against plans to impose a lockdown on the capital this weekend. Nearly 11.8 million people around the world have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and nearly 544,000 have died, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The US and Brazil have reported the most cases and the highest death tolls.

50 million Africans in extreme poverty risk

ABIDJAN: Nearly 50 million Africans could be driven into extreme poverty in the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, the African Development Bank (AfDB) said Tuesday.

Roughly a third of the continent - 425 million people - was already expected to live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day in 2020, the AfDB said in its African Economic Outlook, forecasting that the situation would further deteriorate.

After Oceania, Africa is the least affected continent in the pandemic, recording nearly 500,000 infections and almost 11,700 deaths, according to an AFP tally on Tuesday.

But the health crisis and ensuing lockdowns have destroyed jobs, crippled incomes and devastated economies continent-wide.

"Between 28.2 and 49.2 million more Africans could be pushed into extreme poverty" this year and next, the AfDB report said, with the first figure the baseline prediction and the latter the worst-case scenario.

The Abidjan-based institution, one of the world's five largest multilateral development lenders, expects Africa to suffer a major recession, with GDP forecast to contract between 1.7 percent to 3.4 percent this year. — APP

Bank chiefs take measures to eliminate corruption: President Uzbekistan

DNA

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a meeting on implementation of the 2020-2025 Banking System Reform Strategy and acceleration of the process of transforming commercial banks with an eye to uplifting the private sector share in banking assets from 15 to 60 percent. It was noted that a number of key issues have to be addressed in order to achieve the goals.

The need for intensifying the process of transformation of banks was noted. Currently, 6 commercial banks, namely, Ipoteka Bank, Sanoat Qurilish Bank,

Turon Bank, Asaka Bank, Aloqabank and Agrobank have begun cooperation with international financial institutions in matters of financial diagnostics, development of long-term strategies and privatization. However, work on the transformation of other commercial banks has barely been progressing well enough, the Head of the state noted. To change the situation, it was entrusted to conduct a stocktaking of functions not inherent to banks, to arrange training programs at the Corporate Retraining Center under the Central Bank to explain the tasks of bank transformation, primarily for local employees of banks. These tasks are assigned to the Central Bank.



Issues of improving the quality of the loan portfolio and bank projects were discussed at the meeting. It was indicated that the share of problem loans, as shown by the results of stress tests, can grow several times, which is a serious challenge for the banking

system. In this regard, instructions have been given to analyze problem loans by region and create an effective mechanism to maintain the quality of loan portfolios. It was emphasized that once the banks' loan portfolios undergo stocktaking, the

Central Bank should develop specific measures to restore the financial capabilities of each customer in a difficult situation. A separate aspect during the meeting was the discussion of the need for eradicating corruption in the banking sector.

The Head of the state insisted that bank chiefs take tough measures to stamp out corruption, introduce compliance control and other effective mechanisms. The President slammed the fact that the share of public funds is still high in commercial banks with state assets. In particular, the share of such loans is 41 percent in Qishloq Qurilish Bank, and 32 percent in Ipoteka Bank. Last year, credit lines

worth about \$600 million were attracted under the state guarantee, this year this figure will amount to \$570 million.

Meanwhile, the share of individual savings and fixed-term deposits in large banks averages only 5 percent. Taking into account this fact, the Central Bank was instructed to come up with additional proposals for attracting household deposits in banks.

The President noted the need for independent attraction of financial resources by commercial banks without state support.

Heads of the Central Bank and commercial banks provided information on the issues discussed at the meeting.

Briefs

Beijing security office opens in Hong Kong

DNA

HONG KONG: A new national security office has been officially opened in Hong Kong, placing mainland Chinese agents in the heart of the territory for the first time. The office is one element of a sweeping new law which outlaws criticism of China's government. Hong Kong was, until the law was passed, the only part of China not subject to such policies. The law has caused alarm in Hong Kong but officials say it will restore stability after violent protests. Chief Executive Carrie Lam said on Tuesday that it was "actually relatively mild as far as national security laws are concerned" and would enable Hong Kongers to "exercise their rights and freedoms without being intimidated and attacked". The temporary base of the new office is a hotel in Causeway Bay, the commercial district next to Victoria Park, which had long been the focal point of pro-democracy protest marches and rallies in Hong Kong.

Harvard move to online courses 'ridiculous': Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump lashed out at Harvard University, calling its decision to move all its courses online in the fall due to the coronavirus pandemic "ridiculous." "I think it's ridiculous. I think it's an easy way out. And I think they ought to be ashamed of themselves," Trump said at a White House roundtable discussion, during which he called for schools and universities to reopen for the next semester. Trump, who is campaigning for re-election in November, has taken a bullish approach to re-opening the country even as virus infections continue to spike, particularly the south and west. "Everybody wants it. The moms want it. The dads want it. The kids want it. It's time to do it," he said. "We want to get our schools open, we want to get them open quickly, beautifully, in the fall." His administration has said it would not allow foreign students to remain in the country if all of their classes are moved online because of the COVID-19 crisis. A number of schools are looking at a hybrid model of in-person and online instruction but some, including Harvard, have said all classes will be conducted online. - APP

Countries warn Israel over annexation

DNA

GAZA: The foreign ministers of Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan have urged Israel to abandon plans for annexing settlements in the occupied West Bank, warning such action could have "consequences" for relations. The government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had set July 1 as the date when it could begin to annex Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, as well as in the strategic Jordan Valley. Netanyahu's office made no announcement on July 1, but said talks were continuing with US officials and Israeli security chiefs. "We concur that any annexation of Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 would be a violation of international law and imperil the foundations of the peace process," the ministers said in a statement after a joint video conference on Tuesday. "We would not recognise any changes to the 1967 borders that are not agreed by both parties in the conflict. "We also concur that such a step would have serious consequences for the security and stability of the region, and would constitute a major obstacle to efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive and just peace.

Export opportunities for PPE's must be enhanced, says Nafees Zakaria

H.E Zakaria encouraged businesses to establish a physical presence of their products in the UK at a designated Pakistan Pavilion

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK H.E Mohammad Nafees Zakaria interacted with leading Pakistani businesses through a webinar on "Exploring business opportunities with the UK" recently. It was jointly organized by the Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi, and iwant.pk, a Pakistani B2B technology platform. The moderators were Mr. Imran Khalil, former Chairman Pak-UK Business Council and Ms. Fariha Shah, Former Marketing Manager, PepsiCo MENA. The webinar highlighted

potential business opportunities for Pakistani exporters during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. The panelists included Mr. Julian Hamilton Barns, Chairman, Pakistan Britain Business Council (PBBC) and Honorary Consul of Pakistan in the UK; Mr. Rashid Iqbal, CEO PBBC; Mr. Talib Karim, President IoBM; Mr. Ahsan Jabbar, Founder and CEO, iwant.pk and Mr. Shafiq A. Shahzad, Trade and Investment Minister, Pakistan High Commission London. High Commissioner Zakaria encouraged Pakistani businesses to augment their engagement with the customers in the UK. He said export opportunities



for personal protective equipment (PPE) and high-quality edibles must be enhanced. H.E Zakaria encouraged businesses to establish a physical presence of their products in the UK at a designated Pakistan Pavilion. Mr. Roger Bayat recommended marketing Pakistan's immense tech talent in the UK. Mr. Tariq Ikram, former Head of TDAP, said that the government and the industry could utilize data points to enhance trade opportunities. Mr. Talib Karim highlighted education as a sector where businesses from both ends can come together through virtual collaboration and an exchange of talent. The speakers agreed that local suppliers do require a consolidated virtual platform to showcase their products and to connect with potential UK importers.

President of Ghana Self-quarantines

President has tested negative for COVID-19, but "has elected to take this measure out of abundance of caution"

DNA

ACCRA: President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, who is the Chairperson of COMSATS, has isolated himself after coming into contact with an associate who tested positive for the coronavirus. It has been officially announced by the Government of Ghana that President will begin a 14-day precautionary self-isolation measure in compliance with COVID-19 protocols. The statement said that the President has tested negative for COVID-19.



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner along with Defence Advisor called on Secretary Aviation at his office. Matters pertaining to Civil Aviation were discussed in the meeting. Secretary Aviation emphasized the importance of constructive engagement b/w aviation sectors of both countries. - DNA

China is 'greatest threat' to US: FBI director

DNA

WASHINGTON: The director of the FBI has said that acts of espionage and theft by China's government pose the "greatest long-term threat" to the future of the US. Speaking to the Hudson Institute in Washington, Christopher Wray described a multi-pronged disruption campaign. He said China had begun targeting Chinese nationals living abroad, coercing their return, and was working to compromise US coronavirus research. "The stakes could not be higher," Mr Wray said. "China is engaged in a whole-of-state effort to become the world's only superpower by any means necessary," he added. In a nearly hour-long speech on Tuesday, the FBI director outlined a stark picture of Chinese interference, a far-reaching campaign of economic espionage, data and monetary theft and illegal political activities, using bribery and blackmail to influence US policy. "We've now reached a point where the FBI is now opening a new China-related counterintel-

ligence case every 10 hours," Mr Wray said. "Of the nearly 5,000 active counterintelligence cases currently under way across the country, almost half are related to China." The FBI director mentioned a programme called "Fox Hunt", which he said President Xi Jinping had "spearheaded" and he said was geared at Chinese nationals living abroad seen as threats to the Chinese government. "We're talking about political rivals, dissidents, and critics seeking to expose China's extensive human rights violations," he said. "The Chinese government wants to force them to return to China, and China's tactics to accomplish that are shocking." He continued: "When it couldn't locate one Fox Hunt target, the Chinese government sent an emissary to visit the target's family here in the United States. The message they said to pass on? The target had two options: return to China promptly, or commit suicide." The programme was originally begun in 2015 to target people accused of corruption and has reportedly led to the capture of thousands of fugitives.

Pak, China strengthens cooperation in renewable energy

DNA

BEIJING: The cooperation on renewable energy sector, such as hydropower, wind power and photovoltaic power, between China and international community has been enhanced in recent years, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. China has established 58 bi-

lateral cooperation projects and participated in 33 multi-lateral cooperation projects with other countries including Pakistan. China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute (CREEI) released a report this week about the development of China's foreign cooperation on renewable energy sector in 2019. The report acclaimed that

Pakistan timely adjusted its renewable energy development goals and policies in 2019, according to national development stage and the latest demand. Meanwhile, "Pakistan is rich in clean energy resources and has great potential for development. Thanks to CPEC, China and Pakistan have deepened cooperation in this field. According to the report, hy-

droelectric power is still the most important resource of renewable energy. The 64 countries along BRI have become the most popular areas for hydropower investment, such as Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Those countries, with rich hydropower resources and low degree of exploitation, have huge potentials to develop hydropower.

Pak to seek re-election to UNHRC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to seek re-election to the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which has 47 elected members. In a note verbal to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the Pakistani Mission to the world body said Pakistan will contest one of the four seats reserved for Asia Pacific Group of States for 2021-2023 term. - DNA

Palestine, Iraq ambassadors discuss cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahmed Ameen Rabae, Ambassador of State of Palestine to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan received Newly-Arrived Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq at the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Federal Capital Islamabad. During the Visit Ambassador of the state of Palestine gave a brief to Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq about the latest political situation in Palestine. Both sides also discussed matters of mutual cooperation between the two Embassies and resolved to continue cooperation even in the coming days. The ambassador of Iraq Hamed Abbas Lefta has recently arrived Pakistan. He is meeting with his colleagues these days. He has already met the Acting Dean of Arab Countries, Ambassador of Somalia.



China: nuclear talks only if US reduces arsenal

BEIJING: Beijing said Wednesday that US demands for it to join nuclear disarmament talks with Russia are a ruse to sink the negotiations, but it could take part if Washington lowers its arsenals to China's level. US and Russian officials held talks in Vienna last month to discuss a replacement for the New START treaty, which limits each side to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads but is due to run out in February. US President Donald Trump has insisted China be included in disarmament talks. China has shown no interest in participating. Fu Cong, director general of the Department of Arms Control at China's foreign ministry, said the US pressure is "nothing but a ploy to divert world tension" and "create a pretext under which they can walk away from the New START". "Their real purpose is to get rid of all the restrictions and have a free hand in seeking military superiority over any adversary, real or imagined," Fu said at a news conference. The US and Russia hold more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. - APP

COVID-19 situation in Kazakhstan under control

DNA

NUR SULTAN: Despite some progress in certain regions of the world, global experience continues to show that the coronavirus crisis is a long way from being eliminated. New cases are soaring in many countries, perhaps most notably in the United States. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that the spread of the virus has not reached its peak in countries in Central and South America. A number of countries in Europe, including Spain and Germany, had to re-introduce quarantine measures. The government of Kazakhstan has always stated that the country cannot become complacent. And, indeed, the country is currently going through a challenging period. At the same time, there has been some exaggeration of the situation in the world. For example, it was reported

in the international media recently that Kazakhstan is one of the countries with the fastest growing rates of COVID-19. Unfortunately this caused some concern and misunderstanding both among the public and the media regarding the epidemiological situation in Kazakhstan. It is indeed true that the number of cases have increased in Kazakhstan. At the same time, a number of points need to be considered. Firstly, since the beginning of July asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 were added to the general statistics of morbidity, thus significantly increasing the infection growth rate. Secondly, Kazakhstan has greatly increased the number of tests carried out. Over 1.6 million people have been tested so far. Currently, the country is carrying out almost 90,000 tests per one million population (almost 14,000 tests per day), which is more than France, Germany, Canada and many other countries. Kazakhstan at the

moment ranks 19th in the world in terms of population testing. Naturally, this has increased the number of confirmed cases. Due to these factors, there are just over 50,000 cases of COVID-19 currently registered in Kazakhstan, including just over 25,000 with symptoms, and over 23,000 asymptomatic. Approximately 1,400 new cases are registered per day, an increase of 3.0%. More than half have fully recovered, while over 23,000 patients continue to receive treatment. 260 people have died so far. The rate of the spread of the virus in June was 1.3. There has been a decrease over the past week to 1.05. According to the Johns Hopkins University in the U.S., Kazakhstan ranks 35th globally in terms of the COVID-19 infection rate. The mortality rate in Kazakhstan is 0.5%. In comparison, it is 4.4% and 1.5% in the United States and Russia respectively. Furthermore,

Kazakhstan ranks 54th in terms of the number of infected people per 1 million inhabitants, and 113th in terms of mortality. Ultimately, these statistics demonstrate that the broad epidemiological situation regarding the spread of the coronavirus in Kazakhstan is under control. As soon as cases began to surge in June, the Government took the necessary measures to combat the pandemic in a timely manner, including implementing a second quarantine. The results of the first lockdown from mid-March to mid-May demonstrated that quarantine measures are indeed effective. The number of confirmed cases remained low during that period. It is expected that two-week quarantine will also contribute to the stabilisation of the situation. In addition, three hospitals focusing on infectious diseases were built quickly in the cities of Nur-Sultan, Almaty and

Shymkent. Clinics in other regions have been provided with the necessary equipment. The two-week quarantine will last between July 5-19. The measures restrict social and family gatherings limited to outdoor walking of three or less. The facilities including beauty and hair salons, all kind of indoor sport centers, beaches, water parks, culture and entertainment places, religious facilities, kindergartens and children health camps suspend their activities. As before, at least 80 percent of employees in public companies will continue working from home. The restrictions do not apply to construction and industrial plants with a continuous production cycle, open air agricultural and construction sites, as well as health centres, grocery stores and open air markets. Summer patios, auto service and appliance maintenance are continuing working under enhanced sanitary and disinfection measures.

Man seeks apology for threatening Justice Isa

ISLAMABAD: Agha Iftikharuddin Mirza, who is accused of posting a video on social media threatening Justice Qazi Faez Isa, submitted on Wednesday an apology in the Supreme Court of Pakistan for the second time. A show-cause notice was issued to him on July 2, 2020. In his written reply, he said that the 67-year-old is "pash-e-imam since 1991 in a mosque and imambargah at Morgah, Rawalpindi." He frequently discusses current affairs with his students after Maghrib prayers. On June 14, some remarks "slipped out of his tongue regarding the honourable judges and prestigious institution of the judiciary", it said, adding that he regrets them. - DNA