



Islamabad POST

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Australian envoy shows love for Pakistani music
India stands isolated, says FM Qureshi
Indonesian envoy interacts with businessmen


Briefs

China welcomes Pak-Afghan trade

DNA



BEIJING: China has applauded resumption of trade relations

between Pakistan and Afghanistan after both the countries overcame impact of COVID-19 pandemic. At regular media briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Hua Chunying said China wants to see better relations between the two sides and economic growth of Islamabad and Kabul. She said we will like to play a constructive role in this regard.

The spokesperson said we are pleased to see Gwadar port and other CPEC projects playing a positive role and we will like to work with both Pakistan and Afghanistan to this end.

Pakistan has opened five key routes with Afghanistan for bilateral and transit trade over the past weeks to help war-ravaged Afghanistan boost trade.

These border crossings are now operationalized for 24 hours a day and six days a week to facilitate cross-border trade, which has been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic in both countries. According to experts, Pakistan's decision to open routes for Afghan trade is positive step and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can greatly enhance regional connectivity and link Pakistan with Central Asia via Afghanistan.

Sindh virus cases rise to 111,238

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh reported 1,170 new coronavirus cases and 30 deaths over the previous 24 hours, taking the province's tally of cases to 111,238 and casualties to 1,952, according to Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. In a statement on the Covid-19 situation, he said as many as 14,027 patients recuperated from the disease, raising the number of recovered patients in the province to 88,103. A total of 10,299 tests were conducted in the previous 24 hours, he added. The Sindh CM said 625,601 samples have so far been tested for the coronavirus in the province, which led to the detection of 111,238 infections. At present, 21,183 patients are under treatment, of whom 755 are at various hospitals, 20,355 at homes, and 73 at isolation centres.

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COVID-19 cases reduced in Pakistan

Positive trend has been the result of our smart lockdown policy and the nation observing government's SOPs: PM

DNA/A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said Pakistan is amongst the fortunate countries where COVID-19 cases in hospitals especially in intensive care and the death rate have gone down, unlike in our unfortunate neighbor India.

In a tweet on Friday, he said this positive trend has been the result of our smart lockdown policy and the nation observing government's SOPs.

The Prime Minister urged the nation to continue observing SOPs to sustain this

positive trend. He said Eid-ul-Azha must be celebrated with simplicity so as not to repeat what happened last Eid when SOPs were ignored and our hospitals choked.

Pakistan has so far registered 259,998 COVID-19 cases out of those 183,737 have defeated the pathogen but 5,475 could not survive. Of 23,907 tests conducted during last 24 hours, only 2,085 found infected.

"This positive trend has been the result of our smart lockdown policy and the nation observing government's SOPs," he stated and urged the nation to continue observing SOPs for being essential to sustain the positive trend.

Planning Ministry corrects Chinese President's message

Daily Islamabad Post carried a report on its front page on July 15 pointing out outdated message

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD : The Planning Ministry has taken notice of a news published by Daily Islamabad Post and released by DNA news agency, which highlighted the outdated quote of Chinese President on the ministry's website.

Daily Islamabad Post on July 15 published news about Planning Ministry's website showing an outdated statement from the

Chinese President. The Chinese President's statement addressed the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Mamnoon Hussain and quoted as "President Hussain, Prime Minister Sharif and I have agreed to elevate China-Pakistan relations to an all weather strategic co-operative partnership...". However, after taking action news, the Planning ministry has now removed the old statement and updated the website.

Sources in the Planning Ministry informed that soon after the publication of news, the matter was brought into the notice of Minister Asad Umar who immediately took action and asked for removal of old content. Sources further said since the statement related to President of China, therefore the Chinese embassy was also taken on board and with their consent the President's message was corrected.

Kulbhushan offered third consular access

Islamabad has informed New Delhi about the decision; Pakistan has also suggested providing the consular access without the presence of security personnel

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Indian spy and agent of intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was involved in several terrorist activities in Pakistan, will be granted third consular access.

According to details, Indian government has been officially informed about the third access.

The spokesperson also shared that Islamabad has informed New Delhi about the decision, adding that Pakistan has also suggested providing the consular access without the presence of security personnel.

"Pakistan is awaiting India's response," said the spokesperson of the ministry. Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said first consular access under

India stands isolated: Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi Friday said that contrary to its designs of isolating Pakistan, India itself stood isolated having straining ties with all its neighbors. In a statement, the foreign minister said that the inclusion of Iran in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Afghan peace process had dealt a blow to India with the opposition strongly criticizing the Modi regime. "India has lost its several soldiers in border clash with China. Nepalese parliament passed a resolution to press for demands. The India-Bangladesh ties are also losing the warmth," the foreign minister said. – DNA

the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 was earlier provided by Pakistan on second September last year. She said the mother and wife of commander Jadhav were also allowed to meet him on December 25, 2017. Aisha Farooqui said two

consular officers of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad were provided unimpeded and uninterrupted consular access to Commander Jadhav. The development comes a day after Pakistan provided the second consular access to Jadhav.



ISLAMABAD: Charge d Affaires of the Uzbek embassy Col Saadullah hands over Uzbek aid goods to Pakistani officials, at the Nur Khan Air Base. – DNA

Pakistan welcomes TTP man on sanctions list of UN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday welcomed the designation of Noor Wali Mehsud, the leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan by the United Nations Security Council's 1267 Sanctions Committee on its ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List.

"The sanctions are being implemented by Pakistan in compliance with the relevant UNSC resolutions and we hope that other countries will also follow suit," Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

TTP is already a UN-designated terrorist organization and is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

Pakistan has defeated TTP through comprehensive security operations in the country. However, TTP continues to operate from outside Pakistan's borders with support from its third-country facilitators.

"Pakistan will continue to pursue its policy of fighting against those involved in participating, financing, planning, facilitating and perpetrating terrorism," the spokesperson remarked. – APP

166 pilots working abroad have valid licences

DNA

ISLAMABAD (DNA): Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has validated credentials of 166 Pakistani pilots, out of 176, as 'genuine and certified' on the requests received from ten countries. This was stated by spokesman of the Aviation Division Abdul Sattar Khokhar in a press statement in Islamabad.

He said the process for remaining ten pilots will be concluded by next week.

Uzbek humanitarian aid for Pakistan

Military aircraft of Uzbekistan's air forces IL-76 brought to air base Nurkhan special 25 tonnes humanitarian aid to Pakistan on behalf of the President of Uzbekistan

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Military aircraft of Uzbekistan's air forces IL-76 brought to air base Nurkhan special 25 tonnes humanitarian aid to Pakistan on behalf of the President of Uzbekistan.

The Charge d Affaires of Embassy of Uzbekistan Col Saadullah was present at the Nur Khan Air Base to handover relief goods to Pakistani authorities.

Delivered humanitarian aid of Uzbekistan's President comprised with medical masks, protective costumes, medicines, and other medical items and equipments against Covid-19.

This cargo is aimed for brotherly people of Pakistan and is given as a sign of support all efforts of esteemed Government of Pakistan in its wide range struggle against coronavirus.

Uzbekistan always supports Pakistan and such kind of

action once again evidences sincere friendship, trust and respect of each other. In these difficult days of pandemic, friendly countries support each other as Pakistan and Uzbekistan do always.

Two countries always remained together and annually support their business communities to further develop economical ties; governmental officials always visit both states in order to strengthen political ties.

Australian envoy's love for Pakistani music

Pakistan's folk music is enchanting, with its soulful lyrics and rich musical tapestry: Dr.Shaw

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Geoffrey Shaw shared his love for Pakistani music and Pakistan's leading musical show, Coke Studio Pakistan.

Turning to twitter on Friday, Dr Shaw shared a snapshot of his favorite playlist on Spotify that included a few popular renditions and folk songs from Coke Studio: Aaja Re Moray Saiyan by Zeb Bangash, Ali Allah by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi, Taajdar-e-Haram by Atif Aslam, Paar Chana De from Noori and Shilpa Rao, and Lagi Bina by Sanam Marvi and Saieen Zahoar.

Calling Coke Studio as "Pakistani music at its finest," Dr Shaw added "Pakistan's folk music is enchanting, with its soul-



ful lyrics and rich musical tapestry. It speaks for the unique and diverse culture of my present home."

Pak reaffirms support for Hong Kong law

Hong Kong is part of China and it is important for China to safeguard its sovereignty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reaffirmed its support for China's new national security legislation for its Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, saying Hong Kong is a part of China and it is important for China to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and protect the lives of its citizens. "Pakistan's position on Hong Kong is principled, consistent, and clear. Pakistan adheres to One-China policy." Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said at a news briefing, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Aisha added that Pakistan reaffirms that matters related to Hong Kong are China's internal affairs and reiterates it is important to uphold international law and adhere to the basic norm of non-interference.

Tokyo 2020 confirms all venues for Games 2021

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee announced at today's virtual IOC Session that all the venues intended for the Games in 2020 have been secured for next year, and confirmed the sports competition schedule. This marks a significant step for the organisers, with only one year to go until the postponed Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 open on 23 July 2021. As preparations continue to advance, these decisions highlight the progress made amidst the current unprecedented circumstances, with strong unity amongst all stakeholders driving the planning and delivery of next year's Games.

Indonesian ambassador interacts with businessmen

Invites FCCI office-bearers to visit Indonesian embassy and discuss issues related to bilateral trade; assures to take up direct flights issue with the Indonesian authorities

MUHAMMAD TAHIR

FAISALABAD: A steep decline of minus 4% in the Indonesian growth is expected due to COVID-19 and there was dire need to join hands with brotherly countries to revive the national economies immediately. This was stressed by Iwan Suyudhie Amri, ambassador of Indonesia, while addressing a zoom conference with the office-bearers of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) here on Friday.

He said that Indonesia was closely observing the World Health Organisation (WHO) situation reports on COVID-19

pandemic around the world. He invited the FCCI office-bearers to visit Indonesian embassy and discuss issues related to bilateral trade. About starting direct flights from Jakarta to Lahore or Karachi, he said that he would take up the issue with the ministries concerned. However, he added, such flights were not viable financially in the prevailing circumstances. Earlier addressing the zoom meeting, FCCI President Rana Sikandar Azam Khan said that Pakistan and Indonesia should transform their cordial relations into enhanced bilateral trade, investment and joint ventures. Appreciating the recent economic rise of Indonesia, he



said that both the countries had many similarities in their demographics, and the bilateral

trade could easily be enhanced to US\$5 billion from its current level of about \$2.32 billion in 2019. "Pakistani exports to Indonesia are US\$146 million, compared to Indonesia exports to Pakistan of US\$222 million," he said and added that thus the balance of trade was in favour of Indonesia.

He said that Pakistan and Indonesia had signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in 2012 and as a result of that the bilateral trade improved from \$1.58 billion in 2011-12 to \$2.32 billion in 2019. "It is good to note that both the countries are heading towards Free Trade Agreement, which needs to be further paced up," he added.

He said Pakistan could help Indonesia expand its trade to the landlocked Central Asian Republics, China, India and Middle East. Similarly Indonesia, being member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), could provide easy access to Pakistan for over \$2 trillion ASEAN market.

He said that Pakistan had palm oil market of US\$1.46 billion, out of which 70% share was coming from Indonesia. "It should be equally good that while the Pakistani government had given duty advantage to Indonesia, the Indonesian government might also reciprocate in the same way to enhance the bilateral trade," he hoped.

Briefs

Construction of dams top priority: Faisal Javed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Senator Faisal Javed Friday said that his government under Prime minister Imran Khan was focusing on construction of dams which will protect thousands of acres of land from getting barren where opposition was only politicizing the national cause for their own interests.

Talking to a private news channel, he said with the construction of dams and water reservoirs the underground water level will rise, the inauguration of Diamer Bhasha Dam project was highly significant in post COVID-19 scenario which would create more jobs opportunities besides resolving the power crisis.

He said that the decision to build the dam was taken 50 years ago but the work has begun now. He also said that main target of the PTI government was to make Pakistan green and preserve wildlife in its natural forests. — APP

Textile exports decrease 6.01%

ISLAMABAD: The textile exports of the country decreased by 6.01 percent during the fiscal year 2019-20 as compared to the exports of the commodity during the last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.

The textile exports from the country during the fiscal year 2019-20 were recorded at \$12,526.534 million against the exports of \$13,327.727 million last year, showing a decline of 6.01 percent, according to the PBS data.

The textile commodities that contributed in negative growth in trade included cotton yarn, exports of which decreased from \$1,125.419 million last year to \$984.903 million during the current fiscal year, showing decline of 12.49 percent.

Likewise, the exports of raw cotton decreased by 16.64 percent by going down from \$20.396 million to \$17.002 million while the exports of cotton cloth decreased by 12.94 percent, from \$0.253 million to \$0.063 million, yarn (other than cotton yarn) by 23.81 percent, from \$33.836 million to \$25.778 million whereas the exports of knitwear decreased by 3.64 percent, from \$2899.827 million to \$2794.360 million.

The exports of bed wear also declined by 4.91 percent, from \$2261.784 million to \$2150.836 million, towels from \$786.120 million to \$711.265 million, a decline of 9.52 percent, ready made garments by 3.81 percent, from \$2653.340 million to \$2552.294 million and made up article (excluding towels, bed wear) by 13.16 percent, from \$679.971 million to \$590.502 million. — APP

NCHR receives 4281 cases: Senate told

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Human Rights Dr. Shireen M. Mazari on Friday informed the Senate that the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) had received 4281 cases related to human rights violations in the country during January 1, 2017 to June 3, 2020. Replying to a question during a Question Hour, the Minister said NCHR started functioning from December 2015 and was taking steps for the protection of Human Rights under section 9-13 of the NCHR Act, 2012.

Giving the breakup, she said out of total cases, 1701 were in hearing stage, 1538 were under initial investigation and 1042 had been disposed off. She said the Commission had taken suo moto notice of 568 cases. Out of 568 suo moto notices 72 cases were at hearing stage, 288 were at initial stage of investigation while 208 cases were disposed off. The minister said first time ban has been imposed on domestic child labour. Special focus was being given to implementation of various human rights laws, she added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Syed Tariq Huda member Customs FBR (Operations), Dr Arslan Subtugeen member FBR, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed President ICCI, Saif Ur Rehman VP ICCI, Tariq Sadie, Ijaz Abbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ch Waheed ud Din, Khalid Chaudhary, Ahsan Bakhtawari and Abdul Rehman Siddiqui inaugurating Customs Facilitation Desk at Islamabad Chambers of Commerce & Industry. — DNA

Experts see Covid-19 as an opportunity to adapt to virtual learning

The technological shift towards the virtual learning was started much before the occurrence of the Covid19. However, the pandemic has just accelerated this process and now it's time to embrace the change to get fully benefitted from it

FARUKH SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD: To avail the opportunities that After-Covid19 world offers in the field of learning and development, we need to be quickly adaptive to change and pay immediate attention on improving our technological infrastructure accordingly. The experts on learning and development from various national and international institutions said this while sharing their views with the participants at online dialogue 'Learning and Development in a Virtual

World beyond COVID19' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Friday. Regional Head Europe, Institute of International Education (IIE), USA, Dr Cheryl Francisconi, while terming the pandemic time as an incredible opportunity for the learning in the virtual space said that the learning and training now need to be aligned with this newly created space.

"We need to adapt to new reality with the best use of technology," Dr Francisconi said. She added further that

a culture of learning from each other needs to be created. Besides, making virtual learning more participatory and interactive and redressing the connectivity issues would be some of the important steps towards this adaptation, she added.

Mr Qaiser A. Raja, from Skills Enhancement Academy, UK, was of view that adaptation to virtual learning would be more challenging to trainers rather than the trainees that always show a better ability to get transformed with the new change.

He said that the tech-

nological shift towards the virtual learning was started much before the occurrence of the Covid19.

However, the pandemic has just accelerated this process and now it's time to embrace the change to get fully benefitted from it.

"Pakistan needs to pay immediate attention to remove the connectivity barrier for the communities."

Mr Faisal Shafiq, Social, Technology, Business Program and Project Expert, Canada, opined and added further that Pakistan has huge potential to make inroads

in virtual learning. However, besides improving infrastructure, the need assessment of the participants would play critical role in the success of virtual learning.

Brig. (R) Mohammad Yasin; Senior Advisor Capacity Building, SDPI, Pakistan, on the occasion shared the overall learning and development context with the participants and said certain steps are now required to make virtual learning really meaningful including finding ways to make such learning more interactive.

He added further that we

must prepare ourselves for the technological transformation as the pandemic has become part of the life now.

Earlier, Mr Shahid Minhas, Head CLD, SDPI, presented an overall context of the issue and said that the pandemic has posed challenges to every walk of life globally and same is true when we talk about learning and development.

He said that the real question today is how much we are ready to adapt to a complete paradigm shift, especially in the context of virtual learning.

‘Govt committed to develop space industry’

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhary Fawad Hussain Friday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government was determined to develop the space industry of the country which will put Pakistan in a new heights. The decision was taken in line with the long-term vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan of transforming Pakistan and making the country self-reliant and technologically advanced,

he said this in a Radio Pakistan's current Affair Programme. He said effective utilization of space sciences and technologies could play an important role in the socio-economic development of the country.

The move will "unlock Pakistan's potential in space sector and it is high time to invest in space technology as it is closely linked with sustainable economic growth, he added. "The history of the space programme

in Pakistan goes back to 1961 when Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) was founded by Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Abdus Salam. Pakistan has a very glowing history in the space program", He explained.

Space provides so many opportunities of research and space exploration is amongst the most fascinating ventures of modern times, he added.

The competence and capabilities in relevant areas of space science and technology for space exploration could help attain sustainable socio-economic development and improve the quality of life of the people of Pakistan, he said, adding that, the incumbent government was working on many fields at the same time. The efforts of the government would change the destiny of people of Pakistan, he assured. — APP



RAWALPINDI: An auto rickshaw and motorcycle passing through rain water accumulated at Commercial Market Road during rain in the Twin Cities. — APP

COVID-19 response: 60% of healthcare workers dissatisfied

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Islamic Medical Association and Gallup Pakistan published the results of a new survey on Friday according to which 60% of healthcare workers in Pakistan are dissatisfied with the country's response to novel coronavirus. The same survey stated that 39% of the healthcare workers are happy with the country's strategy in battling the pandemic.

Among those who expressed dissatisfaction with the response to the COVID-19 challenge, 65% are doctors and health professionals from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Yesterday, confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country jumped to 259,999 after 2,085 new infections were reported during the last 24 hours.

According to the national dashboard, there are 110,068 cases in Sindh, 89,023 in Punjab, 31,486 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 11,385 in Balochistan, 14,454 in Islamabad, 1,775 Gilgit-Baltistan and 1,808 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The country also recorded 49 fatalities in the last 24 hours taking the nationwide death toll to 5,475. The number of recoveries from coronavirus currently stands at 183,737. — DNA

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‘Rest areas underway at Multan-Sukkur motorway’

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Murad Saeed on Friday informed the National Assembly that rest areas and facilities would be available at Multan-Sukkur motorway soon. Responding to a question during question hour, he said, bidding process had been completed for the construction of rest areas and provision of other facilities at Multan-Sukkur motorway and soon after completion of work these will be opened for public.

He said that amendments in the laws had been made to hold bidding for the construction of rest areas before the completion of motorways. He said that earlier according to law, biddings and tenders were opened after the completion of motorways. Murad Saeed expressed the commitment for timely completion of ongoing road infrastructure projects.

He informed the house that several new road infrastructure projects measuring 1700 kilometers had been approved for execution. He said five major road projects will be executed under public-private partnership. The government was giving special importance to the construction of western route of CPCC, he added.

Virus recovery rate in KP around 71%

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Information and Local Government Kamran Bangash said on Friday that the recovery rate among patients from the coronavirus is around 71%, while there is a decline of 25 to 15% in the positive cases' rate.

The official made the remarks during a media briefing at the Directorate of Information. He said that the virus cases had been on the rise in the last two months but now, the number of COVID-18 patients is decreasing daily due to the efforts of the provincial government, health department and the public's cooperation.

In an area of one million, the KP government has conducted 5,000 tests and provided adequate medical facilities to the virus patients. "Doctors, nurses and paramedics staff are our front-line heroes who are risking their lives to provide medical care to patients," the special assistant said. Bangash said that Focal Person of the Prime Minister for Covid-19 Dr Faisal Sultan and Interior Minister Ejaz Shah had appreciated the steps taken by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. The public has also appreciated the provincial helpline 1700 for coronavirus-related issues, he said, adding that frequent calls regarding information and guidance were being received by the relevant department. — APP

2 constables booked for alleged robbery bid

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Motorway Police on Friday foiled a robbery attempt on the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. Two in-service Punjab Police constables were allegedly involved in the incident.

According to the details, a Honda car which had been involved in suspicious activities on the motorway for some time, was carrying two constables of Punjab Police with weapons and other persons. The persons in the car were trying to stop various vehicles under the pretext of search. A complaint of such incidents had been received by the Motorway Police which was searching for the car and the culprits.

During the patrol, motorway police officers spotted a Honda vehicle parked on the motorway, the number plate of which was not clear due to very small size. When a motorway police officer approached the vehicle, he saw two Punjab Police constables and three plain clothed men in the vehicle. Furthermore, there was no name plate on the uniform of the police constables, which added to the suspension of was the motorway police officer. He informed his control for more personnel and at the same time continued to try to confuse the accused. — APP

FPCCI opposes withdrawal of power subsidy

The Ministry of Petroleum, through a letter, had already directed the gas companies to reduce UFG losses from 6.3% to 4%, cut profit from 20% to 15%, besides reducing transmission and distribution losses but the directives were not followed, he argued

DNA

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Mian Anjum Nisar has opposed the government's move of power subsidies' withdrawal just for the revival of the stalled IMF programme, demanding rather substantial reduction in energy rates in line with the drastic fall in international oil prices. FPCCI President said that the change in subsidies regime, amid increasing financial miseries on account of COVID-19, would hit at least 18 million consumers out of a total 27 million electricity connection holders across the country, as the cost of doing business has already increased manifold,

leading to slowdown in economy and unemployment in the country. He called for taking decisions after consultation with the stakeholders in this regard, instead of depending solely on the available fiscal space. Resisting the hike of almost 110% in gas prices, he endorsed the decision of OGRA for rejecting the demand of gas utilities to increase gas prices rather reducing the rates by almost 6% for consumers, which is a good step. He said that the gas companies had recently sought the huge surge in gas tariff by up to Rs622 per mmbtu, putting an additional burden of Rs290 billion on industrial as well as domestic consumers, leading to further jump in cost of production. He said that instead of covering losses and enhancing the efficiencies, the gas utilities

of Sui Southern Gas Company and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited were planning to shift their burden to the consumers. The Ministry of Petroleum, through a letter, had already directed the gas companies to reduce UFG losses from 6.3% to 4%, cut profit from 20% to 15%, besides reducing transmission and distribution losses but the directives were not followed, he argued. Mian Anjum Nisar said that exporters and manufacturers are already greatly burdened and crushed due to rising tariffs of electricity, gas, water and other essential sources of power, leading to high costs of doing business in Pakistan as compared to our competing countries. He said that change in subsidies regime would significantly increase burden of Punjab based consumers

due to increased theft and losses in other three provinces.

According to reports, the government has already cut the power subsidies by 36% in the budget as against last fiscal year's allocation of Rs226 billion because the government has allocated only Rs150 billion for power subsidies this year. The electricity subsidies allocations in the budget are 60% less than the demand made on the basis of current concessional regime of agriculture tube-wells and exporters.

FPCCI president called upon the government to take concrete measures and formulate effective policies to reduce the cost of doing business so as to jack up the country's exports. The government should merge all taxes,

duties and contribution etc and introduce one-window operation for one-time payment of all dues he suggested.

He said that the gas prices were required to be reduced further to pass on the benefit of lower international oil rates to consumers since the producer prices of gas were directly linked to global oil prices.

He said that the energy prices were retreating across the world but the gas prices were not being reduced in Pakistan. He said the value-added industry is contributing to its role in national exports in addition to providing jobs to millions of workers. But, increased cost of doing business was hurting industry which must be curtailed to get maximum share for Pakistan economy.

Briefs

AIOU to offer admissions in MA/ M.Sc, M.Ed

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University will offer admissions in MA/ M.Sc and M. Ed programmes for the last time in Autumn 2020 semester. As per a letter received from HEC all universities of Pakistan have been directed to stop offering BA/BSc and MA/MSc programmes with the purpose to streamline the 16 and 18 years schooling and to stop using of various titles for the 16 years and 18 years degree programmes such as BS/BSc (Hons)/ MA/MSc and M.Phil/ MS/ MSc (Hons) respectively. Hence, to have a common nomenclature system the Commission gave 2020 as deadline for last offering of MA, MSc and MEd programmes. According to Director Admissions of the University, Mian Muhammad Riaz, AIOU enrolls hundreds of thousand students in MA, MSc, and M.Ed programmes each semester. However, as a responsible public sector mega university of the country, AIOU will follow HEC rules and regulations in this regard and hence would stop offering of these programmes after Autumn 2020 semester. Although this will be the last offering of these programmes however, the university will continue educational activities for those who will get admission in these programmes in Autumn 2020. – APP

Ministry to facilitate wheat importers

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of National Food Security and Research (NFSR) on Friday said that wheat importers would be facilitated on import of wheat in order to keep the domestic demand and supply smooth in local market. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research said that taxes and duties have been abolished including, Regulatory Duty by 60 percent, Custom Duty 11 percent, Sales Tax 17 percent and Withholding Tax 06 percent. Besides, the imported wheat will be exempted from the Anti-Hoarding Act imposed by the provincial governments on producing verified import record by the importers. In this regard key decisions were taken in Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet in its recent meeting. The Sindh Government to be approached to waive off d the charges @ 1.25% on import value of wheat. It said that State Bank of Pakistan would also arrange inter-bank dollar exchange cover for wheat importers, as provided to other industries. – APP

Pak Post to expand Counter Automation System

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post has decided to expand its Counter Automation System to all 83 General Post Office (GPOs). “Counter Automation System aims at computerizing the Post Office counter” an official of Pakistan Post told APP on Friday. He said that “it provides state-of-the-art point of sale terminals which can handle all the counter”. He said that Pakistan Post intended to offer collaboration with interested e-commerce partners, through selling their products using postal counters, by providing brochures or using tabloids for order placement on online Pak post shop. Pak Post was offering collect and return services for the exchange and return of articles through postal counters, he added. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Children enjoying outdoor time with sacrificial animals in capital greenery ahead of Eid. – DNA

Rs 254 mln embezzled in wheat subsidy of 2018: Shahzad Akbar

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) would probe last 10 years cartelisation in sugar industry, State Bank of Pakistan will investigate sugar mills wilful loan defaults, pledged sugar stocks according to their rules

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Accountability Barrister Shahzad Akbar on Friday said some Rs 254 million of Ramzan Package 2018 had been misappropriated by 149 flour mills tasked to provide Atta to people on subsidised rates. Talking to media, he said from out of Rs 254 million a sum of Rs 190 million has already been recovered and deposited into national exchequer. While action was also being taken against 156 officials of food department. The anti corruption department has started criminal proceedings against 70 officials of food de-

partment, who were directly involved in misappropriation of wheat subsidy. He said 149 flour mills were involved in the embezzlement of wheat from out of a total of 687 mills. Right now, due to strict measures taken, a 20 kg flour bag was available at Rs 860. In case of complaint helpline of Punjab government could be contacted. He said the Supreme Court had vacated the stay orders of Sindh High Court on the report of Sugar Inquiry Commission. Stay orders were sought by Sugar Mills Association. Supreme Court had also directed the high courts to decide pending petitions relating to sugar commission within three weeks period.



Over 100 stay orders regarding sugar mills were still pending in different courts since the last 11 years. The government had made public sugar inquiry commission report first time in the history.

Islamabad High Court had also vacated sugar mills association’s stay order after vigorous persuasion by the government. On receiving Sugar Inquiry Report, he said the federal cabinet had approved

a strategy including roadmap of taking punitive action, introducing reforms and rationalising the price of sugar. A committee headed by Minister for Industries Hammad Azhar has been constituted to finalise the reforms in sugar policy and rationalise prices of sugar. The committee has started negotiations with sugar mills association in this regard. Provincial governments, Competition Commission of Pakistan, State Bank of Pakistan, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) have been directed to investigate violations by sugar mills in accordance with their rules and report

within a period of 90 days. A reference has been sent to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate the misappropriation in subsidies given to sugar mills according to NAB ordinance 1999. The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) would probe last 10 years cartelisation in sugar industry, State Bank of Pakistan will investigate sugar mills wilful loan defaults, pledged sugar stocks according to their rules. FIA will inquire the fake export of sugar to Afghanistan and report within 90 days period. Provincial governments have been asked to probe violations by sugar mills including paying less price of sugarcane to farmers and other violations.



ISLAMABAD: A foreign citizen cycling during a pleasant weather in federal capital. – DNA

ZEE brings back brand ‘Zindagi’ on ZEE5

FIJAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Keeping the consumers’ evolving entertainment needs at the fore, Media & Entertainment Powerhouse ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEE) today announced the return of its much-loved content brand Zindagi, on its digital entertainment platform, ZEE5. Zindagi’s shows have been highly appreciated by audiences for its realistic appeal, superlative character portrayals, captivating performances and its ability to satiate the evolving content preferences of the viewers. Catering to this strong level of global consumer demand, Zindagi is returning with a bigger promise to not only offer its rich original content library, but to also create fresh new shows which will be thought provoking, with a bold multicultural narrative.

Hammad Azhar inaugurates pre-launch of RCCI Expo 2020

RAWALPINDI: Hammad Azhar, Industries and Production Minister on Friday inaugurated the pre-launch of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s (RCCI) Virtual International Rawal Expo 2020. On this occasion, the minister assured his ministry’s full support to the expo. He said that through digital platform, domestic and local products can be better advertised. He welcomed the initiative of expo being organised amid Covid-19. He lauded RCCI for coming with an innovative idea of Virtual expo and expressed hope that others will follow the same. This is in line with PM Imran Khan vision of Digital Pakistan, he added. Earlier, RCCI President Saboor Malik briefed the minister about the expo and other activities of the chamber. The Virtual International Rawal Expo will run from August 7 to 16th. What is special about the virtual platform is that there is no time limit for participating in the exhibition. Any stall holder or visitor will be able to participate on the online platform at any time in 24 hours. Companies from various sectors will be able to display their products. Senior Vice President Noshewan Khalil Khan, Vice President Hamza Sarosh, Group Leader Sohail Altaf and Chairman Rawal Expo Nasir Mirza was also present on the occasion. – DNA

Archbishop urges to follow SOP’s

RAWALPINDI: Archbishop of twin cities, Dr. Joseph Arshad has urged the followers to strictly follow the guidelines issued by the government in order to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus. In a message for Christian community, he said that the lives of millions of people around the world have been affected, the economies of countries around the world are also on the verge of collapse, millions of people have lost their jobs, adding that it is indeed a warning for our reformation and urged the whole nation to bow God for salvation from this pandemic. The government is very clear in its decisions and it is now responsibility of the citizens to follows all Standard Operating Procedures, he mentioned. The church is our mother and she loves her children immensely. Today, as the leader of the church, I pray for all the families who have been affected by the Corona’s disease. Let us all move forward together to face the current situation with renewed vigor, with complete trust in God by acknowledging that God is our protector and guardian, he said,

Govt hasn’t changed retirement age, ended pension

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has debunked all the rumours regarding any changes in retirement age and end of pension funds. There was news circulating on social media that the government has abolished its pension scheme and will be reducing the retirement age. The news was, however, declared fake and misleading by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ali Muhammad Khan in a Senate session on Friday. He said that no such decision had been taken so far. The clarification was made after a calling attention notice regarding the issues was passed in the Senate by Senator Rehman Malik and Senator Mir Kabeer Shahi. Shahi had said that if pensioners already just get between Rs12,000 to Rs14,000 and if this too is stopped, they will find themselves in a very bad position. To this, Khan has replied that the news was just a rumour from social media and there was no truth behind it.

NPMC for removing price disparity

ISLAMABAD: The National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC) Friday advised the concerned authorities and the provincial governments to ensure smooth supply of essential food items at affordable prices and remove price disparity. The committee chaired by Additional Finance Secretary (Exp) while discussing the price trend of essential food items also directed the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) to play a proactive role to check cartelization and other anti-market practices. The NPMC meeting was attended by the representatives from the provincial governments, Islamabad Capital Territory, Ministries of Industries, Interior, Commerce, Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, National Food Security & Research, Federal Board of Revenue, Competition Commission of Pakistan and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Mumbai hotel case adjourned

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad hearing the Mumbai hotel attack case on Friday adjourned proceeding till July 22. In today’s hearing, taken up by the ATC judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan, the prosecution completed its arguments in a separate plea filed for seeking three months’ time for the production of foreign witnesses. The court after listening to the arguments reserved its verdict on this plea that will be announced on July 22. However, the main case was also adjourned till date.

Webinar on “Opportunities for Pak-Uzbek business women”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: THE PLATFORM by CGSS, Islamabad and Uzbekistan Women Association jointly organized a webinar on, “Opportunities for Pak-Uzbek Business Women” to discuss the entrepreneurship opportunities for women of both countries. Ms. Mehreen Gul, Director, CGSS commenced the webinar and stated that Pakistan and Uzbekistan share a common culture and both countries have countless opportunities of business for each other. Women entrepreneurs have immense potential and only need a proper platform. THE PLATFORM by CGSS is willing to provide this platform for women of both Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

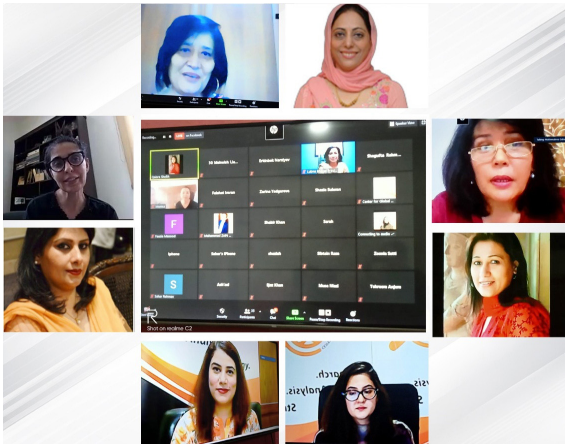
Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, Founder, All Pakistan Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Pakistan shared that in the beginning women were very reluctant to join businesses as there were social constraints and obstacles and to overcome these issues, a separate chamber for business women was initiated. Ms. Gulnara Makhmudova, Chairperson of Business Women Association, Uzbekistan stated that women in Uzbekistan are very active in business. She highlighted that they started from 4-5 women and now have more than 16000 women attached with the Women Association. She commented that despite of many opportunities available in Uzbekistan for business there is still a lack of training and awareness when it comes

to entrepreneurship, and in this sector, Pakistan can be of great help if we provide trainings and awareness sessions to business women in Uzbekistan. Ms. Naheed Memon, CEO, Oracle Power PLC & Former Chairperson Sindh Board of Investment, Paki-

stan gave a comprehensive overview of the industries and sectors where women from Uzbekistan and Pakistan can work together to better utilize the natural resources available in both countries like Cotton. Ms. Zamira Yunusova, Director of “SharqiliboslariMarka-

zi” in the Ministry of Textile Industry, Uzbekistan expressed her opinion to initiate more cooperation in the textile, garment and fashion field. She mentioned her interaction with Iqra University, Pakistan and praised the immensely talented women in textile business. Ms. Qaisra Sheikh, Coordinator Women Entrepreneur VP Seat & Former President WCCI Lahore, stated that we have a lot of similarities with the business women in Uzbekistan our financial and culture barriers are also similar in both countries but the beginning of women Entrepreneurship in various sectors is a good way to make business easier for women in both countries. She suggested the signing of MoU’s with Uzbekistan’s Women Association, arranging of more

webinars for individual sectors and initiating a Pak-Uzbek Women Portal. Ms. ShaziaSuleman, CEO & Director, Inter-Global Travels & Tours, Pakistan mentioned that more focus needs to be given to tourism opportunities, as tourism is one of the major pillars in Pakistan and Uzbekistan economies. Women Associations can work better when they visit each other and more people to people contact is initiated. She suggested increased collaborations to promote women entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan and Pakistan specially in the tourism sector. The webinar was moderated by Ms. Palwasha Nawaz, Project Executive, THE PLATFORM by CGSS and was attended by almost 30 participants from Uzbekistan and Pakistan.



Briefs

FBISE: SSC results on Monday

ISLAMABAD: The annual results of Secondary School Education (SSC) 2020 under Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Islamabad would announce on 20th July (Monday). According to press release issued by the FBISE, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood grace the results announcement ceremony as chief guest. The ceremony will be held in the Federal Board Auditorium at 02:15 PM. The SSC results will be uploaded on the FBISE website. The ceremony will be held under mandatory safety measure in wake of COVID-19. — APP

Minister suggests open debate on CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Friday categorically said China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) programme was being rolled back and suggested open debate on it in this august house.

Replying to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the Minister informed the Senate that CPEC was a strategic project adding no one could even think to roll back it under any foreign pressure. He said Special Economic Zones (SEZ) proposed to be established under the CPEC programme were included Rashakai SEZ (CPEC), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (1000 Acres), Allama Iqbal Industrial Park (CPEC), Faisalabad, Punjab (3278 Acres), Bostan SEZ (CPEC), Balochistan (200 Acres), Dhabeji SEZ, Thatta, Sindh (1530 Acres), ICT SEZ, Islamabad (Yet to be decided), Mogpandass SEZ, Gilgit Baltistan (250 Acres), Mirpur SEZ, AJK (1088 Acres), Momand Marble City SEZ, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (350 Acres) and, Jinnah Pakistan Steel Mills, Karachi, Sindh (1500 Acres).

Mohmand Marble City SEZ, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa comprising of 350 acres was part of CPEC SEZ Program and formal application to notify Mohmand Marble City as SEZ under SEZ Act-2012 was being prepared. He said Rasiha Special Economic Zone was granted SEZ Status and it would cost \$ 128 Million (Rs. 20 Billion approx.). Bostan Economic Zone was also part of CPEC, he said. — APP

IRSA releases 316,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Friday released 316,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 301,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1455.39 feet, which was 69.39 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 149,200 cusecs and outflow as 175,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1225.95 feet, which was 185.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 36,100 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 212,600, 202,900 and 67,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 51,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 32,100 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

No power shortfall in country

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson Ministry of Energy (Power Division) has said that there was no power shortfall in the country and 23,000 MW electricity was available against recorded demand of 22,566 MW at 0830 hours. He said that all Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) were getting electricity from the national grid station as per their demands, said a statement issued here on Friday. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz taking interest in Quran relics during an exhibition at local Mall. — DNA

Facilitation desk of Pakistan Customs inaugurated at ICCI

Tahir Abbasi Senior Vice President ICCI thanked the guests and participants for attending the inaugural ceremony and hoped that the establishment of facilitation desk of Pakistan Customs would be very beneficial for ICCI members

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has taken another positive step for the facilitation of its members by establishing a Facilitation Desk of Pakistan Customs in its premises, which was inaugurated by Dr. Arslan Subuctageen, Member (Legal & Accounting – Customs) and Syed Muhammad Tariq Huda, Member (Customs Operations) of FBR in a ceremony held at ICCI.

With the establishment of Fa-

ilitation Desk, ICCI members would now be able to avail all Customs related services and get their issues resolved within the premises of ICCI instead of visiting various offices of Pakistan Customs.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Arslan Subuctageen, Member (Legal & Accounting – Customs) and Syed Muhammad Tariq Huda, Member (Customs Operations) of FBR said that the facilitation desk would provide customs related services to the business community and help in resolving their issues.

They said that availability of Pakistan Customs facilitation desk in the premises of ICCI was a great facility that must be availed by the business community.

They said close relations between business community and Pakistan Customs would help in improving the Pakistan's economy. They also shared their plans with the business community for controlling smuggling and improving tax revenue of the country. They appreciated the role of ICCI for providing enhanced facilities to its members by establishing facilitation desks of various organi-

zations in its premises.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry thanked Dr. Arslan Subuctageen Member (Legal & Accounting – Customs) and Syed Muhammad Tariq Huda Member (Customs Operations) FBR for their cooperation in setting up Facilitation Desk of Pakistan Customs at ICCI.

He said the purpose of arranging this facility at ICCI was to provide customs related services and resolve issues of business community under one roof that

would facilitate them in business promotion.

He said that ICCI was in the process of setting up facilitation desks of other organizations including ICT Administration, Islamabad Police, NADRA to provide more facilities to its members and help them in promoting business activities.

Tahir Abbasi Senior Vice President ICCI thanked the guests and participants for attending the inaugural ceremony and hoped that the establishment of facilitation desk of Pakistan Customs would be very beneficial for ICCI members.

NIC to hold webinar on 'Importance of 3D computer vision'

ISLAMABAD: National Incubation Centre will hold an online webinar on the "Importance of 3D computer vision" on July 25 to discuss its classical problems and their solutions. The webinar will focus on fundamental problems in 3D computer vision and some classical techniques for solving these problems.

According to an official, the webinar will discuss why using neural networks with 3D vision is much more challenging than its 2D image counterpart. He said that they would introduce some of the open issues in the field and future directions for research in this area.

He said that guest speaker will be Sheikh Ziauddin who is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow and an adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. He will discuss the problem and solutions for using 3D computer vision. — APP

CTP opens automated driving test system

RAWALPINDI: CTP Rawalpindi on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Ahsan Younas has launched an automated driving test video system for driving test here. According to a CTP spokesman, the CTP driving license branch is providing all facilities to the applicants under one roof at One Window Operation. He informed that the CTP officers concerned would directly monitor the driving test through online video facility. CPO Rawalpindi Ahsan Younas had directed the authorities concerned to introduce modern facilities at the driving license branch to facilitate the driving license applicants and eliminate corruption and nepotism. The CTP was using computerized sign testing system for sign test and now driving test has also been attached with online facility, he said adding, 12 counters were set up at one window operation to facilitate the citizens. — APP

Women integral part of PTI family, says Munaza Hassan

Success of PTI was built on their shoulders and their unquestionable loyalty to PTI is at the center of this struggle

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) MNA Munaza Hassan has said that women are integral part of Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) family.

In a twitter message, she said that women are cornerstone of this Tehreek and the most dedicated supporters, workers and voters. "Success of PTI was built on their shoulders

and their unquestionable loyalty to PTI is at the center of this struggle" she added. She said that a network of development projects is being spread in every part of

the country so that no area suffers from a sense of deprivation, adding that these projects will bring progress and prosperity as well as improve tourism and economic conditions. — APP



ISLAMABAD: President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran, Ajmal Balouch meeting with Zahid Hussain, Chairman Pakistan Furniture Association, General Secretary Kashif Mehmood is also present. — DNA

President lauds Federal Tax Ombudsman's role

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi Friday while lauding the Federal Tax Ombudsman's (FTO) role in providing relief to the taxpayers, emphasized the need to create more awareness on the forum's efficacy through traditional and digital media. In a meeting with Federal Tax Ombudsman Mushtaq Ahmad Sukhera, who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president appreciated the FTO in resolving complaints of the taxpayers against the maladministration of tax authorities and using own motion powers to unearth irregularities in the taxation system. The president expressed his satisfaction over the proper utilization of traditional and digital media by FTO

Office to promote awareness among the taxpayers regarding free services for redressal of complains and efforts to digitalize FTO office using IT based Complaint Management Information System (CMIS). He also eulogized the development of a mobile phone application to facilitate the taxpayers in complaint registration process as well as establishment of paperless office environment in FTO Secretariat. President Alvi emphasized that there was a need to create more awareness about the efficacy of the forum by utilizing the traditional as well as digital media. President Dr. Arif Alvi also observed that there was room for improvement to the Act/Law of Federal Tax Ombudsman to make this institution more effective in order to provide speedy

justice to the taxpayers. He assured his support to the institution in the discharge of its duties and functions. Federal Tax Ombudsman Mushtaq Ahmad Sukhera presented report on performance of FTO office during

2019 along with comparative figures of last five years, which showed significant growth in almost all measurable indicators of performance from 2015 to 2019. President Arif Alvi was apprised that sanction and pay-

ment of stuck up tax refunds of Rs. 5864.94 million were facilitated to the taxpayers and 82.59% recommendations made by the FTO Office were implemented by FBR and its subordinate officers during 2019.

He apprised the president that the majority of the taxpayers' complaints were about grievances in the assessment processes which was not the FTO's mandate. However, improvement in the law of FTO office would empower it to look into such matters. Federal Tax Ombudsman reported that during 2019, FTO office received 2510 fresh complaints and 202 own motion cases involving huge revenue and glaring maladministration, were registered. After adding 458 complaints carried over from previous

year and some inspection report based cognizance, all registered cases totaled to 3171. Out of these, 2633 complaints were disposed of during the year 2019, compared to 1880 complaints redressed during the calendar year 2018. The Federal Tax Ombudsman said that the FTO Office conveyed its recommendations to FBR regarding misuse of zero-rating facility and audit of manufacturers, misuse of jewelry export and illegal gold trade, unlawful compulsion of non-residents to file returns and irregularities in seizure, auction and smuggling of non-custom paid vehicles and others. The FTO said in total 25 research studies and proposals had been sent to FBR during 2019 for systemic improvement.

Mayor urges youth to recite Quran

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Programs regarding the copies of the Holy Quran should be conducted so that the new generation can develop the habit of reciting the Holy Quran, said the Mayor Islamabad, Sheikh Anzar Aziz here on Friday. He expressed this while visiting an exhibition of old copies of the Holy Quran in a shopping mall in Islamabad. Mayor urged the new generation to develop the habit of reciting the Holy Quran.

He said that people are facing a number of issues in the current situation. The solutions of all the issues are available in the Holy Quran. But, the distance between people and the Holy Quran has been increased to an extreme level. The issues being faced by masses can be resolved by reciting the Holy Quran side by side following its teachings. One gets peace of heart by seeing the copies of the Holy Quran, he added. Sheikh Anzar Aziz said that the incumbent government of PTI is continuously ignoring the MCI. The government is not providing funds to MCI, therefore no any mega project could be started in the city. However, MCI is giving its best by utilizing the available resources. The work done by MCI in current situation caused by the spread of coronavirus is in front of everyone. MCI played a remarkable role in resolving the water issue in Islamabad. But, the government is continuously creating hurdles for MCI, he further said.

7 arrested for possessing weapons

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police in their crackdown against illegal weapons rounded up seven persons from different areas and recovered weapons from their possession, said police spokesman. He informed that City, Sadiqabad, Civil Line, Wah Cantt, Gujar Khan, Jaldi and Saddar Baroni Police on the directives of Rawalpindi City Police Officer (CPO), launched crackdown and arrested seven persons namely Sharif Khan, Numan, Niaz, Zeeshan, Asif, Togeer and Danish and recovered illegal weapons including a 32 bore revolver, two 9MM pistols and four 30 bore revolvers from their possession. — APP

All main rivers continue to flow normal: FFC

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that there is no riverine flood situation in the country as all main rivers are continues to flow normal. As per Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, yesterday's upper air circulation (extension of Monsoon Low in upper air) over Northern Maharashtra (India) has moved Westwards and now prevails over Southern Gujarat (India) & adjoining areas. Besides this, a weak Seasonal Low prevails over Eastern Balochistan resulting into penetration of Arabian Sea moist currents into upper part of Pakistan upto 5000 feet. Also yesterday's Westerly Wave trough continues to persist over Northern Afghanistan. As per the prediction of FFD, Lahore, the prevailing meteorological conditions, over the next 24 hours, may result into scattered wind-thunderstorm/ rain of moderate intensity over D.I. Khan Division (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and D.G. Khan Division (Punjab) with isolated thunderstorm/ rain over the upper catchment of all the major rivers, South-East Sindh, East Balochistan including the rest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. — APP

Rwp: 4805 corona patients recovered

RAWALPINDI: More than 4805 COVID-19 patients have been recovered so far while 272 died due to pandemic in the district. According to daily situation report issued by Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) Punjab, 15,987 coronavirus suspects have been brought to the quarantine facilities of the district, out of which 5715 cases were tested positive who were provided the required treatment and 4805 discharged after recovery. The DPR said that results of 213 people were awaited while 10442 were tested negative. — APP

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Website: www.islamabadpost.com.pk

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Flying fiasco

THE massive issue of licences obtained by Pakistan pilots, has taken a new twist. Weeks after Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan told parliament that 40 percent of the licences held by Pakistani pilots were fake (later changed to 'dubious') and had been wrongfully acquired, the director general of the CAA has written to senior officials in Oman's aviation department stating that all licences were in fact genuine. This puts matters in a further state of uncertainty. After all, who are we expected to believe? The damage done by the aviation minister's remarks has already been considerable with the European Union air safety body banning PIA's planes from landing at airports within the EU. IATA has also expressed concerns over the safety of Pakistani licences as has the US which has banned Pakistani charter planes and said it is displeased with the safety records of pilots. The DG of the CAA has now said in the letter obtained by the media that 94 out of 104 licences have already been checked and found to be valid and authentic. He has also said the CAA has confirmed this to the aviation authorities in several countries, especially those whose airlines employed Pakistani pilots. It is difficult to understand what went wrong and why the aviation minister chose to make a dramatic announcement in parliament without first verifying the facts. All that this has caused is massive disarray and a global loss of trust in the safety and reliability of PIA. The action taken by the EU and also several UK airports will undoubtedly damage the revenue of PIA, which is already struggling to remain afloat, and could bring it to its final downfall. There has been some conjecture over social media that the real purpose is to privatize PIA.

PALPA, the union of Pakistani pilots, has also said that the letter from the CAA confirms its own position that all commercial and transport licences belonging to pilots are in fact in good order and that these persons have cleared the required examination. While some questions still need to be answered, the most significant is why Ghulam Sarwar made his statement without prior discussions within the cabinet or with the CAA. The problem is that no matter how many letters are now written, the shadow over PIA will continue to hang. The airline can regain at least some of its former prestige only if this shadow is lifted and the aviation minister is able to explain on what he based the information threatening the jobs of scores of pilots that he gave out in public.

Demographic change

ACCORDING to a study published in the journal 'The Lancet', the world may look like a considerably changed place by the year 2100. The study has utilized data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 and applied it to 183 countries to predict future trends based on mortality, fertility and migration. First off, it notes that the current pandemic will have no significant impact on the global population's size. The scientists expect that Pakistan's already massive population may reach about 314 million in 2062 and then decline to 248 million by 2100. This is based on what we already know about patterns of disease, population growth and death rates. The study says that the largest country in the world by 2100 will be India with 1.09 billion people, followed by Nigeria with 791 million and China with 732 million. The US and then Pakistan will follow with considerably smaller population sizes. What this change will mean for the world in terms of politics, economics and the ongoing global struggle for power is difficult to predict. India's vastly expanded population may not however give it any increase in influence over the world given that it is expected to have the lowest life expectancy among the top 10 large countries. This indicates that the poor socio-economic statistics for South Asia will not change. Scientists also believe that India and China may see a huge decline in working age populations which would hamper their economic growth. This factor could lead to a shift in global power with nations possessing bigger populations who are working gaining the edge. The increased age of population had generally meant for the world a growth in healthcare costs and other dynamics which have an impact on the development and growth of that particular country. The study predicts that by the end of the century India, Nigeria, China and the US could emerge as dominant powers. This is of interest given that while India and China are predicted to emerge as global economic powerhouses, the same is currently not true of Nigeria which struggles with internal unrest and also poor development. At the moment, the Covid-19 pandemic may have affected local healthcare systems throughout the world. However, scientists who have analyzed the data believe this impact will not last and other factors will come into play – leading to a change in the manner in which countries are ranked on the basis of their power and influence in a changing world. Right now it may be difficult to say how accurate the projections will be. But they are certainly of interest as we try to understand the future of our globe, the demographics which affect it and what it will look like as a global community in the coming years.

Under the auspices of justice

Dr. Obid Khakimov

Almost immediately after independence in Uzbekistan, a system of strong social policy was formulated amid the transition to a market economy, providing for effective measures in the field of social protection. The state provides free secondary education, guarantees a basic package of medical services, and social support for particularly vulnerable groups of the population and provides benefits for low-income families. With a new President of Uzbekistan, the social direction in the ongoing reforms has significantly been enhanced.

THE political history of mankind was the endeavor for building a just society. Yet everyone understands justice in their own way, which concerns not only the individual level, but also the level of various social groups connected by common economic and political interests. For this reason, the approaches to the definition of justice and its basic principles are different. The following basic concepts are distinguished.

The first and the oldest is power. «Justice is the advantage of the stronger», the ancient Greek sophist Frasinach formulated. The second is the contractual concept of justice, in which the principles of justice are determined by real or hypothetical agreement between people, has been formed for a long time from Aristotle to Kant and has become dominant in modern conditions. However, in the framework of this model, disputes continue on the basis of principles that are necessary to agree on justice.

George Moore proposed an intuitive model where justice is established in an intuitive way or in an intuitive agreement between all actors in the society. However, since the "intuition" of people is different, it is hardly possible to build a coherent and logically sound system of rules on this model. In connection with the foregoing, it seems important to analyze the social policy of Uzbekistan in the context of the main approaches to determining the justice of the social system.

Social policy in Uzbekistan

Almost immediately after independence in Uzbekistan, a system of strong social policy was formulated amid the transition to a market economy, providing for effective measures in the field of social protection. The state provides free secondary education, guarantees a basic package of medical services, and social support for particularly vulnerable groups of the population and provides benefits for low-income families.

With a new President of Uzbekistan, the social direction in the ongoing reforms has significantly been enhanced. In the Strategy of Action on five priority areas for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021, approved on February 7, 2017, the development of the social sphere is one of the key priorities. In this direction, the Strategy provides: a consistent increase in real incomes and employment; improving the system of social protection and health protection; implementation of targeted programs for the construction of affordable housing, the development of social infrastructure, providing improved living conditions; development of education and science; improvement of state youth policy. Large-scale tasks for the development of the social sphere this year were set in the Message of the President to the Parliament on January 14 of this year. "We will accelerate the continuation of large-scale social reforms to radically improve the lives of people, which over the past three years have been carried out on the basis of the principle "Human interests are above all", the President noted in the Message.

Among the tasks set were the development of the State Poverty Reduction Program, the formation of modern entrepreneurial skills among the population, on which it was supposed to spend \$700 million. As part of current year's state program, aim of the government was to create 500 thousand new job places. It was planned to create an effective system of work with elderly, especially with those who are alone, increasing the amount of social benefits allocated to them, and development of social adaption program for children from orphanages providing them with jobs and later with apartments. It was envisaged to increase wages, pensions, scholarships and allowances ahead of inflation and to expand the coverage of benefits to low-income families.

Social measures during pandemic

However, the solution of the tasks was significantly complicated by force majeure- the COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine restrictions associated with it. Production volumes decreased in 196 thousand enterprises, about 95 thousand individual entrepreneurs suspended their activities. 13 thousand food enterprises, 45 thousand trade enterprises, 19 thousand service enterprises, 7 thousand transport enterprises were especially hard hit. As a result, the number of unemployed has grown significantly. The number of calls to employment centers increased to 150 thousand, which is three times more in comparison with January and February months of the current year. So now much more people require government social support because of the coronavirus pandemic. And this support was immediately provided, for which almost immediately the anti-crisis fund was created amounting 10 trillion sums.

In Uzbekistan, there is an existence of informal sector in the economy and labor migration. Part of population engaged in these sectors also found themselves in a very tough situation due to the COVID-19. However, it is very difficult for the government to provide direct support to them due to the lack of transparency in their income. Nevertheless, in the direction of supporting this group of individuals, which are essentially self-employed, the state is making significant efforts. Self-employed were allowed all types of entrepreneurial activities not prohibited by law, and a mechanism for their registration notification was introduced. Representatives of more than 60 self-employed professions are exempted from income tax.

In addition, another option was investigated to support those whom it is difficult to provide direct assistance. The state began to stimulate businesses to provide appropriate support to citizens, compensating for its costs in this direction through various benefits and preferences for taxes, leasing, loans, and access to necessary recourses that is by reducing budget revenues.

The social responsibility of the state also manifested itself in relation to citizens of Uzbekistan who work and find themselves abroad during quarantine. At the expense of the government, 39 thousand compatriots have already been returned

to Uzbekistan. Measures are being taken to return another 12 000 who find themselves in a difficult situation abroad.

Extreme circumstances are usually a kind of test for the strength of both people and government. In this regard, the pandemic clearly confirmed Uzbekistan's commitment to a strong social policy. Social support amid a reduction in state budget revenues due to the pandemic not only did not weaken, but, on the contrary, was significantly strengthened, and in relation to those categories of the population that were most affected by the pandemic.

On the principles of justice

It is noteworthy that since the beginning of independence, Uzbekistan has been pursuing a strong social policy, regardless of the ideological and political changes in the world over the past thirty years, and despite the pandemic.

Strong social policy means that state institutions carry out a certain redistribution of the social product in favor of the least protected and most vulnerable members of society. That is, our government fully meets the criteria of justice, built on a fair attitude of people in relation to other individuals.

At the same time, in Uzbekistan over all these years, unlike in many other countries, the need for a strong social policy has not been questioned. The utilitarian concept of justice, popular in the modern world, has never taken much public attention in our country. That is, it can be stated that Uzbekistan initially chose a model of state policy corresponding to the concept of fair justice. Why did it happen?

In Uzbekistan for thousands of years over which a traditional worldview has been formed that people should help each other, and the poor and weak, who are in difficult situations should receive support from those who can provide it, from neighbors, from society, from relatives. These principles of public morality have widely influenced the structure of social justice, which is based on the protection of the most vulnerable members of society.

Based on this, it can be concluded that in Uzbekistan the formation of social policy has been determined precisely by the worldview features of the nation, their ideas about justice. And that is why social priorities are especially popular. The social policy pursued by Uzbekistan combines intuitive perceptions of the people about justice with Rawls ideas about the social justice of government institutions. This can be interpreted as the fact that a consensus reached in Uzbekistan between the government and society regarding this issue, that is, a real agreement regarding the principles of justice in the public consciousness of Uzbekistan, which Rawls insist on. And it is precisely the fact that state policy that is built on the basis of people's beliefs is the key to its success and effectiveness.

– The writer is the Director of the Center for Economic Research and Reforms under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

A Heart-wrenching Image of Innocent Kashmiris

ZakirUllah

Despite killing civilians, the Indian forces accused the Kashmiri people, whether they're civilians or freedom fighters, for state terrorism. In a recent tragic incident, they have blamed Kashmiri fighters for instigating people to assault Indian forces; but, these allegations are explicitly despicable and baseless. The image of a 3-year child along with slain grandfather exposed a fascist and real face of the Indian government, the wide-spread human rights violations and deliberate killings of Kashmiris acknowledged the viciousness of RSS Ideology backed by Indian central govt

AFTER repealing Article 350 in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK), a free hand had been given to Indian armed forces to arrest, torture, persecute and kill any civilian. The Indian atrocities are increasing day-by-day, and Kashmir has been witnessing the brutalities, restrictions, curfews, and killing of innocent civilians in front of their families. To subdue the Kashmiri voices, the Indian central government introduced several draconian laws, including: Public Safety Act, Armed Forces Special Power Act, Official Secrets Act, and the National Security Act, etc.

Most recently, the world has seen a toddler sitting on the chest of his dead grandfather's body and was inconsolably crying for help; this tragic event caused outrage in residents living in Indian-held Kashmir. The heart-wrenching pictures of a small child sitting on his slain grandfather's chest in the Indian Occupied Kashmir have sparked a new debate about rampant Indian violence. It's not the first time of such a dreadful incident; the Kashmiri people are resisting against Indian oppression for the last seven decades, and their resistance would be continued till their independence from Indian occupation.

This week, thousands of people in IOK have orchestrated a massive protest, denouncing the Indian forces for brutally killing a 65-year old innocent person named Bashir Ahmad, in front of his little grandson without any specific reason. Besides, the security forces stated that Kashmiri fighters had opened fire on them, which led to a gun-fire battle resultantly killing civilians.

According to the deceased person's family members, Bashir was dragged and stretched out from his car by Indian forces and killed him brutally during the relentless onslaught. The Indian forces always tried to overcome their aggression by killing and hurting Kashmiris in IOK. This incident reminds us of the continuous exercise of Indian's cruel and ruthless violence, but who cares about these innocent Kashmiris? The picture of this child and his helplessness, suppression, and blood of innocent civilians demonstrate a lot about the pseudo champions of International human rights.

Despite killing civilians, the Indian forces accused the Kashmiri people, whether they're civilians or freedom fighters, for state terrorism. In a recent tragic incident, they have blamed Kashmiri fighters for instigating people to assault Indian forces; but, these allegations are explicitly despicable and baseless. The image of a 3-year

child along with slain grandfather exposed a fascist and real face of the Indian government, the wide-spread human rights violations and deliberate killings of Kashmiris acknowledged the viciousness of RSS Ideology backed by Indian central government.

Another young boy was killed in the Kulgam area by Indian forces last week mercilessly, and unfortunately, he was portrayed as a terrorist to hide the Indian atrocities. On the one side, the Kashmiri people accelerated their vigorous efforts for independence movement since the imposition of Covid-19 lockdown; contrarily, the central Indian forces have also intensified their so-called counterinsurgency operations against innocent civilians.

According to the Coalition of Civil Society, during this lockdown period, the Indian army conducted more than a hundred military operations in Indian-Held Kashmir, killing at least 250 Kashmiri innocent people. The world doesn't have words to explain the grievances and subjugation of the Kashmiri people.

More specifically, after Indian unilaterally attempt to illegally annexed and seize the identity of Kashmiri people, the Indian forces have unleashed and launched a new wave of atrocities upon innocent civilians. On the so-called militancy pretext, hundreds of young civilians had been tortured and killed to disparage the legitimate right of self-determination of Kashmiris but, it should be cleared that their blood wouldn't go in vain. For the last seventy-two years, the Kashmiris have been consistently opposing illegal Indian occupation, and now, this resistance had been altered into several new strategies.

The young Kashmiris have been becoming a new face of independence movement; they're getting assistance from social media to expose the savaged and ferocious face of Indian forces that threatened and caused fear for the Indian government. Consequently, the Indian administration imposed severe restrictions in the already tormented and oppressed area to suppress the voices of Kashmiris. The Kashmir valley is like a powder keg in the whole South Asian region; almost three wars had been fought between two nuclear power states. The Indian oppression over Kashmiris people is worsening day-by-day, and recently, obliterating the identity of Kashmiri people by repealing the Article 350 and 35A further damaged the freedom struggle of these suppressed people. The extensive magnitude of Indian brutalities, unilateral withdrawal of special status, the subjugation

of Kashmir Identity, violent suppression, human rights abuses, massacre and persecution of innocent civilians, and curbing-off the demonstrations have a detrimental impact on regional peace and stability.

The Indian government's unconstitutional attempt to snatch the identity of Kashmir is a deliberate provocation of waging another war in the region, which would ultimately destabilize the regional peace. The International community should reconsider the nitty-gritty of escalating situations; otherwise, it would become too late. Besides these atrocities in IOK, the abrogation of special status also sabotage the Ladakh territorial status, and it could provoke China to take legal action against India, as they previously did.

Additionally, the perpetual threat of armed conflict between three regional nuclear powers is also vivid, and India must think below the nuclear latency before taking any dismissive step.

Indian forces couldn't overwhelmingly subjugate and oppressed the freedom struggle, and they have witnessed Kashmir's intensive resistance for the last seventy years. Kashmiri shall not dislodge their resilient struggle against coercive strategies imposed by Indian forces and will keep resisting and countering utopian Indian hegemony.

Substantially, the Kashmiri people sacrificed thousands for lives on the name of freedom, and it would be continued till their last breath. Considering the viciousness and restricted policies of Indian government vis-vis resilient resistance of Kashmiri civilians, the International community must utilize available resources against the extremist regime of India for peaceful resolutions of Kashmir dispute.

Albeit, the combined vigorous efforts of the International community would save humanity from this on-going pandemic. Still, it's uncertain whether the International community would discern its sheer responsibility to protect the suppressed people of Kashmir from a permanent epidemic of Indian aggression.

Let the world must know that the blood and killing of innocent Kashmiri people wouldn't be futile and worthless; they shall keep opposing and resisting the Indian fanatical, fascist ideology, and silence of the International community till their last breath.

– The writer is an Independent Researcher and freelance columnist, based in Islamabad.

Briefs

72 NFL players positive for coronavirus

LOS ANGELES: Seventy-two NFL players have tested positive for COVID-19, the league's players union confirmed. In the first major announcement of coronavirus results concerning the NFL, the NFL Players Association said dozens of players had tested positive as of July 10. The tally was revealed in a database described as a "one-stop shop of information" for players.

It was unclear, however, how many of the league's roughly 2,900 rostered players had been tested or how often. The test results come as the NFL and NFLPA are locked in negotiations over the terms and conditions of pre-season training and exhibition games. Players have requested more time to address fitness concerns and want no pre-season games in August.

NFLPA president J.C. Tretter, a center for the Cleveland Browns, accused the NFL last week of failing to prioritize player safety in the face of the pandemic. The league rejected a 48-day training camp recommendation from a joint NFL-NFLPA committee in favor of a 23-day session before the first of two pre-season games, down from four in prior years. However Tretter said league chiefs were risking the entire season if they failed to fully address concerns over the virus. — APP

Father wanted me to play for Pakistan: Usman Qadir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani spinner Usman Qadir, has expressed disappointment for being dropped from the national squad, saying his father late legendary spin-wizard Abdul Qadir wanted him to play for Pakistan.

Usman opened up on being dropped from the Pakistan squad without featuring in a single match. The 26-year-old was part of the Men in Green squad during Australia tour, last year, and the T20I series against Bangladesh earlier in 2020. "I was disappointed and hurt after being dropped from the side without playing a single match. I have achieved my goals in U19 cricket and Big Bash League and will continue to put in the hard yards, in order to ensure that I can go on to play for Pakistan," website quoted him as saying. Usman, who left Pakistan in order to pursue his ambitions in Australia during 2018, also spoke about the lack of chances in domestic cricket. "I had moved to Australia, because of lack of chances in domestic cricket, but my father wanted me to play for Pakistan which is why I came back," he said. "The same thing has started happening again (lack of chances) but it will create a controversy if I speak more on this," he said. — APP

Spain's medics demand job security

MADRID: Spain hailed its medic heroes during the coronavirus crisis, but as infections fall many front-line staff have been left depressed and traumatised by their experience, fearful of an insecure future.

With 36.3 percent of public healthcare workers without a permanent contract, according to one survey, demonstrations calling for change are growing.

"We have to end this low-budget health system," says Patricia Calvo, a 40-year-old doctor, who made her own protective gear out of bin bags at the height of the pandemic.

"I finished specialising in 2010 but I'm still on a temporary contract," says the doctor from the southern city of Granada where she works with 14 other medics, most of whom are in the same situation.

"There was a major outbreak at our medical centre, people died and (at the start) we had to deal with everything on our own."

When the virus hit, costing more than 28,400 lives, Calvo and her husband, who is also a doctor, spent months without hugging their children for fear of infecting them. — APP



MADRID: Real Madrid C.F. players celebrating with the trophy as they are crowned La Liga champions for a record 34th time. — DNA

Boris Johnson hopes for return to normality by Christmas

"It is my strong and sincere hope that we will be able to review the outstanding restrictions and allow a more significant return to normality from November, at the earliest, possibly in time for Christmas"

LONDON: Britain could return to normality from the coronavirus outbreak by Christmas, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Friday, despite fears of a second wave of cases over winter. Johnson sketched out a timetable for easing the remaining lockdown measures in England, including lifting homeworking guidance and reopening sports stadiums and live theatre. "It is my strong and sincere hope that we will be able to review the outstanding restrictions and allow a more significant return to normality from November, at the earliest, possibly in time for Christmas," he said. Current government guidance is

for employees to work from home where they can.

But under the latest proposals, Johnson said employers can have "more discretion" and discuss with workers whether it is safe to return to the office from August 1. Asked if that was at odds with his own government's advice, Johnson also said people could still continue to work from home.

From the same date, most remaining leisure venues, including skating rinks and casinos could also reopen, subject to social distancing regulations. Wedding receptions with up to 30 guests would also be allowed. Johnson also said the state-run National Health Service

(NHS) would receive an extra £3 billion (\$3.8 billion, 3.3 million euros) to prepare for a possible winter spike in cases.

"Even as we plan for the worst, I strongly believe we should also hope for the best," he added. Fears of a second wave of infections were raised this week when scientists said nearly 120,000 people could die in hospitals alone from September to June next year.

The warning was put forward as a "reasonable worst-case scenario" if no counter-measures were put in place. Johnson acknowledged the risks of reopening, particularly for winter when the NHS is often un-

der greater strain because of seasonal flu outbreaks.

But he said councils across England would be given new powers to impose local restrictions quickly in the case of outbreaks, instead of a renewed nationwide lockdown. Leicester, a city in central England, has been under local lockdown for the last two weeks because of a spike in cases. Johnson gave sports fans something to cheer about by announcing the intention to allow crowds to return to stadiums, subject to successful test events, from October.

Mass gatherings have been banned since March, and the showpiece English Premier League has been

played behind closed doors, without fans, since it resumed.

Among the pilot events will be the World Snooker Championship, the Glorious Goodwood horseracing festival and two county cricket friendly matches later this month. Britain has seen more than 45,000 deaths in the outbreak — the worst in Europe — leading to criticism about the government approach to tackle the crisis.

On Friday, the health ministry ordered an urgent review into how death tolls are counted, after a study claimed an overestimation because figures included people who died long after recovering from the virus. — APP

Manchester United aiming for top 4 finish

DNA

MANCHESTER: Manchester United have "earned the right" to challenge for a top-four finish in the Premier League after a "fantastic" spell of post-lockdown form, says boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. United maintained their relentless pursuit of a place in the Champions League with a hard-fought win against Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park.

Solskjaer's side were under pressure after Leicester City's earlier victory over Sheffield United and responded with a victory that keeps them in fifth place, level on points with the Foxes but with an in-

ferior goal difference.

It extended United's unbeaten run to 19 games in all competitions, and Solskjaer believes United, who are still in the FA Cup and Europa League, have set themselves up for a thrilling end to the season.

"No-one thought in January that we would be in with a shout for top four," he said. "We have done fantastic since the restart. These are the games that matter. That is the thing at Manchester United, you have to step up and show your personality."

United were made to work for their victory, Marcus Rashford breaking the deadlock with a stylish finish in first-half stoppage time before playing his part in a

sweet move involving Bruno Fernandes that was rounded off by Anthony Martial in the 78th minute.

Palace felt a real sense of injustice, furious that they were denied a penalty just before United took the lead when Wilfried Zaha tangled with Victor Lindelof, and then seeing a potential 55th-minute equaliser from Jordan Ayew ruled out by VAR for a very marginal off-side.

It meant Roy Hodgson's side slumped to their sixth consecutive league loss and their night was made worse when defender Patrick van Aanholt suffered a dislocated shoulder after trying to prevent Martial scoring United's second.

NZ want SA, Argentina out of Super Rugby

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Rugby on Friday outlined plans for a Super Rugby competition next year that drops South African teams and Argentina's Jaguares, in what could herald a major shake-up.

NZR said the planned revamp to the flagship southern hemisphere competition would contain New Zealand's five existing teams, one from the Pacific and two to four from Australia.

"We want teams that are competitive and that fans will want to watch go head-to-head, week-in, week-out," chief executive Mark Robinson said. — APP

Round-the-world Race postponed

PARIS: The Ocean Race, a crewed round-the-world sailing race, scheduled to take place in the autumn of 2021, has been postponed to October 2022, the organisers announced on Thursday. The postponement of the race, formerly known as the Volvo Ocean Race, was a result of the coronavirus pandemic, organisers said.

It is now due to start from Alicante in Spain in October 2022, circumnavigate the globe in nine stages over nine months and finish in Genoa in the summer of 2023.

"We now find ourselves in unprecedented times and our first priority is with all those who have been and continue to be affected by the pandemic," said Richard Brisius, the Race Chairman of The Ocean Race on the competition website. This decision was welcomed

by the skippers of the Imoca class, the flagship boats in another quadrennial race, the Vendee Globe, a single-handed non-stop round-the-world race, which will start on November 8, and who can now take part in The Ocean Race.

"These changes are positive, as they mean that The Ocean Race becomes a real possibility as a new challenge between now and the next Vendee Globe," said German skipper Boris Herrmann who is competing in the Vendee in Team Malizia. "It's a completely different kind of event, more international, crewed, but extremely interesting for me as a sailor."

The last edition, in 2017-18, was won by Team Dongfeng (China), led by French skipper Charles Caudrelier, after 126 days of racing. — APP

US Open: Kvitova says some players will not go



NEW YORK: Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová says some players will not go to the US Open if current coronavirus restrictions continue.

The US Open is due to be played without fans in New York from 31 August. The country is still reporting tens of thousands of new coronavirus cases daily and possible quarantine rules for players are unclear.

"I know a few players will definitely not go if the restrictions are like they are now," Kvitová told BBC 5 Live. The 30-year-old Czech added: "I'm still thinking of what everything will look like, what the restrictions will be, how many people we can take and if they quarantine

us." World number one Novak Djokovic has previously said he is "not sure" whether he will play, while defending men's champion Rafael Nadal has also expressed reservations.

The US has reported more than 3.4 million cases of coronavirus, and more than 136,000 deaths nationwide, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Kvitová - who is ranked 12th in the world - is one of several top players competing in front of fans at the Bett1 Aces exhibition tournament in Berlin. It is the first sporting event in Germany to take place with spectators, who have to socially distance in the stands. — DNA

US reports record 77,000 cases

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States on Thursday broke the daily record for the highest confirmed COVID-19 cases as a staggering 77,000 reported they had contracted the virus, as per a Reuters tally. The hardest-hit areas in Texas and Arizona are running out of places to store bodies as their morgues fill up and are bringing in coolers and refrigerated trailers. US deaths peaked in April, when the country lost on average 2,000 people a day. Fatalities have steadily fallen,

averaging 1,300 a day in May and under 800 a day in June before rising again in July, according to a Reuters tally. Americans have become increasingly divided on issues such as the reopening of schools and businesses and wearing face masks in public, hindering the fight against the virus. The current tally of 77,217 cases surpasses the previous record set on Friday when cases rose by 69,070. In June, cases rose by an average of 28,000 a day, according to a Reuters tally. In July, they have risen by an average of 57,625 a day.

Canada: man shot over mask incident

MONTREAL: A 73-year-old man was killed by police in Canada just hours after refusing to wear a face mask in a grocery store, the country's public broadcaster the CBC reported Thursday. The man allegedly assaulted a grocery store employee Wednesday after he was asked to follow laws about wearing face coverings to slow the spread of the coronavirus, the CBC said, citing Ontario police. The man refused, according to an employee at the store in Minden, about 120 miles (200 kilometers) north of Toronto, and fled after the incident. Police were called but did not stop the suspect's car "in the interest of public safety," they said. Instead, they used his license plate to find his house. — APP

Williams set to play inaugural Kentucky tournament

LOS ANGELES: Serena Williams will make her return to the WTA tour at a new hardcourt tournament in Kentucky in August, organizers said Friday.

The Top Seed Open said 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams and 2017 US Open winner Sloane Stephens will be in the field when play begins on August 10.

Williams hasn't played since representing the United States in the Fed Cup in February, before the WTA tour along with most of global sport shut down amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Both the WTA tour and the men's ATP tour are scheduled to resume in August. Williams has already said she plans to enter the next scheduled Grand Slam tournament, the US Open, which is slated to begin in New York on August 31. The Kentucky tournament was one of two new events confirmed by WTA chief executive Steve Simon last week as additions to the tour's revamped calendar. WTA action is scheduled to resume with the Palermo Open in Italy starting on August 3. — APP

Real Madrid crowned La Liga champions

DNA

MADRID: Zinedine Zidane says sealing a first La Liga title with Real Madrid in three years has made him happier than winning the Champions League.

Real wrapped up the title with a game to spare as they edged past Villarreal at an empty Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium. Karim Benzema fired between the legs of Sergio Asenjo and added a controversial second from a retaken penalty.

In bizarre fashion, Sergio Ramos had rolled the first attempt for Benzema to smash in but the effort was disallowed. Vicente Iborra pulled one back but it mattered little to Real as the club wrapped up their 34th Spanish title. Zidane's side have won all 10 of their matches since Spanish football restarted in June. They head into the final day of the season with an unassailable seven-point lead over second-placed Barcelona.

"This is better than anything. It takes a tremendous effort to win La Liga," said the Real Madrid boss. "After 38 matches, you have more points than anyone else. After lockdown and everything, it's astonishing."

President lifts lifetime ban on weightlifters imposed by PWF

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Friday lifted the lifetime ban on 12 weightlifters imposed by the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation (PWL) in 2016 on charges of forming a parallel federation.

The president took the decision while disposing of representation filed by weightlifters Hafiz Zafar Iqbal, Khizar Hayat and Shuja-ud-Din Malik against the Wafaqi Mohtasib's finding in December 2019.

The PWLF had imposed lifetime ban on Hafiz Zafar Iqbal, Khizar Hayat, and Shuja-ud-Din and nine others in January 2016 for forming a parallel federation.

The aggrieved weightlifters approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib against the Federation's decision which closed the case on December 11, 2019, in terms of Regulation 23 (1) (i) of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Investigation and Disposal of Complaints) Regulations, 2013 in view of the fact that the matter had taken place way back in 2015-16.

The weightlifters filed representation with the President of Pakistan on December 30, 2019, against the decision of Wafaqi Mohtasib. The president modified the impugned closure findings of the Wafaqi Mohtasib and disposed of the representation of complainants by lifting the ban imposed by Pakistan Weightlifting Federation. — APP

Briefs

130 accounts attacked this week, reveals Twitter

WEB DESK

SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter revealed Friday that 130 accounts of prominent personalities and organisations were targeted in a hack that included the likes of Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Apple and others. Twitter said that the hackers were able to gain control of a small number of accounts and send tweets from them. The company added that it was continuing to assess whether hackers were able to access private data of the targeted accounts. Accounts of celebrities and political figures including Joe Biden, Kim Kardashian, Barack Obama and Elon Musk were hacked during the cyber attack on Wednesday. Twitter reiterated that it was working with impacted account owners. The FBI's San Francisco division is leading an inquiry into the Twitter hacking, it said in a statement on Thursday, as more Washington lawmakers called for an accounting of how it happened. The high-profile accounts that were hacked also included rapper Kanye West, Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos, investor Warren Buffett and Uber Technologies.

UAE Mars probe launch rescheduled for July 20

TOKYO: A Japanese rocket carrying the first Arab mission to Mars will blast into space on Monday, after being delayed by bad weather, the launch company said Friday. The lift-off of the United Arab Emirates' "Hope" probe, originally planned for Wednesday, is now set for 6:58am Monday (21:58 GMT Sunday) from Tanegashima Space Centre in southern Japan, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said. The UAE, made up of seven emirates, is set to be the first Arab nation to send a probe to Mars. The probe is one of three racing to the Red Planet, with Chinese and US rockets also taking advantage of the Earth and Mars being unusually close: a mere hop of 55 million kilometres (34 million miles). "Hope" – "Al-Amal" in Arabic – is expected to start orbiting Mars by February 2021, marking the 50th anniversary of the unification of the UAE. Once there, it will loop the planet for a whole Martian year of 687 Earth days. The goal is to provide a comprehensive image of weather dynamics in the Red Planet's atmosphere. – APP

'UK virus death toll overestimated'

LONDON: Britain has suffered the deadliest outbreak of coronavirus in Europe but a new study suggests the health authorities are overestimating the toll by including people who died long after they recovered. More than 45,000 deaths have been recorded in patients who tested positive for coronavirus, a grim figure that has sparked accusations that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government bungled its response. But an article for the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine published Thursday reveals a statistical anomaly in the way data is gathered by the public health agency in England. They say that in compiling its daily coronavirus toll, Public Health England (PHE) simply checks its list of lab-confirmed cases to see whether they are still alive. "A patient who has tested positive, but successfully treated and discharged from hospital, will still be counted as a COVID death even if they had a heart attack or were run over by a bus three months later," they write. They suggest this could explain variations in the English daily toll, and why deaths there have not fallen in the same way they have in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which collect their own data. – APP

Yemeni govt rejects UN peace plan

"The problem is that the UN Yemen envoy is sometimes not a mediator. He supports the demand of the Houthis," the third official said

DNA

AL-MUKALLA: The internationally recognized government of Yemen claims that the latest draft of a peace plan submitted by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths is biased toward the Iran-backed Houthis and "undermines" the government's legitimacy, three government officials told Arab News on Thursday. "The proposal suggests accepting the current situation and the changes on the ground including Houthis as an armed group," one Cabinet minister, speaking on condition of anonymity, told

Arab News. The minister said the main "bone of contention" is "three references that the UN envoy wants to convince everyone are irrelevant" – namely the GCC Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and Security Council Resolution 2216. Another government official said the latest draft of the peace plan includes a nationwide truce and demands that the government pays public servants. The official said that the government believes those items contradict the "three references" that oblige the Houthis to hand over their weapons, leave Sana'a and other areas under their control,

and allow the government to return to the capital. "The plan gives legitimacy to the coup that Houthis plotted in late 2014. The fait-accompli policy cannot give international legitimacy to the putschists," the second government official said. The government also believes that the Houthis should share the cost of paying government salaries, claiming the Iran-backed militia has taken large sums of money from seaports, banks and telecom companies. A third senior government official told Arab News that the Houthis should be required to stop executing their opponents and seizing their properties in Sanaa,

to release detainees, and to open Sanaa airport and Hodeida port. "The problem is that the UN Yemen envoy is sometimes not a mediator. He supports the demand of the Houthis," the third official said. Yemen's Foreign Minister Mohammed Al-Hadrami said on Wednesday that the government rejected the latest draft of the peace plan and would abide by the previous draft, which did not include the controversial points. Griffiths refutes the government's accusations, saying the proposed peace plan asks all parties to cease hostilities and immediately

engage in talks based on the three references, which he described in an interview with UN News as "the only way to break with the violence of the past and end this conflict comprehensively and sustainably." Griffiths recognized that major issues between the two sides remain, but said: "There are always points of convergence that a mediation process can build on. Yemen is no different. We will continue to work with the parties to find a consensual path forward to achieve these mutual goals and pave the way for bringing this conflict to a sustainable end." Without specifically naming

the Houthis, Griffiths called for rebels to immediately halt offensives in the provinces of Jawf and Marib. "The continued assault on Marib is unacceptable. I am afraid this assault could seriously undermine the prospects of peace in Yemen," he said. Several previous rounds of peace talks between the government and Houthis in Geneva, Biel and Kuwait have failed. The government insists that the Houthis must disarm before they can share power, while the Houthis wish to discuss powers-sharing and other political arrangements before withdrawing from cities under their control.

British Airways retires Boeing 747s

DNA

LONDON: British Airways has said it will retire all of its Boeing 747s as it suffers from the sharp travel downturn. Airlines across the world have been hit hard by coronavirus-related travel restrictions. "It is with great sadness that we can confirm we are proposing to retire our entire 747 fleet with immediate effect," a BA spokesman told the BBC. The UK airline is the world's largest operator of the jumbo jets, with 31 in the fleet. "It is unlikely our magnificent 'queen of the skies' will ever operate commercial services for British Airways again due to the downturn in travel caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic," the spokesman added.



RABAT: Pakistan ambassador to Morocco Hamid Asghar attending housing moot. – DNA

Spain orders culling of almost 100,000 mink

WEB DESK

MADRID: Almost 100,000 mink at a farm in north-eastern Spain are to be culled after many of them tested positive for coronavirus, health authorities say. The outbreak in Aragon province was discovered after a farm employee's wife contracted the virus in May. Her husband and six other farm workers have since

tested positive for the disease. The mink, bred for their prized fur, were isolated and monitored closely after the workers became infected. But when tests on 13 July showed that 87% of the mink were infected, health authorities ordered for all 92,700 of the semi-aquatic animals to be culled. Authorities said financial compensation will be given to the company that runs

the farm, based in a village 200 km (125 miles) east of Madrid. Along with Madrid and Catalonia, Aragon is one of the coronavirus hotspots in Spain, where more than 250,000 infections and 28,000 deaths have been recorded since the start of the pandemic. Joaquin Olona, Aragon's minister of agriculture, told reporters on Thursday that the decision to cull the mink

was taken "to avoid the risk of human transmission". Mr Olona stressed that it was not clear if "transmission was possible from animals to humans and vice versa". But one possibility, he said, was that an infected farm worker unwittingly transmitted the disease to the animals. Another unsubstantiated theory was that the animals passed on the disease to workers, he said.

Trump niece's memoir makes sales record

NEW YORK: A new book on Donald Trump written by his niece sold nearly a million copies on the first day it went on sale in the United States, its publisher said. Mary Trump's "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man" is billed as the first unflattering portrayal of the US president by a family insider. Mary, a psychologist whose father was Trump's oldest brother Fred, accuses the president of hubris and ignorance, and says he fits the clinical criteria for being a narcissist. The 950,000 copies sold Tuesday, including pre-orders as well as audio and digital versions, "is a company record" for the Simon & Schuster publishing house, it said in a statement. The White House has dismissed the memoir as a "book of falsehoods". The president's younger brother Robert Trump went to court to try to block publication, arguing that Mary was violating a non-disclosure agreement signed in 2001 after the settlement of her grandfather's estate, but to no avail. – APP

Russia accused of hacking vaccine trials

MOSCOW: Britain, the United States and Canada accused Russia on Thursday of trying to steal information from researchers seeking a COVID-19 vaccine. The three nations alleged that hacking group APT29, also known as Cozy Bear and said to be part of the Russian intelligence service, is attacking academic and pharmaceutical research institutions involved in coronavirus vaccine development. Britain's National Cyber Security Centre made the announcement, which was coordinated with authorities in the US and Canada. "It is completely unacceptable that the Russian Intelligence Services are targeting those working to combat the coronavirus pandemic," Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in a statement. "While others pursue their selfish interests with reckless behaviour, the UK and its allies are getting on with the hard work of finding a vaccine and protecting global health." The persistent and continuing attacks are seen by intelligence officials as an effort to steal intellectual property, rather than to disrupt research. The campaign of "malicious activity" is ongoing and includes attacks "predominantly against government, diplomatic, think-tank, healthcare and energy targets," the National Cyber Security Centre said in a statement. – DNA

Hundreds of flights cancelled in Xinjiang

DNA

XINJIANG: More than 600 flights have been cancelled in Urumqi, the capital of China's Xinjiang province after a case was confirmed there. A 24-year-old woman tested positive on Thursday after displaying symptoms. Three of her close contacts tested positive. However, they were asymptomatic. The cancellations at Urumqi Diwopu International Airport account for more than 80% of the day's total. From Friday, a number of airlines including Juneyao Airlines and Shenzhen Donghai

Airlines require all passengers travelling to and from Urumqi to show a negative nucleic acid test taken within seven days. Passengers must display a "safe to travel" health code, on an app which aims to identify potential virus carriers, the Chinese state-run Global Times says. China Eastern Airlines has already put those restrictions in place. Urumqi also suspended the city's subway services on Thursday. Mainland China confirmed 10 cases on Friday. Nine of those were imported from overseas, the country's health authority said.

China says US travel ban would be 'pathetic'

DNA

BEIJING: China says any US travel ban on members of its Communist Party would be "pathetic", in the latest sharp exchange amid souring bilateral ties. The New York Times had earlier reported the Trump government was considering the move, although it is still in draft form and could be rejected. The Chinese Communist Party

has 92 million members and how a ban would be enforced is uncertain. The US this week removed Hong Kong's preferential trade status, after China brought in a controversial new security law for the territory. President Donald Trump has also criticised China over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic as well as its military build-up in the South China Sea, its treatment of Muslim minorities and massive trade surpluses.

"Govt seems more interested in bashing former rulers than to provide relief"

Economic development through construction wishful thinking: Dr Waqar Masood
Wheat crisis engulfing entire country due to mismanagement: Mian Zahid Hussain
Govt lack experts who can take timely, correct decisions: Dr. Murtaza Mughal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Economic experts and business leaders on Friday lauded the PM Imran Khan's move to develop the construction sector but cautioned that focus on only one sector will not revive economic activities. They said all the important sectors deserve attention but the government lacks economic experts who can take timely and correct decisions based on ground realities. Speaking at a seminar organized by FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Insurance, former federal secretary finance Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, for-

mer provincial minister, and convenor FPCCI Mian Zahid Hussain, Convenor of the FPCCI Committee Dr. Murtaza Mughal, Chartered Accountant Tariq Hussain and others said that the economy is without direction which is hitting almost every sector. They said that the government has disappointed masses while instability, inflation, and anxiety is increasing in the masses. The government seems more interested in bashing the former rulers and less inclined to provide relief to the masses, they added. The participants said that mafia has taken economy and masses as a hostage, the government promise to



reduce prices but there is nothing on the ground and nothing has been done to deter the profiteers. The growth rate during 2017-18 was 5.8 percent but the consumption of petrol was less than what was consumed during the last month amid negative growth rate but the issue

in which billions were plundered was hushed up. Similarly, the consumption of cement has also raised many eyebrows but to no avail which indicate collusion in mafia and authorities. The speakers said that the wheat crisis has surfaced again and it is engulfing the

whole country for which the mafia as well as the inefficiency and mismanagement of the rulers are to be blamed. Coronavirus has not damaged Pakistan as it did in the developed countries which is a blessing otherwise the situation would have been different, they said, adding

that the threat of another wave of locust seems not enough to unite federal and provincial governments for a coordinated response. Dr. Murtaza Mughal who chaired the seminar said that coronavirus has brought to limelight the need for health insurance which should be made mandatory by the government. He said that almost eight percent of the vehicles in Pakistan are not insured therefore vehicle insurance should also be mandatory which will benefit masses, and stabilize the insurance industry. Other participants included Makhdoom Taseer, Qazi Asif Sayeed, Muhammad Arif, Sadruddin, and Mr. Ishtiaq.

Barcelona residents urged to stay home

DNA

BARCELONA: Residents of Spain's second city Barcelona have been urged to stay at home unless absolutely necessary after a rise in coronavirus cases, the Catalan government said Friday. The regional government also ordered the closure of cinemas, theatres and nightclubs and banned gatherings of more than 10 people in the coastal city, spokeswoman Meritxell Budo told a press conference. Almost four million people are affected by the move in one of Europe's most visited cities, where restaurants will have to limit capacity to one-half the usual amount. Residents have also been asked not to flee to second homes outside the northeastern city, for a period expected to last about two weeks.

Briefs

Indian troops martyr three Kashmiris

DNA

KULGRAM: Indian troops martyred three Kashmiris in the Kulgram district of the occupied valley on Friday, another fresh act of state terrorism in a series of many conducted by New Delhi this year.

According to a report published by the Kashmir Media Service (KMS), three Kashmiri youths were martyred during a cordon and search operation in the district's Nagnad Chimmer area. The three youths martyred by the Indian troops are yet to be identified.

Tensions in the restive valley have risen after India abolished Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants special status to Indian occupied Kashmir, and deployed an unprecedented numbers of troops in the region.

KSA candidate for WTO chief draws on Vision 2030 expertise

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's candidate for the top job at the World Trade Organisation stands out from the other contenders through his more managerial approach to the role.

Mohammad Mazid Al Tuwaijri, the former minister of economy and planning and Saudi air force pilot, believes that there are lessons to be learnt from Saudi Vision 2030. The framework, which he helped produce in 2016, intends to reduce the Kingdom's economic dependence on oil and develop public service sectors in fields including health, education, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism by 2030.

"This is the fifth year and I am proud to see this transformation taking place in a very difficult region. The core concepts are economic diversification, empowering the private sector, [having more] women in power," he said.

Mr Al Tuwaijri sees the management and leadership aspects of the WTO as similar in nature to the Kingdom's transformation. He is one of eight candidates who appeared before the WTO's General Council – the decision-making body composed of envoys from the 164 member countries – to pitch their suitability for director general this week.

This year's shortlist also includes three women and three African candidates, as well as a Brexiteer. The other candidates are former Nigerian foreign and finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Egyptian former diplomat Hamid Mamdouh; and Kenya's former WTO general council chair, Amina Mohamed. South Korean Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee is also in the running.

KP tourism sector to be open after Eid-al-Adha

SHUGRAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Friday said following the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, we were taking concrete measures for the development of tourism sector in the province to attract people to enjoy the serene beauty of our hilly areas. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugural ceremony of three new roads in Shugran, Manoor and Paprang valleys. He said that we would open the tourism sector after Eid-ul-Adha with the consultation of the federal government, we have also prepared Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in this regard. Mahmood Khan said that like other sectors coronavirus also badly affected tourism but we would continue our journey to the development of the province, promotion of tourism in the Hazara division would change the fate of the region. – APP

No immediate threat of food shortage, says Fakhar Imam

Talking to VoA during an interview with Ali Furqan, the federal minister said that the Met office has predicted ten percent surplus rains during the monsoon season which may affect Khareef crop in the country as climate variations are causing a change in traditional monsoon rains every year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Fakhar Imam, has said that there is no immediate threat of food shortage in the country despite the ongoing locust attack and the prediction of surplus Monsoon rains. However, the government is planning strategy for next year in view of declined agricultural production. Talking to VoA during an interview with Ali Furqan, the federal minister said that the Met office has predicted ten percent surplus rains during the monsoon season which may affect Khareef crop in the country as climate variations are causing a change in traditional monsoon rains every year. Fakhar informed that a strategy to deal with expected Monsoon rains and floods is also being discussed with provinces at national command and control centre.

He said, Ministry of Food in collaboration with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) will make all-out efforts to save crops from rains and floods, saying, "We can make an estimate of threats like locust, rains and

floods which can be prevented to some extent but complete protection is not possible for crops under the open sky."

The minister said that the government is working on the crops insurance policy to make it easier to benefit the farmers. Pakistan Meteorological Department has predicted floods in country's eastern rivers due to surplus monsoon rains from July to September this year and risk of urban flooding will persist in big cities. Pakistan's Agriculture is facing attack of locust along with severe weather conditions while Met office has predicted that monsoon rains will provide ideal environment for the growth of locust.

Minister for Food Security said that fertilization of locust is a big threat for Pakistan's agriculture and the government is working on preventive measures in collaboration with the provinces. He informed that locust stayed in Rajasthan desert last year due to untraditional rains in October and November and because of its fertilization in the desert it spread in such areas where it had never reached before. Although all provinces are affected by locust attack, but the damage remained below



fifty percent in all areas. According to United Nations' body for food security, if Pakistan's 25% agricultural production is effected by locust, it can cause increase in prices of commodities along with five billion dollars loss to economy. Fakhar Imam told that the Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced national emergency and allocated 26 billion rupees to fight the locust attack. He said that federal and provincial governments are working to eliminate locust under a comprehensive strategy and trying to stop fertilization of locust with chemical spray by using three planes of ministry of food security along with five helicopter of Pakistan

Army. The minister said that the government is buying 11 more planes to increase the spraying capacity as helicopters are being used in crops area whereas planes are being used in deserts. Pakistan's agricultural land is under attack by locust nourished in Iran, Oman and African countries. Answering a question regarding the expected loss, the federal minister said that loss due to locust attack on agricultural land is being estimated as it has damaged crops in all the four provinces, and there is a risk of low production this year, however, there is no immediate danger of food shortage. According to official figures, fifty seven million acre area was affected by locust this year of which twenty three million acre was agricultural land.

The minister for food security told that because of weather conditions causing unusual rains, wheat production target was not achieved this year due to which the government had allowed private sector to import wheat to overcome lack of 1.5 million ton. It is pertinent to mention here that United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in a recent report has warned of food security crisis in Pakistan due to

locust attack. The federal minister said that the government has approved subsidy of 50 billion rupees for agriculture including 37 billion rupees for provision of subsidized fertilizers to farmers. He further illustrated that agriculture is back bone of Pakistan's economy and contributes 19.3 percent of GDP. He also informed that indirect contribution of agriculture in GDP also stands at 20 percent as 70-80% raw material of country's industry also comes from agriculture. He said government has declared agriculture as its top priority because 42 percent of working population depends on agriculture sector which had been neglected for last 20 years.

The minister said that his ministry is working on branding of agriculture commodities along with research and adaptation of modern techniques in farming. He told that brand act and seed act have been introduced after 20 years as there was no law earlier due to which India got registered Pakistani basmati rice. Moreover, he said that packaging standards of Pakistan's fruits and agri-products are also being improved to help increase import of Pakistani products as well as to make these commodities cost-effective.

Rupee against US dollar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee weakened by 34 paises against US dollar in the interbank on Friday to close at Rs 167.33 compared to the last closing of Rs 166.99. However, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of Dollar in open market were recorded at Rs 167 and Rs 167.7 respectively. The State Bank of Pakistan reported that in interbank, the price of Euro appreciated by 18 paises to close at Rs 190.54 against the last day's trading of Rs 190.36.

Muharram processions with strict SOPs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has allowed devotees to hold majalis and processions during Muharram as long as they strictly implement precautionary measures. The decision was made in a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and Shia ulama at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday. president hailed the role of religious scholars in containing the spread of the novel coronavirus in the country during Ramadan and Eidul Fitr. Minister for Religious Affairs Noorul Haq Qadri, in a statement, said that unanimous SOPs have been formulated in the light of proposals and will be sent to the provinces and ulema after approval of the National Command and Operation Centre.

Kazakhstan working closely with the WHO

DNA

NUR SULTAN: In his video address for the press conference of the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan in Nur-Sultan, Dr. Hans Kluge, the WHO Regional Director for Europe, noted the following: "Having received over the past few months new knowledge about the COVID-19 infection and measures to combat it, the WHO has introduced new codes to classify this disease. There have been reports from Kazakhstan of a marked increase in cases of pneumonia, one of the explanations of which is COVID-19." Dr.Kluge thanked Kazakhstan's Ministry of Health for agreeing to confirm the possibility of testing in the WHO reference laboratories. As such, it has been confirmed that there is no new dangerous infection in Kazakhstan; all previously reported cases of detected pneumonia according to the WHO classification relate to COVID-19. Earlier, some foreign media outlets mistakenly indicated the appearance in Kazakhstan of some unknown disease. This caused a substantial commotion in the world.

China sees year-on-year increase of 8.4 pc in FDI

DNA

BEIJING: China saw a year-on-year increase of 8.4 percent in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the second quarter of 2020, China Economic Net reported on Friday. The actual investment from the United States grew 6 percent year on year in the first half of 2020. Meanwhile, China's non-financial outbound investment to countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) surged 19.4 percent year-on-year to \$8.12 billion, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOC) announced.

The 8.4% increase in FDI in Q2 made an obvious comeback when compared with Q1 (10.8% decrease).

It demonstrates that the expectations and confidences of the foreign investors remain stable and positive after China has rapidly contained the coronavirus epidemic and taken the lead in resuming work and production. According to data released by MOC, China's actual use of FDI in April 2020 reached 70.36 billion yuan (\$10.14 billion), up 11.8 percent year on year. In May, China saw FDI in the nonfinancial sector surge 7.5 percent on a yearly basis to 68.63 billion yuan



(\$9.87 billion).

In June alone, the total foreign investment actually utilized climbed 7.1 percent year on year to 117 billion yuan (\$16.72 billion).

A total of 472.18 billion yuan (around 67.93 billion U.S. dollars) in FDI was used in the first six months of 2020, a year-on-year decrease of 1.3 percent, narrowing by

2.5 percentages than that in the first five months.

In terms of industries, FDI into the high-tech service sector saw faster expansion, with the sector's actually utilized FDI rising 19.2 percent year on year.

FDI in services of information, inspection and detection, and R&D and design, surged by 20.9 percent, 8.7 percent and 35.7 percent, respectively.

In terms of source of FDI, the actual investment from China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Singapore and the United States climbed in H1 2020, up 4.2 percent, 7.8 percent and 6 percent year on year,

respectively. Chinese President Xi Jinping said the fundamentals of China's long-term sound economic growth have not changed and will not change, in a reply letter to global CEOs on July 15, 2020.

He also pledged that China will keep deepening reform and expanding opening-up, and provide a better business environment for the investment and development of Chinese and foreign enterprises.

To ensure the stability of foreign investment, China's related government departments have rolled out a series of policies and regulations, MOC added.

UN appeals for \$10.3bn to fight coronavirus

NEW YORK: The United Nations is making an appeal for \$10.3 billion (£8.2 billion) to help fight the coronavirus pandemic, its largest ever fundraising call. The UN says up to 265 million people could face starvation by the end of the year because of the impact of Covid-19.

The money will be for used for low income and fragile countries. The UN warned that failure to act could undo decades of development. It initially asked for \$2 billion in its first coronavirus appeal in March.

The coronavirus pandemic is having a huge impact on the world's poorest, the BBC's Imogen Foulkes reports from Geneva. This revised appeal is a record, but, the UN says, wealthy countries have thrown away the financial rule book to protect their own economies, and must now do the same for poorer nations. If they do not, the UN warns, the world faces a series of crises, with millions pushed into starvation. – DNA

Trade with Afghanistan increased

Andleeb said that improving bilateral ties with South Asian countries remained a priority of the govt's foreign policy

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Andleeb Abbas Friday informed the National Assembly that despite COVID-19, trade with Afghanistan had increased by 25 percent. Responding to questions during question hour she said, "We have open border with Afghanistan and trade with our neighbour increased by 25 percent despite the threat of COVID-19." She said that Pakistani exports had increased due to the policies of the government. She said that improving bilateral ties with South Asian countries remained a priority of the government's foreign policy. She said despite hostile Indian attitude, Pakistan took a milestone step by deciding

to open the Kartarpur corridor and released captured Indian pilot after Indian misadventure of Balakot, as a peace gesture.

Pakistan wanted to resolve all outstanding issues with India including Kashmir dispute through peaceful means, she added.

She, however, said that India must create an enabling environment for a result-oriented dialogue to take place.

The Parliamentary Secretary said India wanted to isolate Pakistan at the international level. But Pakistan significantly improved its relations with neighboring countries including Iran and Afghanistan in the last two years, she added. She said today the situation was that India was facing isolation due to various reasons. She said India was the biggest aggressor in the South Asian region.

India passes 1m virus cases

WEB DESK

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil has now tallied more than two million confirmed virus cases. It was less than a month ago that Brazil reached one million cases - and there is little sign that the rate of increase is slowing. Brazil, which is home to around 210 million people, is the second worst affected country behind the US. But President Jair Bolsonaro, who tested positive for the virus, has continued to play down its health risks and fought against social distancing orders. More than 74,000 people have died from the virus - and the true figures are believed to be even higher. The Indian Health Ministry has confirmed that with more than 34,000 new infections in the last 24 hours, India has breached the one million mark.

Govt working to ensure smooth supply of electricity: NA told

FAIZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Omar Ayub Khan on Friday informed National Assembly that the government was working to improve the distribution system for the smooth supply of electricity throughout the country. Responding to a question during question hour, he said that it was unfortunate that previous governments did not make any investment for improvement of electricity distribution system. He said the government was establishing grid stations besides reducing distance among feeders for smooth supply.

He said at present over 23,000 megawatts was being transmitted by power

distribution companies. Some 80 per cent feeders had been cleared of power pilferage and efforts were being made to clear remaining 20 per cent feeders, he added. Responding to another question, he said that the government was providing 290 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) against 190 mmcf quota to K Electric in Karachi to overcome energy shortages in the city.

The minister said K-Electric was a private company and its total power demand stood at 3400 megawatts. The government was ready to provide additional power to K-Electric from the national grid but no investment was made in distribution system of the company during the past 10 years, he continued. He said that oil

had also been provided to K-Electric for the generation of electricity.

The minister said K-Electric and National Transmission and Despatch Company were also being pressed to set up 500 kv grid station and distribution points. At present, there was no shortfall of electricity as sufficient generation was available to meet demand of electricity in the country, he told.

Hence no loadshedding was being carried out in the country due to generation shortfall, he added. However, the minister said load management was being carried out by distribution companies (DISCOS) on the basis of aggregate technical and commercial losses recorded on each feeder in compliance of directives of the federal cabinet.

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

