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Palestine indebted to Pakistan for support, says Amb. Rabei

Govt committed to eradicate corruption: FM

Shibli's tribute to Captain Sarwar Shaheed



Briefs

FM Qureshi says Govt committed to eradicate corruption

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD (DNA): Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that the government is committed to eradicate corruption from the country through better legislation with the support of opposition.

In a statement on Monday, he said that the drafts relating to FATF, National Security and National Accountability Bureau have been sent to opposition.

He said the government expects that the opposition will look into the matter with an open heart and after response received from the opposition, these matters will be discussed sitting together. The Foreign Minister said process of legislation continues as treasury and opposition have different points of view on different laws.

He said a 24-member parliamentary committee has been constituted to work out on these differences for a better legislation. He said that laws against corruption are not aimed to harass anyone unfairly but those who looted the country ruthlessly should be brought to book.

Pakistan mission in Dhaka fully functional

DNA

DHAKA: Balance of relationships in South Asia has changed and India is moving towards isolation in the region as the High Commission of Pakistan in Dhaka has become fully functional after three years, media reported on Monday.

According to sources, the important development was made after China played a vital role in reducing diplomatic tensions between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent telephonic contact with his Bangladeshi counterpart was also a link in this chain. Imran Khan had underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to closer ties with fraternal Bangladesh and highlighted the significance of regular bilateral contacts and people to people exchanges.

He had said that Pakistan is committed to deepening relations with Bangladesh on the basis of mutual trust, respect and sovereign equality. On the other hand, India is worried due to the improving ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh. It has been learnt that Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina refused to meet Indian high commissioner despite repeated requests.

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COVID-19 SITUATION IN THREE MONTHS

Pak reports lowest number of deaths

Today, Alhamdulillah, we have the lowest number of deaths in Pakistan due to COVID-19 in last 3 months. We had a peak of 153 deaths on 20 June and in last 24 hours we had 20: Zafar Mirza

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, Dr Zafar Mirza revealed that Pakistan reported its lowest number of COVID-19 deaths in the past three months when only 20 people died due to the infection. Taking to Twitter on Monday, the prime minister's adviser disclosed that the current statistics indicated an 87% drop in COVID-19 deaths.

"Today, Alhamdulillah, we have the lowest number of deaths in Pakistan due to COVID-19 in last 3 months. We had a peak of 153 deaths on 20 June and in last 24 hours we had 20. This is 87% reduction in COVID-19 related deaths. Yet no place for any complacency!" he tweeted.

Critics have said that a drop in coronavirus cases in Pakistan has been observed to the government testing less number of people. However, PM Imran's focal person on COVID-19, Dr Faisal Sultan rejected the claims in a press conference.

Dr Sultan had said that a lower testing rate is being witnessed due to a "reduction in symptoms being witnessed in people." "When the spread was more rapid, we carried out a greater number of tests," he had stated. Dr Sultan had said that

PM credits smart lockdown strategy

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said that due to the smart lockdown strategy of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government the number of novel coronavirus cases decreased in the country.

The Prime Minister said that the whole world is now acknowledging Pakistan's smart lockdown strategy's benefits, adding that Pakistan's situation is very different from China, the US and other European countries.

during mid-June, there was an average of more than 32,000 tests conducted daily. In the last 24 hours, 23,000 tests were carried out, he said.

When asked what the current testing capacity for the country is, he had said that Pakistan is currently capable of carrying out testing in excess of 50,000 tests a day which can further be ramped up to 75,000 if need be. He said there is no "grand master" who can move the number of tests up or down.

Punjab imposes 'smart lockdown' till August 5

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab government on Monday said it is imposing a 'smart lockdown' in the province, effective from midnight tonight till August 5, in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus during Eidul Azha.

The step comes as Punjab reported zero deaths for the first time in two months. The official daily tally of confirmed

Covid-19 cases in the province has remained below 500 over the last one week. According to a notification issued by the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department dated July 27, all educational and training institutes, marriage halls, business centres, expo halls, restaurants, theme/amusement parks, play areas and arcades, beauty parlours and spas, cinemas and theatres will remain closed.

"There shall be a complete ban on sporting tournaments/matches (indoor and outdoor) except non-contact professional sports without spectators. All contact sports and indoor sports clubs/facilities shall remain closed."

The notification added that there will also be a complete ban on gatherings of all kinds for social, religious or any other purpose at any place, public or private.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Azam Khan Swati presenting a souvenir to newly-arrived Ambassador of Qatar Sheikh Saud Abdul Rehman Faisal Al-Thani. - DNA

Govt orders action against sugar mafia

The federal government further said that a report on the investigation should be submitted within 90 days

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to launch an investigation against sugar mills based on the Sugar Inquiry Commission report.

The directions to launch an investigation come after the Sugar Inquiry Commission report released last month had laid bare some startling revelations about how the prices of sugar are fixed, how exports of the commodity

are faked to avail rebates on sales taxes, and how billions of rupees are overcharged by sugar mills owners. The federal government further said that a report on the investigation should be submitted within 90 days. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior, Shahzad

Akbar, has written to the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Competition Commission of Pakistan and three provinces in this regard on the directions of the prime minister. Moreover, the National Accountability Bureau has been ordered to conduct an audit of all sugar mills in the country.

Shibli's tribute to Captain Sarwar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Monday paid tributes to the first recipient of highest military award for bravery in Pakistan Captain Sarwar Shaheed. In a tweet on the martyrdom anniversary of Captain Sarwar, Shibli Faraz said he created history with his gallantry, valour and courage. He said that the brave sons of the soil who sacrificed their lives for the motherland were the pride of the nation and we saluted them.

US flag lowered at China's Chengdu consulate

DNA

CHENGDU: The United States' flag outside its consulate in China's Chengdu city was lowered on Monday as tensions continue to soar between Washington and Beijing on the coronavirus blame-game, trade and a host of other issues.

Footage on state broadcaster CCTV from outside the consulate showed the flag being slowly lowered early Monday morning, after diplomatic tensions soared between the two powers with both alleging the other had endangered

national security. Relations deteriorated in recent weeks in a Cold War-style standoff, with the Chengdu mission Friday ordered to shut in retaliation for the forced closure of Beijing's consulate in Houston, Texas. The deadline for the Americans to exit Chengdu has been unclear, but the Chinese consulate in Houston was given 72 hours to close after the original order was made. The road leading to the Chengdu consulate was closed on Monday, with police and cordons blocking the way. State media reported that

staff members had left the compound at around 6am Monday morning. Over the weekend, removal trucks entered the site and cleaners were seen carting large black rubbish bags from the consulate. A constant stream of on-lookers in the city of 16.5 million people flowed past over the weekend, many taking photos. Beijing says closing the Chengdu consulate was a "legitimate and necessary response to the unreasonable measures by the United States", and has alleged that staff at the diplomatic mission endangered China's security and interests.

Palestine indebted to Pakistan for support: Amb. Rabei

Palestine Ambassador Ahmed Ameen Rabei talks to Daily Islamabad Post; says Palestine, Pakistan relations go back to 90 years; OIC, Arab League role important; calls for a strong United Nations

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Ameen Rabei has said Israel wants to annex parts of Palestine but we will strongly resist this move and do whatever we could to thwart this move. He said Palestine is banking on its friends like Pakistan that they would extend all possible support in this regard.

The Palestine ambassador expressed these views while giving an exclusive interview to daily Islamabad Post / DNA News Agency and CENTRELINE magazine. He said Palestinian National Authority was established after Oslo agreements in 1994 on the land occupied by Israel in 1967, that includes west bank with Jerusalem and Gaza strip. According to agreements, in 1998 an independent Palestinian state will take place, which didn't happen. Israel has adopted policy of stealing land in favour of settlers, now in west bank 530 settlements (700,000 settlers).

After shifting American embassy to Jerusalem and disclosing the deal of century by President Trump, Israel is planning to annex 30% of west bank, which is fertile land and contains 60% of water reserves. While dilating upon their plans to thwart Israeli move the ambassador said, they were working to unite their ranks first. Secondly they had to depend on the sup-

port our brothers. Palestine is a member of OIC and Arab League, they recognized our country and they sponsored agreements signed between us and Israel. He added, the United Nations and friends have to play their due role in this regard.

To a question Ambassador Ameen said, we have learned last decades how to resist the occupation, our roots are deep in Palestine. Palestinian National Authority with the collaboration of civil society and University students have worked a plan to protect the land and not to Israeli troops or settlers to grab it.

To a question about Group captain Saif Ambassador said, Group captain Saif Azam was deputed by Pakistan Air force to train Jordanian pilots, in 1967 war between Arabs and Israel, he fought bravely when Israeli planes attacked military airports in Jordan and Iraq and could shoot down 3 Israeli war planes in few days. Palestinians are proud of him and I believe every Muslim should remember him and PAF pilot Abdelsattar Alvi, the other hero, who shot down an Israeli war plane in 1973 war. The lesson we learn from these Mujahids shows when Muslims unite their ranks and train themselves hard, they do better and the result in every battle, we are victorious.

While talking about bilateral ties he said, Palestine, Pakistan relations go back to 90 years, when the Muslim poet Allama Iqbal along with of Muslim league members attended first Islamic conference in Alquds



Alsharif 85 years ago. Then the mufti of Palestine, Haji Ameen Alhusaini visited Pakistan, immediately after independence, and met with father of the nation, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Pakistan stood by Palestine all the time, at UN, OIC, and other international forums. Pakistani volunteers, along Palestinian fighters fought Israeli troops many battles, where many of

them embraced shahadat while defending Palestinian refugees and Lebanese civilians as well. In educational field, Pakistan has opened its institutions for Palestinian students 60 years before, more than 40,000 Palestinians graduated from universities here, many of them serving in Palestine as ministers, members of parliament, ambassadors, directors of hospitals and directors of

big companies. I call them ambassadors of Pakistan. In economic field, Pakistani government assisted financially in building our embassy and is continuing to pay its share in Unrwa and other related UN organisations. Palestine opened its first mission in Islamabad after second Islamic summit in Lahore 1974, it was upgraded to embassy in 1988 after declaration of independence in Algiers. It is worth mentioning that 25 years ago, Alquds Alsharif and Islamabad were declared twin cities. The ambassador further said that he is keen to promote and strengthen economic ties between the two countries. Currently the trade volume is only USD 20 million per annum which is very nominal. He said he had already visited various chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan in order to explore business opportunities with them. Similarly, I have talked to businessmen of Palestine also and urged them to come to Pakistan and look for different joint ventures with the Pakistani counterparts. To a question about direct imports from Pakistan, the ambassador said, currently we cannot import directly goods from Pakistan however we can do it through Jordan. We can talk to businessmen in Jordan who can play as a bridge between the businessmen of Palestine and Pakistan. Ambassador Rabei said agriculture was yet another sector where both countries can cooperate given the fact that both

countries are rich in agriculture products. He said he is already in contact with relevant quarters in this regard and expecting a breakthrough soon. To a question about role of Arab League the ambassador said, Arab league has been supporting Palestine issue, unfortunately, many Arab countries are busy with their internal conflicts, which has weakened the role of Arab League. OIC was established in 1969 after Masjid Aqsa was torched by some Israelis. Since then, all OIC resolutions emphasized on a just solution, right of return of Palestinian refugees and establishment of independent Palestinian state with Alquds Alsharif as its capital. We wish that both organisations take a serious stand in favour of Palestine and other Muslim issues. Super powers had helped in creating Israel illegally in 1948, soon became full member of UN, ignoring its own resolution 181, which calls for creation of two states, Palestinian and Jewish in 1947. Since then, Israel has been refusing to implement scores of UN resolutions. The United States has played its role in supporting Israel militarily, economically and politically, at Security Council it used veto power 21 times against Palestine. We want strong United Nations to solve conflicts between countries. We want to see UN resolutions mandatory, said Ambassador Rabei.

- Detailed interview to be published in the CENTRELINE magazine

Briefs

CM to celebrate Eid with simplicity

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan here Monday announced to celebrate Eidul Azha with simplicity in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing a press conference after attending the 4th provincial meeting of National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) here at Civil Secretariat, the Chief Minister KP said that he has requested Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants and MPAs to celebrate Eidul Azha with simplicity in order to express sympathies with all the victims families whom loved one loss their lives due to coronavirus.

He said employees of Government departments including health and administration have also sacrificed their lives in fight against coronavirus and the best tributes to them was to help poor, orphans and needy people on this Eid. The Chief Minister said Govt has prepared SOPs for Eidul Azha and urged masses to strictly follow it by playing role of a responsible citizen. — APP

Tea imports shrink to \$532.776 mln

ISLAMABAD: The tea imports into the country witnessed decline of 6.81 percent during the fiscal year 2019-20 as against the same period of last fiscal year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The tea imports into the country were recorded at \$532.776 million during FY 2019-20 as against imports of \$571.690 million in FY 2018-19, according to latest PBS data.

In terms of quantity, the tea imports witnessed decline of 0.63 percent during the period under review by going down from the imports of 222,732 metric tons last year to 221,319 metric tons during the FY 2020.

The imports of overall food commodities during the period under review declined by 4.31 percent as these contracted from \$5668.013 million last year to \$5423.949 million during the current year. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the tea imports into the country increased by 107.42 percent during the month of June 2020 compared to the same month of last year.

The tea imports into the country in June 2020 were recorded at \$59.684 million compared to the imports of \$28.775 million in June 2019. During the period under review country's exports registered about 6.84% decrease, by going down from \$22.958 billion last year to \$21.387 billion during the current year whereas the imports declined from \$54.763 billion to \$44.570 billion, showing sharp decline of 18.61%. — APP

Rs160.43 bn distributed under Ehsaas Programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD, JULY 27 (DNA) — The federal government has so far distributed Rs160.43 billion to more than 13.2 million people across Pakistan under its Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme.

Nearly half of the amount, Rs72.14 billion, has been disbursed to 59.62 million people in Punjab. Apart from the health crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic, people in Pakistan have been facing a financial crisis as the country's economy contracted for the first time in 68 years.

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar had said that the pandemic may push 20 million to 70 million people below the poverty line while 18 million people may lose their jobs.

In order to help struggling people, the government launched its Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme. Nearly one-third of the total amount, Rs48.61 billion, has been distributed among more than four million people in Sindh. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, over 2.2 million received Rs27.11 billion while 654,000 people in Balochistan received Rs7.94 billion under the programme.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar meets speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament house. — DNA

Covid-19 still a threat, implementation of SOPs vital, says Asad Umar

Asad Umar advised people to use masks while maintaining social distance in cattle markets and celebrate Eid-ul-Adha with caution by avoiding crowded recreational places

DNA

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Asad Umar Monday said that significant reduction in coronavirus cases and mortality rate has been witnessed in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Addressing a press conference after presiding over the 4th Provincial Meeting of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) here at Civil Secretariat, the Minister said the high level meeting has deliberated and reviewed the work made by KP Government against COVID-19. Chief Minister KP, Mahmood Khan, Minister for Health and Finance, Taimour Salim Jhagra,

Special Assistant to CM for Information and Local Government Kamran Bangash were also present on the occasion.

Asad Umar said that the spread of the virus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was on the decline and the provincial government played a vital role in achieving this.

He said strict implementation of SOPs and precautionary measures will ensure that Eid-ul-Adha passes without causing a major spike in new cases.

The Federal Minister said that Eid-ul-Adha is an important occasion but it is our responsibility to practice precautions in order to protect ourselves and those around us. He urged the public to celebrate Eid with simplicity and conduct sacrifice in a manner that does not result in spread of the virus.

Asad Umar advised people to use masks while maintaining social distance in cattle markets and celebrate Eid-ul-Adha with caution by avoiding crowded recreational places.

He said our religion has laid great emphasis on protection of lives and properties of humanity, therefore it was our collective duty being a Muslim to make our people safe from coronavirus.

He urged people to celebrate Eid-ul-Adha with simplicity and use mask while visiting cattle markets. Asad Umar said "Pakistan is a beautiful country and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are famous for tourism worldwide".

He said the limited health facilities in remote and far-flung scenic areas in these provinces could not afford load of influx of tourists in

case of spread of COVID-19 and urged people to celebrate Eid at their native areas.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan said that SOPs have been formulated in public interest to save the lives of the people, they should be followed strictly. He also urged the public to celebrate Eid with simplicity, just as all ministers and members of the KP Assembly will.

CM KP said that after Eid, reopening of tourism industry in the province will be discussed and the PM will be approached in this regard. But, until the virus is controlled, people should avoid crowds.

CM Mehmood Khan said he would like to dedicate this Eid-ul-Adha to the martyrs of the Covid-19 pandemic, who lost their lives because of the deadly disease.

The number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in Pakistan has reached 274,289 with the virus claiming 20 more lives, bringing the death toll to 5,842.

According to the latest figures from the NCOC, 1,176 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours, and now the total tallies stand at 92,073 in Punjab, 118,311 in Sindh, 33,397 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 11,601 in Balochistan. 1,989 total cases have been reported in Gilgit-Baltistan, 14,884 in Islamabad and 2,034 in Azad Kashmir.

So far 1,890,236 people have been tested across the country and 22,056 new tests were conducted in the last 24 hours. So far, 241,026 patients have recovered while the condition of 1,229 patients is critical.

Buzdar warns about risks of hepatitis

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar said on Monday that people should be fully sensitised about the risks of hepatitis disease.

They should adopt necessary precautions as well as vaccination to remain safe from the disease, he said in his message, issued on the World Hepatitis Day here. The CM said that people could remain protected from the disease by adopting necessary precautions as prevention is better than cure. The role of the whole society is important in combating the disease and people from different walks of life should come forward to play their role in raising public awareness about hepatitis, he said. People's cooperation would boost the government efforts against the disease, the CM said adding that hepatitis treatment facilities had been provided in hospitals and the disease could be eradicated by moving in the right direction. Hepatitis-free Punjab is an important mission and the provincial government was committed to providing the best treatment facilities to patients, added the CM. — APP

Minister booked over activist's murder

DNA

QUETTA: The Levies Force registered a case against provincial Minister for Food and Population Welfare Sardar Abdul Rehman Khan Khetiran and his "two guards" on Sunday over the murder of a social media activist, Anwar Jan Khetiran. The activist was murdered on July 23 by some armed men in Naharkot, in Balochistan's Barkhan district, when he was on his way home on a motorbike.

Officials of the Levies Force said that Anwar Jan's brother had nominated Sardar Khetiran and his two guards, Adam Khan and Nadir Khan, in the case. The complaint was filed by Ghulam Sarwar Khetiran, the elder brother of the slain man. According to the complaint, Anwar had been writing since long on social and other problems of his area and about atrocities and alleged corruption of the minister.

Balochistan to introduce vessel monitoring

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has decided to introduce a vessel monitoring system in the province to ensure safety of marine life, fisheries and fishermen in a fixed amount.

Officials said that for the first time in Pakistan the Balochistan government had decided to implement the international policy of monitoring fishing boats having the size larger than 15 metres in the province and install vessel monitoring systems in such boats. The Command and Control Centre will be set up in case of any emergency or accident under the automated system.



ISLAMABAD: President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran Ajmal Balouch along with Ghafoor Paracha addressing a press conference. — DNA

ICCI demands urgent cut in petroleum prices to bring down high inflation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that the price of crude oil in the international market is currently less than USD 44 per barrel but the prevailing price of petrol and diesel in Pakistan is more than Rs.100 per litre due to which the cost of doing business has gone up and inflation has increased manifold for common man.

He demanded from the government to make urgent cut in petroleum prices that would bring down the business cost and reduce inflation providing great relief to the common man.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that business community and people were already facing great hardships due to the devastations of Covid-19 pandemic but instead of taking relief measures for them in these difficult times, the government had increased the prices of petroleum products

by 27 to 66 per cent in the last week of June that further increased the difficulties of businesses and the general public. He said that in light of current tough conditions, the government should have taken steps to reduce the manufacturing cost and promote ease of doing business so that our economy could recover fast. But instead of taking relief measures, government increased the problems by making unnecessary hike in petroleum prices. He said that the industrial sector uses furnace oil in

factories while the transport and agricultural sectors are using diesel so the reduction in prices of petrol and diesel will alleviate the problems of these sectors and bring down inflation as well.

The ICCI President said that the government has made the petroleum products an important source of revenue collection which is not justified. He said the government is currently collecting an amount of Rs.47 on per litre of petrol and diesel in the form of sales tax and petroleum levy.

RCCI opposes Punjab gov't smart lock-down

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has opposed lock down announced by the Punjab government till August 5. RCCI president Saboor Malik at an emergent press conference at Chamber house Rawalpindi demanded to revise the decision as it is not in-line with ground realities. He said that the Prime Minister is against the lock-down and the Punjab government is taking such decisions. The business community does not agree with the decision and we reject the notification. On the one hand, the government itself has acknowledged that the smart lockdown policy was successful. The new decision of the Punjab government contradicts this policy. Traders have a big role to play in controlling Corona at the moment.

Saboor Malik said Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi also tweeted on the condition of beds on July 26, stating that 748 out of 790 beds are vacant. The situation has been improved in Rawalpindi with 90% recovered patients. The Punjab government should reconsider its decision and allow doing business with SOPs. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that trade associations and chambers of commerce are there to be decided after discussion with us. The stakeholders should be taken on board prior issuing such notifications, he added. These are the difficult times for business. Our goal is to reduce unemployment. The business centers should be allowed to open till eid, he added. — DNA

Women lawmakers to form bilateral caucus with Afghan counterparts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Afghan women parliamentarians should have a caucus to work on issues of bilateral significance and build linkages through positive interactions and collaborations. This was agreed upon by a contingent of prominent female lawmakers in Islamabad at an inception event organized by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). Members stressed on building cooperation in the sectors of health, education, financial inclusivity, employment, COVID-19, border trade, refugees, maternal health, and youth engagement. They further urged that the proposed caucus should comprise representatives from both the National Assembly and the Senate. — DNA

Bank Alfalah and NIFT launch strategic collaboration

DNA

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah & National Institutional Facilitation Technologies (NIFT) announced their strategic collaboration on NIFT's digital financial services platform "NIFT ePay", which is an industry first, enabling bank accounts for e-commerce across the banking industry. NIFT's partnership with Bank Alfalah is unique and multidimensional; the Bank has supported in the realization of this new ecosystem by not only being the settlement bank for NIFT ePay, but also allowing access through its payment gateway - Mastercard's MPGS - to NIFT ePay merchants for facilitating card transactions.

Mr. Atif Bajwa, President and CEO for Bank Alfalah welcomed the initiative and commented, "Bank Alfalah and NIFT's partnership in promoting e-commerce while enabling bank account holders across the banking industry is a unique and innovative

initiative which will help grow the payments market significantly. Bank Alfalah is a leading innovator in the banking market and our aim is to keep partnering with like-minded players to not only bring greater convenience to our retail and cards customers but also provide access for electronic & digital transactions to segments not yet served by the industry." Mr. Haider Wahab, CEO-NIFT added, "NIFT ePay has gained good momentum and has started its journey towards digitalizing the e-commerce payments in Pakistan through partnerships with leading banks. We thank Bank Alfalah for their support in this journey and understanding the power of collaboration to bring change and add value to the market. We feel the industry is ready to embrace a change and are opening up to innovate and disrupt the payments space. NIFT is working on many new digital initiatives and would be looking at Bank Alfalah to continue its support towards these programs."

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Briefs

Work on Yakmach-Kharan Highway continues

ISLAMABAD: Construction work of Yakmach-Kharan Highway was continuing smoothly and it is expected to be completed next year. An official of National Highway Authority said that 264 kilometres road would link Chagai, one of the remotest areas of the Balochistan province with China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route and also with Gawdar in order to boost trade and other economic activities in the region. He said that the road would pass through the districts of Kharan, Washuk and Chagai. He said that the project has been divided in four sections. Work on section one costing Rs3109 million started in March 2016 and so far 86 per cent physical progress has been achieved. Work on Section II had started in January 2018 and so far over 50 per cent work has been completed, he said adding that the estimated cost of the section is Rs2422 million. He said that work on Rs2458 million Section III started in January 2018 and so far 30 per cent physical progress has been achieved. — APP

DC inspects anti-dengue activities

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Capt @ Anwar ul Haq Monday said all resources were being utilized for eliminating dengue and concerned departments were fully mobilized for carrying out the task. During a visit to Choor chowk and its adjacent areas to inspect anti-dengue activities, he directed the health officials that surveillance activities for tracing of larva and its eradication be expedited so that growth of dengue larvae could not spread. On the occasion, the DC also interacted with the public and inquired about the performance of field teams. Anwar called upon the residents to keep an eye on vacant plots and under construction buildings which lead to spread of dengue larvae. He asked the citizens to keep their houses clean and leave no place wet or with stagnant water as prevailing weather suitable for dengue larvae breeding. — APP

IHC orders CDA to decide regularization cases

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday ordered Capital Development Authority (CDA) to send the matter of contract employees to regularization committee and decide their application in light of IHC's directives. The court directed the CDA to produce the report before it till August 25, after deciding the regularization cases of employees. Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani of IHC conducted hearing on a petition filed by CDA's contract and daily wages employees seeking regularization of their services. During the course of proceedings, the CDA's member administration apprised the court that it had given ad for recruitment on 670 seats ranging grade 1 to 17. — APP

Online blasphemous content case adjourned

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad on Monday adjourned the hearing of a case pertaining to sharing online blasphemous content till August 15. The hearing was adjourned by the court of ATC judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan without any proceedings as no lawyers appeared before the court. The court has summoned again the last defense witness for next hearing. — APP



RAWALPINDI: Senator Rehman Malik called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. — DNA

Belt & Road project to bring peace and prosperity in the region: experts

CGSS organizes International Webinar on "China's Quest for Peaceful Coexistence & Mutual Development"

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad organized a special Webinar on "China's Quest for Peaceful Coexistence & Mutual Development". The aim of the Webinar was to interact with prominent Chinese experts to discuss the recent Sino-Indian situation and learn about the latest developments in the Belt and Road Initiative as well as China's future economic development plans. Maj Gen Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery (Retd) - President CGSS commenced the session by welcoming all the participants, especially the Chinese speakers for joining the unique webinar. He stated that China is considered as biggest threat by US for unknown reasons. US is attempting to contain China but this policy is deemed to failure because of the concept of BRI, which has very efficiently countered the containment policy without firing a single bullet. Mr. Muhammad Mudassar Tipu, Director General Chi-

na, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan emphasized the significance of Pak-China friendship and thanked the Chinese friends for participating in this very timely initiative. He stated that there is a need for multilateralism and deeper strategic coordination between Pakistan and China. He also mentioned that he has had the honor of serving in China and China is an all-weather strategic partner of Pakistan. Within Pakistan there is a general consensus between all political parties, all institutions and the citizens of the country that Pakistan's closest friend is China and both the countries are Iron Brothers. Mr. Victor Zhikai GAO, Chair Professor Soochow University & Vice President, Center for China & Globalization, Beijing, China talked about China-India Border Clash and its current status. He stated that this is a very scary situation as what happened on June the 16th, reminds us of what happened in 1962. Subsequent to June 16th, tensions remained between China and India. Moreover,



the tensions have increased in the South China Sea, in Taiwan and between United States and China also. We see increasing links between India and United States including the recent concluded joint naval exercise between the two countries in the Indian Ocean. Prof. Huang Yunsong, Associate Dean, School of International Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu

stated that there are two takeaways of the entire episode; first that the Standoff between India and China at the Line of Controls under control and the possibility of war has been considerably reduced; and secondly that the China-India bilateral relations have suffered serious setbacks after this border skirmish. China does not want confrontation with India but India needs

to act responsibly as well. Mr. Qinduo Xu, Researcher on Chinese Foreign Policy, Pangoal Institution, Beijing stated that United States views China as a top competitor and adversary. For the upcoming elections, US government is creating distraction from their poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic by bashing China. So US administration is promoting anti-China senti-

ments among public and on media. Mr. Xu Wenhong, Deputy Secretary General of the Belt & Road Center, CASS stated that BRI is now recognized as a project for peace, development and stability benefitting the region and the world. All countries are welcome to take part in BRI and become a partner country. India has not taken part in this project as it claimed that CPEC - the flagship project of BRI - has infringed its sovereignty. Mr. Zhong Feiteng, Head & Professor, National Institute of Int'l Strategy, CASS, Beijing gave a detailed presentation on US China Trade War, Repercussions and Future Implications and highlighted the US trade deficit with China. He stated that China is re-emerging as an economic power equal to the United States and China's position has significantly enhanced in the last few decades. The Webinar was attended by more than 50 participants and was moderated by Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS.

PNCA to conclude online calligraphy classes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Art (PNCA), which was continuing its classes for calligraphy online due to lock down, will broadcast its last chapter on July 27 to 30 on all official social media of the council. According to the management, the classes that were scheduled pre-lockdown were halted due to the Covid-19, were being conducted in form of videos that were uploaded on PNCA's Facebook and YouTube channel in three sections. The first section had 7 parts and each part was posted on the social media sites of the council at 10 am daily. The second sections of the classes were being posted and streamed on the council's YouTube channel every Monday under the supervision of famous calligraphist Shabbir Ahmad Zia. The last chapter of the classes will be streamed three days continuously (July 27 to 30) and will be concluded before Eid-ul-Adha Online classes aimed at helping the students to rekindle their creative skills who were confined at their homes during lock-down. — APP

PTA issues detail order on PUBG

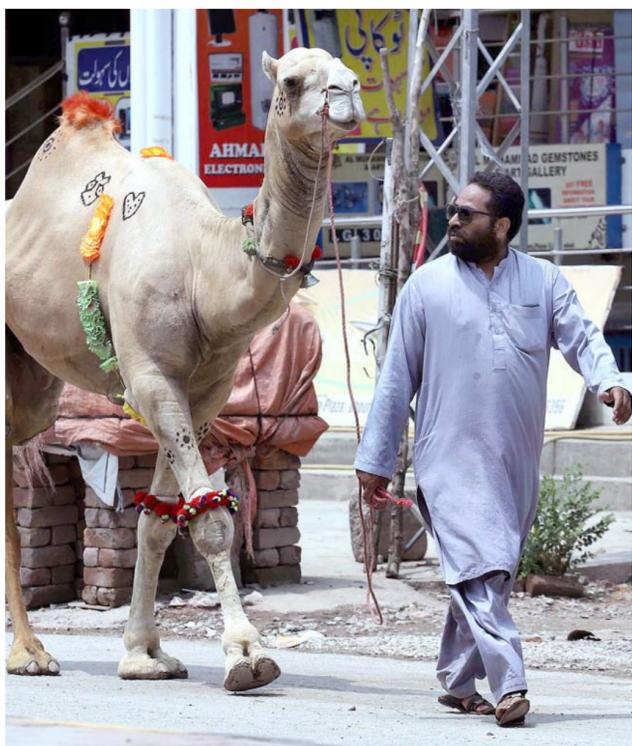
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Monday issued a detailed order regarding blocking of online game PlayerUnknown's Battle Ground (PUBG) and said it was issued in accordance with Islamabad High Court's orders after a hearing conducted by PTA on July 9 and in accordance with the provisions of PECA 2016. According to a statement, the PTA provided an opportunity of hearing to concerned parties including PUBG's lawyers. As per the order of the authority, the PUBG game would remain blocked in Pakistan. PTA has also approached PUBG management to inform about a suitable framework to address key concerns. No response has been received from PUBG so far. — APP

Two criminal gangs busted

ISLAMABAD: Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police has arrested five members of two gangs involved in dacoities, house burglaries and recovered snatched cash, valuables as well as weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. He said that SP Investigation constituted two special teams under supervision of DSP CIA which arrested five members of two criminal gangs identified as Aamir Khan alias Shouter resident of Dohke Kashmir Rawalpindi, Attullah resident of Mehmand Agency, Shokat Khan resident of Afghanistan, Allah Noor resident of Turnab district Peshawar and Usman Nahmat resident of Taxila. Police teams recovered snatched cash, laptop, mobile phone, valuables and weapons from their possession. Separate cases were registered against them at Khanna, Golra police stations and further investigation was underway. — APP

IRSA releases 295,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 295,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 292,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1459.22 feet, which was 73.22 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 150,300 cusecs and outflow as 150,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1228.80 feet, which was 188.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 31,300 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. — APP



RAWALPINDI: A person on his way with his sacrificial camel at Iqbal Road. — APP

'Eco-friendly Week' kicks off at 'Panahgahs'

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Focal Person on 'Panahgahs' Naseem ur Rehman Monday kicked off an 'Eco-friendly Week' at shelter homes of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad by planting a sapling of Java Plum (Jamun) at a facility located in sector G-9. The initiative was aimed at encouraging the involvement of daily wage earners in environment-friendly activities to ensure their physical, mental and social well-being, the focal person told the media after inaugurating the second week of 'Promoting Healthy Lives' drive here. He said under this week, more than 100 plants of fruit bearing trees would be planted at all the 'Panahgahs' of the two cities with active support of staffers of the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC), service providers at shelter homes, Saylani teams and daily wage earners. At least 20 fruit bearing trees had been planted at G-9 'Panahgah', he added. — APP

87 development schemes to be executed: DC

ATTOCK: As many as 87 different developments worth Rs 1277.565 million would be executed in Attock during current fiscal year. It was informed by officials in the special meeting of the district development committee (DDC) which held at deputy commissioner office. While briefing the district development committee (DDC) about the development projects, the participants were informed that a sum of Rs 302.299 million would be spent on execution of as many as five different schemes regarding building constructions, a sum of Rs 1695.191 million would be spent on execution of as many as 23 different schemes regarding public health, a sum of Rs 339.041 million would be spent on execution of as many as six different schemes regarding provision of different sports facilities in various towns of district, a sum of Rs 5952 million would be spent on execution of as many as 25 different schemes regarding highway roads, a sum of Rs 2757.105 million would be spent on execution of as many as 4 different schemes regarding improvement of irrigation system, a sum of Rs 40 million would be spent on execution of one scheme regarding mines development, a sum of Rs 50 million would be spent on execution of one scheme regarding livestock development, a sum of Rs 241. Addressing to the participants of the district development committee (DDC), Deputy Commissioner has urged transparency in award of work, utilization of quality material and timely completion of these projects. He urged the officials of executive agencies to ensure quality and required standard of work in various development schemes of the district. During the meeting issues related to health, education, rehabilitation of roads was discussed in details. — DNA

Pak Post revenue sees remarkable increase

"The emphasis was also to bring structural and functional modernization in PPOD in line with international best practices": Akhlaque Rana

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post Office Department (PPOD) revenue has witnessed remarkable increase during last two years from 11.7 billion to 19.6 billion including receivable Rs 4.2 billion due to new initiatives taken by the present government. PTI-led govt from last two years had launched all-comprehensive reform initiatives in Pakistan Post in order to increase revenue and to bring in innovation in products and services commensurate to the

customer choices. Director General Pakistan Post Muhammad Akhlaque Rana told APP that the emphasis was also to recapture the lost market and to bring structural and functional modernization in Pakistan Post in line with international best practices, adding that the hectic efforts resulted in increase of revenue. "The emphasis was also to bring structural and functional modernization in PPOD in line with international best practices" he said.

He said that the present Government has also underlined the need to extend National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) as a measure to alleviate poverty in the rural areas, adding that thereafter, the PPOD has been assigned the task to champion this cause of providing financial products and services' access to the downtrodden segments of the society, especially in the rural settings. He said that new initiative not only increase revenues but will also im-

prove its products and services in line with customers need and will also ensure the cause of NFIS to provide better and affordable services, delivery to the rural population, making them bankable. Akhlaque Rana said that PPOD is working on plan to introduce ATM services, e-commerce platform and widening the base of international and domestic remittances through proper banking channel. In previous regime Pakistan Post was experiencing losses and no-

body was willing to take its responsibility. "As PTI came into power and worked day and night to uplift this national asset and resultantly restored the confidence of the people" said DG Pakistan Post. Pakistan Post has also initiated Electronic Money Order Service Post-doorstep which was paid at door step of the recipient. The booking producer was same as it is for EMO Post-Post. However, the customers elect the method of payment either at window or at doorstep. — APP

Briefs

Operation against overcharging transporters

RAWALPINDI: Regional Transport Authority (RTA) on Monday launched a grand operation and warned the transporters against overcharging public transport fares from the people going to their hometowns to celebrate Eidul Azha with their families. Talking to APP, Secretary RTA, Mehar Ghulam Abbas said that RTA has launched a special operation and only fines would not be imposed on the violators rather their vehicles would also be impounded.

He said, it was common feature that with the coming of Eid people go to their hometowns to celebrate the festival with their loved ones. People from abroad as well as major cities make it a point to be home with their kith and kin for the festivities. However, the transporters have a habit of fleecing the home bound citizens by charging exorbitant fares.

He said, stern action would be taken against transporters found overcharging and overloading the passengers. The staff concerned have been directed to check overcharging and overloading of the passengers in buses and vans specially before Eidul Azha.

The checking would be carried out randomly at different places including Pirwadhai, Peshawar Road and G T Road as the RTA has formed special squads to check overcharging by the transporters. Strict action would be taken on the spot and excess fares would also be returned to the passengers. To a question he said that a meeting in this regard was arranged and the transporters had been directed to display the fare charts at prominent places at the bus and van stands. — APP

CTP to take strict action on over speeding

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Syed Ali Akbar has directed the City Traffic Police (CTP) camera squad to take strict action on over speeding and other severe traffic rules violations. He said that the CTP on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Ahmed Younas had formed a special camera squad to check over speeding on roads of the district.

The squad under the supervision of in-charge Inspector Sarfraz checked over speeding at old Airport Road, New Airport Road, Taxila, Kalar Syedan and different roads of Meharabad sector and issued challan slips to over 500 violators besides imposing over Rs200,000 fine during the month of July 2020. According to CTO, CTP on the directives of CPO were making all out efforts to control over speeding and violation of traffic rules aimed at minimizing road traffic accidents.

He said, in-charge camera squad had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against over speeding and wrong overtaking. CTP Education Squad was also making efforts to create awareness among road users about the road safety laws. He advised the road users to obey traffic rules and cooperate with Traffic Wardens in order to reach their destinations safe and sound. — APP

'Decorated Sacrificial animals'

ISLAMABAD: Like every year, the excitement of the kids is increasing ahead of Eid ul Azha, and members of their families have started roaming around the streets and cattle markets in search of animals including goats, cows, buffaloes to be sacrificed in the name of the Allah the Almighty as one of the ritual to be fulfilled. According to retailers, these animals are present in and around the cattle markets in large numbers and people are showing their keen interest in buying decorative sacrificial animals which gives them good entertainment opportunity. People specially kids are enjoying the best time with their animals, after attaching the names of actors to the animals for sacrifice, a new trend is also being witnessed in cattle markets, said a citizen. — APP



RAWALPINDI: Carpenter busy in preparing wooden bases to be used by butchers in cutting meat on Eid-ul-Azha. — APP

Technology key to remove hurdles in education: Shafqat

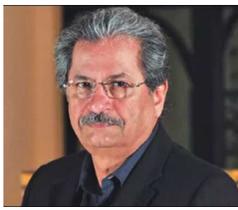
The technology based education program would help online contents development, teachers training program, development of rural area schools and monitoring of teachers and students: Shafqat Mahmood

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood Monday said there were many traditional hurdles in the way of education which could only be removed by using technology. While presiding over a meeting of Ed-Tech partners to promote the technology driven education in the country, he underscored that

today the public & private sector were required to work together for noble cause of education.

The minister has constituted a committee under the chair of Additional Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed Vani to chalk out a mechanism and terms of reference to move forward on this plan.

He lauded the Ed-Tech companies who helped the ministry in develop-



ing online contents for Teleschool, saying, the project would continue even after the re-opening of schools. All previous models of 'adult education' have been abortive, and now technology based model was required for the purpose, he added. Likewise, Shafqat said, the technology based education program would help online contents development, teachers training pro-

gram, development of rural area schools and monitoring of teachers and students.

On this occasion, Federal Secretary Dr. Sajid Yusufani said due to outbreaks of COVID-19 pandemic and closure of schools, Ed-Tech partners paid their national duty by providing free online contents for Teleschool in that hour of the need. — APP

Modi stands exposed globally, says Kanwal Shauzab



ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Planning Kanwal Shauzab Sunday said Prime Minister Imran Khan shook the world's conscience and made the international community realize the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue. Talking to APP, she said the fascist and Hindu supremacists policies of Narendra Modi had been exposed globally for perpetrating human rights abuses in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She said the government was rightly pursuing the Kashmir cause and time was not far when the Kashmiri people would get deliverance from the Indian aggression. She said voices were being raised in support of Kashmiri people after Prime Minister Imran Khan, through his prudent foreign policy, changed the world's perception considering Kashmir dispute as Pakistan's internal matter. The parliamentary secretary said in his historic address to the UN General Assembly, the prime minister had highlighted the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue and since then the world was paying a serious heed to the subject. Even the human rights organizations, the European Union, and the UN agencies had also taken up the decades old Kashmir issue, after the prime minister successfully highlighted it, becoming an ambassador for Kashmir, she added. — APP

Islamabad to close public places on Eid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Islamabad has decided to keep public spots and tourist destinations in the city closed on Eidul Azha. According to a notification issued by the district administration, all such spots will be closed from Monday, July 27, till the last day of the Eid holidays. The Murree Express and hill station will also be closed, Deputy Commissioner said. "Margala Hills, picnic spots, parks and restaurants will also be barred from remaining open." He has requested people

to refrain from making travel plans during the Eid holidays or arranging get together to protect themselves and others from the novel coronavirus.

In a media briefing on Sunday, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Zafar Mirza warned people of a possible rise in COVID-19 infections on Eid.

He has urged people to religiously follow SOPs while visiting cattle markets. "Wear masks, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distancing," he advised. Prime Minister Imran Khan will also be addressing the nation regarding the situation on Eid in light of coronavirus.

Asim Abbasi's 'Churails' to release on ZEE5 Global

Zindagi, launched earlier in India had built a legacy of for itself for presenting stories that are strong, powerful yet relatable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: ZEE5 Global announces the launch of the first Zindagi original, CHURAILS streaming from 11th August onwards on the digital platform. Directed by critically acclaimed film maker, Asim Abbasi, Churails brings together a talented cast led by Sarwat Gilani, Nimra Bucha, Mehar Bano and Yasra Rizvi for this power-packed narrative.

She who takes ownership of her life and is unapologetic of her being. She who breaks the glass ceiling and every prejudice that society has created against women. She who is strong, she who is fierce, she stands for what she believes in... she is a 'CHURAIL'. Churails narrates the story of four self-proclaimed Churails who come together to open a covert detective agency to expose cheating husbands amongst

the city's elite. As their operations expand, they come to be saviours of abused, harassed and mistreated women.

Director Asim Abbasi says "Zindagi's commitment to truly original content that has a voice and can transcend borders, has provided me with the perfect platform to create a show like Churails. A story about strong women, embarking on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment and sis-

terhood, I believe Churails is a timely show with pertinent themes that will resonate with audiences globally."

Zindagi, launched earlier in India had built a legacy of for itself for presenting stories that are strong, powerful yet relatable. Now launched on ZEE5, the largest streaming platform for South Asians across the globe, the brand's first original series promises to take this legacy forward.

NCHD relies on its 36,000 volunteers

ISLAMABAD: National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) has always relied on its 36,000 volunteers force in 128 districts across the country providing support in monitoring, training, advocacy and resource mobilization. An official of NCHD told APP on Monday that, NCHD has decided to utilize the services of its 2,929 volunteers in 16 districts as a pilot project for creating awareness among 96,100 households regarding COVID-19 pandemic. He said that NCHD had a strong infrastructure at grass root level covering all 128 districts across the country. — APP

Six arrested in Chontra killing case

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi police Monday arrested four more accused in connection with Chontra killing case. According to the city police officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, main accused Rab Nawaz's two sons, Danish and Akram, and his brother and nephew namely Aqib have been sent behind the bars.

The were arrested during raids conducted under the supervision of SSP Operations Tariq Walait and SP Saddar Zia ul Din Ahmed. The main accused Danish has confessed his crime of killing women and children in revenge on his mother's murder. The number of the arrested accused in the firing incident

has surged to six. The police said 10 accused were named in the case out of which six had been arrested while raids were being conducted to arrest the remaining accused including the principal accused Rab Nawaz. The CPO said all the accused allegedly involved in the brutal and cold-blooded murders would be sent behind the bars.

On July 24, at least nine members of the same family, including children and women were gunned down and three others sustained bullet injuries when some armed men attacked their house in Miyal village, located in suburbs of Rawalpindi. — APP

AIOU starts admissions in merit based programs

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has initiated admissions in merit based programs of Autumn 2020 Semester including PhD, MPhil, MSc, MBA and BS. September 8 has been set as the deadline for the submission of admission forms of these face to face academic programs, a press release on Monday said. Admission forms and prospectus are available online on the university website. Interested candidates can apply for the admission through online mode only. Guidelines for online admission procedure are described in detail in the prospectus. Entry tests for PhD and

MPhil will be held in the Academic Complex of the university from September 14-18.

First merit list will be uploaded on the university website on September 21 while the deadline for fee submission will be September 25.

Furthermore, second merit list will be uploaded on the university website on September 28 while the deadline for fee submission will be September 30.

Mian Muhammad Riaz, Director Admissions, informed the media spokesperson that transparency will be ensured in determining merit and preparing merit lists. — APP



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying the ornaments for sacrificial animals to attract customers. — APP

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Women in politics

NUMEROUS studies from two decades in Pakistan have indicated that what little empowerment of women we have seen till now has stemmed from the increased representation in local governments. This increase to 33 percent took place in 2001. As a result, Pakistan ranks as a nation with a comparatively high representation of women in government when compared to other developing countries. But now under the new local government system this representation has fallen to less than 7 percent.

A report on the Punjab Local Government Act 2019 highlights that the representation of women, peasants and labourers as well as minorities has been considerably lowered. A study on this piece of legislation was issued by the Women in Struggle for Empowerment in Lahore. Religious minorities are now represented by only 2 to 3 percent of members, further down from an already negligible 5 percent in 2001.

This change does not coincide with the government's promises to further empower women and other vulnerable groups in order to create a more equitable society. In the history of Pakistan very few efforts have been made to change the marginalized nature of groups represented on reserved seats. Other experts have said the ratio for women must not fall below 33 percent at all LG tiers. There was also a demand for the restoration of representation for youth and for workers.

There can be no doubt that democracy can be better served by having a diversity in representation in local government and its other tiers rather than excluding large portions of the population based on their religion, gender, age and employment. The inclusion of marginalized groups is necessary to create a local government system which can represent all its citizens. The subject of local government was devolved to provinces following the 18th Amendment. Provincial governments have developed their own laws but, with the exception of Balochistan, which held LG polls in 2015, have avoided installing the local government system through election.

Local governments are essential to people because they are the most approachable level of governance for citizens. Naturally if there is diversity within them more citizens would feel at ease when bringing forward their problems to these setups. Punjab has done a huge disservice to vulnerable groups by cutting the representation available to them. This will have an impact on democratic development in the country, with local governments serving as the first step in the ladder for political workers to move further up towards provincial and then even national assemblies. It is unfortunate also that change has been ignored by the federal government. The prime minister and his team have consistently promised to create a more equal society. This is achieving just the opposite.



An education emergency

IF there's one thing the Covid-19 pandemic has shown it is that the 'system' the world lives with – aka capitalism – is so flawed that it can't even sustain four months of a go-slow movement for human health and life. We had hoped these four months would teach the world what needs to be prioritised – health, education, science, humanity – but instead the world seems hell bent on proving itself the same kind of narrow-visioned and greedy place it has always been.

A recent report by British charity Save the Children has warned that Covid-19 has caused an “unprecedented education emergency”, with nearly 9.7 million children at risk of never going back to class. Moreover, the report also says that the economic fall-out of the crisis could force an extra 90 to 117 million children into poverty. Eventually, it all boils down to a matter of policy priorities. The world will have to decide whether it wants its children educated or its one percent rich even richer. Unfortunately, for lower-income and developing countries, it's even worse – mostly because of the crippling lack of choice due to policy directives from international financial institutions. The report lists 12 countries where children are most at risk of falling behind. These include Niger, Mali, Chad, Liberia, Afghanistan, Guinea, Mauritania, Yemen, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal and Ivory Coast. That means the world's most deprived children get even more short-changed than usual.

For Pakistan, the education emergency has been around forever. A consequence of poor planning by the state, education – both school and higher – in the country has been left to market forces. It was during the 1980s, when privatisation was all the craze, that private schools charging outrageous fees while providing a substandard education began to crop up. In the meanwhile, public schools remain chronically underfunded, forcing parents into paying outrageous sums just to get their children education. The issue is clearly of class privilege and state apathy – and from ghost schools to poor quality education, Pakistan suffers from a myriad of crises when it comes to education. The pandemic will only make things worse. Clearly, there is a need for change and it needs to come from the bottom up since the state has shown no appetite for tackling this crisis. We really don't want a country whose children (larger in number than adults) have no options for surviving with dignity and respect.

No end in sight to the suffering of the Rohingya

Maha Akeel



Hundreds of people have attempted to escape to other nations in rickety boats, only to be turned away by authorities in destination countries out of fear that the refugees might spread the coronavirus, leaving them stranded at sea for months. In the squalid refugee camps at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, meanwhile, the threat posed by the virus is increased by the unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions

WHILE the world has been in lockdown as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and the media focused on the economic and social effects of the pandemic, the Rohingya continue to suffer under a ruthless regime in their homeland, Myanmar, and in cramped refugee camps in Bangladesh. The coronavirus simply added to their existing misery. Even the risky prospect of attempting to escape on treacherous rough seas in search of a better life is no longer an option.

In a statement to the 44th session of the Human Rights Council last week, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Michelle Bachelet said: “The Rohingya refugee crisis has effectively become protracted, with no solution in sight.” The human rights situation of the Rohingya are facing in Rakhine State, Myanmar, has not improved, and the conditions required for their safe, dignified and sustainable return home from Bangladesh are not in place, she added. In addition, restrictions placed on humanitarian access and freedom of movement as a result of the pandemic have exacerbated the situation.

Hundreds of people have attempted to escape to other nations in rickety boats, only to be turned away by authorities in destination countries out of fear that the refugees might spread the coronavirus, leaving them stranded at sea for months. In the squalid refugee camps at Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, meanwhile, the threat posed by the virus is increased by the unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions. Social distancing is almost impossible. Families live at close quarters in flimsy bamboo shacks. They have to use communal toilets and water facilities that are not always clean or available. Even the most basic items, such as soap, are scarce. In other words, the Rohingya are doomed wherever they go. While the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is working in the camps to protect people from COVID-19 and treat the infected, an internet ban imposed by the Bangladeshi government “for security reasons” has added to the distress of refugees. It has left them cut off from the outside world with no access to news or reliable information about the pandemic. As a result, rumors spread quickly.

The rising number of confirmed cases is putting growing pressure on the UN refugee agency's ability to provide enough equipment and isolation facilities, medication, food and water, and to conduct medical tests. It is running out of funding and human resources.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi authorities intercepted a boat carrying hundreds of refugees and escorted it to a remote island, apparently in an effort to reduce the risk of them spreading the virus in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh is doing what it can, with limited resources, to help the refugees. However it is struggling to cope with high numbers of coronavirus cases across the country and the loss of many healthcare workers.

In Rakhine State, where the majority of Rohingya live, they continue to bear the brunt of an intensifying armed conflict between the military, called the Tatmadaw, and the Arakan Army, an insurgent group that supports efforts by Rakhine Buddhists to seek greater self-governance and wider development. The government considers it a terrorist group. During a so-called “clearance operation” launched by the Tatmadaw, residents were told to leave their homes and that “anybody left behind would be considered Arakan Army.” Tens of thousands fled as a result of the heavy fighting.

According to the UNHCHR, a pattern has emerged of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including airstrikes on and shelling of civilian areas, and the destruction and burning of villages.

Last month, the Tatmadaw reportedly burned large areas of Buthidaung township. About 700,000 Rohingya were forced to flee from the area to Bangladesh in 2017 following a brutal crackdown by the military, which the UN said was carried out with “genocidal intent.” Eyewitness accounts and satellite images suggest dozens of Rohingya villages were burned to the ground. The importance of this lies not only in the fact that these villages contained homes to which Rohingya refugees hoped they might one day return. They also contained evidence of what transpired in 2017. Five months before they were burned down, in fact, the International

Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an order prohibiting the destruction of evidence supporting allegations of genocide.

In 2019, The Gambia took up the Rohingya case on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The African nation brought the genocide allegations to the ICJ and sought provisional measures to end the killings, protect and preserve evidence, and punish those responsible.

On Jan. 23 this year the ICJ announced a landmark decision on those provisional measures. Unanimously endorsed by all 17 judges, the binding ruling ordered Myanmar to: take prompt action to prevent further abuses and violations of the human rights of the Rohingya people; prevent the destruction of or damage to evidence related to the case; and report regularly to the ICJ on the action being taken to ensure these orders are followed.

Myanmar continues to strongly deny any genocidal intent, while refusing to cooperate with UN special rapporteur on Myanmar or comply with the ICJ orders.

The root causes of the violations and abuses endured by the Rohingya in Myanmar have not gone away. These include the discrimination and exclusion enshrined in the laws and policies of the government, such as the revocation of citizenship rights in 1982, which rendered them stateless and restricted their access to basic human rights, services and free movement. A 2017 resolution by the UN's Human Rights Council called for a comprehensive solution to the Rohingya crisis within three years. Two and a half years later, their situation is as bad as it was, if not worse. There must be a way for the international community to help resolve this crisis, and other cases involving blatant violations of international law and human rights, otherwise the credibility and standards of international organizations are in doubt.

But then, we are already all-too familiar with other protracted crises, such as the Palestinian issue and the Kashmir issue, in which the will of an individual country continues to override that of the international community.

– Courtesy Arab News

World missing lockdown's climate opportunity

Ranvir S. Nayar



Unfortunately, the world over, no government bailout plans were tied to making companies adopt greener manufacturing or business practices. Little wonder then that, within weeks of lockdowns being eased and business activities resuming, pollution levels had begun spiking again. In most places, they were racing back to their pre-lockdown levels

THE last few weeks have seen the now-familiar sight of vast swaths of Siberian forests burning, while temperatures across the Arctic soar, setting new records practically every day. On June 20, for the first time in recorded history, a Siberian town saw a high of 38 degrees Celsius – a good 18C above normal for the season.

The heat has fanned wildfires, which last month released 59 million tons of carbon dioxide, another record for the region. Experts estimate that the Arctic region is warming twice as fast as rest of the world, setting a worrying trend for the way climate change is headed, mainly because of rapidly melting icecaps in the polar region, which could lead to a sharp rise in sea levels.

Rewind to March and April and the global media was replete with images, videos and articles on how water and air pollution levels had dropped dramatically and that, for the first time in living memory, nature was beginning to flourish again. There were surprising images of crystal-clear lakes and bright blue skies as pollution levels dropped to levels not seen for at least three decades.

Pollution had dropped due to the unprecedented lockdowns put in place practically all over the world in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic. The pristine views showed the world, and its leaders in particular, what the planet could look and feel like if humanity managed to curb its polluting activities.

At the time, several environmental organizations exhorted political and business leaders all over the world to use the lockdowns, tragic as they might have been, as an opportunity to reset our lifestyle, the way we run our companies and manage our economies. There was frequent talk that, when the lockdowns ended and normal economic activities and normal life resumed, it would be the ideal occasion to go as green as possible in all our activities – industry, transport, agriculture and lei-

sure. As each government opened its war chest to help businesses and the most vulnerable sections of society, there were numerous appeals made by environmental activists that leaders ought to include strict conditions, making the trillions of dollars of aid dependent on drastic cuts in emissions and a major shift toward a green economy.

The timing was indeed ideal and perhaps unique, not just in a generation but in centuries. Never before had nearly all the polluting activities of human beings the world over come to a complete halt. It is difficult to envisage another occasion that could present such a similar opportunity. Gains could have been made across different sectors of the economy since, for most companies, especially those in the industrial and transport sectors, entire processes had to be changed, with machines that had not been used for several months having to be cleaned and tested before being restarted. Thus, it took several weeks or even months for industry to restart normal production.

This was an ideal opportunity for companies to replace their old machines with something newer and greener. And, even if they did not or could not change the machines, they could definitely have given them a thorough assessment to see how to make small gains in terms of pollution and emission levels.

Unfortunately, the world over, no government bailout plans were tied to making companies adopt greener manufacturing or business practices. Little wonder then that, within weeks of lockdowns being eased and business activities resuming, pollution levels had begun spiking again. In most places, they were racing back to their pre-lockdown levels. The same is bound to be repeated as business fully resumes in more countries across the world.

However, this is not the first time that human beings, especially governments and business leaders, have missed an opportunity to clean up their

act: A similar, though very different and much smaller, window of opportunity presented itself following the global financial meltdown of 2008. Then, as now, governments, especially those in the Western world, spent hundreds of billions of dollars bailing out businesses, saving jobs and boosting economies.

Just like today, no government leader or business magnate thought of investing that money in a way that not only made their companies financially strong, but also made them sustainable by cutting carbon emissions and pollution levels. Indeed, global warming had already become a real challenge and scientists had been warning government leaders about the urgent need to take corrective measures. Back then, as now, the warnings were not heeded and pollution levels and global warming continued to increase sharply.

During the 13 years to 2018, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels rose about 15 percent, from 32 billion tons to 37 billion tons. This was during a period when most developed countries had already committed to cutting their emissions from the 1990 levels. This year, there was a prediction that global carbon emissions could fall by 2.5 billion tons due to the lockdowns but, with the way economies have been revived with scant regard for pollution, it would not be a surprise if emissions continued their upward march, just as has been the case for every year since the industrial age began.

Each economic crisis brings new opportunities for mankind to think about and review its approach toward nature and natural resources. However, each time nature or our own errors give us a reason to pause and review, instead of changing our priorities and learning from past behavior and its impact on the planet, we continue to go downhill faster than ever before, straight into the fires that global warming is causing.

– Courtesy Arab News

Briefs

China doctor accuses officials of cover-up

WEB DESK

WUHAN: A doctor who diagnosed early coronavirus cases in China has told the BBC he believes local officials covered up the scale of the initial outbreak. Professor Kwok-Yung Yuen, who helped to investigate in Wuhan, says physical evidence was destroyed and the response to clinical findings was slow. "When we went to the Huanan supermarket, of course, there was nothing to see because the market was clean already. So, you may say that the crime scene is already disturbed because the supermarket was cleared we cannot identify any host which is giving the virus to humans," said Professor Yuen. "I do suspect that they have been doing some cover-up locally at Wuhan. The local officials who are supposed to immediately relay the information has not allowed this to be done as readily as it should," he added. China has been criticised for its initial response to the outbreak, and for penalising a doctor who tried to warn colleagues about the virus in late December. In response, China has repeatedly denied accusations that it withheld information about the severity of its outbreak.

Indian court summons Alibaba, Jack Ma

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: An Indian court has summoned Alibaba and its founder Jack Ma after a former employee in India said he was wrongfully fired after objecting to what he saw as censorship and fake news on company apps, documents seen by the Reuters news agency showed. The case comes weeks after India cited security concerns in banning Alibaba's UC News, UC Browser and 57 other Chinese apps after a clash in June between the two countries' forces on their border. Following the ban, which China has criticised, India sought written answers from all affected companies, including responses that addressed whether they censored content or acted for any foreign government.

Pedro to leave Chelsea

DNA

LONDON: Spanish striker Pedro has played his last league game for Chelsea, manager Frank Lampard has confirmed. The forward, who will be 33 on Tuesday, came on for the final few minutes of Sunday's 2-0 Premier League win over Wolves. Pedro, signed from Barcelona for £21m in 2014, helped Chelsea secure the Premier League title in 2016-17 and also won the FA Cup and Europa League. Reports suggest that he is set to join Serie A club Roma on a free transfer.

Thompson snaps 7-year US PGA win drought

WASHINGTON: American Michael Thompson snapped a seven-year US PGA title drought on Sunday, making birdies on two of the last three holes to win the 3M Open by two strokes. Thompson, the 2012 US Open runner-up, rolled an impressive bunker shot within three feet of the cup at the par-4 16th and holed a 15-foot birdie putt at the par-5 18th to secure his first tour triumph since the 2013 Honda Classic. "I don't know what to say. This is so exciting," Thompson said, his voice cracking with emotion as he fought back tears. "I played such good golf today. I stayed within myself. I played within myself. This means so much to me." - APP



TURIN: Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates with Juventus teammates after scoring the opening goal in a league match against Sampdoria. - DNA

Russian navy to get hypersonic nuclear weapons, says Putin

"Work is being successfully completed to create modern weapons systems for the navy," it was cited as saying

WEB DESK

ST PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the Russian navy will be armed with hypersonic nuclear weapons and underwater nuclear drones. The weapons, some of which have yet to be deployed, include the Poseidon underwater nuclear drone, designed to be carried by submarines, and the Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missile, which can be deployed on surface ships. The combination of speed, ma-

neuvrability, and altitude of hypersonic missiles, capable of travelling at more than five times the speed of sound, makes them difficult to track and intercept. Putin, who said he does not want an arms race, has often spoken of a new generation of Russian nuclear weapons he says are unequalled and can hit almost anywhere in the world. Some Western experts have questioned how advanced they are. Speaking on Sunday in St Petersburg at an annual naval parade that showcases Russia's best warships, nuclear submarines



and naval aviation, Putin said the navy's capabilities were growing and it would get 40 new vessels this year. He did not specify when it would receive new hypersonic weapons, but suggested that day was drawing closer. "The widespread deployment of advanced digital technologies that have no equals in the world, including hypersonic strike systems and underwater drones, will give the fleet unique advantages and increased combat capabilities," Putin said. In a separate statement released via Russian news agencies, the

defence ministry said testing of the Belgorod, the first submarine capable of carrying the Poseidon drones, was under way and testing of the weapons systems was nearing completion. "Work is being successfully completed to create modern weapons systems for the navy," it was cited as saying. Putin last year threatened to deploy hypersonic missiles on ships and submarines that could lurk outside US territorial waters if the United States moved to deploy intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe.

Manchester United, Chelsea seal UCL spots

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Manchester United and Chelsea grabbed the final two Champions League places at the expense of Leicester City on the final day of the English Premier League season. The three teams were separated by just one point heading into Sunday and Chelsea beat Wolves 2-0 at home to book one of the spots with both goals coming in first-half injury time. That meant Leicester needed

to beat Manchester United for the other place but instead it lost 2-0 at home thanks to a Bruno Fernandes penalty in the 70th minute after opposing striker Jamie Vardy - who still finished as the league's top scorer - hit the post. It was United's record 14th penalty of the season and Fernandes has never missed one at the highest level, according to Sky. Former United defender Jonny Evans was sent off in injury time for a foul on Scott McTominay, with Jesse Lingard later adding the

second goal. Manchester United and Chelsea finished on 66 points - United got third with a better goal difference - and Leicester City 62. United was set to lose around £70 million (\$90 million) had it missed out on the top four but flourished in the league since it restarted in June after being halted due to the coronavirus pandemic. Much of that was down to attacking midfielder Fernandes, who was signed from Sporting Lisbon in January.

"Russian athletes must be kept out of Tokyo Games"

SPORTS DESK

MOSCOW: No Russian athletes should be allowed to take part in the postponed Tokyo Olympics next year, says former doping mastermind turned whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov. The architect of the country's infamous state-sponsored doping scandal told BBC Sport the country had not changed despite being banned from all major sporting events for four years in December for manipulating laboratory data. The World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) has ruled that Russian athletes who prove they are clean will be able to compete in Japan under a neutral flag. In his first broadcast interview since the decision, Rodchenkov, the former head of Moscow's anti-doping laboratory, said: "It should be an absolute blanket ban without any excuses or admissions of athletes. "The same personnel who were smuggling and swapping samples during Sochi [the 2014 Winter Games], they were falsifying all documentation. "It was a progression in falsifying, day by day, of this data - an incredible fraud of unspeakable proportion. It shows the country learns absolutely nothing."

'Cricket and COVID-19 will have to co-exist'

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board Chief Executive Wasim Khan said that sending the Pakistan cricket team on a tour to England during the coronavirus pandemic was quite a tough decision, but "cricket and COVID-19 will have to co-exist". The PCB official, while speaking to media, said that the situation became quite tense when cricket team players started testing positive for COVID-19.



"However," the official said, "for the restoration of world cricket and to keep it on track, it is imperative to continue with matches." "COVID-19 and cricket will have to co-exist, there was no other reason for this decision other than the [revival of] global cricket," he added. Khan said that, "Whenever we are asked regarding our decision to proceed with the tour to England, the same question should also be posed to the West Indies cricket team, which has also continued with scheduled matches." "The West Indies (cricket team) decided to go to England when the situation was quite worse over there (due to the pandemic)," he said, adding that, following suit, the PCB officials also made their decision. He emphasised that decisions based on security matters and those in light of the coronavirus pandemic differ in their dynamics. Speaking on international cricket in Pakistan, the PCB official said that international teams are changing their perspective regarding Pakistan and they think matches should take place here. - DNA

Qatar confirms plan to bid for 2032 Olympics

DOHA: Qatar will seek to host the 2032 Olympic Games, it said on Monday, joining a crowded field and raising questions about scorching summer temperatures and underwhelming attendances at past events. India, Australia's Queensland state, the Chinese city of Shanghai and a potential joint bid between South and North Korea are also being touted for the 2032 summer games. Under changes put forward in 2014, interested coun-

tries submit a request to join the non-committal "continuous dialogue", which Qatar confirmed to AFP it had done via a letter to the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne. "Today's announcement marks the beginning of a meaningful dialogue with the IOC's Future Host Commission to explore our interest further and identify how the Olympic Games can support Qatar's long-term development goals,"

Qatar Olympic Committee president Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani told AFP in a statement. Qatar unsuccessfully bid to host the 2016 and 2020 games, having proposed to host the former in October without first clearing it with the IOC. It won a waiver to propose hosting the 2020 games, a joint bid with Baku, Azerbaijan, between September 20 and October 20, but failed to make the shortlist. - APP

Juve clinch ninth Serie A title

SPORTS DESK

TURIN: Cristiano Ronaldo dedicated Juventus' record-extending ninth successive Serie A title 'to the fans' as they defeated Sampdoria in Turin. The forward scored his 31st league goal of the season from Miralem Pjanic's short free-kick and Federico Bernardeschi sealed the victory. Sampdoria's hopes of finding a way back into the match ended as they were reduced to 10-men following a second booking for Morten Thorsby. Ronaldo's goal sees him move to within three of leading Serie A goalscorer Immobile, who scored a hat-trick in a 5-1 win over Verona earlier on Sunday. "I told the players 'if you win with me who has retired here in June. Ronaldo missed the chance to get closer to Ciro Immobile's tally of 34 at the top of the Serie A goal charts as he struck a penalty against the crossbar in the final minutes. Juventus had missed the chance to claim the title in what manager Sarri described as a "messy" defeat at Udinese on Thursday and began Sunday's match with just one win in their last five games. They were far from their free-flowing best and were forced to withstand plen-

ty of pressure in the second half but Bernardeschi's goal from Ronaldo's saved attempt ensured former Chelsea manager Sarri won the first league title of his managerial career. Sampdoria's hopes of finding a way back into the match ended as they were reduced to 10-men following a second booking for Morten Thorsby. Ronaldo's goal sees him move to within three of leading Serie A goalscorer Immobile, who scored a hat-trick in a 5-1 win over Verona earlier on Sunday. "I told the players 'if you win with me who has retired here in June. Ronaldo missed the chance to get closer to Ciro Immobile's tally of 34 at the top of the Serie A goal charts as he struck a penalty against the crossbar in the final minutes. Juventus had missed the chance to claim the title in what manager Sarri described as a "messy" defeat at Udinese on Thursday and began Sunday's match with just one win in their last five games. They were far from their free-flowing best and were forced to withstand plen-

Barcelona president expects Messi to sign new deal



BARCELONA: Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu says he has "no doubt" Argentina forward Lionel Messi will sign a new contract with the club. The 33-year-old's current deal expires in 2021. BBC Sport columnist Guillem Balague recently reported Messi was "fed up" at the Spanish club. "Messi has said many times that he wants to retire here and I have no doubt that he will re-sign," Bartomeu told Mundo Deportivo. Barcelona finished the domestic season five points behind La Liga champions Real Madrid. They play the second leg of their Champions League last-16 tie with Napoli on 8 August with the score 1-1 from the first match in February. Messi, who won the La Liga Golden Boot with 25 goals, has said "things have to change" at the club. On the transfer front, Bartomeu added: "Now we are making decisions and the players, if they do not come as part of a player exchange, it is very difficult for them to come." - DNA

Halep pulls out of tennis' return event

SPORTS DESK

BUCHAREST: The first official tennis tournament to be staged during the coronavirus pandemic lost its top attraction when Simona Halep pulled out Sunday in a move that frustrated organizers. The reigning Wimbledon champion - one of tennis' most popular players - tweeted that she would be skipping the Palermo Ladies Open in Italy that starts August 3 due to an increasing number of coronavirus cases in her native Romania and worries about international air travel. According to the World Health Organization, there were 413 confirmed cases recorded on July 14 in Romania but the number has surpassed 1,000 on both July 24 and 25. Overall the country has recorded more than 42,000 cases and 2,150 deaths. "Given the recent rise in Covid19 cases in Romania and my anxieties around international air travel at this time, I have made the tough decision to withdraw from Palermo," said Halep. "I want to thank the tournament director and the Italian ministry of health for all efforts on my behalf." Halep's participation had been in doubt after Italy on Friday said it was imposing a 14-day quarantine period for people traveling from Romania and Bulgaria. The tournament, though, said the rule wouldn't have applied to the players competing.

Thailand's beach resorts reopened to local tourists

DNA

HUA HIN: For travelers around the world, visiting a tropical beach resort in Thailand feels like a far-off dream right now due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. The country's borders remain closed to international tourists and plans for an aviation "bubble" with other nations continue to sputter. Thailand's tourism sector, which contributes close to 15% of its GDP according to the World Bank, has been severely impacted. For the moment, domestic travelers are infusing some much-needed cash into the ailing industry. Thailand hasn't reported a locally transmitted Covid-19 infection in more than 50 days, giving travelers a sense of security as they hit the road. Though destinations like Koh Samui and Phuket continue to suffer from the lack of overseas visitors, resort towns within driving distance of Bangkok are taking advantage of locals' urge to travel following weeks of lockdown.

Young adults majority of new cases in Canada

MONTREAL: Canadians under the age of 39 make up a clear majority of new cases of COVID-19 in Canada, health authorities said Sunday, warning young adults they are not "invincible" against the disease. "Recent national surveillance data show that young adults aged 20-39 years of age account for the highest incidence rates across all ages in Canada," Canada's chief public health officer Theresa Tam said in a statement. For the week ending July 22, the incidence rate was highest among young men and women aged 20-29 (14.4 and 13.8 cases per 100,000 people respectively), followed by those aged 30-39. "Younger Canadians are not invincible" to the disease, Tam warned, noting that it is not only the elderly who are at risk of serious health problems if infected. She pointed out that, of the cases of COVID-19 reported to public health last week, 63 percent involved people under 39 years of age, of whom roughly one-third were hospitalized. There was an average of 485 new cases reported daily across the country last week. - APP

Briefs

US Police declare riots in Seattle & Portland

WEB DESK

SEATTLE: Riots were declared by authorities in the United States cities of Seattle and Portland as months-long demonstrations against racial injustice have continued across the country. The most recent night of unrest marked two months to the day that George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, died in police custody in Minnesota after a white officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes on May 25. Saturday's demonstrations included a car driving through a crowd of protesters in Aurora, Colorado, a man fatally shot in Austin, Texas, and a court house set aflame in Oakland, California. In Seattle, authorities declared a riot following large protests in its Capitol Hill neighbourhood, with police deploying flash bangs and pepper spray to try to clear a weeks-old "occupied protest zone" that stretches for several blocks.

UK to add five new countries to 'air bridge'

DNA

LONDON: The UK government has been advising against all but essential travel since March, but this advice has been lifted for destinations that "no longer pose an unacceptably high risk" for British travellers. Passengers from more than 50 countries and 14 British Overseas Territories no longer have to quarantine on arrival in the UK.

Five new countries will be added from 28 July. They are Slovenia, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. But national governments have differing assessments of countries deemed safer for travel. Finland, in contrast to Britain, has placed Slovenia on its restricted list from today, and anyone travelling from there to Finland will have self-isolate for a fortnight.

Hong Kong extends virus restrictions

DNA

HONG KONG (DNA): Hong Kong has announced further restrictions to curb a surge in coronavirus cases, including a ban on gatherings of more than two people, a total bar on restaurant dining and mandatory facemasks in all public places, including outdoors. The measures, which will take effect from Wednesday, are the first time the city has completely banned dining in restaurants. Since late January, more than 2,600 people have been infected in Hong Kong, 20 of whom have died.

5 Turkish soldiers die in bus accident

DNA

MERSIN: Five Turkish soldiers and the driver transporting them died on Monday after their bus rolled over in the southern province of Mersin, the local governor's office said. Ten soldiers were also seriously injured in the accident and taken to the hospital, it said, adding that the cause of the disaster had not yet been determined. Some media reports say that the driver couldn't make a turn and lost control of the vehicle, causing it to roll over.

Sudan to send more troops to Darfur

WEB DESK

KHARTOUM: The Sudanese government is sending more troops to the restive Darfur region, following a spike in violence there. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said the forces would protect people during the farming season. Unidentified gunmen killed more than 60 people in the region on Saturday, and another 20 the day before, the UN said.



BEIJING: China's indigenously-developed AG600 large amphibious aircraft succeeded in its maiden flight over sea. -DNA

United States consulate in Chengdu officially shuts

"Today, we bid farewell to the US Consulate General in Chengdu. We will miss you forever," the mission's official post said

DNA

CHENGDU: The United States consulate in the Chinese city of Chengdu officially closed Monday morning, amid worsening relations between Beijing and Washington. The American flag over the building was lowered at dawn, according to Chinese state-run broadcaster

CCTV, and onlookers were moved back by police surrounding the consulate as it prepared to shut.

Beijing ordered the US embassy to close on Friday in a tit-for-tat move, after Washington instructed China's consulate in Houston, Texas, to cease operations, claiming it had been involved in a US-wide Chinese espionage effort. The Chinese government gave the Americans the same 72-hour time

frame to close their Chengdu mission as Beijing had been given in Houston last week.

As that deadline expired, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Monday that the Chengdu consulate closed at 10 a.m. "Relevant Chinese authorities then entered from the main entrance and took over," the ministry said in a statement posted on Chinese social media platform Weibo.

Over the weekend, hundreds of people had gathered outside the US consulate in the city of 16.5 million people, taking selfies and waving Chinese flags.

On Saturday, the US insignia was taken down, while on Sunday removal work began on a plaque outside the embassy and shipping containers were loaded onto trucks, as staff prepared for the consulate to be closed.

A video posted to Twitter by the US Mission in China on Monday morning featured images of the Chengdu consulate being opened by then-Vice President George Bush in 1985, before listing the areas covered by the diplomatic mission, such as Tibet.

"Today, we bid farewell to the US Consulate General in Chengdu. We will miss you forever," the mission's official post said.

Iran moves mock aircraft carrier to sea amid US tensions

The US Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, which patrols Mideast waterways, did not immediately respond to a request for comment

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran has moved a mock aircraft carrier to the strategic Strait of Hormuz amid heightened tensions between Tehran and the US, satellite photographs released Monday show, likely signaling the Islamic Republic soon plans to use it for live-fire drills. An image from Maxar Technologies taken Sunday shows an Iranian fast boat speed toward the carrier, sending waves up in its wake, after a tugboat pulled her out into the strait from the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas. Iranian state media and officials have yet to acknowledge bringing the replica out to the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20

percent of the world's oil passes. However, its appearance there suggests Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard is preparing an encore of a similar mock-sinking it conducted in 2015. The US Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, which patrols Mideast waterways, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The replica carries 16 mock-ups of fighter jets on its deck, according to the satellite photos taken by Maxar Technologies. The vessel appears to be some 200 meters long and 50 meters wide. A real Nimitz is over 300 meters long and 75 meters wide. The mock-up strongly resembles a similar one used in February 2015 during a military exercise called "Great Prophet 9."



RABAT: Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco Hamid Asghar Khan hosted a party at Pakistan House, Rabat. - DNA

Economical threat in Latin America

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Even as coronavirus cases soar in Latin America, another calamity looms: Sharply contracting economies, unsustainable debt and deepening inequality could unleash social turmoil in the region. The regional economy of Latin America and the Car-

ibbean is expected to shrink more than any other region worldwide - a contraction of nearly 10% this year, according to the International Monetary Fund's June forecast. The IMF said the "pandemic's still rapid spread indicates that social distancing measures will need to remain in place for a longer time, depressing economic activity in the second half of 2020."

A new UN report goes further - saying Covid-19 could lead to "the worst economic and social crisis in decades, with highly damaging effects on employment, the fight against poverty and the reduction of inequality." The region had already been weakened by years of stagnation before Covid-19 arrived. Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2014

and 2019 averaged just 0.4% annually, the lowest since the 1950s. The millions who had finally made it into the middle class faced what the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development called "a vicious cycle of low-quality jobs, poor social protection and volatile income that leaves them at risk of falling back into poverty."

Time to establish peace in Afghanistan: Stefano

It has been 71 years since the NATO was founded. It entered to Afghanistan almost nineteen years ago, back in 2001. It has been engaged militarily in Afghanistan to fight against terrorism and never to let the country become again a safe haven for terrorism

NEWS DESK

ROME: It has been 71 years since the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), also called the North Atlantic Alliance, was founded. It entered to Afghanistan almost nineteen years ago, back in 2001. It has been engaged militarily in Afghanistan to fight against terrorism and never to let the country become again a safe haven for terrorism. Although it contributed to reconstruction, development and support of the Afghan forces in Afghanistan and has had many achievements, still a war is going on in the country. The NATO's 19 years of war that claimed the lives of thousands is expected to be ended through negotiations. For further discussions, we have Mr. Stefano Pontecorvo, the Senior Civilian Representative of NATO in Afghanistan. *The Killid Group: Hello Ambassador. Thank you so much for speaking with us today. We would like to first know that how do you assess the ongoing Afghan peace process?*

Mr. Pontecorvo: This is a historical opportunity for peace in Afghanistan. Everyone must seize this opportunity because the Afghan people will not forgive,

nor forget those who stand on the way of peace. Peace processes are not easy and they require compromise by the warring parties. Both parties to the conflict must continue to build confidence; finalise prisoner release and start intra-Afghan negotiations, showing real commitment to peace and the peace process.

The Killid Group: Yes, absolutely! Now, to what extent are you confident that peace efforts will succeed?

Mr. Pontecorvo: All Afghans demand peace. There has been too much suffering, and yesterday was late for the conflict to end. There is no military solution to this conflict. It can only be solved through political negotiated settlement. Intra-Afghan negotiations must start as soon as possible. They must be truly inclusive to achieve durable peace. And I welcome the efforts by the government so far on creating an inclusive negotiating team and on the progress it has made on the prisoners release. The government and Afghan leaders must continue building a united front. And durable peace must be built on achievements of the past 19 years, including human rights, women rights and rest of minorities, civil freedom and liberties, press freedom and the life.



The Killid Group: We would like you to elaborate on what roles NATO has played in the Afghan peace process, so far?

Mr. Pontecorvo: NATO has supported the efforts of Ambassador Khalilzad to bring the parties together to set stage for an Afghan-owned and Afghan led process. As part of the Doha agreement between the Taliban and the U.S., we have agreed to drawdown our forces in support of the peace process. We have now, in fact, come down from 16,000 troops. But no decision has been made on further reduction. Our presence in Afghanistan is conditions-based, and we will make adjustments depending on the progress on the peace negotiations.

The Taliban must live up to their commitments, cut ties with terrorist groups and enter the intra-Afghan negotiations at good faith as soon as possible. We have also supported the ANDSF through our Resolute Support Mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces who had become increasingly professional. It was ultimately them with our assistance who have made the Taliban realize that they cannot win on the battlefield, and they have to sit at the negotiating table. We are proud of their achievements, including their professional commands, air force and a quality leadership and interoperability. As NATO, we will continue our support to the ANDSF with train-

ing and funds and they provide security for Afghans and set the conditions for peace.

The Killid Group: Mr. Ambassador! To what extent are the disputes of the warring parties over the release of prisoners and the start of the long-awaited peace negotiations frustrating?

Mr. Pontecorvo: Prisoner release is one of the sticking points currently that is no news. It is not an easy process logistically and legally, and I understand different concerns. But this issue needs to be finalized as soon as possible and I urge flexibility on both sides. We are not seeing much on the Taliban side whereas I believe the government is doing all of them. This will bring us closer to the intra-Afghan negotiations which is the best chance for peace in Afghanistan.

The Killid Group: Based on your perspective, what are the main obstacles on the way to ending the longest-running war in Afghanistan?

Violence perpetrated by the Taliban remains the main predicament to peace. The current level of violence is totally unacceptable and aren't compatible to creating the conditions of trust. They are not conducive to establishing a favorable environment for the

Huawei holds summit amid global pressure

WEB DESK

SHENZHEN: Chinese technology giant Huawei started a four-day online event focusing on how technology can be used in the fight against the coronavirus. The "Better World Summit" will also explore how to boost the world economy in the wake of the pandemic. Meanwhile, HSBC has issued a statement defending its cooperation with the US in a case against Huawei. It came after Chinese state media accused the London-headquartered bank of "setting traps to ensnare" Huawei. The world's biggest telecoms equipment maker said the summit will feature talks by technology industry executives and experts from around the world, including Huawei's deputy chairman Guo Ping as well as South Africa's telecoms minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams. The event is being held against the backdrop of growing pressure on the company as tensions rise between Beijing and western governments.

Poland's decision to leave treaty criticized

DNA

WARSAW: Poland's decision to leave a European treaty aimed at combating violence against women has sparked criticism the day before the country said it would begin the withdrawal process. Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro announced Saturday that Poland will take the first step needed to withdraw from the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on Monday, according to the state-run Polish Press Agency.

The Istanbul Convention, which is the first legally binding treaty of its kind in the world, aims to protect women against violence and to help bring about the end of discrimination against them. Guy Verhofstadt, the former Prime Minister of Belgium, described Poland's decision as "scandalous" in a tweet on Sunday. "Violence is not a traditional value. EU and all of its members signed, because Europe stands for human rights, equality and decency," he added.

Kuwait inks vaccine deal

DNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait has secured an agreement with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) to provide the country with an enough COVID-19 vaccine for 800,000 people once available, national daily Kuwait Times reported. Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said the government will cover 50 percent of the country's vaccine needs once the second shipment arrives from manufacturing companies working with GAVI.

Briefs

'Pervaiz Elahi had misused his power'

DNA

LAHORE: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore on Monday has accused Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi of exceeding from his authorities.

According to details, the anti-graft watchdog has submitted its 9-page detailed reply in Lahore High Court (LHC), stating that Pervaiz Elahi has committed corruption by misusing his power. Pervaiz Elahi remained local government minister from 1988 to 1993. During this tenure, he had illegally appointed 29 people, NAB said. The bureau representative further stated that Pervaiz Elahi used his official letter head to hire these people.

BRT inauguration in 2021: KP minister

DNA

PESHAWAR: In yet another deadline, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour and Culture Shaukat Yousafzai said on Monday that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project will be inaugurated in 2021.

Speaking to a private television channel, the KP minister said construction work is going on and the mega project would be inaugurated in 2021. Commenting on the cable car project in the Upper Dir district's Kumrat valley, KP, the minister said that the project intends to be the world's largest and highest one.

Shaikat Yousafzai said that Chief Minister KP Mehmoond Khan has given the approval of feasibility report of the project. The project will boost tourism in the region. "Apart from the main attraction of the cable car, facilities will include a car parking space, a restaurant, and other allied facilities.

According to details, the cable car will likely charge Rs500 per person and the parking area will have a capacity to accommodate around 500 vehicles at a time. The cable car will move at a speed of 6km/sec, said the documents, elaborating that each car cubicle will have a capacity of 10 tourists per round.

Saudi Arabia all set for downsized hajj

MECCA (Saudi Arabia): Saudi Arabia on Wednesday begins hosting the annual hajj pilgrimage, dramatically downsized due to the coronavirus pandemic that has barred millions of international pilgrims for the first time in modern history. Up to 10,000 people residing in the kingdom will participate in the Muslim ritual, a tiny fraction of the 2.5 million that attended last year, after what many saw as an opaque selection process that left a wave of applicants rejected. The foreign press are barred from this year's hajj, usually a huge global media event, as the government tightens access to the holy city of Mecca and puts in place strict health restrictions to prevent a virus outbreak during the five-day pilgrimage - a key pillar of Islam.

Saudi Arabia has recorded more than 260,000 cases of the novel coronavirus, while the number of declared global infections exceeded 16 million on Sunday. Mask-clad pilgrims began trickling into Mecca over the weekend and were subject to temperature checks and placed in quarantine, authorities said. They were given elaborate amenity kits that include sterilised pebbles for a stoning ritual, disinfectants, masks, a prayer rug and the ihram, a seamless white garment worn by pilgrims, according to a hajj ministry programme document. Pilgrims are required to be tested for coronavirus before arriving in Mecca and will also have to quarantine after the pilgrimage. - APP

PM asks nation for strict SOPs compliance on Eid, Muharram

Any recklessness on Eid and Muharram in terms of ignoring standard operating procedures (SOPs) could result in upsurge of coronavirus cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said the government's smart lockdown policy had yielded positive results with sharp decline in coronavirus cases, however asked the nation to adopt strict safety measures on the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha and Muharram ul Haram to prevent the virus

rebound. "Any recklessness on Eid and Muharram in terms of ignoring standard operating procedures (SOPs) could result in upsurge of coronavirus cases," the prime minister said in a televised address to the nation after chairing a meeting to review situation of COVID-19. Imran Khan warned that the government would be forced to impose strict lockdown in case



of spread of coronavirus, which would "result in increased financial losses and unemployment". "However, on getting successful in controlling the spread of virus after these two occasions, the government will open up more sectors including schools, universities, tourism, restaurants, marriage halls and several other areas," he said. He said with blessings of Allah

Almighty, the country witnessed less coronavirus cases as compared to the world and added that any casual response by the public at the moment would be a gesture of ungratefulness. The prime minister asked the people "not to repeat the mistake of ignoring SOPs like previous Eid which had put a heavy toll on lives along with unaffordable pressure on hospitals".

China records highest number of virus cases

DNA

BEIJING: China on Monday recorded 61 new coronavirus cases, its highest number since April as fears of a second wave of infections grow. The bulk of 57 new domestic cases were found in the far north-western Xinjiang region, according to the National Health Commission, where a sudden outbreak in the regional capital of Urumqi occurred in mid-July. Fourteen domestic cases were also recorded in the northeastern province of Liaoning

where a fresh cluster broke out in the city of Dalian last week. Two more local cases were found in the neighbouring province of Jilin near the North Korean border - the first since late May. The last four infections confirmed on Monday were imported from overseas. It is the highest daily tally of new virus cases since April 14, when 89 cases, mostly imported, were recorded. Chinese authorities have rolled out mass testing for hundreds of thousands of people in the port city of Dalian. A second wave of mass testing was also launched in Xinjiang's Urumqi on Sunday to detect

residents who had previously tested false negative, reported the state-run Global Times, following a mass testing effort earlier this month. More than 2.3 million people in the city of 3.5 million have been tested so far, according to a local press conference Friday. The outbreaks come as the Chinese Super League football tournament kicked off its much-delayed season on Saturday. Residential communities in both Dalian and Urumqi have been placed under lockdown, with authorities declaring a "wartime mode" to combat the virus. Experts still

have not confirmed the origin of the recent Xinjiang cluster, which has infected 178 people to date. The fresh infections in Jilin were announced just days after President Xi Jinping concluded an inspection tour of the province last week. The area announced four new asymptomatic cases on Sunday, after screening travellers returning from Dalian. Another 302 asymptomatic cases in China are under medical observation, health authorities said Monday, and there are currently 331 people ill with COVID-19 across the country, 21 in a severe condition.

Turkish Airlines welcomes PIA's Istanbul flight operations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Airlines has welcomed a plan by PIA to start flight operations of the national carrier to Turkey from next month. PIA CEO Arshad Malik has said that the airline planned to start operations to Turkey from the first week of

August provided that Turkey's aeronautical authorities granted it permission for the flights. According to the plan, PIA passengers will be able to travel to Europe from Turkey via Turkish Airlines. In his letter, the Turkish Airlines' CEO proposed to upgrade the codeshare from unilateral to a bilateral

arrangement with Pakistan. He said that flights of both companies to Birmingham, London, Milan, Barcelona, Copenhagen and Oslo can also be made with codeshare. Through this, Pakistani passengers landing at the airport in Istanbul will be able to book flights on European routes. - DNA

Key Trump advisor tests positive

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, has tested positive for coronavirus, the White House has confirmed. Mr O'Brien, 54, has been self-isolating and working from home. The aide has mild symptoms and there was no risk of exposure to Mr Trump or Vice-President Mike Pence, a statement said. Mr O'Brien is the highest-ranking official in Mr Trump's administration known to have tested positive. It is not clear when he and the president last met, but they appeared together two weeks ago on a trip to Miami. The White House statement read: "He has mild symptoms and has been self-isolating and working from a secure location off site."

COVID-19 most severe global health emergency: WHO

DNA

GENEVA: Nearly six months since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern, the organization on Monday said it was "easily the most severe" emergency ever declared by the global health agency. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned during a virtual news briefing Monday that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to accelerate as the total number of cases has doubled in the past six weeks. "This is the sixth time a global health emergency has been declared under the International Health Regulations, but is easily the most severe," Tedros said.

More than 16 million coronavirus cases have been confirmed with more than 640,000 total deaths since the outbreak began late last year. The WHO official said strict adherence to social distancing and wearing masks can help mitigate the spread of the virus, praising countries such as Canada, China, Germany and South Korea for controlling outbreaks. He also emphasized the need for testing, contact tracing and isolating those who test positive. "Keep your distance from others, clean your hands, avoid crowded and enclosed areas, and wear a mask where recommended. Where these measures are followed, cases go down. Where they're not, cases go up," Tedros said.

Targets achieved from polio

ISLAMABAD: The government has successfully achieved the targets from polio immunization drive concluded in selected districts of the country after a four-month suspension due to COVID-19 pandemic. "Our objective was to reach target areas with continuous polio virus circulation to protect children against the crippling polio disease," said an official of National Emergency Operations Centre, Polio Eradication Programme.

He said that staff was especially trained on preventive measures to follow during vaccination, including protocols of door-knocking and marking, keeping the desired physical distance inside homes, and ensuring safe handling of a child while vaccinating and finger marking. He said that the door to door campaigns was also utilized to raise awareness on COVID preventive measures and referring mothers and children for other essential vaccinations as well as the antenatal care services.

He said that the government had decided to reach the eligible children with all essential vaccines and relaunch small scale door to door vaccination round since suspension during March in the context of COVID-19. - APP

Punjab reports zero deaths

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab has reported 172 new cases of the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, the government's Covid-19 portal said. No death was reported in the province. This is the first time the province has recorded zero deaths since May 26. The total number of confirmed cases in Punjab is now 92,073.

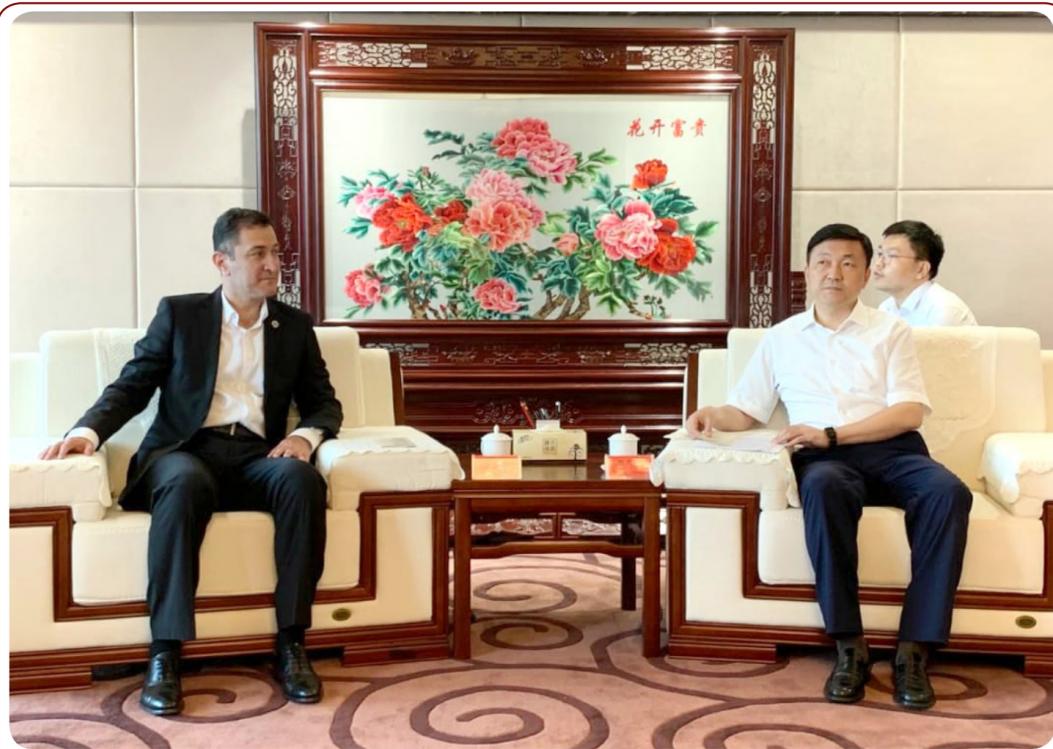
'Tenure of trade bodies not being extended'

DNA

KARACHI: Prime Minister's Advisor on Commerce and Trade Abdul Razzak Dawood has categorically said that there is no consideration of extending tenure of trade bodies office bearers and even the law doesn't

allow such proposal. He was talking to a delegation led by Patron in Chief of United Business Group (UBG) and former Chief Executive of Trade Development of Pakistan (TDAB) SM Muneer. Secretary Commerce Salih Farooqui, Former Presidents of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce &

Industry (FPCCI) Zubair Tufail, Abdul Rauf Alam, Khalid Tawab, Sohail Altaf, Zafar Bakhtyari and Malik Sohail Hussain were also present at the occasion. Dawood mentioned that office bearers of FPCCI and some other trade bodies have brought the idea to extend the term of their office for one more year.



BEIJING: Sherali Jononov Deputy Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting with Chinese officials. Both sides discussed matters related to SCO. - DNA

Chinese Motorcyclist support slums in Pakistan

"Thanks to Pakistan for giving us higher dimensions of travel and life meaning. As a respond, I'd love to do more for this lovely country"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To help the slums 20 kilometers away from here overcoming COVID-19 epidemic, Yang Xiaolong, a Chinese motorcyclist led a group of Chinese travelers to donate supplies to slums in Pakistan. According to Gwadar Pro, Yang Xiaolong is a Chinese globetrotter and a planner of China-Pakistan friendship travel. He has organized motorcycle teams many times to ride along the KKH From China to Pakistan. "We do round trip five or six

times every year, and some locals knew us and became very good friends with us," Yang Xiaolong said. The citizens in slums keep a difficult living standard, severe sanitation conditions, the awareness of prevention and control is weak. Thus, the situation of residents is grim. "we must offer help when brothers are in trouble." Knowing that the situation in Pakistan is severe, these Chinese travelers were very worried and spontaneously donated supplies to the local slums. During the period of COVID-19 outbreak, Yang

Xiaolong raised funds, rushed to contact friends and manufacturers, paid attention to the slums of Pakistan, went through formalities, made overall coordination, and donated relief



tents, daily necessities, epidemic prevention supplies and other materials within his capacity, including 3,000 bags of bread and 10,000 pieces of masks. Due to the epidemic, Yang

Xiaolong was unable to travel to Pakistan in person, so he commissioned another Chinese cyclist in Islamabad to distribute supplies to the slums. In fact, this is not the first time that Chinese motorcyclists have donated. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Yang Xiaolong and others would bring food, stationery, daily necessities and other supplies to children in slums every time they rode to Pakistan. In addition to the slums near Islamabad, where they go most often, travelers often find different slums to send supplies. Yang Xiaolong recalled: "Every time we went to

a slum, we brought them some bread, flour and rice, and gave kids sweets and snacks. In addition, we also brought the national flags of China and Pakistan." Yang Xiaolong told Gwadar Pro that after the epidemic, he will once again rally a team to Pakistan, "Iron Brother" is by no means a cold political term. Our friends are there, Pakistan is a place we never get bored with how many times we go. "Thanks to Pakistan for giving us higher dimensions of travel and life meaning. As a respond, I'd love to do more for this lovely country," he said.

Karachi submerged after heavy rains

DNA

KARACHI: Many roads, streets, and homes were flooded in Karachi following heavy rains on Monday afternoon. Two people died after being electrocuted in Baldia Town. Rain was reported in Five Star Chowranghi, Nazimabad, Gulberg, Ayesha Manzil, Buffer Zone, Powerhouse Chowranghi, Gulshan and Gulistan-e-Jauhar. Following the rain, traffic jams were reported in different areas. The water entered houses in Orangi Town's after the area's gutters overflowed.