



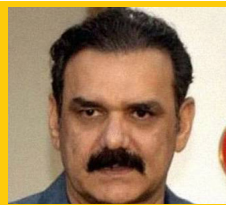
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Ambassador Rabei briefs Pak dignitaries on Palestine situation

1100 new jobs under CPEC, says Asim Bajwa



Chief of Air Staff launches Artificial Intelligence center



Briefs

1100 new jobs under CPEC: Asim Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, and Chairman CPEC Authority, Lt. Gen (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said on Thursday that as many as 1100 new job opportunities had been announced for various categories under Thar block-1 mining project. In a tweet he said Shanghai Electric at Thar Block-1 had announced the jobs. He said locals would get preference in jobs, subject to criteria and qualification. — APP

British Airways to operate flights to Lahore

DNA

RAWALPINDI: After resuming flight operations to Islamabad from the United Kingdom, British Airways (BA) is seeking permission from Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) to start operating flights to Lahore, as a team of experts from the airline visited Allama Iqbal International Airport earlier this week to review arrangements made by the airport management. The airline resumed flight operations to Islamabad in August, which had been suspended due to outbreak of the coronavirus. "Yes, the British Airways has been seeking permission from PCAA to resume flights to Lahore from the UK as a BA team has visited Allama Iqbal International Airport to review the arrangements made by the airport management," a senior official from the PCAA said.

SHC turns down Aamir Liaquat's request

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday turned down a request by PTI MNA Aamir Liaquat Hussain to issue notices on his petition challenging the Sindh government's decision of carving a seventh district out of Karachi. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, who headed a two-judge bench, observed that the court can't put the Sindh government on notice in the case until a notification regarding the formation of Keamari district in question is submitted to it. — APP

APNS holiday notice

DNA

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society has announced that member publications of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society will observe one closed holiday on Sunday, August 30, 2020 on account of ASHURA. Consequently, there will be no morning newspapers on Monday, August 31, 2020 whereas the evening newspapers not appearing on Sunday, August 30, 2020, may bring out their editions on Monday, August 31, 2020.

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Pakistan to achieve \$150 mln mango export target

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Chaos in Karachi after heavy rains

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi shares a video clip in which cars were seen to be driving around in the city's DHA Phase 6 area in high water

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The Meteorological Department's prediction about light to moderate rain did not come true as heavy showers flooded Karachi for hours on Thursday, flooding roads and underpasses. A day ago, the Met Office had predicted that the monsoon rain system had weakened and it was likely that the metropolis would be provided with much-needed relief from the torrential rains. In its new weather alert, the Met office redacted its earlier rain prediction that heavy showers in the city could last until 4pm, saying that now it would last till 11pm. The Met Office said that the weakened system had merged with another system coming in from Balochistan hence it gained in intensity and resulted in heavy rain pelting the city. Rainwater inundated KPT underpass that connects Do Talwar to Teen Talwar at Clifton, while the same situation was observed with the underpass near Punjab Colony. In a video that went viral on social media, containers brought for security measures in Muharram could be seen swept away by rainwater. Due to the situation at the two main underpasses, the flow of traffic came to a halt as traffic officials urged the mass-

Will not leave Karachi in the lurch: PM

KARACHI: While expressing concerns over torrential rains in Karachi and other parts of Sindh, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday said that the federal government will not leave the people of Karachi alone in this difficult situation. As per details, PM Imran Khan telephoned Sindh Governor Imran Ismail and expressed concern over the recent rains in the metropolis that has disturbed the normal life. The premier ordered Imran Ismail to speed up relief efforts in rain-hit areas of the city and moved stranded people to safety. He also directed to provide food to people affected by torrential rains. "Federal government will not leave people of Karachi alone," said PM Imran and added that he was fully aware of the problems being faced by people of Karachi and monitoring the situation. — DNA

es to use alternate routes. Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi took to Twitter to share a video clip in which cars were seen to be driving around in the city's DHA Phase 6 area in high water.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister For Defence Production, Ms. Zobaida Jalal presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan of Mr. Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Maliky. — APP

Fakhar for enhancing research cooperation with Egypt

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam on Thursday urged for enhancing bilateral cooperation in filed of cotton research with Egypt in order to enhance per-acre crop output in country. The Ambassador of Arabic Republic of Egypt to Pakistan Tarek Dahrough called on minister and discussed the ways and means to en-

hance bilateral cooperation in different fields including agriculture. The minister also proposed to sign an agreement between both the countries for enhancing cooperation in the fields of research, extension and agricultural education. Syed Fakhar Imam also mentioned that Pakistan exports mangoes to Afghanistan, UAE, Oman and Iran as it has good Phytosanitary systems. The Egyptian Ambassador under Official Development

Assistance (ODA) offered fully funded capacity building training program and master program to Pakistani professional and scientists. Economic Affairs Division finalize nominations from the federal and provincial governments through its Foreign Trainings Committee. According the Trade development Authority of Pakistan, there was huge potential for export of rice but it has certain trade restrictions by the Egyptian Government.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Sitara Ayaz in a meeting with Palestine Ambassador Ahmed Rabei. — DNA

Ambassador Rabei briefs Pakistan dignitaries

The Ambassador presented them with a picture of the latest developments in Palestine, the repercussions of the deal of the century, the Israeli annexation plans for more of the occupied territories

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Pakistan, Ahmed Jawad Rubai, met at the embassy headquarters in two separate meetings with a member of the Pakistani Senate, Senator Satarah

Ayaz of the National Awami Party, and Chairman of the Council of Muslim Scholars, Tahir Ashrafi, where they expressed their full solidarity with Palestine and affirmed. On the historical position of Pakistan in support of Palestine at the regional and international levels, and their support for the right of the

Palestinian people to self-determination and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. The Ambassador presented them with a picture of the latest developments in Palestine, the repercussions of the deal of the century, the Israeli annexation plans for more of the occupied Pal-

estinian territories, and the tripartite agreement between the UAE, Israel and the United States of America. They asked the ambassador to convey their greetings and the greetings of the Pakistani people to the President Mahmoud Abbas and the brotherly Palestinian people.

Pakistan to continue efforts for regional peace: FM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan will continue its efforts in maintaining peace and stability in the region. He was addressing a consultative meeting of former Foreign Secretaries in Islamabad on Thursday. The meeting reviewed the Indian aggression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Afghan Peace Process and regional security. The Foreign Minister said that the innocent and unarmed Kashmiris are facing the worst curfew over the last one year. He said the supporters of secular India are also protesting against the Hindutva policy. He said India is continuously committing violations at Line of Control targeting innocent citizens to divert attention from its internal anarchy.

Schools reopening to be decided on 7th Sept: Shafqat

FAIZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood has said the final decision regarding the reopening of educational institutions will be taken with consensus on the 7th of next month. He was speaking at a meeting of National Command and Operation Center in Islamabad on Thursday. The NCOC emphasized that the educational institutions must ensure compliance to all Covid protocols and prepare accordingly before the final decision. The forum suggested a strategy about reopening of educational institutions. It said that the institutions be opened on top to bottom approach starting from the Universities to the High Schools on rotation basis. The NCOC proposed that timings of various institutions be staggered with suspending various activities which involve contraction and mass gatherings including co-curricular activities. The forum apprised the participants that tracking, tracing

and testing will help arrest any spread. For this, enhance testing of symptomatic children, teachers and school staff will be very beneficial. The four provinces, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan apprised the NCOC about measures being taken including consultations with various educational institutions in their respective areas including teachers training and Covid awareness. Special Assistant on National Health Services Dr. Faisal Sultan said the disease statistics will intimately be monitored on daily basis, particularly to assess the likely impact of tourism and Muhammad on the opening of educational institutions. Dr Faisal said an IT based monitoring mechanism be developed to ensure health guidelines and Covid containment measures. Representatives of various educational institutions gave their detailed input on school opening measures and assured the forum about compliance of health guidelines particularly wearing of face mask, social distancing and hand washing protocols.

Speaker NA, Saudi envoy discuss ties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Saudi ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf Saeed Al Malki called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser here on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest, regional and global developments as well as the bilateral parliamentary relations between the two countries. The speaker informed the Saudi envoy regarding the ongoing Indian atrocities in the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He stressed upon the need for raising collective voice of the Muslim Ummah for the suppressed Kashmiri people through the platform of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as well as the Parliamentary Union of OIC member States (PUIC). The Saudi ambassador reaffirmed all out support of his country for socio-economic development of Pakistan.

Justice will be delivered; court assures Shehbaz

DNA

LAHORE: An accountability court here on Thursday resumed hearing a money laundering and assets beyond means case against Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif and his family. Judge Jawadul Hassan heard the case as the PML-N president appeared before the court. At the outset of the hearing, the judge asked the government lawyer present in court as to where Hamza Shehbaz was, to which he replied that he will be presented before the court in a short while. Shehbaz stated before the judge that he had not been involved in corruption of even a single penny. "I served the masses for twelve and a half years but never received TA/DA of a single rupee," he continued.

Shehryar acclaims Turkish support for Kashmir

He appreciated the bold stance adopted by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for Kashmir issue that has helped further highlight the Kashmir issue at the international fora

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Afridi Thursday lauded the unflinching and continued support by the people and the government of Turkey for the cause of oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K). Afridi said that freedom was around the corner and soon Kashmiris would exercise their right to plebiscite according to the United Nations resolutions. He made these remarks during a meeting with Turkish Ambassador Mustafa Yurdakul here. He appreciated the bold stance adopted by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for Kashmir

issue that has helped further highlight the Kashmir issue at the international fora. Afridi said that President Erdogan played vital role in exposing Hindutva designs against the people of Kashmir and Indian minorities as the goons of proscribed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were lynching Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Dalit Hindus with impunity and the Indian authorities were providing assistance in actions against the Indian minorities and Kashmiris. He said that the Hindutva regime is destabilizing regional peace. He said that since three nuclear powers including Pakistan, China and India were major play-



ers in the region, any misadventure on Kashmir may jeopardize regional peace, affecting more than half of the world's population. Turkish ambassador Mustafa Yurdakul ensured Turkey's

role in becoming the voice of unheard and oppressed in IIOJ&K. He said Turkey is not fighting for military supremacy or territorial gains. He said it is high time that the Organization of Islamic Coun-

tries raise Kashmir issue and become voice of the Ummah. While admiring President Erdogan's government, Afridi said that Turkey made the whole world realize what Muslims as Ummah have

achieved. "Turkey has been playing leading role for whole Ummah to stand united against their common enemy," said Afridi. He emphasized on urgency for bringing attention of international media to the Indian atrocities committed in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Afridi recommended engaging the academia, students and youth to highlight Indian atrocities in Kashmir through art and culture which could be projected through diplomatic forums and new initiatives in highlighting struggles of Kashmiris globally. He lauded Turkish Embassy's role in playing key role to further cement undying Pak-Turkey relations. — APP

Briefs

‘PTI govt committed to facilitate overseas Pakistanis’

DNA

ATTOCK: Chairman District Overseas Pakistanis Committee Ch Adil Ali Khan chaired a meeting in Deputy Commissioner Office for Overseas Pakistanis Complaint Cell and reviewed the progress of Departments in connection with the resolution of complaints. Chairman District Overseas Pakistanis Committee Ch Adil Ali Khan said PTI government is committed to solve problems of Overseas Pakistanis. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the District Overseas committee. He said a large number of Overseas Pakistanis living abroad belongs to Attock. He said that the overseas Pakistanis were taking part in stabilizing the national economy and it was the government's priority to provide the maximum level of facilitation to them. DOPC Ch Adil Ali Khan directed the government departments to take immediate action on the applications received from the district overseas Pakistani Committee. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar have taken concrete steps to give relief to Pakistani expatriates.

Govt to provide relief to the people: Anwar

DNA

ATTOCK: Punjab Minister for Revenue Col (R) Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan said PTI government is determined to provide every possible relief to the people in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, steps are taken in this regard. The minister Malik Anwar Khan said Punjab government priorities health, education, energy sectors, clean drinking water, infrastructure and economic development. The Revenue Minister assured that PTI government will fulfill all its promises made with the people of the province. He said that our mission under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief minister Usman Buzdar is to serve the people of punjab with dedication. The minister told that the objective of the PTI government is to create employment opportunities for the unemployed youth besides providing health and education facilities. Minister for Revenue Malik Anwar Khan said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan had promised to make Pakistan a country where equal justice would be available to both rich and poor.

ISLAMABAD: The SAARC CCI delegation comprises of Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, President, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman Senate on Foreign Affairs, Senator Haji Ghulam Ali, VP, SAARC CCI (Pakistan), Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Executive Member (Pakistan), and Mr. Zulfiqar Butt Acting SG, called on H.E. Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan. – DNA

‘Govt must regulate local cars prices’

It was totally unjustified that local manufactures revised their car prices whenever they desired and without even getting approval from the regulator

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Standing Committee, Former Chairman and Businessmen Panel Secretary General (Federal) Ahmad Jawad on Wednesday says consumer welfare is altogether missing as evident from high prices, less variety and low quality of vehicles being assembled in Pakistan. We urged the government to announce special slab to reduce the prices of locally assembled cars to facilitate the masses. It was totally unjustified that local manufactures revised their car prices whenever they desired and without even getting approval from the regulator. The Ministry of Industries must devise a mechanism to regulate the local assemblers' prices, he added. He said "It is pity for the public to get the price of Suzuki Alto of 12 lac, a 43 lacs for Honda Civic with a normal variant and same in the case with Toyota Corolla Altis variants" despite all these manufacturers have manufactured the cars locally except to import engine and may be fuel tank for safety standards but they always raise their prices with a parity of dollar against PKR which is unjustified".

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Abdulaziz Al Neyadi, DHM of UAE Embassy in Islamabad meets H.E. Ahmed Latif, IGP and MD of National Police Foundation and discusses the ways of bilateral cooperation. – DNA

First wheat shipment cleared after inspection

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The first vessel, YM Summit Majuro carrying about 60,804 metric tons of wheat from Ukraine had allowed to discharged after fulfilling the national and international quarantine regulations. The shipment of imported wheat berthed at Karachi port on Wednesday afternoon as it was initially subjected to health examinations and other legalities by the concerned authorities. A detail mandatory Quarantine Inspection was also conducted by the senior management of Ministry of National Food Security and Research, says a press release issued here Thursday. Director General, DPP Dr Falak Naz along with senior quarantine experts have thoroughly examined the imported wheat in accordance with national and international quarantine regulations and allowed discharge of the vessel. Earlier, Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam along with Secretary Ministry Omar Hamid Khan had informed about the efforts of government to immediately tackle the increasing wheat and flour prices.

Govt taking steps for reviving SEZs: Hammad Azhar

“We want to introduce one window operation in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate the local and foreign investors”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Muhammad Hammad Azhar Thursday said that the government was utilizing all available resources to revive Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and to develop underprivileged areas of the country those were neglected in previous governments. While expressing commitment to revive special economic zones, Hammad Azhar talking to a private news channel said the present government was taking “practical steps” to make them instruments of industrial production, economic growth, export promotion and employment generation. He said that the whole world was facing economic difficulties due to COVID-19 outbreak but Prime Minister Imran Khan was determined to put the country on the road of economic development. He said, “We want to introduce one window operation in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate the local and foreign investors”. He added that the his government has made serious efforts to promote tourism as an industry in the country to generate revenue and also provide employment opportunities to youth. The incumbent government is not only trying to improve the economy but is also focused on welfare of the people, he said. He further said the timely completion of ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority (CPEC) projects was the top-most priority of the government and CPEC was a new example of joint efforts between Pakistan and Chinese leadership.

No one to be allowed to derail accountability: Shandana

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce Shandana Gulzar Khan Thursday made it clear that Prime Minister Imran Khan is a man of principle and he would not allowed any propaganda to derail the process of accountability to succeed. Talking to a state media, Shandana Gulzar said that political parties should be unanimous against across the board accountability and warned that whoever stood apart would be helping the corrupt elements in escaping accountability process. She also said that massive corruption by previous regimes had badly paralyzed the justice system in the country, which was being rectified now by the government in the larger national interest. She said removing flaws in the current justice system and ensuring affordable and immediate access to justice for the people was the basic element of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) manifesto.

PAF launches tree plantation campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Archery Federation (PAF) has launched a tree plantation campaign in the country, with an aim to eliminate the pollution and keep the environment and country clean. “The campaign was launched following the launch of largest tree plantation drive by the government. Local and international players and officials are participating in the campaign at the district level,” PAF Secretary General Wisal Muhammad Khan told. He said as per the instructions of the PAF President Lt Gen (R) Syed Arif Hassan, who was also the President of Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), a campaign has also been launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like other parts of the country. “Athletes, coaches and officials from rural to urban areas are participating in the tree plantation campaign by planting trees in their respective areas,” he said.

License issuing of quail netting stopped

DNA

ATTOCK: Punjab Wild Life Department has stopped issuing of fresh licenses for the netting and dealing of quails, however those already holding these licenses may avail the facility. Assistant Director Wild Life Attock Manzoor Ahmad said while talking to media. He said that all the dealers of the quails must maintain their record as per the prescribed form N. He said that use of voice recorders for the hunting and netting of quails is strictly forbidden and those violating the law will be heavily fined and their licenses will be cancelled.

Pakistan-China to sign MOUs for literary relations

Chairman PAL Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk said that they were aimed at enhancing cultural and literally relations between two countries through writer to writer contact and intellectual exchange through translations and other literary events

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) would be signed between China and Pakistan to promote literary relations and literature in country. These views were discussed in a meeting between Mr. Zhang Hewing the Cultural Counsellor of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Dr Yusuf Khushk on Thursday. The meeting was held to discuss the matters related with promotion of literature and cooperation between two friendly neighboring countries which possess rich cultural heritage and powerful literary traditions. The Chinese Cultural Counsellor Zhang Hewing said that the role of Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in extending cultural and literary ties with China were commendable. He said that this mutual cooperation in form of MoUs and exchange of ideas and literati in future would bring literary circle of both countries closer and a new wave of cultural and literature exchange would begin between two neighbouring Nations. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PAL Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk said that they were aimed at enhancing cultural and literary relations between two countries through writer to writer contact and intellectual exchange through translations and other literary events. He said that classics and valuable literary treasures of both countries would be exchanged through extensive translation works so that people on both sides enjoy the real colours of living. They both agreed that very soon formal MoUs would be signed between both countries to cement these literary relations

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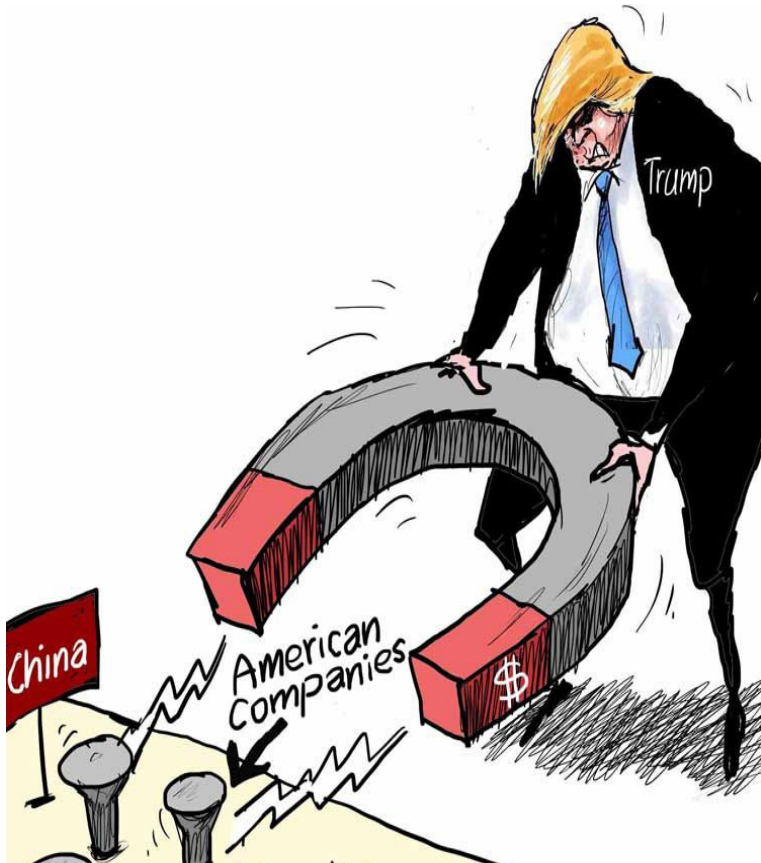
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Combating polio

PAKISTAN has been, and is, determined to join the rest of the world in being polio-free. On Tuesday, the WHO announced that Africa is now officially polio-free. This means that Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world still endemic for the disease. No doubt, this situation must change as soon as possible. A severe setback had been delivered by the Covid-19 pandemic which meant that anti-polio campaigns had to be suspended in March given the lockdown and the problems with reaching people. But the country's united stand against Covid-19 seems to have worked, and can be used as inspiration for this fight for the future of our children. This year, Pakistan has recorded 65 cases of the polio virus. In 2018, we were on the brink of vanquishing polio once and for all from our country. In what should only be seen as a positive step – and which needs to be endorsed by everyone across the board – the government has initiated a brave new initiative in the worst affected districts in all four provinces to ensure that we see the end of this disease.

We must hail the polio workers who have gone out into the field even in the existing circumstances. These are our everyday heroes, largely unsung, who display remarkable courage and fortitude. These teams will be working together with clerics, community workers, schoolteachers and other influential people in specific communities to try and make sure that every child under the age of five is successfully vaccinated and that parents are educated about the need for the anti-polio drops to be administered so that their children can be assured a safer future without the threat of a disease that has already crippled tens of thousands of people across the country. This is crucial to ensuring that every child is vaccinated and that Pakistan can very soon escape the stigma of being a nation that is afflicted by polio. This is not just important for all of us in terms of our country's standing in the global community but this is a matter of the survival of many of our children.



Taliban in town

FOREIGN Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has warned a delegation of the Taliban Peace Commission of spoilers, while stressing that the peace accord with the USA must be implemented in full. While meeting them on Tuesday at the Foreign Ministry in Islamabad, he said that the next step in the agreement, the intra-Afghan talks, must begin. There is logic in what he said, for one of the main obstacles, the release of many Taliban captives, has now been accepted by the Kabul government, and now, to bring about a lasting peace in the region, it is essential that the next step be taken, and there be an intra-Afghan dialogue. Thus the reference to spoilers should be taken to include the Kabul government, which has been loudly skeptical about the deal. However, the Commission should bear in mind that the Taliban has in its ranks those who feel that a military solution is possible; something which Mr Qureshi rejected, saying that Prime Minister Imran Khan also said it was not. Then there are elements that have drifted to the Islamic State, who take the most radical stand, and refuse to have any negotiations with the Americans. The Commission must also keep in mind that they might have all of that labour for nothing, because US President Donald Trump might do as he did before, which is to throw away the deal.

The Taliban must remember that Mr Trump needs a deal by November, in time for his election. However, the Taliban might prefer to see who the new President is, for the consequences of handing Mr Trump the diplomatic triumph he seeks, only to find Mr Joe Biden is the new President, are unpredictable. However, as Mr Qureshi stressed, Pakistan also wants a lasting settlement in Afghanistan so that the entire region might enjoy the benefits of the peace that this would bring. It would be well if the Taliban were to keep in mind that it is not just one country which will find peace, but the entire region. If Mr Trump is willing to be a partner in peace, neither the Taliban nor the Kabul government should hang back.

Social support in the fight against poverty

Dr. Obid Khakimov



Uzbekistan belongs to socially oriented countries. In such countries, there is a significant presence of the state in the life of society, which implies a wide range of social obligations of the state in front of its citizens. This makes it necessary to provide state support to socially vulnerable groups of society

IN the message of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis on January 24, 2020, the fight against poverty was identified as a priority task. It was emphasized that "poverty reduction requires the implementation of a comprehensive economic and social policy - from stimulating entrepreneurial activity to mobilizing the abilities and potential of the population, creating new jobs". Economic laws show that "poverty reproduces poverty". This happens for several reasons. First, poor countries cannot afford to spend enough to maintain affordable, free, and high-quality health care and education, and poor people cannot afford to pay for adequate private services. As a result, less educated and less healthy poor people cannot get out of poverty because of the low quality of human potential. Secondly, the poorer the population, the lower the effective demand, the lower the capacity of the consumer market, and, accordingly, the incentives for the development of industry, agriculture and, especially, services. This, in turn, constrains the development of the economy, reduces budget revenues and in a closed cycle - the possibility of social support for the poor. Thirdly, the mentality of people from poor families often differs from those of wealthier families. Due to the above reasons, lesser people from poor families are with creative and entrepreneurial thinking. The crime rate among people from poor families is generally higher.

In other words, poverty constrains human development potential, productive forces in the country and the economic activity of the population. Over the past three years, real total income per capita in Uzbekistan increased by 43.9%, and the average monthly nominal accrued wages by 79.7%, or from 126.54 USD in 2016 to 227.34 USD in 2019 year. According to the survey of households within the framework of the project "Listening to the citizens of Uzbekistan" in the World Bank, the average monthly income of one poor household in January-March 2020 is about 1.5 million soums or 146.70 USD, which is 12% more in comparison with the same period of the previous year. President Sh.Mirziyoyev poses the problem of poverty reduction in Uzbekistan as a task of strategic nature. On its solution significant efforts of the government is directed. Thus, the country has created the necessary institutions to fight poverty. This is the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, which will determine the policy to combat poverty. To support both socially vulnerable and low-income families, a Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family was recently created. This ministry, as a responsible body for coordinating the activities of citizens' self-government institutions, should increase the effectiveness of identifying socially vulnerable segments of the population.

Programs are being implemented to improve living conditions in rural areas. In particular, due to the realization of the Obod Qishlok program, the living conditions of 1,7 million villagers have been improved. For the implementation of programs "Obod Qishloq" and "Obod mahalla" in 2019 in total 6.1 trillion soums have been allocated, or \$ 600 million equivalently. However, despite the progress made, at present, more than 400 thousand families in Uzbekistan needs improvement of their living conditions, while their daily income per family member according to official statistics does not exceed 10-13 thousand soums (less than 1.5 dollars). According to World Bank criteria from October 2015, the global poverty rate is set at \$ 1.9 per day. The share of the informal sector in the labor market is 40-50%. At the same time, only 23% of vulnerable households receive social benefits. During a pandemic intensified need to accelerate the reform of institutions providing social support and material assistance

to the poor and most vulnerable. Therefore, these problems are being actively addressed. A transition is underway from the previously established insufficiently targeted and ineffective institutions for the distribution of material assistance to systemic solutions based on the digitalization of this area, providing the necessary control, transparency and targeting.

Foreign experience

Social protection is a government policy, a package of measures and programs aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, and increasing the well-being of socially vulnerable groups of the population. The organized system of social protection of the state in the Western world began to enjoy success at the beginning of the 20th century - the period of the creation of social security systems in Germany and Great Britain, and a little later in the USA - during the Great Depression. If 100 years ago, systems of social protection of the population officially existed only in a few countries, today they are practically everywhere. The logic, tools and mechanisms for applying such schemes differ as countries seek to build social protection systems based on their capabilities, national conditions and priorities.

Institutions of social support for the population play an important role in overcoming poverty, which are designed not only to help financially but also to help the most vulnerable groups get out of poverty. In developed countries, since the 1990s social assistance in the form of grants began to be provided with mandatory requirements for the involvement of its recipients in legal entrepreneurship. In those countries where such practices were used (Korea, US, New Zealand, UK and others.) active engagement of the population on employment was observed. The results of various studies show that a more accurate assessment of the needs of the beneficiary, which is based not only on the level of his income but also taking into account other unrecorded incomes provides more effective tools in terms of poverty alleviation. This mechanism of comprehensive criteria includes a comparison of the declarations of data with data of tax and other public authorities. These changes in the system of providing targeted social assistance is partly a factor of reducing official poverty rates in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, etc. in the mid-2000s.

Different countries use different schemes to reduce poverty rates. The Swedish model considers the fulfillment of two goals: full employment and income equalization. In this Scandinavian country, they prefer to retrain the unemployed and return them to work in demanded areas.

China has adopted a wide range of measures aimed at rural development, including reforms in the agricultural sector, along with land reforms in rural areas. In the Czech Republic in addition to basic assistance to the poor, an emphasis is placed on assistance in natural form and cash compensation as an additional tool to support the poor. In the United States, assistance to the poor is provided within the framework of special programs that cover 15% to 20% of the population. In-kind assistance has become widespread: food stamps, low-cost housing, medical care of elderly and o early childhood care and others. For the conditions of Uzbekistan, the most acceptable comprehensive approach to poverty reduction should be aimed at engaging as many working-age populations in employment, while simultaneously defining a package of state social support that will help those in need below the poverty line to get out of poverty trap. At the same time, in the conditions of the impossibility of immediate eradication of poverty, it is recommended to gradually implement measures in the field of ensuring the social protection of the poor, creating additional opportunities for earning stable income and improving human capital.

Social model

Uzbekistan belongs to socially oriented countries. In such countries, there is a significant presence of the state in the life of society, which implies a wide range of social obligations of the state in front of its citizens. This makes it necessary to provide state support to socially vulnerable groups of society. Strong social policy, this means that state institutions carry out a certain redistribution of public goods in favor of the least protected and most vulnerable members of society. For all these years in Uzbekistan, unlike many other countries, the need for a strong social policy has not been questioned. That is, it can be stated that Uzbekistan a priori has chosen a model of state policy that corresponds to the concept of social justice. Why did it happen?

For thousands of years, a traditional worldview was formed on our land that people should help each other, and the poor and the vulnerable, who are in difficult life situations, should receive support from those who can provide it: from neighbors, from society. Our social contract is based on these centuries-old principles of public morality.

At the same time, for a long time, the existence of poverty for political reasons was practically not recognized at the official level, there were no normatively approved criteria for determining poverty rate, without which it is very difficult to pursue an effective social policy. Nevertheless, the problem of poverty has not disappeared, and in 2007, an attempt was even made to develop an appropriate strategy to overcome it. Together with UNDP, the World Bank and the ADB "Strategy for improving the well-being of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan 2008-2010" was developed. However, until recently, there were no fundamental changes in terms of real social support for the poor, carried out through mahalla committees.

Identified imperfections

The fact that this area does not function effectively enough and needs deep reforming became clear after the People's Receptions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were opened in 2017, where citizens' appeals were received and carefully analyzed. Over the past two years, more than 3.6 million citizens' appeals to the President

were received, which reflected many problems related to both the standard of living and provision of employment, housing, high-quality utilities, healthcare and education services. Many of the issues raised were related to shortcomings in the system of social support for citizens, assistance to the poor and vulnerable groups of the population, which caused numerous complaints from citizens.

It is worth here to mention that the mechanism for providing material support is still determined by the "Regulations on the procedure for assigning and paying social benefits and material assistance to low-income families", approved by the Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers on February 15, 2013. In accordance with this provision, the decision on the appointment and payment of benefits to families with children, child-care benefits and material assistance was made by citizens' assemblies of villages and mahallas, or by the commission authorized by assemblies of citizens. The Commission was elected by the Citizens' assembly and chaired by the President of the Citizens' assembly. Members to the Commission at choosing were for a period of 2 years, and the chairman of the citizens' assembly - for the entire period of his term. The number of members given to the Commission should have been at least 15 people. On the one hand, such a mechanism involves a real understanding of the commission's members, those who really need support. However, on the other hand, this mechanism for collegial decision-making is very complicated, not transparent enough and does not exclude abuse, especially since it is accompanied by numerous procedures and requires the provision of a large number of documents and references. Apparently, all these difficulties and shortcomings in the mechanism for allocating social assistance have led to numerous complaints to the President's Receptions about the ineffective or even unfair practice of allocating material assistance.

In manual mode

In this regard, there is an acute need to find out the real state of affairs on the ground, both in matters of aid allocation and in other areas of social support. On January 17, 2019, the President issued a Decree "On measures further to improve the system of working with population problems". This Decree established that the People's Receptions, together with the sectors for the integrated socio-economic development of territories, state bodies and other organizations, identify the real problems of the population by going household-by-household, studying social and other objects, and ensure their solution.

Based on the household bypass that the register of poor families was formed, popularly called "Temir Daftar", which includes poor families and also takes into account the problems of socially vulnerable groups of the population. This register has become the basis for a targeted program of poverty reduction and welfare at the sectoral level. Problems that were not resolved at the local level were transferred to the regional or republican levels to solve systemic problems that are vital for the population. In 2019, more than 6.1 million households of the country were examined by working groups organized to study the problems of the population. As a result of interviews with citizens, 935.6 thousand issues were identified that require a solution, most of which were resolved. Among the most painful problems for the population were: supply of liquefied gas (18.9% of respondents), employment (11%), health care (8.5%), electricity (8.1%), bank loans (7%), material aid (5.7%), drinking water (5.5%), cadastral issues (5.3%), housing (4.4%), natural gas (3.4%), coal supply 2.3%), passport control (2.1%) and issues related to preschool education (1.5%).

In the current year, the situation in the sphere of living standards worsened due to the pandemic because of the deteriorating financial situation of many citizens as a result of coronavirus restrictions. Therefore, the work to identify social problems has become even more important and is actively continuing. As of August 1 of this year, the number of appeals on social protection issues has doubled compared to the same period last year. At the same time, the number of applications for material assistance and social benefits amounted to 48% of the total number of applications for social protection, which is 1.9 times more than in the previous year. At the same time, it should be noted that there has been a 4% decrease in citizens' applications regarding the termination of the pension or benefit's payment. Applications for low pensions decreased by 52%. The number of requests for material assistance for treatment decreased by 19%, and requests for payments of benefits to disabled people decreased by 14%. In the area of free medical care, the number of applications decreased by 37%, applications for obtaining an order to rehabilitation centers decreased by 29%, the number of applications regarding the provision of prosthetic and orthopedic products and rehabilitation equipment for disabled people also decreased by 64%. Nevertheless, at the same time, the number of requests for medical assistance and medicines from the elderly and the disabled has sharply increased (by 20%), which is understandable by their home isolation under quarantine conditions. There are also new categories of complaints related to the pandemic. Appeals regarding the provision of citizens with material assistance, food and protective equipment during the quarantine period amounted to 16% of the total number of appeals, and about prices and shortages of food and necessities - 8%. Most of these appeals were resolved positively, and this shows that the issues of social assistance in manual mode during the pandemic was quite successful.

A household survey also gave a lot to understand the imperfection of the social assistance system. It turned out that many of the recipients of financial aid did not live in poverty at all, having well-appointed houses with modern renovation and interior furnishings, cars, and had bank accounts. At the same time, many poor families were not included in the lists for material assistance. This state of affairs sharply

raised the question of the need for fundamental changes in the system of social support for the poor and the most vulnerable segments of the population, in particular, the criteria for the allocation of this assistance.

On a systematic basis

As can be seen from the above, the problems accumulated over the previous years in the system of social support of the population have to be solved literally in the system of manual control - receiving information through the local sectors to solve existing problems and identify those families that really need state support. However, this is often a subjective solution to the issue, overly dependent on the "human factor". The experience of foreign countries and the identified shortcomings in the process of the research carried out indicate that social support should be built on a systematic basis. Clear criteria for the allocation of certain types of assistance should be developed, the determination of compliance with which should be based on independent sources of information. The criteria and procedures for the allocation of aid and the specific data on which it is allocated must be transparent. In addition, it is precisely in the transition from manual management of social support issues to a clear and precise integral system of support for the population and poverty reduction that a lot of work has been done recently. Important steps in this direction in the country began to be taken last year. According to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers dated April 15, 2019, the Information System "Unified Register of Social Protection" is being implemented, in which a transparent assessment of the degree of families need and the compliance of applicants with the established criteria is carried out in real time. The degree of need is determined taking into account information about the income of family members, property, bank accounts, loans received, and cars available in the relevant databases of various departments. Based on these assessments, a unified database of applicants and recipients of state social services and assistance is formed. To develop this system, from October 1, 2019, a pilot project is being developed in the Syrdarya region. For the effective implementation of this system, objective data on the support provided to the population are required to be included in the "Unified Register of Social Protection". And this task is also solved during household surveys. On their basis, and taking into account the negative impact of quarantine restrictions on the living standards of certain families, the Ministry for Support of the Mahalla and Family and the departments responsible for the socio-economic development of the regions this year compiled lists of those in need of material assistance and support. The lists include the poor; citizens with disabilities; families in need of social protection; lonely senior citizens; permanently unemployed citizens; citizens who have been unemployed due to quarantine; citizens returning from epidemiologically unfavorable regions. These lists include over 400 thousand families with more than 1.7 million members. For the provision of one-time assistance to these families, by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 30, 2020 PD-6038 "On additional measures for material support of the population in need of assistance and social protection during the coronavirus pandemic" 380 billion soums were allocated from the republican budget. Assistance was allocated in the amount of 220 thousand soums for each family member. The next important step in this direction is the Presidential Decree, issued on August 4, 2020, "On additional measures to automate the procedures for the provision of state social services and assistance to the population". The decree established that from September 1 of this year, the procedures for considering applications and the appointment of social benefits are carried out in stages through the information system "Unified Register of Social Protection", which is an integral part of the "Electronic Government" system and will be introduced in all regions of the republic by the end of this year. Among the main goals of the implementation of this system is the need to eliminate the subjective approach in decision-making by objectively assessing the neediness of low-income families in accordance with certain criteria; a radical reduction in the number of certificates and documents required for the provision of public social services and assistance by automating procedures for interdepartmental electronic interaction for the exchange of documents, as well as automating the processes of providing public social services and assistance. From January 1, 2021, the list of documents required to receive state social services and assistance is sharply limited. Certificates of recognition of low income will be issued through the Single portal of interactive public services and are valid for twelve months. 30 billion soums are allocated from the republican budget for the translation of documents stored on paper in the archives of the registry office into electronic databases. The implementation of this presidential decree should create a modern and transparent system for providing material assistance to the poor and vulnerable groups of the population, which will become an important tool in the process of overcoming poverty in Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

This paper deals with only one of the areas of poverty reduction in the country - increasing the effectiveness of social protection, which in general can be overcome successfully only with an integrated approach through an integrated approach to solving this problem. In recent years, significant efforts have also been made in other areas that contribute to overcoming poverty. This is the creation of new jobs, support of entrepreneurship, rural and agriculture development, improvement of infrastructure in rural areas, improvement of healthcare, professional education and training, and issues of economic migration. In all these areas there are already positive changes.

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

Briefs

Greece,
Turkey draw
in allies in
Mediterranean

DNA

ANKARA: Greece and its EU allies held war games in the Mediterranean Wednesday while Turkey conducted drills with the US navy nearby, as the row between the two neighbors over gas and maritime borders ratcheted up another notch.

The convergence of a growing number of warships on an energy-rich but disputed patch of sea between Cyprus and Crete came as NATO and a host of European officials called for cooler heads to prevail. Greece and Turkey are ancient rivals with a litany of disputes – despite both being members of the NATO military alliance. They nearly went to war over some uninhabited islets in 1996, and earlier this month frigates from the two sides collided while Turkey was searching for energy in the eastern Mediterranean. The threat of another conflict could imperil Europe's access to a wealth of new energy resources and draw in nations such as Egypt and war-torn Libya. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he was "personally regularly in contact with Ankara and Athens." After failed shuttle diplomacy aimed at getting the two sides talking again Tuesday, Berlin on Wednesday criticized the naval exercises as "not helpful."

Roosevelt
Hotel's fate
in National
interest:
Shaikh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) here at the Cabinet Division. ECC was given an update on the issue of the Roosevelt Hotel, as directed by the Adviser Finance in an earlier meeting. The Adviser directed that the issue should be handled in fair and most transparent manner and in the best national interest. He directed that all stakeholders including Secretary Aviation should be included in every discussion/ negotiation related to the issues of the Roosevelt Hotel. Chairman ECC further directed that it should be made clear to all that in this transaction all matters shall be resolved in a manner that is only in favor of the country and not benefiting any individual or party. ECC approved the technical supplementary grant equivalent to Rs.252.382 million for the discharge of liabilities related to M/s Karkey arbitration. Procurement of 83 X Micron sprayers for anti-locust operation was allowed by ECC to National Disaster Management Authority with the grant of special exemption of taxes and duties of import.

Christchurch
shooter
sentenced to
life in prison

DNA

CHRISTCHURCH: A far-right terrorist who killed 51 Muslim worshippers in New Zealand's worst mass shooting in modern history will spend the rest of his life in prison with no chance of parole, the first time such a sentence has been handed down in the country's courts. Brenton Tarrant, 29, was sentenced Thursday after pleading guilty earlier this year to murdering 51 men, women and children at two Christchurch mosques on March 15, 2019. The youngest victim was just three years old.

The Australian citizen also pleaded guilty to 40 counts of attempted murder and one charge of terrorism – he is the first person in New Zealand to be convicted of that crime. Tarrant represented himself at the hearing and chose not to address the court, but instructed lawyer Pip Hall to speak on his behalf.

Pakistan to achieve \$150 mln
mango export target

The report stated that the country has so far exported 125,000 tons of mangoes, fetching valuable and much needed foreign exchange of \$72 million, as against the corona-revised target of 85,000 tons for 2020

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expected to accomplish its mango export target of \$150 million by end of 2020, setting aside the prediction that the export will be affected due to the epidemic. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday, the country already surpassed its mango export target by 45,000 tons despite grave challenges arising from the global outbreak of COVID-19.

Quoting All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters, Importers & Merchants Association (PFVA), the report stated that the country has so far exported 125,000 tons of mangoes, fetching valuable and much needed foreign exchange of \$72 million, as against the corona-revised target of 85,000 tons for 2020. Earlier, Pakistan's registered a record high in export of fruits and vegetables was 12.5 percent, amounting to \$730 million in FY2019-20, despite the global pandemic.

This is also the highest revenue in terms of foreign exchange generation. During the last year, the export of fruits was enhanced by 3.8 percent while the vegetables reflected an increase in export by 28 percent. Export of fruits fetched \$431.27 million while export of the vegetables generated \$30 million. The government took wise and on-time decisions to especially enhance mango export this year through its unique marketing strategies and trade diplomacy.

To export Pakistani fruits and vegetables was almost impossible due to the pandemic and resulting lock downs. However, the exporters translated these challenges into opportunities by enhancing exports of this sector and adopting realistic strategies. Pakistan International Airlines gave discounted freight charges of up to 30 percent for mango exports to ease pressure amid the global shut down due to COVID 19. To further boost the mango export, Pakistan

embassies in various countries arranged mango exhibitions, introducing Pakistani mangoes to local people. Pakistan exports mangoes to 40 countries of the world, and by adopting meticulous planning and removal of barriers restricting exports, Pakistan can gain access to bigger and high value international markets. Pakistan ranks sixth in the world in terms of mangoes production and fifth in terms of mango export in the world, having around 5% share.

Chief of Air Staff
inaugurates AI center

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force achieved yet another remarkable milestone by inaugurating the 'Centre of Artificial Intelligence & Computing' at Islamabad today. Air Chief Marshal Mughd Khan, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the chief guest at the occasion. The Air Chief formally inaugurated the newly established centre by unveiling the plaque. Addressing the ceremony, the Air Chief said that establishment of CENTAIC was indeed a landmark initiative in the evolutionary journey of PAF which would lead Artificial Intelligence Research & Development in both civil and military spheres. He further said that technology had altered the characteristics of warfare in the 21st century and the vision of establishing the centre was to harness the potential of Artificial Intelligence and its integration in PAF's operational domain. Earlier, Air Marshal Amir Masood, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (Training), in his welcome address, gave a broad overview of the newly established centre. The event was attended by former Air Chiefs, Principal Staff Officers and senior serving and retired PAF officers. – DNA

India hits another
record for new cases

DNA

NEW DELHI: India reported a new record of daily infections on Wednesday as more than 76,000 tested positive across the country. Simultaneously, fatalities also crossed 60,000 yesterday, which means the South Asian country has the fourth highest death toll in the world. India has confirmed more than three million cases so far, with the latest million taking just 15 days to reach. In comparison, the country took 21 days to confirm two million cases and 167 days to reach the first million. When India first went into a strict lockdown in March,

it was clear that the urban and metropolitan cities were at the centre of the outbreak. While that continues to be the case, experts have started to warn that the virus is slowly spreading into more far-flung and rural parts of the country. Most recently, a remote tribe in India's Andamans archipelago became the latest to record its first cases of the virus. But India's government has consistently pointed towards a high recovery rate as a sign of success in its battle against Covid-19. For every 100 infected, approximately 76 have recovered, contributing to a low case fatality ratio of around 1.8%.

WAPDA hydel
generation
surpasses
8500 MW

ISLAMABAD: Electricity generation of hydel power stations owned and operated by Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) surpassed 8500 megawatt (MW) mark for the first time in Pakistan, as WAPDA provided 8757 MW of electricity to the National Grid during peak hours the other day. Previously, the record of hydel power generation was 8474 MW delivered to the system on September 11, last year, said a statement issued here. The installed capacity of WAPDA hydel power stations has risen to 9389 MW with phased completion. – APP

Pakistan Navy conducts rescue
operation in rain affected areas

KARACHI: During heavy spell of rain in Karachi, Pakistan Navy's rescue and relief operation continued in various parts of the city. Pakistan Navy Emergency Response and rescue teams evacuated stranded people to safer places and recovered bodies being washed away in flash flood.

In assistance to civil administration, PN Emergency Response teams along with boats and requisite life saving equipment were deployed in different areas of the city including Diamond City Malir, Shah Faisal Town, Korangi Crossing, Sammagoth and Bahria Town Karachi. During



search and rescue operations, Pakistan Navy Divers recovered two dead bodies from Shah Faisal Town and Korangi crossing areas while 55 individuals were

evacuated from flooded areas of Malir and Korangi crossing. Besides, Rescue teams have also evacuated 20 families stranded in Sammo Goth and shifted

them to safe place. Pakistan Navy Seaking helicopter conducted aerial recce of Korangi crossing, Quaidabad (Malir), and Goth Shafi Muhammad while aerial recce with the help of a quadcopter was also carried out in Saddar Town in support of relief operations to localize individuals requiring assistance. Additionally, ration bags and cooked meal was also dropped at various areas. Pakistan Navy's continuous relief operation in Karachi aimed to assist people and extend all necessary support in rain-hit areas. – DNA



WARSAW: Ambassador of Poland in Pakistan Piotr Opilinski being presented with a gift of mangoes during his visit to Pakistan embassy in Warsaw. – DNA

Massive fall of rupee value harms economy

Besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market

DNA

KARACHI (DNA): The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front chairman Mian Nauman Kabir has said that massive fall of rupee value continued to harm the economy, as the cost of deals done by the businessmen with their foreign buyers has increased manifold due to unprecedented plunge of local currency against dollar. Besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market. He said that the rupee has dropped by 2.9 percent or Rs4.62 against the dollar during last couple of months. Mian Nauman Kabir, in a joint

statement with senior vice chairman Nasir Hameed and vice chairman Javed Siddiqi appreciated the positive development related to the imports, which have now started decreasing since the last financial year followed by the government's initiative of imposing regulatory duties. PIAF Chairman urged the government to control volatility of rupee against the US dollar, as the industrial revival and economic growth is not possible without stability of local currency. He said that Pakistani rupee continued its downward slide against the US dollar, moving in record low range of Rs167-168, having no sign of recovery, despite the fact that Pakistan's Current Account Deficit has reduced by 78 percent owing to lower imports and better inflows.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that the CAD fell to \$2.97 billion during fiscal year 2019-20 while the import bill fell by 19 percent to \$44.57 billion during this period but rupee continued to sink. He said that sharp depreciation of rupee shows that Pakistan is again moving towards a trade deficit regime, which might jack up the current account deficit yet again. He said that the inflows of workers' remittances also grew by 6.4 percent to \$23.12 billion during fiscal year 2019-20 which should have a positive impact on dollar-rupee exchange value. He said that Pakistan has received around \$500 million in soft loan from the World Bank last month, helping the rupee to maintain its uptrend, besides bridging the shortfall in budgeted expenditures. PIAF senior vice chairman Nasir

Hameed Khan, terming rupee depreciation against dollar a mysterious development, said that continued fall of rupee is not understandable with the fact that there was no fundamental change in the country's imports during last few months while other economic indicators are also the same for a long time. Nasir Hameed said that in dollar value, the gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 5.22% in FY20. The GDP value in terms of dollar does not reflect the growth pattern, as Pakistan measures economic indicators in rupee value and converts it into dollar term. So, the volatility in the rupee-dollar exchange value would lead to a huge difference between GDP growth in dollar value and real growth in rupee term.

PIAF vice chairman Javed Siddiqi said the foreign direct investment rose 88% to \$2.56 billion in the country in FY20, as in June alone, the foreign investment surged 70.53% to \$174.8 million, which could help strengthen the rupee and the foreign exchange reserves. Javed Siddiqi said that the current account deficit shrank to 1.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) in FY20 and the deficit of \$2.96 billion is the lowest in five years which should be appreciated but it is also the fact that the much-needed improvement in the current account deficit was initially achieved by compromising economic growth. Later, the Covid-19 outbreak slowed down the economy further and caused negative growth for the first time in the history.

IBRAR KHAN

No change in
Kashmir policy:
Foreign Office

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has categorically stated that there is no change in its policy on Kashmir dispute. At his weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry said solution of the lingering dispute lies in granting right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people through a fair and impartial plebiscite under the umbrella of United Nations. The spokesperson called upon India to reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5th August last year, lift restrictions, release all the prisoners and revoke the draconian laws in the occupied territory. He said the domiciles issued post 5th

August 2019 in the occupied valley should also be declared null and void. He said New Delhi should allow unfettered access to UN Military Observer Group and human rights observers and organizations to the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry said there cannot be durable peace and security in South Asia without resolution of Kashmir dispute. He warned the world community to be cognizant of the dangerous consequences of India's belligerent rhetoric and irresponsible actions for peace and security in the region. He said the world community must use all tools at its disposal to hold India accountable for its crimes against Kashmiris.

No new
Corona death
reported in
Punjab

LAHORE: No death due to COVID-19 has been reported in the last 24 hours on Thursday in the province while the number of coronavirus cases in the province reached 96,540 after registration of 74 new cases. According to the spokesperson of the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department, so far the total number of deaths has been recorded as 2193 altogether. The P&SHD confirmed that 30 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, 1 in Sheikhupura, 6 in Rawalpindi, 1 in Jehlum, 2 in Jhang, 1 in Sargodha, 1 in Bahawalnagar, and 2 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Sahiwal district during the last 24 hours till the filing of this news. – APP