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Tokyo Olympics rescheduled until 2021: Matsuda

RCCI chief seeks relief for SMEs



Over 74,000 **COVID 19 patients** cured in China



Tokyo Olympics rescheduled until 2021: Matsuda

It was a tough decision to delay the Games; Japan was determined to further support Pakistan in the field of sports; Pakistani players should continue preparation for the games: Japanese Ambassador

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: It is unfortunate but it was unavoidable. Tokyo 2020 Olympics & Paralympics have been postponed until summer 2021, said a communiqué issued by the Japanese embassy on Wednesday.

It further said, that the IOC President Thomas Bach and Prime Minister ABE Shinzo, after a wide-ranging consultations and deliberations, have announced yesterday to postpone the Tokyo Olympic & Paralympic Games because of the coronavirus pandemic to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Games and the international community.

The IOC President said the Tokyo Games would still be called the 2020 Olympics, even though they will be held in 2021 as 'light at the end of pandemic tunnel'.

Ambassador MATSUDA in his message to the Pakistani athletes, who were all set to take part in the mega event, has said that it was a tough decision to delay



the Games. However, after tions for the Olympic & analyzing the situation aris-Paralympic Games with ing out of the COVID-19, IOC and the Government of Japan together have ultimately decided to reschedule the Olympic & Paralympic Games to a later date beyond 2020,

but not later than summer 2021, after a complete victory over the pandemic.

renewed zeal and spirit", advised the Ambassador to Pakistani athletes. Also expressing his gratitude to Lt General (retd)

Syed Arif Hasan, the President of Pakistan Olympic Association, for his support, Ambassador MATSUDA said that Japan was determined to further support Pakistan in the field of sports and he was looking forward to further cooperating with POA.

The Ambassador hoped that the pandemic COV-ID-19 would be defeated through the collective efforts of the international community, and assured Pakistan all of his support in the face of this global challenge.

Pakistan condemns attack on Gurdwara

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attack on a Gurdwara in Kabul, that has resulted in the loss of precious lives and injuries to several worshippers. Such despicable attacks have no political, religious or moral justification and must be

Our hearts go out to the families who have lost their loved ones in this inhuman act and we pray for the swiftest recovery of the injured.

Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and

All places of worship are

sacrosanct and their sanctity must be respected at all times.

Experts call for mitigating COVID-19 impact on labour force

QUETTA: Security forces including Police, Levies Force and Balochistan Frontier Corps patrolling the areas

of during lockdown as people restricted their movement to prevent COVID-19 outbreak. - APP photo

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Experts at an Online Seminar at SDPI stressed the need for a coordinated policy approach mechanism among the federal and provincial government institutions which they said is crucial to mitigate impact of COVID-19 on the labour force, a pandemic most the whole world.

The participants agreed that the implementation time to deal with this crisis could have been greatly reduced if local governments and local actors

were engaged. The online seminar on 'Mitigation action against COVID-19 and its impact on Pakistan's labour market' was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the

former governor State Bank of Pakistan, said the government needs to move forward in an aggressive manner and revisit the macroeconomic framework completely. She emphasized the need for intensive discussions with the IMF and other international financial institutions.

She also called for lowering the interest rate that she said is more of a market-based solutions than cash transfers.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI Executive Director, said philanthropy at an individual and firm level needs to be activated, as it has worked previously in floods and earthquakes with any organization such as NDMA and ERRA taking the lead. Furthermore, he added, if deputy commissioner's office is used to make a list of the necessary items, local philanthropists and

be in a better position to provide their assistance. He stated that tax should be made as an incentive and firms should be provided relief in utility bills that can be linked with tax Dr. Muhammad Nasir

from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) said that there were different stages of lockdown as provinces were experiencing different impacts of it. We are moving closer to stage 3, which is the final stage of

complete lockdown. He said that this stage can result in 18 million layoffs, that's why the Prime Minister is reluctant to opt for this option. He added that estimates regarding daily wagers, street vendors, labourers and self-emplovers are conservative and do not reflect the ground realities.

RCCI chief seeks relief for **SMEs**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has sought extension of relief package to small and medium enterprise. RCCI President Saboor Malik in a statement said that 100 billion allocated for SMEs and agriculture sector.

The relief announced for domestic consumers of electricity and gas is appreciated however, its scope should be extended to SMEs as well. Sabor Malik demanded that electricity bills be exempted for SMEs as well.

He said that in the current situation, businesses that were already in decline now unable to pay bills due to 14 days lock down.

'Govt spending 1.25 trillion to address Covid-19'

APP

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh on Wednesday said that Rs1.25 trillion would be spent through multi-sectoral relief package, aimed at addressing the ongoing challenges that emerged due to outbreak Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

Addressing a press conference, he said that purpose of the package was to provide immediate relief to those who had been affected by the pandemic.

Briefs

Prince Chalres tested positive for COVID



DNA

LONDON: Britain's heir to the throne, Prince Charles, has tested positive for the coronavirus, according to a statement from his London house-

"He has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual," a statement from Clarence House, his residence in the capital, said Wednesday.

It is not possible to determine who gave the prince - whose official name is the Prince of Wales - the virus, the statement said, "owing to the high number of engagements he carried out in his public role during recent weeks.'

New UN enoy for Afghanistan



NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General

UNITED

Antonio Guterres has appointed Canadian diplomat Deborah Lyons as his new Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Ainjiang donates medical masks to Pakistan

China sends third group of medical experts to Italy

APP

BEIJING: China's Xinjiang Uvgur Autonomous has donated 380,000 medical masks to eight countries including Pakistan to help with the global fight against the novel coronavirus.

The masks were delivered to Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Malavsia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia and Algeria, according to local media here on Wednesday.

The regional government has organized local enterprises to increase production while Customs and China Post

were coordinated to ensure the timely delivery of the materials.

Meanwhile, Hunan Chinese traditional medicine enterprises will donate Chinese patent medicine

to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran Around 1,500 boxes of silver-yellow lung capsules, produced by Hunan Anbang Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd have been donated to Karachi University.

Meanwhile, a team of 14 medical experts from east China's Fujian Province departed on a chartered flight to Italy on Wednesday morning to aid the European country's fight against the COVID-19 out-

The team consists of experts from several hospitals and the center for disease control and prevention (CDC) of Fujian, as well as an epidemiologist from the national CDC and a pulmonologist of Anhui Province. The experts specialize in areas including respiratory, intensive care.

in Kabul

rejected outright.

We also express our abiding solidarity with the fraternal people of Afghan-

manifestations.

Azerbaijan embassy consular section issues guidelines

А.М.Внатті

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan embassy consular section on Wednesday issued guidelines for the visa applicants.

According to a notification of the Embassy, as part of the measures takne to combat the spread of the coronovirs pandemic, the Consular section of the embas-

sy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan temporarily restricts the group and individual reception of citizens and direct contact with them for a definite period till April 20,200.

The embassy said that if it would be necessary this period may be extended. It further said that continuous reception of the appeals of citizens will be

munication. Citizens have been requested to send their appeals and question to the email of the embassy or contacting Fariz Jafarov, First Secretary (Consul) of the embassy throught mobile number 03355230500. Email: Islamabad@mission.mfa.

carried out only through

email and telephone com-

Over 74,000 COVID 19 patients cured in China

The facts are very clear. The US, out of its long-standing ideological bias against China, has continuously escalated its political oppression and unreasonable restrictions on Chinese journalists. This is simply intolerable.

DNA BEIJING: According to the lat-

est figures from the NHC, 456 patients cured and discharged from hospital in China's mainland, bringing the tally to 73,159. Geng Shuang the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told media on Wednesday that On March 24, experts on COVID-19 from China and Latin American and Caribbean countries exchanged views in a video conference. About 200 officials and experts from China, Latin American and Caribbean coun-

tries having diplomatic relations

with China, and Nicaragua, as well as representatives of WHO, UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank attended the video conference, which lasted for over three hours and achieved positive re-

Chinese experts talked in detail about the trajectory and features of the epidemic and Chinese experience in disease control, clinical treatment, customs administration and community-based quarantine and gave thorough answers to their foreign counterparts' questions.



Foreign officials and experts spoke highly of China's effective measures to contain the virus and its important contributions to global public health security. They believed this timely, professional and efficient video conference offered important guidance for their countries. They would like to draw on China's experience and maintain communication and coordination with China to defeat the pandemic together.

Going forward, China will uphold the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind and follow closely the situation in Latin American and Caribbean countries. We will do our utmost to coordinate domestic resources and enhance cooperation with these countries in light of their needs to jointly overcome the challenge posed by the virus.

We stated China's position for many times. The measures taken by the Chinese side against the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, among other US media, are all necessary countermeasures against US' unreasonable oppression of Chinese media in recent years. The US side provoked China first and China was only responding in legitimate self-defense.

Last week, I briefed you on the discriminatory restrictions the US has long imposed on Chinese journalists with regard to visa, administrative review and reporting.

Inside...

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Pilgrims asked to download mobile Apps during Hajj

US corona-virus deaths top 800, cases over 55,200

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CITY BRIEFS

Training held regarding corona virus preventive measures

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: Police personnel have been given orientation training regarding Corona Virus preventive measures and are being followed in letter and spirit under the close supervision of DPO Khalid

PRO Attock Police Taimoor Alizai said this while talking to this journalist. While giving details he said that three training sessions were held in Police Lines which were attended by SDPOs, SHOs, ASIs, SIs and other police personnel.

During these sessions Dr Riaz of DHQ Hospital Attock imparted orientation training and after these sessions the precautionary measures are being taken.

He said that all personnels have been provided gloves and masks while efforts are being made to ensure availability of sanitizers and tissue papers. While replying to a question said that so for disinfection/fumigation of police lines, police offices and police stations has not been done however concerned authorities have been approached in this regard.

50 people arrested for violating ban on public gatherings in Attock

DNA

ATTOCK: Police arrested fifty peoples in Attock including two grooms, for violating Section 144 imposed as a precautionary measure against the spread of Covid-19.

Hassanabdal police arrested a groom, wali Muhammad for arranging a marriage ceremony.

Attock police raided various parts of the city and arrested 24 shopkeepers for opening their workplaces. Those who arrested included block manufacturing unit owners, tailors, car dealers, paint shop owners and Tent services owners.

In Jand police booked 14 people, including four cattle dealers for organising cattle markets in Domial. Moreover, in Wah Cantonment police booked a groom identified as Shahjehan and two other persons, Rizwan and Nasir, for organising a marriage party. Seven hotel owners identified as Waseem, Khalid, Sher Mohammad, Shahbaz, Shahid, Sabir and Mehmood, were also arrested by the same police for opening their hotels.

'Preventive steps taken to keep Attock jail hygienically clean'

DNA

ATTOCK: All possible steps have been taken to keep the Jail hygienically clean to control the spread of any infectious disease among the prisoners.

Deputy Superintendent Distt Jail Attock said this while talking to newsmen . He said that barracks of the prisoners were being washed with antiseptics while close supervision is being carried out to have a look on the health of the prisoners. He said that the jail was over crowded and if prisoners involved in petty crimes are shifted to some other location.

ICT Admin announces steps to ensure public safety in view of covid-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has announced specific measures to ensure public safety and maintain peace and tranquility in the city in the wake of Coronavirus.

It was the continuation of the order issued by the Ministry of Interior earlier to impose the Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Crpc) in Islamabad, said a notification issued by the ICT Administration. It said the decision was taken on the recommendations of the public health expert so as to ensure public safety, conserve lives, and maintain peace and tranquility in the territorial jurisdiction of Islamabad. "All markets, shopping malls, restaurants and private offices shall remain closed. Public offices will function from 10:00 am to 04:00 pm except on Friday for which timing will be 10:00 am to 01:00 pm," it said. Intra-city, inter-district and inter-province movements of people by public transport have been banned in the city while the metro bus service of Rawalpindi and Islamabad would be allowed to operate for four hours a day, it added.

It said the bus will remain functional from 08:30 am to 10:30 am and from 03:30 pm to 05:30. Friday timing for the metro would be 08:30 am to 10:30 am and from 12:30 pm to 02:30 pm.

The passengers have to keep a distance of one seat during their travel through the bus. The cabs are allowed to operate for which a separate Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be issued soon, it added. There shall also be a complete ban on all kinds of gatherings including social and religious at any place such as public or private.

"Langar Khannas (food centre) and Panagahs (shelter home) shall remain functional and Islamabad Administration will also establish 'Ration' warehouses for the needy and underprivileged."

The Out Door Patient Departments in all hospitals would remain suspended. However, emergency services would remain operational.

HEC to fund research to address covid-19 crisis: Chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has sought proposals from universities, institutes, and individual researchers on ideas to address the Novel Coronavirus crisis. This was decided on Tuesday in a special video meeting of HEC's senior management.

The bulk of HEC staff has been directed to work from home, following the directives of the Health Ministry, so all the work of the Commission is conducted electronically.

Applications are received online or through courier, meetings are conducted by video link, and all papers and files are handles electronically.

These arrangements have

been out in place in order to ensure that all major services of the Commission continue to be provided without interruption during the current emergency.

The research initiative launched today, with the support of the World Bank, is entitled the RAP-ID Research and Innovation Fund (RRIF) program. It aims to mobilize the research capacities of universities in support of national efforts to address the COVID-19 crisis.

Under the initiative, a rapid assessment and review mechanism has been established to analyze research and innovation proposals urgently.

Each applicant seeking funding through the RAP-ID Research and Innova-



tion Fund can propose an idea based on one of the priority themes.

The proposals are due by April 3, and funding decisions will be made within the month of April. Funding will be provided to selected research-intensive institutions for analysis

of data, testing of specimens, access to facilities or equipment, or development of essential products or services.

Besides the research initiative, HEC has also been working with universities to minimize the impact of the lockdown of univer-

sities on academic activities. To this end, three specialized committees have been established to help arrange IT facilities, software, tech support, and curate substantive online content

The objective is to enable

faculty members to (virtually) continue teaching their courses from where they left off at the time of closure of universities. Individual faculty members will share their course outline/s required reading materials with their students through online learning management systems. Universities will develop repositories of online courses. HEC will facilitate access to an extensive digital library of lectures

and courses.

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ing telephone number of

regional offices for filing

complaints about gas sup-

APP

NBF suspends all its activities due to Corona



DNA

ISLAMABAD: With an unfortunate developing situation on Coronavirus in the country National Book Foundation (NBF) has postponed it's National Annual Book Fair.

The NBF has suspended its all activities and public gatherings immediately till further orders.

The annual Book Fair would be rescheduled after overcoming the Coronavirus situation.

ply or low pressure issues. The consumers could

contact General Manag-

er Islamabad Region on

03335482013, Chief Engi-

neer Nazir on 03364367575,

Deputy Chief Engineer

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0332 4047722, Deputy

Chief Engineer Operations

Zahid Ali on 03364046622,

Deputy Chief Engineer

Maintenance Raza on

Chief Engineer Custom-

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Ehsan Ellahi Mirza on

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Islamabad region



Zia renowned calligrapher of Pakistan on the occasion of his photo exhibition. - DNA photo

ICCI hails cut in POL prices, demands further cut in interest rate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has hailed the decision of the government to reduce the prices of petroleum products by Rs.15 per litre as it would provide good relief to the inflation-stricken people and demanded that government should further cut the interest rate to bring it down to 5 percent in order to ease the problems of business community that has been badly hit by the emerging crisis caused by the coronavirus.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & In-

dustry said that business community was expecting significant cut in the interest rate, but SBP has reduced policy rate by only 1.5 percent, which was not enough in the prevailing conditions. He stressed that government should bring down policy interest rate to at least 5 percent that would provide significant relief to the business community in these difficult times. He welcomed the stimulus packaged announced by the Prime Minister Imran Khan and said that business community would be able to give its full reaction on it after revelation

of its full details. However, he said that government should also reduce the prices of gas and electricity for commercial and industrial consumers and allow them to pay these bills in instalments so that businesses could cope with the current crisis situation. ICCI President said that

many industrial units have made required payments of imported raw material, but due to restrictions on transportation, their raw material was lying at ports while they have to pay banks mark up and demurrage charges.

He demanded that government should orders deferring the receipt of banks mark up and demurrages

for at least six months so that businesses could be the general public.

able to sail through the current difficult situation that would provide business community some relief in this tough situation. He said that in the prevailing conditions, it was difficult for businesses to meet the domestic orders and added that cut in the utility charges for commercial and industrial consumers would reduce their problems to some extent. They said that business community was standing with the government in this tough time and would fully cooperate with it in mitigating the problems of

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan Wednesday said the provincial government would soon announce relief package for the province in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. Talking to media during his visit to District Headquarters Hospital in Khyber district, he said "together we can defeat corona pandemic", adding that with cooperation of public, government and military the coronavirus

Seeking public support to overcome coronavirus, the CM said that all the precautionary measures had been taken for public safety and these could only yield result if the masses would cooperate and remain in self quarantine. Mehmood Khan said the government was working to constituting volunteer

could be defeated.



teams to assist stoppage of coronavirus outbreak. The government was appointing as many as 2000 doctors on contract basis. he said and added that 1300 doctors had been appointed while approval of 600 more doctors through public service commission had been granted.

On the occasion KP Government spokesman Ajmal Wazir told media that no local case of corona had been reported from D I Khan district while all the coronavirus affected patients at quarantine centres were Zaireen from other areas of the country.

UNHCR supports training for 2,500 **Pakistanis**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the Refugee Agency, in partnership with NAVT-TC - the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, has announced technical skills training opportunities for 2,500 Pakistanis and Afghan refugees.

Despite the challenges that the global pandemic is presenting, UNHCR remains committed to maintaining its essential activities, including by offering livelihood opportunities that benefit both Pakistanis and Afghan refugees.

Shahid Afridi donates hospital for corona patients

APP

PESHAWAR: Cricket legend, Shahid Khan Afridi here Wednesday donated his hospital in Kohat district for treatment of corona patients. Deputy Commissioner Kohat Captain

ited Shahid Afridi Memorial Trust Jerma in Kohat district and met legendary Cricketer Shahid Afridi. On the request of Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Shahid Afridi donated his Hospital to District

(Retd) Abdur Rehman vis-

Administration will be used as isolation center for coronavirus patients. Moreover, Shahid Afridi also donated 500 Panaflexes for COVID-19 awareness which will be displayed at different areas of the city.

Education Ministry seeks contents for education to be aired on National TV

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training had asked the contents providers to share their contents with the ministry as it was in the process of launching a National TV channel so that learning continues while schools were closed.

According to an official notification issued by the Education Ministry on Wednesday, it was stated that in light of nationwide school closures due to COVID-19, the ministry had planned to start a national TV channel to disseminate SLO-based educational contents for Grade 1-12. It said that the contents providers who were willing to share

their contents free of cost to the ministry for this national cause during current emergency, were requested to contact the technical advisers of the education ministry within 72 hours. It further stated that due acknowledgment shall be given to those whose contents are selected for airing. However, the education ministry

in a Tweet informed that educators at the forefront with health workers to ensure learning can continue in these difficult times. The teachers were sifting through the education content provided free of cost by content developers to make it ready for airing through dedicated television channel, the Tweet added.

UN urges rich countries to adopt massive stimulus package

ecretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged leaders of the world's 20 major industrialized nations to adopt a "wartime" plan including a stimulus package "in the trillions of dollars" for businesses, workers and households in developing countries trying to tackle the coronavirus pandemic."COVID-19 will require a response like none before - a 'wartime' plan in times of human crisis", he said in a letter to the G20 leaders, while welcoming their decision to convene an emergency their planned teleconference on the pandemic that has adversely affected health, education and economies worldwide."The G-20 leadership has an extraordinary opportunity to step forward with a strong response package to address the various threats of COVID-19. This would demonstrate solidarity with the world's people, especially the most vulnerable".

With Iran and North Korea apparently in mind, the UN chief also encouraged the G20 summit to waive sanctions on countries to ensure their access to food and essential medical supplies. In his letter, dated Mach 23 and released today, Guterres recommended three areas for discussion and decision-making at the meeting, due to be held on Thursday.

Topping his list is the need for coordinated action to suppress the virus through "an articulated response mechanism" guided by the World Health Organization (WHO)."Such a mechanism would strengthen the global response and provide countries with stronger capabilities to stop transmission: test, trace, quarantine, treat the sick and coordinate measures to restrict movement and contact. It would also help enhance scientific collaboration in the search for a vaccine and therapeutic treatment", he said. G-20 leaders were also asked to ban tariffs and remove restrictions on cross-border trade that affects the deployment of medical equipment, medicines and other essential goods."And I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity not exclusion", the Secretary-General added.

For his second point, Guterres previewed the social and economic impact of the pandemic, which is likely to be in the trillions of dollars. He urged the G-20 to launch a large-scale stimulus package for developing countries. "Unlike 2008, this is not a banking crisis", he said. "While the liquidity of the financial system must be guaranteed, we need to focus on people - families, low-wage workers, small and medium enterprises and the informal sector. Important steps have already been taken by developed countries in this direction. This must be scaled up". Furthermore, developing economies also will require a support package that could include trade credits, liquidity lines and help in accessing concessional financing.



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Govt's incentive package in the wake of COVID 19 crisis

T was never going to be a simple balancing act to perform, but the government seems to have done it right.

More details about the trillion-rupee-plus package announced by the prime minister on Tuesday are needed before its true impact can be assessed. But in walking the tightrope between providing direct assistance to the people and helping industry to weather the tough times that lie ahead, it seems to lean in favour of direct assistance without forgetting industry.

It was stated that for the construction sector, a separate package would come later. Presumably, the lockdowns announced by the provincial governments have halted construction activity, so coming up with any incentive package for the sector at this time would have no beneficial impact.

For industry, the package is structured to accelerate the release of sales tax refunds and calls for deferring debt service payments. This is smartly structured because it minimises the cash outlay on the part of the government, but will help improve the liquidity position of the companies that benefit from it, thereby enabling them to maintain their payrolls.

Deferred debt-service payments, assuming the government is successful in arranging this for the private sector, means only those who access bank credit will benefit. There is an allocation of Rs100bn for small and medium-size enterprises and agriculture, but the mechanism through which this will be allocated is yet to be announced. Aside from this, an amount of Rs400bn seems to be allocated for direct support to the working poor; half of the sum is supposed to preserve employment.

If the government intends to put this money into the pockets of rich industrialists under the assumption they will pass it on to the workers as remuneration, then room for abuse and capture is substantial.

It would be worth its while to find ways to directly transfer these funds to the working poor. Once disbursement gets under way, the government is also likely to be swamped with complaints and loud calls for more, especially from industry. Given the unprecedented nature of the challenge we are now moving towards, it would be entirely appropriate for the government to focus its energies directly on the people rather than seeking to route its assistance through industry.

This is a good time to rapidly increase its capacity for targeted assistance, and given the technologies available today, especially with the National Socioeconomic Registry of the Benazir Income Support Programme, as well as myriad other targeted support schemes, this can be achieved.

There is time enough to ramp up the targeting and it should be used for this purpose. - Courtesy Dawn

Combating COVID-19 vital for declining global emission

Dr Saeed Ahmed Ali

A anticipatory meeting of EU-China climate summit, which had to take place at the end of March 2020, ahead of UN's next global climate meeting, has been postponed due to coronavirus outbreak. These events help draft governmental level agreements in advance of the UN meetings. The UN global meeting 'COP26' conference is scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November, 2020.

noticeable decline is witnessed in global emission level of greenhouse gases due to strict initiatives launched by the governments of corona affected countries to halt the spread of COVID-19 as safety measures for public health.

In order to break the chain of coronavirus, people have been restricted to their abodes. Like other parts of the globe, Pakistan too has halted social, economic and political activities to reduce the risk of coronavirus

For public health safety, strict measures have been exercised by locking down the routine activities such as public gatherings and transport operations. Almost on daily basis, new coronavirus cases have been reported in Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The virus first emerged in Wuhan, China which later gripped some other parts of the country. The government has locked down the entire city and established various quarantines to accommodate around 12 million

After getting the situation from bad to worse, the movement of around 60 million people turned stagnant while the cities have shown a deserted look.

Talking to APP, an official of Pakistan Meteorological Department said that the reduced transport activities in major cities of the country had positive impact on environment and air during the last week.

Similarly, the United States Space Agency, NASA's Earth Observatory has recently released satellite images which clearly show that the environmental pollution has been declined drastically due to the non-movement

These pictures also show a reduction in the levels of greenhouse gases including Carbon Dioxide (CO2) particularly Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) in the environment. These gases are emitted from motor vehicles, industrial structures and power plants.

In order to avoid the virus, industrial operations in the coronavirus hot spot regions have been halted and travel restrictions were imposed in China, Europe and USA which had helped in rectifying quality of air.

The recent research report submitted by a noted environmentalist Lauri Myllyvirta, working at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air in Finland observed that the travel restrictions contributed to a 25 percent drop in China's Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions during the last four weeks from Januray to February, 2020.

Sustainable Development policy Institute Environmental Expert Kashif Salik said that keeping in view the current scenario, a temporary reduction in gas emissions in 2020 should be encouraged globally; however, it should be adopted as a permanent behavior to put the emissions on a long-term decline.

"Hopefully the COVID-19 outbreak will bring changes which make societies more willing permanently, to act on the climate change crisis in the long run," he said. However, it was pertinent that the drop in global emissions due to Coronavirus would have an impact on global economic activity, he added.

Owing to climate change impact and migration of different communities, the World Meteorological Organization(WMO) in its declaration has warned the nations that around 22-23 million people were displaced around the globe by extreme weather conditions in 2019, which was a clear increase as compare to 17.2 million migration, during the year 2018.

A anticipatory meeting of EU-China climate summit, which had to take place at the end of March 2020, ahead of UN's next global climate meeting, has been postponed due to coronavirus outbreak. These events help draft governmental level agreements in advance of the UN meetings.

The UN global meeting 'COP26' conference is scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November, 2020. It is worth mentioning here that the COP26 conference is particularly critical, in a scenario that all signatory countries are supposed to present even more ambitious plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions than called for under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

According to a World Resource Institute (WRI) report, under 2015 Paris Agreement, only the Moldova, Suriname, Marshall Islands and Norway had presented such improvement plans to reduce global and local omissions.

G20 can play vital role in combating effects of coronavirus

Saudi Arabia assumed the G20 presidency last December and will continue to hold it until November, making it the focal point of international economic coordination. King Salman said that Saudi Arabia would seek, during its presidency, to "create a cooperative environment for the G20 to introduce policies and initiatives that will fulfill the hopes of the people of the world."

■ he G20 has never been as relevant as it is today, with a pandemic and economic recession wreaking havoc globally. The need for international coordination has never been greater and the G20 is the right format for such cooperation, as the group comprises the planet's 20 largest economies, which collectively account for about 90 percent of the world's gross domestic product, 80 percent of trade, two-thirds of its population, and half of its land area. They have the coverage, the financial means and the necessary tools to mitigate the impact of these twin crises.

Last week, China called for multilateral efforts to coordinate the global response, including through the G20. One official said: "The G20 is the main platform for in-

ternational macroeconomic policy coordination. After the financial crisis in 2008, the G20 played a historic role in coordinating and promoting the world economic recovery." He said that China would proactively take part in international coordination and was ready to give "constructive ideas" on how countries should work together to manage the economic costs of the pandemic.

But the G20 can play a greater role, beyond macroeco-

nomic coordination.

Saudi Arabia assumed the G20 presidency last December and will continue to hold it until November, making it the focal point of international economic coordination. King Salman said that Saudi Arabia would seek, during its presidency, to "create a cooperative environment for the G20 to introduce policies and initiatives that will fulfill the hopes of the people of the world." The Kingdom this month called for a leaders' summit by video conference to discuss the coronavirus crisis.

During the 2008-09 global financial crisis, the G20's role - as well as its stature - grew considerably. From 1999, when the group was set up, until 2008, the G20 was the purview of finance ministers and its discussions focused on the promotion of international financial stability. The G7, and sometimes G8, summits were the places where heads of state met and coordinated policies on wider economic and political issues. In November 2008, US President George W. Bush changed that when he convened the first G20 summit of heads of state in Washington to coordinate responses to the financial crisis. The coordinated adoption of financial stimulus packages was one outcome of those deliberations.

Since then, the G20 has held about a dozen summits and scores of ministerial meetings, in addition to expert gatherings and other activities. It has frequently dealt with issues outside economic policy. For example, the 2019 G20 summit held in Osaka, Japan, discussed eight themes: The global economy, trade and investment, innovation, environment and energy, employment, women's empowerment, development, and health.

This year, a main area of focus should be mitigating the disruptive impact of the coronavirus on global supply chains, including its effects on health, security and aid to vulnerable communities. The disease has led to limited access for employees due to quarantines and curfews, factory closures or manufacturing slowdowns, limited access to logistics to move goods, and skyrocketing costs that are making it difficult for limited-income families to cope, especially when combined with layoffs or forced leaves.

A main area of focus should be mitigating the disruptive impact of the coronavirus on global supply chains

Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

Resilinc, a supply chain mapping and risk-monitoring company, has issued preliminary reports on the number of items sourced from and the sites of industries located in the quarantined areas severely affected by the pandemic in various countries. The information shows that manufacturers in more than a dozen industries are facing a supply crisis and are struggling to mitigate the impact on their supply chains. Just like the Fukushima nuclear crisis of 2011, the current crisis has exposed weaknesses in supply chains, such as relying on a single source or a limited number of sources for key inputs.

Especially critical are health supply chains. Medical equipment and supplies needed to fight the disease are in short supply and the production lines to make them need to be expanded quickly. Distribution is an even greater problem amid rising costs and limited transportation channels. Countries with fragile health systems are finding it more difficult to monitor and fight the disease. If left to their own devices, disease could spread uncontrollably and, in the end, spread to other countries. More alarming for international humanitarian agencies is the fate of refugee communities when the disease reaches them. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, more than 70 million people globally have been forced to flee their homes by persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. Of those, more than 29 million are refugees, of whom 84 percent are being hosted by low or middle-income nations that have weak health, water and sanitation systems. It is critical that these communities are provided with the means to protect themselves against the ravages of the disease.

The impacts of coronavirus can be felt in the security area too, with serious concerns about weak supply chains, difficulties in organizing meetings, production slowdowns, and logistical disruptions. More importantly, the disease is making it difficult to move forces and materiel to maintain security in some regions. It is especially worrying that Iran and its allies are taking advantage of these disruptions to expand their influence in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon.

The G20 is well placed to deal with all these issues. Countries should put aside their differences as they address the coronavirus crisis. For example, tensions between the US and China, the two largest G20 economies, should not delay coordination and agreement on concrete actions to deal with the pandemic's repercussions. China and the US are each other's top trading partners and the economic health of each country depends on the other's - and now the physical health of their populations depends on their cooperation. There are real issues and conflicting interests that divide them, which may very well outlast the current pandemic, but it should be possible to agree on at least two issues: Isolate the immediate coronavirus-related supply disruptions that affect health and security, and avert a total economic meltdown, which could prove to be irreversible in the near future. - Courtesy Arab News

Humanity cannot fail Gaza yet again

In Gaza, 97 percent of the population lacks access to clean water and a third of homes are not connected to the sanitation system

he coronavirus has just found another fertile environment. For weeks, the 2 million Palestinians crammed into Gaza have hoped and prayed that the virus would not breach the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of this Eastern Mediterranean open-air prison. Those days are over.

On Sunday, Gazans work up to the news that two Palestinians had tested positive. They are now in quarantine alongside more than 1,000 others in 18 centers, largely school classrooms. The two confirmed as being infected

had traveled back from Pakistan via Egypt, so the authorities are worried about who they may have infected en route, including fellow travelers and border guards. The best-case scenario is that the virus does not escape the quarantine, but these facilities are hardly high-tech. Even if this first infection is contained, it is just a matter of time before Gaza will be hit, and here it may spread at warp speed.

The developed world may barely notice. Western Europe is dealing with its first real crisis since 1945. And it might seem a tad tame for a strip of land that has seen four wars with Israel and a civil conflict since 2006. In Europe and the US, citizens are digesting the prospect of self-isolation, lockdown, and quarantine for several months. But Palestinians in Gaza have spent almost 13 vears in lockdown under an Israeli-led blockade that renders it effectively an open-air prison.

In fact, Gazans have a longer history of such isolation. Back in 1994, I visited Gaza as the Israeli forces were leaving as part of the Oslo process, redeploying to the edge of the prison. Gazans had spent most of the time from 1988 until then under nightly curfews. Breaking the Israeli-imposed curfew certainly had consequences, largely for their bones. Now they can go out until all hours and even barbecue on the beach, which they had previously not even been able to visit.

What are the options for Gazans? Isolation is challenging when you inhabit one of the most crowded places on Earth. Palestinians in refugee camps often survive 10 to a room. They have also endured travel restrictions all those years, so there is no port or airport to shut down. Globally, authorities remind everyone to routinely wash their hands with soap. Houses are starting to stink of disinfectant. Hygiene is essential. This is sound advice

all should follow – if they can. But just try this in Gaza, with its sewage lagoons and garbage-strewn alleys. Children run barefoot through all of this. In Gaza, 97 percent of the population lacks access to clean water and a third of homes are not connected to the sanitation system. Many Gazans cannot afford soap, while hand sanitizer is but a dream. Twelve years ago, the Israeli water authority head warned me never to drink the water in Gaza. "It's either sewage or seawater," he said. The situation has only gotten worse since then, making a mockery of Westerners fighting over toilet tolls. Face masks and gloves are also only a dream. Gazans would love to be able to stockpile vital necessities. Even in the best of times, if markets were laden with goods, most people lack the purchasing power to buy them. Most Gazans are dependent on aid and surviving off ever-decreasing donor largesse. - Courtesy Arab News





DNA

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responsible for imple-

"Shops of those who vi-

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sealed," he said.

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Iran dumps refugees across Afghan border

DNA

HERAT: Iranian security forces are rounding up thousands of Afghan refugees suspected or confirmed of having the coronavirus and forcefully deporting them to Afghanistan with no regard for international safeguards meant to protect the world from the spread of the deadly pandemic.

About 70,000 Afghans have returned from virus-hit Iran in the past 20 days, overwhelming health workers at border crossings and raising fears of a major outbreak, AFP reported Monday (March 16), citing the International Organisation for Migration.

Ahmad Ahmadi, an Afghan refugee who worked in Tehran, said that the Iranian military arrested him and his nine-year-old son and then deported them to Afghanistan through the Islam Qala border crossing.

SBP allows importers to advance payment, open account without limit

APP

ISLAMABAD: Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday allowed importer to advance payment and open account without any limit for the import 0f medical equipments, medicines and other ancillary items for the treatment of COVID-19. According to a press release issued here, all federal and provincial government departments, hospitals in public and private sectors, charita-

ble organizations, manufacturers and commercial importers can make Advance Payment and Import on Open Account, without any limit.

Further, the banks have been allowed to approve Electronic Import Form (EIF) for import of the equipments, donated by international donor agencies and foreign governments to facilitate their seamless and speedy im-

ports. The numbers of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan were increasing. An effective strategy to fight against the menace of COVID-19 requires timely availability of needed equipments. In the backdrop of unprecedented spread of the deadly virus.

Beijing reports two imported COVID-19 cases in 12 hours

APP

BEIJING: Beijing reported two new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) from Canada and France, respectively, over the past 12 hours by Wednesday noon, according to the municipal health commission. The latest reports have brought the total number of confirmed imported cases in Beijing to 145 as of Wednesday noon.

In addition, 416 confirmed indigenous cases have been reported in the city, of which 392 have been discharged from hospital after recovery.

LAHORE: Firefighers extinguishing fire after an LPG container caught fire in Lahore's Shahdara on Wednesday morning. - DNA photo by Sindhu

Islamabad introduces guidelines for shop keepers ISLAMABAD: A new set of guidelines for shopkeepers in the capital have been introduced by the district administration of Islamabad. People coming to buy essentials from grocery stores have to first create a circle outside the shops while maintaining a distance of 1.5 meters from each other. Then, one by one, each person will go inside the stores and buy whatever they want. According to Islamabad District Com-

SBP reports decline in

ISLAMABAD: The imports of vegetable products into the country decreased by 3.92 percent during the first eight months of financial year 2019-20 as compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The vegetable product imports into the country during July-February (2019-20) were recorded at \$1610.657 million against the import of \$1676.530 million during July-Feb-

3.92pc

imports

according to SBP report. The food commodities that contributed in negatively growth included edible fruits and nuts, import of which dip from \$23.535 million last year to \$22,129 million during the period under review, showing declined of 5.97 percent.

ruary (2018-19), showing

declined of 3.92 percent.

CDA to wash markets, major roads to ensure public safety

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA), ICT Administration and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) have been directed to wash all markets, busy area and major roads of the city with Chemicals as well as to carry out cleanliness in the all parts of the city. All the departments are participating in this special operation, the steps has been taken as preventive measure to control the spread of Coro-

navirus in the city. Chemical to be used for washing are secured by the ICT Administration from a Chemicals factory at Attock and is an route. The activity would be

after input from Ministry of Health. The step has been taken

started from tomorrow

to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in the city. Furthermore, in line with the instructions of CDA Management, four ventilators are being made operative at CDA Hospital from Thursday.

Moreover in accordance with instructions of CDA management, Doctors and Paramedical staff of CDA Hospital have been directed to remain alert to cope any emergent sit-

Furthermore, a camp office has also been established at CDA Hospital implementation on medical advisory issued by the Government is being ensured.

Pilgrims asked to download mobile Apps during Hajj

The Rehnuma-e-Hajj app provides guidelines about the Manasik-e-Hajj and provides information about the complete set of rituals during the pilgrimage

APP

ISLAMABAD: The intending pilgrims have been asked to download five smart phone mobile applications (Apps) for ensuring hassle free Hajj 2020, said official of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

Talking to APP, he said the apps could prove very important as they contain documentaries on Hajj performance process and complete guidelines to facilitate the intending pil-

The five android phone applications including 'Mina Locator'; 'Al Maqsad'; PakHajj Muavin; 'Rehnumai-e-Hajj'; and 'Pak Hajj Guide' had worked satisfactorily last year's Hajj.

The mobile-phone applications could be downloaded getting Hajj-related prayers and other important information about Hajj rituals.

Mina Locator App helps people locate their residence, Mina Maktab, train stations, the route to different camps, mosques, hospitals and all other important places in Mina with reference to the user's current location. AIMaqsad mobile application provides detailed 3D indoor navigation for Masjid Al Haram.

The app is created to assist visitors in determining their location accurately inside the corridor of the Grand Mosque and guide their way anywhere they want to go during

PakHajj Muavin helps Hajj pilgrims to check their own details regarding their group's information, buildings that they are staying in, travel information and other details about hajjis.

The Rehnuma-e-Hajj app provides guidelines about the Manasik-e-Hajj and provides information about the complete set of rituals during the pilgrim-

Pak Hajj Guide app educates the pilgrims about how to make preparations for this religious event, it includes performing Umrah and Hajj, Ziarat-e-Madinah, and things to remember for the pilgrimage.

Pak cricketers ask fans to adhere to safety policy to combat coronavirus

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan cricketers have stepped in to support government's efforts to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by asking their fans to remain indoors and adopt safety measures.

For the past couple of days, they are active on social media, imploring the public to stay at home and adhere to safety policy. Former skipper Ramiz Raja said that social distancing was extremely necessary for the safety of general public. "You should not go to social gatherings and activities. Also avoid visiting your relatives and keep distance from your colleagues because the

more you will get closer, the more this virus will bite you. So you need to be careful," the cricketer-turned commentator said on his YouTube chan-

nel RamizSpeaks. He also suggested public to arrange indoor exercises and eat healthy foods to keep themselves fit during the shutdown period. "This coronavirus is knocking at your gates. So you have to increase your lungs' capacity and immunity system to resist it by eating healthy foods and doing exercise," he added. Former captain Shahid Khan Afridi in a video message asked the fans to take care of their health by washing their hands regularly and avoid coughing and sneezing openly. He

also asked people to follow Islamic teachings and avoid hoarding. "When the poor go to buy sanitizers and masks they don't find these as the rich people have bought and collected them in their homes. And if at some places these things are available they are bevond the reach of the poor. "I request you all that this is the time to become a nation. I'm also the son of this soil. You all have given me a lot of respect and love. [To fulfill my duty] I've started a little effort to distribute ration among the needy. So, please you also play your role," said Afridi, who came forward to provide ration to around 2000 families of Kohat besides opening doors of his fully equipped charity hospital as quarantine centre.

China resumes construction of 65 airport projects

APP

BEIJING: Constructions works of 65 airport projects have been resumed across China, representing more than 80 percent of the country's airport projects under construction, according to the civil aviation authorities.

Among which, 27 projects are the national major airport projects, accounting for 90 percent of the total sum of 30, said the Civil Aviation Administration of

Airports are key public infrastructures that sustain the continuous and fast growth of China's civil aviation industry. By the end of 2019, China had a total of 238 civil airports.

MUNIR FAISAL

First Corona case

confirmed in Attock

ATTOCK: First case of Corona Virus has been confirmed in Attock district. The female patient whose Corona Vi-

rus test has been found positive is from Village Gharibwal of Tehsil Pindi Gheb in Attock District on Wednesday. Nusrat Nisar who came back from Saudi Ara-

bia on March 15, after performing Umra was addmitted to THQ Hospital Pindigheb along with her husband Muhammad Javed as both were having symptoms of the viral disease.

Their samples werw sent to National Institute of Health for verificartion from where the test result of Nusrat Nisar was found positive while the test result of her husband Muhammad Javed was declared negative. Nusrat Nisar has now been shifted to an isolation ward of DHQ Hospital Attock.

Deputy District Health Officer Pindigheb Manzoor Hussain said that almost 17 memebers of Gharibwal came back from Saudi Arabia after performing Umra but they were not kept in Quarantine which may now cause a great threat to this area.

He said that Gharibwal village has now been cordoned off and exit and entry points have been locked and now screening of all the residents of the residents of Gharibwal and nearby Village Dhulian is in progress.

Sino-Pak cooperation in cultural creativity industry stressed

AGENCIES

BEIJING: The cooperation in cultural creativity industry can become a new field of cultural exchanges and economic collaboration China and Pakistan, Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said on Wednesday. "I believe that coopera-

tion in cultural creativity

industry can become a

new field of cultural ex-

changes and economic cooperation between China and Pakistan. It can also further enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples," China Economic Net reported. At present, the cooperation between China and Pakistan in this field has just started. However, he believed there was great potential for cooperation. While commenting on special relief program for export-oriented industries announced by the government of Pakistan, he said that in addition to the current export-oriented industries, Pakistan had many sectors that had potentials to earn foreign exchange, such as tourism, service, software, and cultural

creativity, etc.

US corona-virus deaths top 800, cases over 55,200

APP

ANKARA: The corona-virus-related deaths in the U.S. topped 800 on Wednesday, while the number of cases reached over 55,200, according to latest figures by Johns Hopkins University.

The figures put the U.S. in the top three countries worldwide with the most infection cases, after Italy and China. New York City and the

Washington - where the country's first case was reported in late January - are the hardest hit with 192 and 128 fatalities, respectively.

northwestern state of

In all, 354 people diagnosed with COVID-19 in the U.S. have recovered

Cases have been reported in all 50 states of the U.S., as well as Washington, D.C. and the territories of Puerto Rico,

Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The figures by the uni-

versity's Corona-virus Resource Center exceed the official tally compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which are updated daily but only for cases reported by 4 p.m. local time (2000GMT) the preceding day.

After emerging in Wuhan, China last December, the virus has spread to at



least 170 countries and claiming nearly 19,000 while confirmed cases regions around the globe, lives as of Wednesday, topped 424,000.