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US stands with Pak against COVID 19

Japan approves grants for uplift projects

Uzbek envoy indebted to Peer Naqeeb



Briefs

Chinese envoy Yao Jing called on PM Imran

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister conveyed sincere gratitude to China for supporting Pakistan in helping contain COVID-19. The medical equipment provided by China will greatly strengthen Pakistan's capacity. Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's support and solidarity with the people of China in its fight against Corona-virus.

Automatic renewal of UAE work permits

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates announced exemption of medical tests for labourers having expired work permits, the Emirates News Agency said on Thursday. The work permits and residence visas will be issued and renewed automatically for labourers employed by companies and support service staff such as domestic workers as part of precautionary measures taken by the UAE to curb the spread of COVID-19.

COVID 19 HANDLING

China to send experts to Pakistan

China is preparing a medical team to visit Pakistan and this team of experts will pay field trips to different localities in Pakistan; China shared with Pakistan immediately therapeutic and prevention protocols for Covid-19

MONITORING DESK

BEIJING: China will send a team of medical experts to Pakistan to work closely with local health authorities and provide assistance and expertise in their fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic, Zeng Yixin, Vice Minister of China's National Health Commission said on Thursday. "As required by Pakistani side, China is preparing a medical team to visit Pakistan and this team of experts will pay field trips to different localities in Pakistan," Zeng said while responding to APP at a press conference on China's cooperation with the international community in fighting COVID-19 held at China's State Council Information Office. He said the team would have experience sharing and technology exchanges with Pakistani counter-

parts and also the Chinese team would be discussing with Pakistani side on other assistance and technology support. The Chinese vice minister said that in terms of medical technology, China shared with Pakistan immediately therapeutic and prevention protocols for Covid-19. "We also shared with Pakistani friends through video-link China's experience in treatment and containment," he added. Zeng Yixin also said that the Chinese authorities also had a very good discussion on other issues of Pakistan in wake of the new coronavirus outbreak. Acknowledging Pakistan's support to China against the coronavirus, Deng Boqing, Vice Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency said that as China was fighting the epidemic

at home, Pakistan extended great support. Pakistan mobilized all possible medical supplies to support China and that measure had moved numerous Chinese people. He said at a moment, the two countries were facing the challenge and China was ready to share its experience with Pakistan and provide Pakistan with badly needed medical supplies. Deng said that so far, China had provided four batches of international assistance and added, "As a matter of fact, we have already provided four batches of assistance to Pakistan in terms of testing kits, protective suits, facial masks, ventilators and other medical supplies." He said for the next stage, the Chinese side also had a plan to provide more urgently needed assistance to Pakistan.

Japan approves grants for uplift projects

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: As a part of efforts to promote human security, the Government of Japan has decided to provide financial assistance of US\$ 236,230 for four social development projects in education and rural electrification in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces. The grants will be provided to four national NGOs, Learning Awareness & Motivation Programme (LAMP) in Khyber district, Friends Welfare Association (FWA) in Torgbar district, Hana Development Council (HDC) in Mandi Bahauddin district and Actions for Human Advancement (AHAT) in Kasur district. Human security is an idea, focusing on individual member of community, to promote to strengthen the community and independence of each person with protection and capability development in order to achieve rich potential of each member of community. There are vari-



ety of areas that Japanese Government has been extending assistance with this idea in Pakistan and education is one of the very focused area as education is the equal basic right for everybody to enjoy, will be a tool for everybody to develop its own potential, and naturally resulting in the accomplishment of sustainable development of each nation.

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FRIENDSHIP WITH CHINA



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Yan Chen, Managing Director, Challenge Group of Companies from China called on Prime Minister Imran Khan today in Islamabad and donated 15,000 Protection Suits to be used by Pakistani Doctors and para-medical staff while dealing with COVID-19 cases. Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Muhammad Afzal and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Yao Jing were also present on the occasion. - DNA

US stands with Pak against COVID 19

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and the United States are partners in the fight against coronavirus. In a video message released on the U.S. Mission to Pakistan's social media platforms today, Ambassador Paul Jones highlighted the support the United States is providing Pakistan, our commitment to deepen our collaboration with new technologies and resources, and guidance for American citizens in Pakistan. In particular, Ambassador Jones encouraged American Citizens in Pakistan to register for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to receive security and health alerts at: <http://step.state.gov>. Ambassador Jones noted, "We've made Pakistan a priority country for emergency coronavirus assistance. We redirected \$1 million in existing funding, and provided \$1 million in new funding for lab and emergency supplies and to enable communities to identify potential coronavirus outbreaks... The United States and Pakistan are longstanding partners in tackling global health challenges, and this partnership has been critical as we work together against coronavirus... to achieve our shared goals of health and prosperity of our peoples."

Uzbek ambassador indebted to Peer Naqeeb for support

Says truly corona virus nowadays is the biggest threat to the world. May ALLAH protect all of us from this disease

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Furqat Sidikov has thanked Peer Naqeeb ur Rehman and his son for supporting Uzbekistan on this difficult times. In a message he said, truly corona virus nowadays is the biggest threat to the world. May ALLAH protect all of us from this disease. We have a very dear and close to our heart a Muslim country. The land of Imam Al Buhari, Imam Termezi, The land of our spiritual leaders Hazrat Gajdwani, Shah e Naqshband Bahuddin Naqshband. Uzbekistan is also the land of Sahabas. This land is called Uzbekistan a beautiful land with a Nation with beautiful hearts. They welcome everyone

with open arms, having a devoting and respectful Government. We pray that may Allah protect the Uzbek government and it's nation from this corona virus. He further said, people who are infected in Uzbekistan with this virus may ALLAH bless them with good health and may ALLAH always protect the pure land of Uzbekistan. Now our respected sheikh will do the special pray for

Uzbekistan. (Arabic duas) ALLAH please protect the Government of Uzbekistan it's nation and the pure land from any kind of bad air. May this country grow more and more in all fields of life. Please bless this country with your blessing. Always protect this beautiful land from this corona virus. Please forgive all of us and bless us. The ambassador also hoped that this situation shall soon be over.



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Bulgaria, COMSATS mull cooperation

Bulgarian Ambassador assured of his support for expediting the membership process. Dr Parashkevov expressed interest in collaborating with COMSATS' Network for expert-exchanges, faculty development, training and capacity building of scientific workforce

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable development in the South (COMSATS) explored avenues of cooperation with Bulgaria in areas of mutual interest including faculty development, scholars exchange and capacity building of scientific workforce in a meeting held here Thursday. The meeting was held between Executive Director COMSATS, Dr S M Junaid



Zaidi and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Pakistan, Dr Aleksandar Borisov Parashkevov at the Embassy of Bulgaria. Dr Zaidi briefed the newly appointed ambassador on COMSATS' operations focused on bringing peace and development in the Global South aided by interventions aimed at socio-economic development through scientific tools

and mechanisms. He informed that COMSATS has forged partnerships globally and instituted programmes and projects in health, education, internet services, climate change and sustainability. With membership of 27 countries, COMSATS has completed its 25 years of successful operations with wide array of programmes. The Bulgarian Ambassador assured of his support for expediting the mem-

bership process. Dr Parashkevov expressed interest in collaborating with COMSATS' Network for expert-exchanges, faculty development, training and capacity building of scientific workforce. The meeting ended on a cordial note with the invitation to the ambassador to visit COMSATS Secretariat and its Centre of Excellence in Islamabad-COMSATS University Islamabad (CU), for furthering cooperation ties which was accepted.

SERENA STANDS UNITED IN FIGHTING THE CORONAVIRUS

SERENA ASSOCIATES PLEDGE ONE DAY SALARY

&

THE COMPANY CONTRIBUTES AN EQUAL AMOUNT IN SUPPORT OF THE UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY

SERENA HOTELS PAKISTAN

ArtAid' to put art works for online auction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "ArtAid" will put art works for online auction both for funds as well as barter for supplies to provide much needed assistance for the affected low income families in the testing time. Renowned artist Jamal Shah said "ArtAid" was launched in 2005 as a platform to support the earthquake affected people and held the historic Marathon Live Art Auction in collaboration with PTV. He said that it was time for them to engage all their supporting network in order to reach out to the needy such as the daily wagers and other downtrodden communities exposed to Covid-19 onslaught. "ArtAid" will collect necessities such as grocery items, tea, cooking oil, sugar, medicines, dettol and soap or detergents.

QAU Alumni extends awareness, assistance drive to 20 cities

APP

ISLAMABAD: Quaid-e-Azam University Alumni Association, in collaboration with Safar-e-Mehar-bani and Quaidian Sindh Forum, have extended its drive to more than 20 cities in order to create awareness and ensure assistance for needy people in the wake of Covid-19. In view of current circumstances, QAU Alumni after consultation with other senior members, have requested the Quaidians to participate in the awareness drive and charity work in order to extend to other cities as well, said General Secretary QAU Alumni Association Mur-taza Noor on Thursday. Talking to APP, he said that the students had also been suggested to own a village or families in their respective areas through possible means, keeping in view precautionary measures prescribed by the government authorities. In case they need any further assistance or coordination, please contact on following contact numbers 0300-9840120, 0304-8178283 or 03018488572, he added.

Business fraternity demands deferring receipt of utility bills

ICCI has called upon the government to defer the receipt of utility bills from business community for few months in order to save the businesses from default; businesses struggling for survival in the prevailing conditions

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to defer the receipt of utility bills from business community for few months in order to save the businesses from default. It further said that businesses were struggling for survival in the prevailing conditions and government should allow them to pay monthly utility bills

in three installments after the expiry of deferment period. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that due to coronavirus issue, business activities have almost come to a halt and businesses were facing threat of closure. He said that manufacturing activities have reached shut down level and manufactured goods were waiting for buyers with no good prospect in



near future. He said in these circumstances, it has become difficult for businesses to meet their day-to-day expenses and pay the wages to idle labor.

He said deferring the receipt of utility bills from businesses for few months would provide them some relief. ICCI President said that energy cost in Pakistan was very high that has pushed up the cost of doing business manifold. This situation has made it difficult for industry to remain competitive and meet domestic & international orders. He said that high energy cost has pushed many businesses towards de-

fault. He said that government has announced a stimulus packages for industry, but it might not save many industrial units. He appealed to the Prime Minister Imran Khan to also announce a bailout package, especially for steel industry to save it from destruction. He said that business community was standing with the government in this difficult time and would contribute to save the labor class from unemployment.



ISLAMABAD: MCI officials carrying out cleanliness drive in the Capital. — DNA

Ahsan Bakhtawari donates ventilator for Poly Clinic

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari CEO D Watson group has donated a ventilator to the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Mr. Hamza Shaqat to fulfill the emergency requirement of ventilators in Poly Clinic Islamabad which is facing an acute shortage of ventilators at the moment. On the advice of Deputy Commissioner the ventilator was handed over to the administration of Poly Clinic. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, while talking at the occasion said that we are actively contributing our resources and services to



help the government and the health workers in this present situation of health emergency. We at D Watson and our staff is working day and night to fight against the Corona Virus pandemic and our struggle will keep going on till the complete eradication of Corona Virus. He further said that we are also

running a public awareness campaign against the spread of Corona Virus. DC Islamabad Mr. Hamza Shaqat appreciated the role of D Watson Group in the fight against Corona Virus by providing free masks to the people of Islamabad and a ventilator to Poly Clinic Islamabad which was direly needed during the current emergency situation. Mr. Ahsan further added that D Watson staff also deserves appreciation by media as they are working day and night to fight against Corona and ensuring smooth availability of medicines and health supplies.

Solid Waste Association offers support to combat Coronavirus

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Solid Waste Association of Pakistan (SWAP) held an emergency meeting of the trade organization at its Head Office in Islamabad to discuss the prevailing situation in the country due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. "We realized that the root cause of this Pandemic is lack of hygiene and cleanliness" said Jamil Asghar Bhatti, Chairman SWAP in his address to the executive committee which was convened with representatives from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and KPK. The executive committee expressed its desire to offer all out support voluntarily to the Government in providing spray, fumigation and cleanliness campaigns throughout the country especially in far flung areas and towns where the waste

management services were lagging due to the capacity of the local municipality. "We offer our services to the concerned local governments in the entire country to combat the spreading threat of the Coronavirus which has so far attacked over 1000 people in Pakistan killing 8 persons to date," said Bhatti. Major cities like Karachi and Lahore are also now failing to provide proper waste management services due to lack of capacity in their systems. We feel that it's our duty to step up to the call of the day and offer ourselves as the front line fighters against this dangerous threat. The Sanitary Workers, Jharoo Kash Union, Drivers & Mechanics Union and all other allied organizations are with us in this campaign which are offering their services for the entire country.

CITY BRIEFS

AIOU's employees get salary well before time

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) paid salary to its employees all over the country for the current month well before time, by March 25. The salary was disbursed through their banks' account to facilitate them in the wake of COVID-19 (coronavirus), a press release Thursday said. On the directives of the Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Zia-Ul-Qayyum, the wages have also been paid to daily wages' labourers employees, considering them as working in routine. At the difficult time, when the country is facing the threat of coronavirus epidemic, the employees were also given relaxation in attending their offices and only necessary staff was put on duty, to attend day-to-day work. Special arrangements have been made to facilitate the students for enrollment in the ongoing admission through online.

Seven places declared quarantine in Peshawar

APP

PESHAWAR: As many as seven places in Peshawar have been declared quarantine where suspects of coronavirus would be kept. One quarantine has been setup at Doranpor Peshawar where 146 people were kept, according to officials documents. As many as 195 houses at welfare trust colony Badabair, seven houses at Shaheen Colony Bara Road and one house at Bashirabad were declared quarantine. Similarly, 17 houses were declared quarantine at posh phase 3 Hayatabad, 25 houses on Canal Road and 50 houses at Karkhano market.

PEIRA establishes facilitation desk to help private schools

APP

ISLAMABAD: Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) has temporarily banned public entry in the jurisdiction of authority in wake of Corona Virus (COVID-19). According to a notification, PEIRA has also established a facilitation desk to continue the daily work and help in resolving private schools issues. PEIRA has directed the officials of private schools and colleges to submit their forms at the desk. They have also been requested to cooperate the staff on duty for smooth working. The step has been taken in the large public interest and their safety.

Entry of passenger buses, vans banned on motorways

APP

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Motorway Police on Thursday announced ban on entry passenger buses and vans in the Motorway network to make lockdown against coronavirus successful, said a press release issued here. However vehicles carrying goods, petroleum products and daily use items with minimum staff would be allowed. Private vehicles with maximum two passengers giving valid reason of travelling would also be allowed to enter the network.

Reduction in POL prices widely hailed

APP

ISLAMABAD: People from different walks of life on Thursday lauded the government decision to reduce the petroleum prices by Rs 15 per liter, hoping that it would help bring down the transportation cost of essential items, especially edibles, for benefit of the common man. They said there was economic slowdown due to the coronavirus threat in the country and termed the reduction in petroleum prices a 'timely relief' for the common man. After announcement of the relief package and subsequent notification of the Finance Ministry, the prices of Petrol, High Speed Diesel (HSD), Kerosene Oil and Light Diesel Oil (LDO) had been reduced by Rs 15 per liter. Now, the petrol was being sold at Rs96.58, the HSD at Rs107.25, the Kerosene oil at Rs77.45 and the LDO at Rs62.51 per liter at all the fuel stations.

Japan approves grants for uplift projects

FROM PAGE 01

The grant of US\$ 73,514 provided to LAMP will be utilized for the expansion of a primary section of the school for boys and girls in a village of Khyber district to overcome the problem of overcrowded classrooms. Currently, the school having classes from Play Group till Grade 10 has over 950 enrollment, and over 300 students sit outside their classrooms in open space because of the limited sitting capacity in the classrooms. Earlier, the school was expanded up to grade 10 with the financial assistance provided by the Government of Japan in financial year 2011 and 2015. The grant of US\$ 64,868 provided to Friends Welfare Association will be spent for the construction of a building for primary and middle school in Torghar district of KPK. At present over 130 girls and boys use the premises of a local mosque for their classes because of the lack of availability of school building. The new school building will also be used in second shift for middle school classes for girls specifically. The project

is expected to provide a conducive environment to the students for study. The grant of US\$ 42,818 provided to Hana Development Council will assist in installation of electricity scheme for seven communities of Mandi Bahauddin district in Punjab province where there is no facility of electricity at present. Together with a local power generation company and participation of local communities, the project will install electricity equipment - transformers, polls, electricity lines and meters and connect it with the national grid. The scheme is expected to benefit over 1650 local community members. AHAT will spend the grant of US\$ 55,030 for the expansion of a public elementary school in Kasur district. Currently, the NGO runs the school in a rented building, which has poor infrastructure and limited capacity in the classrooms. With the construction of new school building, children will be able to continue their education in conducive environment. Over 700 boys and girls will get benefit from this project. Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan,

MATSUDA Kuninori, congratulated the recipient organizations for winning the Japanese grant for their respective development projects. He expressed his hope that these projects will help girls and boys to have an easy access to their basic right of education and help local communities get maximum benefit from the rural electrification project. He especially added his strong desire that education will promote understanding and respect to the others and different culture, then will promote peace and stability. Japan, sharing our experience of modernization and rapid economic growth after the WWII, has been extending assistance in the area of education in Pakistan. For those interested in Japanese experience, Embassy is happy to share this with the education institutes in Pakistan, he mentioned. Japan will continue to support the people of Pakistan to improve their living standard and these project will contribute to relationship decade's long friendly relationship between the people of Japan and Pakistan, said Ambassador MATSUDA.

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ISLAMABAD: CEO China Gezhouba Group Company Shi Yu pose for a group photo with the WAPDA Authorities and others during the handing over the face mask donation ceremony at WAPDA Office: - DNA

ECC approves four grants

ECC formed an inter-ministerial committee, to firm up proposals in a month's time

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here at the Cabinet Division. Four technical supplementary grants (1: Rs. 275 million in favor of Ministry of Housing and works for capital outlay on civil works, 2: Rs. 84,352,265 equivalent to \$ 532,152 to be provided to NADRA for FATA TDP Emergency Re-

covery Project, 3: Rs. 5500 million for Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Program, 4: Rs. 5 billion to NDMA for fighting the spread of Corona virus on emergency basis) were approved by ECC. The technical supplementary grant approved for NDMA shall be utilized to gain logistic support and the provision of different types of personal protection equipments against the virus like respirators/face masks etc. ECC formed an inter-ministerial committee, to firm up proposals in a month's

time on incentive package for National Electric Vehicle policy, comprising Minister Planning & Development, Minister Science and technology, SA PM on Austerity and Institutional Reforms, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, SA PM on Commerce (Chairman), SA PM on Petroleum, Secretaries Industry and Climate Change. ECC acknowledged the role and efforts made by Ministry of Climate Change on preparing Incentive proposals for National Electric Vehicle Policy.

'Pakistan contributes to 66 studies on Coronavirus'

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Thursday said Pakistan was also contributing to the 66 global studies being conducted on Coronavirus adopting three different approaches including Re-purposed Drugs, Antibodies and Vaccines.

Taking to twitter, Fawad Chaudhry informed that out of these 66 studies worldwide, 43 studies were focused on new vaccines, 16 on new antibiotics and seven on antibodies. The minister said "all the major health researchers in the world were focusing on this research and Pakistan was also included in such efforts".

CJ visits district courts

APP

ISLAMABAD, Mar 26 (APP):The Chief Justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday visited district courts in the Federal capital to review the arrangements being carried out for safety of litigants, judges and lawyers. CJ Athar Minallah, on the occasion, stressed upon maintaining the social distancing in court premises and ordered for compliance of such at any cost. "There are many things that the government should be doing that we are doing instead," he remarked on the occasion. He said that courts were operational in such conditions for last seventy years where they should not be for dispensing speedy justice. The CJ said that Session judge has appointed a team which was visiting jail along with administration for monitoring the steps taken there.

King Salman calls for a united global response to COVID

We are holding this meeting to carry out our responsibilities as the leaders of the world's largest economies, in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires that we take firm measures on various fronts.

DNA

JEDDAH: Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman has called for a united global response to combat coronavirus.

On the eve of a virtual global summit of G20 leaders, convened by Saudi Arabia, which currently holds the group's presidency, on coronavirus outbreak and its economic fallout, King Salman made a strong appeal for a coordinated united action. "As the world confronts the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges to healthcare systems and the global economy, we convene this extraordinary G20 summit to unite efforts towards a global response, King Salman said in a tweet.

Earlier, Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman, deputy premier and minister of defense, and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held talks over a phone call and they expressed deep concern over coronavirus and the need for all countries to work together to contain the pandemic, according to a statement released by US State Department.

"We are holding this meeting to carry out our responsibilities as the leaders of the world's largest economies, in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires that we take firm measures on various fronts. This pandemic has greatly taken toll on human lives and caused tremendous suffering to many people around the world. And here, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to all countries around the world and to their respective citizens over the lives lost to this pandemic, wishing speedy recovery for all those who are infected. The impact of this pandemic has spread to reach the global economy, financial markets, trade, and

global supply chains, hampering growth and development and reversing the gains accomplished in the previous years. This human crisis requires a global response. The world counts on us to come together and cooperate in order to face this challenge. On the health front, the Saudi G20 Presidency took the lead and worked with partners and relevant organizations to take all necessary actions in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard people's health. And, here, we value the effective measures adopted by different countries in this regard. We reaffirm our full support for the World Health Organization in coordinating the efforts to counter this pandemic. To complement these efforts, the G20 must assume the responsibility of reinforcing cooperation in financing research and development for therapeutics and a vaccine for COVID-19 and ensure the availability of the vital medical supplies and equipment. We must also strengthen the global preparedness to counter infectious diseases that may spread in the future.



pressed deep concern over coronavirus and the need for all countries to work together to contain the pandemic, according to a statement released by US State Department. "We are holding this meeting to carry out our responsibilities as the leaders of the world's largest economies, in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires that we take firm measures on various fronts. This pandemic has greatly taken toll on human lives and caused tremendous suffering to many people around the world. And here, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to all countries around the world and to their respective citizens over the lives lost to this pandemic, wishing speedy recovery for all those who are infected. The impact of this pandemic has spread to reach the global economy, financial markets, trade, and

Corona can be defeated by staying at homes: Kanwal

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member National Assembly Kanwal Shauzab Thursday urged the opposition leaderships to show solidarity with people by helping them in this difficult time, besides supporting the government initiatives to stop the spread of corona virus in the country. Talking to a private news

channel, she said the corona virus had engulfed more than 190 countries in merely a few months where the figure numbers



of patience is much higher than Pakistan. Advising the people she said "There is no other way to stop the spread of corona virus, but to stay at home and maintain social distancing in this difficult time."

Replying to a question, she said the doctors and paramedics who were performing duties to attend corona hit patients, deserved all the praise, because they were facing threat directly.

Nine doctors die from coronavirus in Philippines

APP

MANILA: Nine doctors have died in the Philippines from the coronavirus, the country's top medical association said Thursday, as hospitals were overwhelmed and medics complained about a lack of protection on the front lines. The announcement of the doctors' deaths heightened fears that the scale of the health crisis in the Philippines is much worse than is being officially reported, with the confirmed virus death toll at just 38.

The main island of Luzon, home to 55 million people, is in the second week of a lockdown to contain the spread of the disease, however medics are warning there is a surge in cases. The Philippine Medical Association said Thursday a ninth doctor had died of the virus, and that health workers were not getting enough protection. "If it were up to me, test the frontliners first and test them again after seven days. Doctors could be carriers themselves," Benito Atienza, vice president of the Philippine Medical Association told AFP.

Russia to ground all Int'l flights from midnight

APP

MOSCOW: Russia will halt all international flights from midnight on Friday under a government decree listing new measures against the coronavirus outbreak.

The decree published on Thursday orders aviation authorities to halt all regular and charter flights, with the exception of spe-

cial flights evacuating Russian citizens from abroad. Russia's civil aviation agency Rosaviatsiya will halt "regular and charter air travel from Russian airports to airports of foreign states and back," according to the decree published on the government's website. The grounding starts at midnight Friday, or 2100 GMT Thursday.

40 facilities at doorsteps, PM's vision to maximize tech for social benefit: Firdous

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan on Thursday said that use of modern technology to deliver more than forty facilities at the doorsteps of the masses was practical proof of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of a people-friendly government. In a series of tweets, the SAPM said that the prime objective of Prime Min-

ister Imran Khan was to create an effective and dynamic system based on public service. She said that launch of a unique app by the PM was poised to enhance citizens' access to the latest technology. This app, she added, would help citizens find ways to solve their problems at their homes. By using this unique app, the people would not have to visit government offices, they would be able to contact the concerned departments online to meet

their needs. The entire nation has to be united to tackle the challenge of the coronavirus, and everyone should



play a responsible role at this difficult time, she stressed. With the use of this app, citizens will be able to re-

port to the authorities if any medical store or pharmacy was selling masks at expensive rates, she added. This app will help promote coordination and cooperation among all relevant organizations, she remarked. In addition the app includes e-police, emergency services, domicile, ID card, land revenue record, arms licenses, registration of vehicles, payment of token taxes, issuance of birth and death certificates and various other facilities.

Two coronavirus patients recovered

AGENCIES

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister for Information, Ajmal Khan Wazir here Thursday said two Corona patients were recovered and were sent home. In a media briefing, Ajmal Wazir said two Corona patients, who were admitted in police services hospital Peshawar, has been fully recovered and were discharged. He said more patients are making recovery and their conditions are improving. The Adviser said test of 159 persons have been cleared and result of 317 others were awaited. The number of Corona virus patients in KP is 121. Wazir said Chief Minister KP was personally supervising the whole situation and availability of food services in the province. He said sufficient food services and essential commodities were available and maintained that there was no shortage of essential commodities in markets. Wazir said Corona virus can be defeated through cooperation of masses.

Medicinal imports dip over 8% in 8 months of FY 2019-20

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD: The imports of medicinal products into the country during the first eight months of current financial year (2019-20) dipped by 8.82 percent as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported medicinal products of worth US \$ 677,803 million during July-February (2019-20) compared to the imports of US \$ 743,353 million during July- February (2018-19), showing negative growth of 8.82 percent, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 15,043 metric tons of medicinal products during the period under review as compared to the imports of 15,142 metric tons during corresponding period of last year, showing nominal decrease of 0.65 percent in term of quantity. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the medicinal imports declined by 0.29 percent in February 2020 when compared to the imports of the same month of last year. The medicinal imports during February 2020 were recorded at \$ 87.020 million against the imports of \$ 87.274 million in February

2019. On month-on-month basis, the medicinal imports however witnessed increase of 15.48 percent during February 2020 when compared to the imports of \$75.354 million in January 2019, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the country's merchandise trade deficit plunged by 26.06 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the deficit of the same months of last year. During the period under review, the country's exports registered about 3.62 per cent growth.

Last date for KCCI's membership renewal now April 30

DNA

KARACHI: DNA Referring to a notification issued by Directorate General of Trade Organizations (DGTO), the spokesman of Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) has informed that the last date for renewal of KCCI's membership has been extended from March 31, 2020 to April 30, 2020 due to the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.