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More medical supplies from China arrive in Pakistan

RCCI taking part in govt's efforts for corona fight

Chinese govt supports Pakistan: Afzal



Briefs

Test reports of 136 pilgrims negative

APP

FAISALABAD: The coronavirus test reports of 136 pilgrims, currently staying at the Quarantine Center Faisalabad, were found negative, while four others were found positive. A spokesman for local administration said on Sunday that samples of 158 pilgrims were sent to laboratory for tests. The lab reports of 140 of them were received, and 136 were found negative. The four pilgrims with positive reports were shifted to General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for treatment and recovery.

Training for Covid tigers force urged

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Stressing the need to quickly establish a training system for the newly-formed force namely 'PM's Corona Relief Tigers', economists and policy experts said that a national database containing individual level details of volunteers regarding their qualification, skills and location needs to be automated using a management information system. They were speaking at an online meeting titled "Training of Corona Relief Tigers Force" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Sunday. PM's Special Assistant on National Security Division and Strategic Policy Planning Dr Moeed Yusuf and Dr Safdar Sohail, Special Secretary of Cabinet Division were also attended the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Moeed Yusuf highlighted the key action points through which think tanks could assist the government in organizing the volunteers and training them for the immediate needs at hand in the light of the current crisis.

Pak calls for release of Kashmiri prisoners

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday expressed deep concern over continued restrictions in the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IoJ&K), despite so many confirmed cases and two deaths due to COVID-19. Thousands of Kashmiri youth, members of civil society, journalists and Kashmiri leaders remain incarcerated in Indian prisons, many of them at undisclosed locations and away from their families. The Indian forces continue to operate in the occupied territory with

complete impunity under draconian laws such as Public Safety Act (PSA) and Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA). The senior Hurriyat leadership is under detention at homes or in different prisons. Hurriyat leaders Yasin Malik, Asia Andrabi and others are languishing in Indian jails under fake charges without a free or fair trial. Yasin Malik, already suffering from deteriorating health, has threatened an indefinite hunger strike to protest against a false charge sheet by the Indian government in a 30-year old case. Since the Indian illegal actions of 5 August 2019,

all educational institutions in IoJ&K have almost remained closed. The dire human rights and humanitarian situation in IoJ&K, exacerbated by India's illegal and unilateral actions since 5 August 2019, has been amply exposed by the international human rights organizations and international media. For its part, Pakistan will continue supporting its Kashmiri brethren in their rightful struggle against Indian oppression till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Pakistan condemns attack on Riyadh, Jizan

The Foreign Office spokesperson said "We laud the Saudi Defence Forces for their timely interception, preventing loss of lives"

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday strongly condemned the missile attacks launched towards Riyadh and Jizan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is particularly reprehensible that armed attacks were directed at civilian population that is already fighting a pandemic. The Foreign Office spokesperson said "We laud the Saudi Defence Forces for their timely

interception, preventing loss of precious lives and damage to property". Pakistan reiterates its full solidarity with the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reaffirms its support to the Kingdom against any threat to its security and territorial integrity. It may be mentioned here that Multiple explosions shook Riyadh in the attack, which the Saudi-led military coalition blamed on Yemen's Iran-aligned Huthi rebels who have

previously targeted Saudi cities with missiles, rockets and drones. It was the first major assault on Saudi Arabia since the Huthis offered last September to halt attacks on the kingdom after devastating twin strikes on Saudi oil installations. "Two ballistic missiles were launched towards the cities of Riyadh and Jizan," the official Saudi Press Agency reported, citing the coalition fighting the rebels.

Five Pakistanis return from India amid COVID-19

APP

ISLAMABAD: Five Pakistani nationals, stranded in India owing to the restrictions imposed after the coronavirus outbreak, have finally returned to homeland via Attari-Wagah border.

The Pakistani nationals namely Chaudhary Muhammad Ashfaq, Nighat Mukhtar, Yasir Mukhtar, Muhammad Khalid and Chaudhry Muhammad Asif were visiting India on medical visas but stranded in Noida/New Delhi after the suspension of regular movement across

Attari-Wagah border, said a press release received here Sunday. Earlier, four stranded Pakistani nationals, including a 12-year old boy, Sabeeh Sheeraz, and accompanying parents and grandfather, were repatriated via Attari-Wagah border on March 20, 2020.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese authorities handing over relief goods to PAF air crew. - DNA

Pakistani citrus arrives in China

APP

BEIJING: The second shipment of citrus imported from Pakistan has arrived in Dalian, a major sub-provincial port city in Liaoning province of China. "A container of 40 tons containing around 27 tons of kinnow imported from Pakistan has arrived in Dalian," Adnan Hafeez, Partner-You Lian Feng Food Trade (Dalian) Co. Ltd told APP here on Sunday. He informed that third shipment was on way and was likely to reach in first week of next month.

Thailand returnees cleared of COVID-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani passengers who were quarantined in Islamabad upon return from Thailand were allowed to proceed to their homes on Sunday after their tests for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were declared negative. Islamabad deputy commissioner said none of the returnees tested positive.

China sends more supplies to fight COVID-19

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Another plane full of relief supplies from China arrived in Islamabad Sunday morning. The supplies are meant to help Pakistan fight the coronavirus. The NDMA spokesperson confirmed that the flight has arrived. Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal received the supplies from the ambassador of China to Pakistan at the airport. A team of Chinese doctors also arrived in Pakistan on Saturday to help the country in containing the spread of the coronavirus.

These Chinese doctors will remain in Pakistan for two weeks and will advise our health care specialists in the light of their experience and success in battling Covid-19 in China. China's assistance to Pakistan so far includes 12,000 test kits, 300,000 masks, 10 thousand protective suits and 4 million dollars to build an isolation hospital. Xinjiang government has also provided 50 thousand masks each to the Federal Capital as well as to Sindh government. It may be noted that the virus has killed 12 people in Pakistan and around 1,500 people are under treatment in the hospitals

across the country. China, the first country-hit by coronavirus, has successfully brought the virus under control in recent days. On Friday, the Chinese health officials had announced 55 news cases in the country and 54 of them were foreign cases. China is already helping Pakistan with equipment, testing kits and face masks. The second shipment of equipment, announced by Alibaba Group's co-founder Jack Ma had arrived in Pakistan Friday morning. The previous consignment contained 500,000 masks out of which 50,000 were N-95 masks.

'Chinese government supports Pakistan'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal Sunday said the government of China had supported Pakistan in the testing times of coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and played the role of a true friend. Addressing media persons after receiving the medical aid reached from Wuhan, he said this was the second flight carrying medical equipment from China to Islamabad. He said around 6 tonnes of goods had arrived in a special flight from Wuhan.

Bilwal for taking care of the poor

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that he will not tolerate any shortfall in terms of assistance to those who are dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. He directed the Sindh government and said that it was the government's responsibility to ensure that not a single citizen goes hungry. He expressed these views in a meeting held at Bilawal House Karachi, regarding the mechanism of assistance to those who depend on daily wages. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Intiaz Shaikh, Murtaza Sahab attended while Saeed Ghani and Harris Gazdar participated via video link. On Sunday, in consultation with Sindh leadership, a detailed consultation was held on identifying deserving persons and plans to access them with targeted relief activities.

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Zulfi to sue Khawaja Asif over Taftan issue

APP

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari Saturday said he would take a legal action against PML-N leader Khawaja Asif for levelling a false accusation that he was involved in allowing pilgrims to go to their homes without completing a 14-day quarantine at Taftan. "It's a blatant lie and slander from the opposition leader and for this, I will take Khawaja Asif to the court," Zulfikar Bukhari said while denying his reported role

or influence in giving permission to the pilgrims who had recently returned from Iran via Taftan border. He made the remarks in an interview with Voice of America (Urdu), according to the transcript shared by the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development. The special assistant said being an opposition representative, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader should not have given such an irresponsible statement before the media. His comments about the pilgrims from Iran had created an impression that 'Zulfikar Bukhari' was the sole reason for spread of

the coronavirus in the country. Such accusations against anyone could jeopardize the life of that person, and such an accuser in any other country would have landed in jail, he added. Zulfikar Bukhari said he had nothing to do in the matter of Pakistani pilgrims, who were placed in quarantine at Taftan. He cited the government's recent decision to bring back those Pakistanis, who were in transit flights and stuck at different airports abroad when Pakistan's air space was closed. Referring to the repatriation of some 15,000 Pakistani Umrah pilgrims from Saudi Arabia, he said the same policy was

adopted in Iran's case. The Balochistan government had decided to allow entry of some 5,000 Pakistani pilgrims at Taftan border as they were outstamped by the Iranian authorities. A responsible state could not leave its people abandoned under the open sky. The quarantine facility was arranged for the pilgrims at Taftan to contain the coronavirus spread, he added. The special assistant said there was no comparison between the issue of Pakistani students stranded in China and evacuation of the pilgrims from Iran. The Federal Government had initiated the process for airlift-

ing those Pakistanis who were stranded at various world airports. "Evacuation of stranded Pakistanis on foreign soil is top priority of the government," he added. Zulfikar Bukhari, who is also a chairman of the National Tourism Coordination Board, said the government would soon announce a relief package for the tourism sector. The people, who were associated with the industry, would be helped to cope with the challenges arose due to the coronavirus threat. He said Pakistan's tourism industry was also affected as the entire world was under lockdown.

CITY BRIEFS

Mechanism for implementation of CM relief package prepared

APP

PESHAWAR: A comprehensive mechanism has been prepared for implementation of Chief Minister KP's relief package for assistance of vulnerable segments of the society in the wake of Corona virus spread in KP. The mechanism has been prepared in a high-level meeting of divisional commissioners with Chief Secretary, Dr Kazim Niaz in the chair. Additional Chief Secretary KP briefed the meeting about the decisions of KP Cabinet taken yesterday and Relief Package of CM was discussed at length. The meeting was told that agriculture, construction, wholesalers, transport, hotels, restaurants and manufacturing sectors would be affected. The ACS told that KP Government would submit Rs2000 in BISP amount by providing Rs5000 per month to each vulnerable household that would benefit around nine lakh poor families. The package would for three months. A committee with two members each from Government ie secretary of the village council and teacher or numberdar and two private members ie member of a Zakat Committee and an area's elder have been constituted for identification of genuine deserving poorest families for the package.

PDMA provides 750 litres sanitizers

APP

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disasters Management Authority KP has provided 750 litres sanitizers to quarantine centres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to help the suspected patients and the staff. Director General, PDMA told media on Sunday that 5,000 safety kits and 8,000 gloves were also provided. He said all necessary equipment were provided to districts administration and concerned organizations. The medical equipment received from NDMA would also be delivered to all DHQs hospitals in KP.

Labs on cards to detect virus, says Dr Ata

APP

ISLAMABAD: In order to collect clinical and virological data of disease, Pakistan was establishing a laboratory in Karachi for research purpose detecting virus causing damage to human health. A well-known scientists and Former Science and Technology Minister, Dr Ata ur Rehman expressed these views while talking to private news channel programme. A research center for detection of virus was going to be functional in Karachi university with the help of German and Chinese experts, he revealed. Commenting on current virus Covid-19 threatening the global economy and human health, he said in scientific language, we have families in virus that had already appeared in different regions of the world and caused a severe damage to public health holding weak immune system. Shedding light on such virus, he said that Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), had already visible and posed threat to different people in many regions.

Roadside vendors selling masks at cheap rates

APP

ISLAMABAD: As the novel corona virus tightens its grip all across the world including Pakistan, street hawkers were witnessed selling face masks made up of cloth and plastic-coated bags alongside the roads on cheap prices in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi due to its increasing demand. According to a private news channel, these sellers in small markets and alongside roads are doing brisk business these days with offering variety of protective face masks to their passerby customers so to save them from the effects of corona pandemic.

Public demands experienced staff at medical stores: Report

APP

ISLAMABAD: The general public has demanded of the concerned authorities to take strict measures to check all the medical stores and force its owners to hire qualified, responsible and sensible staff for dealing with masses especially amid corona virus outbreak scenario as they were dealing directly with the human life.

Export sectors' incentives to SMEs urged

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Business & Economic Reforms (FEBR) has expressed dissatisfaction over the financial package announced by the government to cope with the challenges posed by coronavirus.



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Fasial avenue as people restricted movement to prevent spread of COVID-19 outbreak. – APP

RCCI actively participating in govt's efforts for corona fight: Saboor

President RCCI said business community had a big role to play in ensuring that the spread of the Virus is mitigated and everybody have right to play their active role

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce (RCCI) President Saboor Malik Sunday assured their support with government and said all business community are actively participating in government's efforts for corona fight. Talking to PTV news channel, he said the incumbent government is taking all possible measures to facilitate the gen-

eral public in containing the spread of Coronavirus in its limited resources which is appreciable. President RCCI said business community had a big role to play in ensuring that the spread of the Virus is mitigated and everybody have right to play their active role. RCCI has organized the volunteer groups to help the needy in this crucial time, he mentioned. It is need of the hour to take all precautionary measures and avoid social



gathering, he stressed. He said our volunteer task force will join government volunteer teams to help community, adding, our own volunteers are providing free of cost

food to needy people. He urged business community to support government for curbing hoarding and profiteering to provide relief to the masses in their difficult time. Saboor Malik said that the provision of food items will be ensured with the cooperation of the government and with the help of volunteers. He said that no government alone can fight against this epidemic, adding, the impact of the pan-

dem will be minimum if we jointly fight against it. He urge retailers to behave responsibly throughout the coronavirus and not to make misleading claims or charge vastly inflated prices. The government has taken timely precautionary measures to contain the spread of Coronavirus in country, he added. I appeal to the nation to follow the instructions of the competent authorities to stay home and stay safe.

COVID-19 less severe in children

APP

ISLAMABAD: Child Specialist Sunday said that COVID-19 less severe in children than adults but parents should avoid situations where children interact with others in a bid to contain the coronavirus threat and involve their kids with indoor games.

Cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) among children in China and other countries have been less severe than those in adults, Child Specialist Dr Zeeshan Ghani while talking to PTV news channel said.

IT ministry develops application "Covid-19"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication had developed an application "Covid-19 Gov Pk" to effectively deal with deadly coronavirus in the country. The application had been developed on the direction of Federal Secretary Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui to deal threat of Coronavirus with the help of technology. The application was de-

veloped by National Information Technology Board (NITB), an organisation under Ministry of IT and Telecommunication. The application will provide awareness to citizens about all the actions to be taken for the prevention of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The application currently contains four different functions such as Dashboard for current status of COVID-19, Alarms for washing hands, Chatbot for awareness of COVID-19 and WHO videos for prevention of Coronavirus.

One of the major features of this application "Radius Alert" is under development phase, which will give citizens an opportunity to identify corona patient in certain radius so that citizen can maintain social distancing. The said feature will be launched within one week. On the launch of the "Covid-19 Gov Pk" app, Secretary IT Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui has appreciated the efforts of team of Ministry of IT and National IT Board for developing application in short time.

Riphah University launches Virtual learning program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the current scenario of a global outbreak of novel coronavirus, Riphah International University has launched the Virtual learning program for their students. Riphah International University has taken measures to continue academic activities during this pandemic, a press release on Sunday said.

In the leadership of Respected Chancellor, Hassan Muhammad Khan, University has started the initiative of digital classrooms. Virtual Learning Education program called Moellim which has enormous features with a full-fledge virtual classroom. Students and teacher can easily interact with each other. Teachers can design the course work whereas the students can easily submit their assignments.

AIOU continues its Online admissions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced that it will continue its Online admissions for the 2nd phase, semester Spring, 2020 till April 15. As preventive measures against pandemic COVID-19, students have been advised to avoid visiting the University's main Campus or its regional offices. In this connection, they

should strictly follow the government's policy and instructions. All the educational institutions and the Universities have already been closed. According to Director Admissions, academic programs offered in the 2nd Phase include: five MSc programs, eight MA programs, eleven Post-graduate diplomas, five BA (Renamed as Associate Degree), 10 BS programs (4 years), besides the teachers' training programs.

Minister urges youth to play role for awareness

DNA

ISLAMABAD, : Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafiqat Mehmood Sunday called upon youth to play their active role in raising awareness among masses about coronavirus and wooing them to adopt the

precautionary measures through social media platforms. Talking to a private news channel, he appealed before the nation specially youth to impose self discipline and should not indulge in panic situation, as with collective efforts, they would overcome the threats of Coronavirus

(COVID 19) pandemic. The Minister said that youth have a great national responsibility to play their part and create awareness amongst their relatives, neighbors in order to provide best possible help to wipe out COVID 19. "The only way to survive is to observe preventive measures", he added.

46 cases of allotment of houses pending in courts

APP

ISLAMABAD: As many as 46 cases of allotment of houses to the government servants of the Ministry of Housing and Works were pending in various courts of law of different categories since several years. The Estate Office was continuously pursuing the cases in court of law and further action would

be taken as well as the cases were disposed of from the concerned courts, an official in the ministry told APP. The official said it was a fact that sometime the retired federal government servants do not vacate the government accommodations on their retirement due to involvement of Rules 15(2) of Accommodation Allocation Rules, 2002 or court cases.

Business community asked not to lay off any workers

Waheed said that after consultation, a Committee has been formed under his supervision comprising Aslam Khokhar and Faad Executive Members ICCI to analyze the situation and provide support to the needy people

FARUKH SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the business community to come forward and extend maximum support to the poor and needy people in this difficult hour and become partner with the government in mitigating the problems of weak segments of society. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Com-

merce and Industry said that due to coronavirus issue, businesses and industrial units were closed, but vowed that workers would not be laid off and would be paid wages so that they could support their families. He also appealed to the business community not to lay off any worker and play their role in meeting their needs in this tough time. He said that a support desk has been setup in ICCI that would start working from 2nd April 2020. He further emphasized that well-to-

do and wealthy people should take maximum participation in welfare activities and added that business community was standing with the government in these challenging times. He said this while addressing a consultative meeting of ICCI Executive Committee through video link. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that after consultation, a Committee has been formed under his supervision comprising Muhammad Aslam Khokhar and Faad Waheed Executive Members ICCI to analyze the situa-

tion and provide support to the needy people. ICCI President issued instructions for doubling the capacity of already running Langar in G-8/1, Islamabad to provide lunch to labor class. He urged that the Langar place should be disinfected with spray so that people could avail lunch in a neat and clean place. He also appealed to the business community to contribute for this noble cause. He said that nations have to face the

difficult times and but we could better cope with this situation with unity and cooperation. He stressed that business community should fully follow the instructions of government to control the outspread of coronavirus. He said that ICCI would remain closed by 1st April, but government's instructions would be followed after taking direction from Trade Regulator who has already extended the membership renewal date up to 30th April 2020.

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Coronavirus response could be a turning point for G7

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday convened the first ever virtual meeting of G7 foreign ministers amid the mounting coronavirus crisis. While the G7 may appear a body ill-suited to tackling the health emergency, with disagreements surfacing during the conference, it has always been at its best when reacting to the big issues of the moment.

The fact that it was founded in 1975, in the aftermath of the geopolitical and economic shocks following Washington's withdrawal from the gold standard, underlines that it was designed for turbulent times. Back then, President Richard Nixon had resigned and there was a clear and imminent danger of currency wars. The G7 proved fit for purpose, playing a key role in the management of the most important exchange rates. It also brought Japan into the Western policymaking community, and we need a similarly farsighted approach today. Another example of the G7's capacity for action was shown when it played an important role in convincing the Russians to pull the remnants of the Red Army out of the Baltic States in the 1990s – even though this issue was not on the formal schedule of discussion. This action was just one part of the lynchpin function the body played in the 1970s and 1980s in helping coordinate Western strategy toward the then-Soviet Union.

The key actions emerging from this week's foreign minister session – despite disagreements between Pompeo and his counterparts over the former's insistence that the pandemic be called the "Wuhan virus" – reinforced those from last week, when world leaders "committed to doing whatever is necessary to ensure a strong global response through closer cooperation and enhanced coordination of our efforts."

The actions going forward will be fourfold. Firstly, a commitment to coordinate on public health measures to protect people at risk from coronavirus; secondly, to restore confidence and growth and protect jobs; thirdly, to support global trade and investment; and finally to encourage science, research and technological cooperation. Take the example of the first and fourth pillars, where there is agreement to enhance efforts to strengthen health systems globally and work with the World Health Organization to foster its global mandate to lead on disease outbreaks and emergencies, as well as the private sector to assist global efforts such as the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.

There is clearly a role for international organizations. The G7 is therefore also working with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and others to support a coordinated global response, including designing and swiftly implementing the international financial assistance that is appropriate to help countries, including emerging and developing economies, face the health and economic shock of the coronavirus pandemic.



Learn and grow in self-isolation

M Omar Iftikhar

The CoronaVirus (COVID-19) has affected the entire world. In this time when the epidemic has spread like wildfire across continents, we have been ordered to self-isolate. This has been done for our safety. While self-isolation may be a part of life for some, the majority of people around the world will consider it no different from a house arrest. However, we must accept this drastic change in our lifestyle and continue with our normal lives at home.

All thanks to the miracles of modern science, we are connected with peers and family through the Internet. Teachers are taking classes via video conferencing and individuals are talking to friends through other online applications. Professionals too are working from home during this lockdown period that is being observed across the world, especially in all metropolitan cities.

While we adjust to this new lifestyle backed by digital media, we must continue with our learning process. There are many ways this can be achieved. Children, who are always eager to go outside and who are too naive to understand the gravity of the global epidemic, must be informed of the situation. Parents must play the role of guardians and teachers for children who are too young to understand what is transpiring around the world. Teenagers and adults can better focus on learning skills and completing tasks during this period of self-isolation when we are confined to our homes. There are fewer chances that an external stimulus will divert our attention.

As far as the learning process is concerned, we must begin by identifying what needs to be learned. You can learn how to use MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint. This will help you in your studies and at your office. You can learn how to speak in public or how to write effectively. When talking about skills, you can learn open-source programming, SEO/Google Analytics, podcasting, project management or can develop culinary skills. Furthermore, you can learn a new language or develop a new hobby that you can pursue at home. Students and professionals can take free video tutorials on YouTube to learn such skills.

This time of self-isolation is also beneficial for freelancers who are providing a service online. If you have not done freelancing, this might be the time to learn how to. You can sell a skill that you have on specific websites that connect freelancers with buyers – individuals or companies – who need these services..

To be continued

US sanctions on Iran hinder global coronavirus response

Majid Ravanchi



People across our planet are fighting the coronavirus – Covid-19 – which has caused the loss of tens of thousands of lives across the globe, and in many countries the toll continues to rise. The people of Iran are not immune to the ravages of this virus as they fight to meet the challenge

FEW days ago, Iranians all over the world celebrated Nowruz, or Persian New Year, which is concurrent with the advent of spring. This is the biggest and most important celebration of the year for Iranians living in Iran and abroad, as well as for people in 11

other countries neighboring Iran. However, this year's celebration is significantly different.

People across our planet are fighting the coronavirus – Covid-19 – which has caused the loss of tens of thousands of lives across the globe, and in many countries the toll continues to rise. The people of Iran are not immune to the ravages of this virus as they fight to meet the challenge.

The World Health Organization has called the virus a pandemic. Many countries are spending billions of dollars to confront it. And there is no clear prospect as to when this disease will be contained. For its part, Iran is also struggling to mobilize resources to defeat the virus. However, Iran's ability to deal with it in an effective manner is limited due to the unjust U.S. sanctions imposed on the Iranian people.

Medics treat a patient infected with the new coronavirus, at a hospital in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, March 8, 2020. With the approaching Persian New Year, known as Nowruz, officials kept up pressure on people not to travel and to stay home. Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour, who gave Iran's new casualty figures Sunday, reiterated that people should not even attend funerals.

It has been more than 22 months since the U.S. withdrew from the Iranian nuclear deal – the JCPOA – and imposed an unprecedented sanctions regime on Iran which has created hardships for ordinary Iranians; particularly the most vulnerable segments of society, such as patients with special diseases who are suffering

from a lack of imported medicine.

The U.S. maintains that humanitarian goods are exempt from its extra-territorial sanctions. However, that is not the reality. The financial channel required for facilitating transactions, even for humanitarian commodities, is not available, for financial institutions are worried about U.S. vengeance in the event that they find themselves in violation of U.S. laws.

Exceptions aren't working

Even the so-called Swiss Channel, designed to facilitate humanitarian trade with Iran and announced with much fanfare, is not functioning well because of the cumbersome nature of transactions in transferring Iran's reserves – blocked outside Iran – to the designated Swiss bank. Furthermore, as strict U.S. interference in Iranian trade further drains our foreign currency reserves, this channel may actually become redundant in few months. As such, it appears that the U.S. administration is more interested in paying lip-service to the notion of humanitarian needs, and is engaged more in propaganda, than in actually facilitating the humanitarian business with Iran.

Today, the whole world is consumed by the coronavirus. No country can claim to be immune from the threat posed by it. It is an international threat traversing borders and necessitating a well-coordinated, concerted international response. The U.S.'s sanctions on Iran, including on its medical sector, is badly impeding Iran's efforts to contain the virus. And thus, in comparison with other countries and despite its

excellent medical capabilities, Iran, while one of the most severely affected, is actually less equipped to contain Covid-19 than others.

Countries today are more dependent on each other than before. The complex challenges the world faces today necessitate more cooperation and coordination at the international level. In this context, one is not able to meet these challenges alone, or deal with their consequences alone. All nations are, ultimately, in the same boat journeying on often stormy seas. Either we will succeed and win together, or we will be hurt and lose together.

Iranian people suffer

The continuation of the illegal U.S. sanctions on Iran will only negatively affect Iran's ability to contain the disease. Consequently, the Iranian people will suffer more as a result of this bankrupt policy, as will the other nations on our interconnected planet. The U.S.'s insistence on continuing – or even doubling down – on its sanctions policy is not only immoral and against international law, but also endangers the lives of many people not just in Iran, but also across the globe.

The best thing the U.S. can do right now to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus is to undo its sanctions against Iran. That would allow the Iranian public and private sectors to have the necessary resources to fight the virus. The U.S. is under moral and legal obligations to do so sooner rather than later, and help not just Iranians, but humankind itself.

Majid Ravanchi is Iran's ambassador to the United Nations

COVID-19: The world is upside down

Dr. Aamir Hanif



This raised the importance of emergency situation how modern technology can be utilized for the basic needs of the society. Certainly, we can do better with latest innovative and technological advances but certainly this needs a senior and trained leadership who can direct its nation towards a right path.

WHO knew that 2020 would bring the whole world to a standstill due to emergence of a very novel virus called corona virus identified at the end of 2019. Within a few weeks it has taken the world into a huge panic after it started from Wuhan city in Hubei province in China and we still see the disastrous effects in different parts of the world especially Europe and USA.

In February, the World Health Organization designated the disease as CoVID-19. The virus that caused the CoVID-19 is designated as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2 (SARS-Cov-2). Globally more than 500,000 confirmed cases of CoVID-19 have been infected. The WHO has declared the virus to be pandemic, meaning it will have sustained global impact. The epidemic in China peaked between late January and early February, 2020 and the rate of new cases decreased by early March.

The transmission of virus was initially noted due to outbreak in sea food market which sold alive animals. Later on, person to person contact became the main mode of transmission mainly through the droplets which typically stayed in air for up to 2 meters. The genomic study of the virus shows similarity between bat coronavirus and shows a link to the bat as primary source. The incubation period of Covid-19 is about 14

days and disease range from mild to severe disease. According to WHO figure, the fatality has varied from 0.7 percent in China except Wuhan city, where case fatality was 5.8 percent and mostly involved population with chronic diseases (including Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiovascular diseases, Chronic lung diseases and cancer). Asymptomatic cases have been detected but their frequency is not completely known.

Initial symptoms are mild to moderate including cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, myalgias, low appetite, this then progress to severe respiratory illness which needs oxygen support and ultimately leads to critical condition which requires ventilatory support. Other complication such as cardiac injury, arrhythmia and shock can occur.

Labtest from covid-19 patients show variation from low to high white blood cells, Lymphocytopenia (low lymphocyte count), elevated lactate dehydrogenase level and elevated liver enzymes including ALT and AST levels. Confirmatory test from covid-19 is RT-PCR testing. Testing should be done in symptomatic patients, patients with a travel history and any close contact with a known case of coronavirus. There are on-going trials to find a cure and some drug trials have shown promising results including combination treatments with hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin. Other drug tri-

als include tocilizumab, Lopinavir / Ritonavir. Prevention is better than cure. WHO recommends preventing exposure in the community such as frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds particularly after touching surfaces in public, use of hand sanitizer that contain at least 60 percent alcohol, respiratory hygiene (covering cough and sneezes), avoid touching the face (nose, eyes and mouth), avoid crowds, keep a distance of 2 meter from other individual, cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces.

This pandemic has created a lot of anxiety and panic among people across the globe. Due to extreme measures taken by the government, significant interruptions in business and daily work routine occurred. This whole scenario has changed people's thinking and finding a solution of working from home, new innovative ways are being developed in order to continue schooling from online, onlineshopping, online business transitions, onlinesocial contacts and online doctor's consultation.

This raised the importance of emergency situation how modern technology can be utilized for the basic needs of the society. Certainly, we can do better with latest innovative and technological advances but certainly this needs a senior and trained leadership who can direct its nation towards a right path.

Briefs

Govt steps against child labour bearing fruit

APP

ISLAMABAD: The government's initiatives to end child labour have started bearing fruit as number of child labour in the country was gradually decreasing, said an official of International Labour Organization (ILO). Talking to APP he said the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) and ILO were extensively working on a coordinated plan for the well-being of children. He said the policy change, introduction of legislation and its implementation and economic well-being of the families of the working children were areas of focus to achieve the desired goals. The ILO and MoHR had jointly conducted number of training sessions to end child labour, he informed. The official said the data collected after certain measures revealed that number of children working as rag pickers had decreased which indicated improvement.

Another 67 pilgrims reach Faisalabad from Taftan

APP

FAISALABAD: Another sixty seven Zaireen (pilgrims) reached the city from Taftan here on Sunday. Assistant Commissioner Sadr Umar Maqbool and AC City Syed Ayub Bukhari received the pilgrims and shifted them to Quarantine Center PARS Jhang Road under their supervision. The Zaireen will be kept in Isolation Rooms and their samples would be sent to laboratory for corona test. Of whom, 20 Zaireen belong to Gujranwala, 7 to Lodhran, 6 to Islamabad, 5 to Chakwal, 3 to Lahore, 3 to Sargodha, 3 to Sialkot, 2 to Faisalabad, 2 to Gujrat, 2 to Bahawal Nagar and one to each from Attock, Khushab, Sheikhupura, Khanewal, Nankana, Sahiwal, Jhang, Hafiz Abad, Rahim Yar Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan, a spokesman of health department said on Sunday.

HRCP head demands govt to assist daily wagers

APP

ISLAMABAD: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Chairperson Nasreen Azhar has demanded of the authorities concerned to provide salaries to the daily waged workforce across the country on priority basis. Talking to APP, the HRCP Chairperson highlighted that the daily waged employees should be given financial support by the government amid coronavirus outbreak. She said the intervention was made after the people were told to work from home if they could, as part of stringent measures to combat the spread of coronavirus pandemic that had caused more uncertainty.

Firdous slams ex-CM for neglecting health sector

Overseas Pakistanis had always been committed and dedicated besides played a front-line role in steering the country out of crisis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Expressing dismay over the negligence of ex Chief Minister Shabbaz Sharif and PML-N government for ignoring many sectors including health in Punjab, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said the people were facing immense problems in acquiring health facilities due to lack of adequate and sufficient health institutions including hospitals amid recent corona outbreak. Talking to a private news channel programme, she said the PML-N leaders had ruled over the province for the last three decades but unfortunately, they could not establish an international standard health institution for provision of facilities to masses. Lack of essential medical equipments being report-



ed in number of hospitals in the province, she said the former Chief Minister Shabbaz Sharif was misleading the nation while taking advantage of the calamity emerged due to Corona virus in the country. She advised the ex CM to shun playing gimmicks and keeping alive himself in the politics, adding the leaders of PML-N should respond to the questions asked by the national accountability bureau for plundering the national exchequer that had caused a colossal damage to many sectors including health. Appealing the Overseas

Pakistanis for depositing foreign currency in the funds being established in the State Bank of Pakistan for helping Corona stricken patients, she said they had always played an active role in helping the country in hour of trial. Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said that Overseas Pakistanis had always been committed and dedicated besides played a front-line role in steering the country out of crisis. She said coronavirus pandemic had affected a large number of people around the world and causing damage to global economy. Pakistan was also one of the nations confronting the same challenge in the present scenario, she added. She hoped that with the support of Overseas Pakistanis in this hour of calamity, the government could avert the country from moving towards economic recession.



ATTOCK: Major General Majid Jehangir GOC visiting isolation center. – Faisal Munir

Railways faces Rs 410 mln losses

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways faced around Rs 410 million losses in train accidents on the entire railway network from August, 2018 to December, 2019.

According to details, the damages occurred in signal was Rs 35,000, rolling stock Rs 85,071,837 locomotive Rs 310,649,663, P. Way Rs 7,523,934 and electrical Rs 7,100,380, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. About the casualties and injured persons, he said that five major train accidents of passenger and good trains occurred from August 2018 to December 2019 in which 110 persons died and 123 others injured. Pakistan Railways was going to revamp and upgrade the existing railway infrastructure through Main Line-I project of China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) which would transform the overall organization and ensure safety of the travelling public, he added.

Minorities' rights top priority of government

APP

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) was giving top priority to the protection of rights of minorities in the country. Talking to APP, Federal Secretary of Ministry Rabia Javeria Agha lauded the contributions of minorities towards the collective objective of attaining truly developed Pakistan. She said that present government was committed to ensure equal opportunities for all the communities in the country. She said that government had reopened Kartarpur corridor to facilitate Sikh religion followers from around the world.

GoC reviews anti COVID-19 measures in Attock

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: General officer commanding (GoC) Major General Majid Jehangir on Sunday reviewed the anti Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) measures taken by the health department and local administration in district Attock. On this occasion Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (retd) Muhammad Mehmood, Deputy Commissioner Attock Ali Annan Qammar, district police officer Khalid Hamdani and officials of health department, local administration and army were also present on this occasion.

During his visit, he checked the preparedness of the administration to meet any challenge in wake of outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in district Attock. He visited the COVID-19 control room established to monitor the situation in the district besides checked the facilities available at isolation ward established in district headquarters hospital. Major General Majid Jehangir also attended a briefing at deputy Commissioner office. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Attock Ali Annan Qammar briefed the participants about current statistics, action taken, issues and future planning of district. Chief executive officer district health authority Dr. Sohail Ejaz Awan on this occasion emphasized the geographical sensitivity of district as bordering with KPK at one side and Rawalpindi at other and prominent mean of public transport through GT road and motorway, KPK to Punjab and suggested authorities for activation of permanent transit posts for strict monitoring of commuters with vision to stop transmission of suspected or positive cases as WHO have rule regarding EPI.

Newspapers are Safe from Corona Virus: CPNE

The WHO report also confirmed that newspapers and other reading material are safe from COVID-19. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low

DNA



KARACHI: The Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (CPNE), has announced that newspapers have been declared safe from Corona Virus. World Health Organization (WHO) in its detailed report, has confirmed that Corona Virus (COVID-19) cannot reach in human body from printed newspapers and magazines. The WHO report also confirmed that newspapers may contain Corona Virus during printings or distributions. The CPNE has welcomed the decision of Provincial Governments who not only ensured the distributions of the newspapers during lockdown but also brings this newspaper industry as 'Essential Services' in Pakistan. It also asked the management of

precautions measures such as washing hands repeatedly, is essential to preventing the spread of disease in any circumstance. However, it is also impossible that newspapers may contain Corona Virus during printings or distributions. The CPNE has welcomed the decision of Provincial Governments who not only ensured the distributions of the newspapers during lockdown but also brings this newspaper industry as 'Essential Services' in Pakistan. It also asked the management of newspapers and hawkers to adopt preventive measures including washing hands, etc. for the protection of their readers from this pandemic. CPNE added that the need for independent, verifiable news and information is more important than ever during the coronavirus crisis. A large number of people trust on print media & newspapers. At this critical time, the newspapers and news media are fulfilling their responsibilities by providing true & correct information to the general public.

IT ministry, FAO sign accord for agri development

APP

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of IT and Telecommunication and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations have virtually signed framework collaboration agreement to jointly work for the development of agriculture sector of Pakistan by using information technology. Shoaib Ahmad Siddique, Secretary IT & Telecommunication and Min Dowlatchahi, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative virtu-

ally signed framework collaboration agreement while sitting in Pakistan and Rome, Italy respectively, said press release. As to control the spread of Coronavirus social distancing is imperative, Ministry of IT is performing all its function through use of ICT. Online signing of collaboration agreement with FAO is an example of performing official duty while ensuring social distancing. The FAO country representative in Pakistan signed agreement while she was located in Italy one of the worst-hit

country by Coronavirus. Speaking at the occasion, Shoaib Ahmed Siddique said that agriculture is the mainstay of Pakistan's economy as it contributes around 20 percent in the overall gross domestic product (GDP) and is also a big source of employment. Low growth, water shortage, environmental concerns, volatile energy prices, rising expectations of consumers - these are some of the complex challenges the agriculture sector is facing today, in the face of diminishing production profit margins for farmers.

Fawad to represent Pakistan in Dialogue on COVID-19

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain will represent Pakistan in the Virtual Ministerial Dialogue titled "COVID-19 and Open Science" to be held on Monday (March 30) via video link. The dialogue is being arranged by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an official source from the ministry told APP.



The purpose of the Ministerial Meeting is to consider proposals and future action plans for the prevention of global diseases with the help of science. The meeting will also consider the possible immediate and equitable participation of data and scientific

information worldwide regarding global war against COVID-19 and other unknown epidemic diseases and threats. At the meeting, the Director General will also give a presentation on UNESCO science and the prevention of pandemic diseases. All Ministers will discuss and consult on policy and lessons in this context. In the meeting, the world-renowned Nobel laureate scientists will also inform participants of their experiences and observations on COVID-19, the official informed.

Saudi intercepts missiles over curfew-locked Riyadh

APP

RIYADH: Saudi air defences intercepted ballistic missiles over Riyadh and a city along the Yemen border late Saturday, leaving at least two civilians wounded in the curfew-locked capital amid efforts to curb the coronavirus pandemic. Multiple explosions shook Riyadh in the attack, which the Saudi-led military coalition blamed on Yemen's Iran-aligned Huthi rebels who have previously targeted

di cities with missiles, rockets and drones.

It was the first major assault on Saudi Arabia since the Huthis offered last September to halt attacks on the kingdom after devastating twin strikes on Saudi oil installations. "Two ballistic missiles were launched towards the cities of Riyadh and Jizan," the official Saudi Press Agency reported, citing the coalition fighting the rebels. Their interception sent shrapnel falling on residential neighbourhoods in the cities, resulting in

two civilian casualties in Riyadh, a civil defence spokesman said in a separate statement released by SPA.

There was no immediate comment from the rebels. At least three blasts rocked the capital - under a 15-hour coronavirus curfew - just before midnight, according to AFP reporters. Jizan, like many other Saudi cities, faces a shorter dusk-to-dawn curfew. The assault comes despite a show of support on Thursday by all of Yemen's warring parties for the United Nations' call for a cease-

fire to protect civilians from the coronavirus pandemic.

Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni government and the rebels all welcomed an appeal from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for an "immediate global ceasefire" to help avert disaster for vulnerable people in conflict zones. The call coincided with the fifth anniversary of Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen's civil war, which was launched to shore up the internationally recognised government against the Huthi rebels.

Zong 4G Announces FREE Calls

FIJAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD With customers as its Number 1 priority, Zong 4G has stepped forward with an unprecedented gesture for its customers across the country. The customer-centric company is now providing daily free Zong minutes to its entire customer base. The endowment has been introduced with the intent of connecting people as they stay at home amid the coronavirus outbreak. To take advantage of this offering by Zong 4G, customers can simply dial *45# and get 20 Zong to Zong Minutes, without any charges at all. The free minutes can be availed on a daily basis by prepaid subscribers. Zong 4G's Chairman and CEO, Mr. Wang Hua said, "We take pride in being a customer-centric company and are firm in the resolve of fulfilling our commitment to the Zong family."