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Army chief says public safety to be ensured at all cost

Iran ready to export virus test kits to region

Japan unfurls assistance for relief efforts



Japan announces grant for Pakistan

Grant to be disbursed thru United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and USD 540,000 through International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the Government of Pakistan to equip Pakistani people to fight against the (COVID-19) Infection

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Government of Japan has decided to provide grant of USD 1,620,000 through The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and USD 540,000 through International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the Government of Pakistan to equip Pakistani people to fight against the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection. This support will boost Pa-

kistan's capacity to quickly track the coronavirus affected persons and treat them accordingly. This assistance will reduce and delay the transmission of COVID-19, to minimize serious disease due to COVID-19 and reduce associated deaths, to ensure ongoing health services during epidemic peak periods and to minimize socio-economic impact. With the support of UNICEF and IOM necessary equipment/material will be provided to prevent

the spread of COVID-19 and technical assistance by considering the situation on the ground on the request of the Government of Pakistan. The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, MATSUDA Kuninori, commended the tremendous efforts by the Government of Pakistan and its people against the COVID-19 as the issue is becoming even more serious worldwide. He also added that, it is important for every state in the international com-

munity to take necessary steps to address this disease. The Government of Japan always stands with Pakistan to fight against such viruses, referring to Japanese Assistance of 229 Million USD in total provided to Pakistan for polio eradication since 1996. Simultaneously the Government of Japan would like to cooperate with the Government of Pakistan to fight against the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection.



ISLAMABAD: PM Imran Khan being briefed during his visit to Cantt General Hospital. - DNA

Briefs

US virus deaths pass 4,000

DNA

WASHINGTON: The death toll from COVID-19 in the United States reached 4,079 early Wednesday, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. As of Wednesday morning, the United States, which is leading the world in terms of confirmed cases, has reported 189,510 infections, showed the tally updated by the university's Center for Systems Science and Engineering. New York State, the epicenter of the nation's outbreak, has recorded more than 75,833 cases and 1,714 deaths, both the most among U.S. states and territories.

PM confident to check virus spike



ABID RAZA

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday assured doctors and paramedics in the country working at frontline in fighting Coronavirus and other severe health challenges to get protective material for their safety in vulnerable environment. Addressing doctors and healthcare staff here at Cantonment General Hospital (CGH), the prime minister said protective gear would be provided

on priority to those working at the Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and dealing patients with contagious diseases. The prime minister said the decision was taken by Command and Control Centre to ensure provision of shielding material to frontline medical staff for their own safety, and the government stood with its medical workers for their readiness to handle difficult health situations. He regretted that healthcare had never been a priority in last 70 years, adding that his government would take every step to bring improvement to this neglected area. The prime minister was briefed that the hospital had constituted a Corona Response Team with a specific plan in place to deal with emergency.

Capacity building NAB's top priority

FARUKH SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has said that training is an effective tool for improvement and maintaining the quality of Investigation Officers and Prosecutors. NAB accords high priority for training/capacity building of its Investigation Officers on regular basis on modern lines. Chairman NAB said that NAB has designed and proposed for establishment of an Accreditation Council to regulate the affairs of Investigators in Pakistan.

The transactional syndicates operating across the globe warrant for synergized efforts to train the Investigation Professionals par excellent with International best practices. Keeping in view of the importance of training of investigation officers on the one side but there is need for establishment of an Accreditation Council for regulating and accrediting the Investigation Professionals is very vital which could be a benchmark for similar institutions around the world. The proposal for bringing Investigators both in the public and private sectors under one Accreditation Umbrella with the requisite mechanism for synergizing outsources potential.

Army chief says public safety to be ensured

ANSAR M BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) has said all necessary measures to ensure public safety are being taken. We cannot afford to leave any segment of the society at the mercy of this pandemic. Troops on ground must reach out to citizens in every nook & corner of Pakistan not only to protect them against this pandemic but also for bringing comfort in this hour of distress. The army chief on Wednesday attended a

special briefing at National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). He further said only through a coherent national effort we can address all vulnerabilities before they turn into threats. The planned measures, if implemented timely will contribute to safety and well being of every Pakistani and society at large, COAS reiterated. We must Rise - and rise together irrespective of caste, colour, creed and religion fighting as One Nation. The task at hand is daunting, but we have overcome difficult situations before.

This time the challenge is entirely different. Armed Forces will stand shoulder to shoulder with nation to guard the border between people and COVID-19. Pakistan Army being part of national effort will not leave any stone unturned for security and safety of people of Pakistan "COAS added. Forum was briefed about latest situation on containment efforts and enforcement measures against COVID-19 and troops deployment across the country assisting Federal & Provincial administrations in aid of civil power. The forum expressed com-

plete satisfaction over the measures taken thus far and also dilated upon future course of action. The NCOC is serving as a nucleus for one window operation to synergize and articulate national effort against COVID-19, optimise informed decision making and ensure implementation of decisions of National Security Committee (NSC) & National Coordination Committee (NCC) Commander Army Air Defence Command, Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman Khan has been designated as chief coordinator NCOC.

Europe becomes epicenter of virus: WHO chief

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BAKU: The head of the World Health Organization said Friday that Europe has become the epicenter of the new coronavirus after the illness raged in China and elsewhere around the world, according to Kyodo news. "Europe has now become the epicenter of the pandemic, with more reported cases and deaths than the rest of the world combined, apart from China," WHO Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus said at a press briefing. More than 132,000 coronavirus cases have been reported in about 120 countries and over 5,000 people have died, the WHO chief said, calling the death toll "a tragic milestone."

Muslims urged to wait for Hajj plans

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RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is urging Muslims to wait before making plans to attend the annual haj pilgrimage until there is more clarity about the deadly coronavirus pandemic, the kingdom's minister for haj and umrah said on Tuesday. Some 2.5 million pilgrims usually flock to the holiest sites of Islam in Mecca and Medina each year for the week-long ritual, which is a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim and a major source of income for the kingdom.

Iran ready to export COVID-19 test kits

Pasteur Institute of Iran had identified all kits in the international market two months before the first coronavirus-infected case was found in Iran. Biglari went on to say that five knowledge-based companies produced molecular kits domestically

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TEHRAN: Head of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari said thanks to producing COVID-19 test kits in Iran "we are now able" to test suspected cases and "we are even ready" to export kits to regional countries.

Speaking in video press conference on Wednesday, Biglari told IRNA that the kits which are now used in Iran are molecular and has been verified by the World Health Organization. If sampling is done correctly, the kit's test will be true by over 90%, he added. Biglari noted that



rapid test kits are not used in Iranian laboratories since they had many negative responses. Pasteur Institute of Iran had identified all kits in the international market two months before the first coronavirus-infected case was found in Iran. Biglari went on to say that five knowledge-based

companies produced molecular kits domestically. One of these companies announced that it will produce 80,000 kits per week, he noted. There are 90 laboratories working with Iranian Health Ministry which are able to increase 10,000 tests per day to 20,000 tests.

Inside...

Govt plans crackdown against mafias: Shafqat Mahmood

- Page 02

Pak-Bahrain Bilateral Relations: New Dimensions & Determinations

- Page 03

UNESCO holds virtual ministerial dialogue on COVID-19 in Tashkent

- Back Page

Rescue 1122 continues fumigation

RAWALPINDI: In order to deal with deadly Coronavirus, Rescue 1122 conducted disinfection spray in different residential and commercial areas of the city here on Wednesday. According to District Emergency Officer (DEO), Dr. Abdur Rehman, staff of Punjab Emergency Rescue Service 1122 was doing its duty round the clock and assisting the suspects of COVID-19 at quarantine centre established in Rawalpindi district. He said the entire nation was united and committed to defeat Coronavirus pandemic, adding Rescue 1122 was all set and committed to ensure safety of public against Coronavirus. — APP

Educational content to be onaired: Wajiha

ISLAMABAD: The development of educational content is almost at the final stage and expected to be onaired on National Education Television Channel during this week. A meeting over the development of content for the National Educational Television Channel of Pakistan was held here at the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training which attended by the educational experts, officials from the education ministry and Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education Wajiha Akram. — APP



LALAMUSA: A man selling face masks at his roadside set up. — Khurshid Nadeem

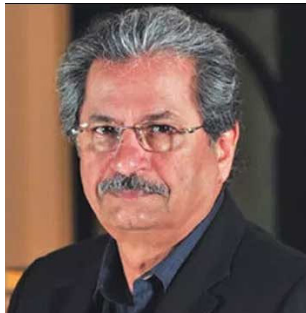
Govt plans crackdown against mafias: Shafqat Mahmood

Thousands of people could not earn bread as all businesses were already closed, the government's decision to make a Tiger force to involve the youth in providing food and ration to needy people on their doorsteps is timely initiative, he said

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood has warned the hoarders and black marketers that government would soon take a stern action against the hoarders involved in artificial shortage of basic necessities.

"The world is facing the pandemic crisis, but a few mafias are still after minting money against the food and edible items. The concerned authorities had completed a report of those involved in creating artificial shortage of food items," he stated while talking to a private news channel. Replying to a question he said, Pakistan could never lockdown like



China as it did not has as much resources as China had, but still the government had closed down all educational and religious institutions in the country, moreover the recreational places were also shutdown to contain the novel contagion, he added. Thousands of people could not earn bread as all businesses were already closed, the govern-

ment's decision to make a Tiger force to involve the youth in providing food and ration to needy people on their doorsteps is timely initiative, he said. Edible supply would not be disturbed but a long process worked behind the availability of fruits and other edibles, hence people should not be misled by the opposition, he opined.

14 quarantine centers in Attock

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ATTOCK: Health Department Attock has established 14 quarantine centres in different areas of the district where 1035 corona suspected patients could be accommodated. While giving details he said that these centres have been established in Technical College Attock, Wapda Colony Attock, Commerce College Attock, Shuja Khanzada Shaheed Boys Degree College Hazro, GBHS (Govt Boys High School) Hameed, GBHS Malhoo, GBHS Rangoo, GBHS Fatehullah, Tameer Millat Institute Ratwal Fatehjang, Form House near Shara-e-Saadullah, Rescue 1122 building Pindigheb, Commerce College Pindigheb, Ibrar Shah Institute Pindigheb and Jamia Piracha Injra.

Lok Virsa library offers 32000 books to researchers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage Lok Virsa Heritage Library has collection of over thirty-two thousand books and journals on cultural heritage of Pakistan. The Heritage Library at Lok Virsa was devoted to provide assistance to

scholars, students and common citizens on folklore and cultural heritage. The library was accumulating field research, collecting cultural studies, oral traditions, indigenous cultural, inheritance and traditional culture. Library has offered unparalleled opportunities for self-directed learning and exploration by peo-

ple of diverse ages, interests, backgrounds and abilities. He said that an other collection of two hundred (200) books published by Lok Virsa was also available in the library. He said that the library continues to serve students, researchers and scholars in connection with their research work on cultural heritage of Pakistan. The numerous

manuscripts, original research reports, field surveys and monographs on Pakistani culture were accessible to any one in the library. The library is atypical since it is with a high concentration of books, journals, manuscripts and field reports pertaining to Pakistani folklore, ethnology, cultural anthropology, art history and craft, he stated.

EOBI pensioners get equity

ISLAMABAD: The Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) has credited an amount of Rs 12,500 to the account of each pensioner which included last month's annuity of Rs 2,500 raise and arrears of January and February. In December, 2019 the government had announced a raise of 30 percent and increased the pension amount from Rs 6,500 to Rs 8,500 which had to be received by the pensioners from January 01, 2020. An amount of Rs 5.8 billion had been deposited in accounts of over 400,000 registered persons who would be receiving Rs 4,000 in terms of outstanding dues and Rs 8,500 as new pension for the month of March, said a senior officer in EOBI while talking to APP on Wednesday. — APP

WASH facilities to contain faecal-oral route

ISLAMABAD: A recent study revealed that the transmission of coronavirus or COVID-19 other than respiratory means was observed in the latest researches through the faecal-oral route that demands the government at all levels to ensure proper water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities to contain the pandemic conduction through this potent source. Research Fellow at Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Dr Imran Saqib Khalid in his policy brief titled "Managing Risks to Water and Sanitation amid COVID-19: Policy Options for Pakistan" had highlighted the risks of coronavirus communication through infected patients' stool while quoting the research carried by Xiao et al. (2020) found that the Coronavirus, in China, was evident in the stool of just over 50 percent of patients.

The study observed: "In more than 20 percent of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS CoV-2) patients, the viral RNA remained positive in faeces even after negative conversion of the viral RNA in respiratory tract indicating the viral gastrointestinal infection and potential faecal-oral transmission can last even after viral clearance in respiratory tract." Dr Saqib in his study had argued that these findings were supported by Gu et al. (2020), who quoting evidences from 2003 SARS epidemic, found the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in stools of the patients days after they had been discharged from the hospital. "This means that symptomatic as well as asymptomatic (having no symptoms) carriers of the virus may be shedding it and could transmit it to others," it added. — APP

Think tanks can assist govt, says Moeed

ISLAMABAD: PM's Special Assistant on National Security Division and Strategic Policy Planning Dr Moeed Yusuf has said that various think tanks could assist the government in organizing the 'PM's Corona Relief Tigers' volunteers and their training in the light of the current crisis. Speaking at an online meeting titled "Training of Corona Relief Tigers Force" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Moeed 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, said a press statement issued here. Dr Moeed Yusuf further stressed the need for a real-time dashboard which can be used to track engagement with communities. This exercise will be important for rapid learning and will also identify any mistakes being committed, he added. SDPI Executive Director Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that think tanks and academic institutions can mobilize their networks for providing training modules and guidelines for the volunteers as well as the trainers, through IT-based modes such as short info-graphics and documentaries. — APP

PCSIR sanitizers available in capital

ISLAMABAD: The hand sanitizers produced by Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) are now available in Islamabad to address the needs of Islooiters for prevention of coronavirus. Talking to APP, PCSIR Member Science Dr Naseem Rauf informed that hand sanitizers produced by the council are now

available here at the head office of PCSIR and can be acquired through calling at 051-9225380. She informed that the council has produced a good stock of hand sanitizers through its laboratories in three cities including Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar to overcome its shortage in prevailing health crisis in the country.

The PCSIR is trying to make the stock of hand sanitizers available in the other cities also to ensure protection of the people from the deadly virus. She said since hand cleaning with sanitizer has been declared as one of the prerequisite for prevention of coronavirus by World Health Organization (WHO), its demand has

registered a significant increase across the country. Majority of the citizens complained about shortage of the hand sanitizers especially the smaller ones in size and also about outrageously inflated prices charged by enterprising sellers which compelled the council to produce their own hand sanitizers for citizens. — APP

RCB sprays sodium hypochlorite in Ward 3

RAWALPINDI: In order to control the possible spread of coronavirus in cantt areas, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has accelerated its campaign launched to spray sodium hypochlorite in different areas. According to RCB spokesman, the board had sprayed sodium hypochlorite in different areas of Ward 3 and covered Saddar, CGH Colony, Chotta Bazar, streets and roads of Gawalmandi area. He informed all main areas of the ward including mosques were sprayed during the campaign. The campaign was being supervised and monitored by Public Health Officer, RCB, Waris Bhatti. Main roads, streets, mosques and several other points of the ward were sprayed with disinfectant, he said adding, all out efforts were being made and different cantt areas were being sprayed with sodium hypochlorite on daily basis to eradicate the possible spread of the disease. The board was also washing different RCB areas with chlorine mixed water, he added. — APP

RCCI urge SBP to monitor rupee volatility against Dollar

"The dollar has risen to an all-time high against Pakistani rupee, 170 per dollar, in the interbank market and it must be controlled, as it could have a devastating impact on all segments of society, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)"

SHAHEEN QURESHI

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) expressed serious concerns over rupee fall and asked State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to check volatility in the foreign exchange market, as the rupee traded as high as 170 per dollar in the interbank market in this week. RCCI President Saboor Malik in

a statement said that the depreciation of Pakistani rupee would have a massive negative impact on the already fragile economy of the country. "The dollar has risen to an all-time high against Pakistani rupee, 170 per dollar, in the interbank market and it must be controlled, as it could have a devastating impact on all segments of society, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)," he added. He said that it was noticed that

the fall of rupee in interbank from Rs 158 per dollar to Rs 170 per dollar in just 8 days should be a cause of great concern for policymakers and monitoring bodies. While appreciating the SBP relief package, President RCCI said this will give a big breathing space and relief to consumers who were using consumer financing. However, SBP should stretched this package to corporate sector mainly manufacturers and

industry. He said that due to coronavirus issue, trade, industry and manufacturing activities have come to a halt, but industrialists have to pay markup on loans besides paying wages to workers. While appealing to Governor Raza Baqir, he said that business community is waiting for a comprehensive package for all sectors. The mark ups should be waived off and loan payments must be deferred to one year, he added.

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The impact of COVID-19 on remittances

AS the world economy grinds to a halt with country after country shutting down in all but the most essential activities, the focus has been on stimulus packages, equity, fixed-income markets, and moves targeting currency and commodity prices. There was less focus on lower-income countries. Some 80 countries have approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is ready to deploy its full quick-response toolbox consisting of debt relief for IMF loans, rapid-financing facilities and a trillion-dollar lending facility. Some of the G20's \$5 trillion coronavirus rescue package, which was announced at last week's virtual summit, will doubtlessly be directed to the multilateral aid agencies. The World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral aid programs and other aid institutions will do their part too. However, the various domestic rescue packages will have to be financed via debt and taxes. In the wake of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, tax rises will be inevitable in most countries that are part of the intergovernmental Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This will put pressure on the overseas development budget in these countries as well as on their contribution to multilateral aid agencies. The aid flows will not be the only concern of developing countries as they contend with the aftermath of COVID-19 ravaging their economies. Many countries, particularly the Philippines, Pakistan, India, but also many Asian, African and Latin American countries depend heavily on the inflow of remittances. Migrant workers are a big part of the GCC economies. Eighty percent of the UAE population are overseas nationals. In Saudi Arabia, they make up more than a third and around 80 percent of the workforce. Many of these overseas workers are involved in low-skilled labor, employed in construction, hospitality and as domestic helpers. For most of them, their host countries are the only chance they have at gainful employment, and they have sent billions of dollars to their home countries from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the US. The world's economies will recalibrate when they resume full activity. In the GCC, many of these migrant workers have already been laid off and will return to their home countries once air travel resumes. It will be some time before the services of some of these workers are needed again. The inevitable return of overseas workers will be a double blow for many developing economies. On one hand, they will lose direly needed hard currency and on the other, they will have millions added to the army of unemployed. This means that many families will now fall below the poverty line and face all that it implies, including not being able to afford education, health care, housing or even food. — *Courtesy Arab News*



The case for the universal basic income

THE idea of a universal basic income (UBI), also called a citizen's dividend or national dividend, has a long tradition going back to Thomas More's "Utopia" in the 16th century, and Thomas Paine, one of the US founding fathers in the 18th century. Among other prominent advocates have been the 19th-century British philosopher Bertrand Russell and, under the guise of negative income tax, even American neoliberal economist Milton Friedman and President Richard Nixon. Advancements in artificial intelligence and automation have brought the concept back into vogue. Perhaps the most visceral example of why people have started taking it more seriously is the case of self-driving cars. And that is just one application of this new family of technologies. Other applications are expected to make large numbers of clerical, paralegal, even lower-skilled medical jobs obsolete. In previous technological revolutions, low-tech jobs have always been replaced by better, more skilled, better paid employment. What nobody expected was that this would be politically possible in the face of ideological opposition from Republicans. President Trump has just removed any basis for that opposition in the future. Sure, Congressional Republicans will continue to oppose UBI in principle — but they will not be able to claim that it is impossible. The second argument is financial; that we cannot afford to give everyone enough money to live on. Except that it turns out we can. In response to the lockdown imposed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump administration announced that people will be sent checks directly from the federal government to help tide them over — though the details are still to be worked out. Or, for an example of how to do this properly, the government of Denmark has already guaranteed upwards of 75 percent of income to everyone affected by the lockdown they have imposed in their country. This arithmetic was already known. It formed the basis of Andrew Yang's campaign to become the Democratic party nominee for the presidency. What nobody expected was that this would be politically possible in the face of ideological opposition from Republicans. President Trump has just removed any basis for that opposition in the future. Sure, Congressional Republicans will continue to oppose UBI in principle — but they will not be able to claim that it is impossible.

Pak-Bahrain Bilateral Relations: New Dimensions & Determinations

Dr Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Being prominent regional expert of Kingdom of Bahrain it is suggested that the bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations may be further increased by initiating a number of diversified but integrated steps from both sides. Military cooperation between the two countries should be further increase and should not be taken as a regional security threat to any country

ifa in March 2014 was a paradigm shift in the history of bilateral relations of Pakistan and Kingdom of Bahrain. For the further strengthening of bilateral relations and fostering of bilateral trade volumes 17 agreements were inked signed during the state visit of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in March 2014, which also included a Bilateral Investment Treaty. Afterwards, there have been various spells of meeting to boost defense and security cooperation. Pakistan had helped Bahrain set up its naval forces and 18 percent of the Gulf States' Air Force comprises of Pakistani personnel. Moreover, there are over 400 companies currently operating in Bahrain, which are either jointly or wholly owned by Pakistani investors. The Board of Investment (BOI) and the Economic Development Board (EDB) of Bahrain also played important role to promote business. It is now hoped that BOI and EDB will facilitate business meetings and exchange of delegations of the two countries in addition to bilateral visits, organization of road shows, exhibitions and business forums. It is hoped that mutual cooperation would be extended in various areas including agriculture, agro machinery, processed food, dry fruits, fresh fruits, cotton, milk and its by-products and leather to be processed at the earliest. The business community of Pakistan urged the government to promote bilateral trade with Muslim countries particularly Halal food to earn maximum foreign exchange especially, with Bahrain. Being prominent regional expert of Kingdom of Bahrain it is suggested that the bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations may be further increased by initiating a number of diversified but integrated steps from both sides. Military cooperation between the two countries should be further increase and should not be taken as a regional security threat to any country. Pakistan may assist Bahrain in sophisticated defense & security equipment and military training and resources including non-combatant equipment. In my personal opinion Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) cooperation and trade and export may be further increased in areas such as textile, food and hospitality, which are found to have substantial scope for Pakistan. Telecommunications, tourism, infrastructural development and real estate development sectors are developing rapidly and offer attractive investment opportunities for Bahrain in Pakistan. Bahraini businesses are involved in halal products, one of the fastest growing industries in the world, has a great potential at hand by collaborating with Pakistani food businesses. Close liaison between chambers of commerce may

widen prospects of higher trade volumes between the two countries. Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) should also contributory role to double bilateral trade in the days to come. CPEC may be another game & fate changer between Pakistan and Bahrain. Bahraini investors should take this opportunity for best dividends. Foreign investors are allowed to have 100 per cent ownership of their business, with no restrictions placed on capital repatriation, currency exchange and transfer of dividends in Bahrain. So, extended volumes of investments would bring desired dividends of greater economic integration, socio-economic prosperity and regional conflict resolution between the two countries in the days to come. Being prominent regional expert of Kingdom of Bahrain it is strongly suggested that translating the political goodwill and fraternal bonds existing Pakistan and Kingdom of Bahrain into a strong economic and trade partnership to the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries private sectors of both the countries should play a leading role. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) said that Pakistan is experiencing a new dawn of economic revival and Bahrain should partner with it for mutual benefits. Bahrain should look into the unmatched business opportunities in Pakistan with a special focus on the project-based financing and Islamic banking. Currently, almost 400 Pakistani companies are working in Bahrain and the number is on the rise. Bahrain has central location in the Gulf with a highly diversified economy and enhanced linkages will boost flow of investments. Pakistan can learn from Bahrain's economic diversification and expertise in the energy sector. An early trade treaty between the two countries will benefit each other, as Pakistani textiles should find place in the US market due to Bahrain's free trade agreement (FTA) with the US and Manama can explore markets in Pakistan.

1. Proper exploitation geographical proximity
2. Export of potential products along with perishable and halal food items.
3. Exploiting high purchasing power of the Bahraini people preference towards value added and branded products, ensuring premium quality.
4. Formulation of comprehensive marketing strategy to promote potential products in Bahrain.
5. Rigorous participation of international trade exhibitions in Bahrain, as presently there is no participation in those exhibitions. Potential investors from Pakistan may attend in Hospitality & Restaurant Expo and Gulf

construction Expo.

6. Contributory role of Pakistani Diasporas in Bahrain which can be used as a bridge to improve bilateral trade volume especially, in the emerging industries of the country such as tourism and restaurant business.
7. Business & investment friendly policies to provide incentives to the investor that desires to invest in halal food that will compliment Pakistan's export basket. Finalization of bilateral trade & investment treaty may be useful to enhance bilateral trade in the days to come.
8. Persuasion of constructive trade agreements as currently, there is no trade agreement between the two countries, whereas, Bahrain only has PTA with Singapore and FTA with USA, though it is suggested that preferential trade agreement can be beneficial in the long run for bilateral trade.
9. Enhanced business-to-business contacts
10. Meaningful participation of private sectors of both the countries. Pakistan should device a knowledge sharing mechanism with Bahrain so, that it can benefit from its well-established financial system.
11. Formulation of product specific strategy to facilitate exporter in terms of incentives, subsidies and duty drawbacks schemes to gain comparative advantage over our competitors.
12. Instrumental Role of TDAP is the need of the hour which must arrange a single country exhibition in which different Pakistani products can be exhibits to further benefit from the potential Bahraini market.
13. Formation of E-commerce business models, appropriate marketing strategies artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

The Kingdom of Bahrain aspires to shift from a macro-economy built on oil resources to a smarter, greener, productive, globally competitive economy, shaped by the government and driven by a sustainable private sector in the days to come. It desires to build an economy that raises a broad middle class of Bahrainis who enjoy good living standards through increased productivity and high-wage jobs. It is hoped that Bahraini society and its government will follow the principles of sustainability, competitiveness and fairness to ensure that every Bahraini has the means to live a secure and fulfilling life and reach their full potential. In this way, prospects and potentials are very bright to further increase the bilateral relations and trade volumes between the two countries in the days to come.

Tourism Potential in Pakistan's Coast Line

Syed Mushahid Hussain Naqvi



MIDST of technological advancement trends and efficient transportation interconnectivity mechanisms, global maritime tourism witnessed resounding growth in recent years. Nonetheless, Pakistan's coastline remained in doldrums, yet to mark its triumph through becoming Panacea of domestic economic woes by aligning contours of maritime tourism with the blue economy. The 1050KM long coastal belt configures interprovincial geographic proximities between Sindh and Baluchistan which also linchpin imperatives of strategic resources and security exigencies of the country, with extraordinary beauty of its beaches, fascinating ecological sites and archeological heritage offers diversified opportunities to unfold prospects of optimum maritime tourism growth in the region. Appraisal suggests, given the potential that coastline belt offers, a new maritime tourism corridor can be established to attain far-fetched manifold socio-eco-

nomics. First, it would offer extensive pathways of strengthening the economic fortunes of the entire belt which considerably remains dispossessed. Secondly, it will robust the mainstream tourism sector and in foreseeable future can serve as a key driver to outscore other Asian maritime tourism industries by attracting the majority of global tourists. Thirdly, the construction of an entirely new industry would pave employment and foreign direct investment opportunities through refurbishing social and economic architecture of two major provinces which relatively remained deprived. However, mere rhetoric cannot bring substantial fallouts, on practical grounds over years, the expansion of maritime tourism remained insignificant due to government insularity in fostering cross-cutting policy aspects and averting deficient competitive maritime tourism facilities. Although the resilient counterinsurgency efforts by law enforcement agencies made the environment conducive for tourism activities but misperceptions of security vulnerability tarnished the image of the region and geographical constraints left it untapped even for local populace. With very limited scope, the recreational activities confined to few beaches alongside the Karachi and Baluchistan coast whilst other remote archeological and ecological sites of the entire belt remains inaccessible, which pushed the local tourist to pursue alternate options, consequently average 300,000 Pakistani tourists visit Maldives, Dubai Thailand, and Malaysia in domain of maritime tourism due to lack of facilities at home. Likewise, mesmerizing beauty of Indus delta, Run of Kutch, Gawatar Bay and Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches awaits exploration by visitors. It is pertinent to highlight that the efficacy of this Belt is further blossomed

by coastal and Marine Islands. For instance, Astana Island of Baluchistan coast located in Arabian Sea, followed by Bundal and Buddo Islands along the Sindh Coast, and Churna-Kaio Islands Complex in west of Karachi possesses massive potential for beach games, cruise shipping, boating, water sports, Jet, Skiing, Scuba diving, sport fishing and various other entertaining activities, thus little attention towards those spots can bring out adequate outcomes in terms of promoting maritime tourism. An abundance of archeological and ecological sites designates Pakistan's coastline ahead of many regional states who predominately depend on maritime tourism for economic growth. In account to this, holding global ecological significance, wetland and Ramsar Sites not only add exquisiteness to the coastline belt but it can be an ideal destination for the tourists to witness the migratory birds in this region. Unacquainted with the fact, a general misperception looms in indigenous masses that coastline only offers sea-based activities but archeological sites and mud volcanoes further rise the impetus and scope through bringing inclusiveness in maritime tourism of Pakistan. History vindicates that ancient Bhambore town, which dates back to the 1st century BC is also situated beside the Sindh coast. Rato Kot Fort was constructed as an anchorage to ensure security purposes from pirates during the Indo-Arabian sea trade on the Karachi Coast. Notably, among numerous earth science wonders, one fascinating attraction for tourists is the existence of eighteen mud volcanoes whose history can trace back to the year 1840. Henceforward, the utility of those sites for tourism would generate revenue and will promote cultural heritage by attracting worldwide archeological tourists.

The maritime tourism sector fragmentation necessitates a comprehensive sustainable policy framework:

- Stakeholders and authorities must ensure effective implementation of comprehensive maritime tourism planning, management and monitoring policies through collaborating with the private sector investors and assisting sustainable hospitality business practices in the coastline region.
- Aligned with conducive environmental and biodiversity principles, coastline legislations for beach restorations would reinstate the prospects of attracting value and recreational activities for local and foreign tourists.
- Strategizing tourism reforms can draw plausibility for inclusive growth by creating employment opportunities, generating export revenues and flourishing the hospitality industry.
- Respective provincial and federal ministries should finance sustainable maritime tourism activities, marketing strategies and notable actors to pledge the configuration of cooperation schemes and development aid to alleviate the lifestyle of local populace residing adjacent to the Belt.
- Coherent marketing strategies coupled with the effective utility of electronic, social and print media tools can bring maritime tourism awareness. Stakeholders can organize events, carnivals and arranging visits for foreign designated ambassadors to promote the coastline potential.

To conclude, maritime tourism can play a significant in consolidating the economy and it can also drastically improve the ranking of Pakistan on the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index which currently designated 121 out of 140 countries.

The writer is a research analyst, holding MPhil Degree from Quid-Azam University, Islamabad.

Briefs

Pak-US doctors to send medical items to Pakistan

WASHINGTON: The Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (AP-PNA) is working with the Pakistani Embassy and its consulates across the United States to arrange urgently needed medical items, including protective medical clothing, ventilators and diagnostic kits for use in Pakistan, which is fighting to stem the spread of coronavirus pandemic, according to an embassy press release.

Ambassador of Pakistan to the US, Asad Majeed Khan, has been in regular contact with APPNA and other leading community organizations to mobilize funds and raise awareness in Pakistani-American community, the press release said.

In a video conference with APPNA members, the ambassador apprised them about shortages of essential medical supplies including life-saving equipment, screening kits and protective gears in Pakistan. - APP

Firdous asks media to get authentic information

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Wednesday urged media to get authentic information regarding coronavirus outbreak from the concerned ministers and spokespersons of the respective governments so that no room is left for communication gap.

While chairing a video conference attended by Information Ministers of all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, she said it was responsibility of the federal and provincial governments to provide correct and timely information to the media as hiding facts would tantamount to harming the interest of the country. She appreciated the media for fulfilling its national responsibility at this critical juncture as this was not the time of point-scoring or improving ratings. APP



LAHORE: A view of isolation facility established by Punjab govt. - Shahbaz Sindhu

Turkey's Erdogan under fire over plea for cash

DNA

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been accused of dodging his responsibilities by launching a nationwide donation campaign to help low-income earners struggling with the coronavirus outbreak.

The new fund replaces donation accounts set up by Erdogan's political rivals in the Ankara and Istanbul municipalities, which were abruptly blocked by the Interior Ministry.

Many people prefer making donations to city mayors because it offers greater transparency on how their money is spent.

Erdogan's new campaign, labeled "We are self-sufficient, Turkey," called on Turkish citizens to make financial donations to a specific bank account. The president promised to donate seven months of his salary, and the Cabinet joined the appeal with a donation of more than \$790,000.

"Our goal is to help those financially struggling, especially daily wage workers, due to the precautions taken against the outbreak," Erdogan said.

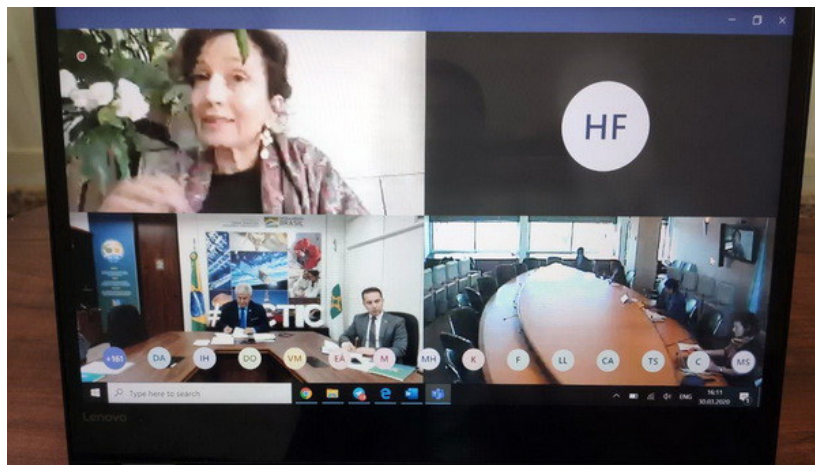
UNESCO holds virtual ministerial dialogue on COVID-19 in Tashkent

DNA

TASHKENT: A virtual ministerial dialogue on COVID-19 and Open Science took place. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a platform for dialogue and exchange of experience between world academia.

The dialogue was attended by over 200 representatives from among ministers, deputy ministers, heads of departments from more than 120 countries. An open dialogue took place at UNESCO headquarters. Each speaker was given 2 minutes. Among the speakers, it is worth noting the representatives of WHO, Erasmus, etc. They spoke about the open access of scientific data on COVID-19. It was noted that this is not a national, but a global problem and requires a global approach.

As Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Natural Sciences, noted, the current COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the crucial role that science plays in global responses to existing threats and challenges. Governments cite science to take action



to protect their peoples, curb the spread of the virus and fight the pandemic.

In the context of pressing planetary and socio-economic problems, sustainable and innovative solutions require an effective, transparent and energetic scientific community, based not only on scientists, but on the whole society as a whole. Ministers of science are key decision makers in the global crisis. UNESCO provides ministers and renowned scholars with an online platform for sharing experiences

and international scientific cooperation in overcoming the global crisis.

From Uzbekistan, the Deputy Minister of Innovation Development Olimjon Tuychiev spoke in the Open Science dialogue. He spoke about the grants announced by the Ministry in the framework of state programs for scientific research in order to effectively combat the COVID-19 coronavirus in the republic and to prevent the spread of the disease into the republic, as well as to conduct operational laboratory

tests to select existing local medicines for acute respiratory infections viral infections for use in the treatment of coronavirus COVID-19. He also spoke about the organization of production of the domestic test system for the coronavirus COVID-19 by the Center for Advanced Technologies under the Ministry of Innovative Development.

Currently, tests have been conducted on laboratory samples. Together with the Agency for Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance under the Ministry of Health, tests were performed on positive clinical samples of patients infected with coronavirus. The tests showed that the developed test system with high accuracy detects the presence of COVID-19 coronavirus in the biomaterial.

At the same time, O. Tuychiev proposed to organize an international fund for co-financing scientific work on combating infectious diseases, developing solutions and solving problems of the world community.

A dialogue of this format and scale is being held for the first time. In the near future we will report on the results of the online discussion.

Fraud schemes cost US buyers \$5 mn

WASHINGTON: Coronavirus-related fraud schemes are rising fast and have cost US consumers some \$4.77 million so far, a government watchdog said Tuesday.

The Federal Trade Commission said it had more than 7,800 coronavirus-related reports from consumers as of Monday, double the number from a week earlier. - APP

US has missed opportunity to lift sanctions on Iran

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's president said on Wednesday the United States had missed a historical opportunity to lift sanctions on his country during the coronavirus outbreak, though he said the penalties had not hampered Tehran's fight against the infection.

It was a great opportunity for Americans to apologize ... and to lift the unjust and unfair sanctions



on Iran, Hassan Rouhani said in a televised cabinet meeting. "The sanctions have failed to hamper our efforts to fight against the coronavirus outbreak."

Turkey virus death toll exceeds 200

ISTANBUL: More than 200 people have died from COVID-19 in Turkey, which has ramped up tests to more than 15,000 a day, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca announced Tuesday. Koca shared the latest figures on Twitter, saying that 46 people had died in the last 24 hours, raising the country's overall death toll to 214. With 2,704 more cases of the novel coronavirus, the official total of those infected has reached 13,531. - APP

Trump ready to help end Saudi-Russian row

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he was ready to help resolve an escalating oil price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia that has helped push crude benchmarks to 17-year lows. The threat of a global recession triggered by the coronavirus pandemic had already hammered prices when Riyadh said last month it would raise exports after a production-cut agreement among top producers flopped in

early March. On Monday, Saudi Arabia said it would increase exports further to a record 10.6 million barrels per day from May, deepening a global supply glut as crude recorded its biggest monthly and quarterly price plunges in history. Trump said he had spoken with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman by phone with the aim of halting the slide. "The two countries are

discussing it. And I am joining at the appropriate time, if need be," Trump said.

Saudi Arabia had been exporting around 7.0 million barrels per day under an output reduction agreement among a 24-member producer alliance known as OPEC+, which included Russia.

OPEC+ failed to reach an agreement on further production cuts to shore up sagging prices as the coronavirus battered the global economy last month. - APP

Mahalla's significance in Uzbekistan will increase

DNA

TASHKENT: From ancient times, mahalla in Uzbekistan has been a powerful cultural center, an effective body of citizen self-governance, the structure closest to the people; a unique institution of civil society. The role and significance of mahalla has always been priceless in the careful preservation of national and universal values, culture, lifestyle, thinking and spirituality of the multi-national people of Uzbekistan, passed down from generation to generation. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbek-

istan Shavkat Mirziyoyev "On measures for improving the social and spiritual atmosphere in society, further supporting the mahalla institute, as well as raising the system of working with families and women to a new level", a Ministry for Supporting Mahalla and Family was established in Uzbekistan.

Considering an important role of mahalla in the community and to support workers in the respective field, March 22 was declared the "Day of Mahalla System Workers". The Ministry for Supporting Mahalla and Family will serve as the authorized government body for the development and im-

plementation of a unified state policy in the field of supporting families, women and the elderly, protecting their rights and legitimate interests, as well as establishing cooperation with citizens' self-government bodies.

One of the tasks of the Ministry will include assistance and full implementation of "Comfortable and Safe Mahalla" principle in society, establishment of close cooperation with citizens' self-government bodies in improving social and spiritual environment in families and mahalla.

Ensuring protection of women's rights and interests is yet another vital tasks of the Ministry. Specialists will maintain close cooperation with women in all mahallas to timely detect and address problems.

A research institute "Mahalla va oila" ("Mahalla and family") will be established on the basis of the Scientific and Practical Research Center "Oila" ("Family") under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Training and Research Center "Mahalla" with its transfer to the Ministry structure. New Ministry will also play the main role in raising the status of mahalla institution in solving problems of the population and exercising public control over activities of state bodies; will carry out tasks to

support and assist citizens' self-government in the following areas: - maintaining a unified state policy aimed at strengthening the institution of family, primarily aimed at implementing the idea of a "Healthy family - a healthy society", organizing targeted assistance to disadvantaged and problem families; - ensuring effective implementation of state policy in supporting women, protecting their rights and legitimate interests, increasing their role and activity in public and political life of the country, ensuring guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men; - timely identification of women's problems, pro-

vision of social, legal, psychological and material assistance to women who need help and find themselves in a difficult social situation, including women with disabilities; - ensuring the employment of women, improving their working conditions, providing women, especially young girls in rural areas, with comprehensive targeted support for their wide involvement in family and private entrepreneurship, craftsmanship; - developing proposals for supporting the activities of citizens' self-government bodies, protecting their rights and legitimate interests, as well as developing mahalla system; - strengthening

the role and importance in society of citizens' self-governing bodies, raising their status in working with everyday problems of the population and implementing effective public control; - strengthening mutual cooperation of internal affairs bodies, other government departments and public organizations in matters of ensuring the rule of law and preventing delinquency in mahallas; - implementation of a set of measures aimed at improving the material and technical security of citizens' gatherings, as well as the introduction of modern information and communication technologies to the field.

Japan records 2,235 COVID-19 cases

TOKYO: Japan's health ministry and local governments said that 2,235 people had been infected with the COVID-19 virus in Japan as of 11:30 a.m. local time on Wednesday, with rising cases in urban areas prompting local authorities to request residents to restrict their movements. The death toll in Japan from the pneumonia-causing virus currently stands at a total of 77 people, according to the health ministry, with the figure including those from the virus-hit Diamond Princess cruise ship that was quarantined in Yokohama, close to Tokyo. - APP