



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**China combat virus with unity and care, says Chinese envoy**

**Britain assures help Pakistan, says Dr. Turner**

**Azerbaijan govt taking all steps to check virus**

## Briefs

**Imran deploras Indian decision**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Twitter on Thursday to "strongly" condemn the Modi government's continuing attempts to illegally alter the demography of India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. "We strongly condemn the racist Hindutva Supremacist Modi Govt's continuing attempts to illegally alter the demography of IOJK in violation of all international laws & treaties," he said. "The new Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Order 2020 is a clear violation of the 4th Geneva Convention." Prime Minister Khan said the timing of this latest illegal action is particularly reprehensible because it seeks to exploit the international focus on the COVID19 pandemic to push forward the BJP's Hindutva Supremacist agenda.

**Firdous welcomes Japanese grant**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan on Thursday welcomed \$216 million Japanese grant for Pakistan to fight corona pandemic. In a tweet, she said that Japan has always supported Pakistan during difficult times. The SAPM said that the government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was making all out efforts to save every Pakistani from the menace. She said that providing relief to every deserving Pakistani affected by outbreak of coronavirus was top most priority of the government.

**Govt taking steps to check virus**

DNA

ATTOCK: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis Zulfi Bukhari has said that has said present government is taking drastic measures to combat Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). He said this while presiding over a meeting here to review the measures taken in for preventive measures, treatment and control of virus besides to provide relief to the poor segments of society in the wake of coronavirus pandemic at deputy commissioner office in Attock on Thursday.

## UAE sends medical supplies

Relatives of Pakistanis who are living in UAE and other Gulf countries have demanded of the government of Pakistan and UAE govt to help facilitate their early return

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: To show solidarity and brotherhood with Pakistan the government of United Arab Emirates has sent first consignment of medical supplies to Pakistan to help government effectively deal with the deadly COVID 19 disease. The medical supplies arrived in Pakistan on Thursday and were immediately handed over the Pakistani authorities. The officials of UAE handed over medical supplies

to Pakistani officials. It is learnt that the UAE is expected to send more supplies in the coming days. Pakistan and UAE are time tested friends and have proved this friendship during difficult times. UAE support even in the past has been forthcoming whenever Pakistan needed that. During the deadly earthquake and floods UAE supported wholeheartedly. Meanwhile, relatives of Pakistanis who are living in UAE and other Gulf countries have demanded

of the government of Pakistan and UAE govt to help facilitate their early return Pakistan is resuming international flights on selected routes. People living in Gulf states hope that they will also be considered for their return to Pakistan. The UAE and Saudi Arabian governments, according to sources, have been providing all possible medical facilities to those suffering from this disease. The Saudi King recently announced to provide free of charge medical services to all patients regardless of their nationalities.

## Britain assures full support to Pakistan



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Dr. Christian Turner has said that his Government fully supports the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to provide relief to its people and it is ready to provide any assistance, if required, in the form of aid through DFID. The High Commissioner assured that in the times of global crisis the British government stands with the people of Pakistan to further strengthen their already well established relationship. He expressed these views during his meeting with Adviser to Prime Minister

on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafee Shaikh here at the Finance Division. The Adviser expressed his and the Government's commiseration with the High Commissioner on the deaths of the people due to Corona Virus pandemic. He said that it is a testing situation for the nations all over the world and every loss of life is a cause of concern. He further shared with the High Commissioner the losses that have taken place due to the pandemic and the strategy adopted by the government of Pakistan to provide relief to the people. The Adviser thanked the High Commissioner for his support and assistance in the hour of need.

## Pakistan Embassy helps distressed Pakistanis during lockdown in France

The Ambassador thanked the Pakistani companies, associations and social workers who have joined hands with the Embassy in this noble initiative

MUBASHAR BHATTI

PARIS: The Embassy of Pakistan in Paris has launched a ration distribution campaign to help those Pakistanis who may face hardship due to coronavirus lockdown in France. This was stated by the Ambassador of Pakistan to France Mr. Moin ul Haque in a statement is-

sued in Paris today. The Ambassador said that the Embassy in coordination with community associations and local philanthropist organizations will distribute the essential food items to needy people. The members of the Pakistani community who need such help may please contact the Embassy at following helpline numbers:

0033(0)14562232 and 0033(0)637281541 or through Embassy's email

parepparis@mofa.gov.pk or consular@pakembparis.com.



The Ambassador thanked the Pakistani companies, associations and social workers who have joined hands with the Embassy in this noble initiative. Earlier, on behalf of the members of the Embassy of Pakistan to France and on my his behalf, the ambassador extended his deepest condolences and grief over the sad demise of Mr. Khushbkat Attari who passed away near

Paris today due to COVID-19. Inna LiAllah wa inna alaihai rajaioon May Almighty Allah bless the departed soul in eternal peace and give patience, courage and fortitude to the bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss. I would also request the community members to pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

## SUPPORT FROM UAE



ISLAMABAD: Media supplies from UAE being unloaded the at Islamabad Airport. – DNA

**Afghan govt releases prisoners**

DNA

KABUL: A senior Afghan security official said that the Afghan government released 100 Taliban prisoners from jails on Thursday, and that in exchange the Taliban will release 20 Afghan security members. The prisoner swap is part of confidence-building measures crucial for the success of the peace deal signed between the United States and the Taliban to end nearly two decades of war. The release of 100 Taliban fighters is the first steps towards a subsequent exchange of 6,000 prisoners held by the Afghan government and the insurgent group.

**Man kills brother**

MUNIR FASAIL

ATTOCK: A man has killed his elder brother in Marri village in limits of Attock Police station on Thursday. Police while quoting family sources said that 45 years Amjad Noor has exchanged hot words with his younger brother over some domestic dispute. Later he took out his pistol and opened indiscriminate firing at him resultantly he received four bullets and died on the spot.

## China combat virus with unity: envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Covid-19 caught us all by surprise from the very beginning, but China, under the strong leadership of Communist Party and Chinese government put the lives of its people first, ensuring confidence, unity, and good attention to the life is returning to normalcy, said Ms Pang Chunxue, the Chinese Deputy Chief of Mission in Pakistan. She was speaking at an online policy dialogue titled "Combating COVID-19: Learnings from China" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Thursday. Sharing her experiences of last three months, she said: "We have made some swift actions regarding total lockdown of Hubei

province, made useful preventive and control measures by persuading people to stay at home and making them socially distant and provided people with daily essentials to ensure their co-operation so that they could stay at home comfortably. Ms Pang Chunxue emphasized that China has paid good attention to the importance of think tanks, their input is very important to governments and the general population. Furthermore, she specified that CPEC is now in a new stage and that this new stage focuses on the cooperation of China and Pakistan to develop socio-economic infrastructure, education sector, agriculture sector and also the SDGs. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri Executive Director SDPI

said that our approach in fighting this disease is urban-centric; urban dwellers have some sort of health care, but in small towns and villages health care is non-existent. "We need to focus on villages, similarly bilateral or multi-lateral institutions should discuss specific districts or advise them how to cope up the situation. Yesterday, he said, Pakistan had the highest number of cases confirmed in a day however we should also be mindful of the fact that there will be a third wave after the lockdown. "This wave will be generated by the exodus of daily wagers that are now returning to their villages." He said April 15 is the date for wheat harvest and if this spreads to rural areas, we should expect wheat scarcity.

## Saudi Arabia calls for OPEC meeting

DNA

RIYADH: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like draw attention to the efforts it has exerted during the past period to reach an agreement within OPEC + group to restore equilibrium in the oil market as it has

garnered the support of as many as 22 countries within OPEC + group, but it was not possible to reach an agreement due to lack of consensus. Today, the Kingdom calls for an urgent meeting for OPEC+ group and other countries, with aim of reaching a fair agreement to restore the desired

balance of oil markets. This invitation comes within framework of the Kingdom's constant efforts to support the global economy in this exceptional circumstance, and in appreciation of President Donald Trump of the United States of America's request and the US friends' request.

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## MNA urges masses to follow precautions

PESHAWAR: Parliamentary Secretary for Interior, Haji Shaukat Ali MNA asked people to follow precautionary measures announced by the government for the prevention of the spread of Corona Virus. Talking to general secretary PTI Union Council No.8, Siraj Khan here Thursday, he said that Corona Virus has affected the whole world and life has been paralyzed. Therefore, he said there is no option other than restricting movement and adopting social distancing. He said that PTI workers have played full role in every difficult time and now he once again wants to tell the party workers to remain alert for the service of the poor people. — APP

# Call to strengthen social safety by diverting funds

UN is trying to promote regional co-operation towards the creation of a global emergency health fund. Debt relief or debt deferral mechanisms need to be negotiated with global lenders in particular

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Countries having better social protection systems are in a better position to deal with COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, flexible budgeting should be introduced in Pakistan on a war footing by diverting funds from other areas for creating strong social protection systems. This was the crux of an online dialogue titled: 'Macroeconomic Policy Responses to COVID-19' organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, economic experts from Pakistan and abroad agreed that the government needs to be more transparent regarding its financial measures and reassure that its people are its priority above anything else. Dr Hamza Ali Malik, Director Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division at UNESCAP, said irrespective of their fiscal positions,

all the countries, including Pakistan, should go ahead with health and social protection expenditures. "We all understand there is a confluence of multiple shocks from both the demand and supply side, however it is expected that demand side shocks will dominate the supply side considerations." Contractions in economy will be of a much more concern than inflation, he said, adding that fiscal policy will have to take lead here and monetary measures will have to be there, but will essentially be complementing the lead by fiscal authorities. Regarding interest rate, he said, it was lowered to boost businessmen confidence or acquire fiscal space rather it is a consequence of the measures that the global system has enforced such as massive and substantial liquidity injections all over the world. In Pakistan, he said, it is a natural consequence, as how the balance sheets work. "Central banks have to step in and make sure that their actions are consistent in

terms of prevailing market interest rates and they have to lower interest rates." He said the decision will be primarily driven by how much liquidity and credit support is needed to run the system. Dr Malik said that the UN is trying to promote regional co-operation towards the creation of a global emergency health fund. Debt relief or debt deferral mechanisms need to be negotiated with global lenders in particular, he said, adding that the UN system wants to engage all the countries so that governments commit that they will have tangible improvements in the areas, which are beyond pure economic considerations. "Moreover, it is evident that there is less pollution due to a decline in economic activity, this should be taken as an opportunity to support and prioritize low carbon footprint industries and businesses, to make economies more sustainable over time. The digital divide also has to be addressed, Internet should

be accessible to all as education and other activities now depend on it, he maintained. Mr. Malik noted that the IMF will be very receptive this time regarding the lowering of targets, and an emergency meeting of Monetary and Fiscal Coordination Board (MFCB) should have been called which is the existing mechanism for consultations to feed its advice to the National Economic Council (NEC). Dr Vaqar Ahmed, SDPI Joint Executive Director, said central banks across the world were quick to respond while treasuries were slow to respond, so this calls for treasuries to change the way they operate in distressed times. Fiscal policy response should be clear, quick and transparent. "We need to revive our trust in rule based fiscal policy, as the confidence of the treasury to act will also be boosted by this. A rule based fiscal policy will not only help in managing the crisis phase but also the post crisis phase." Moreover, he

said, greater participatory democracy in decision-making is needed, as the stimulus package that was announced without participation and consultation from the business community created great resentment among them. Finally, he underlined the importance of the consultative process which is necessary as the government has approached the IMF for the Rapid Finance Instrument. Now, it's time to integrate databases, as currently there is no integration between FBR and Ministry of Commerce or FBR and Ministry of Finance. He said at least 13 tax departments across the country are also not linked. "Moreover, cursory analysis reveals the policies adopted by each of the provinces has overlaps because systems and data were never integrated." This compromises the efficiency of public spending and especially when donors start supporting Pakistan in the post crisis phase, he said, concluding that these overlaps need to be avoided.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Japan Matsuda Kuninori and his staff wearing protective gears during office hours. — DNA

## AIOU earmarks 15 regions for assignments

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has earmarked fifteen regions of the country for submission of academic assignments to the designated tutors through Online, by April 15. The regions are: Islamabad-Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Quetta, Bahawalpur, DG Khan, Abbotabad and D.I. Khan. According to Director Regional services on Thursday, a separate LMS portal (<http://aaghi.aiou.edu.pk>) has been generated for this purpose. The students of these regions have already been sent password and user-names for online submission of

the assignments, by the University's Directorate of Information and Communication Technology. The assignments could be sent for those programs which come under 2nd Phase of admissions (autumn 2019). The programs include: BS, B.Ed, and MA. MSc except Urdu, Arabic, Islamiyat and Pak Studies. The University has introduced the scheme according to newly launched Learning Management System (LMS). A proposal is also under consideration for holding online academic workshops, that are essential part of the University's distance learning system. As was announced earlier, on the country-wide basis the students were required to send their assignments (both first and

second) by the stipulated date through post-offices, since the assignments are also essential segment of the University's learning system. As per the directives of the Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Zia-Ul-Qayyum, the University was trying its best to facilitate its 1.4 million students across the country in their academic pursuits mainly through online, during the wake of coronavirus, said Director Admissions Mian Muhammad Riaz. Meanwhile, the AIOU will continue its Online admissions for the 2nd phase, semester Spring, 2020 till April 15. As preventive measures against pandemic COVID-19, students have already been directed to avoid visiting the University's main Campus or its regional offices.

## Plans to cope with corona virus reviewed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Chairman, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Member Administration, CDA on Thursday visited Capital Hospital and inspected the arrangements made by the Hospital Management to cope with corona virus. On this occasion, Executive Director Capital Hospital, Doctors and para-medical staff were also present. On this occasion, Member Administration was apprised that in order to cope with the situation arise due to corona virus.

## Kanwal Shauzab urges nation for maximum social distancing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leader Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Kanwal Shauzab Thursday urged the nation to adopt maximum social distancing as a precautionary measure against the threat of coronavirus pandemic. Media is very important in this situation as sensationalism could lead to panic that might make the situation worse, she said during a Radio Program. Prime Minister Imran Khan is addressing the nation time to time and always talked about the multipurpose strategies that the government is working on, she added. Kanwal said the government is continuously urging the people to self-isolate voluntarily to contain the virus from spreading. But unfortunately, many citizens continue to live as they did a few weeks ago and continue going about their daily businesses. "We need to carry out social distancing measures to minimize contact with other



people to diminish the risk of contagion", she urges. It is a difficult time for daily wagers in particular who are most affected by the lock down but the government has announced a relief packages for such deserving masses, she added. Pakistan is a developing country with limited resources but doing whatever possible for the betterment of people. It is time to be united and this is not the appropriate time for politics as it is the national issue, leader said.

## Zulfi urges expats to donate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari Thursday appealed the expatriated Pakistanis to donate for Prime Minister's COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund, set up recently to support the lock-down-affected people in the country. He asked the overseas Pakistanis to join his government's cause to support the poor people who could be affected by the lockdowns imposed in the wake of coronavirus.

## 'Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program' receives millions SMS: Sania

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Dr. Sania Nishtar Thursday said that the government has received millions of SMS on 8171 for cash grant Rs. 12,000 under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program, formally launched on Wednesday. In an interview with Radio, she said this program has been launched for the deserving families especially the daily wagers facing financial problems due to coronavirus. The Special Assistant



said that the deserving families would be able to draw the cash grant from next Wednesday. She said transparency has been ensured in the program as the government was using the technology based sys-

tem in this regard. Sania said that the government was ensuring for no disruption and smooth flow of transportation of goods in order to ensure availability of essential commodities to the people. — APP

## Serena Extends Community Support in Wake of COVID-19

"Only the weeks and months ahead will reveal the full impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Mankind, and the losses to the local and global economy and business sectors. However, it is already clear by early estimates that there will be far-reaching economic repercussions, with the under-resourced segments of society suffering the most," he said

FARUKH SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels has started distributing rations to communities in locations surrounding their hotels countrywide, to support affected segments at a time when the global Coronavirus pandemic is wreaking havoc on the country's economy. More than 3400 deserving families and households in areas where Serena Hotels are located, including in Islamabad, Faisalabad, Quetta, Swat, Gilgit, Hunza, Shigar and Khaplu

have been provided with rations that include food staples and essentials. In addition, the employees of Serena Hotels have donated one day's salary, with the company double matching the donation as a goodwill gesture, to contribute Rs. 10 million to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund. "Serena Hotels has always played its role as a responsible business and support the local communities through its extensive CSR initiatives, and community-friendly ethos," said Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels. "During this crisis we stand united with



the Government, relief organisations and local community, and shall continue to extend our humble support." "Only the weeks and months ahead will reveal the full impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Mankind, and the losses to the local and global economy and business sectors. However, it is already clear by early estimates that there will be far-reaching economic repercussions, with the under-resourced segments of society suffering the most," he said. "The severity of the situation calls for prudent measures and precautions to be taken to contain and man-

age this crisis." Serena Hotels has implemented a comprehensive Coronavirus Response Plan that stringently follows the health and safety guidelines from the WHO and CDC, and directives from local Government Authorities. The company has also launched a multimedia awareness campaign for the guests, employees and the public about virus precautionary measures. "We are closely monitoring the situation and adapting our policies accordingly. We hope and pray to return to times of health and prosperity around the world again," said Mr. Boolani.

## Zartaj Gul salutes soldiers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Thursday paid a rich tribute to doctors, paramedics, police, Rangers and Army, recognizing their services in the fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. "We need strong nerves to combat COVID-19 pandemic and as a mature nation we should be united to fight against this pandemic," she said while talking to a private news channel.

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## Limiting the spread of COVID 19

WHERE containment of the spread of Covid-19 is concerned, it is essential that decisions at the top are taken with prudence and firmness. Any dithering or lack of direction can result in the situation getting out of control with an explosion of cases. Considering our creaking healthcare system, this is not a risk Pakistan can afford to take. Where mismanagement of the crisis is concerned, mistakes were quite obviously made while handling the zaireen returning from Iran, which has been ravaged by the virus. The pilgrims were housed in inadequate conditions in Taftan, and the lack of proper facilities to screen and accommodate them is said to have led to the spread of the contagion in this country. However, another major administrative lapse that has affected the battle against Covid-19 has been the Punjab government's handling of the Tableeghi Jamaat's grand ijtimā in Raiwind held in the middle of March, when coronavirus cases had already been reported in Pakistan. The Tableeghi Jamaat's ijtimā is no small event. Figures in the media say around 250,000 people had gathered in Raiwind. At a time when 'social distancing' and 'lockdowns' are buzzwords in the effort to stop the spread of the contagion, the congregation was a recipe for disaster. The Punjab government had asked the Tableeghi Jamaat to postpone the event, but the request was ignored. It took heavy showers in the area for the Jamaat's hierarchy to cancel the event after it had begun, but by then the damage had already been done. Cases connected to its members have been reported across Pakistan, as well as other parts of the world. In fact, it is believed that Covid-19 was carried to Gaza by two preachers who had been to Raiwind. There are lessons that can be learnt from this fiasco. Firstly, where matters of public health are concerned, the state must be gentle but firm. The Punjab government should have clearly communicated to the Tableeghi leadership that letting the ijtimā go ahead would create a health crisis on a national scale. Therefore, overzealous clerics must not be allowed to challenge the writ of the state, and the Covid-19 crisis should be prevented from snowballing further; the ban on congregational prayers must be enforced by the centre as well as all provincial administrations as long as the crisis lasts. – *Courtesy DAWN*



## Pakistan's exports to USA grew 4.64%

PAKISTAN'S exports of goods and services to United State Of America (USA) grew by 4.64 percent during the first seven months of financial year (2019-20) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to USA were recorded at US \$3494.345 million during July-January (2019-20) against exports of US \$3339.206 million during July-January (2018-19), PBS data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from USA into the country during the period were recorded at US \$1932.144 million against US \$1853.087 million last year, showing growth of 4.26 percent in first seven months of this year.

Based on the trade figures, the trade of goods and services with USA witnessed increase of 5.11 percent in surplus during first seven months of ongoing fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$1562.201 million against \$1486.119 million during same period of last year, the data revealed.

The commodities that contributed positively growth in exports included rice exports of which grew from \$16.084 million last year to \$30.475 million during the current fiscal year, showing growth of 89.47 percent.

The exports of tobacco and its refuse also increased by 6250 percent, from \$0.050 million to \$3.175 million whereas the exports of furnishing articles of textile material increased by 41.47 percent, from \$15.856 million to \$22.433 million.

The exports of medical, surgical and dental instruments grew by 14.60 percent, from \$67.352 million to \$77.192 million while the exports of articles of apparel and accessories of leather increased by 8.46 percent, from \$67.132 million last year to \$72.817 million, the data revealed. The exports of maintenance and repair services increased by 28.47 percent, from \$0.764 million to \$1.417 million whereas the exports telecommunication, computer and information services increased by 28.08 percent, from \$336.769 million to \$431.291 million.

Meanwhile, the commodities that contributed positively growth in imports included special transaction NES imports of which grew from \$48.706 million last year to \$85.080 million during the current year, showing increase of 74.68 percent.

The imports of milk and cream concentrated or sweetened also increased by 10.84 percent, from \$9.609 million to \$10.651 million whereas the imports of air or vacuum pump, compressors and fans increased by 126.92 percent, from \$6.350 million to \$14.410 million.

The imports of ferrous waste and scrap also increased by 66.74 percent, from \$63.962 million to \$106.656 million whereas the imports of cotton, not carded or combed increased by 54.43 percent, from \$141.022 million to \$217.784 million, the data revealed.

## Kazakhstan 2030 & Economic Sustainability: an overview

Dr Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



*By implementing the Strategy 2030, Kazakhstan achieved the privatization of its macro-economy, institutionalization of a world class banking system and started to generate its own economic elite. Resultantly, Kazakhstan's priority shifted from a strategy of economic stabilization to one of economic growth during 1997*

TO achieve certain socio-economic goals the government of Kazakhstan announced "Strategy 2030". It outlined a comprehensive road map to transform Kazakhstan's national economy, civility, society, and governance. It was indeed a giant step to achieve the optimal utility of various ongoing socio-economic reforms.

Being prominent regional expert of Kazakhstan I would like to examine the different salient features of Kazakhstan Strategy 2030 along with its success rate. The long-term development strategy "Kazakhstan 2030: Prosperity, Security and Ever Growing Welfare of All the

Kazakhstanis" was adopted in 1997. The former President Nursultan Nazarbayev outlined the major principle of the country's development and termed economic development precedence over political development.

The 2030 Strategy pinpointed seven long-term priorities i.e. national security; domestic stability and consolidation of the society; economic growth based on an open market economy; health, education, and welfare; effectively utilizing energy resources; transport and communication infrastructure; and the professionalization of public administration. It considers the government's policies to achieve each of the priorities. It also touches upon the process of policy implementation, looking at both successes and failures.

By implementing the Strategy 2030, Kazakhstan achieved the privatization of its macro-economy, institutionalization of a world class banking system and started to generate its own economic elite. Resultantly, Kazakhstan's priority shifted from a strategy of economic stabilization to one of economic growth during 1997. Its economic system was stable enough to make it possible to instigate reforms elsewhere, i.e. in social welfare, healthcare, education, transport, and other sectors in late 1990s.

A strong and stable country is entitled to achieve its socio-economic goals. Better national security shield paves the way of economic liberalization, sustainable development, robust industrialization, diversification of economy and productive channels. Strategy 2030 guaranteed Kazakhstan's territorial integrity. It emphasized to achieve a strong state while maintaining friendly relations with all its neighbouring countries. Kazakhstan sought to further deepen and strengthen trust and equitable relations with its nearest neighbours.

It also outlined foreign policy priorities i.e. greater socio-economic integration with all the CIS, nurturing relations with the Middle East Region, and further strengthening of cooperation with the major democracies and industrialized countries of the west the USA in particular. To achieve further financial self-reliance it stated that Kazakhstan welcomes assistance and cooperation initiatives from international institutions and forums such as the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Internal stability and the consolidation of the people were defined as the second priority. Afterward, to achieve the goals of Strategy 2030, a wide range of measures were introduced to prevent ethnic and religious tension and promoted the spirit of unity within the population of the country, based on the principle of equal opportunities

for all citizens of Kazakhstan.

Establishment of an open market economy with high levels of foreign direct investment and domestic savings were defined as the third priority. It encouraged the substantial state's role in economic affairs. It established the legal basis for an economy in which private enterprise was the main actor/contributor. The government was tasked with making Kazakhstan more appealing for foreign investors in order to attract investments into major sectors of Kazakhstani industry. High inflows of FDIs were sought in agriculture, forestry and wood-using industries, light industry and food processing, tourism, building construction, and infrastructure. Development of these industries instrumental to encourage structural changes in its macro-economy which ultimately, created jobs and reduced poverty levels in the country.

The successful implementation of Strategy 2030 has now improved its healthcare system. It launched comprehensive information campaigns to promote healthy living, nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation. It stressed government willingness to pursue a more active policy in demography and family welfare as the economy grows. In the ongoing global COVID-19, the concrete response of Kazakhstan government has been highly appreciated by the WHO which reaffirms its superior health care system among the CIS.

The Strategy 2030 identified five points for the energy resources utilization strategy i.e. execution of long-term contracts with major international oil companies for obtaining technologies and know-how and attract major companies to ensure that the natural resources of the country are effectively exploited, diversification of oil & gas resources by building a pipeline system for oil and gas exports; attracting high inflows of investments from the USA, Russia, China, Japan, and Western Europe in Kazakhstan's oil and gas sector; maintaining self-sufficiency and competitive independence of domestic energy infrastructure through foreign investments and last sensible spending of future revenues. Energy resources have been one of the key elements of its foreign policy through which Kazakhstan revolutionized its economy, society and of course governance. It aimed to make its domestic transport and communication complex competitive on the world market and increase trade flows through its territory. The government sought to develop domestic rail, air, and water transport infrastructures as well as the national road network. Special attention was given to the development of telecommunications. Kazakhstan planned to build its own effective, independent telecommunications system, which gradually increased its competitiveness with other countries' systems.

It ensured to build an efficient, modern public administration that pledged/promised good governance in a market economy. It created a comprehensive nationwide system of public administration with effective staff training both in the country and abroad. It encouraged establishing a fair conditions for career promotion, a standardized information system, and a solid social protection system based on a spirit of appreciation of the contribution of a government's key resource.

It was a strategic giant leap towards further socio-economic transformation, economic sustainability, diversification of energy resources and productive channels, further improvement in education and health sectors, improvement in human development and above all seeking more and more inflows of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in the country. Due to successful implementation of Strategy 2030, Kazakhstan has been attracting the biggest ratios of FDIs in the CIS for so many years.

Being prominent regional expert of Kazakhstan and CIS it is suggested that Kazakhstan must further diversify its macro-economy and rigorously follow export oriented policies to maintain a sustainable economic growth/pattern in the country. Further diversification of oil & gas resources (demand & supply) will increase GDP & GNP. The further development of non-oil sector is the need of the hour which will also stimulate further consolidation of strategy 2030.

The Kazakhstan-2030 Strategy emphasized the importance of defining new international markets where Kazakhstan can become a leading global competitor and thereby generate future sources of economic growth. It encouraged promoting national diversification through innovation, cluster projects, and niche development.

To conclude, improving the quality of Kazakhstan's human resources through enhanced education and training will also be important because humans are real strategic assets of Kazakhstan which has now announced new economic course to achieve the remaining goals of the Strategic 2030.

Strategy 2030 was meant to revolutionize Kazakhstan and achieved a new Kazakhstan, which have been consistently building together starting from the first day of independence, is now confidently moving ahead, finding its unique way of development and winning recognition and prestige in the international community year by year. It was announced and implemented to make Kazakhstan a truly integral and dynamic part of the world markets for goods, services, labour resources, capital, modern innovations and technologies and it is now moving in right direction.

## Iraq's feuding politicians impervious to emerging calamity

*Al-Zurfi faces a daunting challenge. A former governor of Najaf province, he has dual US-Iraqi citizenship and has been associated with Iraq's politics since the US invasion in 2003. He took a tough stand against the militia of Muqtada Al-Sadr in 2004. He is the head of the Nasr parliamentary grouping that includes former Prime Minister Haider Abadi*

TWO weeks ago, Iraqi President Barham Salih nominated Adnan Al-Zurfi as prime minister-designate and tasked him with forming a Cabinet to be approved by parliament. This was the president's latest effort to form a government after Adel Abdul Mahdi stepped down in November last year in the face of widespread public criticisms of his

government's failure to provide services to the people. Al-Zurfi faces a daunting challenge. A former governor of Najaf province, he has dual US-Iraqi citizenship and has been associated with Iraq's politics since the US invasion in 2003. He took a tough stand against the militia of Muqtada Al-Sadr in 2004. He is the head of the Nasr parliamentary grouping that includes former Prime Minister Haider Abadi.

While Al-Zurfi enjoys the backing of several Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish groups in parliament, he is being opposed by the Fatah Alliance that is closely linked to Iran and by several militias that together make up the Iran-affiliated Popular Mobilization Units. He is viewed by them as being pro-US and thus a threat to continued Iranian influence in Iraq. Kata'ib Hezbollah has been particularly vociferous in criticizing Al-Zurfi's nomination, with its spokesman even saying that it is a "declaration of war against the Iraqi people that will burn what remains of Iraq."

Though he backs the street protests, Al-Zurfi is also being opposed by the young demonstrators who have been agitating for wide-ranging reform since October last year. They have been demanding an end to Iraq's "spoils" system in parliament, which is based on sectarian and ethnic affiliations, and have been insisting on a prime minister who has no links to Iraq's earlier politics or with foreign entities – Al-Zurfi fails to fulfill both of these criteria.

Iraq's political system is experiencing paralysis at a time when the country is facing several challenges – both economic and military – which have been complicated by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The virus outbreak has dealt a body blow to the national

economy by slowing down domestic economic activity and retarding Iraq's trade ties with its principal partners, Iran, Turkey and China, which are fighting their own battles against the virus.

What has worsened the situation is the collapse in oil prices. Oil exports provide more than 90 percent of the revenue for Iraq's annual budget. The budget for 2020, not yet approved by parliament, provides for an outlay of \$135 billion, with most of the expenditure going toward paying the salaries of 7 million government officials. The budget was based on assumed oil prices of \$56 per barrel. Now that oil prices have fallen to less than half this figure, the government will struggle to meet its obligations to public servants, while also paying for its local and foreign debt, providing urgently needed public services and investing in national development projects. Amid these economic concerns and popular discontent, Iraq remains the main theater of contention between Iran and the US. Throughout March, Iran-affiliated militants targeted American bases with rockets, at times killing and wounding armed forces personnel. These attacks have led to strong US responses, generating fears that the conflict could expand across the country. Occasionally, the US attacks have hit civilian targets, such as the airport at Karbala, leading to widespread condemnation from Iran's allies and even government sources. In the face of these rocket attacks, the US announced the closure of its bases in three areas – the Qayyarah base in Nineveh province, Al-Qaim base on the Syria-Iraq border, and the K1 base in Kirkuk province. US officials have denied that these closures are due to the attacks, saying that they were planned last year. The American

presence was meant to fight Daesh, but Iraqi forces are now well equipped to handle this responsibility.

The withdrawal from Al-Qaim is particularly significant. This border town was wrested from Daesh more than two years ago and, across the border in Syria, there are Iran-backed militias as well as US-sponsored Syrian Democratic Forces, largely made up of Kurdish fighters. There are concerns that Al-Qaim could see the penetration of pro-Iran militants, possibly from Kata'ib Hezbollah, rather than elements from the Iraqi army. Iraq's political system is experiencing paralysis at a time when the country is facing several challenges.

This period of uncertainty and tension has encouraged rumor-mongering in Iraq. Toward the end of March, Baghdad was awash with talk (perhaps from pro-Iranian sources) of a US-sponsored coup in the country to get rid of the present leaders, end the stalemate and usher in a new order. People were encouraged to stay at home and stockpile as much food as possible.

US sources also might have encouraged these fears. The New York Times reported that Defense Secretary Mark Esper had called for the planning of a "new campaign" inside Iraq and that "secret plans" were being developed to fight the Iran-backed militias. The closure of US bases is being seen as reducing targets for the militants.

Alongside the expanding scourge of the coronavirus pandemic, Iraq is confronting a multiplicity of crises. But its avaricious and feuding politicians appear impervious to the emerging calamity. Not surprisingly, the slogans of the demonstrators include: "Corruption is the real virus," and "politicians are the real virus." – *Courtesy Arab News*

**Briefs**

**US corona death toll tops 5,000**

ANKARA: The death toll from the novel coronavirus in the U.S. pushed past the 5,000 mark Thursday, according to data by Johns Hopkins University. The number of infected cases rose to 216,721, while 8,672 have recovered from the virus.

Most of the deaths were reported in New York state. New York City is the epicenter of the virus in the U.S., where 1,374 fatalities have been recorded.

The Maryland-based university's data showed worldwide infections at nearly the 937,600 mark, with more than 47,000 deaths. Over 194,000 have recovered from infections. — APP

**Qatar's timely steps to contain Covid-19**

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Thursday held a telephonic conversation with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and discussed the situation resulting from the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Foreign Minister Qureshi said that Pakistan was deploying all available resources to curtail the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and reduce its impact. — APP

**EU chief apologises to Italy**

ROME: European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told Italy on Thursday that European nations were ready to help it deal with the coronavirus after initially focusing on "their own home problems". But the EU leader stopped short of agreeing to Rome's request for the bloc to start issuing joint debt — dubbed "coronabonds" — that could let countries such as Italy address the crisis more cheaply. — APP

**Will control virus outbreak: PM hopes**

Government could reach the formal labor but in Pakistan, majority was the informal labour; however it was struggling to reach them out through Ehsaas Program to provide them cash assistance of Rs 12,000 ;country could not move ahead unless the business sector flourished as it used to be in 70s when the sector was greatly incentivized

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday hoped that the country would overcome the coronavirus outbreak using the available resources as the current trajectory of the growth in Pakistan was relatively slower than that of the western countries. "By the grace of Allah, Pakistan does not have the trajectory like other

countries. We will overcome the coronavirus considering the current pace of its growth," the prime minister said addressing a ceremony of distribution of Rs 100 billion refunds among the businessmen.

The ceremony was also attended by Finance Advisor Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Commerce Advisor Abdul Razzak Dawood, Special Assistant to PM on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan and the businessmen.

The prime minister said during the lockdown which had been extended for two weeks, the people must avoid gatherings like weddings, cinemas and sports though the educational institutes had already been closed.

However, he said amid the efforts of containing the Covid-19 disease, the government would have to create a balance allowing the industries which were essential to provide employment to the poor people.

The prime minister congratulated the finance ministry and Federal Board of Revenue for formulating a package to support the business community and daily wagers who had been affected by the closures.

He said the government could reach the formal labor but in Pakistan, majority was the informal labour; however it was struggling to reach them out through Ehsaas Program to provide them cash assistance of Rs 12,000.

He said the country could not move ahead unless the business sector flourished as it used to be in 70s when the sector was greatly incentivized.

He said the previous governments avoided the payment of tax refunds to the businessmen but the incumbent government kept it on priority.

The prime minister said he had assigned the commerce and industries ministries to contact the chambers to discuss the anti-coronavirus strategies.

**Pak condemns news Indian laws**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned and rejected the latest Indian action of amending the domicile laws aimed at illegally changing the demographic structure of the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) by allowing the non-Kashmiris to settle there.

"The so-called "Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Order 2020" is another illegal step by India

to settle non-Kashmiris in IOJK by changing the domicile laws.

This is a clear violation of international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention," the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

She said the Indian action, a continuation of India's illegal and unilateral steps since August 05, 2019, also constituted a violation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Resolutions, bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan, and humanitarian norms.

The spokesperson said the Kashmiris in IOJK had outrightly rejected the new law as "unacceptable."

Indeed, the Kashmiris will never accept such blatant usurpation of their fundamental rights and attempts to change their demography and distinct identity, she added. —APP

**Pakistan Navy distributes ration**

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: While the country is combating Corona Virus Pandemic, Pakistan Navy is extending its support to affected families in prevalent precarious state of affair due to lockdown.

Pakistan Navy has donated food/ commodities while reaching out to needy families in Coastal and Creeks areas of Sindh and Balochistan that includes distribution of ration bags in Gwadar, Pasni, Bin Qa-

sim, Somiani, Shah Bandar, Keti Bandar and other adjoining rural areas containing sufficient amount of food/ commodities for a family of 8-10 persons for a month.

Beside, Pakistan Navy with passionate resolve remained committed in distributing ration bags in various cities across Pakistan at Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur, separately.

In addition, Pakistan Navy personnel conducted awareness campaigns on preventive measures

against Covid-19 and distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs).

Pakistan Navy Women Association (PNWA) has also remained at forefront in distributing ration among low income civilian staff families and Fisherman Association in Karachi and rural outskirt villages of Islamabad including BharaKahu and adjoining areas.

Pakistan Navy midst challenges of Corona pandemic is determined to extend humanitarian support for national cause.



LALAMUSA: Cros seen hovering over sky in Lalamusa on Thursday. — Khurshid Nadeem

**RCCI urges for bailout package for Travel Industry**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Saboor Malik has demanded a special bailout package for travel industry and urged Civil Association Authority (CAA) to intervene immediately as Airlines approach to Travel Agents and Travel Agencies for repayments.

Talking to former Chairman of the Travel Association of Pakistan (TAAP) on Skype, Rana Abdul Ghafoor Khan, President Chamber Saboor Malik said that the travel industry is facing a huge crisis due to corona virus. The airlines already have bank guarantees in millions and their demand for repayments in a situation where every office of Airline has been shut down.

**British American Tobacco working on Potential COVID-19 Vaccine**

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: With the World Health Organization declaring COVID-19 a pandemic, all eyes have turned to the prospect of a vaccine, because only a vaccine can prevent people from getting sick. British American Tobacco's (BAT) US bio-tech subsidiary, Kentucky Bio Processing (KBP), is also developing a potential vaccine for COVID-19 and is now in pre-clinical testing. If testing goes well, BAT is hopeful that

with the right partners and support from government agencies, between 1 and 3 million doses of the vaccine could be manufactured per week, beginning in June.

The vaccine in development uses BAT's proprietary, fast-growing tobacco plant technology which has several advantages over conventional vaccine production technology. It is potentially safer given that tobacco plants can't host pathogens which cause human disease. It is faster because the elements of the vaccine accumulate in tobacco plants

much more quickly. The vaccine formulation KBP is developing remains stable at room temperature, unlike conventional vaccines which often require refrigeration. It has the potential to deliver an effective immune response in a single dose.

Dr David O'Reilly, Director of Scientific Research, BAT said: that While KBP remains a commercial operation, the intention is that its work around the COVID-19 vaccine project will be carried out on a not for profit basis.

**Stigmatization may sabotage China-India cooperation**

BEIJING: Recent hyping of anti-China sentiment on India's social media networks may risk sabotaging potential cooperation between the two neighbors in the global pandemic fight. Last week, senior Indian politician Manish Tewari tweeted that the coronavirus "should be called Chi-

na Virus" and COVID-19 "is a misnomer." Tewari is among those who repeatedly use the terms "China virus" or "Wuhan virus," and alleged that China should take the blame for the global spread of the coronavirus, according to an article published by Global Times here on

Thursday. Only narrow-minded nationalists would exploit a global pandemic, which knows no borders or races, to inflame a conflict between countries. There is an acknowledged consensus that a virus should not be linked to any specific country or region. — APP

**COVID-19: Elmar Mammadyarov: Ministry and diplo missions of Azerbaijan continue operation**

DNA

BAKU: Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov answered questions about the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and consulates of Azerbaijan in the context of the fight against coronavirus in our country and international cooperation in this area. The following is the interview. He said the coronavirus pandemic is a threat that is being fought on a global scale today, and in this context Azerbaijan, like any other country, is taking all necessary preventive and effective measures for the health of its citizens, for the security of our society and state. This process is under the direct control of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Mr. Ilham Aliyev, and the First Vice-President, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva. To this day, our state has always been next to its citizens and showed attention to them.

As part of the fight against the spread of the coronavirus infection, our state is mobilizing all its efforts and taking serious measures to protect the health of its citizens both in Azerbaijan proper and abroad.

In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic missions of our country abroad continue to operate in a special mode.

Our main objectives are to obtain complete information about our citizens temporarily located abroad (working, studying or traveling for other reasons), to respond to their requests, provide sound advice and coordination at a time



when different countries have introduced a quarantine or a state of emergency, restricted and in many cases completely canceled overland and air transport.

As is known, the Operational Headquarters has been set up under the Cabinet of Ministers to combat the coronavirus, and

this headquarters regularly updates the population about the measures being taken.

There is an operational headquarters under the Foreign Ministry too, which provides responses to the queries and questions sent to Foreign Ministry's 24/7 "hotline" and Emails.

In parallel, there are active "hotlines" of all our diplomatic missions. We recommend that our citizens abroad contact these "hotlines" if they have any queries in the current situation.

The hotlines receive hundreds of calls every day. Numerous emails are sent to our email boxes and every single one of them is answered.

First of all, the appeal is recorded, contact details of the caller are noted, and then the appeal is forwarded to a relevant diplomatic mission and answered. At the same time, this information is forwarded to the Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers.

This process takes 24 hours. Most of the appeals are made by our citizens temporarily located abroad to receive education or for various other reasons.

People mainly seek advice on how to behave in the current situation and how they can return to the country. I

t is known that the government has so far organized special charter flights to return about 10,000 of our citizens to Azerbaijan, conducted the necessary checkups and placed them under quarantine.

It is also known that in the current circumstances it is very important to prepare quarantine places and hospitals with special regimes and provide them with the necessary logistics to enable the return of our citizens to the country.

After all, we must understand that quarantine places are also limited.

From this point of view, it is very important for our citizens to support the state and show understanding in this matter.

**NAB arrests fake officer**

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has arrested a fraudster Arsalan, posing himself as NAB officer, on the allegations of collecting funds from people in the name of corona (relief fund) and handed over him to police for further legal action.

According to a press release, NAB was strictly adhering to anti corruption policy of chairman NAB, who pledged strict action against corrupt elements and eradication of corruption immediately after taking the charge of the bureau.

It may be mentioned here that NAB had arrested 11 such fraudsters and handed over them to police on the allegations of looting people by posing themselves as NAB officers. — APP