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Armed forces fully coordinating with Centre, provinces

China welcomes UN report on COVID 19

Chairman NAB's policy yielding results



Construction sector opened from April 14

Govt decision taken in coordination with the provinces; decision aimed at reviving economic activities in the country, badly hit by the situation arising out of the Coronavirus outbreak: PM Imran Khan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday announced the opening of construction sector from April 14 to help the country's daily wagers and laborers, affected by continued lockdown due to COVID-19 outbreak, to earn their livelihoods. Talking to media-persons, he said the government's decision taken in coordination with the provinces, was also aimed at reviving economic activities in the country, badly hit by the situation arising out of the Coronavirus outbreak. The Prime Minister also announced various incentives for the construction sector including tax incentives, waivers and sub-

dies in the areas of sales tax, capital gain tax, withholding tax etc. Giving details of the decisions, he said that those investing in the construction sector during this fiscal year 2020-21 would not be asked any queries about the source of their income. Secondly, the Prime Minister said, the government had also decided to bring the construction sector in the fixed-tax regime under which the rate of tax on land would be levied on the basis of per square yard and per foot. He, however, added that those investing in the prime minister's housing programme would be given 90% tax rebate and they would be required to pay just 10% of the total

calculated tax amount on their projects. The Prime Minister said that it has also been decided to waive-off withholding in cement and steel sectors. Besides, he said, that in coordination with the provincial governments of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Sindh, it has also been decided to bring the sales tax in construction sector to 2% through consolidation of all taxes. The Prime Minister further said that Capital Gain Tax on the sale of house was also being done away with. He also announced Rs. 30 billion subsidy for Naya Pakistan Housing Programme, adding, further subsidy would be given on its progress.

FM talks to Indonesian colleague

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held a telephonic conversation with his Indonesian counterpart Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi and exchanged views over global efforts to prevent spread of the Coronavirus. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, on behalf of Pakistan and its people, expressed grief over loss of precious human lives in Indonesia due to global pandemic. He also appreciated Indonesia's timely measures to contain spread of the virus.

Russian virus cases top 4,000

MOSCOW: Russia has tallied 4,149 cases of COVID-19 in 78 regions as of Friday, up by 601 the previous day, official data showed. The death toll rose to 34 after four more patients died of the disease, Russia's coronavirus response center said in a statement. So far, 281 people have recovered, including 46 in the last 24 hours, it said. - APP

Pak Diaspora in Morocco asked to contact embassy for help

Corona virus has presented mankind with a sudden, acute and unique challenge; Pakistani govt is doing its utmost to grapple with this challenge: Hamid Asghar Khan

DNA

RABAT: Hamid Asghar Khan Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco has urged Pakistani Diaspora living in Morocco to come forward and donate to Prime Minister relief fund. He also called upon them to contact Pakistan embassy in case they need any assistance. He expressed these views in a letter written to Pakistani Diaspora living in Morocco. He added outbreak of corona virus has presented mankind with a sudden, acute and unique challenge, and all of our lives have been affected by it. "At this difficult time, as Representative of the Pakistan Government in Morocco I would like to assure you all that we here

at the Mission stand by you, and are committed to assist you in case you require our help. It is important for our community to remain calm, disciplined and patient as we face this difficult situation together". He said Pakistani Diaspora in Morocco is well settled, and there is a very small number of stranded Pakistani visitors with whom the Mission is in regular contact. Moroccan authorities have also given special attention to the few Pakistani students studying here. "Despite the lockdown, we have undertaken a consular visit of the sole Pakistani requiring one. Nevertheless, I would request all of you to immediately inform the Mission in case you learn of any citizen in distress". "Some of you may, in addition to



our stranded compatriots, may be keen to travel back to Pakistan. As you are aware all flight operations in Morocco are currently suspended, and the state of emergency is to remain in force till 20th of April, 2020 -so in a best case scenario no travel should be anticipated prior to that". Even as discussion of reopening Pak Airspace continues, it needs to be understood that travel would

only be possible once Moroccan authorities also allow flights to arrive and depart from the Kingdom. He said Pakistani Government is doing its utmost to grapple with this unique and enormous challenge. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, a herculean collective effort is being undertaken, and every effort is being made to shelter the population and economy from adverse fallout. Government is doing its utmost to balance the need for restrictions with the need to allow necessary movement for unavoidable purposes. The safety aspect is being considered along with the need to ensure that each and every home, especially in the poorer segments of society is able to access basic food and nourishment.

Despite financial constraints, huge amounts have been dedicated to upgrade medical facilities. Equally importantly, significant steps have been taken to shore up the economy and a mega relief package has been initiated to alleviate the difficulties being faced by the most vulnerable in society. In order to reach out to every household in far flung areas, a volunteer 'Tiger Force' is being raised as a special initiative of the Prime Minister. They will assist state representatives with relief activities at this hour of need. Similarly, a special fund has been created to accept donations to assist our more needy brethren. He requested those able and desirous to contribute generously in response to this appeal.



ISLAMABAD: UAE Embassy in Islamabad illuminated in blue to mark World Autism Awareness Day. - DNA

UAE EMBASSY

Civil, military leaders to protect people at all cost

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan Friday said civil and military leadership of Pakistan is determined and resolute to protect the people from coronavirus. In a tweet, she said that Prime Minister Imran

Khan visited National Command and Operation Center in Islamabad today to review the steps being taken to prevent spread of the pandemic. She said everyone should make efforts like a nation to face the COVID-19 challenge. Meanwhile, talking to a private television channel, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has criticized opposition parties for playing politics

over corona crisis and said Tiger Force would be a volunteer force to help destitute and needy. She denied that NADRA was not cooperating with the provincial government, rather it was NADRA's prime duty to provide required data to other national institutions in the time of national crisis. If any provincial government needed data about

the poor sections of the country it could request National Ehsaas Programme of the Federal government to order NADRA to fulfill the request, she suggested. The daily wagers and families of low income would be registered and receive cash through Ehsaas programme for which the government has allocated an hefty amount, she added.

Briefs

Pakistanis stranded in Turkey return

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight from Istanbul carrying 194 Pakistanis stuck in Turkey has landed in Islamabad. A total of 194 Pakistani citizens were stuck in Istanbul due to lockdowns and suspension of flight operations. A special PIA flight was then used to bring back the passengers to Pakistan. Arrangements for screening the incoming travelers for coronavirus are in place at the airport. After their screening, they will be kept under quarantine in a quarantine center for a period of 24 hours.

PM slams BJP policies

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said the RSS inspired leadership of India's ruling Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) spoke about Kashmiris the way similar to Nazis did to Jews. The prime minister in a tweet said such treatment was being meted out even in the 21st century towards the 200 million Muslims of Kashmir. He also shared a recent video clip of BJP leader Subramanian Swamy who in an interview openly spoke against Kashmiris denying their rights. - APP

China welcomes UN report on COVID 19

DNA

BEIJING: Hua Chunying Spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry has said that they had noted this recent report issued by the UN Secretary General about COVID 19. We welcome the UN's efforts to coordinate international response to the pandemic. Since the COVID-19 broke out, the UN, the WHO and other international organizations have been mobilizing the international community to enhance policy coordination and resource input, and especially to help developing countries with fragile public health systems to be better prepared. Their efforts have been widely supported by the international community. During the recent Extraordinary G20 Lead-

ers' Summit on COVID-19, all sides agreed that no country could face this pandemic alone, and the international community needs solidarity and cooperation more than ever. President Xi made a series of proposals on a united international response, including a G20 health ministers' meeting to be convened as quick as possible, a G20 COVID-19 assistance initiative for better information sharing with the support of the WHO, a collective response for prevention and control at the international level, and discussion on the establishment of regional public health emergency liaison mechanisms. He also called on G20 members to take collective actions like cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade.

Pak Navy, Customs seize narcotics

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy in an offshore intelligence based joint operation with Pakistan Customs Intelligence seized approximately 100 Kg Crystal Meth at Ibrahim Hyderi near Bin Qasim area of Karachi. The drug valued at approximately Rs 1.6 Billion was handed over to Pakistan Customs Intelligence for further legal formalities, a Pakistan Navy press release said. The successful execution of joint Anti-Narcotics Operation against narcotics smuggling was based on prolonged surveillance and operational coordination demonstrating Pakistan Navy's effective monitoring of our coastline and seas for any illegal purpose.

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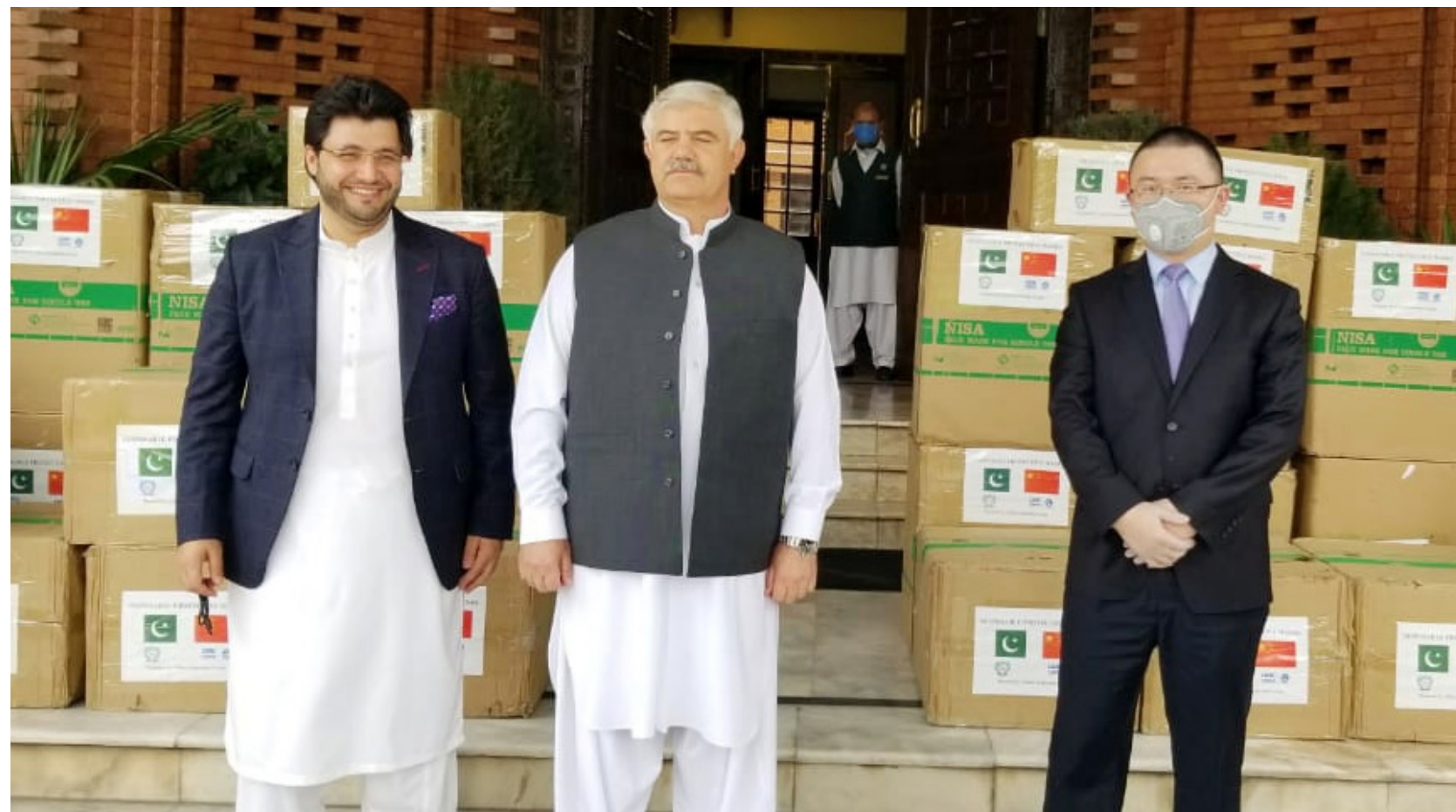
ADB President, Uzbekistan Dy PM discuss support for COVID-19

Kazakh President and Eruopean Council chief discuss COVID 19

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People advised to take self-isolation seriously

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of University of Health Sciences Dr Javed Ikram Friday asked the masses to follow distancing and self-isolation principles seriously amid to contain coronavirus. Talking to private news channel, Dr Javed Ikram said that the most important thing to understand right now is not to overlap seasonal flu and allergy with Coronavirus symptoms. He said it is better to avoid coming to hospitals for minor issues, he said, adding, the best remedy is to observe self-isolation in case of mild symptoms. He appealed to stay at home and avoid interaction with other people because you may risk the lives of other people with weak immunity system. Javed said the major symptoms of Coronavirus include body pain, high fever, dry cough and difficulty in breathing. The corona victim would first experience cough followed by high fever and difficulty in breathing. Any patient who is already a cardiac patient may experience chest pain before cough and flu, he added. There is no need to get panic due to corona pandemic and situation can get more worse if we not adopted the given guidelines of government, he warns. — APP



PESHAWAR: The CGGC (China Gezhouba Group Company) Country Head Pakistan Mr. Shi Yu called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Mahmood Khan this afternoon & donate 60000 Protective masks & 1000 3M brand protective suits as a gesture of Good will. The CM KP Mr. Mahmood Khan appreciate the friendly gesture of Good well from time tested friend CHINA. — DNA

PTCL signs MoU with Gulberg Greens for provision of state-of-the-art services

On the occasion, Shehzad Yousuf, Chief Business Operations Officer, PTCL, said that “PTCL is committed to contribute towards the society by providing a robust ICT infrastructure and seamless services to the citizens in line with Prime Minister’s vision of a Digital Pakistan.”

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Gulberg Greens Islamabad for provision of Information Communication Tech-

nology (ICT) services and infrastructure in the society. The signatories included Muhammad Shehzad Yousuf, Chief Business Operations Officer, PTCL and Shujaat Ullah Qureshi, Secretary, Intelligence Bureau Employees Cooperative Housing Society (IBECHS) Islamabad.

PTCL and IBECHS endeavor to transform Gulberg Greens into a smart city base, where the residents will be able to enjoy hi-speed, unlimited internet & bandwidth, crystal clear voice and Smart TV services with quality content. On the occasion, Shehzad Yousuf, Chief Business Operations Officer, PTCL, said that “PTCL is

committed to contribute towards the society by providing a robust ICT infrastructure and seamless services to the citizens in line with Prime Minister’s vision of a Digital Pakistan.” Shujaat Ullah Qureshi, Secretary, IBECHS, said, “We feel privileged to partner with PTCL that will enable us to bridge the

connectivity gap, provide uninterrupted services and move forward collectively to deliver better internet experience to residents of Gulberg Greens Islamabad.” PTCL strives to provide communities with the necessary facilities and services that are pertinent for growth and endless possibilities.

PSF invites research proposals on virus

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has invited research proposals from scientists, technologists, engineers and technopreneurs to carry out indigenous research to better understand and address challenges pertaining to the recent spread of Coronavirus “COVID 19”. According to an official of PSF, the research proposals have been invited under the Competitive Research Programme (CRP)-the project of PSF. Researchers from Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized public and private sector universities, public sector Research and Development organizations and industry can apply under the programme. Principal Investigator should be from the HEC recognized university or public sector Research and Development organization and private industry can be onboard for pilot scale/ commercial trials, production and marketing activities. — APP

KP treats members of Tableeghi Jammats as guests

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan Friday said the delegates of Tableeghi Jammats who are busy in preaching and promotion of Islamic teaching and values in the province as its guest and extending full facilities to them. In a message, the CM said that KP government was taking good care of delegations of Tableeghi Jammats who have come to KP from different parts of the country for a noble cause, adding that the government would continue providing them all facilities till their stay in the province. He said that the delegates of Tableeghi Jammats have left their homes for a noble religious cause and KP government highly values their sacrifice. — APP

Residents demands ICT to implement approved rate list

ISLAMABAD: The residents of federal capital urged the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration to implement the approved rate list by Islamabad Market Committee (IMC) of fruits and vegetables as the shopkeepers were charging extra prices on every item. During the visit to various fruit and vegetable shops in the markets of federal capital and adjacent housing societies of Islamabad, the vendors were found violating the rate lists provided by the IMC on daily basis. The residents said that the administration should take steps for implementing the rate list in true letter and spirit and penalize the violators to curb the menace of self-imposed inflation by the fruits and vegetable vendors.

The IMC has fixed the price of apples Kala Kulo Irani at Rs 182/149 per kg but the shopkeepers charging Rs 200-250 per kg. The rate of Pakistani Banana on the list was Rs 98/79 per dozen but the market price was about Rs 130. Similarly, Guava price was Rs 75/60 per kg but the market rates was around Rs120, Strawberry rate was Rs 120/94 per kg while the vendors charging Rs 210, Kino Special price was Rs 149/116 per dozen while the market rate was Rs 220 per dozen. Vegetables were also being sold at exorbitant prices. According to the IMC approved rate list, Onion price was Rs 65/55 per kg while its market price was Rs 85, Tomato was Rs 24/21 per kg while its market price was Rs 48, Lem-

on price was Rs 88/77 per kg while its market price was Rs 110 per kg, Peas are Rs 51/42 per kg while it was sold at Rs 80. Hassan Talal, a businessman who was purchasing vegetables from a shop in Soan Gardens, said that shopkeepers would not even listen to if their attention was drawn towards difference in prices written on the IMC approved rate list. He said that low income person cannot even think to purchase fruits as the rates of fruits and vegetables were so high. When contacted, an official in ICT administration said that committees headed by a magistrate have been formed in Islamabad to conduct surprise visits to different sectors and check prices of the commodities. — APP

People urged to perform prayers at home

ISLAMABAD: In response to the coronavirus pandemic, Renowned religious scholar Maulana Tahir Ashrafi Friday appealed that people should better say prayers at home as the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) himself had given the same direction during his life. Talking to PTV news channel, the masses should adopt precautionary measures to stem the spread of coronavirus in the country, he added. The federal government, he said, was fully aware of the challenge and it wanted to meet it with unity and better coordination, he added. — APP

Govt stands with Poor, daily wagers: Amin

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam Friday said that government was taking all necessary steps to control spread of COVID-19 and it is standing with the common man at this crucial time. Talking to PTV news channel, Malik Amin asked general public to cooperate with the government and follow the health ad-

visories properly to avoid any catastrophe. He asked the public to remain restricted to their houses, maintain social distance and follow the instructions given by the govt to ensure lock down for controlling Corona Virus. As this crisis continues, both the federal and provincial governments will almost surely announce more measures to rescue

the economy, especially for the vulnerable, Amin said. He said Amid to coronavirus daily wagers are mostly surviving however, prime minister announced gigantic relief packages for them to help poor people, daily wagers, laborers and others vulnerable segments who have lost jobs due to lockdown imposed to prevent spread of the coronavirus. — APP

Over 9,000 women sign up for PM’s Corona Relief Tiger Force: Dar

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar Friday said over 9,000 women have registered themselves at the Pakistan Citizen Portal for the Prime Minister’s Corona Relief Tiger Force. “The number of total registered persons has crossed

benchmark of 400,000 during the last 61 hours,” said the special assistant in a press release issued here. The Corona Relief Tiger Force, announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan, started the registration process at the PCP on late Tuesday night to hire the volunteer services of citizens to mitigate the im-

act of COVID-19. Usman said over 408,000 people had showed keenness in becoming part of for the tiger force, out of which some 9,000 were women. Most of registered female were from Punjab and Sindh, he added. Giving province-wise break up, Usman said some 276,000 had signed

up for the tiger force from Punjab, 62,839 from Sindh, 52,171 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 6,408 from the federal capital. More than 8,000 people from other areas including Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir also took interest in joining the force, he added. — APP

IBC to remain closed till April 14

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Bar Council (IBC) has extended closure of its office till April 14 due to epidemic CoronaVirus (Covid-19) threat. Earlier the body announced to close its office till April 5. Vice Chairman IBC Qazi Rafee-ud-Din Babar and Chairman Executive Committee Haroon-ur-Rasheed after consultation with other members had announced the closure of lawyers body. Similarly the lawyers of ICT will also not appear before the courts during the said period. — APP

Senator Mushahid hosts all parties webinar on COVID 19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee & Pakistan-China Institute, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed hosted an all parties Webinar on “Confronting Coronavirus & Pakistan-China relations” in which eight different political parties participated. This online video conference was the first event of its kind held in Pakistan since the outbreak of corona virus crisis which focused on ‘Confronting coronavirus: Pakistan China relations, CPEC and impact on global order’. The two-hour long conference was participated by

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Khan Swati (PTI), Deputy Chairman Senate, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla (PPP), Senator Usman Kakar (PKMAP), Senator Anwar ul Haq Kakar (BAP), Senator Talha Mehmood (JUI-F), Senator Sitara Ayaz (ANP) and Senator Mushtaq Ahmed (JI) The participants were also given presentation by the Executive Director Pakistan-China Institute, Mustafa Hyder Sayed giving details about the assistance provided by Pakistan to China and China to Pakistan during this crisis. According to the fact sheet, Pakistan sent a special transport plane to china on February 1, 2020



sending valuable medical supplies including masks, at the time when there was a big shortage of such masks in China. On February 10, 2020 Senator Mushahid Hussain sponsored a resolution in the Pakistan Senate, which was unanimously passed, expressing solidarity with China and a few days later

the a similar resolution has been passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Pakistan parliament was the first parliament to express such solidarity with China on the coronavirus crisis. Pakistan is one of the few countries not to evacuate its nationals out of China, including the students at

Wuhan which showed Pakistan’s confidence and trust in China’s ability to take care of our nationals “as their own”. On March 16-17, President Alvi specially flew to China to express Pakistani Nation’s solidarity with China, a gesture which was appreciated by President Xi Jinping and entire Chinese people. The fact sheet also mentioned the air lift from China to Pakistan beginning March 25, which included 2 million face masks, 70,000 medical protective equipment, 100,000 testing kits, 217 ventilators plus a \$4 million emergency medical grant from China to Pakistan to build a special hospital for corona virus

patients. In his opening remarks, the host, Senator Mushahid Hussain said that the coronavirus crisis had strengthened the Pakistan-China Friendship and solidarity because like other previous crises China again had stood by Pakistan firmly like a rock. Talking about the impact of the crises of global order he said that Asian countries like China, South Korea and Singapore have shown quality leadership as well as the efficiency of their medical and healthcare system as opposed to Western countries and in this regard China has shown leadership during this global pandemic, as the Chinese doctors are working in

Asian Countries like Pakistan as well as European countries like Italy and Spain. Senator Mushahid Hussain welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday that the CPEC projects will be restarted on top priority because he said that CPEC like Kashmir issue & the nuclear program enjoys national consensus above party lines as CPEC is the guarantor of the progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan. Senator Mushahid Hussain also demanded that the government should also announce National Health Emergency to cope with the crisis so that all resources and institutions are utilized for this one-point agenda.

US determined to help world overcome threat

In order to adequately estimate how much the coronavirus has impacted the US and its different political and strategic implications, there is a need to look at the overall discourse and wide range of views on this medical dilemma. Some suggested that President Donald Trump would fail miserably in responding to this epidemic. Others believe that Trump is cherishing this drama to assert his tenure as being that of a wartime president. Others are warning of a banking collapse, a severe dysfunction of many government services, a cash shortage for the average American family, and an unemployment rate that could reach as high as 30 percent. Yes, America has been hurt badly by the coronavirus. But this is not the end of everything good. The US can recover, and the whole world will overcome this crisis.

Trump and other leading officials were able to present the coronavirus epidemic to the American people as a problem that relates directly to their daily lives, and as something that will change many things in their living conditions. But Trump also conveyed that Americans' forcefulness and energy would soon restore their ordinary circumstances. There is an advantage for the US in taking the lead in trying to resolve this global public health crisis. The US' treatment of the coronavirus as a menace threatening its people and all humankind has restored a degree of confidence and respect in its ability to do good in the world.

The American people, and the whole world, know that the US is managing the coronavirus crisis. People are watching TV and seeing the shutdown in American states and cities, the Dow Jones falling, and Trump making many statements about fighting the virus.

Ultimately, there is one particularly good quality in the speeches coming from the US amid the world's coronavirus worries – simplicity. The virus is as harmful to us in the US as it is to everyone on the planet. While a number of analysts are trying to project American-Chinese competition on the issue, what matters most to Trump and his team now is a prompt remedy to stop the domestic malaise. Trump himself may even have changed a little bit. While he is still a firm believer in his "America First" political slogan, this is now also grounded in the unity of all nations as the world attempts to terminate a global health threat. Trump and the US are determined to overcome the virus threat. The US recognizes that the coronavirus has started a new page in history; one which is based on treating serious universal threats as sufficient diplomatic grounds for narrowing the differences between nations.

– Courtesy Arab News

Urgent response needed for climate change

In recent weeks, the world has been focused on urgently battling the fast-evolving coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The World Health Organization, governments and central banks have acted rapidly to mitigate the virus's impact, while scientists, policymakers and public health experts are sharing vital data via sophisticated tracking tools. And the large number of people who have recovered from the virus attests to the efficacy of the response to date.

But, in addition to the novel and immediate COVID-19 threat, the world also faces an unprecedented climate and environmental emergency. Governments and businesses must now start addressing climate change with the same resolve and urgency that they are showing in fighting the pandemic. Consider air pollution, which kills an estimated 7 million people worldwide each year. Unlike COVID-19, this threat is not new, stems from multiple sources, and is closely linked to how we heat and light our homes, move around, and deal with waste – daily habits that are deeply embedded in our lifestyles and economic systems. Tackling such a complex challenge thus requires action on many fronts to reduce the risk of even more premature deaths.

Indeed, while the COVID-19 response has demonstrated the power of open, collaborative science and swift action in dealing with emerging threats, it has also highlighted deep-seated issues that limit our ability to respond to challenges like global environmental change. In particular, the world is waking up to the possibility that the pandemic – and the strict measures introduced to contain it – could result in an even deeper economic downturn than the one triggered by the 2008 global financial crisis.

The systemic nature of such risks may also explain why climate action has, to date, been insufficient. The science is clear: Global carbon dioxide emissions must decline by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net zero by mid-century if the world is to have a chance of preventing catastrophic global warming.

Likewise, although a growing number of companies are pledging to become carbon neutral, this share needs to increase significantly. Too many multinational corporations and investors resist adopting climate-friendly policies and exert heavy pressure on governments, which in turn are unwilling to take the bold and potentially unpopular steps that are needed. Yet a relatively small number of fossil fuel companies are responsible for a significant proportion of global carbon dioxide emissions. By putting a real price on carbon, governments can set in motion a controlled shift away from fossil fuel dependence.

– Courtesy Arab News



COVID 19: a leading cause of anxiety & depression

Ms. Mehreen Gul



It's important to acknowledge that it is normal to be feeling anxious and worried about this situation. In the case of coronavirus, some amount of anxiety helps remind us to take precautions and to protect ourselves, healthcare providers are probably experiencing heightened levels of anxiety right now that aren't helpful. But, it's important to practice acceptance of whatever negative emotions they are feeling in the moment and remember that anxiety will dissipate with time

least mild depression; 14% of physicians and nearly 16% of nurses reported moderate or severe depressive symptoms and about 34% reported insomnia.

In recent research, a large section of healthcare providers treating patients exposed to COVID-19 have symptoms of mental stress including depression, anxiety, and insomnia. Those at greatest risk for depression and anxiety symptoms included women, those with intermediate seniority roles (compared with those with junior roles), and those at the center of the epidemic in Wuhan.

Psychological distress is due to the increasing contagiousness of the virus. They are facing personal and professional challenges.

Need for Swift Action

The researchers have conducted a cross-sectional survey of 1257 healthcare workers in 34 hospitals across China, including Wuhan epicenter of the outbreak.

Among survey respondents, 61% were nurses, 39% were physicians, 61% worked in hospitals in Wuhan and 42% were frontline healthcare workers engaged in the direct diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients with COVID-19. Protecting healthcare workers is an indispensable component of public health measures and for addressing the COVID-19 epidemic. Special interventions to promote mental well-being in health care workers who got exposed to COVID-19 need to be immediately implemented, with women, nurses, and frontline workers requiring particularly focused attention.

Significant Findings:

The rates of anxiety and depression revealed by the survey are "striking," Roy Perlis, MD, associate editor of JAMA Network Open, writes in an accompanying editorial. Perlis, from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, notes that while the peak of the COVID-19 epidemic remains to be seen, it will ultimately subside. "It's important to acknowledge that it is normal to be feeling anxious and worried about this situation. In the case of coronavirus, some amount of anxiety helps remind us to take precautions and to protect ourselves, healthcare providers are probably experiencing heightened levels of anxiety right now that aren't helpful. But, it's important to practice acceptance of whatever negative emotions they are feeling in the moment and remember that anxiety will dissipate with time

Self Care Measures:

At this time of danger, agony, and grief where human beings are in isolation, our healthcare professional heroes are fighting with valor and audacity knowing that the transmission risk is higher, healthcare providers to be proactive and take steps to guard against burnout. Try taking some short breaks during each day. Being out-

side and connecting with nature for 20 to 30 minutes, but even just 10 minutes has been shown to reduce cortisol levels the stress hormone. Practicing gratitude has also been shown to have positive effects on physical and emotional well-being. Tying it to something you do every day, like brushing your teeth or brewing your coffee, will make you more likely to stick to it. Also, daily mini self-check-ins are important. Take several deep breaths and check-in on how you are feeling. Research has shown that just by labeling what you are feeling that I am stressed, my thoughts are raising, my stomach is in knots, you raise the intensity of that emotion.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, frontline providers not to hesitate to get professional help. People typically wait until their anxiety and depressive symptoms get severe before they reach out.

To Focus On Success Stories:

To focus more on optimism can eliminate the risk of psychological disorders. Cases are being shrunk gradually. Researches are being conducted and in the process of findings. Possible treatments for this deadly virus are introduced so far. Measures are being introduced to lessen the risk. And the good news is "no more cases in Wuhan" remember it was the epicenter. It took less than 2.5 months and Wuhan is clear of COVID-19. The Republic of Korea, Japan and Singapore have adopted early precautionary measures e.g. early detection, self-isolation, social distancing, and other related measures. According to the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention, no child under the age of 10 has died. Recovered patients forms COVID-19 have joined volunteer organizations to combat this pandemic.

The Response of a Society:

The well-being of our health professionals and all who are working on frontlines are highly demanded. The entire society is ready to support our heroes vigilantly. We can help healthcare professionals with such response:

- We need to show solidarity, resilience, and optimism.
- The dire need of this time is to follow the instructions given by the health care providers, scientists, and researchers.
- The moratorium of convening until the situation is controllable.
- To develop an encouraging culture we need a combined effort.
- Breaking the stigma that health professionals are apathetic.
- To write healthy and supportive blogs.
- Disturbed mental health shouldn't be associated with a failure.

- To create a better environment for our heroes.
- Avoid propagation of falsified information about the virus and disease.
- By following the WHO guidelines for mental health in emergencies could be helpful.

All these instructions will automatically help the health practitioners to overcome their burnouts and exhaustion. Being a responsible citizen and an important part of society we can step into the vacuum of the current health crisis.

Measures by Concerned Authorities:

Health organizations, government, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, media, scholars, and students can play a powerful role in this pandemic.

The primary responsibility comes from the government to provide practical actions to these dedicated healthcare providers and fighters, by providing those weapons (PPE and medical machinery) to win the battle. The best rapid transformation of our health system is required, especially, concerning the mental well-being of the doctors and our warriors, a well-organized structure and plan should be implemented.

However, as we all know that Pakistan is an underdeveloped country with multiple challenges. As our government is taking efficient actions so the psychological needs are also imperative. To undermine health crises health organizations need to draft a charter.

Surveillance of the healthcare facilities, the security of the staff in hospitals in terms of providing disinfectant scrubs, medical kits and high potential masks (PPE) and to overlook the personal security, to boost the communication system for and among the emergency staff.

The fear of insecurity is a risk and can affect the performance of our heroes. Regular reviews of their performance are effective motivation. The availability of the support system is another exercise to eliminate stress. Allocate break rooms and space to rest and meals will ensure their healthy performance. Training of the junior staff to avoid hazards is also essential.

Conclusion:

As results are showing the increasing ratio of the psychological distress of the health practitioners in this pernicious pandemic strong support system is needed to help them. Every segment of society can play an integral part. By providing the best facilities and proper surveillance can shrink the risk of their mental disturbance. Healthcare providers are the warriors of this deadly battle. The only worry is the contagiousness of COVID-19, following the WHO guidelines for COVID-19 could be defeated and our heroes can get relief from anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

The writer is the Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad

Chairman NAB's policy yielding excellent results

Nasir Abbas

Today, NAB is the focal organization of Pakistan under United Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Moreover, NAB is Chairman of SAARC anti Corruption forum. NAB is the only organization who has signed Memorandum of understanding (MOU) with China in order to enhance cooperation in eradication of corruption

assumption of his responsibilities of Chairman NAB more than two years ago which was eradication of corruption has started yielding excellent results. Reputed national and International Organizations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, PILDAT, Mishal Pakistan have not only lauded NAB's efforts for eradication of corruption but in the Gillani and Gallop Survey about 59 percent people have shown their confidence upon NAB as NAB under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Justice Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has not only recovered 178 billion from corrupt elements during his tenure which is remarkable achievement as compared to previous years of NAB.

NAB has filed 600 corruption references in the respected accountability courts and conviction ratio of NAB in the Accountability courts is about 70 %. Currently, there are 1275 corruption references of NAB are under process in 25 respected Accountability courts and their total worth is of about Rs. 743 billion.

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hance cooperation in eradication of corruption. In line with its Enforcement Strategy, NAB has initiated complaint verifications, inquiries and investigations across the board on alleged allegations of corruption and corrupt practices. The indiscriminate actions of NAB have increased the prestige of NAB manifold against the mighty as the aim of NAB is to apprehend the corrupt elements and deposit the looted amount in the national exchequer.

Honorable Justice Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has rejuvenated NAB to eradicate corruption from Pakistan. Chairman NAB not only reviews progress of NAB headquarters but all also of all the regional Bureaus on regular basis.

Due to this reason, the number of complaints has been increased as compared to the same period of last year from 2018 to December 31, 2019.

The comparative figures are indicative of the hard work, transparency being put in by all ranks of NAB staff in an atmosphere of renewed energy and dynamism, where fight against corruption is being taken as a national duty.

On the directions of Chairman NAB, all complaints are being computerized and all DGs of Regional Bureaus are entering not only self respect of all the concomitants but also responded promptly to all the complaints of concomitants

very expeditiously as per law.

Chairman NAB Justice Javed Iqbal has spent more than 40 years of his life in providing justice to people starting from Session Judge Quetta to Acting Chief Justice of Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan and now Chairman NAB. He has an unmatched and balanced personality with integrity, honesty and honor.

He believes in self respect of humanity and does not believe in breaching self esteem of any person who comes in NAB. He always believes in law abiding and firmly believes in eradication of corruption by ensuring accountability to all. Chairman NAB believes that Pakistani nation is the best nation in the world which has all the abilities to check corruption and corrupt practices.

There is dire need to ensure merit and transparency so that the dream of eradication from Pakistan turned into reality. NAB is taking visible and indiscriminate actions against the corrupt elements. Corrupt elements are being probed by NAB as per law.

All DGs of NAB have been directed to perform their duties in accordance with law under the leadership of Justice Javed Iqbal Chairman NAB. Due to this reason, sincere effects of NAB for eradication of corruption have started yielding excellent results under the dynamic leadership of Justice Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB.

JUSTICE Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB's policy on 'NAB's Faith-Corruption free Pakistan' introduced immediately after

Briefs

Armenia army violates ceasefire 25 times

DNA

BAKU: "Military units of the armed forces of Armenia violated ceasefire 25 times throughout the day in various directions of the front, using large-caliber machine guns," Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense said in a statement. "Armenian armed forces, located in Berkaber village of Ijevan region, in Chinari village of Berd region subjected to fire the positions of the Azerbaijan Army located in Gizilhajili village of Gazakh region and Aghbulag village of Tovuz region." "The positions of the Azerbaijan Army were also fired from the positions of Armenian military units located near the occupied Goyarkh village of Tartar region, Garvand, Garakhanbayli, Gorgan villages of Fuzuli region, as well as from the positions located on nameless hills in Tartar and Aghdam regions," the ministry added.

Pak student shares China's experience

NANJING: Pakistani student Ali Qadir in east China's Jiangsu Province has become an Internet celebrity recently via live streaming and sharing China's experience in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic on the social media.

Qadir, 27, comes from Quetta, capital of the southwest Baluchistan Province in Pakistan. Capable of speaking Hazaragi, Urdu, Chinese and English, he is now studying for a master's degree in Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Jiangsu.

Since the epidemic outbreak, Qadir has been sharing China's anti-virus experience in four languages via filming vlogs and live streaming on social media, trying to record the country's efforts and sacrifices made during the epidemic. - APP

Pakistan's growth faces headwinds

ISLAMABAD: Economic growth in Pakistan is expected to slow to 2.6 percent this year due to ongoing stabilization efforts, slower growth in agriculture and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, before recovering to 3.2 percent in 2021 according to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) latest annual flagship economic publication, Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020.

"Pakistan's strong and decisive policy measures have started to yield positive results in reversing macroeconomic imbalances and narrowing current account deficits," said ADB Country Director for Pakistan Xiaohong Yang. - APP

ADB President, Uzbekistan Dy PM discuss support for COVID-19

DNA

TASHKENT: Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masatsugu Asakawa and Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade, and ADB Governor Sardor Umurzakov today discussed how ADB can support Uzbekistan in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"ADB is fully committed to supporting Uzbekistan at this extraordinarily challenging time by mobilizing financing to combat the spread of the outbreak, supporting entrepreneurs and employment, expanding social support, and

ensuring the economy continues to function sustainably," said Mr. Asakawa. "ADB has approved US\$200,000 in grant support to immediately address medical needs.

ADB is working with the government on counter-cyclical support that will help to mitigate the negative impact on the economy. ADB will also offer policy advice and reallocate loan savings to help address immediate health care needs and strengthen health systems." Mr. Umurzakov expressed his appreciation for ADB's continued support to Uzbekistan and proactive



communications during the crisis caused by the pandemic. He stressed the government is taking all necessary measures to support the health and wellbeing of its people, and address macroeconomic challenges facing the country.

Mr. Asakawa commended the government on its early measures to combat the pandemic announced on 19 March. He said the measures introduced by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev demonstrate a proactive approach to safeguarding the wellbeing, incomes, and livelihoods of the people

of approximately \$6.5 billion to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries, including Uzbekistan, as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. ADB stands ready to provide further financial assistance and policy advice whenever the situation warrants. Visit ADB's website to learn more about our ongoing response.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Italian PM tells EU to 'show more courage'

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on Friday extended his feud about coronavirus money with EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in the pages of a Roman newspaper.

Conte wrote a letter to Italy's La Repubblica in response to an apology that von der Leyen had published in the same paper on Thursday.

"I am sorry," von der Leyen had told Italians. "The EU is with you now." Conte sounded unimpressed in his letter.

"Dear Ursula," he wrote. "I hear ideas (from you) not worthy of Europe." - APP

Pakistani leaders pray for speedy recovery of Larijani

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman and deputy Chairman of Pakistan's Senate expressing solidarity with the people and government of Iran on coronavirus outbreak, prayed for early recovery of Iran's Majlis (parliament) Speaker Ali Larijani.

According to an official statement on Friday Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani prayed for speedy recovery and well being of Ali Larijani. He said that coronavirus outbreak has affected bad-

ly the people of Iran adding that Pakistani nation is standing with its Iranian brethren in this time of difficulty.

Sanjrani said that we have to jointly fight this pandemic. He added that people and the government of Pakistan pray for the long life and good health of Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani. "We are concerned about the problems of Iranian nation due to this global problem," said Chairman Senate.

Meanwhile deputy Chairman of Senate Saleem Mandviwalla on Friday expressed well wishes for

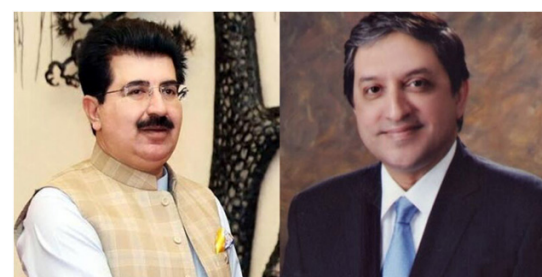
Iran Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani.

He said Mr. Larijani is a close friend of Pakistan and we are concerned about his health. Mandviwalla prayed for speedy recovery of the ailing Speaker.

He praised the efforts of Iranian government in fighting the coronavirus outbreak.

The deputy Chairman expressed gratitude to the government of Iran for taking care of Pakistani pilgrims.

Majlis' News Department in a statement late on Thursday said that Speaker Ali Larijani has been tested positive for coronavirus and is in quarantine. After certain symptoms emerged, he underwent coronavirus testing and he tested positive for COVID-19. He is currently in quarantine and receiving treatment.



Masood slams India's attempts to change IOJK demography

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan has spurned the new domicile rules imposed by the Indian government with the motives to change demography of Indian Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IOJK).

"The Indian government must abandon its poli-

cy to make Kashmir its colony, and resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people in the light of the UN Security Council resolutions," he warned.

In a video message, he condemned the Indian government for imposing new domicile law,

and said that this was a part of the well-hatched conspiracy of the Indian rulers designed to turn the Muslim majority of the occupied territory into a minority and an abortive attempt to suppress the struggle of Kashmiri people for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. - APP



LALAMUSA: City wears a deserted look due to lockdown. - Khurshid Nadeem

Baby born with virus

MADRID: For 10 days after giving birth to her first child, the mother was not allowed near him after she tested positive for coronavirus, for fear of infecting her newborn. And even though she has since been reunited with her son, neither she nor her husband have been allowed to physically touch him without gloves as they undergo an extended period of quarantine. "It's hard," says Vanesa Muro at her home in Madrid, the worst-hit area in Spain, a country where more than 10,000 people have died from the virus, the highest number outside Italy. - APP

China plays active role in int'l cooperation against COVID-19

BEIJING: The global tally of COVID-19 cases swelled to 1 million on Thursday, posing a tough test for the human race.

As the pandemic is raging around the globe, China has been joining hands with the international community to fight the virus by donating medical supplies, sharing anti-coronavirus experience and sending professional medical teams to epidemic-stricken countries.

"This is, indeed, the most challenging crisis we have faced since the Second World War," said United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday.

A total of 1,002,159 cases have been reported across the world, with a death

toll of 51,485, an interactive map maintained by Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering showed on Thursday afternoon.

The bruising pandemic has further rampaged in the United States, where over 244,000 cases have been reported with more than 5,900 deaths, according to the tally.

Some 40 U.S. states have ordered residents to stay at home unless necessary, including the heavily hit New York, New Jersey, Michigan, California, and Louisiana.

Non-essential businesses, such as theaters, museums, gyms, and shopping malls are largely shut down, and restaurants and

bars are asked to avoid in-person dining, effectively paralyzing the consumption-driven U.S. economy. The fast-moving coronavirus has also haunted Europe. In locked-down Italy, the pandemic has claimed close to 14,000 lives, and the caseload surged to 115,242 by Thursday, according to the latest data released by the country's Civil Protection Department.

In neighbouring France, hospitals registered a one-day loss of 471 coronavirus patients, taking the death toll to 4,503, while some 900 dependant elder people living at nursing homes had died of the virus since the epidemic began, a health official said on Thursday. - APP

Kazakh President and European Council chief discuss COVID 19

In particular, Charles Michel praised the practical actions and decisions of Kazakhstan's President to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the country. According to him, Kazakhstan is an extremely important partner of the EU in Central Asia. In this regard, Kazakhstan's involvement in international and regional efforts to combat coronavirus is of great importance and is fully supported by Brussels

DNA

NURSULTAN: President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had a telephone conversation with President of the European Council Charles Michel.

The two sides discussed the situation on the spread of coronavirus in the world and joint measures to eliminate its consequences.

In particular, Charles Michel praised the practical actions and decisions of Kazakhstan's President to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the

country. According to him, Kazakhstan is an extremely important partner of the EU in Central Asia. In this regard, Kazakhstan's involvement in international and regional efforts to combat coronavirus is of great importance and is fully supported by Brussels.

The Head of the European Council also highlighted the anti-crisis measures taken by President Tokayev aimed at supporting small and medium-sized businesses, providing employment and fulfilling social obligations to the population. Kassym-Jomart



Tokayev stressed that Kazakhstan is taking decisive steps to ensure the socio-economic stability of the country. During the conversation, the Head of State informed the EU representative about the results of telephone talks with the leaders of Russia, China and a number of Central

Asian countries on tackling the pandemic. Besides, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed support for the initiative of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to promote a humanitarian plan to combat coronavirus, including attracting international funding (\$5 trillion) to help the world's most vul-

nerable countries.

In addition, the parties exchanged views on the current state and prospects for the development of Kazakh-European relations, including the implementation of the new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU. The President of Kazakhstan stressed that this document lays a solid foundation for further strengthening the political dialogue and building up mutually beneficial trade, economic and investment cooperation. At the end of the talks,

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Charles Michel touched upon pressing issues of the regional and global agenda. In particular, the President of the European Council asked about the prospects for holding inter-Syrian talks within the Astana format. In turn, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev reaffirmed Kazakhstan's readiness to provide a platform for organizing the next round of negotiations that complement the Geneva Process for a peaceful settlement in Syria. The telephone conversation was held at the initiative of the European side.

UN opposes death penalty

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations stands against death penalty, the world body's spokesman said when asked about the overturning by a Pakistani court of the murder convictions of four men accused in the 2002 killing of US journalist Daniel Pearl.

"I have no specific comment except to say that, obviously, we stand against the use of the death penalty. We do, however, strongly believe that there needs to be accountability for people who take the lives of others, especially, in this case, the life of a journalist," Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said during UN's online briefing in New York. He was replying to a question about UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' comments on the Sindh High Court's verdict. - APP