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Distribution of funds on merit transparent and non-political: PM

Qureshi talks COVID-19 with Malaysian FM

Iran sanctions must be lifted: Nafisa Shah



Briefs

Chinese company donates Rs 5 mln

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: President of Zenergy Company Limited of China Mr. Richard J. Guo, Vice President Mr. Kevin Qiu, General Manager Mr. Li Kan from China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) called on Prime Minister Imran Khan today and donated Rs. 5 million to PM's COVID-19 Relief Fund. They also donated medical supplies worth Rs. 3 million that includes 30,000 masks, 100 N95 masks and 300 Protection suits to NDMA. Chairman NDMA Lt. Gen. Muhammad Afzal was also present on the occasion. GM CMEC Mr. Li Kan apprised about application of latest and environment friendly technology for enhancing cotton production in China. He offered to provide technological support to Pakistan for enhancing cotton production.

PM orders activation of Tiger Force

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday directed for immediate activation of the Corona Tiger Force in order to provide relief to daily wagers amid coronavirus lockdown. As per details, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Usman Dar and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar has finalized plan on the instructions of PM Imran. Usman Dar said that Tiger Force will be mobilized with district administration soon and all preparations have been finalized in this regard.

Biggest relief programme starts

Families to get compensation; Coronavirus situation in Islamabad on Wednesday evening, he assured that distribution of funds to the deserving families will be totally merit-based, transparent and non-political what may come: PM Imran Khan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan says provision of cash assistance to poor deserving families under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme will begin from tomorrow (Thursday). Talking to media about prevailing Coronavirus situation in Islamabad on Wednesday evening, he assured that distribution of funds to the deserving families will be totally merit-

it-based, transparent and non-political what may come.

He said the process of awarding cash worth 144 billion rupees to 12 million deserving families will be completed within next two and half weeks. Imran Khan informed that Coronavirus Relief Tigers Force will continue to identify deserving poor people at district and union council level, and these will be added in the list of deserving people.

The prime minister cautioned that every single person out of 100 per-

sons in Pakistan might be infected due to Covid-19.

He urged the citizens to understand gravity of the Coronavirus situation and demonstrate responsibility by adopting all necessary precautionary measures to contain the virus.

The prime minister urged the opposition leaders, parliamentarians and civil society to support government in its endeavours to steer Pakistan out of Covid-19.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on

Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar said the government has received over 30.5 million SMS on 8171 for financial assistance under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme.

She said over 12 million deserving families will be awarded 12,000 rupees each after biometric verification. Dr Sania Nishtar said Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme is countrywide umbrella, and all provinces, including Federation, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and

Kashmir, are part of this platform. The Special Assistant asked people to contact toll-free helpline number 0800-26477 for any query.

In his remarks, NDMA Chairman Lt General Muhammad Afzal said Personal Protective Equipment will be sent to all provincial hospitals during the next three days.

He said at present, 22 laboratories are functional across the country, while equipment for establishing further 12 laboratories has been dispatched to the provinces.

Nigerian man arrested for defrauding people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Nigerian national was arrested on Wednesday for defrauding people in a fake coronavirus fund scheme in Islamabad, according to the Federal Investigation Agency.

The suspect approached people on social media platforms such as Facebook and then became friends with them. "He then took their account numbers and took money out of that," FIA spokesperson said.

He tricked residents by telling them that he will send them funds for the coronavirus, the spokesperson added. A case has been registered under the cybercrime law and further investigations are under way.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese delegation in a meeting with PM Imran Khan. - DNA

Nine pilgrims tested positive

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: Nine pilgrims who arrived in Attock from a Quarantine Centre Multan have been declared positive for coronavirus by the lab concerned.

Incharge CoronaVirus Cell Attock Dr Asif Niazi talking to newsmen said that total 19 pilgrims reached Attock after spending 14 days in Taftan and then 14 days in quarantine in Multan where they were declared negative by the authorities concerned.

Uzbek President, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince talk on phone



DNA

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a telephone conversation with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the

Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates.

The sides discussed pressing issues in Uzbekistan - UAE multifaceted relations, as well as prospects for further expanding practical cooperation in trade, economic, investment, banking, financial, fuel and energy, transport and communications and other priority are-

as. Particular attention was paid to the unprecedented measures taken in the two countries to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection and ensure effective countering to this global challenge.

President of Uzbekistan expressed sincere gratitude to the leadership of the United Arab Emirates for the assistance rendered in overcoming the consequences of the pandemic. Importance of continuation of close coordination to minimize the negative impact of coronavirus dissemination on the dynamics of bilateral cooperation, including the ongoing projects in industry, infrastructure, energy,

Wuhan opens after 74 days

WUHAN: Thousands streamed out of the Chinese city of Wuhan Wednesday after a lockdown on the birthplace of the coronavirus was lifted, offering a ray of hope even as Europe and the United States faced rising deaths and crippling economic pain. As Wuhan reawakens, Western countries remain in the throes of a crisis that has claimed the lives of more than 80,000 people worldwide and forced around half of humanity into some form of lockdown. - APP

COVID-19: Saudi Arabia expects 200,000 cases

The death toll has climbed to 41 more deaths, while the total number of recovered patients is 615, Al Rabiah, said during the press conference

DNA

RIYADH: The kingdom has approved the allocation of additional amount of SR7 billion to combat the pandemic, he said, adding that the government has spared no effort to meet the budgets allotted to deal with the COVID-19 crisis.

Dubai: Saudi Arabia said that it would take four months to a year to contain the coronavirus disease while announcing that it expects the total number of cases to reach 200,000 if measures to counter the disease are not followed. The announcement

was made by Saudi Health Minister Dr. Tawfiq Al Rabiah during a press conference.

This came as the country reported 203 new cases of the coronavirus, COVID-19, on Tuesday, and three new deaths. This brings the total number of cases in the country to 2,795.

It was also announced that three more people had died due to the virus. from the novel Coronavirus as the total number of confirmed cases in the kingdom rose to 2795, the Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday.

The death toll has climbed to 41 more deaths, while the total number of recovered

patients is 615, Al Rabiah, said during the press conference.

The kingdom has approved the allocation of additional amount of SR7 billion to combat the pandemic, he said, adding that the government has spared no effort to meet the budgets allotted to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it continues to receive requests from Saudi citizens stranded abroad who want to return home. The priority is given to the old people, urgent cases and pregnant women.

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Qureshi discusses COVID-19 with Malaysian FM

Hishammuddin requested the Pakistan government to help ensure all Malaysians there are given the necessary assistance and ease of movement to take a special Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight from Islamabad bound for Kuala Lumpur this Saturday (April 11)

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD, APR 8 (DNA) - Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi held a telephone conversation on Wednesday with the Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Hishammuddin Hussein, on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Foreign Minister felicitated Foreign Minister Hussain on his recent appointment to the important position, and offered condolences for the loss of innocent lives in the pandemic. The Foreign Minister also thanked the

Malaysian Foreign Minister for looking after Pakistani nationals based in Malaysia, as well as facilitating Pakistanis at the airports. Underscoring that Pakistan's and Malaysia's infection rates and fatalities were similar, the Foreign Minister commended the measures adopted by the Malaysian authorities to contain the epidemic, and apprised his Malaysian counterpart of the steps being taken by Pakistan. The Foreign Ministry of Malaysia assured Pakistan that all their citizens here would be treated equally and well taken care of during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein told his counterpart in Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi that Malaysia would do its best to ensure the safety and well-being of all Pakistani nationals here.

Both ministers also agreed to work together to bring home any stranded nationals as soon as possible. "Hishammuddin requested the Pakistan government to help ensure all Malaysians there are

given the necessary assistance and ease of movement to take a special Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight from Islamabad bound for Kuala Lumpur this Saturday (April 11)," Hishammuddin also affirmed that the Malaysian government would extend necessary assistance in the repatriation process of over 300 Pakistani nationals that would take the PIA flight back to Pakistan.

"Both ministers also agreed that it was crucial for Malaysia and Pakistan to work together to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its devastating impact."

ECC approves Rs 50 bln for USC

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet Wednesday approved six technical supplementary grants in addition to approving Rs 50 billion technical supplementary grant for the Utility Stores Corporation (USC).

The ECC meeting which was chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh gave approval to Rs 842 million for paying off the executing agencies of the Prime Minister's youth loan scheme during the current financial year. - APP

Briefs

Pakistanis in Japan donation

ISLAMABAD: A young Pakistani businessman in Japan has donated medical equipment worth Rs 35 million in response to the health-care situation due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The equipment donated by Asad Nawaz Khan, also President of Fair Medical Japan includes refurbished ventilators, Electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, ultrasound machines, analyzers, nebulizers, injection pumps and special wheelchairs.

According to embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo on Wednesday, the donated medical equipment is being shipped as a full container for Pakistan consigned to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) – the national focal agency to fight Coronavirus in the country. – APP

Apex court briefed about Covid-19

ISLAMABAD: The senior government functionaries on Wednesday apprised the Supreme Court judges of the measures taken to stem the coronavirus, arrangements for the lock-down and provision of health facilities to the people.

Special Assistant to PM on Health Dr Zafar Mirza, Dr Sania Nishtar, Chairperson Ehsaas Programme and Chief of National Coordination Committee, Attorney General for Pakistan, and Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) visited the Supreme Court premises. The briefing proceedings were held in the conference room of SC Judges Block. The senior government functionaries briefed the Chief Justice about the lock-down imposed in the country after report of coronavirus cases.

IRSA releases water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Wednesday released 82,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 109,400 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1473.09 feet, which was 87.09 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 24,700 cusecs and outflow as 5,000 cusecs. – APP

RCB recovers goods

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) on Wednesday confiscated three truck-load goods from different markets in its operation against encroachments. According to RCB spokesman Qaiser Mehmood, the enforcement wing on the directives of the Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) had accelerated operation against encroachments and striving to clear different commercial areas. – APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of disinfectant walkthrough gate installed at PIMS for precautionary measures to prevent and control spread of corona virus. – APP

ICCI calls for early bailout package for SMEs

President, ICCI said that due to Covid-19, business and industrial firms were closed for the last one month due to which business activities were on the verge of destruction

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to finalize a bailout package for coronavirus-hit SMEs at the earliest in order to save them from default and extinction.

Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Indus-

try said that due to Covid-19, business and industrial firms were closed for the last one month due to which business activities were on the verge of destruction.

He urged that government should finalize a bailout package for SMEs as early as possible because these businesses were eagerly looking forward towards the government for relief measures at this critical situation.

He said that due to closure of industries, workers were without work, but industrialists were meeting their day to day food needs.

He said that due date of commercial and industrial utility bills was approaching near and if lock down continued for long time, many SMEs would face default.

ICCI President said that due to coronavirus pandemic, many countries

have come out with relief packages for SMEs, but SMEs in Pakistan could not get such package as yet. He said that SMEs were the backbone of economy and government should announce for them bailout package on priority basis to ease out their problems.

He said that SBP has increased the regulatory limit on extension of credit for SMEs that was a good step, however, he

stressed that banks mark up on loans should be brought down to below 5 percent so that SMEs could easy credit for reviving business activities.

He said that many SMEs have obtained loans from banks for expansion & new investment and urged that government should defer their loans with mark up for 3-6 months and allow them to pay such loans in easy instalments that would reduce

their difficulties.

Tahir Abbasi Senior Vice President and Saif ur-Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that Prime Minister has announced an attractive package for construction industry and they demanded that government should also provide tax relief to other industries of SME sector so that they could be able to come out of these difficult circumstances for revival of business activities.

CDA demolishes illegal constructions

FIJAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: In continuation of anti-encroachment drive, Capital Development Authority (CDA) while conducting operations in the different areas of the city demolished several illegal constructions and encroachments.

During the operation conducted at Taramri Chowk on Wednesday, Enforce-

ment Directorate of the authority removed several fruit stalls, handcarts and other moveable and immovable encroachments from vicinity. During this operation 05 illegally established animal sheds were also razed.

In continuation steps to control spread of Corona Virus in the city and ensuring proper social distancing in the Sabzi Mandi of Islamabad a team of

Enforcement Directorate conducted an operation with the assistance and on the indication of Sabzi Mandi Committee and removed several encroachments from the area. During this operation two trucks encroachment material including vegetables and fruit carts and other material was confiscated which was handed over to management of the Sabzi Mandi.

Protective equipment for para-medical staff

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhary Wednesday assured that the government's resolve to provide protective gear equipment to paramedical health professionals on priority basis in their fight against corona pandemic is its topmost priority. Talking to private news channel, he said the government was taking all emergency measures to equip the paramedical staff against the Corona pandemic with the required protective gear on a priority basis. He also appealed to the public to observe social distancing, avoid hand shaking and hugging and wash hands frequently to contain the spread of Coronavirus. – APP

COVID 19: Asad Qaisar stresses uleam role

RAJA FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has stressed upon the religious scholars and Ulama to play their role in creating harmony and awareness among their followers for countering the challenges posed by the deadly coronavirus pandemic. The Speaker said that unity amongst all the religious sects was imperative in the current situation. He reiterated his stance that the spread of coronavirus pandemic should not be attributed to a particular religious sect or group of people.

He said this in a tele-video meeting held in Parliament House with Shia Ulama and scholars in Parliament House, today to discuss the

repatriation of Zayreen. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri, Minister of State for SAFRON Sheryar Afridi and Religious Scholar Khanum Tayyiba Bokhari attended the meeting, while Religious Scholar Allama Shenshah Naqvi joined the meeting through a tele-video link.

The Representatives of Ministries of Health, Interior, Foreign Affairs and Aviation Division were present during the meeting. The Speaker said that the world was facing immense challenges due to the spread of coronavirus and Pakistan was not an exception. He said that the virus had badly affected the health and livelihoods of people of Pakistan besides inflicting losses to the economy.

He said that we have to face that challenge courageously and collectively and the support of Ulama and religious scholar was imperative in that regard. He said that Ulama and scholars should advise the masses to adopt precautionary measures so that they were safe from that virus. He said that social distancing, staying at home, avoid public gatherings and adoption of other measures advised by the M/o Health should be followed to keep them safe. The Speaker said that 15 Shabban has religious significance for all sects of Islam, but due to the present threat, people should stay at home, pray to Allah Almighty for the well being of humanity and their fellow citizens and progress and prosperity of the Country.

Hamid Ismail Foundation conducts a Ration Drive

ISLAMABAD: The lock down in the city of Karachi has resulted in thousands of daily wagers being devoid of their livelihoods due lack of opportunities to earn. This has resulted in huge sense of desperation and void which is now being filled by NGOs and impact organization which look to provide food item in rations bags to these people in this hour of need. – DNA



Climate Change a pandemic not taken seriously, say experts

SAIFULLAN ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Climate change is a pandemic in the making as there is rise in temperature, scarcity of water, and unbreathable air, but most of the governments are not taking it seriously, said Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute. In his welcome remarks at an international online webinar titled: State of Climate Governance Post COVID-19, organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad here on Tuesday, he said Covid-19 is a black swan

event (low probability very high impact). "We were warned that a novel virus may threaten mankind, but no one took it seriously and now the planet is suffering," he maintained. Learning from COVID-19, he said, we must take climate change as a real and serious threat and get prepared for it. In post-corona world, he said, the world should continue spending on building resilience against climate change, otherwise the future will be very bleak. "One stitch in time always saves nine", he added. Dr Saleem ul Haq, Director, International Centre for Climate Change & Development, Bangladesh said the glob-

al target of 1.5 degrees becomes less and less achievable with every single day, as we are not acting to control it. COVID-19 is just a smaller and faster version of how the impacts of climate change will be, he said, adding that we talk about reducing the steepness of the curve for COVID, the same applies for climate change in a bigger way. Stressing the need to act before the situation, he acting after the impact will be useless. The global leaders have an important role to play in decision-making regarding their openness to listening to climate science, he said, adding that the

relative impact of the leaders who take early action is based on science and making difficult decisions such as taken by Taiwan, Germany, and Singapore. Dr Fahad Saeed, Regional Climate Scientist at Climate Analytics Science, Germany, said currently the world is releasing 42 giga tonne emissions per year that should reduce to half by 2030, otherwise we'll reach the end of carbon budget within 10-15 years. He stressed the need to achieve zero emissions by 2050. Ms Aisha Khan, Executive Director, Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), said it is unfortunate that the

pandemic happened and is now stretching on. "Climate change needs multilateral decision-making. We need to bring people together to discuss the real issue. Climate Change may be a slow-burner but the impacts will be harsher than the pandemic." She said when push comes to shove, every country will try to use the resources they have for themselves and become more inward looking, so at the end of the day, it will be a moral question. It also relates to the type of governance we need, and citizens have a great role to play, she added.

10 arrested in Attock

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: The Attock police arrested 10 shopkeepers for gambling on Wednesday morning. The police say the shopkeepers had gathered despite the lockdown. They were found gambling money in an under-construction house. Rs20,000 and six cell phones were seized from them and a case has been registered. One shopkeeper had escaped but the police say they are searching for him.

Ehsaas Programme receives 43 million SMS

ISLAMABAD: For Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program, 43 million people sent SMS to become beneficiaries said Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar on Wednesday. In a tweet, she said: "Till Wednesday morning, we have received Forty million, thirty lac, forty four thousand and sixty (43,044,060) SMS by the people from different areas under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme." The daily wagers and piece rate workers badly affected due to the lockdown amid prevailing Coronavirus health crisis in the country can send SMS to 8171 to become beneficiaries of Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme.

President for best treatment of Corona patients

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed provision of best medical facilities to the patients of Coronavirus with their treatment on utmost priority. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the situation of Coronavirus in Punjab, the president called for ensuring quality environment for the suspected patients kept at the isolation centres. Punjab Governor Chaudhry Sarwar, Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, provincial ministers and senior officials attended the meeting. – APP

Pakistanis stranded in UAE

WITH Covid-19 turning the global order upside down, governments worldwide have been taking unprecedented measures to halt the spread of the contagion.

The foremost of these is internal lockdowns, coupled with the temporary closure of borders. In the midst of such difficult circumstances arises the question of repatriating citizens wanting to return from foreign shores. As reported in this paper on Tuesday, around 20,000 Pakistanis stranded in the UAE are seeking to return home.

Expectedly, these individuals are facing a tough time in the Emirates; some have lost their jobs or have not been paid by their firms, while the visas of others have expired. As per media reports, "hundreds" of Pakistanis gathered outside the consulate in Dubai on Sunday demanding to return home. The plight of citizens stranded abroad is indeed a dire one, especially when jobs have been lost.

However, the question arises: can the health system in this country screen, quarantine and treat such a large number of people were they to be brought back immediately? The best possible response to this difficult situation would be for the state to work in close coordination with the UAE authorities to ensure Pakistanis stranded in the Emirates have access to quality healthcare, housing and food until the coronavirus crisis dissipates.

The UAE government should extend the visas of those whose documents have expired, while Pakistani missions in the Emirates must keep in constant touch with stranded citizens to assure them that the state stands by them in these trying times, and that they will be able to return as soon as it is feasible.

By no means should citizens feel that they have been left in the lurch by their government at a time of a global crisis.

It is a fact that every citizen has the right to return home at any time of their choosing.

However, those Pakistanis stranded abroad should be encouraged to return at a more opportune time, when the danger that an easily transmissible infection poses to public health has reduced considerably. – *Courtesy DAWN*

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Wheat and sugar investigations

PRIME MINISTER Imran Khan is to be commended for keeping his word and releasing the findings of two investigations into the recent sugar and wheat flour shortages that led to an increase in the price of these items. The reports were made public without delay or alterations, even though they incriminate people close to the prime minister – something unheard of in previous dispensations. And yet, the ensuing shakeup in government ranks has raised several questions. For instance, a number of ministers, advisers and bureaucrats linked with the damning probe have been given other portfolios – was this reshuffle essentially a face-saving exercise? Indeed, any action at this stage is a little premature.

The reports expectedly spawned demands from the opposition for immediate action against those believed to have benefited from the shortages and price hikes. In response, the premier rightly advised them to wait for the completion of the forensic audit of the scams. In a series of tweets on Sunday, he said he was waiting for a detailed forensic report on the matter before taking action against anyone.

A high-powered commission is expected to finalise the audit by April 25. He also said that "after these reports come out no powerful lobby would be able to profiteer at the expense of our public". On their own, the two reports do not contain anything new or startling. Most of the information contained in them has been extensively reported by the print and electronic media over the past few months. But what the reports do confirm is the deep connection between politics and the sugar and wheat trade as a whole.

A look at the report shows that it is not only sugar mill owners linked to the government who are beneficiaries of the billions doled out in the name of export subsidies, but also those associated with the PML-N and other parties. Governments need to break this nexus between politics and the sugar and wheat trade through extensive policy reforms if such crises are to be prevented in the future.

That will mean a substantial reduction in the government's own role in the sugar and wheat trade and greater reliance on market forces. – *Courtesy DAWN*

10th anniversary of the April 7 revolution in Kyrgyzstan

Erik Beishembiev



The negative experience of the abusive rule of two first presidents of Kyrgyzstan A.Akaev and K.Bakiev, which lead to popular uprisings in 2005 and 2010 and their resignations, resulted in peoples overwhelming support for parliamentary system with more authority given to the parliament and prime minister and limiting the powers of president to security and foreign policy issues

ON April 7, 2010 people of Kyrgyzstan took to the streets with demands for resignation of the President K.Bakiev. Thousands arrived to the capital Bishkek from all over the country and gathered at the central square Ala Too in front of the government house. In spite of the security forces firing guns the demonstrators kept storming the government house for the whole day eventually forcing government to resign and President K.Bakiev to run away first to his native region in the South of the country and finally to Belarus.

Due to mass disturbances, 77 people died and more than 300 wounded. The ex-president K.Bakiev, his brother and head of the state security service J.Bakiev and ex-prime-minister D.Usenov had been convicted for mass killings for life sentences by the court on June 25, 2014. The reasons of uprising laid in disappointment and indignation by the people against strict authoritarian rule and wide-spread corruption of the ex-president K.Bakiev and his close family members, including his brother and head of the state security service J.Bakiev and son M.Bakiev, who was director of the influential Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation and actually controlled the whole economy of Kyrgyzstan.

The notorious regime was involved in gross corruption and international money laundering, suppression of opposition and Mass Media, which lead to beatings and even killings of some of the political leaders and journalists. After ex-president K. Bakiev's runaway a provisional government was formed headed by interim president of the transitional period prominent opposition leader Roza Otunbaeva and parliament and government dissolved. On June 27, 2010 referendum on Constitution changes was held and 90.57% of the voters approved introduction of parliamentary system in Kyrgyzstan. At the

same time this plebiscite confirmed the powers of the interim president Roza Otunbaeva and provisional government until December 31, 2011.

Previously Kyrgyzstan since independence in August 1991 had presidential system of governance and first president A.Akaev concentrated all powers in his hands and established family rule. Hewas also overthrown by people's revolution on March 24, 2005 soon after election to the parliament of his son and daughter in the result of mass vote rigging during parliamentary elections. The negative experience of the abusive rule of two first presidents of Kyrgyzstan A.Akaev and K.Bakiev, which lead to popular uprisings in 2005 and 2010 and their resignations, resulted in peoples overwhelming support for parliamentary system with more authority given to the parliament and prime minister and limiting the powers of president to security and foreign policy issues.

On October 10, 2010 parliamentary elections and October 30, 2011 presidential elections had been held in Kyrgyzstan and for the first time in the history of the country peaceful transition of the power of the president successfully passed.

Since that time, Kyrgyzstan entered the period of stability and peaceful political process with regular and

fair parliamentary and presidential elections.

On October 4, 2015 parliamentary elections and on October 15, 2017 presidential elections had been held in the country and Sooronbai Jeenbekov elected as a new President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Under the leadership of the President S.Jeenbekov, today Kyrgyzstan is emerging as a democratic state, where national unity and political pluralism, as well as all basic human rights and freedoms are preserved. The socio-economic situation in Kyrgyzstan is steadily improving and a number of national projects are under realization in the framework of the National strategy of country development for 2018-2040, which aims at raising the level and quality of life of the people through sustainable economic development.

The revolution of April 7 is remembered in the country as a historical date, which laid further foundation for the development of Kyrgyzstan on the way of democracy and freedom. On this day a wreath-laying ceremony at the Monument in memory of the heroes of the April 2010 Revolution is held and prayers are read in Bishkek and at National Ata-Beyit historical and memorial complex.

– *The writer is Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan*



Impact of COVID-19 on the World: an overview

Senator Sehar Kamran T.I.



"Public health is really closely tied to the social, political and economic issues of the world. Where they go awry, public health can quickly go awry."
– *Michael Osterholm*

THE world is currently grappling with the yet untamable monster of COVID-19, as the global tally of people infected is on an upward march. Until 6th April, 2020, more than 1,274,923 have been tested positive for the virus globally; with more than 69,000 dead, and 260,484 recovered. As clichéd as it sounds, the world as we knew has completely changed. Undoubtedly, the post-COVID-19 world will have a different reality, as

compared to the one we were living in. From increased distrust of global institutions erected post-World War-II (especially financial ones), to a growing international skepticism and waning trust between states, rise of authoritarianism, and a surging state surveillance impinging upon citizen's privacy are some of the long-term impacts of this pandemic, which are going to reshape the world.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the world is officially in a global recession. The fund stated that this recession would be worse than the one following the 2008 economic crisis with no respite in sight. Undeniably, the pandemic has injected a lot of economic uncertainty across the globe with almost the entire world in a shutdown mode. In the first three months of 2020, the global stock markets have crashed around by 30 percent. The longer the lockdown lasts, the worse the economic conditions will get. The global supply chains have been upended, and it will take time for them to become functional again. An unprecedented level of unemployment is on the rise globally, with no clarity on when businesses will open and normal life will resume. Though researchers are on task to find a vaccine and treatments for the virus but it will take time, from some months to year or more, until then social distancing and lockdown is the only way forward to break the transmission chain and contain the spread of pandemic.

The third world countries will be hit the hardest. As per the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report released on 30th March stated that, "developing countries, including Pakistan, will be hit hardest by the economic shockwaves caused by the novel coronavirus crisis that has shaken the world and will need a support package of up to \$2.5

trillion to cope with the damage."

The wave of economic distress across the globe will further erode the perception of international organizations like the UN, IMF, and WTO, etc., which have already been under severe criticism from different quarters. The states will adopt more inward policies in order to protect their interests and it will have a negative impact on global trade and cooperation. The bilateral cooperation between states which was already under strain prior to the pandemic will further weaken. The countries will view each other with more skepticism and the transparency in relations will further erode. The US intelligence has alleged that China has hid the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak which aggravated the situation globally and is not revealing the real number of pandemic casualties, so much so that the US President went ahead and termed the novel coronavirus as the "Chinese virus." Moreover, these allegations against China are now being echoed by the rest of the world as well, as they hold Beijing's silence complicit in the spread of the virus. China has rejected these accusations.

One of the after-effects of the pandemic is going to be the undermining of democracy as an institution and an increase in authoritarianism around the world. A glimpse of this has been seen already in the form of Hungary's new "Corona Virus laws", which give the country's Prime Minister Viktor Orban sweeping new powers, without any time limit. Although the EU and others have criticized this move, it is worrying that other states are considering to implement similar measures. Authoritarianism is creeping slowly and steadily into the power capitals of Europe and other regions, where populist leaders are 'using the pandemic as an excuse to tighten control over their countries.'

Another victim of the post COVID-19 world will be the civil liberties and privacy of citizens. Currently, several states like Iran, China and Israel have launched coronavirus applications to monitor location of its citizens. Such measures can continue post the pandemic with States making new laws infringing upon citizen's privacy with an increased electronic surveillance in the name of protection.

One of the positive impacts amidst all this, which has already been announced, is the ban on the consumption and farming of wild animals by China. This step will help in curtailing any future epidemic or disease which might spread from the eating or trading of wild animals. In order to prevent a future epidemic or pandemic, developed countries, multinational corporations and conglomerates will now invest more in research and development, because the novel coronavirus has shaken the foundations of the global economic system and exposed the world's lack of preparedness to fight this deadly disease. It is hoped that in the post COVID-19 world, states would review their strategies, and will give scientists and healthcare professionals their due in protecting the people. History is witnessing that humanity has overcome a number of deadly pandemics and epidemics over the centuries. Undoubtedly, the world will come out of this pandemic albeit shaken but not broken. The human spirit will prevail. The complete financial and political repercussions of this pandemic will only come to the fore after it is over, but it must not stop the cooperation between states because only by working together, we can achieve milestones and miracles.

(The writer is former Senator and founder of Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies (CPGS). She tweets @SeharKamran)

Briefs

China for peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue

DNA

NEW YORK: China has once again called for a peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue according to the United Nation resolutions.

A spokesman of the Chinese Mission to the UN while rejecting the Indian media claim that China had ignored Pakistan's call for urgent consideration of the situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir during its presidency of the Security Council in March this year, reiterated that China's stance on the Kashmir remains unchanged calling it a dispute left from history.

He said issue of Kashmir remains high on the Security Council's agenda and China is very closely monitoring the current situation in occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan's inflation rate drops

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank has projected that Pakistan's inflation rate would slow down to 8.3 percent in the fiscal year 2020-21.

"Inflation is forecast to decelerate to 8.3% in FY2021 with the central bank expected to take further policy action to both manage inflation and boost economic activity," the ADB said in its latest annual flagship economic publication, Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020.

It said inflation is projected to accelerate to 11.5 percent in FY2020, reflecting a sharp rise in food prices in the first part of the fiscal year and a 9.8 percent drop in the value of the local currency against the US dollar in the first seven months of FY2020. - APP

15000 Afghan refugees

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan Wednesday attended National Coordination Committee (CC) meeting through video link and apprised the participants about updates on corona virus prevention measures in the province.

According to an official statement issued here, the meeting of NCC was held in Islamabad with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair. The chief minister informed the meeting that all the 152 patients admitted at Duranpur Quarantine Center (Peshawar) had been sent back to homes. - APP

PIA flight from Baghdad arrives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special flight of Pakistan International Airline (PIA) carrying 136 stranded Pakistanis from Baghdad has arrived in Islamabad. The passengers include disabled persons, women, children and elderly people.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi offering Fateha after condoling with family members of Wing Commander Numan Akram Shaheed at his residence. - APP

Iran sanctions must be lifted: Nafisa

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) says that the US should lift sanctions to avert humanitarian and economic disaster that Iran confronts. The PPP leader Nafisa Shah while responding to a query of IRNA Wednesday said that it is very unfortunate that despite international pressure the US has not lifted sanctions it has imposed on Iran. "If COVID-19 pandemic will not make us come together what will? It was expected that the present outbreak would lead to the world community rising to the occasion and helping the vulnerable countries that stand to face colossal losses if help is not coming forth," she said. Member of Parliament added the lifting of sanctions against countries such as Iran should not have required lobbying, it should have happened. "But despite international pressure the US has not done so, international politics and power games can wait, this is the time to save lives, saving lives everywhere," noted Nafisa Shah.

COVID-19: Pak green project productive: Cheng Xizhong

Pakistan has a population of more than 200 million, which means an average of 50 trees per person. Therefore, this is a very big project. If other provinces all follow the example of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province and immediately launch the planting campaign, hundreds of thousands or even millions of jobs will be created

STAFF REPORT

BEIJING: Chinese scholar Prof. Cheng Xizhong hoped Pakistan's government decision launching a three-month plantation campaign to create new jobs for daily income group affected by the countrywide lockdown will prove very productive. In an article carried by Gwadar Pro App on Thursday, he noted that the Forestry Department of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province

was going to launch the campaign, employing thousands of daily income workers.

He expressed his confidence that the campaign will achieve the effect of "one arrow aiming at three eagles", which means doing one thing to achieve three goals at the same time.

First, it will solve the livelihood problem of daily income workers who are unemployed due to the epidemic. It is noted that the federal government and provincial governments have formulat-

ed afforestation plans to plant 10 billion trees all over the country. Pakistan has a population of more than 200 million, which means an average of 50 trees per person. Therefore, this is a very big project. If other provinces all follow the example of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province and immediately launch the planting campaign, hundreds of thousands or even millions of jobs will be created.

Second, there are a large number of poor daily income work-

ers in big cities. A large-scale tree planting campaign will lead a large number of daily income workers to leave the big cities, which may not only help them solve the employment problem, but also reduce the population pressure in the cities. Population evacuation is also conducive to controlling the epidemic spreading.

Third, he added the large-scale tree planting in Pakistan is a green project of strategic significance. Pakistan is a country with

limited water resources. Planting trees helps to increase green coverage, avoid soil erosion and enhance the ability to cope with natural disasters such as mudslides and landslides.

At the same time, planting trees can purify the air, beautify the environment, and create a better living environment for all the people. In addition, by planting trees we can have huge economic benefits, and enhance the export of fruits, herbs, rubber and other products, he added.

WhatsApp tightens message sharing limit

DNA

WASHINGTON: WhatsApp on Tuesday placed new limits on message forwarding as part of an effort to curb the spread of misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new policy limits users to forwarding certain messages to one "chat" at a time, aiming to limit the rapid propagation of content that is provocative but likely to be false.

The Facebook-owned messaging platform said it took the action to enable people to concentrate on personal and private communications during the health crisis.

In recent weeks, "we've seen a significant increase in the amount of forwarding which users have told us can feel overwhelming and can contribute to the spread of misinformation," WhatsApp said in a blog post.



"We believe it's important to slow the spread of these messages down to keep WhatsApp a place for personal conversation."

Last year, WhatsApp set limits on forwarded messages to five chats at a time, "to constrain virality," responding to events in India where the rapid proliferation of unverified information led to mob violence.

The new policy applies to messages forwarded "many times" and marked with a double-arrow, indicating that it did not originate from a close contact, according to WhatsApp. "In effect, these messages are less personal compared

to typical messages sent on WhatsApp," the blog said. "We are now introducing a limit so that these messages can only be forwarded to one chat at a time."

Damian Collins, a British member of parliament and co-founder of the Infotagion fact-check blog, called the move "a timely intervention," noting that WhatsApp was being used to spread recent hoaxes that 5G wireless networks were spreading the virus. "The online conspiracy theories about #5G exposed last week, and their real-life consequences, are a clear call to fight disinformation about #COVID19," Collins tweeted.

Jl leaders review virus relief services

DNA

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi in a meeting at Idara Noor-e-Haq reviewed essential supplies to needy under Alkhidmat and also discussed lockdown situation in city as well as elsewhere in country. During discussion, responsible of all districts informed Ameer JI, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman about daily essential items and readymade meals supplies in their respective districts.

Fund raising also carried out by philanthropists while relief packages were being supplied at door steps of needy families in all districts without hurting their self confidence, they informed meeting. In several districts vegetable packages were also distributed in households, they added.

UN chief asked to explore Kashmir solution

ISLAMABAD: In India Occupied Kashmir, senior APHC leader and Tehreeke-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, has called upon the UN Secretary General António Guterres to appoint a special representative to explore a viable solution to the festering Kashmir dispute.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai in a statement issued in Srinagar while paying tributes to

the Kashmiri martyrs said that everyday innocent Kashmiris were getting killed due to the unresolved Kashmir conflict. He emphasized that the Kashmiris had for years been writing in blood that they wanted 'Azadi' to self-determine their destiny.

He said Kashmir, which is one of the longest standing disputes in the world, is continuously leaving behind tragic stories, walls and thousands of untold stories. - APP

Space crew set for launch during pandemic

ALMATY: A three-man space crew finished preparations on Wednesday for a mission to the International Space Station, which is going ahead despite the coronavirus pandemic. Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner of Russia's Roscos-

mos space agency and NASA's Chris Cassidy will blast off from Kazakhstan for a six-month mission at 08:05 GMT Thursday. But with journalists and relatives unable to travel to Baikonur due to restrictions related to COVID-19, the tra-

Debt relief for the poorest countries critical

DNA

NEW YORK: "COVID-19 is generating an unprecedented global economic crisis. And as we witness in all such crises, this economic destruction is cruelly and unequally distributed.

"For the world's poorest countries, the financial fallout caused by the pandemic, combined with debilitating debt-service obligations, are hampering their ability to prevent further transmission and protect citizens.

"And for the families within those countries, with widespread loss of income and limited access to food in environments where social distancing is impossible, soap and water for handwashing a luxury, and quality health services non-existent, the situation is already dire, and it is only going to get worse.

"While children are largely spared the immediate health consequences of the pandemic, they will suffer the economic destruction left in its wake. More than 200 million children live in debt-distressed countries and those at high risk of debt distress. The burden of debt leaves countries struggling to prevent disease transmission.

China to hold Int'l fair online: Li Keqiang

"Tackling the economic impact of the outbreak abroad is a pressing task. With the tight containment measures introduced across countries, foreign trade and investment are persistently going downward," Li said

STAFF REPORT

BEIJING: China will support processing trade with new steps and hold the Canton Fair online to keep foreign trade and investment stable amid the epidemic, according to the State Council's executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang.

According to China Economic Net, figures from the General Administration of Customs showed that the retail sales of China's cross-border e-commerce businesses reached 186.21 billion yuan (about 26.25 billion U.S. dollars) in 2019. The meeting noted the massive impact of the fast-evolving outbreak worldwide on the global economy, trade and investment. The fast growth of cross-border e-commerce in recent years has become a new highlight in

the country's foreign trade. It is important to leverage the unique strength of cross-border e-commerce when the traditional sectors in foreign trade are hit hard in the COVID-19 outbreak, in order to drive foreign trade with new business forms in this trying time.

"Tackling the economic impact of the outbreak abroad is a pressing task. With the tight containment measures introduced across countries, foreign trade and investment are persistently going downward," Li said.

The meeting decided to set up another 46 integrated pilot zones for cross-border e-commerce on top of the 59 existing ones. In addition to applying the practices proven effective in boosting the flow of commerce, firms in these zones will enjoy such support policies as exemption of value-added and consumption taxes on retail exports, and assessed levy of the corporate income tax.

Integrated pilot zones with proper conditions will be listed into the pilot program on retail imports of cross-border e-commerce. Companies will be supported to jointly build and share overseas warehouses.

"We must accelerate the development of cross-border e-commerce and other new models to boost foreign trade and investment. Competent departments must exercise sound quality supervision and ensure unimpeded logistic services," Li said.

Measures to boost processing trade are also discussed at the meeting. With processing trade accounting for one fourth of the country's foreign trade, the meeting stressed the need to coordinate domestic and foreign trade and help companies engaged in processing trade tackle their difficulties, as well as to stabilize foreign investment and employment.

"In a globalized world, countries all have a stake in each other's future. The Chinese economy has been deeply integrated into the world economy. We must promptly analyze the outbreak's impact on the industrial chains and work out our policy response accordingly. This is vitally important for stabilizing employment," Li said.

It was decided at the meeting that interests of the deferred tax for the bonded materials or finished products in processing trade sold domestically will be temporarily waived till the end of this year. The pilot program where processing trade companies may pay duty for their domestic sales as either imported materials or finished goods will be extended to all the integrated bonded zones. The category of industries where foreign investment is encouraged will be expanded, and the list of prohibited goods in processing trade will be

shortened. "We must take a holistic approach in developing domestic and foreign trade, and swiftly introduce support policies prioritizing the domestic sales by processing trade companies," Li added.

It was also decided that given the serious outbreak situation globally, the 127th China Import and Export Fair, also known as Canton Fair, will be hosted online in mid- to late June.

Companies from home and abroad will be widely invited to exhibit their products online. Powered by advanced information technology, the Fair will provide around-the-clock services for online product promotion, matchmaking and business negotiations.

It will be an Internet-enabled foreign trade platform of quality and specialty products where Chinese and foreign businesses may place orders and cut deals without the hassle of travel.