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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Indian troops kill a minor and injure four people, says DG ISPR
Envoy thanks govt for safe return of citizens

Pak imports no PPE except N-95 masks


INTER-DISTRICT TRAVEL

SC nullifies Punjab Govt's decision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has nullified Punjab government's decision to mandate recovered coronavirus patients to produce a coronavirus travel certificate for inter-district travel. According to details, the apex court, while hearing a suo motu case related to non provision of facilities in hospitals during the viral pandemic, nullified the

notification issued by Punjab government. Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed remarked that how can the Punjab Government impose a ban on inter-district travel without corona certificate from local authorities? Additional Advocate General Punjab said that this notification was issued through coronavirus ordinance 2020 to curtail the spread of the virus, in reply to which the Chief Justice asked that on what

basis was this directive issued as Article 15 is a part of Federal legislative list. Meanwhile, The CJP noted that larger size of cabinet means that PM doesn't know anything. The CJP asked AGP Khalid Javed Khan that why Zafar Mirza was not removed. However, AGP told the larger bench that it will not be wise to remove Mirza at this stage. The CJP also wondered why a Parliament session is not being called in pre-

vailing situation. AGP assured the bench that he will convey the court's concerns to the PM who is holding a high-level meeting on COVID-19 today (Monday). The bench has also set aside Punjab government's directive for obtaining corona clearance certificate before entering the province. The court has also sought details from Sindh government regarding the expenditure of Rs80 million to distribute ration.



LAHORE: A woman busy in wheat harvest in the outskirts of Lahore. – Shabaz Sindhu

Briefs

PM launches Tele School Channel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday launched Tele School Television Channel and said the government would utilize all its resources to improve the channel. He maintained the channel would also benefit children living in far-flung areas. Speaking at the launching ceremony here, the prime minister said the aim of the initiative was to provide education to children at their doorsteps during the lockdown situation.

Aleem back in cabinet

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Aleem Khan was sworn in as provincial minister at a ceremony at Governor's House, Lahore on Monday. Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar administered the oath to the MPA from Lahore.

Envoy thanks govt for safe return of Japanese citizens

Ambassador Matsuda expresses grief over loss of lives in plane crash; says CAA cooperation excellent

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A special PIA flight from Karachi via Islamabad landed at the Narita International Airport, Tokyo, on Monday with over hundred Japanese and foreign nationals on board who were stranded in Pakistan due to the coronavirus pandemic outbreak. "A special PIA flight left Pakistan today Monday April 13 with 110 Japanese nationals and 25 foreign nationals

(24 Pakistani) on board and has arrived safely in Japan". MATSUDA Kuninori, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has greatly appreciated the support and cooperation extended by the Government of Pakistan, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) for arranging and operating the special flight to Japan enabling the smooth and safe return of Japanese nationals and Pakistani residents in Japan back to their homes.

Ambassador MATSUDA in his message of appreciation has thanked all the individuals and departments involved for their brave efforts to arrange safe return of the Japanese nationals and Pakistani people back to Japan, in spite of challenging and life-threatening circumstances caused by the lethal pandemic. The Ambassador renewed his resolve to continue working hand in hand with the Government and people of Pakistan to defeat the coronavirus pandemic.

Tiger Force number to reach 1 million

ISLAMABAD: The number of Corona Relief Tiger Force comprising country's motivated youth was increasing daily as 904,519 young Pakistanis have registered themselves from across the country. The latest number released by Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU), a total of 904519 citizens has registered on the Citizens Portal here on Monday while a control room had already been set up at the Prime Minister Office for monitoring the evolving situation. – DNA

Indian troops kill a minor: DG ISPR

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar Monday said Indian Army troops in total disregard to ceasefire agreement and international conventions initiated unprovoked ceasefire violations along the line of control (LOC) deliberately targeting civilian population in Baroh, Dhudnial, Rakhchikri and Chirikot Sectors. In a tweet, the DG ISPR

said, "Due to indiscriminate Indian fire of heavy weapons and mortars, a two years old minor Muhammad Haseeb in Dhudnial Sector, embraced shahadat while 4 citizens including a woman and 72 years old senior citizen in Baroh, Rakhchikri and Chirikot Sectors sustained serious injuries." He added that Pakistan army troops effectively responded and targeted those Indian posts which initiated fire. Moreover, the injured have been evacuated to nearby health facility for necessary medical care.

Pakistan's exports can contract by 19.7%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has forecast that if the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) lasts longer than expected, Pakistan's exports could plunge to negative growth of 19.7 percent in the current fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 as compared to the previous one. The negative impact of global lockdown due to coronavirus would persist longer and could go beyond FY-20, said the World Bank in its twice-a-year-regional update 'South Asia Economic Focus' adding that under the baseline scenario, the growth rate of exports of Pakistan is likely to contract by 5.3 percent during the year 2020-21.

President holds moot

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi held consultative conference with all provincial Governors and President of AJK and sought their cooperation and suggestions to meet the challenge of Covid-19 Pandemic. President AJK Masood Khan, Governor Punjab Chaudhary Muhammad Sarwar, Governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Governor Balochistan Amanullah Khan Yasinzai and others.

PM seeks overseas Pakistanis donations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday appealed to the overseas Pakistanis to come forward and donate generously to the national Corona Relief Fund as the country faced looming challenge of poverty. "Pakistan will be hit by poverty as aftermath of the lockdown due to coronavirus and will thus need financial support from overseas Pakistanis," the prime minister said in a special video message addressed to the Pakistanis living abroad.

Imran Khan said Pakistan could only collect eight billion rupees so far which was quite a little amount for the 220 million population. On the other hand, the United States of America provided relief of \$2,200 billion for its 300 million population while Germany and Japan allocated over \$1,000 each to fight the pandemic of coronavirus. "It is therefore need of the hour that overseas Pakistanis play their part in mitigating the difficult

situation the country is currently facing," he said. He mentioned that a dedicated website - <http://covid.ophrd.gov.pk/>, had been launched for smooth transfer of donations. The prime minister expressed hope that with joint efforts, Pakistan would be able to fully overcome the challenge of COVID-19. The website of Corona Relief Fund offers multiple options for donations including through credit or debit cards and wire transfers to support needy families.

2 pilots killed as Pak Army's aircraft crashes

President, PM express grief; Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force expressed grief over the tragic air crash of Army Aviation Mushshak

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: An old Pakistan Army aircraft – Mushaq – crashed on Monday near Gujarat during a routine training mission, according to the ISPR. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Major Umer, an instructor pilot, and Lieutenant Faizan, a student pilot, were killed during the crash. "Major Umer, a resident of Gujarat, and Lieutenant Faizan, a resident of Kalar Kahar, Chakwal, embraced shahadat," the ISPR statement said. Major Umer is survived

by a wife, the statement added. President and Prime Minister have expressed grief over the said incident. Meanwhile, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force has expressed grief over the tragic air crash of Army

Aviation Mushshak trainer aircraft near Gujrat, today. The Air Chief prayed for the eternal bliss of the martyred souls, who embraced Shahdat in the line of duty. He also expressed solidarity with the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.



China provides support to 127 countries

China donated \$20 million to the WHO, sent 13 medical teams to 11 countries and held over 70 video conferences with experts from more than 150 countries and international organizations

STAFF REPORT

BEIJING: The Chinese government has so far provided medical support to 127 countries including Pakistan, enabling them to control the spread of COVID-19. This was stated by a spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Zhao Lijian while briefing the media's about China's assistance to the World community. The medical supplies which were made available to four

international organizations as well, included surgical masks, protective gears and testing reagents. China donated \$20 million to the WHO, sent 13 medical teams to 11 countries and held over 70 video conferences with experts from more than 150 countries and international organizations. Localities, enterprises and civil groups in China also donated medical supplies to more than 100 countries, regions and international organizations. Some countries asked China for

assistance in commercial procurement through diplomatic channels, and we recommended exporters to do it on urgent basis. In this connection, China's Ministry of Commerce also published a list of manufacturers certified by regulatory authorities and facilitated the customs clearance of supplies in compliance with regulations. As of April 8, 58 countries and regions as well as four international organizations have signed contracts on commercial pro-

urement of medical supplies with Chinese businesses, and another 71 countries and ten international organizations are in talks for such purchase. There are other foreign buyers cooperating with Chinese companies, too. According to statistics from Chinese customs, from March 1 to April 4, China exported RMB 10.2 billion worth of anti-epidemic supplies, including 3.86 billion masks, 37.52 million protective gears, 2.41 million infrared thermometers, 16,000

ventilators, 2.84 million testing kits and 8.41 million protective goggles. China will continue to work with other countries and overcome difficulties with mutual assistance to safeguard international public health security. With the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, China has provided support and assistance to the international community within its capacity while continuing to do a good job in epidemic control at home, the spokesperson added.

EAD becomes new ministry

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs has been bifurcated into two ministries, namely the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Affairs Division. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday approved changes and declared economic affairs division as the status of a ministry. According to a decision, the finance ministry will now deal with matters related to revenue and finance. – DNA

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Briefs

KP rejects news about missing of 1100 zaireen

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spokesman Ajmal Wazir Monday categorically rejected media reports about missing of over 1100 (zaireen) pilgrims from quarantine centres in KP and termed the news baseless and fabricated.

In a media briefing here, he said that initially zaireen were kept at three quarantine centres two in D I Khan and one in Peshawar, adding that all the zaireen have left for their homes while the only corona patient was at Darazinda quarantine centre who was found corona positive in re-test.

Ajmal said that media should confirm any news related to coronavirus before its dissemination saying that at this present situation any such false news could create panic in the society. Referring to disbursement of financial assistance among deserving and poor people, he said that a total 3600 points have been set up in the province to give Rs12,000 to each deserving family under Ehsaas Program of Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Strong immune system can defeat COVID-19

ISLAMABAD: With the COVID-19 situation looming large, Medical experts in country Monday advised nationals to boost their immunity, change your lifestyle, and strengthen your body's defense mechanism as a strong immune system can combat Coronavirus.

Talking to PTV news channel, a Nutritionist Dr Nausheen Abbas explained there is considerable evidence that eating habits influence the immune system, which is responsible for fighting off infection and disease.

Eating fruit and vegetables every day does not guarantee to stave off infection. But it gives the body the best chance of beating it early and not becoming severely sick, she added. – APP

Master card signs accord with Askari Bank

DNA

KARACHI: Mastercard has signed an agreement with Askari Bank Pakistan for a multifaceted partnership to enhance customer experience and launch new products for a growing number of the Bank's customers. The agreement is part of Mastercard and the Bank's commitment to bring innovative payment solutions to more people across the Middle East and Africa region and forge strategic partnerships that empower the Pakistani market. Representatives from Mastercard and Askari Bank's top management witnessed the signing which took place at an exclusive ceremony held at Mastercard's premises.

Six Chinese enterprises donated food items to 2000 underprivileged

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Consulate in Karachi and six Gwadar-based enterprises have donated food items to 2000 underprivileged families in remote Balochistan to help them pull through the hit of the COVID-19 epidemic and ensure a peaceful forthcoming Ramadan.

According to Gwadar Pro App, the donation contains 50 tons of flour, 4000kg sugar, 2000 liter edible oil and 2000kg dates. Besides the Consulate, the supplies are jointly provided by China Communications Construction Company, China Rail Group, Beijing Urban Construction Group, China Airport Construction Group Corporation, Gansu Construction Investment (Holdings) Group Corporation, and China Overseas Port Holding Company.

Confronted with the relentless COVID-19 virus ravaging across the country, Pakistan sealed off cities and transportation.



Such a measure contains the spread of the virus to some extent but hit hard the vulnerable families, especially those with low income.

Chinese Consul general in Karachi Li Bijian expressed empathy for the Baloch

people who have been inflicted in the adversity, saying that Gwadar-based companies have been endeavoring to meet their social responsibilities by helping local people weather hardships.

Li said, "it is the traditional virtue of the Chinese nation to be benevolent and to help those in need. And we hold dear the profound friendship between China and Pakistan and the support of the local people to our work. We wish a peaceful and tranquil Ramadan for our Pakistani friends!"

The Senate of Pakistan, Balochistan provincial government, Pakistan army, and navy provide guidance and assistance to the activity. Pakistan Navy specially sent warships to transport the flour, sugar, edible oil and other materials from Karachi to Gwadar Port.

China Overseas Port Holding Company, together with the Gwadar Regional Committee, the Office of the Chief Executive, Fishermen Association and other institutions formed a special team to carry out the donation.

Minister visits ANF HQs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Azam Khan Swati visited Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters, here after assuming the portfolio of Federal Minister for Narcotics Control.

He was welcomed by ANF Director General Major General Muhammad Arif Malik and senior officers of anti-narcotics force.

The director general briefed the minister on counter narcotics achievements of ANF, current drug situation and major challenges being faced with regard to trafficking of narcotics, precursor chemicals and psychotropic substances.

ICCI welcomes SBP's refinance scheme for businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan's temporary refinance scheme for businesses to avoid layoff of workers and hoped that it would be helpful in reducing the liquidity issues of businesses and saving jobs of workers.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the lockdown due to Covid-19 have caused huge losses to businesses and it has become difficult for them to pay wages and salaries to their workers.

In a statement Monday, he said that in these difficult times, offering a temporary refinance scheme by

SBP to business at 5 percent mark-up was a welcome step. However, he said that it would have been much better if SBP had offered businesses an interest free loans scheme so that they could be able to restore business activities and pay more effective role in early revival of economy.

The ICCI President said that the scheme will provide financing for wages and salaries expenses for three months from April to June 2020 to those businesses which will not layoff their employees for these three months while the repayment of the principal amount will be made in two years. However, he said that due to coronavirus, businesses have incurred huge losses and it might take them many years to revive business activities.

Helping poor families top priority: Faisal Javed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Senator Faisal Javed Monday reiterated that helping poor families during COVID-19 crises is top most priority of Prime Minister Imran Khan's government.

Talking to Radio current Affair Program, Faisal Javed said PM Imran Khan in current situation is only concerned about the poor segment of the society, adding, the government has initiated a massive cash assistance package

for the deserving families. Most of the people are taxi drivers and day laborers who do earn enough to hardly make one-day family food expenses, he explained. In this lockdown, these people in the community suffer the most and they are faced with two hazards the Covid19 and poverty because they are unable to get any work during the lockdown period and they do not have any savings so that they can spend it now, he added. – APP

CDA, MCI, ICT washing roads

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA), ICT Administration and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) are taking coordinated steps and measures including spraying and washing of roads, markets, streets and other areas and imparting due awareness amongst the residents to control the spread of Corona Virus in the Federal Capital.

In order to make the efforts and measures being taken to control the spread of Corona virus result-oriented, CDA has placed the services of 14 officers and Officials on the disposal of Health Services Directorate, MCI Islamabad. These Officers and Officials have been directed to immediately report to Directorate of Health Services for their further assignments.

Ijaz Shah grieved

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah on Monday expressed grief and sorrow over the crash of a training aircraft Mushshak near Gujrat, resulting in martyrdom of two soldiers.

In a message, the minister prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear the loss with fortitude. – APP

Pakistan imports no PPE except N-95 masks: Gen Afzal

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal Monday said Pakistan was not importing any item of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) except N-95 face masks as most of the required PPE was locally produced.

Addressing the ceremony organized to hand over 15 PCR testing machines and 15,000 testing kits for coronavirus tests by World Health Organization (WHO) at the National Institute of Health (NIH), he said there was no dearth of any PPEs where as the locally produced equipment was made of global standard clothing.

He was flanked by Country Representative WHO Dr Mahapala and NIH Executive Director Major Gen-



eral Aamir Ikram.

He said that in order to control inflow and outflow of traffic effective measures were made at the borders and airports to control coronavirus or COVID-19 transmission within and outside the country.

Recently, he said NDMA had already provided 3,900 pieces of PPEs to all frontline doctors fighting the pandemic in hospitals of the country.

"Yesterday, we completed second round of our supplies and provided PPEs to 502 hospitals' doctors across the country."

General Afzal said NDMA was in the position to provide over 100,000 PPEs and all other required equipment every week to the doctors across the country.

On March 14, there were 14 laboratories working and around 800 tests per day were carried out. "We have 39 functional labs and are also trying to activate 27 more within a weeks time," said the NDMA chairman.

Out of these, 11 were of the military and today in NDMA's warehouse around 600,000 samples of testing kits were present and along with these machines it had 14 extra testing machines, which would be distributed among the 27 newly established labs, he added.

Corona fallout worse for women than men: IWCCI

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) on Sunday said coronavirus fallout is worse for women than men, therefore the vulnerable women should get special attention of the government.

Women comprise the majority of health workers who are on the front lines in the fight against the pandemic who deserve a salary raise while school closures have particularly affected them as they bear the whole responsibility for childcare, said Samina Fazil, founder President IWCCI.

In a statement issued here today, she said that women are facing income loss, beauty parlours

and boutiques have been closed, millions of maids have been laid off, and hundreds of thousands of teachers etc. have been sent on forced leaves.

She said that many women are low-wage and part-time workers facing gender pay gap while those who are running their businesses depend on exhibitions and middlemen as the majority cannot afford to have a shop. Housewives are facing household budget cuts and increased domestic violence due to problems linked to the lockdown, she



added. She said that most of the items women sell in the market is not seen as a necessity, but more of luxury amid an economic slowdown which has resulted in financial constraints for the businesswomen.

Samina Fazil noted that the economy needs women, and women need equity and protection, therefore the State Bank of Pakistan should reschedule loan repayments, announce interest-free loans for women entrepreneurs and take all other steps needed to empower them amid the crisis to help them remain afloat.

She said that financial security space is shrinking for the businesswomen, therefore the government should announce a bailout package for them without further delay.

Citizens urged to continue social distancing

ISLAMABAD: Health Services Director General Dr Hassan Urooj on Monday asked the citizens to continue social distancing and self-isolation in order to control further spread of coronavirus.

Talking to private news channel, Urooj urged everyone to stay at home whenever possible and practice social distancing of two meters or more when out and meeting with people.

"I am confident that Pakistan will be able to get rid of this pandemic very soon and once the COVID-19 issue is over, Pakistan will become a more vigilant country", he hoped. Keeping in view the present situation, all the segments of society should forged unity for the sake of national interests, he said. – APP

1,000 kites confiscated

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police during raids in different localities confiscated 1,000 kites, 11 strings rolls and arrested five kite seller here on Monday.

According to police spokesman, Sadder Barooni Police raided and confiscated 500 kites and 5 strings rolls from Babar Mumtaz while Pirwadi police held Sikander Hayyat and recovered 25 kites and 3 string rolls from his possession.

Similarly, Cantonment police arrested three kite seller Mudasar, Nauman and Sabir besides recovered 440 kites and 3 string rolls from their possession. – APP

A great recession in the offing amidst Covid-19, experts warn

Goheer said that apart from providing support to WHO in data sharing and providing advise and technical assistance to commonwealth nations, the secretariat working on innovative solutions, such as low-cost ventilators, for greater social impact

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: As a consequent of COVID-19 crisis, the whole world, both developed and developing countries alike, is most likely to face recession period which will be more severe than 2008 great recession. In order to tackle post Covid-19 recessionary period, the multilateral institutions need to strengthen the cooperation and must help the developing countries for effective preparedness to help prevent the spread of pandemic.

Experts said this during an online COVID-19 policy response dialogue titled "Role and Future of Multilateral Institutes" organized

by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here at Islamabad.

Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that irrespective of their development status, no country can afford a permanent or indefinite lockdown. This is the time when multilateralism has become extremely important. He said that this new normal is closing our borders, and unless we have a solution to this problem, we need to bring back the spirit of multilateralism to overcome this Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Suleri said that multilateral institutions including G20, IMF, and World Bank etc., have to support other countries for

themselves, as far as this disease is prevalent in any part of the world other parts of the world can also be affected.

Assistant Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat, Nabeel Goheer said that this pandemic is our common challenge which is hitting us hard without discrimination.

To overcome this common challenge, the multilateral institutions need to come forward and fight this pandemic with collective and collaborative response.

He said that after announcement of \$5 trillion package by G-20 countries and \$160 billion from World Bank, the multilateral institutions' response is now gaining momentum. In this time

of crisis, the governments and multilateral institutions should ensure the comprehensive cooperation, he added.

Goheer said that apart from providing support to WHO in data sharing and providing advise and technical assistance to commonwealth nations, the secretariat working on innovative solutions, such as low-cost ventilators, for greater social impact. He said that developing countries are experiencing social and economic crisis, whereas global stock and supply chains have wreaked havoc and have the potential to turn into a humanitarian disaster.

Additional Secretary, Director General UN, Foreign Office, Farrukh Iqbal Khan said that

the world has no option but to enhance the multilateral cooperation to combat the Covid-19 challenge. He said though there is anxiety, trust deficit and division amongst the international community, but the world needs to understand the rules of the game which are changing.

He said that there are new actors and new institutions are coming into play, such as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) led by China, and the system is in transition.

Pakistan is also contributing to this new institutional framework and the world should realize the potential of this emerging international cooperation in the larger context of multilateralism, he added.

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Trump and WHO lock horns

THE American president is known to tweet first and ask questions later.

However, in such unprecedented global circumstances, world leaders have a responsibility, more so than before, to issue carefully vetted statements, especially when discussing matters related to Covid-19.

Earlier this week, Donald Trump launched a damaging critique of the World Health Organisation, accusing the UN-affiliated body of going soft on China, and threatening to cut American funding for WHO.

While there have been others who have also criticised WHO's response to the coronavirus crisis, saying that the global health body took too long to declare Covid-19 a pandemic, the fact is that this is not the time for censure; informed critiques of what should and should not have been done can wait until the crisis starts to subside.

However, Mr Trump has never been one for subtle diplomacy. Moreover, his own response to the infection in the US has been criticised by American governors and mayors.

The US president himself had early on downplayed the risks of the virus, preferring to keep the wheels of the American economy going. It is only after infection and deaths spiked in the US over the past few days that he changed tack.

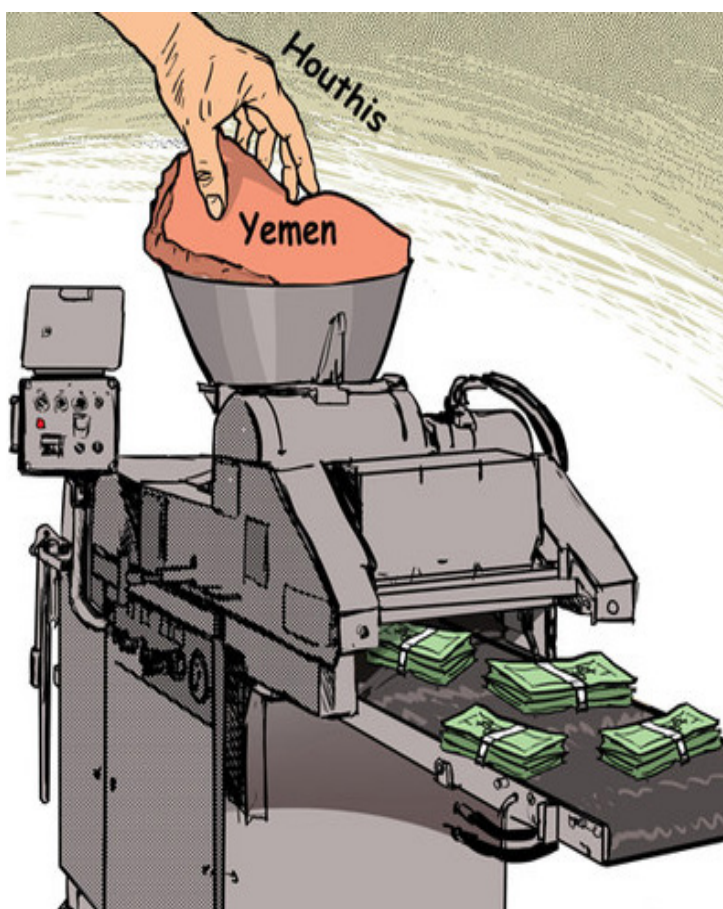
Bashing multilateral organisations has been a favourite pastime of the US leader. In the past, he has heaped abuse on bodies such as the International Criminal Court and UN rights outfits, all the while upholding the principle of American exceptionalism.

However, it is hoped he does not follow through on his threat to cut WHO's funds.

Regardless of any errors of judgement during the pandemic, the health body has worked tirelessly, especially where developing countries are concerned, to put out the message that a global response is the only way to eliminate Covid-19.

That response can best be marshalled by an outfit like WHO.

Multilateralism may be far from perfect, but when a global health crisis challenges humanity, there may not be too many other options.



FATF extension; will it help

AS an expected relief under the corona crisis, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has extended the deadline for Pakistan to achieve all 27 points of its action plan till October 2020. This extension is a much-needed relief for Pakistan as the country is struggling to contain the spread of the coronavirus. In a lockdown situation, it can hardly be expected of the Pakistani authorities to concentrate on anything else other than the crisis itself. The fulfilment of the remaining points of the action plan requires coordination and negotiations at various levels of the government machinery and financial institutions across the country, which are mostly closed or working with only skeleton staff at the moment. Though the government has already passed some legislation to prevent the illegal outflow of the foreign exchange from Pakistan, still there are points to be met in the coming months. Now it has become impossible for anyone to take more than \$10,000 out of the country without prior approval from the State Bank.

Pakistan has also been successful in freezing the accounts of various banned organizations and convicted individuals related to them, but the FATF has been demanding severe action against more outfits that it considers detrimental to world peace and likely to resort to terrorism if further action is not taken. The same applies to individuals whose detailed lists have been shared with the government of Pakistan for their arrest, conviction, and punishments. This is perhaps the weakest area of performance from the Pakistan side as the police fail to collect incriminating evidence against such individuals and as a result the courts cannot convict those against whom sufficient evidence has not been collected or produced. Take for example the recent case of Omar Sheikh who was involved in the murder of Daniel Pearl but a strong case could not be established against him to keep him behind the bars. The government had to act and imprison him immediately after the court verdict. Now, this extension by the FATF is a godsend opportunity for Pakistan to expedite the process of compliance to the action plan. This six-month reprieve should not be squandered and even in the time of lockdown, the concerned authorities and officials must continue their work with various departments and ministries through emails, phones, and video-link. Now Pakistan has to comply with all 27 points by October instead of April 30, and this time will pass quicker than imagined. We can't afford to show any laxity in this matter, as after the expiry of this extension it is highly unlikely that another extension is granted to Pakistan. Our inability to comply by then may result in stringent measures by the FATF that will further affect our economy which is already teetering on the brink.

Imam-Al-Bukhari International Research Centre in Uzbekistan

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



Generally Muslims and Muslim countries are pretty backward in modern education, especially Science & Technology compared to the rest of the world? It's not even about race or ethnicity, almost all Muslim countries lack in Science & Technology as compared to the West and other countries. Most of the inventions in Science and Technology are either by Christians or Jews. The mind boggling question here is that why are 1.7 billion Muslims lacking in this department? The abrupt answer is that most of Muslim countries do not have modern and well-equipped research centers nor do they attach any priority to that.

PROBABLY in this background, Uzbekistan, under the visionary leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, incurred upon itself the onus of establishing a modern and fully equipped research center with the name of "Imam-Al-Bukhari International Research Centre (IBIRC)" in the historical and ancient city of Samarkand. The aim is to provide the research scholars and intellectuals from every corner of the world a unique platform where they could come and do research on Islam in right way with right intentions and right perspectives.

This research centre is headquartered at the Imam Al-Bukhari Academy in Samarkand and affiliated to the OIC. It spans over acres of land. Also situated in the juxtaposition of Imam Al Bukhari tomb, the research center too is frequented by hundreds of people, who visit the place and are briefed about the importance of the Center and various research facilities provided in the Center. Since Uzbekistan has started to reach out to the outer world, especially in the field of Ziyarah tourism, one is pleasantly surprised to know that the country has contributed a lot to enrich human history, through its scholars such as Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam At-Termizi, Mahmud Az-Zamakshari, Muhammad Al-Khawarazmi, Burhaniddin Marghinani, Abu Raihan Beruni, Abu Ali ibn Sina and others. As rightly remarked by the Uzbek President, Imam Bukhari is acclaimed all over the world as the compiler of "Sahih Al Bukhari" the second most important source in Islam after Quran". The idea of the research center first came under discussion in 2016 when as an interim President of Uzbek-

istan Shavkat Mirziyoyev took up this plan with the OIC leadership, who not only supported the initiative but promised to extend full support in order to make this project a complete success.

The spirit ostensibly behind this initiative was to provide the Muslim world with a modern research center with a view to enabling the scientists and scholars to enrich their knowledge not only to match the modern day challenges but to raise the status of scientists in the Muslim world. There were times when Muslim scholars laid the foundation of various sciences in the world but unfortunately this process seems to have halted. For sure, the Imam-al Bukhari Research Center shall play its key role in disseminating scientific and technological know-how among the Muslims across the globe thus empowering them to match the existing and impending challenges effectively.

I had a chance to visit this wonderful place on February 23, 2019 and was taken aback to see a unique epicenter of knowledge and research in the shape of Imam al Bukhari Research Center. We were told that the Center was formally opened in January 2019 and was equipped with all latest scientific and technical facilities that are required for in-depth research and enrichment of knowledge. The hosts showed the visitors various facilities offered at the Center with essential briefing about Imam Al Bukhari and his contribution towards making Islam well-understood not only in the Muslim world but in the Western world also.

The Center comprised many rooms and research areas where scholars gather and carry out their research re-

lated activities. Dedicate translation centers have also been set up in order for translation of various works in different languages. Additionally, proper teaching facilities are also made available along with learned and experienced faculty to impart scientific knowledge to the students. Being Muslims, it was undoubtedly a matter of pride for us that we had such a unique and state-of-the-art research center at the disposal of the Muslims where they can go and quench their thirst of scientific and research knowledge. And above all, the building of the Center in itself was an excellent piece of art and architecture.

Pakistan, along with other countries, has signed a MoU for cooperation with the Imam Al Bukhari Research Center. Pakistan being one of the largest Muslim countries of the world should also focus on research related projects. Partnering with Imam Al Bukhari center indeed is a welcome step however this mutual cooperation needs to be intensified and expanded. Pakistan can work closely with the IBIRC in order to have a similar facility in Pakistan also.

It is quite unfortunate that not even a single institution in Muslim countries had been conferred with the Nobel Prize so far, therefore one should hope that Imam Bukhari Center would not only scale this milestone but also play its due role in overcoming the research and scientific deficit the Muslim world is facing today.

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The article is based on his visit to Uzbekistan. www.dnaneews.com.pk / www.centreline.com.pk



Leading in a pandemic crisis: never too late to change course

Maleeha Lodhi



As the number of cases rose, the prime minister's tone changed. But procrastination over measures aimed at social distancing continued to send conflicting messages

NO government in the world had a primer to deal with the unprecedented pandemic which plunged countries into unmapped territory. However, several months into the global health emergency, lessons have emerged from across the world to show what worked to mitigate and contain Covid-19 —

and what did not. It is never too late for a government to change course even in the midst of an uncharted and evolving crisis, especially as more evidence emerges about how best to tackle it. By now, the most obvious and instructive lesson is that it is "rapid, decisive and collective action that can prevent the spread" — as an influential report from London's Imperial College put it. And this advice from the World Health Organisation remains imperative to fight the virus: "Countries must continue to find, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact". And "If countries rush to lift restrictions too quickly, the virus could resurge and the economic impact could be even more severe and prolonged".

Informed by this perspective, the prime minister might consider taking the following five steps: 1) send clear, coherent and consistent messages to the public; 2) act decisively; 3) lead a unified, multilayered, national effort with close coordination with all provinces; 4) stay a firm course on social distancing; and above all 5) be guided by the evolving medical science on the pandemic by giving a lead role to medical specialists who understand this, not generalist bureaucrats. Like other countries, Pakistan is navigating a crisis that will test its leadership.

Why urge these steps? To answer this, consider what has happened so far. First, on messaging, the early weeks saw mixed signals, which did not convey the urgency or severity of the unfolding threat. Public communication veered between saying this was little more than a flu virus that would afflict the elderly to asserting that the virus had not hit the country as hard as other nations. If the aim was to calm and not panic the public, the (un-

tended) result was to underplay the threat when people needed to be persuaded to stay home to prevent the virus from spreading. As the number of cases rose, the prime minister's tone changed. But procrastination over measures aimed at social distancing continued to send conflicting messages. Getting mired in a prolonged public argument about lockdown vs no lockdown conveyed an impression of indecisiveness. That brings up the second step — act decisively. If, as government leaders claim, they first "reviewed" the looming threat in mid-January, how did they act on this? How was an under-resourced healthcare system enabled to deal with the remorseless onset of cases? Did "rapid, decisive action" follow after the first infection was confirmed on Feb 26?

Missteps exacerbated the situation. Much has already been said about how zaireen (pilgrims) returning from Iran through the border crossing at Taftan were managed and cluster allowed into the mainland, which accelerated the spread of the virus. According to the latest official figures, over 30 per cent of current Covid-19 cases in Pakistan came via this route. The third step is centre-province coordination. This was found wanting weeks into the crisis. The prime minister's reluctance to reach out and consult provincial leaderships, especially of Sindh, prevented a unified policy from emerging. Provinces went their own way until a National Coordination Committee and a Command and Operations Centre were established in mid-March and early April respectively. But provincial approaches — for example, on a lockdown — are still not harmonised. This prompted a Supreme Court judge to urge the centre during a recent hearing to

improve coordination with provincial governments.

Four, as the federal government mulls relaxing restrictions on economic activity, it remains important to meet clearly articulated health milestones, especially enhanced testing capability, before easing the lockdown. According to the government's own projections, infections may reach 70,000 by end-April, as reportedly revealed to a cabinet meeting last week. If this projection is based on an assumption about a degree of compliance with social distancing, then that estimate can change if restrictions are relaxed early. Last but not least, the determination of when to ease restrictions should be made on the advice of health professionals. Their counsel should guide the overall policy response to Covid-19. They should be represented in the top policy bodies established to address the crisis, not just subsidiary committees. Membership of these bodies should be dictated by the nature of the crisis, not ministerial status. Expertise is needed to interpret the evolving response of the global medical community. This critical gap should be filled as the NDMA is designed to deal with natural disasters and other aspects of the ongoing crisis, not a health emergency. Like other countries, Pakistan has to navigate a crisis that will test its leadership. The prime minister has used the metaphor of war to describe the challenge of fighting Covid-19. He has a chance to emerge as an effective 'wartime' chief executive. Now is the time for him to live up to that challenge.

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, UK and UN.

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Briefs

Cabinet, docs advise to extend lockdown: Sindh CM

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday said that the members of the provincial cabinet and doctors have suggested to extend the lockdown for two weeks more and make it vigorous to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The chief minister of Sindh said this during a video press conference here. During the press conference, Syed Murad Ali Shah said that they needed proper data to provide help to needy people, but they received data with delay and action was being taken on it.

Chief Minister Sindh said that they have so far provided 300,000 ration bags to the welfare organizations while 250,000 rations bags have been distributed among the needy people. Murad Ali Shah said that there was nothing more important than life and the whole Pakistan has to be united on the coronavirus. "We cannot win from this pandemic 'coronavirus' separately", he added. He said necessary medical supplies were being provided to the hospital staff, but some hospitals had also reported confirm cases of coronavirus, where the virus was not being treated.

1 mln students return to school in China

ZHEJIANG: The eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang on Monday partially reopened schools, with a total of 977,000 senior students in junior and senior high schools resuming classes in classrooms, as the novel corona-virus epidemic wanes in China.

On Monday morning, students wearing masks had body temperatures taken and presented their digital codes proving their health conditions before entering schools. "I'm happy to be back. Study at home was inefficient, and I don't want to miss the time with my classmates," said Yu Chaojie, a senior high third-grader of the Hangzhou Xuejun High School in the provincial capital Hangzhou. — APP

Pakistanis to return via Torkham

PESHAWAR: The federal government has made all necessary arrangements for the safe return of Pakistanis stranded in Afghanistan via Torkham border. Officials in KP government told APP that initially 1,000 Pakistanis would be returned back from Afghanistan and would be quarantined in Landi Kot and Jamrud in Khyber district. They would be provided foods, healthcare and other necessary facilities in these centres upon their return to the home country. — APP



LALAMUSA: A view of main bazar closed due to lockdown. — Khurshid Nadeem

Indian envoy summoned to protest violations

The DG (SA & SAARC) called upon the Indian side to respect the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, investigate this and other such incidents of deliberate ceasefire violations and maintain peace along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indian Charge d'Affaires Gaurav Ahluwalia was summoned at the Foreign Office on Monday to lodge Pakistan's strong protest over the ceasefire violations by Indian occupation forces along the Line of Control (LoC) in Dhudnial, Rakhchikri, Chirikot and Baroh sectors on April 12. Director General (South Asia &

SAARC) Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry summoned the Indian diplomat and condemned the targeting of innocent civilians by the Indian occupation forces, the Foreign Office said in a statement. He stressed that such "senseless Indian acts", in clear violation of the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding and complete disregard for international human rights and international norms, further vitiated the tense atmosphere along the LoC and were a "threat to re-



gional peace and security". He said by raising tensions along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB), India could not divert attention from the worsening human rights situation in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K). The DG (SA & SAARC) called upon the Indian side to respect the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, investigate this and other such incidents of deliberate ceasefire violations and main-

tain peace along the LoC and the WB. He also urged that India should permit the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to play its mandated role as per the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSC). The Indian indiscriminate firing resulted in martyrdom of a two-year-old Muhammad Haseeb s/o Muhammad Yousaf in Dhudnial Sector.

Tajik Supreme Court bans terrorist groups

DNA

DUSHANBE: The internet portal www.akhbor.com and nahzat.ru, which were belongs to terrorist-extremist organizations of the Islamic Revival Party, National Alliance of Tajikistan and other extremist and terrorist organizations

blocked in the territory of Tajikistan and prohibiting the import and distribution of their audio recordings, videos, literature, publications and editions in Tajikistan. The decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tajikistan was made on March 19, 2020 on this matter. The Supreme Court de-

cision was made on the basis of the application of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Tajikistan. This application is submitted in order to ensure the safety of citizens and protection of the constitutional system, national security issues and the prevention of terrorist and extremist activities.

ECC makes decision on wheat quota

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet today at the Cabinet Division. ECC approved the allocation of additional 200,000 M.T of wheat for Utility Stores Corporation from PASSCO, the approved quantity will be released in tranches. The first tranche will be of 50,000MT, which would be released immediately; the rest will be released on demand by USC. The total cost of this package is Rs.8,690 billion including incidental charges of 1,690 billion.

'Clinical trials' for corona treatments begin: Dr Atta

ISLAMABAD, Apr 13 (DNA):Head of Prime Minister's Task Force on Science and Technology Dr Attaur Rahman Monday announced that a large-scale clinical trial has been launched to assess potential treatments for Covid-19 (coronavirus) patients. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) had allowed drug manufacturers to fast-track the refining of raw materials used to make chloroquine, a drug that health experts believe is partially effective in treating virus patients, he said while talking to a private news channel. He said that combination of Chloroquine Phosphate or Hydroxychloroquine medicines would have good results for treating coronavirus patients, adding, these medicines prescription by doctors would start in next 15 days.

Dr Atta said after France human trial on COVID-19, Pakistan had also started a clinical trials where it proves that these medicines are benefiting for this virus.

He said according to France recent study the combination of hydroxy-chloroquine and a commonly used antibiotic could be effective in treating COVID-19, he mentioned. In coming days after these trials we may face some shortages of these medicine in market but government is taking serious steps for its availability in country, he assured. PM Task Force on Coronavirus was taking war footing steps to introduce its vaccine and treatment in country, he added. Government is working in close coordination with the international community to improve the country's research infrastructure, he added.

ADB triples Covid-19 response package

DNA

BEIJING: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Monday tripled the size of its response to the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic to \$20 billion and approved measures to streamline its operations for quicker and more flexible delivery of assistance. The package expands ADB's \$ 6.5 billion initial response announced on March 18, adding \$13.5

billion in resources to help ADB's developing member countries counter the severe macroeconomic and health impacts caused by COVID-19. The \$20 billion package includes about \$2.5 billion in concessional and grant resources, according to a news release issued here. "This pandemic threatens to severely set back economic, social, and development gains in Asia and the Pacific, reverse progress on poverty re-

duction, and throw economies into recession," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "Our expanded and comprehensive package of assistance, made possible with the strong support of our Board, will be delivered more quickly, flexibly, and forcefully to the governments and the private sector in our developing member countries to help them address the urgent challenges in tackling the pandemic and economic downturn."

Pakistan should seek emergency loan from AIIB: Chinese media

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Given the serious impact of the Covid-19 epidemic and the fallout of locust disaster, Pakistan should seek emergency loan for the Crisis Recovery Facility from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB has announced launch of a new Crisis Recovery Facility earlier this month to support its

members in the battle against the Covid-19 epidemic, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. The initial offering of the loan is said to stand at \$5 billion dollars, and the AIIB Board of Directors has approved a sovereign-backed loan of 85 million yuan (about \$355 million equivalent) to China. Pakistan should also seize the opportunity and apply for the loan. According to AIIB, the

facility could support emergency public health needs, such as health infrastructure for emergency preparedness and clients whose infrastructure investments are severely impacted by the pandemic. It could also provide the financing needed to preserve the productive capacity of other productive sectors, including manufacturing, that have been hit by Covid-19. The facility is designed to

be flexible and adaptive to emerging demands. It will offer dedicated financing for the next 18 months for qualifying projects within its membership. The size of the loan could be increased depending on client demand. AIIB is also exploring how it can use its Project Preparation Special Fund to help its members, especially low-income members, whose

economies are being particularly impacted by Covid-19. The loan approved to China on April 3, was the first tranche of the project, which aims to strengthen public health emergency response capacity in the Chinese municipalities of Beijing and Chongqing, including sustainable public health infrastructure, emergency equipment and supplies. Finance Ministry of Chi-

na applied for the loan with a term of 34.5 years. It holds the advantages of low interest, long maturity, and convenient for utilization. Jin Liqun, AIIB President and Chair of the Board said, "the international community needs to come together to pool our resources to help the world navigate the current pandemic and economic upheaval. AIIB is committed to playing its full part."

Corona cases hike to 665 in Afghanistan

RAJA FURQAN AHMED

KABUL: Coronavirus cases increased up to 665 in Afghanistan. According to the reports provided by the ministry of public health, at least 58 new cases tested positive for Coronavirus in the past 24 hours coming from Kandahar, Kabul, Helmand, Nimroz, Takhar, and Kunduz provinces. According to the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), 22 patients of the COVID-19 have passed away, including two doctors, and 38 others have recovered so far.

Wahidullah Mayar, the MOPH spokesperson, said, "28 of the positive cases come from Kandahar, 13 from Kabul, seven from Helmand, six from Nimroz, three from Takhar, and one from Kunduz."

The number of COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan is rising rapidly, and to prevent the outbreak, staying at home is the most important prescription.

Dow varsity experts claim virus cure

DNA

KARACHI: Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) medical experts have claimed on Monday that they have created a drug to treat patients suffering from the coronavirus disease. As per details, medical experts from the DUHS claimed that Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG) can cure the COVID-19 patients.

Talking to a private television channel, Professor Muhammad Saeed Qureshi, member of the research team, said that Intravenous Immunoglobulin is a great development in the fight against novel coronavirus. He said the globulin was manufactured with purified antibodies, obtained from the recovered coronavirus patients. Professor Shaukat Ali, head of the research team, has termed the corona cure as a ray of hope amid the pandemic crisis. On April 09, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) allowed clinical trials of blood plasma therapy to treat coronavirus patients in the country.