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IMF lauds Pakistani response to COVID-19: Teresa Daban

Afghanistan is thankful to Pakistan: FM

Indian concerns about Gurdwara domes baseless



Briefs

Forces kill five outlaws

DNA
RAWALPINDI: Terrorist carried out fire raid on security forces' check-post, in Miranshah, North Waziristan. According to ISPR, troops effectively engaged them and killed five terrorists. In exchange of fire, one soldier Havaldar Akbar Hussain Khan embraced shahadat while three soldiers got injured. Troops cordoned the area and carried out search operation.

RAW agent arrested



DNA
KARACHI: In a major breakthrough, intelligence agencies and local police have arrested a police officer who was working for the Indian agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). The intel-based operation was carried out after a report from Karachi's Gulistan-e-Johar area in which ASI Shehzad Parvez Faisal was arrested. Several mobile phones, unregistered SIM cards and two hand grenades among other belongings were seized during the raid. As per sources, the police officer had been facilitating terror activities in the metropolis. He is also told to be an active target killer involved in the killing of several key figures. Sources familiar with the development confirmed that he was also in contact with MQM-London and received terror funding from the Mehmood Siddiqui group.

COVID-19: IMF lauds Pak response

IMF was quite happy the way Pakistan was implementing different policies to achieve fiscal consolidation and macroeconomic stability and would continue to provide its support to the country to face the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID19: Teresa Daban

A.M.BHATTI
ISLAMABAD: Maria Teresa Daban Sanchez, Resident Representative of International Monetary Funds (IMF) in Pakistan, has said that the performance of Pakistan's economy prior to the emergence of Covid-19 and its devastating impacts, had been quite satisfactory. She said that the IMF was quite happy the way Pakistan was implementing different policies to achieve fiscal consolidation and macroeconomic stability and would continue to provide its support to the country to face the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID19. The Resident Representative of

the IMF said this while speaking at online policy dialogue titled 'IMF support to Pakistan under RFI, Existing EFF program, & Debt Rescheduling' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Monday. Ms Sanchez, on the occasion apprised of IMF toolkit to fight the COVID-19 shock that includes the Rapid Finance Instrument which Pakistan will be utilizing. She noted that the IMF's assessment of the situation says that COVID 19 would reverse the decline in public debt that resulted from fiscal consolidation efforts. This would also result in increase of primary deficit. She appreciated Government of Pakistan's decisive response

to COVID19, including cash transfers to most vulnerable families, lowering down policy rate, eliminating import duties on several items, and other initiatives to provide relief for the low income segments of society. Commenting on opening up of Construction sector, she said that IMF supports opening of labour intensive sector where daily wagers may be absorbed. However, she hoped that amnesty announced for investment in construction sector is temporary in nature, and would be withdrawn once situation becomes normal. "The IMF recommends that Pakistan as well as other countries recalibrate their policy actions as we move on. Therefore, the regulatory measures

taken are temporary and regulatory relaxation might not be necessary in the future as it can create problems", she added. She said that ongoing existing fund facility (EFF) program is very much intact. IMF is working closely with the authorities in Pakistan and the next review mission may take place virtually. Regarding the EFF, she said, as the medium term economic outlook is changing, we have to recalibrate everything from targets to trajectories. "It is encouraging that the GOP is committed to fiscal consolidation and reforms once the things get normal", she added. While commenting on the overall impacts of Covid-19 on Pakistan's economy, she said that

there would be a significant cut in imports from Pakistan from various countries, the remittances would get reduced, tax collection would reduce considerably and the growth rate may get reduced to -1.5%. It is in this context, funds under RFI arrangement would help Pakistan to bridge the gap in immediate financing needs. (Going forward, in Post COVID19 times.) "The IMF is working to make Pakistan as competitive and open as possible by making it more export oriented and an attractive destination for investment" she added. Responding to a question, Ms Sanchez stated that IMF experts in Washington are trying to bring SBPs legislation in line with best practices, we have no

bias for or against any person to chair SBP's board. It is purely Government of Pakistan's discretion. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, while highlighting Pakistan's recent engagements with the IMF, said that COVID19 has brought socio-economic uncertainties with a lengthy period of emergency response that would result in global recession. This "new normal", according to the UN would be accompanied or followed by a severe food crisis. In these circumstances, multilateral lenders like IMF would have to redefine their role as a socio-economic saviour to ensure "stability" of the "stability" that IMF talks about.

Ulema support lockdown plan

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: Ulema and Mashaihk have strongly supported the lockdown strategy of Prime Minister Imran Khan in the wake of coronavirus. A delegation of religious scholars called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad on Monday and assurance him of full coordination to implement the decision of precautionary measures taken by the government. The delegation included Pir Aminul Hasanat Shah, Pir Shams-ul-Amin, Pir Naqib-ur-Rehman, Maulana Mohammad Hanif Jalandhari, Maulana Tahir

Mahmood Ashrafi, Maulana Hamidul Haq Haqqani, Hafiz Ghulam Mohammad Sialvi, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Sahibzada Pir Sultan Fayyaz Hussain, Mufti Maulana Syed Charagh Din Shah and Maulana Ziaullah Shah. Governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Mufti Munib-ur-Rehman, Mufti Taqi Usmani also attended the meeting through video link. Minister for Federal Education Shafiqat Mahmood, Minister for Religious Affairs Noor ul Haq Qadri, Assistant Special Information Minister Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Dr Qibla Ayaz and others were also present in

the meeting. Allama Shehenshah Hussain Naqvi also attended the meeting through video link. The religious scholars of the country said that the stance of the prime minister about lockdown is a realistic approach and according ground realities. PM urges people to stay home: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday urged upon people to stay maximum at home leading the government lead to ease the gradual lockdown. "The more people show self-discipline, the easier it will be for us to manage the COVID-19 plus ease the lockdown gradually," the prime minister wrote in a tweet.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan and Director General ISI, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed called on President Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

OIC rejects anti-Muslim prejudice in India

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has expressed deep concern following recent media accounts of rising anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobia in India. OIC, the second larg-

est inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with 57 member states, condemned the incidents within political and media circles in India and on mainstream and social media platforms, where Indian Muslim minority is blamed of spreading the coronavirus in the country. "The OIC General Sec-

retariat expresses its rejection of the targeting of Muslims anywhere, pointing out that the current COVID-19 world situation is such that it requires greater efforts, more active co-operation and solidarity mechanisms worldwide, and stronger mutual aid among all citizens of the same country," the OIC said in a statement.

Chinese team arrives in Kyrgyzstan

DNA
BISHKEK: A group of medical specialists from the People's Republic of China has arrived in Kyrgyzstan. Chinese medics will provide assistance and share experience with domestic specialists in the fight against coronavirus infection. In addition, they will share best practices and techniques in the treatment of patients. The agreement on sending medical experts from China to Kyrgyzstan was reached on April 14, 2020.

Indian views about Gurdwara domes baseless

ADNAN YOUSAF
ISLAMABAD: Responding to media queries regarding damage to a few domes of Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib due to the strong winds caused by severe storm, the Spokesperson stated that the domes damaged on the night of 17 April have already been repaired. The repair work was completed within 24 hours of damage. The Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (PSGPC) and the Sikh Community have greatly appreciated the efforts for immediate repair of the damaged domes.

The Sikh community in Pakistan and all over the world is appreciative of the Government of Pakistan's efforts for operationalizing Kartarpur Corridor. The work on the world's biggest Gurdwara, the Kartarpur Sahib, was completed in record time by Pakistan last year. The magnificent newly-built Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib compound is a gift by the people of Pakistan and its leadership to the Sikh community. India would be well-advised to take steps to effectively protect the minorities and their places of worship, rather than feigning concerns for the rights of minorities elsewhere.

Afghan FM thanks Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Tuesday called Mohammed Haneef Atmar acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan to discuss bilateral counter-COVID-19, peace, security and economic cooperation. Afghan Foreign Minister said he thanked Pakistan government and people for extending emergency support to Afghan refugees and support for bilateral trade and transit. Both sides vowed to work together on counter-terrorism through APAPPS mechanisms, building a better understanding of each other's concerns, intel sharing from Aslam Farooqi and his accomplices for mutual security and security cooperation in our shared region constitute our top priorities.

Pakistan ports well protected

The permission was given for the sake of efficient and cost-effective operationalization of the Gwadar Port and the western-corridor of the CPEC

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani ports such as Gwadar, Karachi and Qasim are well-protected in wake of COVID-19, as they are carrying forward their routine operation, Gwadar Pro App stated in a report on Monday. The Gwadar Port which strives to become a vibrant transit and transshipment port, kept on its working since COVID-19 did shake Pakistan's economy. On the plea of Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PAJCCI), Gwadar International Terminals Limited, Federation of Pakistan Chambers

of Commerce & Industry (FPC-CI) and other stakeholders, the government of Pakistan allowed import of Afghan bulk cargo of wheat, sugar and fertilisers at the Gwadar Port, and onward transit to Afghanistan. "The permission was given for the sake of efficient and cost-effective operationalization of the Gwadar Port and the western-corridor of the CPEC, the import of Afghan bulk-cargo of wheat, sugar and fertilisers at the Gwadar Port and onward transit to Afghanistan shall be permitted in bonded carrier, insured and sealable trucks having a tracking device installed on them," the office memorandum noted.

In addition to Gwadar Port, Karachi Port and Port Qasim, Pakistan's two main operating international deep-sea ports, also adopted measures to tackle the current economic downturn caused by COVID-19. The government has recently approved 3 projects worth Rs. 1.04 billion for Karachi's Korangi Fish Harbour (KFH), namely, "Establishment of Business Park at Korangi Fisheries Harbour" worth Rs.784 million, "Establishment of Cold Storage & Freezing Tunnel at Korangi Fisheries Harbour" worth Rs. 170.1 million and "Modification of Auction Hall of Korangi Fisheries Har-

bour" worth Rs 94 million. The first project presented by Ministry of Maritime Affairs envisages the development of Business Park to accommodate industrial units, offices and other associated infrastructure and services centered around one primary product or activity. The planned Business Park will be established on the 320 acres of land available within KPFHA boundary. Port Qasim - currently caters for more than 40% of seaborne trade requirements of the country - issued a Response Plan for Coronavirus on March 12, preparing to deal with entry of the ship in port and while

it is berth inside and defining the role function of port health authority, port administration, shipping lines/agents and other stake holders. In accordance with the Response Plan, brisk shipping activity was observed at Port Qasim these days, with ships like Maersk Bentonville, Nordic Anny, CL Heidi and Serene Amelia carrying Containers, Mogas and Coal arriving at outer anchorage of Port Qasim on April 17. On top of port authorities mentioned above, Pakistan's fishermen are to venture into the Seas of Pakistan by being equipped with advanced Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) technology.

CDA to repair IJP road

DNA
ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Chairman CDA, the Authority has completed for process of hiring of consultant rehabilitation of IJ Principal Road. M/S Zeerak International being the lowest bidder has been finalized for consultancy services for the rehabilitation of IJ Principal Road.

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Briefs

Motorway Police recover stolen car

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Motorway Police on Monday recovered a car stolen from Islamabad and arrested car lifter. Motorway Police was informed on its helpline 130 that a Toyota Corolla car bearing registration no. JF 058, Model 2005, color blue, has been stolen. The Motorway Police officers traced the car during their patrol near Peshawar on Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. The car lifter Israr, resident of Durgai, was arrested and handed over to local police for further investigation.

Tarbela dam losses 40% storage capacity

ISLAMABAD: A per Hydrographic Survey 2017, water storage capacity of Tarbela Dam has been reduced by over 40 per cent due to silting in the reservoir. "As per results of Hydrographic Survey 2017 of Tarbela reservoir, since operation the live and gross storage capacities of Tarbela reservoir have reduced by 37.524% and 40.58% respectively," sources told APP here. They said inflow of sediment is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. However, construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam will help reduce the inflow of silt into Tarbela Dam. Diamer Bhasha dam will enhance the life of Tarbela dam upto 35 years, they said. — APP

PSB clears pending dues

ISLAMABAD: In view of the prevailing situation, triggered due to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has released over five million rupees to support around 57 athletes. "Yes, we've dispatched Rs. 90,000 cheques to each of 57 athletes, who brought laurels for the country by exhibiting outstanding shows in their respective disciplines in the past," Deputy Director General (Tech) PSB, Muhammad Azam Dar told APP.

IRSA releases water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 137,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 182,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1478.66 feet, which was 92.66 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 32,400 cusecs and outflow as 20,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1199.70 feet. — APP

Monal goes Drive Through from 21st

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Country's renowned food outlet Monal Margalla Hill's shall go Drive Through from Tuesday April 21st In. Customers can now Drive through the serene Margalla Hills, Order and pay from the Safety of their Car (a 6ft distance), grab your order, Park in Parking Bays or alongside the road overlooking Islamabad or the equally beautiful Margallas. People of twin cities and from rest of the country as well could not relish moth watering cuisines offered by Monal due to COVID 19 issue. However, after the administration has allowed restaurants to serve take away, Monal management spared no time in opening this outlet for the convenience of public.

MONAL Margalla Hills goes Drive Through from 21st April
**Limited Menu*



Enjoy the serene drive of The Margallas to feast on **Monal's New Drive Through Menu**
 Because it's all about Social Distancing — for now!

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Yasmin urges Ulema to follow govt guidelines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid Monday asked Ulema to follow Standard operating Procedures for the safety of worshippers issued by government to check spread of novel coronavirus. Talking to a private news channel, she said worshippers should also be educated to ensure social distancing and that of others while praying in mosques. She hoped people would continue following the advisories of the government to limit spread of Coronavirus pandemic, adding, it is responsibility of the religious leaders to play their active role. Mosques should be opened but Ulema must be complied with the guidelines issued by the government, she said

adding, people who did not comply with the ordinance and violate the guidelines of the government must be dealt with iron hands. She said the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Pakistan is much better as compared to other developed countries in the world and coronavirus situation was still under control in the Punjab as well where fully recovered persons are happily returning back to their homes. "We hope that with coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders, we would be able to come out of this critical situation very soon and hopefully after April 30 the situation would be more relaxed in the country", she added. Yasmin Rashid said the provincial and federal governments should be on the same page to improve the current situation and check spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

Pakistan to provide 'state-of-the-art' equipment to fishermen

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is all set to harness potential in deep sea fishing by providing access to cost effective and state of the art equipment to Pakistani fishermen. Highlighting Pakistan's achievement to this effect, Gwadar Pro App in a report stated that Sindh, Balochistan's fishermen will benefit, particularly from the technical advances in Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS).. Gwadar, a port city on the southwestern coast of Balochistan province where

the Arabian Sea meets the Persian Gulf, is definitely facing a huge chance to develop fishery. Fisheries Development Commissioner Dr. Safia Mushtaq on Saturday gave a detailed presentation to Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi on an integral element of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programs at the national and international level. During the course of history, despite having a huge potential in deep sea fishing and with export markets having demand for the catch abundant in warm waters of the Arabian Sea, the sector had been neglected till the incumbent government prioritized to revamp it, so that incorporation and adoption of the prevailing international best practices is ensured, said a report of Press Information Department. As per the official sources, currently no tracking system is in place to monitor the activities of fishing vessels, hence Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing was rampant and there were no check and balance to combat the smuggling activities in the Seas of Pakistan.

Telenor CEO presents 50 mln cheque

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CEO Telenor Pakistan Mr. Irfan Wahab Khan called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and presented a cheque of Rs. 50 million as donation to PM's Corona Relief Fund. SAPM for overseas Syed Zulfikar Abbas Bokhari and Senator Faisal Javed were also present during the meeting. The CEO Telenor committed Rs. 1.6 billion towards relief activities including provision of testing kits and PPEs to the medical staff, e-learning, digital skills and food ration etc.

SECP economic revival measures lauded

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday lauded the initiatives of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) aimed at economic revival and strengthening the financial system of the country during the virus emergency. The PEW has been demanding inclusion of insurance in the list of essential services and now the SECP has asked the authorities to include insurance, modaraba, non-bank finance sector, non-bank microfinance

companies and companies involved in not for profit activities in the list of essential services, it said. Chairman of the SECP in his letter to the authorities stated that these sectors form an integral part of the economy and their uninterrupted operations are very important, which is very good and timely move, said Chairman Brig. (ret'd) Muhammad Aslam Khan. He said that these companies are providing financial facilities to a wide range of customer base many of whom lack access to formal banking or financial services while non-bank microfinance institutions cater to the needs of more than half of the 7.2 million active micro borrowers comprising poor and microenterprises. A large number of persons, microenterprises, SMEs, corporates and the general public need to access these institutions to manage immediate liquidity demands, therefore they should be facilitated, he added. Muhammad Aslam Khan said that the interruption in services for a long time can adversely affect the investors, depositors, customers and the general public and raise doubts.

ICCI wants opening of construction industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry M Ahmed Waheed, has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had announced to open construction industry in the country from 14th April 2020, but notification for opening construction related industries in Islamabad

has not been issued as yet due to which business activities were badly suffering and workers were sitting idle. He appealed to the Chief Commissioner Islamabad to issue the notification on urgent basis for opening all businesses related with construction industry including steel re-rolling, steel pipe manufacturing etc. in the federal capital. He said that restoration of closed manufacturing activities took about two months and added that further delay in opening of construction related industries would affect the industrial growth and damage the local economy. steel re-rolling, steel pipe manufacturing and marble were the major industries in Islamabad while around 12000 workers were employed only in steel and pipe manufacturing industries.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Telenor Irfan Wahab meeting with PM Imran Khan. — DNA

COVID-19: political, social impact debated

COVID-19 has brought the changes in the pattern of globalization. The pandemic has also brought in the consideration, how to use modern technology in a more efficient way to communicate and connect. Regionalism could become more popular, offering new opportunities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Study Center, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with Mishal Pakistan and AGAHI launched a series of webinars to deliberate on the political, economic and social impacts of COVID-19. The first debut seminar was held online attracting senior academics, researcher, media, diplomats and members of the civil society and business community. Speakers from Government, Development sector and international institution expressed their views on post pandemic scenarios. More than 100 participants joined the online session and took part in the discussion. The session was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China Pakistan Study Center, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world on the

whole. An unprecedented crisis of a scale and intensity not experienced in recent past, it has potential to become a turning point in the modern human history. Analysts argue that world is undergoing far-reaching changes, and post-pandemic, it will be new and different world. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad in his keynote speech said, COVID-19 has brought the changes in the pattern of globalization. The pandemic has also brought in the consideration, how to use modern technology in a more efficient way to communicate and connect. Regionalism could become more popular, offering new opportunities. He further said, the responsibility to combat the COVID-19 situation cannot just be put on the government alone, the private sector, civil society, media and other institutions should work together to lessen the suffering and anguish of the people of Pakistan. Sharing his views, Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer, Mishal Pakistan, a Country Partner Institute of the New Economy and Societies Platforms, World Economic Forum, said "COVID-19 has confined the societies in a forced incubation. Pushing societies to embrace digital transformation, enabling people to adopt the "new" norm. Transforming societies to adopt new social and economic outlook for the future". Hasan Daud Butt, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade said, the COVID-19 has brought the paradigm shift and it would push the governments to enhance the spending on technology. Pakistan's external relations with countries will also change because of this pandemic. This change will move Pakistan to adopt and embrace the fourth industrial revolution, both for doing business and serving the citizens. He further briefed the participants that "the impact on Pa-

kistan economy is dependent on the measures taken by the government to stop COVID-19 Spread. Asian Development Bank stated in its report that the virus outbreak could cost Pakistan economy in around \$5 billion, or 0.01% to 1.57% of GDP. The report also highlighted that this loss would plunge Pakistan's GDP by at least 1.57 per cent and trigger 946,000 job losses". Puruesh Chaudhary, President AGAHI and Member Global Agenda Council on Futures and Foresight, World Economic Forum stated "Early proof shows that the well-being and financial effects of the infection are being borne lopsidedly by unprivileged. For instance, marginalized communities and the poor below the poverty-line might not be able to securely protect and preserve. Individuals and senior citizens, without access to necessities and immunities might be the first line of causality of the society. Established in 2003, Mishal Pa-

kistan is the leading research and analysis institution in Pakistan on Competitiveness and Governance Accountability research. Mishal as partner of global development agencies help them develop their development and communication strategies and solutions for the state, business and societal leaders. Mishal prides itself as being the institution at the forefront of the development sector in Pakistan, where Mishal is directly responsible to measure Pakistan's global rankings on more than 150 key indicators. Mishal's media development initiatives are considered, global standards for quality and ethical journalism. AGAHI is a not for profit organization. It encourages and advises individuals and institutions in pursuing and supporting initiatives to improve the state of development in Pakistan. It works on developmental frameworks facilitating information and knowledge sharing platforms on understanding chal-

lenges in global perspective. Its research work mainly focuses on national and international security, ICT, competitiveness, human capital development, and governance. AGAHI is at the forefront of devising foresight research and future scenarios work in Pakistan. AGAHI works with highly motivated and qualified professionals who have substantial experience in learning and leadership development. China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSIC) part of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad carries out comprehensive research about China's role in the region and the world. It also looks in-depth on how it affects Pakistan. The Centre also serves as a forum to create knowledge resources to better understand the dynamics of the China-Pakistan relationship in the context of political, social and economic cooperation. The Centre provides policy inputs to the Government of Pakistan on China-Pakistan relations.

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Praying in safety

PAKISTAN'S religious influencers and ulema, in consultation with the government, appear determined to hold congregational prayer in the country. This despite the real threat of a rapid spread of Covid-19 and the consequent death of more people, young and old, across the country. At a meeting between President Arif Alvi and senior ulema representing all sects, it has been agreed that during Ramazan congregational prayers would be allowed, including taraveeh prayers. A set of SOPs has been agreed on. These include using prayer mats brought from home, performing wuzu at home, keeping a distance between people offering prayers and between the rows, using outdoor courtyards when available and avoiding hugging or touching each other. These broadly follow guidelines offered by the WHO for congregational gatherings, though the organization has also warned that socialising should be avoided when possible.

It has been possible for Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia and almost every other Muslim country to avoid prayer gatherings at mosques in order to prevent the risk from the novel coronavirus. The SOPs agreed to between the ulema and the government of Pakistan may have some effect, but realistically speaking one cannot be sure as to their implementation. Governments across the country have largely – with some variations – struggled to enforce even partial lockdowns put in place, with people openly violating them. A sharp uptick in cases has recently been reported from many places following an increase in testing. These places include congested alleys and spaces where an outbreak of the virus would be almost impossible to contain, giving the small spaces people live in. This is precisely the fear that had been expressed by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who had warned that if Covid-19 appeared in the kachi abadis of the country, a nightmare could unfold. This is surely the perfect way to ensure the virus reaches the maximum number of people possible and with them enters their homes.

If most Muslim countries can ordain that mosques will remain closed during Ramazan and prayers will be offered at home, there is no reason why we cannot adopt the same sensible measures. Surely, our ulema and the government both recognize the dangers of not adhering to social distancing as well as the real difficulty in ensuring that people stick to the SOPs agreed on. The move also puts doctors, who still have limited supplies of PPEs, at even greater risk. Some of the best minds in the Muslim world have advocated that people pray in solitude at their homes. That way they can also contribute to the effort to combat Covid-19. Saving lives is after all one of the most humane things to do, and should be the spirit with which we start the holy month of Ramazan.



Rohingya plight

IN yet another remainder to the world, over two dozen Rohingya died at sea on April 16. They were trying to reach Malaysia but in Bangladesh waters their boat sank as the coastguard were able to rescue nearly 400 people from the sinking vessel.

The boat is reported to have been adrift for months and couldn't find its way to Malaysia. According to details, most of the rescued passengers were starving.

The photos circulating on media of those rescued show hundreds of emaciated children, men, and women, who are scantily clad and visibly starved. These harrowing pictures remind one of the people in concentration camps during the Second World War.

It is a pity the world in the 21st century can turn a blind eye to the plight of these people who have nowhere to turn to. Even now the authorities in Bangladesh have said that the rescued people would not be allowed back in Bangladesh but would be sent to Myanmar. Many of these people were barely able to stand and needed help to come out of the boat.

There are conflicting reports about whether they were able to reach Malaysia or not, as some passengers reported that they had been turned back from Malaysia three times. The main problem is that neither Bangladesh nor Myanmar recognize them as their citizens and in both countries they have faced severe curbs on their movement as well as access to employment. In the absence of jobs they are unable to earn a livelihood to feed their families. They have had no opportunities for education or healthcare.

There are at least three aspects of this tragedy: one is the hostility of the government of Myanmar itself towards the Rohingya who have lived in that country for centuries. And second is the apathy displayed by the neighbouring countries, which have all shown a disregard for human rights and their responsibility to let refugees disembark.

The third is the response of the world community to this tragedy. No major country of the world has come forward to denounce the government of Myanmar or impose sanctions on it. Most Western countries are prompt in imposing sanctions of various kinds on countries such as Iran but don't bother much to counter Myanmar.

The world needs to take this problem seriously as millions of lives are at stake in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Bangladesh is at least hosting thousands of refugees but with its own meagre resources it can't do much.

It is the government of Myanmar that needs to be forced to change its treatment of the Rohingya who have become a victim of an apartheid-like situation. – Courtesy The News

Pakistan's image problem and Western propaganda

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



While there is no denying the fact that many families may have been adversely affected as a result of the operation against anti-social elements but then it is something normal during such clandestine operations. The armed forces did their best to avoid any collateral damages and provide maximum possible relief to those affected by clean up drive

THE British Broadcasting Corporation on June 02, 2019 published a news report about Pakistan military's operation in tribal areas giving an impression as if Pakistan Army were committing "atrocities" in the region. The report also accused the armed forces of Pakistan of 'violating' human rights and suppressing the voice of the local people. Pakistan Army came up with a matching response with complete facts and figures and later sent a detailed dossier to the BBC and the British regulator asking the organization to tender apology. While the broadcasting house is yet to com-

ply with the demands made in the dossier, the Pakistan government is mulling various other options that how to proceed further in case the apology is not made to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party.

Skewed media reporting and spreading of propaganda against the armed forces of Pakistan in fact appears to be at the top of the Western media and establishments. Peace in tribal areas is hard to digest for those forces who want instability in the region as they can only wield influence when the region is fragmented and bruised and governance system in a shambles. Now when peace has returned to the area – thanks to Pakistan's valiant armed forces – the enemies are left with no option but to mourn their defeat and lick wounds.

While there is no denying the fact that many families may have been adversely affected as a result of the operation against anti-social elements but then it is something normal during such clandestine operations. The armed forces did their best to avoid any collateral damages and provide maximum possible relief to those affected by clean up drive. As we can see, a handful of tribals presumably fed by alien forces, attacked military posts and even inflicted huge losses. Our security agencies had a right to respond and bring to justice such elements. The Western media ostensibly maneuvered by Western security establishments takes pride in dancing to the tunes of their masters when it is asked to do so. What happened in Iraq. There were no weapons of mass destruction but Western media created hype and provided allied forces with an excuse to attack Iraq and overthrow a government elected by people of Iraq.

In March 2010 Bob Geldof confronted Andrew Marr on a BBC report claiming the Ethiopian government used money raised for the famine to pay for weapons. Geldof and the Band Aid Trust reported the BBC to Ofcom over the incident. The BBC initially announced that it was standing by its report and claimed to have evidence to back up its stance. The BBC was forced to broadcast a series of apologies in November 2010 after realising that it did not have enough evidence that any money was spent on weapons, basing much of the unfounded claims on a CIA report it had failed to question.

The BBC News at Six reporting of the American bombing raid on Libya outraged Thatcher and Conservative Party Chairman Norman Tebbit because they believed it accepted the Libyan government's propaganda about civilian casualties and because it gave no airtime to American or British spokesmen to explain their government's

stance. Tebbit ordered Conservative Central Office to compile a dossier on the BBC's reporting and then to hand it to the lawyer Lord Goodman for a critique. Goodman's critique largely agreed with the dossier's findings and on 30 October Tebbit submitted it to Lord Barnett, saying that the BBC's coverage was "a mixture of news, views, speculations, error and uncritical carriage of Libyan propaganda which does serious damage to the reputation of the BBC".

Likewise, a BBC Radio 4 documentary in 2005 claimed that it had evidence that a radio newsreader inserted the word "exactly" into a midnight time check one summer night in 1953, a code word to the Shah of Iran that Britain supported his plans for a coup. The shah had selected the word, the documentary said, and the BBC broadcast the word at the request of the government.

Apart from external factors, various internal factors have also contributed towards Pakistan's skewed image both at home and abroad. Let us begin with the role of Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to projection of soft image of country and its handling of foreign missions based in Islamabad or in other cities of Pakistan. During past few years, especially when a junior officer was elevated to the post of Foreign Secretary, things went topsy-turvy at the Ministry. This development not only impacted badly upon the internal working but it also contributed towards straining of relations with various foreign missions – whose biggest complaint was non-addressal of even their petty issues.

Undoubtedly, with the slightest effort, Pakistan's image abroad can be improved significantly. What the Foreign Office has to do is to listen to genuine grievances of diplomats and then help them in speedy redressal. Take the example of the ongoing operation against encroachments. The foreign missions located outside of the diplomatic enclave had to face unseemly situation when the civic body staff started removing security booths of various embassies without serving them any notices. The missions had no other option but to write to the Foreign Office and big-wig of the Islamabad Municipal Corporation and the Capital Development Authority (CDA). While the Foreign Office as usual remained unmoved, the Mayor of MCI took stock of the situation and issued a letter asking the CDA and other relevant staff to seek prior consent of the MCI before launching any operation against foreign missions besides admonishing them to treat them as state guests.

The foreign missions nevertheless were nonplused to

see anti-encroachment staff again gate-crashing their premises to dismantle security booths even after issuance of the directives. It unequivocally shows lack of co-ordination among various institutions. So much so, some of the diplomats even went to the extent of packing up their missions from Pakistan in case such operations were not stopped and they were not treated humanely. In such circumstances how can we expect from these missions that they would encourage businessmen from their respective countries to explore business avenues in Pakistan!

Another issue that we face in terms of image problem happens to be the lackluster performance of our missions abroad. Most of Pakistan's diplomats abroad seem to be on honeymoon as we rarely hear from them that they are doing something constructive and positive to improve country's image. It is normal diplomatic practice that when a diplomat finishes his posting abroad he or she is called back to the headquarters where he or she is supposed to stay at least one year, and in some cases, two years, before proceeding to another posting. This practice ostensibly helps a diplomat get first hand information about changes that took place in his country during his or her absence. But interestingly our diplomats hardly report back to the headquarters once appointed abroad. In most of the cases they get shifted from one country to another and this practice remains in vogue till the time of their retirement.

Then, the business community can also play important role in country's image building abroad by exporting quality products as per samples provided before delivery of final consignment. Unfortunately, some of the members of business community do not observe transparency while exporting their goods to other countries and thus earn a bad name and reputation for themselves and country also.

That is perhaps the key reason that our exports continue to decline despite the fact that the government has extended so many facilities to business community including free fall of the dollar.

I am privy to a number of cases where our friendly countries wanted to buy our products despite the fact they did not need them, just to help Pakistan's struggling economy. However we tried to cheat with these friends also by quoting exorbitant prices. What a pity!!

Summing up, those at the helms of affairs in the incumbent government need to take stock of such happenings if they really want to do something for this country.

Global challenge, response and responsibilities

Malik Muhammad Ashraf



While the affluent nations are in a much better position to absorb the shockwaves, the developing will find it extremely difficult to cope with the emerging situation without outside assistance. The consequences of the recession in one part of the world would have an impact almost across the whole world due to the interdependence permeating the global economic structure

NEEDLESS to emphasize, Covid-19 poses an existentialist challenge to the global community and it was an inescapable imperative for it to mount a well-coordinated response to check and mitigate its ravages. The virus has already wiped-off trillions of dollars from the global stock-exchange, put unprecedented strain on the economies of almost all the countries and claimed more than 150,000 lives. With no remedy yet available to treat the people afflicted with the virus, the pandemic is assuming alarming proportions every day and there is uncertainty about how long it would take the world community to extricate itself from the disastrous impact of this novel coronavirus. It is widely believed that ultimately the developing and poor countries would be more severely hit than the developed nations in terms of loss of human lives and the ensuing recession. While the affluent nations are in a much better position to absorb the shockwaves, the developing will find it extremely difficult to cope with the emerging situation without outside assistance. The consequences of the recession in one part of the world would have an impact almost across the whole world due to the interdependence permeating the global economic structure.

The latest report by the World Bank reveals that South Asian countries including Pakistan are likely to be hit by the worst recession as their GDP growth rates will be in the vicinity of 1.8 percent to 2.8 percent during the current year. According to the report, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Maldives present the worst-case scenarios. While calling on the countries to provide more fiscal and monetary support to jobless workers, the report has warned that anti-corona measures would disrupt supply chains causing economic contraction if lockdowns prolong. At the same time, the World Health Organization has warned against the early lifting of the lockdown as according to it there was a danger of the virus spreading exponentially or rebounding in the areas where it has been contained.

That surely presents a great dilemma for the world community, more so for the developing and poor countries which have found it extremely difficult to strike a balance between measures to prevent the spread of the virus and treatment of the patients as well as keeping their economies afloat to be able to help the poorer segments of their societies. Their health systems and economies are simply not in a position to take the hit.

Pakistan is a country of 220 million people. The government is trying its best to strike a balance. It has already announced a stimulus package of Rs1200 billion which in terms of dollars is \$8 billion. Efforts have been made to keep the economy running by keeping some vital sectors open and also providing relief to the worst hit people besides gearing up the health system to deal with the challenge. But the problem is that even if the partial lockdown is prolonged for an indefinite period due to the continued spread of the virus, the situation is likely to get out of hand. The country does not have the resources to grapple with such an eventuality. The money allocated for the stimulus and relief package is peanuts as compared to the developing countries which have released relief packages amounting to trillions of dollars.

Prime Minister Imran Khan in his first address to the nation in the backdrop of the arrival of the novel coronavirus in Pakistan rightly emphasized the need for world lending institutions and consortiums to write-off debts of the developing countries to provide them some fiscal space to tackle the emerging challenge. In his address to the world community last week he again urged world leaders, financial institutions and the UN secretary-general to provide relief to the developing countries through enhanced debt relief, restructuring and other steps which could help the developing countries.

The PM rightly cautioned the world that the socio-economic impact of the pandemic would be more consequential in developing countries like Pakistan which are fighting to contain the novel coronavirus as well as deal-

ing with the impacts of the economic crises leading to hunger and poverty. The stark reality is that most of the developing countries including Pakistan have high debts which have a debilitating impact on their economies and they do not have the money to spend on overstretched health services to save people from dying.

The crisis has both economic and humanitarian aspects. As such the affluent nations and the world lending institutions owe it to the poor and developing countries to extend help to them to steer through the confronting challenge, which is in the interest of the entire humanity.

In this context, the prime minister's call to the UN secretary-general to work with him in advancing the objective of a coordinated response and his decision to approach the heads of state and government from a wide range of countries notably from Paris Club, highly indebted poor countries, heads of international organizations and other concerned to join him in this effort, was a pragmatic and timely move. Equally appreciable was the initiative to entrust the foreign minister and the adviser on finance to reach out to their respective counterparts to work for a global initiative on debt relief with the objectives of relieving developing countries of the financial challenge emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and realizing sustainable development. Although the G-20 and Paris club nations as well as the World Bank, IMF and ADB and some countries at the bilateral level are already seized of the issue and ready to contribute to saving the developing countries from the unbearable consequences of the novel coronavirus, as the prime minister rightly said there is a need for a well-coordinated global response to the challenge. That can be possible under the auspices of the UN, spearheaded by the UN secretary-general which was necessary to keep the effort above political considerations and restricting it to a need-based approach.

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Briefs

Germany reopens some shops

BERLIN: Parts of Europe hit hard by the deadly coronavirus pandemic took tentative steps towards resuming normal lives on Monday, with Germany allowing some shops to reopen and Norway restarting nurseries. Governments across the world are debating how and when to ease the lockdowns that have kept more than half of humanity - 4.5 billion people - confined to their homes and crippled the global economy. After emerging in the industrial central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, the respiratory virus has claimed roughly 165,000 lives, with nearly two thirds of the victims in Europe.

WB plans to approve \$ 500 mln for Pakistan

DNA
LAHORE: The World Bank is planning to approve 500 million dollars for Pakistan by next month, media reported on Monday. According to details, the loan is aimed to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics like health and education. Earlier, the World Bank worked to increase funding to \$1 billion through repurposing the existing projects for Pakistan to respond to COVID-19. Ilango Patchamuthu, WB country director for Pakistan, had said that the funding would support health, employment, food and security sectors and small companies. "Every crisis presents an opportunity to reform the social sector policies. The World Bank has already approved \$200 million funding for Pakistan. "Funding of \$150 million will help in immediate purchase of medical equipment and supplies. About \$50 million as relief through Ehsaas cash transfers will help poor families."

President lauds people

DNA
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday lauded the people for taking ownership in implementing the Standard Operating Procedures as set by the State on congregational prayers during lockdown. "What a good model where the State provides guidance and the people implement themselves," the President wrote in a tweet in reference to the 20-point strategy agreed upon the government and the Ulama. The President expressed satisfaction over the people taking ownership of the matter. "As the SOPs of the 'Ijma' (consensus) between Ulama and government becomes well known and widespread, it is generally the masajid and the people who are taking ownership," he said.

China's support reflective of deep-rooted friendship

STAFF REPORT

BEIJING: China's support to Pakistan, extended on government and private-level to fight COVID-19, was a testimony of the two countries' true friendship, that rooted in the hearts of their people. It was noted that in the recent days, there has been generous support from the Chinese side to Pakistani brothers and sisters. Although the Chinese government and people are themselves fighting against COVID-19, they are still trying their best to help Pakistan, said Chinese scholar Cheng Xizhong in a report published by China Economic Net. Commenting on Pakistan's deteriorating economic condition in wake of the country-wide spread of deadly virus, Cheng Xizhong noted

that Pakistani Rupee has continued to depreciate against the USD. Pakistan's total external debt rose to \$107 billion, reaching a record high. Pakistan's auto sale was down by 47% during the first nine months of the current fiscal year. Since March 15 the number of containers arriving at ports for export has fallen by 50% compared with the same period last year. According to Pakistan Textile Exporters Association, textile export orders worth nearly \$1.3 billion have been cancelled or delayed. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that due to the coronavirus pandemic, Pakistan's economy may contract sharply by 1.5% during the current financial year, with an unemployment rate of 4.5%. The World Bank's report

believes that Pakistan's national output may fall in the range of 2.2% to 1.3% in the current fiscal year. Pakistan's economy has been struggling for years. Now it is suffering from a double whammy of locust plague and COVID-19. Currently, novel coronavirus pneumonia is spreading very rapidly. Prof. Cheng added, that in the fight against the pandemic, Pakistan has received the most assistance from China. Pakistan's National Disaster Management Commission said that up to now, China's anti-pandemic assistance accounts for 80% of the total Pakistan has received from the world. It is remarkable that in addition to the efforts of the Chinese government, medical aid from Chinese enterprises, NGOs, social organizations and common

people are flowing into Pakistan constantly, which fully shows that China-Pakistan friendship is deeply rooted in the two peoples. Recently, China's Beijing Lianxin Charity Foundation donated a batch of medical materials to the Embassy of Pakistan, Beijing, including 20,000 disposable gloves and 3000 protective face shields worth more than \$3 million. The China Red Cross provided anti-epidemic materials worth 4.56 million to Pakistan. The materials were donated by a number of Chinese enterprises and local Red Cross societies including Henan Tuoren Medical Device Group, Shanghai BioGerm Medical Biotechnology and Inner Mongolia Red Cross. On the same day, Shandong Province People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries

also donated a batch of medical masks to Pakistan. Haier Group Pakistan donated 50,000 masks to the Pakistani government. The company is now procuring the second batch of aid materials. While, China's Zhong Mei Engineering Group donated a batch of medical materials, including 14,240 masks, 300 pairs of medical gloves, as well as protective clothing, thermometer to local government. On the same day, Guizhou University mailed respirators, masks, gloves, thermometers, medicines and other pandemic prevention materials to Peshawar University. A Pakistani police spokesman said that Islamabad police had received 20,000 masks donated by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. MCC donated a batch of materials to Balochistan, with a value of more than

1.7 million yuan, including 200,000 masks, 4000 novel coronavirus pneumonia nucleic acid test kits, 2,000 sets of medical protective clothing, 2,000 pairs of medical gloves, 2000 goggles and 100 thermometers, etc. In addition, the Chinese enterprises undertaking the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects are also providing help to local government, hospitals, schools and local people as possible as they can. There are many more organizations providing assistance to Pakistan. I am fully confident that with the help of the Chinese government and people, as well as the international community, the Pakistani government, military and people will be able to effectively deal with the pandemic and win the battle against COVID-19.

US crude falls below \$15 a barrel

SINGAPORE: US crude crashed to below \$15 a barrel Monday, its lowest level for over two decades, with traders concerned that storage facilities are filling up as the coronavirus pandemic strangles demand. West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the US benchmark, plunged rapidly in opening trade in Asia and was changing hands for \$14.90 a barrel in the afternoon, down 18.45 percent. International benchmark Brent was less badly affected, as the storage concerns mainly relate to WTI facilities in the US, and was down three percent at \$27.23 a barrel in the afternoon. Oil markets have plunged in recent weeks as lockdowns and travel restrictions to fight the coronavirus around the world batter demand. - APP

G77, China voice support for WHO

UNITED NATIONS: The Group of 77 (G77) and China on Sunday issued a statement expressing their support for the World Health Organization (WHO) in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned at the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most serious public health crises in modern history," the statement said, adding that "the first priority is to save lives." "The group, therefore, acknowledges the leading role of the World Health Organization led by its Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and extends its full support and appreciation for its work in providing information,

technical guidance, training and other assistance to developing countries to help them prepare for and efficiently respond to the pandemic," the statement said. The group and China share United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' view that solidarity counts in the international efforts to curb the virus and its shattering consequences, they said. They emphasized that "the international community must unite in its efforts to ensure access to scientific guidance, training, equipment, essential medical supplies, and concrete life-saving services to countries in greatest need and in regions where the full impact is yet to be felt."

Japan virus cases surge over 10,000

TOKYO: Japanese medics are warning more must be done to prevent the coronavirus from overwhelming the country's healthcare system as confirmed cases passed 10,000, despite a nationwide state of emergency. Experts have been alarmed by a recent spike in COVID-19 infections, with hundreds detected daily. Japan's outbreak remains less severe than in hard-hit European countries, but its caseload is one of Asia's highest after China and India, and is roughly on par with South Korea. There have been 171 deaths recorded so far in Japan. - APP

U.S. COVID-19 cases top 750,000

WASHINGTON: Confirmed infections of COVID-19 in the United States exceeded 750,000 with over 40,000 deaths recorded as of Sunday while federal and state leaders are making an increasingly hard choice between ensuring public health safety and reopening the battered economy. The total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States reached 759,086 as of 8:00 p.m. Sunday evening (0000 GMT on Monday) and a total of 40,661 people have died, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

The state of New York suffered the most cases of 247,815, as well as the highest death toll of 18,298 while New Jersey recorded 85,301 cases and 4,362 deaths, the CSSE tally showed. Other states with over 30,000 cases include Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan and Illinois. Data indicated that New York was "past the high point" of the outbreak, but "any plan that is going to start to reopen the economy has to be based on data and that means it has to be based on testing," New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo said on Sunday. - APP



LAHORE: Youngsters enjoying themselves as mercury has gone up. - Shahbaz Sindhu

S. Korea reports 13 more virus cases

SEOUL: South Korea reported 13 more cases of the COVID-19 compared to 24 hours ago as of midnight Monday local time, raising the total number of infections to 10,674. The daily caseload hovered below 30 for the eighth consecutive day. Of the new cases, seven were imported from overseas, raising the combined number to 1,006. Two more deaths were confirmed, lifting the death toll to 236. The total fatality rate came in at 2.21 percent. A total of 72 more patients were discharged from quarantine. - APP

Germany to cover costs of foreign virus patients

BERLIN: Germany will foot the bill for treating novel coronavirus patients taken in from European Union neighbour countries as a gesture of goodwill, Health Minister Jens Spahn said Monday. Germany has been spared the worst of the coronavirus crisis seen in some of its hard-hit European neighbours, and has taken in patients - mainly from France and Italy - to relieve pressure on their overburdened healthcare systems. More than 200 seriously ill COVID-19 patients from other EU nations are currently in German intensive care units, at a cost of about 20 million euros (\$21.7 million). "Germany will cover the treatment costs of these patients, that is what we understand by European solidarity," Spahn said ahead of a meeting of ministers tackling the virus crisis on Monday. "The willingness and capacity is there to admit more if necessary," he added. The number of coronavirus deaths and infections in Germany has remained well below some of its neighbours. - APP

India death toll rises to 543

NEW DELHI: India's federal health ministry Monday morning said the death toll due to COVID-19 in India rose to 543 and the total number of confirmed cases in the country reached 17,265. This is a jump of 24 deaths and an increase of 1,149 cases since Sunday evening. According to ministry officials, so far 2,547 people have been discharged from hospitals after showing improvement. "The number of active cases in the country right now is 14,175," read the information. Monday marks the 27th straight day of the ongoing lockdown across the country announced by the government to contain the pandemic. - APP

CPEC 2nd opens opportunities: Report

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Opportunities grow for Pakistan in spurring the development of science and technology as China tops the international patent applications filed with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2019 while the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) second phase will put a high premium on technological cooperation. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro App on Sunday, the technology spillover suggests that among multiple ways to boosting the evolution of science and technology in a country, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and multinational corporations have proven to be efficient channels in sending technologies from leading economies to less developed ones. In FY 2018 - 2019, China is the largest source of FDI in Pakistan, registering an amount of \$546 million. With ongoing CPEC projects and Chinese multinational corporations driving development in energy, IT, construction, agriculture and other sectors,

the registration of new companies and intellectual property rights such as trademarks, patents, and copyrights in Pakistan have been increasing spontaneously. Multinationals play a major role in vitalizing industries and expedite the improvement of productivity by introducing new technologies and training local talents. For example, China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak, known as Zong) successfully conducted 5G trials in August 2019, narrowing the gap between Pakistan and other developed countries in the telecom sector. Zong also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Huawei to establish a 5G innovation center in Pakistan, which will present golden opportunities for local professionals to acquire the most advanced knowledge at this center. Haier, the first enterprise to establish home appliance factory in Pakistan back in 2001, has created jobs for several thousand professional, skilled and non-skilled local workers, and has given the country a high-quality manufacturing base for home appliances and consumer electronics. Most impor-

tantly, Haier has provided Pakistan access to R&D and technology transfer. CPEC-based enterprises, which take a bulk of Chinese investment, make more contributions to the technological development of Pakistan. Through joint ventures (JVs) under CPEC projects, Chinese companies bring advanced technologies and management philosophies in local production and provide a demonstration for local enterprises. Take an example in the transportation sector. In February this year, China introduced the Operation and Maintenance Services for Metro Rail Transit System on the Orange Line. According to the agreement, 8 years after the Chinese team led by NORINCO ensures stable operation of the metro train, the Pakistani team will take over the services with complete and systematic knowledge and skills their Chinese counterparts pass on to them. That illustrates how the current investments will benefit Pakistan in the long run. The same goes for other projects like Karakoram Highway, the world's top 10 precipitous roads, and Karachi - Peshawar Railway (known as

ML-1) project, a grand overhaul of the existing rail system. The professionalism of local firms will be enhanced during the construction process because they will learn to overcome technological barriers and polish their skills with the guidance of Chinese experts. Academic organizations also play their parts in the exchanges of knowledge and technologies. NUST, in collaboration with China International Technology Transfer Center (CITTC), established China Pakistan Technology Transfer Centre (CPTTC) in Islamabad and Beijing, acting as a bridge and gateway between the industries and innovative resources of both countries, especially to extend the much-needed support in view of the CPEC. China-South Asia Technology Transfer Center also signed such an agreement with the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology to vitalize innovation, R&D, and talent training in Pakistan. Though Chinese companies and organizations have been devoted to technological improvement in Pakistan, it lies in the Pakistani government and

enterprises to utilize the resources and strengthen the capacity of independent innovation, in other words, to raise the registration of intellectual property rights including trademarks, patents, and copyrights in the country. However, the Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) Pakistan, an attached department of the Ministry of Commerce, due to lack of required human resource and facilities, is currently facing thousands of pending cases or disputes related to the intellectual property rights in different courts, Pakistan Today reports citing comments of Chairman of IPO. According to the official, the importance of IPO Pakistan has increased after the CPEC project took off, opening new avenues of foreign investment in the country and a number of foreign companies. But to fully leverage the science and technology cooperation under the second phase of the CPEC project, more favorable policies and efforts are needed from the Pakistani side to encourage innovation at home and ensure IPR protection for foreign-based countries.