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Germany embassy to provide food to 600 families in Lahore

Pakistan to soon overcome virus challenge: Yao Jing

Press Freedom essential for democracy



YAO JING SAYS

Pakistan to soon overcome virus challenge

When China was facing a severe challenge because of the coronavirus, Pakistan did its best to help us and in return, Beijing has also helped Islamabad by sending medical teams who have expertise in fighting the virus, relief aid and other things

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing has said that Beijing is confident that Pakistan will soon overcome the challenge presented by the coronavirus pandemic which has infected more than 3.34 million people worldwide and killed over 237,000. In an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, Ambassador Jing said Pakistan had a lower mortality rate of the virus. "About 60% of Pakistan's population is under

the age of 30. Patients infected with the novel coronavirus are mainly young people, with mild symptoms. It is easier to treat them," he said. He added, "Like the traditional Chinese medicine, Pakistan also has a herbal system with good effect on treatment." Jing said the cooperation between China and Pakistan has set a good example of international cooperation in the fight against the virus. "When China was facing a severe challenge because of the coronavirus, Pakistan did its best to help

us and in return, Beijing has also helped Islamabad by sending medical teams who have expertise in fighting the virus, relief aid and other things," he said. China has sent several consignments of aid relief since it stemmed the spread of the virus in the country. Last month a special Pakistan International Airline flight arrived carrying 52 tonnes of aid to help Pakistan fight in the coronavirus. The aid included protective kits, masks, testing kits and other medical supplies. Earlier, the Chinese gov-

ernment sent 12,000 test kits, 300,000 masks, and 10,000 units of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Pakistan along with \$4 million to build a separate hospital for coronavirus patients. Pakistan has so far reported more than 19,000 confirmed cases and 340 deaths from the virus. China, on the other hand, has seen a reduction in the number of cases in the country with just two cases reported on May 2. Overall, the country has reported 82,877 confirmed cases of the virus and 4,633 deaths.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting addressing the participants of a media workers' sit-in in front of the Parliament House. - APP

'Pak wants a stable Afghanistan'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has consistently underlined the importance of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, which we deem indispensable for peace and stability in the region and beyond. The U.S.-Taliban Peace Agreement signed in February 2020 is a significant step forward, creating a historic opportunity for the move towards intra-Afghan negotiations. A spokesman of the Foreign Office said on Sunday that "We believe that the pursuit of sustained reduction in violence by all concerned parties is pivotal in advancing the cause of peace in Afghanistan. The unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19 and the advent of the holy month of Ramzan further underscore the imperative of creating a conducive environment".

'Sufficient petrol, diesel stock'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Petroleum Division on Sunday clarified that sufficient stock of petrol and diesel was available to meet 15-day needs of the country, rejecting some media reports regarding shortage of petroleum products. A spokesman for the Petroleum Division said a significant increase in the sales of POL products was witnessed.

German embassy to provide food to 600 families

Fighting consequences of COVID-19 together: Ambassador signed a contract with @Rizq_Sharefood this week to support financing of 240000 meals for 600 widows and vulnerable families in Lahore: Ambassador Bernhard

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The German Embassy Islamabad has joined hands with a local non-governmental organisation to provide food to some 600 vulnerable families of Lahore during the ongoing lockdown imposed in the country

to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck signed an agreement with the Rizq Sharefood for preparing 240,000 meals for the purpose. "Fighting consequences of COVID-19 together: Ambassador signed a contract with @Rizq_Share-

food this week to support financing of 240000 meals for 600 widows and vulnerable families in Lahore. They can stay at home and get food delivered to their homes. Great cooperation with the young team of Rizq," the ambassador wrote on his social media accounts both on Facebook and Twitter.

Qureshi thanks China for support

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has urged the UN Secretary General to take notice of India's intensified persecution campaign in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to the media persons in Lahore on Sunday, he regretted that the Indian government has not changed its posture regardless of the breakout of Covid-19 pandemic. He pointed out that the siege of occupied Jammu and Kashmir is continuing. The Indian occupation forces are barging into the houses of Kashmiri people and subjecting them to violence. He said Pakistan will continue to highlight



the plight of Kashmiri people at different forums. Responding to a question, the Foreign Minister commended the assistance extended by China to Pakistan to cope with coronavirus challenge. He expressed gratitude to Chinese President and the people for the assistance. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the country's economy cannot afford lockdown for a long period.

RCCI urges for opening of all businesses

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Saboor Malik has urged government to ease lock-down and provide a way to open all businesses under strict SOPs. Pakistan's economy cannot afford a complete lock-down, nor can it survive mass infections due to its overburdened healthcare system. An out of the box solution can be opted to open businesses on alternate bases either via limited working hours or geo location base, said Saboor Malik while addressing 8th executive committee meeting at Chamber house. He said that business community has lauded Punjab Government's recent steps and consultations with respect to partial lock-down aiming to open businesses. We consider recommendations prepared by Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Bazard regarding opening of business as encouraging one, he added. RCCI had already sent letters to CM Punjab, Provincial Minister for Industry, Minister for Commerce Razaq Dawood, Minister for Planning Asad Umar and Minister for Industry and Production Hamad Azhar regarding the Corona epidemic and lockdown where we demanded that all businesses be allowed to open.

Briefs

Dr Sania talks about web portal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar has said Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched a web-portal to solicit Ehsaas Emergency Cash aid applications from COVID-19 livelihood-loss-affectedees (category-4). In a tweet, she said the Category-4 beneficiaries who qualify for PM's COVID-19 fund assistance will get Ehsaas Emergency Cash of 12,000 rupees. Dr Sania Nishtar said the COVID-19 fund would continue to be realized for those in need of assistance and for each rupee donated by donors, four rupees will be committed by the Government.

Quarantine regime in Azerbaijan extended

DNA

BAKU: The current sanitary-epidemiological situation in Azerbaijan in connection with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, the preventive measures being taken in other countries and the recommendations of the World Health Organization have been analyzed and the decision has been made to extend the special quarantine regime until 00:00, 31 May 2020. At the same time, taking into consideration the rate of the infection and the recovery dynamics among patients, a number of restrictions have been eased.

Based on the current sanitary-epidemiological situation, the number of patients and the rate of infection, the easing of restrictions is carried out in stages in Baku, Sumgayit, Ganja, Lankaran cities, Absheron district and other regions. Therefore, starting from 00:00, 4 May 2020, the following rules shall apply to Baku, Sumgayit, Ganja, Lankaran cities and Absheron district:

- the activities of an approved number of employees of state bodies are being restored (the number of employees of state bodies whose activity is being restored will be determined by a relevant decision of the Cabinet of

Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan);

- "DOST" centers are to resume their activities in the areas of targeted social assistance and issuance of social bank cards in their respective territories;
- the activities of legal entities and individuals engaged in activities and provision of services to other business entities the operation of which was restricted during the special quarantine regime are being restored;
- the activities of individual retail facilities in all areas are being restored;
- the activities of barber-shops, beauty salons and cosmetic services are being restored.

Press Freedom essential for democracy: Wouter

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Wouter Plomp Ambassador of the Netherland to Pakistan has said press freedom is corner stone of human rights.

He added, press freedom in fact protects others fundamental freedom rights. In a message on the Press Freedom Day the ambassador said, free press is essential democracy. In this current corona pan-

demic reliable information can save lives. The ambassador said media workers should report independently without any fear. We need a free press now than ever, the ambassador added.

Azerbaijan president convenes NAM summit

President Dr. Arif Alvi will represent Pakistan; online summit will take place today; leaders to discuss COVID 19 and its impact; Non-Aligned Movement represents the biggest grouping of countries outside the United Nations

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi will represent Pakistan at the virtual Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) being held on 4 May 2020. The Special Online Summit of the Heads of State and Government of NAM Member States has been convened at the initiative of the President Ilham Al-

iyev of Azerbaijan, in his capacity as current Chair of the Movement. The Summit will conclude with a political Declaration of the Movement "Uniting Against COVID-19" as well as identified measures for enhanced coordination among NAM Member States in their common fight against COVID-19. President Aliyev's efforts aim at bringing the Movement, at the highest



decision-making level, for assessing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Member States and identifying needs and steps for possible remedies and follow-up measures. The Non-Aligned Movement represents the biggest grouping of countries outside the United Nations, comprising 120 developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A number of Heads of State and Government will participate in the virtual Summit. Pakistan is an active member of the Movement and has contributed and shaped the Movement's position on a range of political, legal, economic and social issues. President Dr. Arif Alvi had represented Pakistan at the 18th Summit of NAM in Baku in October 2019.

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India allows 193 Pak nationals to return on May 5

The directives by the Indian government had been issued after the Pakistan high commission requested facilitation for Pakistani citizens in returning to their country

DNA

NEW DELHI: The Indian government has allowed 193 Pakistanis stranded in the country due to the coronavirus lockdown, to return on May 5.

The Indian External Affairs Ministry has directed state police chiefs to facilitate the travel of the stranded Pakistanis back to their country via the Attari-Wagah border crossing next week. The Pakistani nationals have been told to arrive at

the border early Tuesday to begin the formal process of their return. The Indian External Affairs Ministry said only asymptomatic persons will be allowed to return to Pakistan.

"It is requested that all returning Pakistani nationals may be screened as per international norms and existing provisions of the Government of India and only asymptomatic individuals may be allowed to return," said Dammu Ravi, additional secretary of the ministry, to the state governments.

The directives by the Indian government had been issued after the Pakistan high commission requested facilitation for Pakistani citizens in returning to their country.

Last month, a smaller group of Pakistanis had returned from Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The 193 Pakistanis who will return to their country on May 5 were stranded across 25 districts in 10 states: Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Delhi.



ISLAMABAD: Various Chinese companies have donated RS 7 million for PM Relief Fund. Cheque being handed over to Zulfi Bukhar. - DNA

Briefs

Rangers raids gutka factory

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Rangers Sindh on Sunday conducted a raid at Gutka production factory in Old Golimar area and arrested two accused. The Rangers also recovered material and equipment used in Gutka production, said a news release.

Arrested Amjad Husain and Sajid Ahmed belonged to Lyari Gang. The accused were involved in the Gutka business since long under the supervision of Lyari Gang. During preliminary investigation, the arrested confessed that they were paying heavy extortion to Lyari Gang heads Sajid alias Golimar and Agha Zikri for safety of their illegal business. Their network of Gutka supply is spread across the city. The paramilitary force seized 1000kg betel nuts, packaging material and equipments used in Gutka production from the possession of arrested. On their pointation Rangers also recovered arms and ammunition which they were using to safeguard their illegal business. Both arrested have been handed over to police for further legal action.

Egypt says 18 militants killed

CAIRO: Egypt's interior ministry said Sunday 18 suspected militants were killed in North Sinai in a firefight with security forces, two days after a deadly blast claimed by the Islamic State group. "National security received intelligence about terrorist elements hiding out in a home in Bir al-Abed, where they were planning to launch hostile operations," the ministry said in a statement.

"Their hideout was targeted and a firefight ensued which led to the death of 18 (militants)." Security forces found 13 automatic weapons, two explosive belts and three other explosive devices in their possession, the ministry said. Egypt's army said Thursday that 10 soldiers, including an officer, had been killed or wounded in an explosion targeting an armoured vehicle near Bir al-Abed in North Sinai. - APP

'Donations will be used transparently'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has assured the donations in PM's Relief Fund for Covid-19 will be transparently disbursed amongst the deserving families affected by the breakout of Coronavirus. He was speaking in Islamabad today (Saturday) after launching a web portal to register and provide assistance to those who have lost their jobs due to lockdown. The Prime Minister said he is personally monitoring the relief fund and its details will be shared with the public after audit. Imran Khan said the government will contribute four rupees for each rupee

donated to the relief fund. He said our aim is to reach out the maximum number of people during these testing times. Giving details of the web portal, Imran Khan said those who have lost jobs due to lockdown can get themselves registered on the ehsaaslabour.nadra.gov.pk to get the assistance of twelve thousand rupees. He said the volunteers and Tiger Force to help these people get them registered on the website. He said the registered people will be scrutinized and the cash assistance will be given to the qualifying ones. He said the cash assistance will be given totally on merit irrespective of the political affiliations of the recipients. The Prime Minister said

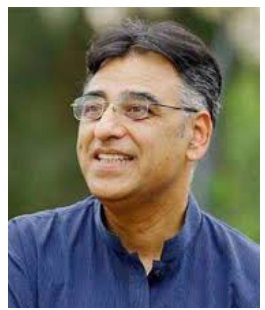
eighty-one billion rupees have been disbursed under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program to 6.8 million poor and deserving families over a period of three weeks. He said it is first time in the country's history that such a hefty amount has been disbursed in a short span of time. He added that the program would be taken forward. Alluding to the opening of businesses in different parts of the world including New York, the Prime Minister said we have also decided to fully open the construction industry as it will provide job opportunities especially to the labourers. He said we have given unprecedented incentives to the construction industry.

Relaxation in lockdown decision after May 9

Fatality rate in Pakistan is far less compared to the United States, the UK and Spain

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development, Asad Umar has assured to take all the decisions regarding relaxation in lockdown after 9th of this month in consensus with all the provinces. Briefing the media persons in Islamabad on Sunday, he said the National Coordination Committee on Coronavirus will take the decision about the future course of action. Asad Umar said the decisions will be taken in such a manner that they do not paralyze our healthcare system. He said the restrictions will be eased gradually in order to provide livelihoods to the people. He said we have significantly enhanced the ca-



capacity of our healthcare system. We currently have 1,400 ventilators for Coronavirus patients and 900 more will be added in two months. He said at present there are 35 Coronavirus patients on ventilators. He said the country has now the capacity to develop medical equipment and soon the domestic production of ventilators will start. The Minister said the country has fifty five functional labs and we have the capacity to carry out over

14000 corona tests on daily basis. The Minister for Planning said the testing, tracking and quarantine system has been made functional and one saw its manifestation recently in two sectors of the federal capital. Asad Umar expressed satisfaction that the coronavirus has not proved to be as contagious for Pakistan when compared with Europe and the United States. He said the fatality rate in Pakistan is far less compared to the United States, the UK and Spain. He, however stressed that we have to adopt the precautionary measures in order to avoid it getting contagious. Asad Umar said that the economic impact of the lockdown on Pakistan is serious than the western countries.

French virus toll hits five-week low

PARIS: The number of daily deaths in France from the coronavirus fell to 166, the health ministry said Saturday, the lowest number in more than five weeks. The total number of COVID-19 deaths in France since March 1 rose however to 24,760 it added the fourth highest in Europe. Pressure on intensive care units eased a bit further meanwhile, the data showed, with a net decline of 51 patients. The last time the number of daily reported deaths was below 166 was on March 22, when it represented only those reported by hospitals. The current figure also includes deaths in elderly care facilities and at home. The government has announced the country's strict lockdown will be eased from May 11, but the pace will be slower in harder hit areas such as the greater Paris region and the northeast quarter of the country - APP

Iran to reopen many mosques

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said mosques would reopen across large parts of the country Monday after being shuttered since early March over the novel coronavirus outbreak. Rouhani said 132 counties, or about one third of the administrative divisions, would "reopen their mosques as of tomorrow," speaking at a televised virus taskforce meeting. "Maintaining social distancing is more important than collective prayer," he added, arguing that Islam considers safety obligatory while praying in mosques is only recommended. - APP

Europe prepares for lockdown easing

MADRID: Europe on Sunday prepared for a further cautious easing of coronavirus restrictions following signs the pandemic may be slowing, after Spaniards flocked to the streets to jog, cycle and rollerskate for the first time after 48 days of confinement. More than 242,000 people have been killed and 3.4 million infected worldwide by the virus, which has left half of humanity under some form of lockdown and pushed the global economy towards its worst downturn since the Great Depression. With signs that the spread of the contagion has been brought under control,

parts of Europe and the United States have begun to lift restrictions to try to inject life into economies crippled by weeks of closures and ease the pressure from populations wearying of captivity. After a two-month lockdown in Italy - with the second-highest number of virus deaths in the world - people on Monday will be allowed to stroll in parks and visit relatives. Restaurants can open for takeaway and wholesale stores can resume business. And in Hungary, some stores and museums, outdoor spaces of restaurants and hotels, beaches and baths can reopen from

Monday - but restrictions will remain in the capital Budapest, which has recorded about 70 percent of the country's cases. Germany will also continue its easing at the start of the week, with schools in some areas expected to reopen, while Slovenia and Poland will allow some businesses and public spaces to operate again. France has said it will partially lift its lockdown on May 11. But with health experts warning the disease could hit hard once again, they are sticking to social distancing measures, the use of masks and more testing to try to track infections.

Spain daily virus death toll drops

MADRID: Spain on Sunday counted another 164 coronavirus deaths, the lowest daily number in nearly seven weeks as the country begins to gradually lift its strict lockdown. The figures from the health ministry bring the total number of fatalities from the pandemic in Spain to 25,264 - the fourth-highest after the United States, Italy and Britain. It is the lowest daily increase since March 18

when 107 deaths were recorded but the ministry's emergencies coordinator, Fernando Simon, said the figure had to be interpreted with "caution" as it comes on a long holiday weekend when reporting of fatalities by hospitals is usually slower. "The figures are very good and confirm the trend we have observed. We have to see if they are consolidated in the coming days," he told a news conference. - APP

Russia reports 10,000 new cases

MOSCOW: Russia on Sunday registered more than 10,600 new coronavirus infections, marking a fresh one-day record increase. New infections jumped by 10,633 to 134,687 cases, Russian authorities said. Russia is now the European country registering the most new infections. But the official fatality rate is low in comparison to countries like Italy, Spain and the United States. Fifty eight people died over the past 24 hours, bringing the total death toll to 1,280. Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin has said the Russian capital, which has emerged as the epicentre of the contagion, was not yet past the peak of the outbreak. Moscow recorded 5,948 new cases, bringing the capital's total to 68,606. President Vladimir Putin has said the situation remains "very difficult." Despite the steady increase in cases, the government has indicated it could gradually lift confinement measures from May 12, but the easing will depend on the region. - APP

PM food export ban helping millions of poor

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the business community and former President ICCI Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday lauded the government for imposing a ban on exports of all edible items to ensure adequate food supply to the local market at affordable rates. The decision is providing relief to millions of people facing countrywide lockdown due to corona-

virus pandemic, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that prices of fruit, vegetable and other food items have come down substantially after the ban while such quality products can be seen in the markets which were never seen before. Export quality fruit and vegetable are now in the reach of poor which is a great development, he said, adding that for this all the credit goes to the Prime Minister Imran Khan.

UK PM says it was tough moment to be in ICU

Says doctors were ready to declare him dead; was aware there were contingency plans in place

LONDON: Doctors treating Boris Johnson for coronavirus prepared to announce his death after he was taken to intensive care, the British prime minister said on Sunday, in his first detailed comments about his illness. "It was a tough old moment, I won't deny it," he was quoted as saying by the Sun on Sunday newspaper in an interview. "They had a strategy to deal with a 'death of Stalin'-type scenario.

"I was not in particularly brilliant shape and I was aware there were contingency plans in place. The doctors had all sorts of arrangements for what to do if things went badly wrong." Johnson, 55, first announced he had contracted COVID-19 on March 27 but maintained he had only mild symptoms. Yet he failed to shake the illness after a week of self-isolation. He was taken to hospital as a precau-



tion on April 5 for further tests but within 24 hours was moved to intensive

care. The Conservative party leader spent three days receiving "oxygen support", and admitted after his discharge on April 12 that his fight with the virus "could have gone either way". But although he told the newspaper he did think "how am I going to get out of this?", he did not think at any point he was going to die. Johnson, who returned to work last Monday and became a father again when his fiancée Carrie Symonds

gave birth on Wednesday, said he was given "litres and litres" of oxygen in hospital. He said he felt frustrated he was not getting better but the reality hit home when doctors were deliberating whether to intubate him and put him on a ventilator. "That was when it got a bit... they were starting to think about how to handle it presentationally," he told the weekly tabloid. - APP