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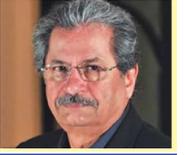
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Japan provides fifth cache of assistance: Matsuda Kuninori

Shibli warns Opp against point scoring

All students promoted to next classes



Pakistan MPs thank China for support

The Senate of Pakistan also commended the government and people of China, led by President Xi Jinping, who showed leadership in this crisis through clarity of vision by taking decisive and timely measures to combat the Coronavirus effectively in China

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Thursday passed a resolution unanimously by expressing its deep appreciation to the Chinese government and people for their unflinching role and timely assistance to Pakistan in the current coronavirus crisis. "The Senate of Pakistan, taking note of China's strong support and timely assistance to Pakistan during the current Coronavirus Crisis, expresses its deep appreciation to the Chinese government

and people for their unflinching role as 'all weather friends' of Pakistan," said the resolution moved by the leader of the opposition Raja Zafarul Haq on behalf of all parties in the house. The resolution said China's support to Pakistan has helped combat COVID-19 by protecting our people and saving lives as well as providing our health workers with testing kits, protective gear and ventilators at a time when these were badly needed plus sending medical teams.

"The Senate of Pakistan also commends the government and people of China, led by President Xi Jinping, who showed leadership in this crisis through clarity of vision by taking decisive and timely measures to combat the Coronavirus effectively in China. As 'Iron Brothers', both Pakistan and China are collectively confronting this 'common enemy', the coronavirus, which is a threat to humanity, irrespective of country, race or religion."

In this context, the Senate of Pakistan rejects the baseless propaganda against China from certain quarters, which stems from geopolitical rivalry and is more an attempt to divert attention from their own internal failings as it has no factual basis. "The Senate feels that this resolution, just prior to May 21, which marks the 69th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China on May 21, 1951, is an auspicious occasion to celebrate the resilience of our time-tested friendship, which is evident from China's consistent support to Pakistan on Kashmir, on CPEC and now on COVID-19," the resolution further said.

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ISLAMABAD: IMF Resident Representative, Ms. Teresa Daban Sanchez called on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Makhdam Khusro Bakhtyar At His Office. – DNA

Corona may never go away, says WHO

DNA

GENEVA: The new coronavirus may never go away and populations around the world will have to learn to live with it, the World Health Organisation warned Wednesday.

As some countries around the world begin gradually easing lockdown restrictions imposed in a bid to stop the novel coronavirus from spreading, the WHO said it may never be wiped out entirely. The virus first emerged in Wuhan in China late last year and has since infected more than 4.2 million people and killed nearly 300,000 worldwide.

"We have a new virus entering the human population for the first time and therefore it is very hard to predict when we will prevail over it," said Michael Ryan, the WHO's emergencies director. "This virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this virus may never go away," he told a virtual press conference in Geneva. "HIV has not gone away – but we have come to terms with the virus." More than half of humanity has been put under some form of lockdown since the coronavirus crisis began.

Khusro thanks IMF for cooperation

Ms. Teresa Daban Sanchez, Resident Representative of IMF concurred with the views of Minister and said that IMF would continue to cooperate with Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Resident Representative of International Monetary Fund in Pakistan Ms. Teresa Daban Sanchez called on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Mr. Makhdam Khusro Bakhtyar in his office this afternoon. The Minister appreciated and thanked the IMF's support of US\$ 1.386 billion under the Rapid Financing Instrument to address the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19

outbreak. The Minister highlighted that Government of Pakistan and IMF are working together for much needed structural reforms for fiscal consolidation and long-term sustainable growth. Minister exchanged his views on looming global economic crisis and negative impact on communities due to the Pandemic and cumulative global response to combat COVID shock.

He expressed the hope that IMF and Pakistan would collaborate to mitigate the impact of the Pandemic on regular basis and would address the emerging situation accordingly while keeping focus on social safety nets for vulnerable section of the society to navigate through crucial time of the Pandemic.

Ms. Teresa Daban Sanchez, Resident Representative of IMF concurred with the views of Minister and said that IMF would continue to cooperate with Pakistan for sustainable economic growth in future.

Briefs

PM's absence from NA criticised

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Mushahidullah Khan on Thursday has expressed concerns over the absence of Prime Minister Imran Khan during the National Assembly and Senate sessions on coronavirus.

While speaking in Senate, the senator said that the sessions will pass but the premier will not attend any of them. Meanwhile, Mushahidullah Khan questioned the government's accountability, asking "How can you blame elites? Where is your accountability?"

'COVID-19 to slash economic output'

DNA

NEW YORK: Against the backdrop of a devastating pandemic, the global economy is projected to contract sharply by 3.2 per cent this year, according to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) mid-2020 report, released Thursday.

The global economy is expected to lose nearly \$8.5 trillion in output over the next two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, wiping out nearly all gains of the previous four years.

Japan provides fifth cache of assistance

Latest assistance by the Government of Japan would support Pakistan's efforts towards defeating this lethal virus pandemic

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has decided to provide fifth cache of assistance worth USD 4,000,320 to the Government of Pakistan through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to support its efforts in combating the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. Prior to this grant assistance, the Government of Japan has provided a total assistance of USD 3,410,000 to Pakistan through UNICEF, IOM, IFRC and UNHCR for a similar support. Through this grant assistance, the UNOPS will provide necessary technical assistance and equipment/material to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by considering the situation on the ground as well



as the request it received from the Government of Pakistan. This support will boost Pakistan's capacity to quickly track the coronavirus affected persons and treat them accordingly, which will help in reducing and delaying the local transmission of it. Hence, minimizing the serious illness and associated deaths due to COVID-19. Furthermore, it will also strengthen the ongoing health services during the fast approaching peak period of the pandemic and will help in minimizing its socio-economic impact.

MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, while appreciating the tremendous efforts of the Government of Pakistan in its fight against COVID-19 has stated that the latest assistance by the Government of Japan would support Pakistan's efforts towards defeating this lethal virus pandemic. The Ambassador stressed upon the need of taking more collective measures by the international community to fight out this disease.

He further stated that the Government of Japan, in light of our long-standing friendship, would continue to provide its support to the Government of Pakistan not only in its efforts to fight against COVID-19 but also in other matters related to Japan-Pakistan socio-economic cooperation.

Hindutva and rising extremism in India

COMMENT

By Justice ® Ali Nawaz Chowhan



THE Indo-Aryans who came from the north like other invaders settled along river Indus. The word Hindu was coined for them by the Greeks and the Arabs. This word was not derived from the vedas or the upnashads. Or any religion. Hinduism was later crafted for describing the specific belief. Nahru in his classic ' the discovery of In-

dia ' advocated Indian nationalism rather than Hindu nationalism. Gandhi however used all the symbols of Hindu society in his personal and collective life and thus brought religion into politics. In the khalafat movement the existence of Hindu Muslim unity was a proud reference. For several hundred years the Muslims ruled in India. But they did not interfere in matters of beliefs. They treated the Hindus well. The best case is of Moguls. Aurangzeb was harsh in matter of governance only.

Despite this harmony for so long Hindus did not mix-up socially with the believers in Islam . They created a society believing in castes. Muslims or those 6l to Islam were treated untouchables. Alburuni observed so, a long time back. Except for landlord classes and Nawabs Muslims were kept poor and exploited. Muslim poverty was the main issue raised by Al-lamah Iqbal in his letters to the Quaid. Yes the British too exploited the disharmony. But there were still hope for existence.

Nehru accuses the Quaid for leaving the congress because he wanted to keep the non elite out. This is an insinuation. The Quaid became a member of the trade union and worked for human rights ,that is rights of the poor.

The person who laid the foundation of Hinduism was a Gujarati Brahmin Dayan sarasvati. According to him Vedas are the only source of Truth. He negated idolatry and asked for propagation of Sanskrit and Hindi. He launched the movement called Arya Samaj . Hate speeches started by Yogi Adityanath in 2015 before becoming chief minister of UP. He started politics of extremism against minorities and promoted the ranks of Goraknath mutt. The irony is that the place for their temple was granted by the Nawab Asaf ud din Daula . Initially this was a non political unorthodox movement turned extremism Digvijay Nath transformed himself.

The glaring examples of the extremists' inter-alia were taking over of the Bahri

majid, Gujarat killings when Modi was the chief minister. The burning of Christians alive, the atrocities being perpetrated on the helpless Kashmiris and the Genocide. This is a disputed territory. And the recent wave of violence ethnic cleaning encourage by the government is a smear on the biggest democracy. Who is allowing Genocide of its own people and delivering hate speeches.

The freedom of religion USA in its recent report has condemned India's atrocities against the Muslims. The Muslim nations owe a duty under the UN charter of human rights to raise this issue and pressurize India to stop the madness. The rationale for the creation of our homeland has proved correct time and again. Thanks to the founding father.

Justice R Alinawaz chowhan
Former chair national commission for human rights pakistan
Chief Justice of The Gambia
Intl judge of the UN at The Hague
Co-chair Unesco judicial board Paris

Naek dismisses reports of Zardari's death

DNA

KARACHI: Former president Asif Ali Zardari's counsel has dismissed reports of the death of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader, saying that propaganda is being done against the former president. Farooq H Naek made the remarks while speaking to the media outside Supreme Court's Karachi registry during a case against PPP leader Khursheed Shah's family.

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Briefs

Rs. 101,0622 billion disbursed among needy

ISLAMABAD: Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program has disbursed a total of Rs. 101.0622 billion among 8,298,671 beneficiaries so far under the different categories. According to the details provided by Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program, this amount has been disbursed among the daily wage, piece-rate workers and deserving ones till 10.00 am of May 14, since the beginning of the payment process under this initiative on April 9. Till today, an amount of Rs. 1.6017 billion has been disbursed among 128,289 beneficiaries in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Rs. 4.6446 billion among 379,940 beneficiaries of Balochistan, Rs 0.6972 billion among 54,763 beneficiaries in Gilgit-Baltistan and Rs. 0.3811 billion among 31,377 beneficiaries of ICT. An amount of Rs. 19.2136 billion has been disbursed among 1,558,532 beneficiaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rs.43.2814 billion among 3,559,788 beneficiaries in Punjab and Rs. 31.2426 billion among 2,585,982 beneficiaries in Sindh. The total disbursed amount also included due payments of Rs. 1.47 billion to the Kafalat beneficiaries. – APP

NBF's readers drive to continue

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) Thursday said under Reader Club Scheme, members could get books on 55 percent discounted rates during the current month. According to an NBF official, the foundation was promoting book reading culture in the country by offering books on inexpensive rates. He said membership was open during May to increase the number of members and to facilitate books on low-priced rates in this year. Readers Club Scheme was the most attractive scheme of the foundation for the book lovers who waited anxiously for opening of this scheme, he added. He said to get membership there was only need of CNIC and two passport size photos along with Rs110 membership fee. – APP

US for expanding cooperation with Pakistan: Paul JONES

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: While respecting Pakistan taking its decisions as an important country in the region, the United States focused on expanding its humanitarian, political and commercial cooperation with Islamabad amid post Covid19 pandemic to the mutual benefits of both the peoples and the countries, said the U.S. Charge d' Affaires to Pakistan Ambassador Paul W. Jones. Speaking at the Online Policy Dialogue Series on 'Pakistan-United States Cooperation amid COVID19' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institutes (SDPI), the ambassador said that

the coronavirus has hit hard the U.S. and still it is impacting huge number of people. Pakistan is also facing a grave crisis due to the pandemic. The U.S. wants Pakistan to succeed in its fight against the virus. Setting the scene as moderator Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director of SDPI, drawn some similarities between the pandemic situation of the U.S and Pakistan. He said that both the countries have devised appropriate strategies and policies to keep a fine balance between economy and health. He raised certain questions for ambassador Jones including: the U.S.-Pakistan cooperation amid coronavirus pandemic,



ic, the potential U.S. support to Pakistan's plea for debt rescheduling and impact of COVID on Afghan peace process. Responding to these questions, Ambassador Jones said the United States is closely connected to Pakistani leadership since the pandemic broke. President Donald Trump has spoken to Prime Minister Imran Khan and expressed the support for Pakistan's actions to fight against the pandemic. The ambassador said the U.S. leadership believes that expansion in commercial and political relations between the two countries should emerge stronger amid current situation. He also talked about the issue of debt rescheduling request by Pakistan, and support of USA. Moreover, U.S. also has supported extending loans and grants to Pakistan like IMF US\$ 1.4 billion and support by

World Bank and other financial institutions. The Ambassador Jones said we have now entered in health partnership with Pakistan on a long-term basis and stepped up cooperation. Pakistan is among top priority countries in terms of the U.S. health partnership on pandemic. Within 48 hours of the request, the USAID has come to support National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and others government agencies. The U.S. has allocated millions of dollars in a new funding for Pakistan for testing of virus in badly hit areas. The U.S. health support also includes technical training and assistance. We are upgrading health

emergency centers in provinces in the country, he added. The best part is that Americans are not supporting only through government to government cooperation but the U.S. private sector companies operating in Pakistan are also spending huge sums from their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and humanitarian support funds to provide humanitarian assistance to low income families. On Afghanistan, the ambassador said that the U.S. provides support to the Afghan refugees and their host communities in Pakistan. We believe that it is in our mutual interest that we reach to a peaceful settlement of Afghanistan issue.

76,512 families receive cash in Pindi

RAWALPINDI: As many as 76,512 families have received Rs12,000 each cash here in Rawalpindi district under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme launched by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. According to Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt (Retd) Anwaarul Haq, total 92,800 families were selected for the programme while the administration has provided cash amounting to over Rs 918.144 million to 76,512 persons. He said, 26 centres were set up for Rawalpindi district including Gujjar Khan tehsil, Taxila, Murree, Kahuta, Kallar Syedan and Kotli Sattian. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Turkish aid agency TIKa distributing relief goods in the wake of COVID-19. – DNA

NCOC says health facilities in hospitals

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) Thursday took an in-depth analysis of existing beds, ventilators and other facilities in the hospitals keeping in view the possible spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and present available data. The purpose of the thorough examination of the existing facilities was to collect real-time data and gauge capacity of the hospitals. The 20th consecutive meeting of the NCOC during Ramadan, also reviewed the latest situation of COVID-19, progress on implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines at the provincial level. Addressing the meeting in chair, Federal Minister for

Planning, Development, Reforms and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said the provinces and hospital management had the responsibility to ensure verified data of coronavirus affected patients to take effective measures for mitigating the risk of the pandemic outbreak. He said the management of the provinces and hospitals had an important role to play for providing credible information where the provinces and the administration were doing an excellent job in this context and it should continue.



China media to host seminar on locust control

The Chinese government delivered the pesticide sprays to the government of Pakistan which it promised late last in April to combat locusts in the country, which are now emerging as a threat to food security

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: A major Chinese Media House, the China Economic Net will host a seminar on Pakistan-China joint efforts to control locust. Pakistan has once again been plagued with the problem of locusts, which inflicted substantial damage to farmlands thus threatening food security of the country and prompting the government to seek help from Chinese experts to tackle the issue. In this regard, the China Economic Net has organised a China-Pakistan trade Hotline Cloud Salon

with the theme of 'Joint Efforts in Locust Control' on May 20, as Pakistan's agriculture sector is now suffering from the worst desert locust infestation in 27 years. The seminar is aimed at stressing the urgency of joint efforts to combat locusts and strengthen regular thinking and forward-looking planning. Earlier in March, President Arif Alvi and Chinese President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of an agreement on strengthening plant disease and insect pest control in Beijing. To assist in dealing with this outbreak, China sent aid of 300,000 litres of pesticides and 50 sets of

equipment to Pakistan. The Chinese government delivered the pesticide sprays to the government of Pakistan which it promised late last in April to combat locusts in the country, which are now emerging as a threat to food security. Beijing had promised to provide malathion (insecticide) along with high-efficiency remote sprayers and other equipment to Pakistan in a bid to control the locusts which are affecting a huge area of land in the country. In addition to the sprays, plant protection drones, also included in the assistance package, were sent to the country.

Cutlery exports decrease

ISLAMABAD: The exports of cutlery from the country witness decreased of 3.45 percent during the ten months of ongoing financial year 2019-20 as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The country exported cutlery worth US \$72.051 million during July-April (2019-20) against the exports of US \$74.625 million during July-April (2018-2019), showing negative growth of 3.45 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the cutlery exports also decreased by 78.79 percent during the month of April 2020 as compared to the same month of last year. – APP

Pak increasing domestic PPE manufacturing

FIAZ CHAUDHRY
 ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhary Thursday said that the government was working with local industry to increase domestic production of personal protection equipment (PPE) to contain COVID-19 pandemic. While talking to a private news channel, Sci-

ence minister explained that the government is also in an advanced stage to make local ventilators in Pakistan within next 10 to 15 days. The disposable PPE gear to be worn by doctors, have also been certified by the Ministry of Health after meeting the appropriate and necessary parameters and shall also be cheaper in price compared to the imported ones, he said.

PARC signs MoU for hygienic Bakery items

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A signing Ceremony of Memorandum of Understanding was held at PARC HQs, Islamabad on 14-05-2020 between Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Islamabad and M/s PATCO (Pvt.) Ltd and Solution and Services to develop research based hygienic and healthy Bakery items and Juices and to promote at national and international level. A delegation from M/s Solution and Services (Pvt.) Ltd headed by Mr. Waseem Abbas Aulakh, Chief Executive Officer, Solution and Services visited PARC HQs, Islamabad for the purpose. On the occasion, Dr. Muhammad

Azeem Khan, Chairman, PARC was of the view that access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. Unsafe food containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances can cause different diseases. The Chairman also expressed that the main objective of the signing MoU is to develop research based hygienic and healthy Bakery items and juices and further to promote it at national and international level. Dr. Muhammad Amjad CEO, PATCO also added that to develop nutritious healthy and cost effective recipes and to develop research based certified national brands for revenue generation at also part of the Memorandum.



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Sugar robbery

AS the inquiry into the notorious sugar scam is coming to its logical conclusion, startling revelations are being reported about the amounts that the sugar barons allegedly extorted from the public exchequer in the shape of subsidies and from unsuspecting consumers who were forced to pay higher prices. According to some estimates, as much as over Rs100 billion may have been pocketed by sugar-mill owners. This windfall appears to be the result of an increase in sugar prices due to the scarcity of sugar in the market, which itself was the result of an inappropriate decision by the PTI-led government to allow exports that many of its own ministers had opposed. The Economic Coordination Committee had recommended to the cabinet the decision to export sugar, without considering the likelihood of its shortage in the domestic market which became a primary cause of its higher prices. As the opposition and the ruling party are hurling accusations at each other, it is the people of Pakistan who need an explanation. The FIA is conducting an inquiry and has conducted interviews of sugar-mill directors, as many owners didn't turn up at the FIA's call. The inquiry commission had summoned eight groups of sugar mills for investigations. A detailed forensic audit has also been conducted after the initial report was submitted to the prime minister. The All Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (APSMA) has also participated in the investigation. In the last week of April, the federal government had given additional three weeks to the Sugar Forensic Commission to complete its detailed report on the scandal. It is noteworthy that on April 4, 2020, a high-level inquiry report made the headlines giving details of the sugar and wheat crises that hit the country in January this year. The report had revealed that PTI leader Jahangir Tareen, a brother of Food Minister Khusró Bakhtiar, and PML-Q leader Moonis Elahi were among the prime beneficiaries of the sugar crisis that hit the poor of this country in a big way. Now a couple of questions still remain unanswered. First, what action has been taken against those who recommended the export of sugar when the country itself was likely to face its shortage, which ultimately happened? Second, why were such huge amounts of subsidies awarded to sugar barons who were already wallowing in their sugar molasses? And finally, when the first report was loud and clear why was there a need to delay punitive action? It has been over four months since the sugar and wheat crises targeted the people of this country. They were not a result of a natural calamity, rather they were deliberate and manmade scourges unleashed on people. The people of Pakistan don't simply need answers to these questions, they also expect justice done to those who commit such robberies in broad daylight, no matter which party they belong to.



Carnage in Afghanistan

BABIES and mothers who have recently given birth are easy targets for gunmen who shoot point blank at them. It is unthinkable that any human being would commit such an act of heinous violence. In Kabul on Tuesday, gunmen stormed a maternity hospital and after a stand-off with security guards attacked nurses, women and babies present there. The maternity centre was run by the Paris-based Medecin Sans Frontiers. The reason for choosing the target is unclear. But the impact it has left on people who saw the scenes after the crime is not. They saw mothers hugging babies in attempts to save their lives. A few succeeded but died themselves. They saw nurses try to smuggle babies away and after the attack was over they saw the splashes of blood and the 16 corpses, two of them of newborns which lay there after the shooting was over. We hope the US, which is attempting to broker a peace deal in Afghanistan, is watching the visuals. Surely they cannot be left unmoved by what they see on television screens. The Taliban, with whom the US is engaged in dialogue, have not claimed responsibility for the hospital attack. However, two previous attacks in Kabul, one only a few hours before the hospital siege and another series of coordinated bomb blasts in Kabul on Monday have been claimed by the IS. Allegations surfacing on social media suggest these were facilitated by the Taliban. One of the clauses of the deal with the US is that the Taliban, which control most of the territory of Afghanistan, will not allow the country's soil to be used for purposes of violence. Prior to the hospital attack, the funeral of a police chief in the Nangarhar province was literally blown apart by a suicide bomber who detonated his vest at the site. Around 24 people are believed to have died, bringing the death toll in Afghanistan through deadly terrorist attacks to 40. A day before this on Tuesday, bombs were placed in various parts of the city, sometimes in waste bins, injuring citizens including at least one child. It is obvious that Afghanistan is not moving towards peace. The persons responsible for this, the world leaders who sat in Doha for talks with the Taliban for months, need to step up and take responsibility. The people of Afghanistan cannot be allowed to suffer indefinitely. It is clear that the weak Afghan security forces are not able to deal with deadly terrorism such as that unleashed by the IS. Some kind of action is needed. Some kind of responsibility has to be attached. A country which has bled for decades, since 1979, cannot live if such violence continues. It cannot live if its babies are shot down even before they begin their journey of life. The situation is one that requires serious thought among all stakeholders. Suggestions and strategies are needed. But whatever these are, the killings must stop.

Role of the SCO in Ensuring Regional Security Cooperation

Lt. Col. Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd)



The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in the year 2001 and ever since it has become an active regional player by attaining significance in the overall strategic and security architecture of Asia. Eradication of Extremism, Separatism, and Terrorism is one of the fundamental goals of the SCO

Eradication of Extremism, Separatism, and Terrorism is one of the fundamental goals of the SCO. With the changing strategic and security trends, Russia and China are now more focused on the prevailing security issues and energy potentials.

Presently, SCO has eight permanent members which include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and India. It also has four observer states. They are Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia. While Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, and Sri Lanka are the six dialogue partners.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization & Enhanced Regional Security

The continuous efforts have been made by SCO to counter the common security threats and challenges, promote dialogue, enhance security by combating terrorism, separatism, extremism, and even cyberterrorism. SCO has also actively worked for the enhancement of international information security. Recognizing the increased number of terrorist attacks in the world, SCO plans to use advanced methods to combat terrorism and extremism related activities. Moreover, SCO encourages its member states to join forces in their mutual fight against terrorism and the international community to collaborate for an anti-terrorist coalition to counter this global threat.

In this regard, Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), a permanent organ of SCO, has been established to maintain and promote cooperation among the member states against the three fundamental evils that are Separatism, Extremism, and Terrorism. Furthermore, it focused on collecting and exchanging information regarding terrorist activities, counter-terrorism policy drafting, and to maintain cooperative relations between the SCO member states and the institutions working towards similar objectives. RATS, under SCO, proved to be effective in achieving its core objectives. Due to the efficient coordination by RATS, the relevant authorities of the member states successfully managed to prevent 20 terrorist attacks between the years 2011-2015. They also managed to deter 650 crimes of extremism, and 440 terrorist training camps and 1700 members of international terrorist organizations were neutralized.

The core objective of RATS i.e. eradication of Terrorism, Extremism, and Separatism makes it especially relevant in the case of Afghanistan. Afghanistan shares its border with four of the SCO member states (China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan). Hence, the instability and poor security situation of Afghanistan have direct effects on the region mainly South Asia and Central Asia.

Instability and Radicalization in Afghanistan have often been discussed in SCO summits. In the year 2013, the leaders from the SCO member states emphasized the idea of a stable Afghanistan. As the peace and security of South Asia and Central Asia depended on how the situation unfolds in Afghanistan.

To cater to the Afghan issue, certain measures have been taken by the SCO. In Astana (the year 2005), a

protocol on the creation of the Afghanistan-SCO contact group was adopted by SCO. It mainly aimed at increasing the cooperation between the two parties on issues of mutual interest. Moreover, a conference on Afghanistan was organized by SCO in Moscow. The conference mainly focused on the areas of mutual interest between SCO and Afghanistan. In another SCO summit in Astana 2011, the political instability and the unresolved situation of Afghanistan were seen as the fundamental threat to the peace and security of Central Asia. The leaders of SCO member states further agreed that the Afghan crisis could not be resolved through military means. The socio-economic situation of Afghanistan needs to be improved to facilitate peace and stability in the country. Providing economic and development opportunities will eventually support the stabilization of Afghanistan.

For this purpose, initiatives have been taken by the Central Asian states, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan enterprises have facilitated in providing electricity to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has also been included in a major energy project i.e. TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India). Under this project, India and Pakistan will be provided Turkmen gas via Afghanistan.

An Afghanistan Action Plan has also been designed by SCO which was announced at a special Afghanistan Conference organized by SCO. The plan intended to align its objectives with the broader strategy formulated and adopted by the US-NATO. The Afghanistan Action Plan by SCO focused on joint counter-terrorism operations, combating drug trafficking, and other related organized crimes. It further called for Afghanistan to be involved (in a phased manner) in SCO collaborations, and invited Afghan State institutions to participate in law-enforcement exercises planned and conducted by SCO. The training of drug agencies, combating drug money laundering, and enhancing border security were also focused.

The fact that Afghanistan is yet not politically stabilized faces trans-border threats such as terrorism, Islamic militancy, drug trafficking, etc. and lacks the required forces to maintain internal peace and stability of the country poses serious threats and challenges for the entire region which is likely to experience the spillover effects.

The entire situation simultaneously provided an opportunity for SCO to place the Afghanistan issue on its scope area. Despite being eager to play an active role in stabilizing Afghanistan, SCO needed US-NATO cooperation as the space available for SCO to play its role in Afghanistan was limited due to US-NATO presence there.

Besides, certain organizational limitations also limited SCO's role. The accession of new members to the organization proves to be beneficial in certain situations but it also has its adverse effects. In the case of the Afghan issue, incorporating new members proved to be beneficial as various regional countries have varying interests in the stabilized Afghanistan. Hence, enhancing the organization's capability to deal with

the issue more effectively. On the other hand, it can at times lead to a clash of interest between the new members and the core members of the organization. India and Pakistan were the latest addition to the SCO. The two rivals became the permanent members of the SCO summit in the year 2017. Accepting of India and Pakistan as the permanent members in SCO has broadened the scope of the organization, both in geographic and thematic terms. Their entry into the organization will be providing an opportunity for SCO to encompass the long-standing Kashmir issue.

Despite being successful in resolving several disputes among the newly independent (former USSR) states, SCO could not play the role of a dispute resolving body in case of India-Pakistan dispute. India and Pakistan, being arch-rivals, have a long history of disputes and conflicts. One of them being the Kashmir issue.

In August 2019, after India imposed curfew in Kashmir, the tensions between India and Pakistan escalated and both the states reached the brink of war. With both states having nuclear weapons, not only the two states were at risk but the stability and security of the entire region were in danger. Even though SCO's Charter Clause 2 mentions the responsibility of the organization to resolve any dispute that arises between the member states, yet it is viewed that SCO may review its non-binding model, so as to play a more assertive role for complex dispute resolutions.

Pakistan viewed SCO as the most successful platform in the Eurasian region that is likely to bring and maintain peace and stability in the South Asian region. The inclusion of India and Pakistan has resulted in the expansion of SCO by covering Central Asia, South Asia, and West Asia. This expansion will also support linkage and connectivity between the SCO and BRICS states.

SCO, NATO, & UN: Collaboration or Competition in Ensuring Security?

Complying with the well-known norms of the International Law and the Principles of the United Nations, SCO firmly believes in Diplomacy being the most effective tool of conflict resolution. SCO in collaboration with the United Nations has initiated several projects which aim at the enhancement of international cooperation against mutual security threats. A few of the notable events include "The United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Jointly Countering Challenges and Threats" organized in the year 2016 in New York, and "The United Nations and Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Fight Against Drugs: Common Threats and Joint Actions" held in March 2017 in Vienna.

The world sees SCO as the future role model and key geostrategic power player among the international community. The SCO secretariat under the guidance of His Excellency Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General of SCO, is striving hard to achieve the desired goals. The present Secretary-General has reached out to all the member states and is likely to take SCO to new heights.

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

Vulnerable people deserve equal treatment during crisis

Maha Akeel



The risk of online child sexual exploitation should also be considered, as more children are spending more time connected to the internet

AT times of crisis, the most vulnerable segments of society are the most likely to suffer and the least likely to receive assistance. In the case of the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, this is no different. Whether it is women, children, the elderly and the handicapped, or refugees, minorities and the poor, the difficulties and challenges these groups face usually do not get the same attention as the urgent issues that are addressed immediately. When COVID-19 hit the world — at lightning speed and with such viciousness — it prompted countries to take extreme but necessary measures to prevent and contain its spread, including lockdowns. However, as time slowly crawled by, the virus's effects loomed over people's lives and heightened their panic, uncertainty and stress. Along with the downturn in the economy and the rise of unemployment, the social impact of the pandemic has been palpable.

Reports have shown that coronavirus is disproportionately affecting women and girls around the world, including disrupting access to maternal health, jeopardizing care-givers — where women represent 70 percent of the global health care workforce and carry out the majority of unpaid care work — and increasing the risk of domestic violence. In addition, the pandemic has also affected women economically, as many of them work in the

sectors that have been the hardest hit, such as travel, tourism, hospitality and retail, while many women work part-time or at home and in the informal economy and have limited savings. In the longer term, women may be disproportionately affected by cuts to social services including health, water and sanitation, and social care. Furthermore, as many daily essential activities, such as work and teaching, moved online, it put women and girls at a disadvantage as the gap in access and knowhow between males and females is wide. School closures also increase the risks of child labor and exploitation, as well as depriving thousands of poor children from getting their main meal at school. Experience from other emergency contexts highlights an increase in child, early and forced marriage as a means for poor and marginalized families to reduce the number of mouths to feed, which increases the chances of girls dropping out of school and also leads to early pregnancy and its associated health risks. While the numbers indicate that COVID-19 hospitalizes and kills more men than women, the overall impact on lives is hurting women and girls the most, especially in poor countries and among those who are displaced, refugees or living in conflict-affected areas. Many experts are warning that, if officials and society do not act now, women and girls will be suffering from the pandemic's

fallout for decades to come. The risk of online child sexual exploitation should also be considered, as more children are spending more time connected to the internet. Also, it has been reported in some countries that the take-up of childhood vaccinations has plunged since the pandemic began due to a massive backlog of shipments and the concerns of parents over taking their children to clinics. They fear being infected with the coronavirus, which would also expose children to the risk of other serious diseases like measles, polio, tetanus and other infectious diseases besides COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the high rate of COVID-19 fatalities in care facilities for the elderly and people with disabilities in some countries has been shocking, as horrific reports have emerged of neglect during the pandemic. Such discrimination is inhumane, as medical decisions should be based on individualized clinical assessments and medical need, not on age or disability. However, the very high infection rate and rapid spread of the virus has overwhelmed some of the best health care services in the world and put tremendous pressure on health care providers, forcing them to make difficult decisions. Had the pandemic been handled well at the beginning, they wouldn't have found themselves in such a position. — *Courtesy Arab News*

Economy expected to grow by 2 percent: Hafeez

Participating in a Webinar on "Pakistan Economy: Post COVID-19", organized by Institute of Chartered Accountant of Pakistan (ICAP), the advisor said that Pakistan was expecting around 3 percent growth during the current fiscal year, however it would end up negative 1 to 1.5 percent due to coronavirus impact

DNA
ISLAMABAD: With the current projections of negative 1.5 GDP growth rate owing to COVID-19 pandemic impact, the country's economy would turn around to witness 2 percent growth in upcoming fiscal year (2020-21), Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said on Thursday. Participating in a Webinar on "Pakistan Economy: Post COVID-19", organized by Institute of Chartered Accountant of Pakistan (ICAP), the advisor said that Pakistan was expecting around 3 percent growth during the current fiscal year, however it would end up negative 1 to 1.5 percent due to coronavirus impact. However, he said the when the situation improves; the GDP was expected to grow by 2 percent next year. Likewise, the advisor said that the fiscal deficit, which was projected at 9 percent this year compared to

the target of 7 percent, would also be brought down next year while, the debt to GDP ratio would also be reduced. Talking about the post COVID-19 situation, the advisor said that



the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had predicted 3 percent global growth. The contraction in global economy had been affecting the country's exports as had been witnessed in April during which the exports decline by 40 percent as compare to last April. Likewise, unemployment was going up due to lockdown and low economic activity while the revenue collection also declined so the expenditure side was going to be affected.

China rejects US claim

BEIJING: Beijing accused the United States Thursday of smearing China after Washington alleged Chinese hackers were attempting to steal research on developing a vaccine against the coronavirus. "China expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to such smearing," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular press briefing, stressing Beijing has significant achievements of its own in the fight against the pandemic. — APP

No compromise to be made in action against smuggling: PM

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said no compromise will be made in action against smuggling. Chairing a meeting on checking smuggling and about prices of essential commodities in Islamabad today, he directed all the departments concerned to submit report about actions against smuggling and the people involved in smuggling fortnightly. The Prime Minister said smuggling is a nuisance for the country's economy. He said smuggling threatens food security and causes irreparable loss to the country's industrial sector. Regarding the steps taken to bring prices of essential commodities down, the Prime Minister said the government's objective to reduce prices of petroleum products was to provide relief to people. He said provision of the benefit of reduction in fuel prices to people should be ensured. He said provincial governments should play an active role in this regard. The provincial governments presented reports of actions taken against hoarders and profiteers.

Briefs

Electric vehicles charging facility

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Gas & Oil Pakistan Limited (GO), the fastest growing Oil Marketing Company (OMC) in Pakistan has announced that it has become the first OMC in Pakistan to introduce Electric Vehicle (EV) charging facility at its retail outlets. The first of these EV chargers, made by ABB Italy, the Swiss-Swedish multinational, has been installed at GO's Company Owned & Operated Outlet, COCO-3 near the Expo Centre in Lahore. This was announced by Zeeshan Tayyeb, Chief Operating Officer, GO. As a responsible corporate entity, GO aims to be at the forefront of taking initiatives for the environment.

France announces rescue plan

PARIS: France announced Thursday an 18-billion-euro (\$19.4-billion) rescue plan for its tourism sector, one of the world's largest, to weather the coronavirus crisis, including 1.3 billion euros in direct public investment. "Whatever strikes tourism obviously strikes at the heart of France," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said as he announced the measures, underscoring that 95 percent of hotels in the country are closed. — APP

150 Pakistanis brought back from France

MUBAHSAR BHATTI
PARIS: Paris 14th May, 2020. A special PIA flight took off from Paris to Islamabad carrying onboard 150 stranded Pakistanis. The flight had been arranged by the Government of Pakistan to repatriate stranded Pakistanis in France. Apart from France, a number of stranded Pakistanis from neighboring countries, including Belgium, Italy and Poland also travelled on the special flight.

Taliban claim attack on Afghan army base

KHOST: The Taliban said it carried out a deadly attack Thursday on an Afghan army base after the government ordered forces to resume strikes against the militants. Afghan officials said a truck bomb targeted an army base in the eastern city of Gardez, killing five civilians and wounding 19 — including five army personnel. It comes after a particularly violent week which

saw President Ashraf Ghani rescind the government's recent "defensive" stance aimed at promoting peace talks with the Taliban, and order troops back onto the offensive. Provincial health director Welayat Khan Ahmadzai confirmed the death toll, but the Taliban claimed "tens of soldiers were killed and wounded" and denied reports any civilians died. — APP

Viruses cases in Pak soar to 35,788

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The nationwide tally of coronavirus cases has soared to 35,788 with 1,452 new cases reported during the last twenty-four hours. Overall 13,561 cases have so far been detected in Punjab, 13,341 in

Sindh, 5,255 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2,239 in Balochistan, 482 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 822 in Islamabad and 91 in Azad Kashmir. A total of 9,695 patients have so far recovered from the virus whilst the death toll stands at 770 with 33 new deaths reported during the last twenty four hours.

RCCI organizes virtual APCPC

DNA
RAWALPINDI: The Twelfth all Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference, organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has unanimously demanded that the sales tax rate, which is currently 17 per cent, be dropped to five per cent. The interest rate should be further reduced to four percent. All types of income should be taxed and FBR should focus on new taxpayers and burden should not be placed on existing taxpay-

ers for revenue collection. The concessions given to the construction sector should be extended to other sectors as well. RCCI President Saboor Malik, in opening remarks, said that the Chamber has been organizing the conference every year. However, due to the Corona virus and the lockdown, the conference was held via video link, with more than 47 presidents from across the country attending via video link. "The situation is extraordinary at the moment and extraordinary steps will have to be taken," he said.



DERA GHAZI KHAN: CM Punjab Usman Buzdar laying foundation stone of institute of cardiology. — DNA

'Profiteers and hoarders to face strict legal action'

MUNIR FAISAL
ATTOCK: Secretary Social welfare Punjab Zahid Saleem Gondal paid a surprise visit to Fruits and vegetable market on Thursday to monitor the auction process. Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamer, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue ch Abdul Majid and other officers also present on the occasion. Secretary Social Welfare Ensure availability of sufficient quantity of standard vegetable, timely price lists should be issued and

the process of bidding should be completed in a transparent manner under his supervision. He also inspected the measures taken for prevention from Corona Virus. The Secretary Social welfare has said that the supply and wholesale prices of the Fruits and vegetables are being supervised minutely for keeping the balance between supply and demand to discourage the negative trend of the price hike during Ramadan. He urged public to check the price of edibles and if they found that anyone was involved in profiteering or hoarding then can register com-

plaint on app "Qeemat Punjab". He visited different sheds of the market and reviewed the auction process of strawberries and other fruits. He warned that unwarranted and unfair increase in auction would not be tolerated. He said that the fair profit was right in business but exploitation of the consumers would not be allowed. He talked to the vendors and asked about their problems. He directed the market Committee to ensure the selling of fruits and vegetables at fixed prices so that people are not overcharged.

All students promoted to next classes, says Shafqat

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Federal Education Minister Shafqat Mehmood on Thursday said that board examinations for matriculation and intermediate will not be held this year and the students who had not given exams of 9th and 11th classes have been promoted to next grades. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad, the education minister said that it has been finally decided to promote students of class 9-12 based on their performance of the previous year. He said only those students will be promoted whose performance in previous exams will be satisfactory. He said a three percent increase has been made in previous results of those students based on statistical formulas. The minister said that those students who failed in 40 percent of subjects will be given passing marks, while the students who failed in more than 40 percent of subjects have to give the special examination. "All those students who are not satisfied with their results and those who want to give composite exams will be able to sit for special exams," he added. He further said that students in class 10 and 12 will be promoted based on their performance in class 9 and 11. He said the result will be calculated on a cumulative basis and not subject-wise. The minister said the students desirous to participate in special exams should indicate to their respective boards by first of July this year. The examination could be held anywhere between September to November this year.

Japan lifts coronavirus emergency in many parts

TOKYO: Japan's prime minister on Thursday lifted a state of emergency imposed due to the coronavirus for the majority of the country but kept it in place for top cities Tokyo and Osaka. After fears the virus could explode in Japan, new in-

fections have come down sharply, enabling the government to end the measure in 39 out of 47 prefectures before it was due to expire on May 31. But with new cases still emerging daily in Tokyo, Osaka and the northern island of Hokkaido, Shin-

zo Abe told reporters in a televised news conference that the state of emergency would be kept in place for those regions. "If possible, before May 31, we would like to lift the state of emergency for the other regions as well," he said.

NAB committed to root out corruption: Chairman

FARUKH SHAHZAD
ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has said that NAB is absolutely committed to root out corruption with iron hands in an atmosphere of renewed energy and dynamism, where fight against corruption is being taken as a national duty. He said these remarks while chairing a meeting via video link at NAB Headquarters by maintaining social distancing and ensuring all precautionary measures and said that our Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan had termed "One of the biggest curses... is corruption and bribery. That really is a poison. We must put it down with an iron hand".

Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that National Accountability Bureau was established to eradicate corruption in a holistic and integrated manner. This is the backdrop against with NAB is striving to accomplish its mission i.e. to rid the nation from corruption and corrupt practices. He said that NAB's operational methodology has set three stages for proceeding of cases complaint verification, inquiry and investigation. NAB's officers/officials need to follow Anti Corruption Strategy by Adopting "Accountability for All" policy against eradication of corruption. He said that the hard work, commitment, transparency and merit being put in by NAB officers are being appreciated by national and international reputed organizations. He said that NAB officers should doubling their efforts in nabbing



corrupts elements and recovered from them hard earned looted money of the innocent citizen of Pakistan. He said that through detailed introspection and analysis of organizational weaknesses, overhaul of procedures, all pillars of the organization i.e. Operations, Prosecution, Human Resource Development and Awareness and Prevention. He said that to close the possi-

bility of any single NAB officer/official influencing the discharge of official business, the new concept of a "Combined Investigation Team" (CIT) was introduced where two investigation officers and a legal consultant, financial expert under the supervision of Additional Director/Case and concerned Director are working as a team for a fair, transparent and unbiased, inquiry/investigations. He said that the quality of inquiry and investigation of NAB must have further improve due to establishment of NAB's first Forensic Science Lab (FSL) in Islamabad which has all facilities of Digital Forensics, Questioned Documents and Fingerprint Analysis which will help in lending quality and solid evidence in conduct of inquiries and investigations. He said that NAB has devised Monitoring & Evaluation Sys-

tem (MES) in order to monitor NAB performance of NAB and all Regional Bureaus in qualitative and quantitative term which has proved very helpful in evaluation of overall performance of NAB. He said that NAB is the only Organization with whom China has signed MoU to oversee projects being undertaken under CEPC. He said that NAB is absolutely committed to nab corrupt elements. He said that NAB Ordinance 1999's preamble emphasizes to nab corrupt and recover looted money. Due to this reason, NAB has recovered Rs. 328 billion since its inception and its overall conviction rate is about 70% in Accountability Courts. He said that NAB hopes that joint efforts of all stakeholders can collaborate to check corruption before happening with the help of all stakeholders.