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Indonesian Embassy facilitates repatriation of its stranded citizens

Exploring nature better than sitting at home: Marion

Japanese envoy lauds Afghan power sharing

China announces \$2 bln in virus help

President Xi says vaccine will be shared with all once ready; we have shared control and treatment experience with the world without reservation

DNA

GENEVA: China will provide \$2 billion over two years to fight the coronavirus pandemic, President Xi Jinping said Monday, rallying around the World Health Organization and its efforts even as the Trump administration has slashed funding for the U.N. health agency. The European Union's 27-member bloc and other countries, meanwhile, called for an independent evaluation of WHO's initial response to the coronavirus pandemic "to review experience gained and lessons learned."

In a speech to the World Health Assembly, Xi said China had provided all relevant outbreak data to WHO and other countries, including the virus' genetic sequence, "in a most timely fashion." "We have shared control and treatment experience with the world without reservation," Xi said. "We have done everything in our power to support and assist countries in need." The \$2 billion over the next two years will support COVID-19 response efforts, particularly in developing countries, Xi said.

The EU resolution proposes that the independent evaluation should be initiated "at the earliest appropriate moment" and should, among other issues, examine "the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic." WHO announced the coronavirus outbreak to be a global health emergency on Jan. 30, its highest level of alert. In the following weeks, WHO warned countries there was a narrowing "window of opportunity" to prevent the virus from spreading globally. WHO officials, however, repeatedly described the

transmission of the virus as "limited" and said it wasn't as transmissible as flu; experts have since said COVID-19 spreads even faster. It declared the outbreak to be a pandemic on March 11, after the virus had killed thousands globally and sparked large epidemics in South Korea, Italy, Iran and elsewhere. Xi said he also supported the idea of a comprehensive review of the global response to COVID-19. "This work should be based on science and professionalism, led by WHO and conducted in objective and impartial manner," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan talking to Dr. Sania Nishtar and others on the occasion of launch of emergency cash program. – DNA

PM launches Ehsaas Cash Program

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has formally launched Ehsaas Emergency Cash program for those rendered jobless due to Coronavirus. Over three billion rupees have so far been collected in the Corona Relief Fund. Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar briefed the Prime Minister. On the instructions of the Prime Minister, government will contribute four rupees for every rupee donated to the fund. Donations to the relief fund as well as release of funds from it is being done in a transparent manner.

Chinese envoy, Zaidi discuss projects

Ambassador Yao Jing appreciated the two-pronged strategy of prevention through strict adherence of SOPs and protection of employment and sustenance by MOMA in these testing times

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Syed Ali Haider Zaidi was called on Yao Jing, Ambassador of China to Pakistan in the backdrop of a major initiative envisioned for the residents of Karachi. The Minister of Maritime Affairs vision is of transforming Pakistan into a Maritime Nation and especially raising the port city par excellence with leading ports. The Minister is endeavouring to fast track projects designed to transform encroached land into systematically planned residential areas having all the basic amenities in a state of the art manner. The project is expected to attract substantial FDI. "Globally, the port runs the cities whereby revenue streams of ports are utilized for the betterment of the people" observed Ali Zaidi citing the examples of Los Angeles and New York ports. "Karachi has been neglected since independence, resource allocation was minimum with available resources

plundered rampantly in collusion with property mafia and land grabbers" lamented Ali Zaidi. During the meeting, the Minister shared with the Ambassador that even during the present COVID-19 crisis port operations continued without any interruption. The Ambassador of China to Pakistan appreciated the two-pronged strategy of prevention through strict adherence of SOPs and protection of employment and sustenance by MOMA in these testing times. – Picture on Back Page

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Briefs

RCCI for resolving flour mills issues

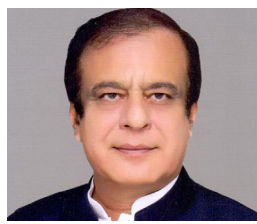
ABID RAZA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has demanded of the Punjab Government that the issues of Flour Mills Association be resolved immediately. The strike will lead to severe shortage of flour. RCCI President Saboor Malik, in a statement said that in the event of a lockdown situation, the unavailability of flour will only aggravate the problem for the masses. The government must realize the gravity of the situation. He said that other sectors are also linked with flour. Shortage will lead to a storm of inflation. RCCI President further added that the barriers faced by the flour mills regarding procurement and stock of wheat should be removed. He said that philanthropists were distributing rations to the deserving people across the country and the strike and flour shortage would also affect relief work.

World all praise for Tiger force: Shibli

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Monday that the world was praising Imran Khan's initiative of establishment of Corona Relief Tiger Force for assistance to the people. Tagging an article published by United Kingdom leading newspaper Daily Telegraph, he said that with the national spirit, the youth were helping the people in the fight against coronavirus.



The minister said that young volunteers, facilitating the people at this difficult time were pride of the nation. Daily Telegraph of the United Kingdom in a detailed piece had in an article written by Ben Farmer said the initiative will tap into youth population that is the country's one of the biggest resources. The Force will provide masses of enthusiastic volunteers to aid the police, civil servants and health officials, it said. Their tasks will range from ensuring social distancing rules, applied at public places and food shops to helping hand out emergency cash payments to the poor. It article said among over a million volunteers who signed up for the Tigers force, are some 400,000 students including 50,000 engineers, 45,000 teachers, and 5,000 or 6,000 lawyers.

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Azerbaijan's export to Russia increases

The volume of export increased by \$ 15,089.6 thousand or 8.5% and made up \$ 193,536.1 thousand, while the volume of import decreased by \$ 50,165.6 thousand or 7.6% and made up \$ 610,471.5 thousand

DNA

BAKU: During January-April of this year, the volume of trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Russia made up \$ 804,007.6 thousand which is \$ 35,076 thousand or 4.2% less as compared with the same period of

the last year, according to the calculations conducted by "APA-Economics" on the basis of the indicators issued by the State Customs Committee. In the reporting period, the volume of export increased by \$ 15,089.6 thousand or 8.5% and made up \$ 193,536.1 thousand, while the volume of import decreased by \$ 50,165.6 thousand or 7.6% and made up \$ 610,471.5 thousand. In the reporting period, the negative trade balance amounting to \$ 416,935.4 thousand emerged, and this indicator decreased by \$ 65,255.1 thousand or 13.5% as compared with relevant period of 2019.

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Wheat shortage will not be allowed

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: The Provincial Minister for Revenue Col (R) Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan said that No one would be allowed to create artificial shortage of wheat through hoarding. Food Department is fully alert and carrying out action against wheat hoarders across the province. Minister has paid a surprise visit to government wheat procurement Warehouse here in Attock on Monday. Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamer, Additional Deputy Commissioner for Revenue Ch Abdul Majid and District Food Officer were also present.

Train resumes from May 20

He outlined some SOPs saying that citizens should not come to pick up or drop off passengers to railway stations as a precautionary measure and noted that there is no restriction on the travelers' age

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has given the permission to resume train services under given SOPs from Wednesday, May 20. Railway Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed while addressing a press conference said that the Prime Minister has given the permission to operate 30 trains for now. He said that if conditions improve by June 1, more trains could be allowed to operate. Sheikh Rasheed said that many people have already made online pre-bookings of train tickets. He outlined some SOPs saying that citizens should not come to pick up or drop off passengers to railway stations as a precautionary measure and noted that there is no restriction on the travelers' age.

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Man injured in Indian firing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indian Army troops resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation in Khairatta Sector along LOC deliberately targeting civilian population. Due to indiscriminate fire of automatics at a civil house in Jijot village, an innocent citizen sustained serious injuries. The Injured evacuated to nearby health facility and provided with necessary medical care.

Nigeria seizes British plane

LAGOS: Nigeria has seized a British plane for flouting a travel ban imposed as part of measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the aviation minister said Sunday. Flair Aviation, the airline involved, was authorised to conduct humanitarian flights but was caught operating commercial flights, Hadi Sirika said on his Twitter account. "This is callous!" he wrote. "The craft is impounded, the crew being interrogated. There shall be maximum penalty. Wrong time to try our resolve." – APP

Japanese envoy welcomes Afghan power sharing accord

Ambassador MATSUDA reaffirms that the Government of Japan strongly hopes that the intra-Afghan negotiations will make a steady and constructive progress toward an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned durable and comprehensive peace

DNA

ISLAMABAD: MATSUDA Kuni-nori, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, welcomes the signing of power-sharing deal between Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan, and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah on May

17 in Kabul as a possible breakthrough in the Afghan peace process, signaling the end of months-long stalemate after the latest presidential election. On this occasion, Ambassador MATSUDA reaffirmed that the Government of Japan strongly hopes that the intra-Afghan negotiations will make a steady and



constructive progress toward an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned durable and comprehensive peace. The ambassador also reiterates that Government of Japan will continue to actively contribute to the peace and stability of Afghanistan in collaboration with the international community and looks forward to working

closely with Pakistan. Japan has continuously supported the host communities of Afghan refugees in Pakistan especially in the fields of health, education, and water and sanitation. Our total assistance for Afghan refugees in Pakistan provided through UNHCR amounts to USD 160 million for the past 36 years.

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Briefs

Homemade healthy food stressed

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Monday stressed that the people should use homemade healthy food items and avoid oily fried food to remain healthy throughout the holy month of Ramadan. Talking to PTV news channel, the experts said that it is very important for the people to eat healthy, nutritious, balanced meals and take care of their body adding fasting is an excellent opportunity to strengthen our digestive system as it helps maintain our blood sugar level. Dr Waseem Khawaja of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) said the month of Ramadan is a blessed one for many reasons and Muslim community should take advantage of all of its blessings as the nation is under the grip of a deadly corona virus. He also advises people to avoid eating fried, oily and heavy food items as they cannot be easily digested and can make you feel uncomfortable and rather they should continue their exercises on daily basis. He said there is no need that people should be worried or feared by doing novel coronavirus tests and they should visit our hospital fearlessly as they could fight against this virus with their strong immune system. – APP

Face masks SOPs issued

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services has issued Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for health professionals and general public on wearing face masks for prevention against COVID-19. According to an official of the ministry, as per these SOPs people must wear face masks to protect their fellow beings from droplets of their saliva or sputum particularly when entering closed or congested areas and also to protect themselves. He said that a regular disposable face mask, which is also called a surgical face mask or a medical face mask is considered as one of the 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)' of a healthcare worker. It is also used in the healthcare settings to cover the face of a patient, from whom spread of a communicable infection is a possibility and many countries have adopted this as a national guideline. – APP

Shortage of cars parking

PESHAWAR: The shortage of cars parking facilities in most of shopping markets in cantonment and city have irked Eid shoppers on Monday. As less than a week left in Eidul Fitre celebrations, Eid shoppers have started arriving to shopping markets in city, cantonment and university road in large numbers by parking their vehicles mostly on roadsides due to lack of parking space, which were causing traffic jam. The easing of lockdown restrictions and allowing of passengers transport by KP Government have helped Eid shoppers of others districts to visit major shopping centers in Qisakhwani, cantonment, Tehkal, Jehingirabad and University Road in Peshawar to select appropriate garments including ready made cloths and footwear besides others necessary items at affordable prices, which are putting extra pressure on the existing cars parking facilities here. – APP

Govt committed to revive Drama Industry

ISLAMABAD: PTI Senator Faisal Javed Monday expressed his governments' commitment for revival of film and drama industry with long-term policies which would have a positive impact on entertainment industry in future. Talking to a private news channel, Faisal said that the revival of the quality drama would immensely contribute to the promotion of Pakistani culture, its heritage, scenic beauty, screen tourism and our Islamic values. He stressed that good writers should be encouraged so that they could produce quality work and re-tecast evergreen old dramas of PTV to sensitize the new generation about standards and quality of programmes the PTV used to telecast for viewers education.. He also appreciated the popular Turkish serial, ' Ertugrul Ghazi which is reviving the forgotten Islamic traditions, values, and struggles faced by previous nations. – APP

AIOU sets June 5 last day for admission in media studies

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has set June 5 as the last day for taking admission in Post-graduate programs including MSs Mass Communication for semester Spring 2020. The desiring ones could apply through online to get them enrolled in these programs before the stipulated date. Enrollment in the MSc Mass Communication (Media studies) is merit-based and the admission is on country-wide basis. Eligibility for admission in the program is second-class bachelor degree from recognized institution. According to Chairman

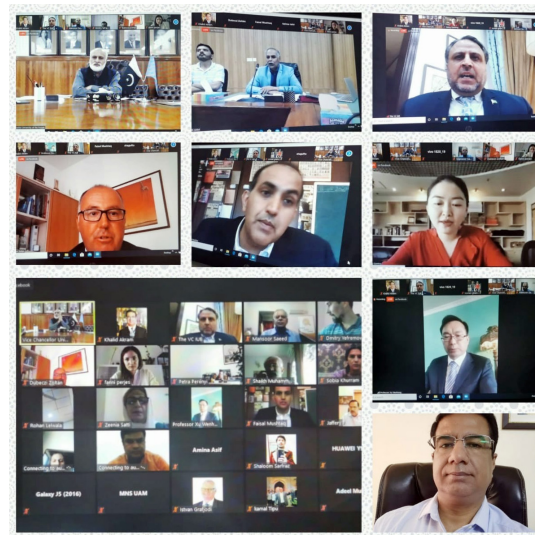
Department of Mass Communication Dr. Saqib Riaz, the University strictly adheres to prescribed merit-criteria in the admission process, as per the directives of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum to ensure quality of education. The program is mainly based on social sciences focus, which is completed in two-year duration, through distance learning system. It also consists of research thesis as an option. At the end of the study period, students are required to do three months internship in an accredited media organization. From autumn 2019 semester, the AIOU has also launched BS (four year) Mass Communica-

Speakers discusses COVID-19 impacts on education system

Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS) organized an International webinar on the topic, "Reopening Of The Educational Institutes Post COVID- 19: Effects And Precautions To Be Observed"

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS) organized an International webinar on the topic, "Reopening Of The Educational Institutes Post COVID- 19: Effects And Precautions To Be Observed". At this time of the health crisis, educational sector all over the world is effected badly and countries are taking practical measures to avoid the educational loss. The aim of the Webinar was to consolidate all the sufficient measures from different countries including Hungary, Russia, China and other European countries. Niaz Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore stated that in these testing times, Punjab University has made virtual education effective. This Pandemic has hit our country when universities

were at their completion of the session. Punjab Universities focusing on international advancements in educational system. Dr. Asif Ali, Vice-Chancellor, MNS University of Agriculture, Multan mentioned that they have developed a formula for their own special hand sanitizer amid the prevailing COVID-19 crises in Pakistan and the classes are being shifted to online programs. Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB), stated that the students and teachers are following the instructions, once the university will revive its classes, reconsideration is very important to maintain the same precautionary measures. In this new post-COVID world new modules and new learning traditions would be introduced. Laboratory tools have to be virtualized for example computer



studies. Furthermore, he stated that very close watch for the virus is needed and especially the research in microbiology. Mr. Faisal Mushtaq, CEO, The Millennium Education University, Islamabad stated that we need to redefine the digital inclusive education, and digital inclusion. We have to turn towards digital medium. The key consideration is to build trust in the digital education system. This is the time to reconsider the infrastructure readiness for the crises in educational institutes and new normal has to be prepared. Ms. Wang Qianting, China Media Group, Beijing, stated that China has taken sufficient measures. We are practicing tests at every ed-

ucational institute. We monitor the temperature twice a day, even AI robots are also active for testing COVID-19 and especial vehicles have been arranged for the people. Professor Xu Wenhong, Institute of Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies, China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, China stated that before opening the education institutes it is important to record travel history of students and faculty and to instruct the parents about the threat of the pandemic. All the educational institutions have reasonable planning including medical supplies and medical centers. After the reopening of the educational institutes, controlling an emergency program has been made in China. It should be in law to wear masks. Mr. Zoltán Dubécsi, Secretary General, Hungarian Rectors Conference, Buda-

pest, Hungary stated that during the pandemic, Hungary made global analysis and experience. In Hungary, the high official's meetings are being conducted regularly to revisit the educational plan. Hungarian universities have organized online courses. All new challenges are being handled well by the Hungarian educational institutes. The exams of universities will be decided by the university management. Hungarian medical universities have started comprehensive COVID-19 screening tests in Hungary that are supported by the Ministry for innovation & technology in seven regions of the country. Special attention is paid to elders and the once with chronic illness. The Webinar was attended by approximately 65 participants and was moderated by Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS.



ISLAMABAD: Ration being distributed among the transgender community of Islamabad. – DNA

Asad assures resolution of newspaper hawkers issues

ABID RAZA
 ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umer said that the government would take all possible steps to solve the financial crisis of newspaper hawkers. He expressed these views while meeting a delegation at his office in Islamabad. The delegation included Secretary General of All Pakistan Akhbar Farosh

Federation Tika Khan, former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zafar Bakhtawari and PTI local Leader Jamshed Mughal. Tika Khan in his requests regarding the financial difficulties of the newspaper hawkers said that although newspapers are being published in this pandemic but the supply, and demand of newspapers have been greatly reduced. government has announced a relief pack-

age for the poor, laborers and small traders, so they should also announce a relief package for newspaper hawkers. Zafar Bakhtawari told Asad Umar in the meeting that Tika Khan is a prominent leader of Pakistan's newspaper industry and he has spent his entire life fighting for the rights of newspaper hawkers. The popularity of the government will be increased if a relief package is issued for this sector.

'Exploring nature better than sitting at home'

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Youth Ambassador of the German Embassy Islamabad Marion Pfennigs Sunday said exploring nature and beautiful landscape of the Federal Capital was better than sitting free at homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Marion Pfennigs, in a tweet, said: "When there are no flights out to a tropical paradise, just hike to

one...most fun morning I had in a long time #IslamabadDiaries #BeautifulPakistan." She expressed her pleasure to see the beautiful landscapes, and neat and clean environment of the capital, and termed it a blessing for its citizens.



PCCI presents Rs 20 mln cheque to PM

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) President Mian Anjum Nisar and other office bearers Monday called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and presented a cheque worth Rs20 million for the PM's Corona Relief Fund. On the occasion, the prime minister appreciated the donation of FPCCI and said that the government facilitated functioning of the industries during the coronavirus pandemic. However, he stressed that the industrialists should ensure implementation of precautionary measures by their employees. The prime minister said that they would have to keep a balance between the economic activities and the precautionary measures against coronavirus. Other members of the FPCCI included vice presidents Dr Muhammad Arshad and Qaisar Khan.

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GDP growth

THE growth in Pakistan's GDP is likely to remain negative this year. Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Hafeez Shaikh has disclosed his projection for current year to be negative 1.5 percent. He has blamed this decline on the coronavirus pandemic that has had an adverse impact on the economy.

He has also expressed his optimism that the country's economy would experience an upturn to show at least two percent growth rate in the GDP during the next fiscal year of 2020-21. It is to some extent true that Covid-19 is wreaking havoc on most economies of the world, but it must also be kept in mind that in Pakistan the first three quarters of this fiscal year from July 2019 to March 2020 were not affected by this pandemic. We need to see this macroeconomic picture in its correct perspective.

In 2018, before the PTI-led government assumed power, the GDP growth rate was nearly 6 percent, to be exact it was 5.85 percent. In 2017, it was 5.55 percent, and in 2016 it was nearly 5.3 percent. There was a sustained growth rate of over 5.5 percent and that came crashing down during the past 22 months even before Covid-19 hit the country.

In July 2019, Pakistan signed the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for 39 months with the IMF, when Covid-19 was nowhere in sight. Stabilization measures undertaken by the government in the first 20 months of its rule – again, before Covid-19 struck – could not moderate the aggregate demand pressure in the economy. All leading indicators in the beginning of calendar year 2020 were suggesting a slowdown in growth.

The output of large-scale manufacturing contracted by nearly 3.5 percent from July 2019 to January 2020. The large-scale manufacturing sector accounts for around 50 percent of industrial output and if it contracts the entire economy shivers. The same applies to rising inflation that was unprecedented in many decades, and so was the rise in interest rates that hit a whopping over 13 percent benchmark. The current Covid-19 pandemic is compounding the economic woes of the government, which has had no plan for economic recovery for the past nearly two years apart from begging and borrowing.

When a sustained growth rate in GDP of over 5.5 percent declines so fast without any apparent reason, it simply exposes inept economic management, or rather mismanagement. Even now, though the government has been able to bargain for a rescheduling of debts with the G-20, no long-term economic policy is visible anywhere.

If this trend continues for the next three years that the current government is planning to remain in power, the outcome is likely to be highly unimpressive.



Health toll

WHILE the Covid-19 virus has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives around the globe, it is also causing other, virtually invisible deaths. According to the British Journal of Surgery, 28 million surgeries have been canceled around the world – except in the case of emergency surgery which is necessary to save a life – because of a shortage of medical staff and because doctors do not want to expose patients to the virus. In our country, patients complain that even those suffering cardiac problems are being turned away from hospitals, while the gynaecological ward at Peshawar's largest hospital has been closed, endangering women and infants.

There are other ways in which Covid-19 affects the healthcare system. The huge drain it has placed on medical staff means they cannot perform as efficiently as they would in other circumstances. As a result of the virus, campaigns including drives to immunise children against polio have also been suspended in our country, putting more of them at risk in a situation where cases are already climbing after almost coming to a halt some two years ago. Last year, Pakistan recorded 147 cases of polio compared to 12 the previous year.

The same is true of other inoculation drives, including those against measles or other ailments that can potentially claim lives. This has been identified as a problem by medical experts in a number of different countries. The presence of Covid-19 also means people are reluctant to visit hospitals. As a result, many people are refusing to be tested and are staggering into hospital only when the illness is so severe that it is impossible to save them. More lives are being lost as a consequence of this fear.

In other words, the healthcare system in many countries is close to collapse. In our own country, it was barely standing at all in the first place. It was this factor that affected poor people extremely badly even before the corona crisis hit us all.

Currently, there is a desperate struggle to deal with the disease. Despite the optimistic view taken by adviser to the PM Dr Zafar Mirza, who says one lakh doctors would be trained on properly using PPEs, 500 on ICU care and that a Pakistani firm is among five in Asia to have obtained a licence to manufacture a drug used in the treatment of Covid patients, the reality is that the deaths are continuing every day.

The cancellation of non-essential surgeries also means long periods of suffering for those afflicted. There are no immediate answers, and it seems the healthcare system will simply need to stagger on until the Covid-19 crisis begins to slow down, at least on a temporary basis.

Palestine Refugees: A Permanent State of Emergency for 72 Years

Mahmood Butt

UNRWA stressed in its latest emergency appeal in January 2020 "Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria will continue to face a range of daunting human development and protection challenges. Central to these pressures is the ongoing occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the blockade of Gaza, the continuing conflict in Syria, the political crisis in Lebanon, and the growing needs in Jordan, all of which continue to dramatically impact the lives of Palestine refugees"

Introduction:

IT is inhumane to live a permanent state of emergency through all the years of your life, but this has been the case for Palestine refugees following the Nakba, the Catastrophe of 1948, when the Zionist gangs forcibly uprooted them from their homeland and scattered them all over the world. With every renewed catastrophe, the state of emergency continues for Palestine refugees, their children, and grandchildren, either due to Israel's ongoing crimes inside occupied Palestine or due to security, political, and economic conditions and disturbances in host countries and beyond.

After a long history filled with dangers and difficulties since 1948, Palestine refugees are now facing the threat of COVID-19 alongside two main challenges. The first is caused by Israel's prolonged occupation and its direct violations of refugee rights. And the second is due to the targeting of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) by Israel and the Trump administration in an attempt to eliminate the Agency and drain its financial resources in preparation for liquidating the refugee issue. For the past 72 years, Israel has been refusing to implement United Nations Resolution 194 and preventing more than 6,171,793[1] refugees from different parts of the world from exercising their legal and natural right of return. This paper explains the Trump-Netanyahu Plan to eliminate the refugees issue and the main Israeli violations against refugees during the spread of COVID-19. It as well presents live testimonies from refugees in both occupied Palestine and in exile in light of UNRWA's financial crisis.

The Trump-Netanyahu Plan

In 2018, the Trump administration decided to politicize the work and services of UNRWA. As the most significant donor, the U.S. started to drain the financial resources of the Agency and to incite countries to cut UNRWA's funding under the allegation that the continuation of its work contributes to the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The U.S. aims to resettle Palestine refugees in host countries and beyond, and to transfer the responsibility of the remaining refugees to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). For this reason, the White House established its own definition of

a Palestinian refugee, revoked the refugee status of the children and grandchildren of refugees that were born outside of Palestine, and accordingly redirected the provided funding for UNRWA. Israel and the Trump administration have been leading a deliberate campaign to end UNRWA's mandate in a desperate effort to liquidate the Palestinian refugee issue, dismantle the United Nations and its legitimacy, and overthrow the international order altogether. However, their attempts failed in light of the world's overwhelming vote in November 2019 in support of renewing UNRWA's mandate for another three years as it has been the case since the establishment of UNRWA per UNGA 302 of 1949.

The Trump Plan announced on 28 January 2020 clearly explains its position on the issue of refugees uttering the Zionist narrative and ideology. Still, it managed to mislead the international community concerning the Nakba of 1948. The Plan equated Palestinian refugees, who were forcibly and systematically displaced from their homes, with Jewish immigrants from Arab countries, calling them "Jewish refugees." Jewish immigration to Israel, one of the main pillars of Zionism, was part of an organized campaign launched by the Zionist movement for the resettlement in Israel. This organized campaign aimed to attract Jewish immigrants from all over the world.

To legalize its attempts, Israel enacted what is called "the Law of Return," which provides the right of every Jew to acquire Israeli citizenship as soon as they set foot in the country. The Trump Plan unequivocal call for abandoning UNRWA's definition of refugees, which includes their descendants, is exacerbating the crisis – even though international norms apply this definition to all refugees around the world. The problem in the case of Palestine, which is caused by Israel's prolonged occupation, is that the refugee status has lasted for more than seventy years, which has doubled the refugee population due to natural growth.

The Plan deliberately and provocatively described the return of refugees to their homeland as immigration to the State of Palestine which shall be limited, as it considered exceeding a certain number of the Palestinian population, even in the State of Palestine, a threat to Israel's security. According to the Plan, this number is to be determined by Israel alone. It also stated that "Upon the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Agreement, Palestinian refugee status will cease to exist, and UNRWA will be terminated and its responsibilities transitioned to the relevant governments."

The Plan ridiculously suggests in an illogical manner that Arab states forcibly detain Palestinian refugees in a state of "limbo to keep the conflict alive", and that

to, then retreated on its commitment.

Clearly, the comparison between the right of Palestine refugees to return and the settlement of Jews in Israel is irrelevant.

UNRWA: An Escalating Financial and Services Crisis
The systematic targeting of UNRWA was reflected on the reduction of its funds and the endangerment of its ability to continue providing humanitarian and vital services and assistance to millions of refugees who rely on financial aid in light of the absence of a just solution to their issue. Today, UNRWA needs approximately 1.4 billion USD[2] to fund essential services for around 6.2 million refugees, after it experienced multiple financial crises during its long operation history.

UNRWA stressed in its latest emergency appeal in January 2020 "Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria will continue to face a range of daunting human development and protection challenges. Central to these pressures is the ongoing occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the blockade of Gaza, the continuing conflict in Syria, the political crisis in Lebanon, and the growing needs in Jordan, all of which continue to dramatically impact the lives of Palestine refugees.

In light of the current difficult situation that UNRWA is suffering due to the financial crisis and initial budget deficit for the current year, the concern is that it might resort to the reduction of its services or cease some of its programs. And with the spread of COVID-19, UNRWA launched an emergency appeal in March 2020 to provide \$14 Million to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak for three months, between March and May 2020. The call outlined the financial priorities and requirements of public health services as well as highlighted the living conditions, overcrowding, the fragility of the situation, and the physical and mental anxiety of millions of refugees resulting from prolonged years of suffering – all of which would declare them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. It also mentioned that UNRWA will temporarily close its schools and education institutions, and will keep its 144 clinics open to provide the necessary primary health services. UNRWA called on donors, whether governments, institutions, or persons, to help them face what could become a catastrophe of unreasonable proportions in places like the Gaza Strip and Syria. However, UNRWA has only received 4 million dollars, and the available funding is only sufficient until the end of next month, which will prevent humanitarian and health aid from reaching Palestinian refugees. Therefore, UNRWA has launched another appeal on 8 May 2020 to obtain \$93.4 million for its response to COVID-19, over the next three months, in the fields of health care, personal hy-

UNRWA is the primary source of health services and has been the safety net for Palestinian refugees for more than seventy years. Considering the current spread of COVID-19, their reliance on the Agency has increased. The need for its daily services has become urgent in light of the difficulty to adhere to the UNRWA and WHO guidelines under the circumstances such as the ones present in refugee camps, where social distancing is impossible, and water is scarce for washing hands and maintaining proper hygiene practices.

Israeli Violations Under COVID-19 Outbreak

While countries around the world are taking the necessary protection measures to avoid the further spreading of COVID-19, Palestinians, including refugees, remain vulnerable to the virus and to more Israeli breaches of international law that directly affect including other, their human, social, environmental, health, work, education, food, and security rights. The following list summarizes key Israeli violations before and during the spread of COVID-19 in the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem.

The International Responsibility Towards Achieving a Just Solution for Palestine Refugees

To facilitate access and humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, and besieged communities, and all those destroyed by war and deprivation, without prejudice or discrimination, as called for by Envoys of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Middle East on 11 April 2020. However, the current spread of the virus and the inability to fight it due to UNRWA's lack of financial capabilities will put the region in front of enormous challenges. It will result in harsh consequences, which is the primary responsibility of the occupying power and the Trump Administration. Hereafter, we call on:

- Israel: to end its colonial occupation of Palestine that has lasted for more than half a century, to implement United Nations Resolution 194, and to allow for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes from which they were forcibly displaced. As an occupying power, Israel has the responsibility to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to lift its illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip to avoid a health and human catastrophe in case of a widespread outbreak of COVID-19.
- On governments that host Palestinian refugees: to ensure that refugees have equal access to services and medical care; that they are effectively included in the national response plans to COVID-19, including prevention, testing, and treatment, and to provide them with protection.
- On European countries that host refugees: to implement international standards for the treatment of asylum seekers. To work on the evacuation of refugee camps and detention centers, and transfer them to appropriate housing before it is already too late.
- On the United Nations: to guarantee continuity of the work of UNRWA, considering it as a stabilizing factor in the region until the realization a just solution for Palestine refugees.
- On members of the international community: to work collectively, make all possible efforts to fully fund the budget of the Agency, and work with the Arab host countries in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and with the UNRWA's advisory committee, donor countries around the world, and others, to provide the required financial, health and political assistance.
- On donor countries to fulfill their annual financial pledges to UNRWA, to ensure the continuation of its work in a manner that is consistent with the current state of emergency to avoid another emergency crisis that exceeds COVID-19.

The emergency conditions that Palestine refugees have been experiencing for the past seventy-two years oblige the international community to hold Israel accountable and responsible for its violations against refugees. Since its establishment, Israel has failed to implement United Nations resolutions and to respect international law. International efforts should be doubled towards finding a political and just solution that can finally end Israel's colonial occupation of Palestine. The international community must express its commitment to implement the rights of the Palestinian people, including refugees, per the continuous reiteration by the United Nations General Assembly that it bears the permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine towards resolving all its aspects. This includes the implementation of UNGA resolution 194, which called for a just solution for Palestine refugees and affirmed their right to return.



"Their Arab brothers have the moral responsibility to integrate them into their countries as the Jews were integrated into the State of Israel." Most Arab countries provide Palestinian refugees with the same rights that are granted to citizens of those countries, except the right to acquire the nationality of that country. The reason behind this exception is to preserve the status of Palestine refugees, therefore, safeguarding their right of return and/or compensation, which was provided to them through UN Resolution 194. Hence, this measure is entirely consistent with international legitimacy, and it is also a temporary measure that awaits the implementation of the right of return, which Israel committed itself

giene, and education. UNRWA considers the required amount as a renewal of its previous emergency appeal to curb the virus among refugees.

The Israeli plan aims to establish schools under the Israeli Ministry of Education in Shuafat refugee camp and the village of Anata in Jerusalem to substitute UNRWA schools. It seeks to confiscate all UNRWA properties, placing them under Israel's Jerusalem municipality, and to cancel the definition of Shuafat as a refugee camp. Additionally, the plan intends to confiscate the land that the refugee camp stands on, to consider it a neighborhood in Jerusalem, in the framework of complete Judaization of the city.

Briefs

Indian diplomat summoned

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: A senior Indian diplomat was summoned to register Pakistan's strong protest over the ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the Line of Control (LoC) in Khairatta Sector, on 17th May 2020, resulting in serious injuries to an innocent civilian.

Due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian occupation forces, 37 years old Muhammad Shafi S/o Khushi Muhammad, resident of Jijot village, sustained serious injuries.

The Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) have continuously been targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars and automatic weapons. In 2020, India has so far committed 1081 ceasefire violations. Condemning the deplorable targeting of innocent civilians by the Indian occupation forces, it was underscored that such senseless acts are in clear violation of the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, and are also against all established humanitarian norms and professional military conduct.

Japan's economy shrinks

TOKYO: Japan's economy shrank for a second straight quarter in the January-March period, as a result of the adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the government said in a report on Monday. According to the Cabinet Office, the economy shrank by an annualized real 3.4 percent in the January-March period from the previous quarter. The decrease in the quarter corresponds to a 0.9 percent decline on a seasonally adjusted quarterly basis, the Cabinet Office said. The preliminary reading of inflation-adjusted gross domestic product comes on the heels of a contraction logged in the previous October-December quarter. — APP

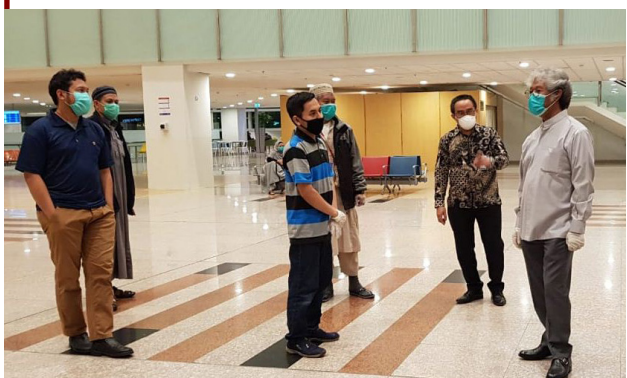
Cases rise to 96,169 in India

NEW DELHI: India's federal health ministry Monday morning said 157 new deaths due to COVID-19, besides fresh 5,242 positive cases were reported since Sunday in the country, taking the number of deaths to 3,029 and total cases to 96,169.

"As on 8:00 a.m. (local time) Monday, 3029 deaths related to novel Coronavirus have been recorded in the country," reads information released by the ministry. On Sunday morning, the number of COVID-19 cases in the country was 90,927, and the death toll was 2,872. According to ministry officials, so far 36,824 people have been discharged from hospitals after showing improvement. "The number of active cases in the country right now is 56,316," reads the information. — APP

Indonesian Embassy facilitates repatriation of its stranded citizens

Out of the 182 Indonesian Citizens 136 came to Pakistan to attend the Tablighi Congregation at Raiwind. Others included 17 students at IIUI, 13 Madrasa students and 16 travelers. Ambassador Iwan Amri



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad successfully facilitated the repatriation of its citizens by a special flight of Pakistan International Airways (PIA) which was announced to repatriate Pakistani nationals from Indonesia.

The news of the flight made possible by the Embassy efforts was cheered and admired by the Indonesian citizens majority of whom had been stranded in Pakistan for over three months as the COVID 19 pandemic forced suspension of international flights.

"We are very happy that we are going back to our homeland

and will be able to celebrate Eid together with our families" said one Indonesian citizen when sharing his joy as he arrived at the Islamabad Airport to board the special flight.

Indonesian Ambassador Iwan Suyudhie Amri was present at the Islamabad Airport to see off the special flight 186passenger that included 182 Indonesians

and 4 other nationalities.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Iwan Amri informed that out of the 182 Indonesian Citizens 136 came to Pakistan to attend the Tablighi Congregation at Raiwind. Others included 17 students at IIUI, 13 Madrasa students and 16 travellers. There were 4 other nationals among the passen-

gers that included 3 Pakistani citizens married to Indonesian spouses and 1 Chinese student of Temboro Islamic Boarding School, Magetan, East Java. "The four foreigners are Indonesian resident permit holders," continued Ambassador Iwan.

Ambassador Iwan said that the tracking and data collection process of the Indonesian citizens for their repatriation was a daunting task because of the reason that they were located in various cities and regions of Pakistan. Especially those of Tablighi Jamat were hard to track and contact as they would move from a region to another for their Tablighi activities, he added.

The Ambassador said that limitations of movement resulting from the lockdown and physical distancing policies by the Pakistani authorities, the Embassy adapted to the evolving situation and through innovative ways and tireless efforts managed to contact its nationals spread over different parts of the country.

Sharing some details the Ambassador informed that as per our multiple pronged strategy the Embassy established intensive coordination with the Pakistani authorities, management of the Tablighi Markaz in Raiwind and Islamabad, IIUI management and the students, Markaz Jamat Tabligh back in Ancol, Indonesia, and the Pakistani friends to ensure that the repatriation was com-

plete and successful.

The Indonesian Embassy's offer for an independent repatriation with PIA was greatly welcomed and appreciated by the Indonesian citizens because the fare was way cheaper than the other flights options with certainty of the date of departure.

To provide protection to its citizens, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad formed a Task Force to monitor and respond to the situation arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Task Force headed by the Embassy's Defence Attache Colonel ARH Dody Muhtar Taufik was able to complete the entire task of repatriation successfully.

The Indonesian Embassy Task Force also helped out and arranged vehicles from the point of departure of Indonesian citizens to the Islamabad airport and provided road permits and unnecessary assistance for the COVID-19 negative certificates issued by the Pakistani health authorities.

The passengers were also given necessary logistics such as PPE and were guided through fully comply with the health protocol established by the PIA during the flight and the Government of Indonesia upon arrival in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"The repatriation is part of the Indonesian Government's efforts to provide protection and all possible necessary assistance to its overseas citizens which is one of Indonesia's diplomacy priorities," concluded Ambassador Iwan Amri.

New Gwadar Airport enters into 2nd phase

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The construction of the much-awaited New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) costing \$ 230 million has entered into its second phase after meeting specific benchmarks laid down in the first phase. According to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Sunday, with completion of the first phase involving soil testing, ground leveling, land boundaries, design details and walls construction at adjacent properties, the second phase has been unveiled with a purpose-built mega permanent station.

Earlier there was a temporary camp office comprising limited resources and man force strength. "Located in Gurandani area, some 26 km north-east of Gwadar city of Balochistan province just off the Makran Coastal Highway, NGIA is under construction over the last few months. Establishment and opera-

tionalization of the permanent station is a leading step in the second phase to bolster development activities with full tilt," China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) Chairman Zhang Baozhong said. As construction work did not suffer suspension despite the COVID-19 catastrophic devastation, he said, the second phase had been materialized as per schedule. With mobilization of civil work machinery, modern construction gears, terminal paraphernalia, manpower had been shifted into the newly constructed building, Mr. Zhang explained.

The second phase involves modern terminal and cargo buildings, communication & navigational projects, air traffic control system, runway, water supply, power supply, HVAC, parking space, residential area, schools and other facilities. The design and construction of the new airport are in conformity with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.



KARACHI: Ambassador of People's Republic of China Yao Jing discussing various development project with Minister Ali Zaidai. — DNA (Story on Page-1)

Inquiry commission seeks more time

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The investigation of the Sugar Inquiry Commission has been delayed once again as the Commission has sought four more days to submit the final report.

ICCI urges Govt. to accept demands of flour millers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) M Waheed, has called upon the government to take immediate measures for accepting the demands of flour mills owners in order to

avert any flour crisis in the country. He said this while talking to a delegation of flour mills owners that called on him led by Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Central Executive Member of Flour Mills Association. The delegation apprised him of the issues being faced by the flour millers due to some wrong pol-

icies of the Punjab Government. Ch. Mukhtar former Secretary General of Flour Mills Association, Sheikh Shaukat and others were in the delegation. President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that due to the strike and closure of flour mills, severe flour crisis would emerge.

3,279 virus cases in Africa

By region, North Africa saw 27,300 cases, West Africa 24,200

ADDIS ABABA: The number of COVID-19 cases in Africa rose to nearly 85,000 Monday after 3,279 new patients were identified over the past 24 hours, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said in an update.

The update said 60 more patients died during the period, taking the continent's death toll to 2,764 out of 84,586 cases to date. It also said recoveries rose 1,399 to have reached a total of 32,477. By region, North Africa saw 27,300 cases, West Africa 24,200, Southern Africa 16,800, East Africa 8,600, and Central Africa 7,700.

In terms of death toll, North Africa suffered 1,400 COVID-19 fatalities, West Africa 509, Central Africa 293, Southern Africa 283, and East Africa 257. — APP

Sardoba dam site restoration work to be completed by September 1

Citizens affected from flooding in Syrdarya Region will receive financial assistance from the Uzbek govt

DNA

TASHKNET: As stated earlier, on May 1, 2020, Sardoba dam wall in Syrdarya region saw the partial collapse. As a result of emergency situation, 2,570 private houses and 76 apartment buildings in Sardoba, Mirzaabad and Akaltyn districts were destroyed; 1,781 private houses and 52 apartment buildings were partially flooded. 70 social, produc-

tion and service facilities, around 20 thousand hectares of agricultural land, 828 kilometers of roads, networks of electricity, gas and water supply, communication were also partially destroyed. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited affected areas four times during which he met with local people and oversaw restoration works. Uzbek Leader's order foresees not only restoration works, but also improve-



ment of local communities living conditions. New housing, social facilities and new jobs are

to be created. Particularly, 3 residential districts comprising 5 store buildings and 2,640 apartments

will be built for people in Mirzaabad, Sardobinsky and Akaltynsky districts whose houses have become completely unsuitable for living. Government will oversee restoration and construction works for people free of charge. Along with this, the land under the destroyed houses will remain at the disposal of their owners. 305 construction companies' teams and around 12 thousand workers arrived to Syrdarya from all

across Uzbekistan to help execute restoration of survived facilities. During his latest visit to Syrdarya region, on May 15, President of Uzbekistan laid the first stone of the new Dustlik makhalla in Sardoba district. 37 multi-storey buildings comprising 1,480 apartments will be built in this makhalla. By September 1, people will be able to relocate to new apartments and their mended homes.