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Human development could decline, says UNDP Coordinator

Sh. Anser Aziz restored as Mayor Islamabad



Pak-China 69 years ties yield fruits: Yao Jing



Report finds massive bungling in sugar sales

Inquiry commission was set up because there has been a cycle of sugar price increases from December 2018 to August 2019, where prices were hiked up to 33%, which, in rupee terms, translates to Rs17 per kg

DNA

ISLAMABAD— Federal Information Minister Shibli Faraz and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior Ministry and chief of the Assets Recovery Unit (ARU) Shahzad Akbar on Thursday said that today is a historic day for the country as no other government had to courage to form such a commission. Addressing a press conference highlighting contents of Sugar Inquiry Commission report, they

said that neither have investigations been conducted over such matters in the past, nor has any government had the courage to make the investigations public. Shahzad Akbar said sugar inquiry commission was established to ascertain the reasons of increase in sugar prices in the last few years. He said an inquiry committee headed by DG FIA Wajid Zia was established by the Prime Minister which recommended for forensic audit of this matter. Mirza Shahzad Akbar said the commission gave its de-

tailed report to special cabinet meeting. The special assistant said that the report will be available online shortly for anyone to read following the prime minister's orders. Shahzad Akbar went on to say that the sugar inquiry commission was set up because there has been a cycle of sugar price increases from December 2018 to August 2019, where prices were hiked up to 33%, which, in rupee terms, translates to Rs17 per kilogramme. He said the report explicitly says that sugar mills

owners pay amount to sugarcane growers even less than the support price. In addition, all sugar mills make cuts in the weight of sugarcane from 15 to 30 percent. Shahzad Akbar said Commission also found irregularities in the form of giving advance payments to farmers in the form of cash or commodity, which is akin to unregulated banking. He said PM Imran Khan also directed all government advisors to declare their assets to ensure transparency.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Shibli Faraz and Shahzad Akbar giving details of findings of sugar inquiry commission. DNA

Indian envoy 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 Chirikot Sector, on 20th May 2020, resulting in serious injuries to an innocent civilian. Due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian occupation forces, 45 years old Muhammad Arif s/o Khadim Hussain, resident of Pothi 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 1102 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. These egregious violations of international law reflect consistent Indian attempts to escalate the situation along the LoC.

Human development could decline: UNDP

"The world has seen many crises over the past 30 years, including the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-09

DNA

UN: Global human development-which can be measured as a combination of the world's education, health and living standards - could decline this year for the first time since 1990 mainly due to the coronavirus pandemic, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has warned. "The world has seen many crises over the past 30 years, including the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-09. Each has hit human development hard but, overall, development gains

accrued globally year-on-year," UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said. "COVID-19 - with its triple hit to health, education, and income - may change this trend." The concept of human development was developed by the late Dr. Mahbubul Haq, a Pakistani economist who worked for the UNDP, and he unveiled it in 1990. The same year the first UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) was prepared and launched under his leadership. Dr. Haq later served as Pakistan's finance minister. Declines in fundamental areas of human develop-

ment are being felt across most countries - rich and poor - in every region, according to a UNDP statement issued on Thursday. COVID-19's global death toll has exceeded 300,000 people, while the global per capita income this year is expected to fall by four per cent, it said. With school closures, UNDP estimates of the "effective out-of-school rate"-the percentage of primary school-age children, adjusted to reflect those without Internet access- indicate that 60 per cent of children are not getting an education, leading to global levels not seen since the 1980s.

Briefs

Murree to remain closed on Eid

AWALPINDI: The entry of tourists would be banned in Murree during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. According to Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt. @ Anwar ul Haq, all the tourist spots and hotels in Murree would remain closed during Eid ul-Fitr holidays as part of precautionary measures against COVID-19. The DC said that the decision has been taken to control spread of coronavirus and in the best interest of people so they could be saved from the virus. He urged the citizens to avoid visiting tourists spots particularly Murree during the Eid holidays. He further said that rush at the tourist spots could cause further spread of the novel coronavirus. The local residents of Murree would be allowed to enter the town after showing their CNIC. -APP

Japan keen in developing fish harbor: Matsuda



Islamabad: (DNA) Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Matsuda Kuninori and Tokita Yuji economic and development counsellor called on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi to discuss development projects for Korangi Fish Harbor. Both sides emphasized to expedite the process so that work could start once the things get normal after COVID-19. The projects include modification of Auction Hall, Establishment of Business Park and Cold storage-Freezing Tunnel at Korangi Fish Harbor. The projects will help in complying with standards set by the WTO,

EU and Seafood importing countries. Ali Zaidi citing the exemplary revival of post World War II Japanese economy reiterated the significance of "looking-inward" strategy whereby the development of human capital is given prime importance. "In Pakistan, we have the skill set which just needs some polishing. Cost of production is low due to competitive labour and our exchange rate is favourable for the export sector. All we need is to create an environment. Our people and our nation will excel like none other", the minister remarked. Ali Zaidi proposed a dedi-

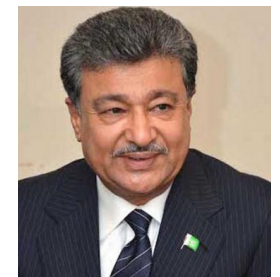
cated technology-oriented industrial zone for Japanese companies at Port Qasim. In addition to the above, the two also explored an idea of establishing an institute for fishermen where the next generation of workforce-related to deep sea fishing will be trained. The Japanese Ambassador also mentioned a MOC signed between Japan and Pakistan last year whereby Pakistan's could utilize the opportunity to get employment in the Fisheries and Maritime sector. Ali Zaidi vouched for the employment of Pakistani Seafarers by Japanese shipping lines.

Sh. Anser restored as Mayor Islamabad

Court suspends Interior Ministry Notification regarding suspension of the Mayor

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz has been restored by the Islamabad High Court on Thursday. Justice Mohstin Akhtar Kiani heard the case and restored the Mayor. The court asked ques-



tions from Secretary

Local Government however he could not satisfy the court.

The court then ordered his restoration by suspending the notification issued by the Ministry of Interior regarding suspension of the Mayor Islamabad Sh aikh Anser Aziz.

Pak-China 69 years ties yield fruits: Yao Jing

China was deeply touched by the firm support it received from Pakistan in its effort to curb the epidemic. President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan sent letters of solidarity

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said on Thursday that China and Pakistan were true friends and brother sharing weal and woe and the cooperation between the two countries in the fight against COVID-19 was a model of international cooperation. "China and Pakistan are true friends and brothers sharing weal and woe. The cooperation between China and Pakistan in the fight against COVID-19 is a model of international cooperation. Our all-weather

strategic and cooperative partnership is consolidated in addressing this common challenge." Yao Jing made these remarks in an exclusive interview with China Economic Net, a leading economic news portal in China, during which he spoke in length on issues of China-Pakistan mutual support during the COVID-19 pandemic, progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), achievements in business and trade cooperation, and joint fight against the locust swarms etc. He remarked that China was deeply touched by the firm support it



received from Pakistan in its effort to curb the epidemic. President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan sent letters of solidarity to President

Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang respectively. President Arif Alvi paid a special visit to China in March this year. Prime Minister Imran Khan

made a phone call to President Xi Jinping to express his support for China. Foreign Minister Qureshi held two telephone conversations with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan respectively passed resolutions to support China's fight against COVID-19. Pakistan had tried its best to mobilize anti-epidemic materials nationwide to support China. Many Pakistani people, including Pakistani students studying in China, expressed their support in various ways, reflecting the rock-solid friendship between China and Paki-

stan. In return, after COVID-19 broke out in Pakistan, China rushed for assistance. The Chinese central and local governments, the military, enterprises, the Red Cross Society of China, and civil society continued to provide Pakistan with urgently needed anti-epidemic materials, including large quantities of testing kits, masks, ventilators, PPEs, medicines and cash to assist Pakistan in establishing a new isolation hospital. China has also held video conferences with Pakistan and sent medical teams to Pakistan for experience sharing and disease prevention and control.

Global COVID-19 deaths 328,000

NEW YORK: Global COVID-19 deaths surpassed 328,000 on Thursday, reaching 328,172 as of 1:59 a.m. (0559 GMT), according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. Meanwhile, total COVID-19 cases around the world rose to 5,000,038, according to the CSSE. The United States reported the most COVID-19 cases and deaths, which stood at 1,551,853 and 93,439, respectively. Other countries with over 27,000 fatalities included Britain, Italy, France and Spain.

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Briefs

UPaisa introduces free service

ISLAMABAD: To upscale the pace of digital transactions and provide convenience, UPaisa has further facilitated its customers by completely removing the charges on all transactions using mobile wallet accounts. As the nation approaches Eid amid Coronavirus crises, the move will prove extremely convenient for the users to transfer money safely from the comfort of their home.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic in March and as per the directive of State Bank of Pakistan, charges on money transfer to other bank accounts from mobile wallets were also removed. Now with this move all types of money transfer transactions will be free from UPaisa wallet. This means that customers can now send money to anyone in Pakistan with a valid CNIC by selecting send money and then selecting CNIC option from the menu. Money can also be deposited into UPaisa account from any other bank account by simply selecting U Microfinance Bank from the list and adding the UPaisa wallet account/mobile number.

In order to open a new UPaisa account Ufone customers can simply dial *786# from their Ufone SIM, accept the terms and conditions, enter CNIC issuance date and create MPIN upon receiving confirmation SMS. — APP

Glass Bangles sell like hot cakes

ISLAMABAD: With Eid-ul-Fitr is just around the corner, sale of colourful funky and clinking glass bangles and 'cone Mehndi' has picked up momentum in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi as mehndi and bangles are much important for the beauty and happiness in Pakistani women's life.

A number of Stalls selling cone Mehndi and glass bangles are doing roaring business these days, as these two items are most popular with girls, who throng to these stalls like bees to a hive.

According to vendors of stalls, Huge rush of girls buyers have been witnessed on bangles and henna stalls ahead of Eid as shopkeepers have beautifully decorated their shops with bunnings and clourful lights to attract customers.— APP

Jazz's contributes Rs 20 mln to PM's

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital company has deposited a total of Rs. 20 million to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Relief Fund by matching every rupee donated by its customers. This is just the first tranche of payments under the company's Matching Grants program, which was launched last month to double all contributions made by subscribers and employees to the Fund, said a news release.

The idea behind this initiative is to encourage more people to donate in response to the looming health and economic challenges. Jazz expects to raise more funds in the coming weeks to continue with the health.— APP

One window for train bookings

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed Thursday announced opening of one window of booking offices at various stations to facilitate the people on Eid-ul-Fitr. In a video message he said, "Due to rush, online system could not sustain the load, so we have decided to open one window of booking offices in Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Multan Sukkar, Peshawar and Quetta railways stations". He said that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be strictly followed at the booking offices. He said that the people can book 60 percent tickets from these offices from 8am to 5 pm. The minister said, the Divisional Superintendents had been directed to implement the SOPs in letter and spirit and no one should be allowed to flout the SOPs. Pakistan Railways had decided to run the train at 60pc.



ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz distributes protective kits among MCI sanitary workers. —DNA

Recurring grant for higher education increased by 9.2 %

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special package of Rs.285 million has been separately allocated for universities of Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan, over and above their normal allocation for the upcoming financial year 2020-21. FATA University has also been prioritised and its allocation has been tripled. The funding for all universities has been increased strictly on the basis of their performance, as indicated by the number of research publications by their faculty members, the number and amounts of the research grants received, the bandwidth utilized for access to digital libraries and Internet resources, the amount spent on conferences and professional travel,

and the number of PhD faculty and PhD students. Meanwhile, due to paucity of funds compared with the requirement, a principle decision has been taken by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) regarding newly established universities. During next year, no new university is being added to recurring grant stream of HEC. Almost 20 newly established universities have approached HEC for funding from the next year. The inclusion of new universities would have resulted in a reduction of the allocations to older universities. The Higher Education Commission had requested the federal government to allocate Rs.104.789 billion as recurring grant for FY 2020-21. The requirement includes funds for universities as well as for pur-

suating the HEC research agenda, the start of several new initiatives (NAHE, ETC, HEMIS, PERU, and P-15 Research Universities), funding for the Tenure Track Faculty, funding for the Pakistan Education and Research Network (PERN), and the resources needed to meet COVID-19 related challenges. Despite resource constraints to the federal exchequer, the Federal Government has allocated Rs.70.00 billion to HEC as recurring grant for the next year 2020-21, which represents an increase of only 9.2 per cent in comparison with the current year's (2019-20) funding of Rs.64.100 billion. However, considering inadequacy of funding for next year, HEC has requested the Prime Minister to consider enhancement in the budgetary alloca-

tion to HEC. In two separate letters, the Chairman, HEC also apprised the Federal Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training, and Adviser on Finance and Revenues, of the enormously deleterious consequences of inadequate allocation to higher education. Both offices have been requested to intervene at this critical movement and enhance HEC's budgetary allocation for next year. Meanwhile, HEC has carried out a rigorous exercise for allocation of funds amongst HEC National Research Programmes, different type of universities / HEIs considering their needs and availability of overall funding, and HEC secretariat expenses, etc. which constitute less than one percent of the total allocated funds.

Refugee families get assistance

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with Pakistan Post, have begun the first tranche of emergency cash assistance to most vulnerable refugee families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mark the occasion, the Federal Minister for SAFRON, Sahabzada Mehboob Sultan, the Secretary SAFRON, Muhammad Aslam Kamboh, Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Saleem Khan, UNHCR Representative, Noriko Yoshida, and Postmaster General, Laeeq Zaman, visited Golra Post Office and helped distribute cash assistance to refugees here on Wednesday. —APP

Youth imparted training

ISLAMABAD: One million trainings have been imparted to youth in freelancing under the National Level Training Programme (DigiSkills.pk) launched by Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication through Ignite National Technology Fund. The programme through Ignite National Technology Fund has been providing free of cost training in freelancing and other marketable skills to youth. The programme comprises of 10 courses including Freelancing, Digital Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Graphic Design, Digital Literacy, e-Commerce Management, Creative Writing, QuickBooks, AutoCAD and WordPress.—APP

RCCI delegation calls on FBR Chairperson

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairperson FBR Nosheen Javed Amjad has said that next financial budget will be an extraordinary budget in view of the Corona epidemic. Businesses were closed due to the lockdown and FBR is facing shortage on tax collections. She made these remarks during her meeting with a delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). The delegation led by President Saboor Malik which includes group leader Sohail Altaf and former president Zahid Latif Khan.



FBR Chairperson said that the budget for the next financial year is in the final stages of preparation. Suggestions are being collected from the stakeholders.

The joint declaration of the RCCI's Chambers Presidents Conference will be useful in finalizing the budget. Appreciating the

budget proposals from the Rawalpindi Chamber, she said that the best budget would be formulated with the consultation and suggestions of the stakehold-

AIOU to hold online workshops from next month

DNA

ISLAMABAD Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has decided to hold academic workshops of its Post-graduate programs for semester Spring 2020 through Online from next month.

The decision to hold workshops through online instead of face-to-face was taken in view of the current crisis situation in wake of COVID-19 in the whole country.

It is also in line with the government's policy and the instructions of the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

In view of the current crisis, it was stated here on Thursday that the University launched the online Learning Management System, so as to save the

students' academic session. Meanwhile, the AIOU is also in process of digitalizing its whole management system including admission, examination, finance as well as other academic activities in line with the vision and the recent initiatives of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum. The University has recently launched Pakistan first Aaghi Learning Management System (LMS). The decision of holding online workshops is also in accordance with concept of new learning platform or 21st century Virtual classroom that is supported with text, voice and video for interaction between tutor and students. The AIOU has shifted its all Postgraduate-level programs on Aaghi Learning Management System. It

had been working day and night to develop a plan of action to launch online or blended learning system for the AIOU's students which are currently around 1.4 million across the country. As per the decision, the semester Spring 2020 teaching and learning mode will be online through the AIOU Aaghi Learning Management System. The details of the LMS's use will be shared with the enrolled students through Rehana Tulaba and videos on LMS. For this purpose, the students could utilize iPads, laptops and desktops with internet packages. It was assured that the University's trained regional staff and skilled ICT team will be available to support and guide the students.

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Shrinking economy

PAKISTAN is the fifth largest country in the world in terms of population. Ideally, it should be at least in the top ten countries of the world in various indicators of economic, human, and social development. It has been a matter of grave concern not only for the citizens of Pakistan but also for friends and observers of Pakistan that we are far behind in nearly all indicators of economic growth, human development, and social cohesion. From 2015 to 2018 there was progress in many directions but during the past two years, even before the coronavirus hit the country, we started sliding down again.

According to the latest estimates, this year the nominal GDP of Pakistan is likely to shrink to around \$265 billion. This cannot be blamed on Covid-19 alone if we look at the data from the past five years. Our nominal GDP was somewhere between \$265 billion and \$270 billion in 2015, depending on various calculation methods. In just three years to 2018, there was remarkable progress and when the PTI-led government came to power the GDP was around \$315 billion. This was nearly a \$50 billion improvement or increase in GDP, which was appreciated by most independent observers. Then within one year from 2018 to 2019 we experienced a rapid slide in GDP of around \$25 billion and it came crashing down to nearly \$290 billion in just one year. Now this year, due to the added problems created by Covid-19, we are slithering down to reach the level of 2015. If Pakistan's economy shrinks to the expected, or rather feared, level of just \$265 billion it will push us back at least five years in terms of economic growth. Of course, now Covid-19 has added to our economic woes but even more puzzling is the reduction of \$25 billion in the GDP in just one year before the coronacrisis emerged. Similarly, the GDP growth rate falling to less than minus 0.4 percent is the worst performance in the past seven decades. The same applies to declining per capita income.

Now amid all this, the government is making efforts to roll back the autonomy of Pakistan's provinces which may snowball into another crisis of social cohesion. As mentioned earlier, economic growth, human development, and social cohesion all should go hand in hand. There have been serious apprehensions from the provinces who have criticized the recently constituted National Finance Commission (NFC). The commission is tasked with dividing country's resources between the federal government and other administrative units. No less controversial is the nomination of commission members from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. If the economy has been shrinking for the past two years, neither the provinces nor the 18th Amendment can be blamed for it.



Domicile law in Kashmir

EVER since the new domicile was introduced in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK), the people of Kashmir have almost unanimously rejected attempts to change the demography of this region. The National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) are just two of the major parties that have called the J&K Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020, and the J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules 2020, as unjust and discriminatory. The erstwhile State of J&K that was illegally and unconstitutionally incorporated into India has been up in arms and nearly every other day skirmishes are taking place between the freedom fighters and the Indian security forces in IOK. The amended domicile law is an offshoot of the J&K Reorganization Act (2019) that has already been challenged in numerous petitions before the Supreme Court. On May 19, Pakistan also once again strongly condemned and rejected the new rules. These rules announced and enforced by the Indian authorities are a desperate attempt by the BJP government to pave the way for non-Kashmiris to seek permanent settlement in the disputed territories. It is worth recalling that on August 5, 2019, the Indian government unilaterally imposed a decision to unlawfully annex the Occupied Jammu and Kashmir into India. This was in part fulfillment of the longstanding promise by the BJP in previous elections. Now the Indian authorities have notified new rules permitting all those who have lived in occupied Jammu and Kashmir for 15 years or studied there for seven years to apply for a domicile. To make it more convenient, the Indian government has also been lenient with those who appeared in class 10th or 12th examinations in Kashmir; they may also avail themselves of this opportunity. To get any government job in the disputed territory, it is mandatory that the applicant have a local domicile. So, with this controversial step, the Indian government is not only planning to permanently settle the outsiders in Kashmir but also allow them to get government jobs and register businesses. In this manner the local people will be deprived of jobs that should only belong to them. With the controversial Act already challenged in the court, the constitutional validity of any such step will be questionable. And the occupation of Kashmir is not accepted by the international community and there are multiple UN resolutions that forbid India from taking any such action to annex Kashmir or change its status in any way. The same applies to the demographic composition that needs to be preserved to safeguard the interests of the Kashmiri people. Even according to the constitution of India and the universally accepted principle of constitutional propriety, the government of India is both legally and morally bound to desist from using powers under a controversial and impugned Act.

Modi-led Terrorism against Muslims on 'International Radar'

Sajjad Shaukat



In this respect, in its recently released annual report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended that the State Department should designate India as Country of Particular Concern—pushed for imposing targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the US under human rights-related financial and visa authorities

IN his book, "Politics Among Nations", renowned thinker, Hans J. Morgenthau opined that external policy of a country should be moulded in accordance "with the exigencies and circumstances of time and place", otherwise, there will be "failure of the foreign policy." But, without bothering for the reaction of the international community, Indian extremist Prime Minister Narendra Modi—the leader of the ruling party BJP has continued sponsoring terrorism against the religious minorities especially Muslims.

In the recent past, while addressing the Nation and the Indian Parliament about the tensions with minorities in India in passing CAA, Prime Minister Modi said: "In India, live like Indian Hindu. Any minority, from anywhere, if they want to live in India, to work and eat in India, they should speak an Indian language like Hindi Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali any South Indian language and should respect the Indian laws. If they prefer Sharia Law, and live the life of Muslim's then we advise them to go to those places where that's the state law...India does not need Muslim minorities. Such minorities need India, and we will not grant them special privileges, or try to change our laws to fit their desires, no matter how loud they yell "discrimination". We will not tolerate disrespect of our Vedic Hindu Sanatan culture...The Indian customs and traditions are not compatible with the lack of culture or the primitive ways of Sharia Law and Muslims....When this honorable legislative body thinks of creating new laws, it should have in mind the Indian national interest first, observing that the Muslims minorities are not Indians."

Premier Modi had got a land sliding victory in the Indian elections of 2014 and 2019 on the basis of anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan slogans. Therefore, since Modi came to power, he has been implementing anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan agenda. Besides persecution of Indian Muslims, Modi has also accelerated war-hysteria against Pakistan and instructed Indian forces to continue shelling across the Line of Control (LoC) and Working Boundary, which have killed many innocent civilians inside Pakistani side of Kashmir and other nearby villages.

In fact, Modi is promoting religious fanaticism and the ideology of Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) which is the genesis of Hindu terrorism particularly against Muslims.

In this respect, in its recently released annual report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended that the State Department should designate India as Country of Particular Concern—pushed for imposing targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations

of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the US under human rights-related financial and visa authorities. The USCIRF report said: "In December 2019, parliament passed the CAA...for non-Muslim migrants already in India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan by treating them as refugees fleeing religious persecution...The CAA...in conjunction with NRC...is a goal outlined in the BJP's manifesto...this potentially exposes millions of Muslims to detention, deportation and statelessness...cow protection had been promoted by the BJP and the RSS...Lynch mobs, often organised over social media, have attacked minorities—including Muslims, Christians, and Dalits...Since the BJP came to power in 2014, there have been over 100 attacks...often with the police's complicity, Hindutva groups also conduct campaigns of harassment, social exclusion and violence against religious minorities...in August last year, India stripped the Muslim-majority occupied Jammu and Kashmir of its autonomy and imposed security measures, including restricting freedom of movement and assembly, cutting Internet and phone access, and arresting Kashmiri leaders, including religious leaders".

It is notable that under the guise of coronavirus, Indian rulers have been imposing various kinds of restrictions on the Muslims. Modi's government and the health ministry claimed that Muslims are spreading this virus. Hindu extremists have set off a series of assaults against Muslims across the country.

In this context, Western media reported: "Indian authorities had linked cases of COVID-19 to Tablighi Jamaat had held its annual conference in Delhi in early March. Muslims have been beaten up, nearly lynched, run out of their neighborhoods or attacked in mosques...Hindu extremists are scapegoating the country's entire Muslim population for deliberately spreading the virus through "corona jihad, Indian hospitals segregates Muslim and Hindu coronavirus patients...In what many are calling a case of "apartheid" during a global pandemic...made separate wards for Hindu and Muslim patients. It is a decision of the government".

The reality is that under the guise of COVID-19, India fanatic entities are pushing Indian Muslims out of informal sector jobs. Muslims are facing a new form of concerted, deliberate economic marginalisation through blatant lies linking the community to the virus. Muslims are being shut out of the formal sector; many Muslims depend on the informal sector and self-employment for their livelihood. These zealots are instructing the Hindus not to buy anything from Muslims' shops. In this connection, the Gulf News wrote: "India's

carefully cultivated Gulf policy has been at risk of unraveling over the past fortnight, with the OIC, the Kuwaiti government, a UAE royal princess, and the Arab intelligentsia decrying hate speeches by Indian nationals accusing the Tablighi Jamaat of deliberately exacerbating the coronavirus pandemic as well as a crude tweet by a BJP MP on the sexual impulses of Arab women...it seems that the warnings of the Indian mission have fallen on deaf ears as the list of Indian expats facing action over vile Islamophobic remarks on social media keeps getting longer. At least three more have been suspended after their offensive posts were brought to the attention of employers by social media users. The men join nearly half a dozen hate-mongers who have similarly landed in trouble in recent weeks".

In this regard, Al Jazeera wrote: "Did those who commit crimes against Muslims in India...think that Muslims will remain silent and do not move politically, legally and economically against them? a statement by the general secretariat of the Kuwait Council of Ministers said...people in the Gulf countries felt outraged over the way Indian Muslims were being blamed for the coronavirus pandemic...the assault by the RSS—the BJP's parent body—on Muslims is unacceptable and have labelled it a "terrorist" group that should be banned in the Gulf... Kuwait has appealed to the OIC to intervene in India to tackle anti-Muslim sentiment in the country". , taking cognizance of Modi-led religious discriminatory policies, the White House has unfollowed Premier Modi on Twitter sending the micro-blogging site into a frenzy over a possible souring of ties between the world leaders.

It also unfollowed the Twitter handle of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, the Prime Minister's office, as well as, the Indian embassy in the US. And regarding the spread of COVID-19, WHO head of emergencies, Dr Michael Ryan repeatedly said that "we are assured that this virus is natural in origin." Notably, COVID-19 which has affected the entire world does not see race and religion, or borders before targeting any country. But, it is regrettable that in the pretext of coronavirus, Modi-led terrorist outfits BJP, VHP and RSS are leading Hindutva supremacists against Muslims in the occupied Kashmir and across India. In fact, it is primary part of Modi's belief system to persecute the Indian Muslims. Nonetheless, Modi-led terrorism against the Muslims is, now, on 'international radar'.

Sajjad Shaukat writes on international affairs and is author of the book: US vs Islamic Militants, Invisible Balance of Power: Dangerous Shift in International Relations

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Holding your mental strength in a crisis

Dr. Aamir Hanif



In this respect, in its recently released annual report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended that the State Department should designate India as Country of Particular Concern—pushed for imposing targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies.

THIS year, we have seen thousands of lives perished from earth due to COVID-19, many thousands of people still struggling to come to terms with. There are many thousands of families suffering of poverty, hunger, unemployment, social injustice, poor health, corruption, loss of businesses due to cities going into lockdown and people disconnecting socially. This has created an immense pressure on human minds to think rationally and to make right decisions.

There are few things that we can discuss today to keep our minds strong when we see our physical and mental health is in danger, due to fear, anxiety, and sense of impending doom. In our society, strength is the word used to show muscles rippling, absolute fearlessness, never crying, never feeling sad or angry, never asking for help. These all are misconception and often attached to men in our cultural ideas of strength. Due to these cultural pressures we might overdo, get on with the business or impatient with ourselves and switch to hyper-productive mode instead of taking the time as opportunity

to slow down, reflect, nurture ourselves during a very hard time and be present with our loved ones.

We might think wrong of ourselves when we feel sad or show our grief or feeling weak as compared to our counter parts. We might then suppress these uncomfortable feelings.

The trouble with suppression of these true feelings is that anxious feelings will convert into bizarre behavior patterns such as short temperament, blame others such as selfish or fearful behavior such as stockpiling safety equipment and toilet papers. This could also lead to depression or unfortunately can increase in domestic violence as the aftermath of these severe stressful times. This is completely opposite to what an actual strength should be.

Being strong means feeling your emotions as they come and go.

Cultivate Empathy, opening up to those around you and holding space for them.

Being strong means not being fearful to feel your inner painful sensitivities.

Being strong means speaking up against injustice even if every part of you is trembling with fear.

Being strong means share your thoughts and feelings with those whom you can trust.

To have a strong mind, you need to get help from mindfulness. It is a practice of sitting still for a period of time and allowing whatever is so for you in the here and now, the space to exist. When you sit down to practice and anxiety comes to you, do not attempt to resist it or shut it down, instead deal with it politely, gently and in a loving way, same as parents treat their children during a tantrum with empathy, patience and space to accommodate the child's growth. Observe this feeling of anxiety within your body. Ask yourself how does it feel like?

Where in your body you feel it? What is its shape, color and texture? During passage of time, does it change its form or remain the same.

After practicing this observation, it becomes clear that no feeling is permanent. When we are able to hold resilient and this is where our true strength lies.

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Briefs

NBP donates Rs. 80 mln

ISLAMABAD, May 21 (APP): National Bank of Pakistan has topped up its earlier contributions towards combating coronavirus pandemic by donating another Rs. 80 Million to support over 26,000 financially vulnerable households. The initiative is a part of its on-going Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This donation will support over 26,000 households belonging to the disadvantaged segment of society who have been most affected due to the lockdown across the country, said a press release here on Thursday. This gesture endorses the fact that NBP as always stood by the nation to promote the well-being of deprived and marginalized segments of the society in Pakistan.

'2021 'last option' for Tokyo Games'

TOKYO: Olympics chief Thomas Bach said 2021 was the "last option" for holding the delayed Tokyo Games on Thursday, stressing that postponement cannot go on forever. Bach told the BBC that he agreed with Japan's stance that the Games will have to be cancelled if the coronavirus pandemic isn't under control by next year. In March, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were postponed to July 23, 2021 as the coronavirus spread across the globe, killing hundreds of thousands of people and making international sport impossible. "Quite frankly, I have some understanding for (Japan's position) because you cannot forever employ 3,000, or 5,000, people in an organising committee," the International Olympic Committee president said. "You cannot every year change the entire sports schedule worldwide for all the major federations.

"You cannot have the athletes being in uncertainty, you cannot have so much overlapping with a future Olympic Games." -APP

Asian varsities call for solidarity

BEIJING: Fifty-seven universities from 12 Asian countries including Pakistan have jointly called for global solidarity to fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In a statement, signed by members of the South and Southeast Asian University Network, the group suggests stronger cooperation and mutual assistance through difficulties during the fight against the pandemic. The statement was co-signed by 27 Chinese universities and 30 overseas universities from Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. -APP

The self-employed to be exempt from income tax: Shavkat Mirziyoyev

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a video conference to discuss additional measures to support entrepreneurship. Once more, while starting the meeting, the head of state expounded on ongoing work to counter the pandemic. Of the 2,880 people diagnosed with coronavirus, 2,314 or 82 percent have recovered completely. More than 78 billion soums were paid as bonus to 23 thousand medical workers who show genuine courage on this front. "Along with combating the disease, we also are taking care of our citizens abroad. To date, we have brought 39 thousand compatriots. Measures are being taken to provide the necessary assistance and the return of another 12 thousand who found themselves in a difficult situation abroad," Shavkat Mirziyoyev informed. Activity is restored in various sectors of the economy. For example, over the past week, electricity consumption by business entities increased by 13 percent. Over the last two weeks, cement sales on the commodity exchange has grown by 104 thousand tons, fuel - by 74 thousand tons, industrial

glass - by 60 thousand square meters compared to the same period last month. Dividing the regions into "green", "yellow" and "red" zones based on the epidemiological situation, about 110 thousand business entities have been allowed to resume activities, and more than 600 thousand people returned to their jobs. In general, over the past two months, 12 decrees and resolutions have been adopted by the President to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the living standards of the population and the economy. As a result, more than 500 thousand entrepreneurship units and over 8 million citizens received benefits and preferences in the amount of nearly 30 trillion soums. On May 18, the President signed another decree on subsequent measures to support the population and entrepreneurship during the coronavirus pandemic. In accordance with the document, more than 500 thousand enterprises and about 100 thousand people will receive additional assistance worth 1.7 trillion soums. "No matter how difficult it may be, we have done everything necessary to create the conditions. Now



the leaders of economic and investment complexes and sectors must ensure that every entrepreneur and citizen are making use of these benefits," the President stressed. The Republican Commission was instructed to gradually allow the activities of more than 40 thousand business entities with an eye to the epidemiological situation in industries and regions. At the same time, it is necessary to strictly observe the rules of quarantine, since 38 regions of the country today remain in the "red" zone. The pandemic is expected to lead to the growing number of poor and unemployed, and reducing family incomes. Therefore, it is necessary to actively support small business and family entrepreneurship in order to create

new jobs within a short time. The meeting participants discussed additional measures and priorities in this direction. First of all, serious attention is paid to securing the rights of entrepreneurs and the inviolability of their property. "I warn all hokims. If the property of at least one entrepreneur is seized illegally, the hokim will not get off with a single resignation, but will stand liable before the law," Shavkat Mirziyoyev said. Relevant authorities have been instructed to strengthen responsibility for infringing on the inviolability of property, to ensure the full implementation of judicial decisions on compensation for property of entrepreneurs. In accordance with the President's instructions, business activity in each district

and city will be analyzed on a monthly basis. The Business Ombudsman will provide the government with information on hokims of districts and towns that allow for encroachment of the rights of entrepreneurs and inviolability of their property. The Cabinet of Ministers will consider the issue of competence of town and district hokims who fail to address the problems of entrepreneurs and to work with them sufficiently. A new system will be introduced to create decent conditions for self-employed citizens. Thus, hairdressers, shoemakers, bakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, taxi drivers, photographers, translators, designers, programmers - the self-employed representatives of more than 60 professions will be exempt

from income tax. To take advantage of this benefit, it will be enough to notify the tax authorities by phone. Based on international best practices, a mobile application will be developed for registration and accounting of self-employed citizens. As a result of the permission for private notaries, 617 state notaries offices became private, which allowed for saving budget funds in the amount of 200 billion soums. If you transfer to the private sector the services currently provided by state bodies, such as the preparation of cadastral documents and topographic surveys, this will create thousands of new jobs, it was indicated at the meeting. The Ministry for Economic Development and Poverty Reduction and the Ministry of Justice were instructed to draw up, on the basis of accurate calculations, a list of public services that could be transferred to the private sector. During the lockdown period, many organizations may lose solvency and be on the verge of bankruptcy. In this regard, a procedure is being introduced according to which, in case of reorganization of an enterprise, its tax and other debt arrears can be repaid after quarantine has ended. The SCO's expanding cultural and humanitarian cooperation from year to year contributes to the further deepening of interstate cultural dialogue, in order to bring the SCO countries and peoples closer together. A striking example of

this is the comprehensive SCO-our Common Home program, which includes the days of SCO culture, the cycle of piano concerts "Nine Magic Notes", the annual "SCO Marathons" and the "Eight Wonders of the SCO" project aimed at creating a single tourist space. The world community is now facing serious challenges related to a sudden attack called COVID-19. The consequences of the pandemic for further favourable world development are unpredictable and may cause dramatic changes in the modern world order. All this further actualizes the value of a single human civilization with the diversity of its forms of existence, the self-identification of the peoples and ethnicities of the world and their responsibility for its future. We need to raise our many voices in defence of the importance of a day of cultural diversity in the name of dialogue and development. This is the best response and moral support in the fight against humanity's most dangerous enemies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. I am convinced that, based on the rich cultural traditions of our peoples, we will be able to overcome all difficulties and trials together and in close cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi, Ambassador of Turkey Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul and others on the occasion of distribution of aid among needy people on behalf of Turkish aid agency TIKA and others. -DNA

Pak student hails China's poverty alleviation drive

YUNNAN, China, May 20 : "To help the needy by whatever means is a great accomplishment," said Talha Elahi, a Pakistani student who spent his 2019 winter holiday to observe China's poverty alleviation campaign in a small village named Sabazi in Yunnan Province, China. According to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN), a few months ago Talha was an average Pakistani student studying in Sichuan Normal University. He attends classes, plays basketball, friends others, travels around, with not much difference from his schoolmates.

But earlier this year when he returned to school from Sabazi Village, he came to understand things about China's poverty alleviation - a must-win battle for the Chinese government - as quoted by him, "two months that I'll never forget". Talha has been in China for further study since 2016. Living in Chengdu, one of the most important financial, commercial, cultural and transportation centers of western China, he is quite familiar with urban life, so he made a decision to experience rural life in China's developing Yunnan Province, and more importantly, to see how the Chinese government help its people who yearns for a better life.

Sabazi Village, with a population of 1,171, is located in Songping Town, Yongsheng County of Yunnan Province. By the end of 2019, residents here have got access to water, electricity, roads and street lights. The village is an impoverished one in dire need of being lifted out of poverty; its economy, in common with other villages nearby, is dominated by crop and plant cultivation, with purchasers mainly from Yongsheng County. The village is quite distant from Chengdu that it took Talha four and a half hours to get there. Led by the poverty alleviation group, he got chances to see how they find out information and facts about the deserving people and come up

with a list of definite targets to hit for. Stepping into a 89-year-old granny's house, they were shocked by her living conditions. It is unbearable to stay in her woolen house with chilly winter coming, and what is worse, the roof would leak when it rained. To Talha's surprise, the old lady offered to cook her only hen for him out of kindness. "I did cry," Talha told CEN, "they are so needy but still, they are nice. I was deeply moved by her goodwill." Touched by the granny's move, he gave her all his money in the pocket. People might be poor for different reasons, but one's kindness will never lie, and that is the reason why we are ready to help them, Talha added.

Chinese seed sector contribute to Pakistan's fight against COVID-19

ISLAMABAD: Chinese seed companies have been making efforts to extend a helping hand and support to Pakistan in its on-going fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and local outbreak through measures including donations of anti-epidemic materials and guarantee of seed export, reports Gwadar Pro. According to China Seed As-

sociation, Anhui Quanyin Seed Industry donated 1,000 N95 masks and 30,000 medical surgical masks through Pakistani companies; Sichuan Guohao Seed Industry donated 3,000 N95 masks to ICI Pakistan Limited; Jiangsu Hongqi Seed Industry donated 10,000 medical surgical masks through its Pakistani peers; Anhui Longping Gaoko Seed Industry and Pakistani partners donated material packages of flour, rice,

edible oil and sugar to 1,000 poor families in Pakistan's Punjab province. In addition, donated materials from other Chinese seed companies are also in the process of collection and transfer. Since the end of last year, Pakistan has struggled to combat locust plagues which have destroyed crops and threatened the livelihoods of farmers. Chinese seed companies have taken solid actions to help en-

sure the grain yield of Pakistan after work resumption amid pandemic. On February 14 and March 4, two batches of hybrid rice seeds from Jiangsu Shennong Dafeng Seed Industry Technology Co. and Jiangsu Hongqi Seed Industry Co., Ltd. were loaded on ships respectively. On March 31, a batch of corn seeds from Anhui Longping Gaoko Seed Industry Co., Ltd. were loaded on ships and departed for Pakistan.

Tajikistan sends aid for dam victims in Uzbekistan

DUSHANBE Today, Tajikistan sent assistance to the victims of the Sardobin reservoir collapse in Uzbekistan. This assistance was transferred by Tajik Railways. The assistance consists of 51 freight trains and

includes mainly construction materials, including cement, slate, paint, nails, and other necessary supplies. The Deputy Chairman of Sughd Region Anvar Yakubi assessed this initiative as an expression of high spirits and goodwill of the people of the two friendly

countries and a clear sign of strategic partnership between the two states. This assistance package was provided to eliminate the consequences of the disaster following the collapse of the Sardobin reservoir in the Syrdarya region which caused significant damage.

Turkish Airlines to resume operations in June

ISTANBUL: Turkey's national flag carrier Turkish Airlines (THY) will resume operations in June, according to the company. The THY will begin its domestic flights on June 4 and international flights on June 10, a press officer told Xinhua on Thursday. In the upcoming period, cabin baggage would no longer be carried in the cabin, said Ilker Ayçi, chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the company. Speaking to local media, Ayçi noted that only handbags would be allowed inside the cabins.

Qureshi for vibrant economic diplomacy

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi Thursday said that as part of preparedness to cope with COVID-19 situation and allied challenges, it was a must to promote economic diplomacy in order to meet fiscal targets. Chairing a consultative meeting to review the national security situation and Pakistan's priorities in the prevailing coronavirus situation, the foreign minister said the world was fast heading towards global financial crisis and the developing world would face its worse implications. The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to PM on National Security

Moeed Yousuf, Secretary Foreign Affairs Sohail Mahmood, foreign affairs experts and senior officers of the foreign ministry. The foreign minister said that at the time when Pakistan's foreign exchange and exports were fast declining, it would have to explore new opportunities for economic revival. He said the timely completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor was among the foremost priorities of the incumbent government. He said considering the vitality of Afghan peace and stability for the whole region, Pakistan had been playing a sincere reconciliatory role to advance Afghan peace process and would continue doing so.

2500 cops to perform duties on Eid

ISLAMABAD: P: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have finalized a comprehensive security and patrolling plan on the eve of Eid ul Fitr besides augmenting security at markets, worship places and other important areas to thwart any untoward incident. -APP

631 smart lockdowns in place : NCOC

ISLAMABAD: P: National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Thursday was apprised that at present around 631 smart lockdowns were in place across the country where as the testing capacity had been doubled after the launch of Test, Track and Quarantine (TTQ) strategy. The NCOC meeting headed by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar discussed the Epi Curve Chart, Decision Support

System, TTQ update, update on task tracker and communication strategy along with standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Eid. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Pakistan (SAPM) Tania Ardrius briefed the forum on Decision Support System where the NCOC officials also presented briefing on TTQ strategy update. Senior Epidemiologist Dr Rana Safdar presented the Epi Curve Chart and informed that 22pc. -APP