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Strict lockdown if SOPs not followed, says Shibli Faraz
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Missing Persons Commission's performance


Strict lockdown if SOPs not followed

Shibli Faraz says well thought out strategy just like Covid-19 is being followed to make the fight against the crop munching pests successful

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Shibli Faraz has appealed to the people to strictly follow the standard operating procedures in the face of rising cases of Coronavirus otherwise the government will be compelled to again enforce the lockdown. He was addressing a news conference along with Parliamentary Secretary for Railways Farrukh Habib in Islamabad. The Information Min-

ister regretted that the people did not follow the precautionary measures in the wake of easing of restrictions. He said the restrictions were eased to provide livelihood opportunities to the weaker segments of the society. To provide succour to the disadvantaged segments of the society, the government also launched Ehsaas Program and other initiatives. Shibli Faraz said the government is pursuing a very well organized and coordinated strategy to curb the spread of the

contagion. This is the reason the corona cases are less to our estimates. The Information Minister said all the relevant departments are working in close coordination to address the issue of locusts. He said a well thought out strategy just like Covid-19 is being followed to make the fight against the crop munching pests successful. Alluding to the political situation in the country, the Information Minister dispelled the impression of victimization of the political opponents. He

made it clear that the accountability process will go ahead. He said future belongs only to those parties who believe in the service of the public. Shibli Faraz said action will be taken against the mafias who held the country's economy hostage for their own vested interests. Farrukh Habib, in his remarks, said Prime Minister Imran Khan has exposed the mafia and the money plundered by the corrupt elements will be recovered and spent on the poor people.

GERMAN AMBASSADOR ON BICYCLE



ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck going to Foreign Office for an official meeting on his 80 year old cycle. Wednesday was marked as the World Bicycle Day. – DNA

Qatar rejects Israeli plan

DOHA: Qatar has reiterated its rejection of any Israeli move to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, vowing to continue support to the Palestinian people. "We reject any attempt to annex any occupied Palestinian land," Foreign Minister Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told a virtual meeting of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee to coordinate international assistance to the Palestinian people late Tuesday. Israel is expected to annex parts of the occupied West Bank under a plan agreed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival-turned ally Benny Gantz, the head of the Blue and White party. – APP

Austria to scrap border controls

VIENNA: Austria announced that the entry checks at its land borders introduced because of the coronavirus pandemic would all be scrapped from Thursday, except those at the frontier with Italy. "As of tomorrow there will be no more checks in order to enter Austria," Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg told a press conference Wednesday, but added that restrictions on the border with Italy would remain in force for now. – APP

'No complacency on SOPs compliance'

The NCC is fully supporting the provinces to ensure strict compliance of safety guidelines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development Reforms and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Wednesday said no complacency would be permitted as administrative actions would be initiated across the country against the violators of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to contain the spread of COVID-19 in high risk areas of Markets, Transport and Industrial Sectors across the country. Chairing the meeting of National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), Asad Umar discussed the

compliance of SOPs in detail with the provincial chief secretaries. He said there should be a clear message conveyed to the masses that the government is going to spearhead stringent actions to ensure social distancing and compliance of safety guidelines in public places and high risk areas. "The National Coordination Committee (NCC) meeting minutes have been approved with the emphasis on ensuring voluntary compliance of SOPs and strict administrative action against violators. The NCC is fully supporting the provinces to ensure strict compli-

ance of safety guidelines," he added. Asad said the traders association were responsible to ensure compliance of SOPs which were being violated in the markets and increasing the risk of pandemic outbreak. "An effective media campaign is also going to be launched across the country to create education and awareness among the masses for voluntary compliance of SOPs." Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Punjab said there was need to reinvigorate administration's resolve, commitment and vigor for strict implementation of SOPs.

Germany to lift travel warning for Europe

BERLIN: Germany will lift its travel warning for European nations from June 15, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Wednesday, as the continent looks to further ease restrictions imposed to contain the coronavirus. "We have decided today that the travel warning for the named circle of countries will not be continued but replaced by travel advice," Maas said, referring to EU nations plus a handful of countries in the region including Switzerland and Iceland. The warning will be re-

placed by advice for individual nations, "provided that there are no longer any entry bans or large-scale lockdowns in the respective countries", he said. Germany will also be watching contagion data very carefully, he added, saying that warnings could be reintroduced if new infections were to reach 50 per 100,000 people in a week in the country concerned. Germany introduced an unprecedented warning against all foreign travel in mid-March as part of measures to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. – APP

PM takes notice of price hike

FIJAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran on Wednesday took notice of the price hike in the country despite a massive cut in the petroleum products and directed the officials to ensure that the impact of the reduction "must correspondingly reflect" in the prices of essential commodities on daily basis. He also asked the National Price Monitoring Committee to monitor the prices of essential commodities on a weekly basis as already directed by the federal cabinet and devise a mechanism to bring down the prices of essential commodities. In a letter addressed to chief ministers and chief secretaries of four provinces and Gilgit Baltistan, and also to his Adviser on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, the prime minister stressed that the benefit of price reduction of fuel be passed on to common man. "The Prime Minister has desired that the Chief Ministers/Chief Secretaries of the provinces shall personally look into the matter and make every effort to ensure that the impact of the reduction of fuel prices must correspondingly reflect in the prices of essential commodities on daily basis," an excerpt of the letter read, as shared by PM Media Office.

Briefs

CDWP approves 7 projects of Rs. 24 bn

ISLAMABAD: Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Wednesday approved seven projects worth Rs.24 billion and recommended one project worth Rs. 11.35 billion to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) for consideration. The meeting of the CDWP was chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan and was attended by Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan and senior officials from different ministries. The CDWP a project titled "Additional Sources of Supply to Jaranwala Road Grid station" worth Rs. 5787.32 million. It also approved "30.4 MW Jagran-1 Hydropower project, District Neelum, AJK" project worth Rs. 4306.875 million and another project titled "Strengthening, Up-gradation and ISO certification of Karachi Laboratories Complex at HDIP Operations Officer, Karachi" worth Rs 440.812 million. – APP

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Pakistanis from Sierra Leone return

On behalf of the government of Pakistan, Dr. Ali Ahmed Arain, Pakistan's Ambassador to Senegal, conveyed his gratitude to the management of Salam Air, the government of Sierra Leone

DNA

RABAT: A special flight of Salam Air left for Islamabad after taking 118 stranded Pakistanis (69 from Sierra Leone and 49 from Mauritania), including 100 Tablighi Jammah members, 12 Engineers from Wart-sila (pvt), Pakistan and 6 Stranded visitors. This flight was self-financed and arranged by joint efforts of the Embas-

sies of Pakistan in Dakar (for Sierra Leone) and Algiers (for Mauritania) in close coordination with Governments of Sierra Leone & Mauritania. The departing passengers were seen off at the Freetown and Nouakchott airports by the representatives of the both Embassies. The departing passengers conveyed their appreciation for the arrangements made for their safe return.

On behalf of the government of Pakistan, Dr. Ali Ahmed Arain, Pakistan's Ambassador to Senegal, conveyed his gratitude to the management of Salam Air, the government of Sierra Leone, the government of Mauritania, Honorary Consuls General of Pakistan in Sierra Leone and Mauritania and all others who made their valuable support in facilitating the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis.

COVID-19: WHO lauds Azerbaijan efforts

H. Kluge also called on countries that have achieved success in this direction and have a better economic position to lend a helping hand to countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Countries like Azerbaijan have found their way to fight the coronavirus pandemic." Report informs, WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr. Hans Kluge said during an online press briefing with reporters. "We are well aware that Azerbaijan has created a fund to fight against coro-



navirus. Everyone must unite to combat this crisis, both at the state level, and the private sector must be involved in this process. It is a perfect example of

success if you work together. In this matter, we cannot limit ourselves only to supporting the healthcare system. However, more must be done," he said. H. Kluge also called on countries that have achieved success in this direction and have a better economic position to lend a helping hand to countries in need in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

OGRA issues show cause notices to OMCs

It is being reported in print and electronic media as well as physical verification through Hydrocarbon Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP) that several outlets are running dry or short of product effecting product availability to the consumers," OGRA observed in a letter sent to OMCs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Wednesday issued show cause notices to three Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for not maintaining the required stocks of fuel, which caused disturbance in smooth supply of petroleum products in the country. "Ogra has issued show cause notices to three OMC's, where major dry outs have been re-

ported." authority spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a brief statement. He said Shell Pakistan Limited, Attock Petroleum Limited and Total Parco Pakistan Limited had been directed to submit a reply within 24 hours. On June 2, the authority had directed in writing to Chief Executives of 33 OMCs, operating in the country, to ensure availability of petroleum products at their retail outlets. "It is being reported in print and

electronic media as well as physical verification through Hydrocarbon Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP) that several outlets are running dry or short of product effecting product availability to the consumers," OGRA observed in a letter sent to OMCs,. The OMCs had also been directed to ensure the availability of petroleum products on most immediate basis and in a timely manner at their retail outlets, keeping in view the demand to

avoid any inconvenience to the commuters. Due to the prevailing supply situation, the HDIP was tasked to physically verify the product availability at refineries storages, OMCs depots and retail outlets randomly. Accordingly, the HDIP had submitted a preliminary report wherein slight/minimal variations had been observed in the product availability against the position as reported in the Daily Stocks and Supplies Position (DSSP) by

Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAS) in a recent meeting held at the Ministry of Energy. "It has also been noted that few OMCs are maintaining very healthy stock position at some locations, especially in the south as against low inventory at mid and upcountry, whereas few OMCs are operating at critically low volumes throughout the country thus threatening the continuity of supplies to retail outlets," the authority informed the Petroleum Division on the issue.

Briefs

Online Seminar on COVID-19 on June 05

ISLAMABAD: COMS-TECH, the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) will organize an International online seminar on “Pakistan Randomized and Observational Trial to Evaluate Coronavirus Treatment (PROTECT)” to be delivered by Prof. Dr. Ghazna Khalid Siddiqui on June 5. This lecture is in continuation of a series of online lectures delivered by internationally acclaimed experts on COVID-19 and current health situation worldwide. Dr. Ghazna Khalid Siddiqui will explain the intent, need and present experience of running PROTECT clinical trial in Pakistan. She will also elaborate, how COMS-TECH is exploring ways to extend this trial to other OIC member states, as a strategy to develop effective therapies against COVID-19. — APP

Pesco recovers Rs 1.67 mln

PESHAWAR: Task forces of Pesco Mardan Circle on Wednesday took action against power pilferers and outstanding dues and recovered Rs.1.67 million from defaulters. Pesco spokesman said Rs.1.41 million were recovered from domestic consumers, Rs.0.16 million from commercial consumers while Rs.0.5 million were recovered from industrial consumers. The Pesco teams also removed 7 direct hooks while 7 meters disconnected for nonpayment of dues. The teams replaced 7 tampered meters and shifted 38 meters to poles. The spokesman said drive against illegal consumption of electricity and direct hooks will continue till achieving desired results. He said due to power pilferage Pesco has to face financial & line losses on one hand and on the other hand the whole distribution system gets overloaded and the general public faces inconvenience of frequent power break-downs. — APP

MNA hails ‘Tiger Force’

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Sadaqat Ali Abbasi Wednesday appreciated the trained ‘Corona Relief Tiger Force’ volunteers enthusiasm and devotion to their work to contain coronavirus. Talking to a private news channel he said ‘Corona Relief Tiger force’ volunteers are actively participating in corona virus awareness campaign aiming to save the nation. He further said that the tiger force volunteers were contributing great humanity services without any political objective. All volunteers from different backgrounds and educational levels are needed but they have to be physically fit and enthusiastic about the service, he mentioned. — APP

Hundreds of students protest outside HEC for full semester fee waiver

It is not just a piece of cake for everyone to bear the financial burden of their academics as some [students] do part-time jobs and give home tuition to pay off their expenses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: University students from across the country gathered outside the office of the Higher Education Commission in Islamabad on Wednesday demanding their full semester fee be waived. They also wanted varsities to stop their online classes and promote students to the next semester without

any examinations. With placards in their hands, the students shouted slogans and blocked the capital’s Service Road for traffic. These students have not just been protesting on roads but have also voiced their concerns on Twitter and other social media platforms. They say that the pandemic has affected them severely. In a thread on Twitter, Aswad Shiraz, a student at Iqra University, called

out varsities for charging full semester fees during the coronavirus pandemic, declaring it “immoral” and “unfair”. “It is not just a piece of cake for everyone to bear the financial burden of their academics as some [students] do part-time jobs and give home tuition to pay off their expenses,” he said. Shiraz stated that due to the pandemic, they could no longer work, leading to difficulty in paying fees.

The online classes that the varsities conduct only include daily lectures and recordings for which students use their own resources such as WiFi and mobile internet. The student explained that their university fee covers all the student services and facilities such as clubs and societies and campus facilities which have not been utilised since educational institutions were closed. Owing to this, we demand that the

universities reduce their fees by 50%, Shiraz said. Following Shiraz’s tweets, several other students from all provinces expressed their concerns and have requested the HEC to consider their demands. Schools, universities and colleges were closed down by the government in late February as a precautionary measure against the novel coronavirus spread. Following this, educational institutions resorted to online classes.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging the flower bouquet to attract customer at Flower Market F-7 Market. — APP

AIOU advices its students to strictly follow SOPs during COVID-19

According to Head of University’s Security Department, Col. (Retd) Irfan Sadiq, nobody including the University’s employees is allowed to enter the University without proper Mask

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has advised its students that they should strictly follow the government’s issued SOPs for their interaction with University during the current crisis of COVID-19. The students are encouraged and facilitated to contact the University’s through Online for all matters including admissions. To attend matters of emergency nature, the Allama Iqbal Open University has set up a ‘HELP DESK’ at its main entrance (Gate-25) for the students’ contact.



According to Head of University’s Security Department, Col. (Retd) Irfan Sadiq, nobody including the University’s employees is allowed to enter the University without proper Mask. It is mandatory for the visitors to get their body’s temperature

checked at the main entrance. While, visiting the University, the visitors are required to maintain social distance, as per the SOPs. The University’s security arrangements have been tightened in light of the instructions of the

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, keeping in view the magnitude of the coronavirus cases in the federal capital and the elsewhere in the country. The University has also adopted strict measures for those employees living in its residential colony, to ensure strict compliance of the government’s instructions. All precautionary measures were taken for the employees and the students in order to save them from the deadly virus. Similar arrangements were made at the University’s 54 regional offices across the country in light of the government’s policy and instructions.

Fawad for avoiding direct sessions

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain one again advised of conducting virtual session of the Parliament instead of direct, considering the risks of spreading coronavirus among more members. In a statement on Wednesday, the federal minister said results of the direct sessions of Parliament are coming out. Several Members of Parliament have become victims of coronavirus after the live session. He said, in a week, coronavirus took the lives of four members of the assembly, including a provincial minister. — APP

CCP seeks public comments on draft study on LPG sector

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has prepared a draft competition assessment study of the LPG Sector in Pakistan with solid recommendations for the government to introduce policy reforms, remove regulatory barriers, and put in place a competitive LPG pricing framework to create a level playing field and promote competition in the sector. The CCP is mandated under Section 28 of the Competition Act, 2010 to conduct studies for promoting competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activity. The draft study on the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) sector has been uploaded on CCP’s website for soliciting public comments within 30

days. Competition assessment of the LPG sector shows various barriers to entry and expansion that restrict/reduce and distort competition in the sector at various levels. Natural barriers include high capital and financial requirement in the upstream LPG production/extraction, illiquid market, and seasonal fluctuation in LPG demand, while regulatory barriers arise due to certain contradictory clauses in the LPG Policy, 2016. Under Section 3.4.3 of the LPG Policy, public sector companies will import LPG to meet the domestic demand as per the quantity decided by the Federal Government. Whereas, Section 3.5.1 of the same Policy contradicts this section by allowing any party having valid OGRA marketing license to import LPG.

Huawei Tech earns \$100 bln

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Huawei, which was desperate to break into the European market, sprang into action. Yu, who was vice-president of wireless networks then, canceled all of his appointments and worked with Huawei’s small team in Europe and engineers back in China to devise a solution. Within a week, they came up with one – a base station that could be deployed in two parts, required little space to install and was cheaper to run. Telfort was impressed. Within months the deal

for a 10-year contract worth 230 million euros was sealed and Huawei was on the map. The next year, it won contracts from BT Group, formerly British Telecom, and became a supplier to Vodafone Group, one of the world’s largest mobile carriers. “Huawei was not dominant in China at the time, they were well-positioned with customers like China Mobile but they said that if you want more business in China then you need to show us you’re an international company,” Stefan Scheuerle, a former Huawei sales executive who worked on the Telfort deal, said in an interview.

Islamabad residents awaiting CDA reply

FIAN CHAUDRHY

ISLAMABAD: Over 1,000 people have yet to receive alternate plots after the Capital Development Authority constructed new sectors on their land, a bench of the Islamabad High Court remarked on Wednesday. The bench, headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah, chided the CDA for not taking any action in the case. Islamabad has become a classic example of elite culture, he remarked. The CDA is responsible for rule of law in the city, he noted. “Is this a joke to you? Thousands of people were displaced and no compensation has been provided to them.”

FIAZ CHAUDRHY

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that business community is not against tax payment but MCI has increased property tax by 300% in one go, which has increased the difficulties of business class. Therefore, he urged that the current increase in property tax should be withdrawn and this tax should be gradually increased by taking the business community into confidence. He expressed these views while talking to Mian Tariq Latif, DMA/Director Revenue of MCI during his visit to ICCI. Amir Ranjha, Deputy Director MCI was also present on the occasion. Mohammad Ahmad Waheed said that encroachments in markets were not only created problems

for business community, they were also distorting the beauty of markets. He stressed encroachments from all markets should be removed by taking trade associations of concerned markets in confidence. He said that the increase in board tax fee should also be reviewed. He said that a verbal agreement

was reached between DMA and ICCI for a board tax @ of Rs. 60 per square foot, which should be implemented. Emphasized that sanitation arrangements in commercial and industrial areas should be further improved and MCI should intensify its efforts to address the issues highlighted by the business community.

Tahir Abbasi, Senior Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Aslam Khokhar, Usman Khalid, Zia Chaudhry, Asher Hafeez, Khalid Chaudhry, Malik Rabinwaz, Nisar Ahmad Langa and others also highlighted the issues of business community and offered proposals for their solution.

Mian Tariq Latif, Director Municipal Administration and Director Revenue, Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad speaking at the occasion said that encroachments from markets in Islamabad would be removed in cooperation with traders and this process would be started from Jinnah Supermarket. However, the cooperation of market unions was needed in this regard. He said that efforts would be made to solve the problems of the business community through understanding and in this regard a meeting of ICCI delegation would be arranged with Mayor of Islamabad. He said a joint committee of the two institutions would be considered to identify important issues and find their better solutions. He assured that he would fully cooperate with Chamber in resolving the key issues of business community.



On our own

As the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Pakistan is increasing daily by the thousands, the response from the federal government and the NDMA has been as confused as ever. The number of infected people is approaching the 80,000 mark. The number of deaths across the country is feared to touch 2000 in the next couple of days. The increasing number of infected persons among the medical community should be a serious cause of concern and more and more doctors and paramedical staff are being infected and losing their battle against Covid-19.

There are complaints about the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) from across the country. The required testing kits are also in short supply at the government-run clinics and hospitals, forcing people to go to private hospitals for the test, which costs Rs8,000 to Rs12,000 apiece. On Monday, the National Coordination Committee's meeting seemed to give out one message to the nation: you're on your own. This is an alarming situation. On top of it all, smart sampling carried out by the Punjab government in Lahore is said to have found an estimated 670,800 new cases, meaning that six percent of the city's population of 11.18 million could potentially have been infected. Some towns showed a positivity rate of 14.7 percent.

Most of these cases were asymptomatic and could not be reported to the health facilities, according to the Technical Working Group which carried out the study. Reports say that the summary was sent to the Punjab chief minister on May 15 but it seems it was kept secret for over two weeks despite the startling findings which have a potentially disastrous impact on the lives and welfare of people.

There is obviously a question over how long any country can stay in lockdown. But Pakistan's continuous to-ing and fro-ing over the imposition of a lockdown has simply left people confused. Pakistan now ranks among the top 10 countries where the rate of infection is rising most rapidly.

This should be a cause of very serious concern. We do not know what will happen next. But we do know that many people will start feeling like they have been asked to somehow manage without help or guidance in whatever way they can.

It is of course the poor, who also lack access to information, who will suffer the worst and make up the largest figure amongst those who become seriously ill or are killed by a virus Pakistan has failed to hobble as it rampages through a country of 220 million people.

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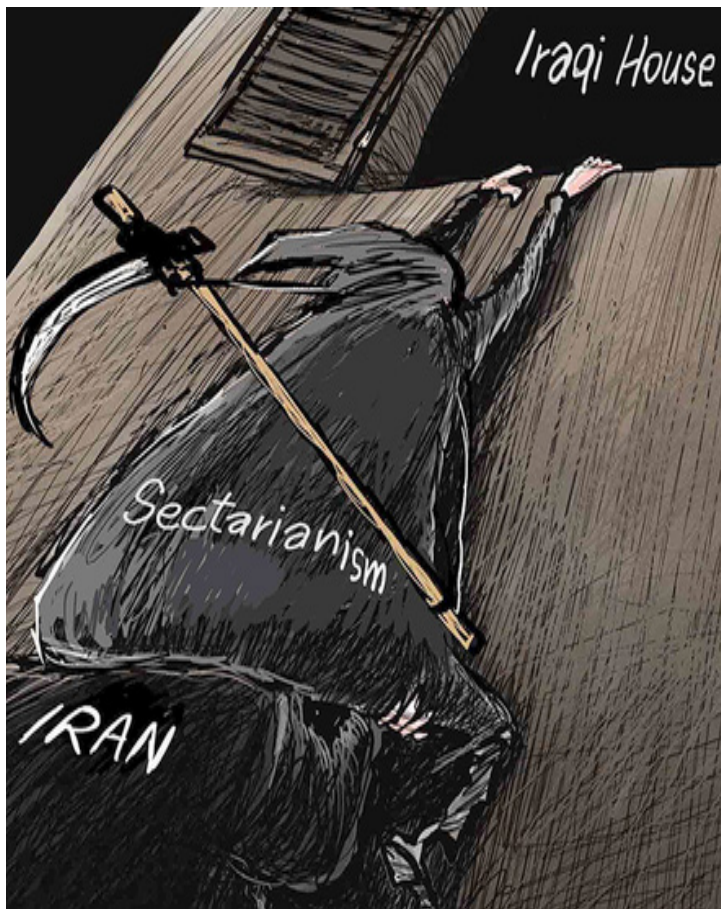
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An untimely loss

RARELY does a person of literary merit consistently produce so much work of high quality as Dr Asif Farrukhi did in a short time. Sixty is not an age to die, especially when you had such huge potential to contribute much more in different genres of literature. He was a quintessential litterateur with a passion for reading and writing, and an immense desire to enliven the literary scene in Pakistan. Though a medical doctor by profession and a public health expert by choice, he was immersed in all colours of arts and humanities.

His father, a renowned Urdu scholar and fiction writer Dr Aslam Farrukhi, died at the age of 92, four years ago in Karachi, and Asif had inherited the genes that enabled him to become a critic, editor, a historian of literature, a humanities professor at Habib University, an initiator and organizer of literary festivals, a short-story writer, a translator; in short an intellectual par excellence.

Asif's literary journey spanned over at least three decades. He managed to perform his duties in the medical profession as well as in his vocation of choice – his love for literature. He established his credentials as a literary critic much earlier in his career. Asif was not one to confine himself to his reading desk or writing table; he interacted with people with an enthusiastic zeal that helped him launch the Karachi Literature Festival in 2010. He took it upon himself to break the monotony of literary sittings. Asif Farrukhi's festivals were not a boring affair; they were full of literature enthusiasts who thronged in droves to multiple sessions. Asif took his zeal of literary festivals to other cities across Pakistan where it became a regular trend.

Having worked for 20 years at Unicef, he finally was able to pursue his academic life full-time at Habib University in Karachi from 2014. As dean and professor of humanities, he inspired his students to expand their intellectual horizons. With six collections of short stories to his credit, and two books of literary criticism, he had formidable energy to work long hours perfecting his writings and editing others'.

His literary journal 'Dunyazad' reflected his penchant for world literature. His love for other languages was beyond question as he made conscious efforts to bring the diverse ethnic communities in Sindh closer to each other. His contribution to the field of literature was immense, and he will be intensely missed by his friends and readers.

He was indeed a literary giant, the likes of whom are not many in Pakistan; it will be an understatement to say that we needed him the most now, when he was at the pinnacle of his potential to promote literature in Pakistan's intellectually barren fields.

Why not to fall in love with Bali?

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



Ulun Danu Bratan Temple is located by the Lake Bratan, Bedugul, Tabanan Bali. It is one of the three sacred temples by the lake honoring God for His gift of water and irrigations and becoming a popular tourist destination. The temple court was expanded to accommodate the visitors and looks more beautiful

Balinese to welcome their guests and thus show their love and respect for the visitors. Our host Eida, in her middle age, yet astute and energetic, briefed us about Bali besides sharing with us the program for next three days. Soon we arrived at our hotel in Kuta area. It was in the city center and on a walking distance from all main attractions of Bali. Kuta is perhaps the busiest tourist center in Bali and most of the tourists prefer to stay in this area. For those interested in traditional Balinese pieces of art, handicrafts and souvenirs Kuta happens to be the best place.

Day's first engagement started with dinner at Kuta beach. It is like a food market. Scores of restaurants are lined on the beach offering delicious cuisines. Some of the restaurants offer traditional Balinese dances also that indeed provide a real feast to visitors. Couples on honey moon in Bali prefer to have at least one dinner at this place. Even those who are not on honey moon find the place equally romantic and mesmerizing. Here you would find all kinds of sea food such as crabs, prawns, fish of course, shell fish, lobster and what not. And if you do not find things of your choice then there is always a man selling corns nearby, so do not hesitate to pick one. It would cost you Rs 200 though.

PENGLIPURAN, A VILLAGE OF IMMACULATE PEACE

We were taken to a traditional model village of Bali called Penglipuran. Located at 625 meters above the sea level Penglipuran is one of the most placid, clean, and serene village throughout the whole nation, and one of the three cleanest in the whole world. Being untouchable by modernization the village's atmosphere and the immaculate gardens surrounding them should be an exceptionally authentic experience for you to visit, from its majestic and mythical culture, to high hospitality and courtship of the locals. It took us about three hours to reach Penglipuran village from Bali city. But with car it should take only one hour or one and half hour. After a tiring journey, beautiful scenic beauty of the village and generous hospitality of locals proved extremely soothing and refreshing.

The beauty of the village is that you just feel at home. You can just walk in to any house in case you need something to eat. You can just walk into any house in case you need to refresh yourself. Doors of village people are open for everybody and so are their hearts. Most of the families have set up their own small businesses outside their house in order to make their both ends meet. Even if you need to use toilet just got to any house and use toilet. It is free of charge. Inmates of the houses get a reasonable amount from the government for facilitating the visitors. Such amount is paid from the ticket money collected from visitors.

We were amazed to see a special place in the village for those who had two marriages because in their belief only one marriage was legal at a time. The place nevertheless was deserted as no one in the village had two marriages at a time. We were told it was not possible for people having two spouses at a time to live with village people, neither they were allowed to worship with others in the temple. So people in this village strongly believe in monogamy.

WISATA ULUN DANU TEMPLE

Ulun Danu Bratan Temple is located by the Lake Bratan, Bedugul, Tabanan Bali. It is one of the three sacred temples by the lake honoring God for His gift of water and irrigations and becoming a popular tourist destination. The temple court was expanded to accommodate the visitors and looks more beautiful. It is a wonderful place for walking, refreshing and recharging one spiritual life. This is one of the two big lake temples in Bali (other be-



ing the one on Lake Batur). Built in 1600's, the lake supports Subak (irrigation). Arrive early if you want to beat the crowd and take great pictures. The temple complex has nicely curated lawn and is well-maintained.

At the entrance there are toilets (small charge PKR 20), a few shops and a restaurant. Once inside there is a well maintained garden, the temple and restaurants. There are also some sellers inside the grounds. You may also hire fishing equipment or take a paddle boat out onto the

lake. The place has a number of restaurants. We had a lunch at one of these restaurants. It was buffet offering a variety of dishes. Here for the first time we had chicken corn soup cooked almost in Pakistani style therefore majority of the participants had it to their full.

The Temple is a great tourist attraction for those also who are looking for scenic beauty and nature at its best. So those visiting Bali must include this destination in their schedule. It is located in the Eastern part of Bali and it takes around one hour from Bali to get there. Since the place gets huge number of tourists daily therefore it is recommended to go early in the morning in order to enjoy its real beauty and grandeur.

JATILUWIH RICE TERRACES

Our next stop was lush green paddy fields. Indonesia imports rice in huge quantity from various countries including Pakistan. Indonesian rice produces are not sufficient to cater to domestic needs because of burgeoning population therefore they have to import rice. These paddy fields are located almost two hours drive from Bali city. Most tourists in Bali only ever seem to go to Kuta Beach. I've been amazed at the crowds in Kuta and equally amazed at how few crowds there have been elsewhere.

One of the top ten things to see in Bali and front and center in every guidebook, these rice terraces are stunning. They give new meaning to the word green. They crawl up the sides of the hills like steps leading you towards the sky. It's just you and nature, when you are at this place. This area is the only place in the world that has three annual rice harvests.

Even at this place we came across so many couples enjoying natural beauty of the place and thus making their trip memorable. The place is so attractive and romantic that you immediately lose contact with the outer world. While those who visit the place accompanied would enjoy the panoramic beauty of the place to the full, those visiting alone would make a solemn vow not to come to the place alone next time.

There are so many other places that are attractive too but due to paucity of time we could not visit all of them. You need to have at least 10 days to fully explore potential of Bali. Bali Safari is yet another attraction, which I visited during my last trip to Bali in 2018. It is also a must visit place. Bali sojourn, I must say, should remain incomplete without visit of Bali Safari.

Summing up, in my view Bali has every reason to fall in love with it. And one plus point of falling in love with Bali is that it would never betray you!!

The article was written last year based on experiences of the author during trip to Indonesia arranged by the Indonesia embassy.

US, China and Hong Kong stand to lose out in latest tussle

John Defterios



The Trump administration has made it a policy priority to maintain pressure on China to reverse what was a \$419 billion trade deficit in 2018. Huawei, the telecoms equipment manufacturer, remains a bone of contention, with the White House eager to get allies to stop orders of the group's 5G technology

THE world economy is just starting to re-emerge from a COVID-19 lockdown but it may be faced with an ill-timed tug-of-war between the US and China, which has Hong Kong being pulled from both sides. At this stage of the conflict, all three players stand to lose out.

This latest dispute was triggered by Beijing's less than stealth maneuver during the National People's Congress to pass controversial legislation which would give it greater sway to impose security measures on the territory. Without hesitation, Washington weighed into the debate by calling for a review of its Hong Kong Policy Act to assess the level of territory's autonomy from China.

US President Donald Trump said that he will begin the process of removing the preferential status for Hong Kong in retaliation for China's move. With no clear timeline articulated and the overwhelming challenge of nationwide protests in America, investors expressed some relief that a "clear and present danger" has been avoided. However, it would be a mistake in an US election year to assume that this issue will slide off the agenda.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the island no longer maintains the freedoms that were afforded it after the 1997 handover from the UK to China. "No reasonable person can assert today that Hong Kong maintains a high degree of autonomy from China, given the facts on the ground," the top US diplomat declared.

Removing that preferential treatment would be viewed as hostile act against Chinese President Xi Jinping. Immediately after Pompeo's comments, Beijing drew its own line in the sand.

"Internal and external hostile forces are trying to use Hong Kong to split the country, subvert the government, carry out terrorist acts and interfere in the affairs of Hong Kong,"

said an official statement from China's embassy in Washington. It went on to conclude that Beijing will continue implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy.

The Trump administration has made it a policy priority to maintain pressure on China to reverse what was a \$419 billion trade deficit in 2018. Huawei, the telecoms equipment manufacturer, remains a bone of contention, with the White House eager to get allies to stop orders of the group's 5G technology, which Washington claims is used as a Trojan horse for intelligence purposes.

The two sides applied tariffs and counter-tariffs. The trade deficit shrank to under \$350 billion last year with those tariffs in place, but so too did global growth. Trump and Xi agreed to find common ground with a face-saving pledge for China to purchase an additional \$200 billion of goods. The agreement covers farm products, natural gas and scores of other items, which would play well with the president's base in the heartland of America during an election year if they are delivered. It does not look promising as the two lock horns on numerous issues.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow recently said that the US president is giving that deal less importance and that the administration remains "miffed" with Beijing over the coronavirus. With Wuhan labelled as ground zero for COVID-19, it opened Beijing to a full range of accusations by the Trump administration, which included hiding evidence, silencing the World Health Organization and developing the virus in a medical research lab there. Critics of the Trump administration contend it was an effort to deflect attention from the president's initial denial of the coronavirus and his subsequent slow response to the threat.

Which leads us back to Hong Kong. For centuries under British rule, the territory developed as a vibrant trade

and financial services hub. Prior to the handover, the city state was known for its press freedoms, sound judicial system and favorable tax regimes that welcomed global companies to use it both as a regional hub and a springboard into China. This rings true for American companies as well. According to the US Consulate General in Hong Kong, 1,200 are doing business there and two-thirds make it their regional headquarters. Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's chief executive, who has always towed Beijing's policy line, claims the measure would have only limited scope to curtail protests and provide a semblance of stability to restore growth.

If Washington goes ahead in earnest with what many say is the "nuclear option" by removing the preferential status, the signal is loud and clear to US companies; it's time to rethink your presence there. The US feels with its diplomatic clout the fallout will reach far beyond American companies. It ranked third in the World Economic Forum's annual "Global Competitiveness Report" last year, a top-ranked status it has enjoyed since the survey was developed.

But perhaps Beijing's bold move to play its own trump card with security legislation may be signaling its overall frustration after two years of protests. If it cannot contain a middle ground of limited democracy and civil liberties, then its own financial hub of Shanghai may be given an expanded role. In the meantime, strained US-China relations will be a deterrent to a global recovery and Hong Kong's business brand will most certainly suffer another blow.

John Defterios is CNN Business Emerging Markets Editor and host of The Global Energy Challenge on CNN International.

– Courtesy Arab News

Briefs

PTA ensures VoIP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) was ensuring uninterrupted services to its consumers using VoIP, VPN and video conferencing applications in remote learning, online businesses and other routine matters across the country.

PTA's priority was to maintain support for consumers and businesses and ensure that networks remain resilient and continue to operate effectively, said an official on Wednesday. All educational institutions and online businesses are using Legal Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIP), Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and video conferencing applications to carry on their online activities without any restrictions.

All legal VoIPs and VPNs and video conferencing APPs such as WhatsApp, Skype, Google Meets, Zoom, Blue Jeans, Cisco WebEx, Team viewer, Meraki VPN etc are available to be used for virtual education and business.

PML-N dual face was exposed

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Information and Culture Minister Fayazul Hassan Chohan has said on Wednesday that PML-N's hypocritical attitude for point scoring over national issues has been exposed as Shehbaz Sharif left his so called self-quarantine after receiving bail.

Talking to a private news channel he stated Shehbaz Sharif had gone to self quarantine to stay safe from COVID-19 as he remained patient of chronic cancer and took medicines of immunity boosters, he was prone to novel contagion. "But soon after receiving bail from Lahore High Court senior leader of PML-N was seen surrounded by party activists," he said. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) always respected courts verdicts gracefully, court has not acquitted Shehbaz Sharif but he was given bail before arrest till June 17, he stated. — APP

Iran reports 3,134 new COVID-19 cases

TEHRAN: Iran reported on Wednesday 3,134 new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of confirmed infections in the country to 160,696, the state TV reported.

Kianush Jahanpur, head of Public Relations and Information Center of the Iranian health ministry, said during his daily briefing that 70 people died of the coronavirus in the past 24 hours, raising the death toll to 8,012. Out of the new cases, 493 were hospitalized, he added. — APP

UNODC's webinar on prisons kicks-off COVID response Virtual Advocacy drive

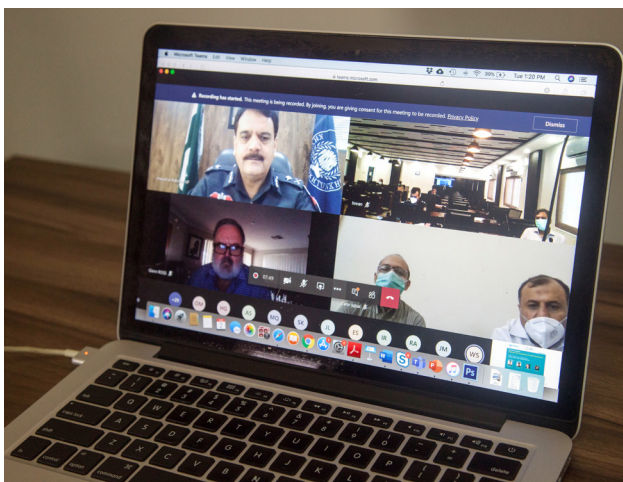
A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a Virtual Advocacy Campaign (VAC) on COVID-19 mitigation measures in collaboration with the Criminal Justice Institutions in Pakistan. The campaign was curated through a webinar on 'Shaping Prisons' response through preparedness' in collaboration with the provincial Prisons Departments from across the country.

Inaugurating the Virtual Advocacy Campaign, Jeremy Milson, Country Representative, UNODC Pakistan underscored the need for a radical shift through adaptive approaches to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. He added that the Virtual Advocacy Campaign will help UNODC to find innovative solutions to advocate and support the institutions of the Criminal Justice System in Pakistan as they continue to adjust to the pandemic.

The webinar on prisons was the first in a series of virtual discussions planned by the UNODC Country Office in Pakistan. The insightful webinar brought together key speakers and panelists from prisons and across the chain of criminal justice institutions in Pakistan, including senior leadership, development practitioners and global experts in prisons, crime prevention and criminal justice, including the judiciary. Participants spoke on evidence-based good management practices for COVID-19 with the purpose to safeguard staff and inmates in the prisons of Pakistan.

Kazi Nazeer, DIG, Prisons, Sindh offered a perspective on Sindh prisons COVID-19 management, protection and response mechanisms taken by the Sindh Prisons Department, such as enforcement of the Sindh Epidemic Disease Act 2014, health protection measures of allocating dedicated cells and barracks for quarantine and isolation facilities, mandatory screening of prisoners and use of personal protective equipment by staff ever since the first COVID-19 case was detected in February 2020.



Glenn Ross, Prisons Expert, Adam Smith International, emphasized that while tackling COVID-19 "we should not let a crisis go to waste" and must look for opportunities not only to deal with short term problems but put in place measures that will have a lasting value for prison and criminal justice reforms.

To this end, Masood ur Rehman, IG Prisons, Azad Jammu and Kashmir outlined challenges and opportunities in prison management as part of COVID-19 response mechanisms, highlighting the strong correlation between 'overcrowding' and 'Under-Trial-Prisoners (UTP)' as one of the key risks to the transmission of the virus. He emphasized reinforcing the need for flexibility in the current legal system to ensure timely release of UTPs to reduce the prison population to control and contain the pandemic.

Philip Meissner, Inter-regional Advisor, Focal Point for Prison Reform, Justice Section from UNODC Vienna provided an evidence-driven reality check for the participants noting that roughly 58,000 prisoners are reported to be infected with COVID-19 across the world. He also introduced the participants to UNODC's e-learning platform for self-directed learning in pandemic preparedness.

The vibrant discussions were successfully steered by Waqas Shah, Programme Officer, Prosecution and Judiciary from UNODC to achieve a broader consensus on recommendations for developing a specific and consolidated road map for prisons on preparedness and crisis response, prevention and control strategies. Tim Williams, Governance and Quality Assurance Specialist, UNODC summed up key recommendations, including measures

related to planning and preparedness, health and protection, training, inspection, communication and coordination to support a robust and effective response to COVID-19. The recommendations also proposed applying effective management approaches to maintain secure, safe and humane detention facilities during the time of COVID-19 and beyond Masood ur Rehman, IG Prisons from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa formally closed the seminar with a note of thanks. The participants agreed that prevention and control alone may not be sufficient since prisons in Pakistan are inundated by several challenges of a strategic and systemic nature related to lack of training and coordination in addition to overcrowding. The pandemic has put a spotlight on the complex challenges that need to be addressed through sustainable and systematic actionable solutions through a coordinated approach by the prison authorities and the relevant criminal justice institutions.

Hand sanitizer is better than soap and water

BEIJING: Some rumors claim that hand sanitizer gel is more effective against coronavirus than hand washing, leading to soaring sales of antibacterial gels and wipes. The fact is, studies have suggested that using running water and soap to wash hands is more effective than a dab of hand sanitizer gel. According to a study by the American Society for Microbiology last year, antibacterial gel cannot be adequately rubbed in during use. Instead, washing with soap will dislodge viral cells from hands, and rinsing thoroughly

with running water will remove them completely, which is key to washing away viruses. Experts agree that a hand sanitizer with over 60 percent alcohol content is effective in killing most viruses. However, the must-have alcohol can be harmful to sensitive skins and even cause damage to healthy ones. A spokesperson for Japanese chemical products company Kao Corporation has said that too much hand gel can dry out the skin and remove natural oils on the surface, increasing vulnerability to infection. — APP



LAHORE: PML President Shahbaz Sharif waves to supporters on the occasion of his appearance before court. — Shahbaz Sindhu

Russia adds 8,536 COVID-19 cases

MOSCOW: Russia has confirmed 8,536 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, raising its total to 432,277, its coronavirus response center said in a statement Wednesday. The death toll increased by 178 to 5,215, while 195,957 people have recovered, including 8,972 over the last 24 hours, according to the statement. Moscow, the country's worst-hit region, reported 1,842 newly confirmed cases in the last 24 hours, taking its total to 187,216. As of Tuesday, 303,641 people were under medical observation, while over 11.4 million COVID-19 tests have been conducted nationwide, Russia's consumer rights and human well-being watchdog said in a statement Wednesday.

The Russian government has prepared a draft action plan to ensure the restoration of employment and income, economic growth and long-term structural changes, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said Tuesday during an online conference with President Vladimir Putin. The plan contains around 500 specific measures to be implemented until the end of 2021, at a cost of around 5 trillion rubles (73.2 billion U.S. dollars), Mishustin said. The plan aims to overcome the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic and reach stable gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates, he told Putin. — APP

Poles to vote on June 28

WARSAW: Poles will go to the polls on June 28 in a presidential election delayed by the coronavirus, the parliament speaker said Wednesday, as surveys showed a liberal opposition candidate could oust the incumbent backed by the right-wing government. President Andrzej Duda, long considered the hands-down election frontrunner, appeared this week to be losing support as the economic hardship triggered by the coronavirus lockdown began to bite. Backed by the governing right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party, Duda could even lose to liberal candidate and current Warsaw mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, according to the latest opinion polls. — APP

US protests defy curfews

WASHINGTON: Protesters defied curfews across the United States Tuesday as leaders scrambled to stem anger over police racism while President Donald Trump rejected criticism over his use of force to break up a peaceful rally. Standoffs between police and demonstrators stretched into the night in cities from New York to Los Angeles over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed African-American man whose killing has brought once-in-a-generation protests to the nation for the past week. But there were fewer reports of the looting and violence that had soured street demonstrations in previous nights. Tens of thousands gathered earlier in Houston to pay a hometown tribute to Floyd, who grew up in the Texas city and is to be buried there next week. "Today is... about George Floyd's family — we want them to know that George did not die in vain," Mayor Sylvester Turner told an estimated 60,000 people.

A tearful Roxie Washington, the mother of Floyd's six-year-old daughter, told a news conference she wanted "justice for him because he was good. "No matter what anybody thinks, he was good." In New York, which on Tuesday prolonged its first curfew since World War II for the full week, AFP reporters saw hundreds refusing to go home after the 8:00 pm cutoff, instead chanting slogans and peacefully walking the streets in Manhattan and Brooklyn. — APP

Pentagon sends 1,600 troops to Washington

ANKARA: The Pentagon announced Tuesday that it had transferred about 1,600 troops to the Washington, DC area in response to ongoing protests over the death of George Floyd. "The Department of Defense moved multiple active duty Army units into the National Capitol Region as a prudent planning measure in response to ongoing support to civil authorities operations," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman said in a statement. He said the active duty elements in the region "are on heightened alert status" but "not participating in defense support to civil authority operations." — APP

Pope says racism 'intolerable'

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis said Wednesday "we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism", in reaction to the killing of a black man by US police that has sparked nationwide protests. But the pontiff also condemned the violence that followed George Floyd's death in the city of Minneapolis last week as "self-destructive and self-defeating". — APP

Missing Persons Commission's excellent performance

A total number of 6661 cases were received by the Missing Persons Commission upto April 2020. During May 2020, 13 more cases were received by the commission and total numbers of cases reached to 6674

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Missing Persons Commission has disposed of 4544 cases upto May 31, 2020 as per monthly progress report released by Farid Ahmed Khan, Secretary (ColoED) on cases of alleged enforced disappearances for the month of May 2020. A total number of 6661 cases

were received by the Missing Persons Commission upto April 2020. During May 2020, 13 more cases were received by the commission and total numbers of cases reached to 6674. The Missing Persons Commission disposed of 21 cases in May 2020 and thus total disposal of Missing Persons upto May 31, 2020 is 4544 and balance as on May 31, 2020 is 2130. The Missing Persons Commission will resume its hearings soon after review of Lock down



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policies announced by Federal Government and Provincial Governments in order to prevent from COVID-19 as per law. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman, Missing Persons Commission and other Honorable members have disposed of 4544 cases upto May 31, 2020. The relatives of missing persons have lauded the efforts of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal Chairman Missing Persons

Commission and other Honorable members of Missing Persons Commission for taking personal interest in locating their near and dear ones. Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman, Missing Persons Commission is serving Missing Persons Commission in an honorary capacity and is drawing no salary and availing other faculties which are admissible as per law.