



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, June 06, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

**European Commission pledges 300 mln Euros for immunization**

**IHC dismisses plea against mayor Islamabad**

**SCO committed to environment protection**

## Virus can render 3 mln unemployed

Budget deficit will increase to 9.34% due to the ongoing pandemic which has proven to be a setback for businesses around the globe: Finance Ministry

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance has informed the Senate that the coronavirus pandemic can result in an estimated 3mn people being unemployed and the poverty rate to surge to 33.5%. In a written reply submitted to the upper house on Friday, the finance ministry warned that the budget deficit will increase to 9.34% due to the ongoing

pandemic which has proven to be a setback for businesses around the globe. The ministry stated that out of the 3mn estimated who could lose their jobs due to the pandemic, a million from the industrial sector will be unemployed while 2mn people will lose their jobs from the services sector. It added that the rate of unemployment will rise from 24.3% to 33.5%. "The rupee was also devalued by 7.5% per month

due to the coronavirus pandemic from February till March," the ministry told the lawmakers. It added that the DGP growth before the pandemic was expected to be 3.24%. However, the 0.4% negative growth was recorded in the ongoing fiscal year. On the other hand, the ministry also shared that there was a decrease in FBR's revenue by Rs700 to 900 billion. It warned that FBR's tax revenue can decrease to

Rs3.9 trillion, adding that the board's tax target was Rs4.9 trillion. "The fiscal deficit will increase from 7.5% to 9.5%," the ministry told the senators in its response, adding that the virus will also hamper the country's exports which are expected to reduce to \$22.22bn. Remittances from overseas workers will also be reduced by \$2 billion and the budget deficit can increase to 9.4%, said the finance ministry.

### SAYING GOODBYE.....



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Belgium and the Netherlands along with outgoing Ambassador of Switzerland Thomas Kolly, posing for picture. The Swiss ambassador is leaving Pakistan after completing his term. – DNA

### Fiji becomes corona free

**DNA**  
FIJI: "Fiji has just cleared the last of our active COVID-19 patients," he tweeted. "And even with our testing numbers climbing by the day, it's now been 45 days since we recorded our last case. With no deaths, our recovery rate is 100 percent." The Pacific islands were initially seen as among the world's most vulnerable to the virus because of under-resourced health infrastructure and high rates of health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

## Sino-Indian standoff caused by Indian side

There is only one way to solve the current serious military confrontation problem. The Indian Army will return wherever it comes from: Chinese think tank

**DNA**  
BEIJING: The serious military confrontation in the Sino-Indian border area lasting more than a month was entirely caused by the Indian side, Cheng Xizhong, a distinguished professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law and a former military diplomat in South Asian countries said while expressing his views on the recent Sino-Indian border confrontation. He pointed out that there is only one way to solve the current serious military confrontation problem. The Indian Army will return

wherever it comes from. In his article issued here, he said, in fact, since the 1950s, India has implemented the endless "advance policy" in the Sino-Indian border area, constantly eroding Chinese territory, resulting in a border armed conflict in 1962. In August last year, India unilaterally changed the status of Kashmir by amending the Constitution. In October, it announced the establishment of the so-called "Jammu-Kashmir Central Territory" and "Ladakh Central Territory", and assigned a large territory of China under administrative jurisdiction to India.

Cheng Xizhong believes that India always wrongly judges the situation and always invades China's territory when China encounters some troubles internationally. As a result, military confrontations have occasionally occurred in the border areas. Recently, the Indian side believed that the time had come, and sent troops to the Bangong Lake and Gallewan Valley areas in the western section of the Sino-Indian border to intensify activities in an attempt to use this as a bridgehead and continue to invade China's territory northward.

### Briefs

**PM says more challenges ahead**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the country cannot endure any more total lockdowns. He said that we can't stop coronavirus from spreading, it can only be prevented by following SOPs. Addressing the corona Tiger Force, PM Imran Khan said that we have decided to recruit volunteers to fight the coronavirus. So far, one million Corona Tigers have registered to raise awareness about the pandemic. He said 175,000 volunteers provided assistance in various relief activities during lockdown. The Prime Minister said that Coronavirus is not going to stop completely, it will continue to spread. He said that if people do not follow SOPs, there is a danger of an even greater loss. He hinted that coronavirus hotspots in the country may have to be sealed in the coming days. He said that the country can still come out relatively unscathed from this crisis if people follow SOPs and decide to be responsible.

## Uzbek ambassador leaves Pakistan after completing tenure

A.M.BHATTI



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Uzbekistan Furqat Sidikov will Pakistan on Saturday after completing his term in Pakistan. Ambassador Furqat spent almost five years in Pakistan. He has been appointed as Dy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan. In his farewell message the ambassador said. "I will depart to my country as I completed my assignment as an Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan and got new appointment in Uzbekistan's Foreign Ministry. I have had the honor and privi-

lege of living in Pakistan for almost 5 years. During this period, I witnessed the amazing accomplishments that Pakistan has achieved, existing potential as well as pureness and sincerity of Pakistan's Nation. To the Esteemed Pakistani Brothers and Sisters, I want to say that I am so grateful for all that you have given me. I will always remember not only your

beautiful towns and countryside, but most of all your warmth and friendship. I know wholeheartedly that my love for your country will never end. Moreover, during my mission in Pakistan I deeply understood how close we are. Uzbeks and Pakistanis are strongly connected with deep historical roots, cultural and linguistic similarities as well as pure mentality and traditions. During my mission, one of the things that saw here is Pakistanis' love of Homeland, respect and amazing Today, Pakistan is a true leader in South Asia and valued partner of the world.

## EU extends Pak GSP Plus status till 2022

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood on Friday informed the Senate that European Union (EU) has extended Pakistan GSP Plus status till 2022. Responding to various

questions during Question Hour, the adviser said as a result of the EU's "Special Incentive Arrangement for Good Governance and Sustainable Development", Pakistan was given the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Plus, which allowed Pakistani products to have duty free access to EU on 91% tar-

iff lines. Pakistan's total trade with EU in 2018-19 was \$ 14,158.29 million and total exports to EU remained \$ 7,986.11 million against imports of \$ 6,172.18 million during the said period. He said the trade balance of \$ 1,813.93 million in 2018-19 remained in favour of Pakistan.

### ADB, Pak sign \$5.28m accord

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Pakistan signed an agreement Friday to expand support for Pakistan's response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province through the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF).

## Senate condemns Indian atrocities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate unanimously adopted a resolution on Friday to condemn violation of human rights in Indian Occupied Kashmir and its illegal incursion into Chinese territory. The Opposition Leader Raja Zafar ul Haq tabled this joint supplementary resolution which was unanimously adopted by the House.

The Senate condemned extra-judicial killings of 13 unarmed innocent youths on the other day and demanded the immediate action from the Secretary General of United Nations. The House declared fullest support to the cause of plebiscite in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) which is the only peaceful and democratic way of solving this burning issue. The Senate also fully supported the strong stance against illegal incursions into Chinese territory.

## SCO States committed to environmental protection: Norov

DNA

BEIJING: The member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are increasing their cooperation in the field of environmental protection, environmental safety, and prevention of negative consequences of climate change. This was stated by the SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov in an interview with TASS correspondent on the occasion of World Environment Day on Friday, June 05. "Today, environmental issues have become one of the main components of economic models for the development of States, including the SCO member States, which have reached to concrete understandings on them," Norov said. In accordance with the SCO Development Strategy 2025, the Organization's countries have come to an understanding on the need to attach importance to cooperation in the field of environmental protection, environmental safety, and prevention of negative consequences of climate change. In order to imple-

ment the provisions of the Strategy, the SCO Summit held on 10 June 2018 in Qingdao adopted the Concept of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in the Field of Environmental Protection. "The emergence of a coronavirus infection has shown that by destroying biodiversity, we are destroying the system that supports human life. While in some places nature has cleaned up during this period of quarantine, in others it has become more worse: in some countries recycling of waste has been suspended, amount of medical waste (disposable gloves and masks) has increased, and as a result of disinfection in cities, toxic substances have begun to enter the environment", Norov noted. Based on the importance of preserving ecological balance in the SCO region and restoring biodiversity in the interests of future generations, ensuring favorable conditions for well-being of the population and sustainable development, the 19th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State in Bishkek on June 14, 2019 approved an Plan of Action for 2019-2021 for implementa-



tion of the Concept. The document contains a number of specific measures to strengthen coordination in the field of environmental protection, training of personnel, and the adoption of effective measures to ensure environmental safety and the preservation of biological diversity. Cooperation is envisaged in the field of waste management, including hazardous waste, promotion of "green" development in the SCO space, as well as exploring opportunities for creating a market for environmental services, products and technologies within the Organization.

Norov continued noting that so far 12 meetings of experts from ministries and departments of the SCO member States responsible for environmental protection have been held. During the first meeting of concerned heads of ministries and agencies of the SCO member States, held in Moscow in September 2019, the parties approved a draft Program for the development of the environmental well-being of SCO cities. The document was adopted during the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the SCO member States in November last year in Tashkent in order to establish practical cooperation, institutional development, development of joint projects and research on improving the environmental situation in cities, providing environmental services and introducing innovative technologies aimed at improving the environment. Over the past 150 years, Norov pointed out, the living cover of coral reefs has halved; glacial ice is melting at an astonishing rate, while acidification of oceans is increasing, threatening its biodiversity. Wild species are disappearing tens or

hundreds of times faster than in the past 10 million years, and within the next 10 years, one out of every four known species could be wiped off the planet. "We believe it is appropriate to support World Environment Day at the international level. And if each of us considers it our duty to preserve what is given to us by nature, and also recognizes that we are responsible for the future of our planet, we will succeed in preserving our common home for future generations," the SCO Secretary-General concluded. World Environment Day was established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 2994 of 15 December 1972 to draw attention to environmental issues. It has been held annually since 1974. On World Environment Day, many countries organize street rallies and processions, bicycle races, concerts, essay or poster competitions on environmental themes in schools, tree planting, waste management and scavenging campaigns, and more. Each year, the Day is dedicated to a specific theme. The theme for 2020 is "Biological Diversity".

**Inside...**

**Pakistan, China's universities sign agreement on textile cooperation**  
– Page 02

**Fallacy of India's Muscle: The Reality is in Ladakh**  
– Page 03

**European Commission pledges 300 mln Euros for children immunization**  
– Back Page

## Briefs

### UNICEF, Microsoft launch Platform for Children

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UNICEF and Microsoft Corporation have launched the expansion of a global learning platform to impart online education among the children and youth restricted to their homes owing to COVID-19 pandemic, said an official of UNICEF here on Friday. He said online syllabus has already been designed for displaced and refugee children with the help of a digital remote learning platform. The content available to schoolchildren includes online books, videos and additional support for parents of children with learning disabilities. It has now undergone rapid expansion to facilitate country-level curriculum for children and youth whose schools have been forced to close due to COVID-19. The platform would also provide key resources to teachers and educators. He said that according to the latest available data from UNESCO, 1.57 billion students have been affected by school closures in more than 190 countries worldwide.

### Tobacco exports increase

ISLAMABAD: The exports of tobacco from the country witnessed an increase of 53.96 percent during the first ten months of ongoing fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the exports of corresponding period of last year. The tobacco exports from the country were recorded at US \$ 29.567 million during July-April (2019-20) against the exports of \$19.204 million during July-April (2018-19), showing growth of 53.96 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the exports of tobacco also increased by 33.05 percent by going up from 8,349 metric tons to 11,108 metric tons, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the exports of tobacco witnessed decreased of 36.06 percent during the month of April 2020 when compared to the same month of last year.

### Indian brutalities condemned

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the innocent children of occupied Kashmir are the most affected victims of the barbarity and aggression of the Indian occupation forces, and these children since they have grown-up, have witnessed nothing except the sounds of Indian guns, cries of the injured and the thick clouds of smoke rising from the arms and ammunition. "Hundreds of Kashmiri, children have been killed by the Indian army during the last three decades while thousands of others have lost their parents, and many others have passed their childhood in the Indian detention cells without any fault," he underlined.

## World Environment Day



ISLAMABAD: Staff of French and German embassies engaged in cleanliness drive on the occasion of World Environment Day. The initiative is part of French ministry of Europe & Foreign Affairs efforts to reduce environmental impact of France's diplomatic representations abroad. – DNA

## Pakistan, China's universities sign agreement on textile cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An agreement on textile cooperation was jointly signed by National Textile University (NTU), Pakistan and Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES), China, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. According to SUES, NTU is the very first Pakistani partner for SUES, and the move is of great significance when it comes to the educational exchanges and cooperation between universities of South Asian countries involved



into China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xia Jianguo, the President of SUES, noted that the signing ceremony was SUES's first move of international cooperation ever since the COVID-19 outbreak. The iron-clad friendship between China

and Pakistan has laid a solid foundation for the cooperation and exchanges between both universities. President Xia spoke highly of the competences and characteristics of research and talent training in NTU regarding textile. Over the years, SUES has



conducted a wide range of international exchanges and cooperation with overseas universities and enterprises, he mentioned, adding that he firmly believed the cooperation would provide both with more opportunities for common development.

Prof. Dr. Tanveer Husain, the Rector of NTU, expressed his heartfelt thanks to SUES for the arrangement and preparation for the video signing ceremony. NTU has been the premier institute of textile education in Pakistan,

meeting the technical and managerial human resource needs of almost the entire textile industry of Pakistan ever since its inception, he added. What is more, he expressed full confidence and keen expectation for a long-term cooperation between the two universities in multiple levels and fields. The signing ceremony was held in video form. Directors from SUES's Office of International Cooperation and Exchange and the Institute of Textile and Garment were present, the report added.

## UBC greets Pakistan Company

DNA

ISLAMABAD: United Business Group Central Chairman and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik Friday congratulated first Pakistani company for getting European Union "CE" certification for "Face Shields" export in the wake of Coronavirus. Talking to delegation of exporters led by Hameed Akhtar Chadda here today he said that entire business is proud that the company "SPEL" the

manufacturer has been assessed and found to comply with the EU PPE regulations for CE marking cat -1 by meeting application clauses for physical parameters." Iftikhar Ali Malik said now Pakistan can export face shields of international standard in entire European Union and globally. He said features of face shields included light weight washable with soap and water full face protection, comfortable to wear, non resistant to breathing and first level of defense

against splashes and mist. It constitutes part of PPE (personal protection equipment). Muhammad Mobeen, a member of the delegation said that It is made of transparent PET sheet using indigenous technologies with local resources. The people at large can also use to protect them self against Coronavirus. He said after its successful trial, 10,000 face shields were donated to Governor Punjab Muhammad Sarwar Ch which is helping a lot to combat with deadly virus.

## SC fixes steel mills case for 9th

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) has fixed the Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) case for hearing on June 9, Dunya News reported on Friday. Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed has formed a bench including Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi. The registrar office has issued notices to all parties including the PSM. It is pertinent here to mention that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) earlier decided to relieve the employees of the PSM under golden handshake scheme. – DNA

## 'Collective efforts needed to fight virus'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Friday thanked healthcare workers as the frontline warriors to fight against the coronavirus and stressed that united efforts would help defeat the disease. Talking in a Radio Pakisran programme, she said the government under sincere leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan is keeping a vigilant eye over the current situation. She said Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking the nation on board in every decision thus requesting the nation to adopt preventive measures in order to avoid from this pandemic. All government institutions, especially those responsible for healthcare, have been mobilized and are working to combat the Coronavirus epidemic in accordance with WHO recommendations, she added. She urged that the people should understand sensitivity of spread of COVID-19 in the country, adding, Masses should strictly follow precautionary measures to stop the spread of corona virus. – APP

## IHC dismisses plea after govt decides to withdraw mayor's suspension notice

During the hearing of the contempt of court case, the government representative said that the federation will soon be terminating the notification

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal government on Friday told Islamabad High Court (IHC) that notification regarding suspension of Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz has been decided to be withdrawn. During the hearing of the contempt of court case, the government representative said that

the federation will soon be terminating the notification. Moreover, the court has disposed of the petition. Earlier on May 17, federal government had suspended Islamabad Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz for 90 days over corruption charges. Aziz was suspended "with immediate effect for a period of ninety (90) days for fair con-



duct of inquiry under section 96, sub-section (1) of Islamabad Capital Territory Local Govern-

ment Act, 2015 (X of 2015)", the notification stated. Sources told that in February, a reference was filed against the Islamabad Mayor in which it was alleged that he was abusing his powers, using staff for personal use, and operating official vehicles that were reportedly beyond his entitlement. On May 21, the IHC had

reinstated Sheikh Ansar Aziz on the post of mayor of Federal Capital and deferred his suspension notification. On May 30, federal government had challenged Islamabad High Court decision to reinstate the mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz. An intra-court appeal was filed against the decision of the single bench.

## CCP initiates enquiry on shortage of petroleum products

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has taken notice of the public concerns and complaints regarding the shortage of petroleum products in country and initiated an enquiry to see whether such a shortage is the result of any anti-competitive activity. The CCP is empowered under the Competition Act, 2010 to ensure that businesses do not engage in anti-competitive activities including abuse of dominant position or cartelization that may result in the shortage of supplies or unreasonable increase in prices of products. Sudden shortage of fuel across country at a time when the Government has reduced prices followed by low demand due to COVID-19 pandemic, arises suspicion that artificial shortage might have been created either by limiting supply at the Oil Marketing Companies, and/or hoarding at the distribution level.

## IRSA releases 283,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 283,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 248,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1443.36 feet, which was 57.36 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 99,100 cusecs and outflow as 110,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1209.60 feet, which was 169.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 51,300 cusecs and 75,000 cusecs respectively. – APP

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Vol: 01 Issue: 64

Email: [dailyisbpost@gmail.com](mailto:dailyisbpost@gmail.com)

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

## PSM layoffs

WHETHER you call it downsizing, layoff, or rationalization, all mean nearly the same thing: you are rendering people jobless. The approval that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has granted to the 'rationalization plan' for the Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) will enable the authorities to lay off nearly 10,000 employees. Though the ECC has tied the approval with a legal go-ahead, the plan itself appears to be more of an eradication than rationalization. Since the government is so fond of advisers and special assistants rather than elected representatives, the ECC meeting was chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Hafeez Shaikh. Cleverly dubbed a 'full and final human resource rationalization plan for PSM employees' the scheme makes it seem like it is in accordance with the judgment and observations of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and other courts hearing the cases about the PSM. It is a long story of how a world class steel mill initiated by the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s, was built and handed over to Pakistan by the erstwhile Soviet Union in the 1980s. General Ziaul Haq's regime hired many more people than were actually required and then the subsequent governments followed suit. Finally it started incurring huge losses in 2008 and its operations came to a complete halt in 2015. This saga of nearly half a century is now taking a new turn. PTI leaders such as Asad Umar, and Imran Khan himself, before coming to power had promised a positive turnaround by improving the PSM management so that once again it could be operationalized. For the past two years it seemed that the government had no interest in running it; rather it looked at other options including the one approved now which is going to have a disastrous impact on its employees. Contrary to its claims, the government has been unable to involve private investors and management. Now, with this proposed layoff thousands of employees will find themselves jobless in a market which is already teeming with the unemployed especially in the aftermath of the corona crisis. According to reports, nearly half of the existing workforce of the PSM is within the age bracket of 50 to 60 years, meaning they still have families to support and many years of productive life. Moreover, the PSM has not been able to pay the retirement dues of the retirees for the last five years. We understand that the government may not be able to carry on paying salaries when there is no production at the mills, but the point is why no efforts have been made to operationalize it with the existing employees rather than firing them with one stroke. One can assume that all these employees will be happy to go back to work rather than being fired or sitting idle. They have the expertise and the skills needed to revive the mills - provided they get to work under good management. We urge the government to understand the value of reviving the mill in a sustainable manner.



## Continued detention

AFTER Jang/Geo Group Editor-in-Chief Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman was not produced before the accountability court in Lahore by NAB, his remand to NAB was extended for another 14 days. Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman has already been in detention for more than 83 days. And now he will spend even more days in detention for a case that is flimsy at its best. Journalists in Pakistan, including the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, have been staging demonstrations demanding his release which by all means has been seen as bizarre since it concerns a case that dates back 34 years, there have been no charges made and even the investigation process has not been completed. The sense then that this is more a case related to press freedom does not seem far-fetched. International media watchdog bodies including the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists and the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders have all spoken out against his arrest. The matter was also brought up during reports published on May 3, World Press Freedom Day. The manner in which the matter is being treated simply highlights the lack of press freedom in Pakistan, and the government's claims that the Pakistani press is amongst the most free in the world ring hollow. Not a shred of evidence has been produced in the Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman case. There have also been orders from courts against detention by NAB without evidence. Yet Mir Shakil remains behind bars and the free media has received a resounding blow from which it struggles to recover. Prompt action in this matter is called for. A fair trial is one of the basic legal requirements that must be fulfilled in all cases, especially when it involves the right to freedom of expression. When the country is facing an epidemic, there is a need to focus more on the challenges that have engulfed Pakistan. We need dynamic and vibrant media to ensure a smooth flow of information across the country. The government and NAB must realize that ensuring freedom of expression is a hallmark of modern societies all over the world. That cannot be ensured when you arrest the head of the largest media group in the country in a case that would be found wanting any given day.

# Fallacy of India's Muscle: The Reality is in Ladakh

Iqbal Khan

**Foreign Policy highlighted two clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers, on May 5 and May 9, at separate border areas in India's east and north. While no one was killed in those hand-to-hand combat skirmishes, more than 100 soldiers were injured. India and China have 3,500 kilometres long un-demarcated border which is generally a very difficult terrain. Now, soldiers from both sides have been camped out in Galwan Valley, according to Reuters**

ACCORDING to prominent Indian Strategist Pravin Sawhney, "China's Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) is a superpower vis a vis India. PLA understands future warfare. Instead of trying to match US, it is leapfrogging in certain areas. India oblivious - believes 74 percent FDI in defence will get it [s]tech[ology] to match PLA".

China even controls India's digital payments platforms. China will run away with victory even before India thinks of putting up a fight. China is a superpower. Almost as advanced as Russians and Americans in all aspects. The US knows this, and that's why it washed its hands off the situation early on by offering to arbitrate. There may be early signs of US-China decoupling, but it would be foolhardy to presume that the US armada would come to fight alongside Modi's boys. Now, Indian defence minister is trying to carve an exit for India, with loss of some territory. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rejected President Donald Trump's mediation offer for resolving ongoing China-India stand-off. Reiterating his offer Trump said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not in a good mood about the ongoing big conflict with China. Earlier Trump had tweeted on May 27 offering to help resolve growing border tensions. Trump described the situation as a "now raging border dispute." Even though Trump's words were hyperbole, they reflected the seriousness of tensions. India has border disputes with all of its neighbours, tension over the Citizenship Act with Bangladesh and a threat of false flag operations against Pakistan. China has settled its border disputes with all its neighbours except India; same goes for Pakistan. The Indian press, has reported that Chinese army brigades comprising thousands of soldiers have crossed into Indian territory to setup tents and trenches at key points near the Himalayas. In response, India's army has deployed reinforcements. The Economist reported that New Delhi and Beijing have activated a high-level diplomatic channel to diffuse tensions. And China's ambassador to India, Sun Weidong, struck a calming tone, telling reporters, "We should never let differences overshadow our relations." Foreign Policy highlighted two clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers, on May 5 and May 9, at separate border areas in India's east and north. While no one was killed in those hand-to-hand combat skirmishes, more than 100 soldiers were injured. India and China have 3,500 kilometres long un-demarcated border which is generally a very difficult terrain. Now, sol-

diers from both sides have been camped out in Galwan Valley, according to Reuters. "About 80 to 100 tents have sprung up on the Chinese side and about 60 on the Indian side where soldiers are billeted. India's The Print reported that Chinese troops had moved as far as three kilometres into India's side of the Galwan Valley. Quoting sources 'in the know', the online publication said that Beijing was also moving men into 'finger areas' of Pangong Lake while boosting its forces on its side of the LAC. Both sides now reportedly have thousands of troops stationed on either side of the ceasefire line, leading observers to draw comparisons with the 2017 standoff between India and China in Doklam. One wonders if it is China's reply to the 2017 standoff with India in Doklam, or it has called Indo-US bluff of their keenness for containing China. Both the US and India are leading partners of a coalition of the unwilling to keep China bogged down in localised petty conflicts. Former Indian military officials and diplomats told Reuters that New Delhi's construction of roads and airstrips in Ladakh were the most likely reason for drawing Beijing's ire. Narendra Modi's government has pushed for improving connectivity and by 2022, 66 key roads along the Chinese border will have been built. One of these roads is near the Galwan valley that connects to Daulat Beg Oldi air base, which was inaugurated last October. "The road is very important because it runs parallel to the LAC and is linked at various points with the major supply bases inland," said Shyam Saran, another former Indian foreign secretary. "It remains within our side of the LAC. It is construction along this new alignment which appears to have been challenged by the Chinese." "Today, with our infrastructure reach slowly extending into areas along the LAC, the Chinese threat perception is raised," said former Indian foreign secretary Nirupama Rao. Observers believe that India's move to open road aims at monitoring Chinese movements, though New Delhi claims that the road is to facilitate pilgrims. So, like in 2017, trigger of conflict this time also appears India's own actions in the disputed area. Indian

action is comparable to Nazi concept of 'Lebensraum', which comprised policies and practices of settler colonialism. India's aggressive policy towards neighbours is putting regional peace at stake. Tensions are rising between China and India's militaries, as both sides are working to fence off a contested border region in the Himalayas. Beijing and New Delhi officials are accusing each other of trespassing over the disputed border. Earlier similar accusations had triggered a brief but bloody war in 1962. India suffered a humiliating defeat in that war. Reuters reported on May 27 that "India left red-faced after its troops were briefly detained by China in Ladakh". "The situation became very volatile when a scuffle between Indian personnel and the Chinese resulted in detention of some of our jawans but later they were released," NDTV quoted a senior Indian bureaucrat as saying. Chinese authorities also seized their weapons. "But eventually weapons were handed back and our jawans also came back." For India, it is a loss of face. The issue, however, stretches far deeper and connects to Modi's destabilising politics in the region. In a bid to bolster his strongman image before his constituents, Modi's regime has taken a rash approach to regional politics. Million dollar question is: What happen next? In case, India backs down and just absorbs it in order to not look the dragon in the eyes, things can settle down. In case India steps up, there are chances of serious consequences, and maybe even a military conflict. India's expansionist policies in the region are becoming a threat to its neighbours. Currently India is in a standoff with three of its neighbours - Pakistan, China and Nepal. All three disputes are borne out of India's hubris. Most recently tensions have flared up between Chinese and Indian troops in Ladakh's Galwan Valley region. And within, India is facing severe vertical and horizontal polarizations on ethno-sectarian axes, with a Divider-in-Chief prime minister personally fanning the fire under RSS oversight. With Donald Trump's abhorrence for war, India's goose is cooked. **Writer is freelance contributor; e-mail: [Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com](mailto:Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com)**

# How a kidnapped aid worker shook Italy

Massimo Di Ricco



**Italian liberals and the left wing openly condemned the hate Romano received for converting to Islam and celebrated her return home**

IN November 2018, Italian aid worker Silvia Romano was kidnapped by gunmen linked to the Somali armed group al-Shabab in northeast Kenya. At the time of the attack, which left several people wounded, Romano was volunteering for an Italian NGO in an orphanage in the village of Chakama. The news of Romano's kidnapping caused not only sadness and worry, but also controversy in her home country. Right-wing politicians and public figures, and some members of the public, accused the aid worker of "looking for trouble" by going to Kenya, and claimed she should have "stayed in Milan and helped people there". In the following weeks, the news cycle moved on and the discussions about Romano, and the work she had been doing in Kenya, slowly came to an end. Last month, however, Romano once again found herself at the receiving end of right-wing attacks, this time not only for going to Kenya and "causing trouble", but also for voluntarily choosing to convert to Islam during her ordeal.

On May 9, when Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced on Twitter that Romano had finally been freed, most Italians were overjoyed. Soon after, however, it was revealed that the aid worker had chosen to become a Muslim during her 18 months in al-Shabab captivity and that she had changed her name to "Aisha". This dampened the celebratory mood and led many on the Italian right to once again question Romano's motivations for going to Kenya in the first place. After Romano landed in Rome wearing a light green jilbab - a loose-fitting robe that covers the entire body and is often worn by Somali women - her conversion swiftly became the sole focus of right-wing Italian media outlets. They published "before and after" photos showing the aid worker's "transformation" and embarked on a quest to shed light on "the mystery surrounding the conversion": Was she forcibly converted? Was she brainwashed? Was she a victim of Stockholm syndrome? "We have freed a Muslim woman," declared conservative daily *Libero Quotidiano*, as if only Christian Italian citizens, and not Muslim ones, deserve to be protected by the government of the country they call home. "Islamic and happy. Silvia the ungrateful," read the front-page headline of an article by Alessandro Sallusti, the editor of *Il Giornale*. In the same article, Sallusti accused Romano of wearing the "jihadist uniform of the enemy" and claimed her conversion is as absurd as a Jew coming back from a concentration camp dressed as a Nazi. Prominent feminist historian, Nadia Riva, who in the 1980s was one of the founders of the influential and radical feminist group the *Cicp & Ciciap* club, for example, in a Facebook post referred to Romano as "a smiling woman in a green recycling bag". Claiming Romano's jilbab is a symbol of male oppression rather than an expression of her religious identity, she explained that she could not believe a woman would choose to dress that way willingly. Many Italian feminists came to Romano's defence and distanced themselves from Riva's controversial comments. However, the fact that some prominent Italian feminists found it appropriate to attack a fellow woman because of what she chooses to believe in and the way she chooses to dress demonstrated how embedded is the idea of moral superiority in parts of the Italian and Western feminist movement. Italian liberals and the left wing openly condemned the hate Romano received for converting to Islam

and celebrated her return home. Their response to the hateful right-wing rhetoric surrounding the aid worker's liberation, however, was equally problematic, albeit for different reasons. In their response to the whole Romano saga, Italy's liberal media organisations and public figures tried to highlight the human side of the story, and celebrated her safe return home without any reservations. But in their undoubtedly well-intentioned celebration, they promoted deep-rooted and highly damaging stereotypes about Africa. They not only portrayed the continent as a savage and abandoned place, but they also implied Africans are in need of "white saviours". Liberal newspapers published countless images showing Romano surrounded by Kenyan children, but did not attempt to preserve the privacy of these children as they would normally do with European ones. These images, and articles that accompanied them, were perfect reproduction of decades of "white saviour" myths, which talked of selfless Western men and women who travelled to Africa to "save" African children with no agency. Italy's leading centre-left daily *La Repubblica* even published an article claiming Romano "was betrayed by the same village she wanted to save" - a claim that reaffirms baseless and damaging tropes about the ungratefulness of African people in the face of Western attempts to "save" them. One of the most obvious reproductions of the "white saviour myth" came from best-selling author and vocal anti-fascist Roberto Saviano. In an article published in *La Repubblica*, and on his Facebook page, Saviano portrayed Africans - perhaps unintentionally - as people living in a desolated place who are in need of help and guidance from the West. In his article welcoming Romano back to Italy, Saviano described the Kenyan children she worked with as "forgotten and abandoned" and claimed they will likely become al-Shabab fighters themselves in the absence of Western "saviours" like Romano. Ignoring Kenya's own fight against the armed group, he even went as far to say "a young European woman who arrives unarmed to stay next to the children" like Romano is the "great enemy" of such terrorist organisations. This narrative is not only problematic and simplistic, but also misleading and paternalistic. It presents a decontextualised image of the region and ignores the role Europeans themselves played, and continue to play, in the

ongoing calamity in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, according to a study released in 2018, many of the orphaned children in Kenyan towns like Chakama will not go to Somalia to fight for al-Shabab, but will most probably move to nearby international tourist spots like Malindi, Mtwapa or Mombasa to try and make a living. There, the biggest threat facing them would not be the possibility of radicalisation, but being pushed into the sex trade. In these regions, it needs to be noted, the main clientele of sex workers are mainly European sex tourists, including Italians. The Italian media's coverage also ignored Italy's past crimes in Africa. As newspapers and TV channels discussed the role Turkey played in the liberation of Romano, and claimed the country is now "the new master of the Horn of Africa", their nostalgia for those times when Italy had power over these parts of Africa was apparent. In these think pieces, of course, there was no mention of the disaster Italy's colonial enterprise caused in the Horn of Africa in the last century. In the shortage of relevant thoughts and critical commentaries, one of the few voices out of the chorus was that of Somali-Italian writer Igiaba Scego, who took the opportunity to remind people, "Italians must be decolonised from their own colonial imagination. Even in language we carry too many legacies, not only of fascism, but of the typical rhetoric of the nineteenth century." There is not much to be gained from questioning Romano's motivations for embarking on a volunteer aid mission to Kenya after her 18-month ordeal and safe return home. We should do everything we can to shield this young woman from the attacks of Italian right-wing media and politicians, who target her only because she chose to convert to a religion that they see as "the enemy". Nevertheless, we should also not ignore the damaging narratives that some liberal media organisations and figures utilise in their defence of the aid worker. While we should reject Islamophobia - whether it comes from right-wing figures or renowned feminists - we should also challenge discourses that present millions of Africans as savages who need to be saved by altruistic Westerners. **The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance. - Courtesy Al Jazeera**

**Briefs**

**SOPs for cattle markets**

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government and Town Planning Department responding to request forwarded for establishment of cattle market, prior to Eid ul Azha, has issued Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), elaborating safety measures necessarily followed by all having any stake in the envisaged animal mandi. The SOPs formulated in particular backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic include mandatory provision of wearing masks by all those present in the markets (under any capacity), readily available hand washing facilities (round the clock), maintenance of three feet distance (ideally six feet) between people all the time during mandi activity and adequately marked entry and exist lanes with arrows facilitating movement of buyers / visitors.

**National volunteer drive in UAE**

ISLAMABAD: As many as 132 nationalities including Pakistani residents in the United have joined the national volunteer campaign to support efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. The number of volunteers enrolled in the campaign within a month of its launch has reached over 18,740 volunteers from different nationalities, Emirates News Agency (WAM) said Friday. The 'UAE Volunteers' national campaign has become popular with UAE citizens and residents alike, who competed to fulfill the call of duty by volunteering in 125 opportunities including 98 field and 27 virtual opportunities remotely. According to data by National Volunteer Campaign, the Emirati volunteers topped the list with 30 per cent of the attending and most participating 5,555 volunteers followed by resident volunteers of Indian nationality (2,010 volunteers), Pakistanis (977), Palestinian (535) and Philippines (496). The numbers of volunteers from the rest of residing nationals in the UAE differ in numbers.

**1,125 teams engaged in killing locust**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Some 1,125 teams of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) were engaged in conducting operation for killing marauding locust swarms destroying standing crops in vulnerable districts of the country. According to NDMA spokesman, some 47 districts of the country were reeling from locust attacks. Of which 33 were in Balochistan, 9 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, three in Punjab and two districts were located in Sindh province.

**European Commission pledges 300 mln Euros for children immunization**

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said, "Vaccines can only save lives if everyone who needs them can access them, especially in the most vulnerable communities and regions of the world. This is why Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's work is so important"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The European Commission has announced a pledge of 300 million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for the period 2021-2025. It will help immunise 300 million children around the world and finance vaccine stockpiles to shield against outbreaks of infectious diseases. Today's Global Vaccine Summit organised by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is an important milestone in strengthening health systems and immunisation capacities of the world's most vulnerable countries. This is instrumental in reaching the objectives of the Coronavirus Global Response. At the Coronavirus Global Response pledging event co-hosted by the Eu-

ropean Commission on 4 May, more than 1.5 billion was pledged for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, including 488 million for deploying, once available, a vaccine against coronavirus. President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said, "Vaccines can only save lives if everyone who needs them can access them, especially in the most vulnerable communities and regions of the world. This is why Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's work is so important. It gives developing countries the means to build stronger health systems and immunisation programmes, to make the world a safer place. I am glad that the European Commission can support Gavi in such a crucial endeavour. This will help us overcome this pandemic and avoid another."



Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen said, "Building up immunisation systems is a fundamental part of the work the EU does with partner countries and Gavi to strengthen health systems, which will be more important than ever on our road to recovery from COVID-19. Improving children's access to basic health care, notably effective and safe

vaccines, was key to almost halving global child mortality between 2000 and 2017. Ensuring more vulnerable children have continued access to vaccines will be key for our collective success over the next five years." The new Commission pledge of 300 million represents more than its total contribution to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance so far. The funding will help: Vaccinate 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives. Ensure the successful transition of some countries into self-financing. Leverage US\$ 3.6 billion in national co-financing and self-funded vaccine programmes. Deliver over 3.2 billion doses of life-saving vaccines to 55 countries. Facilitate 1.4 billion contacts between families and health services through vaccination. Insure the world against

the re-emergence of polio through routine inactivated polio vaccine programmes in collaboration with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Fund vaccine stockpiles for emergency use to stop dangerous outbreaks. Today's pledge is made under the assumption that the EU's new Multiannual Financial Framework and in particular the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), where the funds pledged for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, would come from, are adopted broadly along the lines proposed by the European Commission. On 2 June, the Commission proposed to increase NDICI funding for 2021-2027 to 86 billion in 2018 prices (96.4 billion in current prices), including 10.5 billion from the new 'Next Generation EU'.



**PARIS: The Ambassador of Pakistan to France Moin ul Haque and officers of the Embassy are offering Fateha on the sad demise of Ambassador Iqbal Akhund (Late), a pioneer and accomplished diplomat who represented Pakistan in many countries and at regional and international forums, including as Ambassador of Pakistan to France. May his soul rest in eternal peace. - DNA**

**Libyan govt says it entered Haftar stronghold Tarhuna**

Turkey's backing has helped the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) win a string of victories in recent weeks, ending an assault on Tripoli that led to battles in its southern suburbs and bombardment of the city centre

DNA

DOHA: Forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognised government said on Friday they entered Tarhuna, the last major stronghold of eastern commander Khalifa Haftar, capping the sudden collapse of his 14-month offensive. There was no immediate comment from Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) on whether

its forces remained in the town, a day after they were pushed from their last positions in the capital Tripoli. Turkey's backing has helped the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) win a string of victories in recent weeks, ending an assault on Tripoli that led to battles in its southern suburbs and bombardment of the city centre. The GNA operations room said

in a statement its forces had reached the centre of Tarhuna after entering from four sides. "Our heroic forces entered the city of Tarhuna from four axes and reached the city centre ... and they gave the Haftar terrorist militia a lesson they will not forget," said Mohammed Gnonou, a GNA military spokesman, in a statement. Abdelsalam Ahmed, a resident of Tarhuna, said GNA forces had entered the town.

Libya's conflict is far from over, however, with the LNA still controlling the country's east, where there is a parallel administration, and large parts of the south, where the country's main oilfields are located. The LNA is backed by Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. The United Nations has warned that a recent flood of weapons and fighters to both sides in Libya risks a major new escalation.

**PARLIAMENT SESSIONS**

**Fawad calls for following SOPs**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry Friday emphasised for proper implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) against coronavirus in the Parliament House and warned that physical sessions of two houses in parliament can be more challenging situation. Talking to a private news channel, he said in results of the direct sessions of Parliament we are witnessing number of coronavirus related death and cases among Members of Parliament who have become victims of coronavirus after the live session. He further said no doubt Parliament sessions are necessary but people's health is also important. He said many other countries, including Brazil, China, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Taiwan are utilising videoconferencing and/or other electronic means to maintain some legislative activities. Furthermore, lawmakers can hold the upcoming sessions in any open areas with proper maintaining social distancing, less number of members and following all SOPs, he suggested. Replying a question related to lockdown, Fawad ch said, corona pandemic is a global threat confronted by all the nations of the world not only Pakistan facing this critical situation and stressed that everyone must follow WHO guidelines and SOPs.

**OMCs to reduce HOBC fuel price: OGRA**

ISLAMABAD: Taking note of exorbitant retail price of High Octane Blending Component (HOBC), the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Friday advised all Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to reduce the fuel price in line with the decline at international level. "OGRA has taken up the matter of HOBC pricing with OMC's, keeping in view the consumers interest. All OMC's have been advised to set reasonable prices in line with the declining oil prices in international market," authority spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a tweet. Meanwhile, OGRA asked the Pakistan State Oil (PSO) company in writing that the price of HOBC, being charged in the market at various retail outlets, was considerably higher than its cost. Whilst the price of this product was deregulated, however, in the interest of consumers it was expected that OMC should sell it at a reasonable price. - APP

**Zong 4G recognized as most supportive fight against COVID-19**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A survey conducted by Ipsos, the world's third-largest market research company, has recognized Zong 4G under CMPak (China Mobile Pakistan) as one of the ten most supportive companies in fight against COVID-19. According to Gwadar Pro, the survey revealed that many Pakistanis recognize CMPak's CSR Strategy as highly responsive, pertinent and timely to mitigate the pandemic's adverse economic fallout and with the most supportive roles during the country's ongoing fight against the pandemic, reports Gwadar Pro on Thursday. As an operator that has al-

ways stood with Pakistan, with the outbreak of this pandemic, CMPak and its ever-dedicated employee force stepped forward to ensure the provision of seamless services for both individual and business customers. In response to pandemic COVID-19, CMPak has announced a comprehensive plan to maintain network services, assist government authorities, facilitate customers and ensure that the economy continues functioning digitally. The service packages include free unlimited data and voice connectivity to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA); free SMSes, Mobile Broadband along with CMPak bolt devices to the provincial Governments; access



to websites, CMPak's website, online recharge service and My Zong App totally for free; and a free-of-charge connection to COVID-19 government helplines and hospitals. The comprehensive service packages adopted by CMPak in the challenging time take concerns of both the government and common people, reflecting its capabilities to handling emergencies efficiently and its pursuit of humanitarian morals.

On top of rendering high-efficient telecommunication services, CMPak has already partnered with Pakistan's Federal Government, Provincial Governments, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Institute of Health (NIH), Indus Hospital. Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for relief activities across the country. CMPak, in collaboration

with PRCS, has launched a mass awareness campaign while also strengthening the PRCS hospitals to treat more COVID patients. In collaboration with NDMA, CMPak has provided preventive gear for the front-line workers, which is dire need in current times. In addition, Zong has donated telecommunication products and medical supplies to the provincial governments of Pakistan to ensure the smooth operation of critical services and health facilities in the country. To alleviate the acute shortage of masks in Pakistan and protect the front-line workers from the threat of Coronavirus, Zong has procured 16,000 N95 surgical masks from China, which will further

be donated to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for distribution. Earlier in April, CMPak joined hands with UNICEF to disseminate accurate and reliable information on the pandemic COVID-19, to its over 37 Million customers, through multiple platforms and channels, including CMPak's official page of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Website and MyZong App. To amplify this effort, CMPak has also set up a Coronavirus prevention hotline of "4343" to provide people with medical advice and emergency aid. Or People can acquire knowledge of daily prevention measures through SMS and ring back tone from Zong.

**142 Kashmiris martyred**

ISLAMABAD: In Indian occupied Kashmir, unrelenting military siege and crippling lockdown imposed by Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government on August 05, last year, completed 10 months, on Friday (today). A report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service said that the life of Kashmiris had been made a living hell since India illegally revoked the special status of occupied Kashmir on August 05, 2019. It said that the move was aimed at snatching away identity of the Kashmiris through changing the Muslim-majority status of the occupied territory. The report revealed that Indian troops martyred 142 Kashmiris including 4 women during the period. - APP