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CPEC harbinger of peace, prosperity, says Kanwal

Hungarian envoy for creating trilateral bloc

Pak condemns Armenian attack on Tovuz: Aisha



## Briefs

### Ahsan Iqbal moves NAB

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Former interior minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday moved National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to file a reference against Prime Minister Imran Khan for withholding funds for the Narawal Sports City Complex project.

Talking to media in Narawal flanked by PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday, he said that former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Najam Sethi has promised to hold a Pakistan Super League (PSL) match at the Narawal Sports City Complex. Ahsan Iqbal said that the PM Imran Khan withheld the funding of the sports complex soon after coming into power, adding that baseless allegations were levelled against him.

### Pak doctor awarded medal in KSA

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia-based Pakistani doctor, Zia Ullah Khan Dawar, was awarded a medal by the Kingdom's health ministry in recognition of his services as one of the "captains" of the COVID-19 team. According to the publication, the health worker has been residing in the Kingdom for the last four years and has worked on several health programmes including tuberculosis, dengue fever, and malaria.

### Qureshi discharged from hospital

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Tuesday that he has been discharged from a hospital after recovery from the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). In a statement, he expressed gratitude to all those who sent well wishes and prayed for his swift recovery.

Qureshi said he had called off all meetings after he showed symptoms and went for a test without delay, which turned out to be positive. He added his health condition began improving after his treatment started immediately after the diagnosis.

## PM believes in transparency, says Shibli

Appointment of heads of institutions tedious job; Senate elections to be free and fair

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz, has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan was determined to ensure transparency in Senate election. Shibli Faraz, while addressing a press conference after attending the federal cabinet meeting, said that the premier asked the members to stay focus on the transparency of Senate election. He said that votes are being traded in Senate session. He added that two provinces have mostly raised voice against Senate polls. Regarding the appointment of the heads of the national institutions, the information minister said that the past governments had failed to devise a proper mechanism for making deputations in the government institutions. It was not an easy task to bring improvements in a system, he said.

He urged for introducing reforms in the national institutions to eliminate unlawful activities. Faraz said that the federal government wanted to ensure transparency in polls through electoral reforms. "The federal cabinet has so far taken 1,759 decisions during its 93 sessions. The relevant authorities started implementation on 1,579 decisions, 28 decisions are delayed and 46 are due to be implemented." "Many projects for health sectors are under consideration for the construction of hospitals under the public-private partnership. Moreover, a comprehensive strategy is being finalised for the proper utilisation pension and Hajj funds." "A briefing was given on the deforestation in northern areas in the federal cabinet. Special instructions were issued to the concerned embassies for the repatriation of 11,376 Pakistani nationals imprisoned in foreign countries."

## Hungarian envoy for creating trade bloc

Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad has been working on strengthening economic ties with Pak

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Hungary István Szabó has called for creating a trilateral trade bloc of Pakistan, Hungary and Turkey with a view to eliminate barriers to investment among these nations, besides exploiting huge trade potential. He appreciated the efforts of APBF to promote bilateral trade and joint ventures between business community of Pakistan and Hungary. He said that the serious and result oriented work of APBF convinced him to get HEPA



engaged with APBF to bring the business communities of the two countries closer. Both sides agreed to boost bilateral trade and investment through proactive approach and improved engagement. He said that the Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad has been working on strengthening economic

ties with Pakistan and the two countries also signed an Economic Cooperation Agreement in 2017, which laid down the framework of the further cooperation. Based on that, organizing the first session of Joint Economic Commission in the Hungary in Sept 2019 was another milestone of the deepening relations. He said that the Hungarian Embassy in cooperation with the Pakistan Ministry of Commerce and All Pakistan Business Forum was going to organize a bilateral Business Forum in Lahore but it was postponed due to corona.

## Pak condemns Armenian attack on Tovuz: Aisha

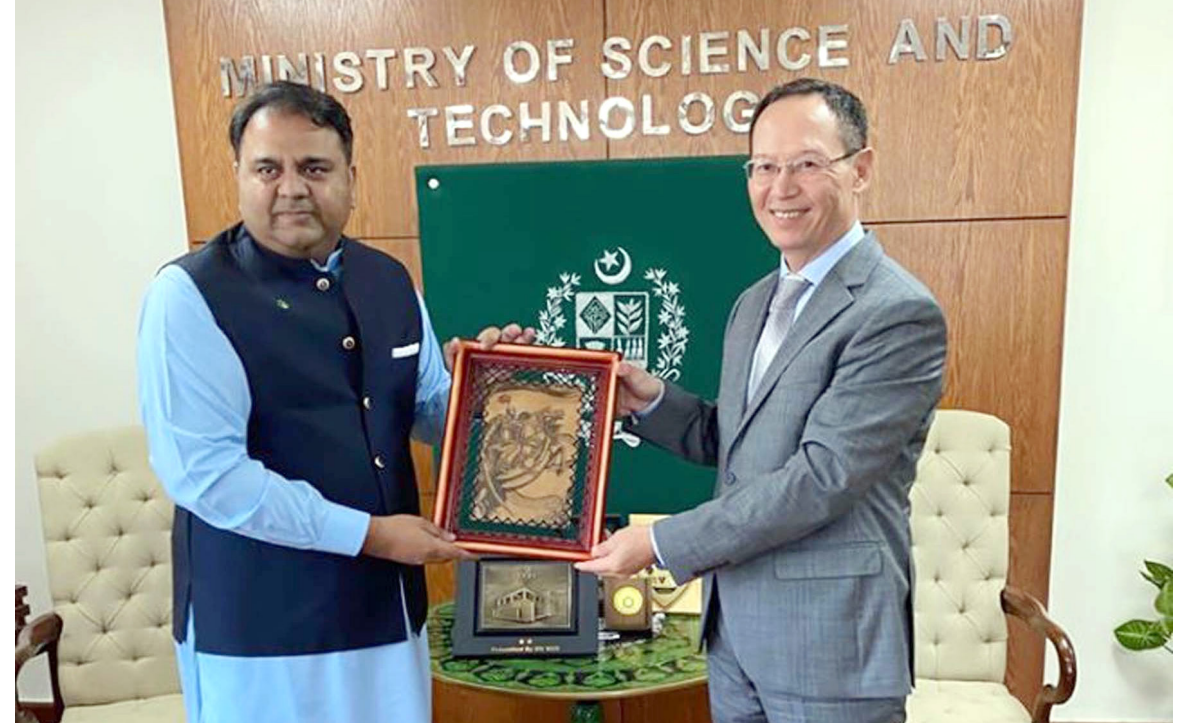
Aisha reiterates Pak support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly condemned the attack by Armenian forces on the Tovuz district of Azerbaijan which resulted in several Azeri casualties. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said we extend our sincere condolences to the bereaved families.

She said the unresolved conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh poses a serious threat to regional peace and security with far-reaching consequences. The Spokesperson said the recent provocative action is manifestation of the Armenian attempt to distract the international community and hamper the ongoing negotiation process for peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Reaffirming Pakistan's principled position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, she reiterated Pakistan's support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Another story with pictures on Back Page



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Erik Beishembiev presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Science and Technology of Pakistan Chaudhry Fawad Hussain. - DNA

### Kyrgyz envoy meets Fawad Ch.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Erik Beishembiev met with the Federal Minister for Science and Technology of Pakistan Chaudhry Fawad Hussain. During the meeting, the sides discussed issues of enhancing cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan in the field of Science and Technology in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain expressed the willingness of the Pakistani side to intensify scientific cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, exchange experience on the latest technologies with Kyrgyz colleagues, and also informed about Pakistan scholarship programs and readiness to accept Kyrgyz specialists in the country.

### SC nullifies SHC order on sugar probe report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday nullified the Sindh High Court's June 23 stay order that restrained the federal government from taking action against sugar mills in light of the sugar inquiry commission's recommendations. A three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, allowed the federal government's petition challenging the SHC order. It directed the government and relevant institutions to desist from unnecessary measures against sugar mill owners.

## Chinese President's old message on Planning Ministry's website

The Chinese President's message reads as, President Hussain, Prime Minister Sharif and I have agreed to elevate China-Pakistan relations...

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese President Xi's message on the website of Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives appears to have been outdated as it still addresses Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister and Mamnoon Hussain as President of Pakistan. According to details the Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives has published messages of various dignitaries including Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, Chinese President, Minister Asad Umar and Chinese ambassador in Pakistan Yao Jing. Messages of all these dignitaries are up to date and as per the prevailing CPEC guidelines, however the message of the Chinese president, which was prepared during the Nawaz regime is still showing on the website.

The Chinese President's message reads as, "President Hussain, Prime Minister Sharif and I have agreed to elevate China-Pakistan relations to an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. This description of China-Pakistan partnership is a most appropriate one, as it aptly defines the all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation between China and Pakistan.....".

## US-Taliban deal enters second phase

WASHINGTON: The United States has said that its landmark deal with the Taliban is entering its second phase, urging militants to stop violence so that the Afghan peace talks can be held. The two sides signed an agreement in February that saw Washington pledge to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan by the middle of next year, in return for the insurgents promising to hold negotiations with the Afghan government to end the decades-old war. Under phase one, the US said it would reduce troops to 8,600 within 135 days, while completely removing forces from five military bases. On the 135th day, US Special Representative on Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated the deal for Washington, tweeted that both sides had reached a "key milestone". "The US has worked hard to carry out 1st phase of its commitments under the agreement, including to reduce troops & depart five bases," he said Monday. As the deal entered its "next phase," Washington's approach will be based on certain conditions, Khalilzad warned. "We will press for completion of prisoner releases, reduction of violence ... & start of & progress in intra-Afghan negotiations," he said. Talks between the Taliban and Kabul hinge on a nearly-completed prisoner exchange agreed in the deal. Kabul pledged to free some 5,000 Taliban prisoners in a swap that would see the insurgents release around 1,000 Afghan security force captives. - DNA

## Three soldiers embrace shahadat

The Injured soldiers have been evacuated to CMH Quetta

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Terrorist fire raid on Security Forces routine patrolling party near Gichak valley, Kahan, Panjgor Balochistan. 3 soldiers embraced shahadat while 8 soldiers received injuries, including an officer. 5 injured are critical. The Injured soldiers have been evacuated to CMH Quetta.

## CPEC harbinger of peace, prosperity, says Kanwal

Kanwal Shauzad who is also member of Pakistan-Romania Friendship Forum (PRF) lauds role of the Forum in cementing relations between Pakistan and Romania; says 2nd phase of CPEC will create more jobs

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Kanwal Shauzad Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives has said friendship between China and Pakistan is based on trust and mutual support, and we have been devoted friends through both good and hard times. Our friendship is a pacesetter for amicable relations between countries. She expressed these views while giving an exclusive interview to Daily Islamabad, DNA News Agency and Centreline journal. Full text of her interview shall publish in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine. To a question about upcoming CPEC projects Ms. Kanwal said China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a major and pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative, to which the leaders of our two countries have attached great importance. It has also won the cross-board support from our two peoples as it aims to provide new opportunities to the citizens as well



Photos DNA

as bring new impetus and vision to China-Pakistan friendship. CPEC is a long-term and systematic project to promote economic cooperation through collaboration on Gwadar port, energy, transportation infrastructure and industrial cooperation, she added.



Kanwal said CPEC will bring solid benefits to our two peoples. With the completion of energy and infrastructure projects, conditions in Pakistan will improve. There will be more electricity integrated into national grid and the electricity supply will be more stable.

People will enjoy more convenient transportation and a better livelihood. The core of the project will remain geo-economic, but its implementation would prove to be transformative for contiguous regions of East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, the Gulf, and

Africa. Pakistan expects CPEC to be a vehicle for regional integration, connecting regional economies through its territory making Pakistan a conduit for regional and international trade. We want to make CPEC as the "gateway to prosperity and a door with many windows". To a question about laying of optic fiber from Khujran to Islamabad she said Karakoram Highway (KKH) which is being jointly upgraded by Pakistan and China will not only link China to the Arabian Sea, but also to South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. A Rail Link between our two countries is also envisaged to contribute to the success of the Economic Corridor. Similarly, the development of Gwadar Port will greatly benefit the region. These relations, which are based on common aspirations for peace and development, are on an upward trajectory and the leadership of both countries is committed to further strengthen them. Kanwal said the new optical fibre cable had been operationalised from Khunjrab to Islamabad. The next phase of the cable would be laid from Islamabad to Karachi and Islamabad to Gwadar as part of digital highway plan. Continued on Page-06

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America shuts down again despite Trump's calmness - Page 06

Armenia bears full responsibility for provocative actions against Azerbaijan - Page 08

## Briefs

## ADB to hold second stage of Annual Meeting

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will hold the second stage of its 53rd Annual Meeting as a virtual event on 17-18 September. The event will include a formal business session and selected knowledge events, according to ADB press statement received here Tuesday.

"As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to evolve, with travel restrictions impacting many ADB members and continued health risks, ADB and the Government of the Republic of Korea have agreed not to proceed with a physical meeting in Incheon," said ADB Secretary Eugenie Zhukov. The Republic of Korea has offered to host ADB's 56th Annual Meeting in Incheon in May 2023. ADB's Board of Governors will consider this proposal when it convenes virtually on 18 September.

The first stage of the 53rd Annual Meeting comprised a reduced-scale meeting of the Board of Governors on 22 May at which Governors approved ADB's financial statements and net income allocation in line with ADB institutional requirements. ADB is actively supporting its members as they address the effects of COVID-19 through its \$20 billion comprehensive response package announced on 13 April. — APP

## 'Universities to formulate exam policies'

ISLAMABAD: The universities will formulate their examination policies, based on nature of examinations, aligned with their respective feasibility scenarios and needs of students. Talking to APP on Wednesday, official sources from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) said that HEC and universities had already reached on a consensus on examinations policy, admissions policy, academic quality, and the academic calendar during the virus pandemic.

According to the sources, all attempts shall be made to protect the academic calendar. The problems faced by graduating students would be addressed, while the HEC would set up an appellate system to follow student complaints. HEC and Universities were agreed that both had shared objectives, as they want to save the semester, avoid disruption in academic calendar, motivate students to keep learning, and address the issues of graduating students, the sources informed. "HEC directed universities to formulate and publicly announce transparent policies on how they will conduct examinations at the end of the Corona-affected semester. HEC had canvassed the approaches being taken by universities all over the world, and had shared the most successful options with universities. However each option involved significant pros and cons. Universities could use any combination of the options as long as they met the minimum standards of readiness and shared the policy publicly. The universities are bound to formulate a clear policy on how this will be done, and share the policy as well as additional guidelines with students, faculty as well as HEC," the sources mentioned.

A clear policy is also needed on admissions in the light of the recent decisions by examination boards to announce results on the basis of past exams. Universities were asked to decide how they will evaluate these results in order to make admissions decisions. — APP

Hot, Humid weather likely in most parts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Tuesday forecast hot and humid weather in most parts of the country during next 24 hours. However, rain-wind-thundershower expected in Islamabad, upper/central Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during evening and night, MET office reported.

Rainfall(mm) recorded in Gilgit-Baltistan: Gupis, Bagrote 06, Gilgit 01. Maximum temperature's (°C) recorded in Sibbi, Nokkundi 44°C and Dadu 42°C. — APP



ATTOCK: Yasmin Rasid, Provincial minister for health talking to media. — DNA

## Plan to Restore the closed Unit Textile city: SBP Governor

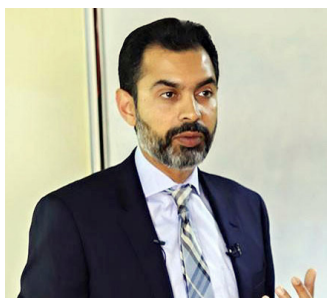
MUHAMMAD TAHIR

FAISALABAD: Documentation should be minimized for SME sector to fully exploit from the Refinance Scheme of State Bank of Pakistan and in this connection a committee headed by Dr. Anayat Hussain Executive Director has been constituted, said Mr. Reza Baqir, Governor SBP.

He was talking to President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Rana Muhammad Sikandar Azam Khan in a Meeting here. Syed Samar Hussain Executive Director, Muhammad Abid and Ashraf Khan Managing Director Banking Services Corporation were also present during this meeting. Governor said that the committee will review the entire system to identify the documents which

could be skipped. He directed the committee to start work on an immediate basis so that viable suggestions could be presented as early as possible. Regarding banking hours, he said that circular has been issued and all commercial banks will work from 9 AM to 5.30 PM from Monday to Friday. "It will not only lessen burden on banks but also facilitate the people", he added.

Governor also announced a separate committee headed by Chief Manager SBP Faisalabad. "It will have President FCCI in addition to other elected office bearers of the local trade bodies", he told and added that this committee will hold its meeting every month and decide problems of local nature there and then. Governor said that yet another Committee will also be constituted to discuss the possible impacts of



corona on sick units. "A separate meeting will also be arranged with the owners of these sick units", he assured. Earlier Rana Muhammad Sikandar Azam Khan President FCCI welcomed the incentive package after corona lockdown. He thanked Mr. Reza Baqir for having direct contacts with the stakeholders to resolve their genuine issues. He was also appreciative of his continuous follow up to pass on

the benefits of this scheme to the needy segments. "In this connection Chief Manager State Bank Faisalabad has been nominated a focal person to resolve any bottleneck", he added.

Regarding sick units, he said that these units were just preparing to restart their operation when the corona lockdown foiled their sincere efforts. He said that banks should reschedule their loans under the incentive package of SBP. "It will not only help them to create new job opportunities but also contribute their role in national exports" he added.

Rana Sikandar also thanked Governor SBP for setting up a dedicated Help Desk at FCCI and told that extensive publicity has been made so that maximum people could avail from the incentive package of SBP.

FCCI has also written letters to the all elected office bearers of major Trade Associations with a request to convince their members to avail form this Help Desk. President FCCI further made it clear that the Government should focus on filers instead of facilitating the non-filers. "It is necessary to achieve the ultimate objective of the documentation of economy", he added. He also thanked SBP for trimming the policy rate to 7% but added the banking spread is so high that it has practically nullified the benefits of Incentive Package.

He said being regulator SBP should also fix the maximum ratio of banking spread. He also stressed the need to empower regions to sanction loans and in this connection a committee headed by Chief Manager SBP could also be constituted.

## Pakistan, Hungary sign taxation convention

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Hungary here Tuesday signed a Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income. The convention was signed at the FBR House, Islamabad by Hungarian Ambassador Istvan Szabo and Dr Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed, Member (Inland Revenue Operations)/Additional Secretary.

The Article 27 of the Convention deals with Exchange of Information, according to press statement issued by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). It is pertinent that the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had approved changes in the Article on Exchange of Information in July 2012 to include provisions concerning cooperation between the tax administrations of the two contracting states. The present article embodies the rules under which information may be exchanged to the widest possible extent to include taxes other than the income tax. — APP

## 3-member committee to investigate audio tape

DNA

PESHAWAR: A three-member fact-finding committee has been formed to probe the alleged audio tape of former information adviser of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government Ajmal Wazir. The three-member committee will decide whether to refer the case to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or anti-corruption. After approval in the cabinet meeting, the committee will formally begin its investigation. The fact-finding committee, headed by Sahibzada Saeed Ahmed and including a retired judge and a retired Grade 20 police officer has been set up by KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.

## Pak air safety rating downgraded by US aviation regulators

The Pakistani embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment

DNA

WASHINGTON: In another blow to Pakistan's travel industry, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has downgraded the South Asian country's air safety rating, following the scandal related to pilot certifications.

The decision, disclosed on an FAA spreadsheet dated July 15 that was posted on

an agency website and confirmed by an agency official, means the US air safety agency determined Pakistan does not achieve international standards and now has a Category 2 rating. Pakistan last month grounded almost a third of its pilots after discovering they may have falsified their qualifications. The Pakistani embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The new rating means Pakistan airlines could be subject to additional inspections at US airports and could not add additional flights. A company spokesman told Reuters last week the airline was planning to expand the current special flights arrangements to re-initiate a regular schedule from Pakistan to the United States to provide direct flights. On Friday, the US Department of Transportation

said it has revoked permission for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to conduct charter flights to the United States. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency has suspended PIA's authorization to fly to the bloc for six months in a blow to the carrier's operations. Pakistan's grounding of pilots with dubious credentials followed the crash of a PIA jet in May that killed 97 people.

## KP reports three deaths in last 24 hours

The province might see a spike in cases if people do not abide by the SOPs during Eid-ul-Azha

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Tuesday announced that the province was reporting a decline in the number of coronavirus-related deaths and cases, with only three fatalities taking place in the last 24 hours. Health Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain, while appraising about the virus situation in the province, said previously more than 24 deaths per day were being reported in the province, however, the number has seen a decline in the past few days. He added that the number of coronavirus-affected patients who were receiving treatment at various hospitals across the province has also decreased, with fewer patients on ventilators and ICU units as compared to before. Hussain further said that the province might see a spike in cases if people do not abide by the standard operating procedures (SOPs) during Eid-ul-Azha.

## PTI leaders lash out at Bilawal

Bilawal cannot get respect by only including 'Bhutto' in his name: PTI leaders

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Haleem Adil Sheikh and Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan on Tuesday have lashed out at Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

In a statement, Haleem Adil Sheikh said that Bilawal Bhutto is finding crutches for coming into power. Minus 420 will be implemented to save Pakistan from thieves and looters, he stated. Meanwhile, Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan said that Bilawal cannot get respect by only including 'Bhutto' in his name. A truck cannot become fighter jet by writing F-16 at its backside, he added.

PTI leader further said that opposition leaders start discussing 18th amendment and All Parties Conference (APC) when they hear about accountability process. The reactions came after Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while declaring Prime Minister Imran Khan a threat danger to democracy and economy said that there should be across the board accountability in the country. He said that Imran Khan has left Kashmiris destitute. Selected or elected, we all used to come together on the Kashmir cause but it was the first and last Prime Minister who did not unite the nation on the Kashmir cause, he added. — DNA

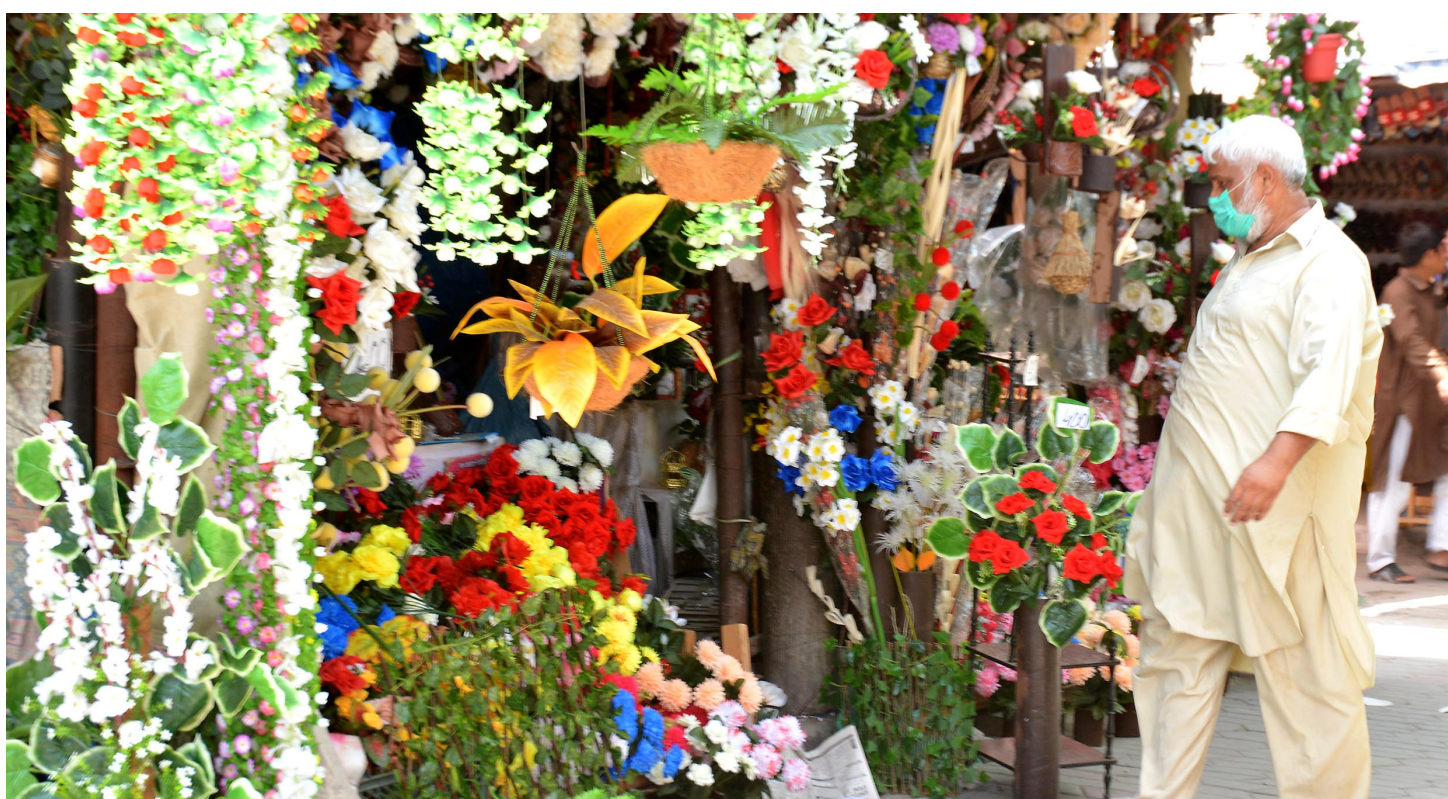
## Environmental Protection (Amendment) Bill approved by committee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The meeting was held with Senator Sitara Ayaz in the chair here at the Parliament House on Tuesday and was attended among others by Senators Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Faisal Javed Khan, Muhammad Akram, Pervaiz Rasheed, Sana Jamali, Keshoo Bai, Minister for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir, officials from the ministry and Environmental Protection Authority.

The Committee was told by the Director General EPA that the intended legislation is a much needed requirement for the Islamabad Capital Territory but the

preventing littering comes under the jurisdiction of Municipal Corporation of Islamabad and CDA and MCI already have a huge human resource to ensure sanitation of the city but they have failed to do the same. She said that the Islamabad Local Government Ordinance of 2015 has many provisions, preventive measures and penalties on littering and the MCI should be asked why they haven't imposed fines on littering or done efforts to curtail it. The Committee members were of the view that this amendment is a good start to improve the environment of the capital and should be adopted.



ISLAMABAD: A citizen checking the decoration flowers on display in a federal capital bazaar. — DNA

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## Briefs

### ITP to launch e-challan campaign

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has decided to launch an awareness campaign to sensitize the motorists about e-challan system and safe city initiatives. "You cannot jump on red light even if no traffic personnel are around you and later the fine ticket would be delivered at the violators' door step," a senior official in ITP told APP on Tuesday.

E-challan also included over speeding, one wheeling, and lane and signal violations. The teams of ITP educational wing in collaboration with Graana.com would carry out the activity at important boulevards, chowks, commercial centres and main avenues in the city.

They would distribute brochures, deliver messages to the road users and special announcement about e-challan would also be made during the drive. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed would himself monitor the campaign while staff of ITP would work in shifts to run the campaign smoothly.

The initiative would not only provide safe road environment in the federal capital but would eventually help to improve the security situation in the city, he maintained. — APP

### IHC reserves verdict on plea against PUBG ban

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday reserved its judgment on a petition challenging ban on PUBG game in the country by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). Justice Aamer Farooq, hearing the case, remarked that the PTA should have taken the advise from psychiatric before banning the game. The court asked the PTA's lawyer that under what section of the law the department had imposed ban on PUBG.

The PTA's lawyer adopted the stance that the game had been banned after the department had witnessed some anti-Islam material on it, to this Justice Farooq asked where it was mentioned in meeting minutes of PTA. Every game and material could be banned on the same pretext, the court noted.

The court observed that the PTA had to apply its own mind and mention the reason whatever the action it took. The PTA lawyer pleaded that there were some unethical scenes as well in the game, adding that it was banned on several complaints. The bench asked the lawyer to mention any complaint which alleged the game having anti-Islamic material. The court said that the PTA should have taken decision as per law. — APP

### RWP being sanitized with chlorine water

RAWALPINDI: Albayrak & Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) were continuously putting their efforts to keep the district clean and sanitized by disinfecting with chlorine water to prevent the citizens from fatal coronavirus.

According to a spokesman, the teams on Tuesday carried out its operation in Raja Bazar, Liaqat Road, Airport Road and Khana Bazar where roads, streets, shops railings, footpaths, markets, bus stops and other public places were sprayed with disinfectant water. Marking for social distancing was also done outside the stores and shops so that people while in a queue make a safe distance from each other as a precautionary measure from COVID-19. Operational staff and management was risking their life on field and monitoring the cleanliness operation spokesman said. — APP



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy family sitting under the shadow of tree during hot weather in capital city. — DNA

## Ombudsmen played vital role in addressing complaints: President

While addressing the conference, the President said that the institution of ombudsman had been doing a remarkable job in addressing the grievances of the people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has asked the Federal Ombudsmen to make the institution of Ombudsman more effective by amending the existing laws so as to provide free of cost and expeditious relief to the common man in resolving their grievances. He said the Ombudsmen played vital role in addressing the complaints of the people against administrative injustices.

He expressed these views while addressing Federal Ombudsmen's conference, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The conference was attended by Federal Ombudsman, Syed Tahir Shahbaz, Federal Tax Ombudsman, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera, Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Kamran Shahzad and Federal Insurance Ombudsman, Dr. Muhammad Khawar Jameel.

While addressing the conference, the President said that the institution of ombudsman had been doing a remarkable job in addressing the grievances of the people. He directed the Federal Ombudsmen to enhance their outreach to remote areas of the country so as the people could benefit of the speedy and free of cost justice being provided by them. Federal Ombudsman, Syed Tahir Shahbaz, gave a comprehensive presentation about the achievements of his organization. He

informed the conference that the Ombudsman had disposed of 75,000 complaints during 2019 while 97% of the decisions had been implemented. Federal Tax Ombudsman, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera, briefed the conference that his institution had disposed of 2,633 cases out of 3,171 during 2019. Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, apprised the conference about the role of the institution in

protecting the right of women. Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Muhammad Khurram Shahzad, informed the conference that the Mohtasib had amicably resolved 10,324 cases out of 15,639 during 2019. While appreciating the role and contribution of Ombudsmen in providing speedy justice, the President congratulated them and expressed the hope that they would continue their efforts to help the people against administrative injustices.

### Attock to get Mother and Child Hospital: Yasmin

ATTOCK: A Mother and Child Hospital having capacity of 300 beds will be built in Attock at the cost of more than Rs4 billion. Initially, it would be made operational with 100 beds facility from next month.

Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said this during her visit to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Attock on Tuesday. She was accompanied by Punjab Public Accounts Committee Chairman Syed Yawar Abbas Bokhari, Attock Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamar, District Health Authority CEO Dr Sohail Ejaz, Medical Superintendent DHQ Hospital Attock Dr Khalid Mahmood, Special Secretary Health Ajmal Bhatti and other officials. She said the Mother and Child Hospital would remain operational day and night, it will be well equipped having state of the art facilities both for mothers and their children. Yasmin Rashid said that at present there was only one gynae ward in DHQ hospital having only 22 beds which were not meeting the needs of the mothers and their children and said that after the establishment of new hospital this problem would be resolved. She said to provide better health facilities, fresh recruitments of doctors and paramedics were being made on merit. Talking about coronavirus, provincial minister said that coronavirus patients were receiving best medical treatment at government hospitals in Punjab. COVID-19 cases were continuously decreasing due to doctors' day and night hard work, she said while adding that the pandemic was controlled in Lahore despite the city being the stronghold of the epidemic. — APP

### SDG 14 'Life Below Water' nowhere on govt's priority

ISLAMABAD: Experts and civil society representatives have shown their grave concerns over least prioritizing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – Life Below Water that deals with the maritime affairs. They urged the government to take immediate steps to tackle marine pollution, streamline its management in a more sustainable manner by amicably resolving the overlapping mandate of the federal and provincial authorities. The participants also showed their trepidations and apprehensions for the extremely overlooked revised draft of the National Maritime Policy (NMP) that is lost in the government shelves for over three years. They also suggested establishing a joint policy advocacy, awareness-raising and outreach platform for the maritime stakeholders especially on the SDG14 targets. They were speaking at a multi-stakeholder consultative webinar organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTNTV on Tuesday. Well-known environmentalist and Devcom-Pakistan and DTNTV Director Muneer Ahmed hosted and conducted the webinar. Speaking on the occasion, Admiral (Retired) Asaf Humayun said that Pakistan was signatory to many international treaties and conventions on maritime affairs but we hardly had any significant implementation. Maritime affairs have also divided mandates between the federal and the provinces after the 18th amendment in the constitution. On many occasions, he said, it turned to be quite confusing what role is of the federal and what role should be picked up by the provinces. Being far away from the Centre despite having the federal ministry, often the maritime affairs have no fare and sometimes we see duplication of work. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has all types of globally accepted regulatory frameworks, Pakistan simply adopts it for the sake of marine resource conservation. Rear Admiral (Retd) Saleem Akhtar said we have three ports and a very long coastal belt to benefit from the blessings of the ocean but have no adequate policy and action plan to harness the benefits. More than 3000 million gallons of untreated wastewater is drained to the ocean. It has caused severe sea pollution damaging the fisheries. European Union has banned import of fish from Pakistan resulting one-sixth of the catch goes to the poultry feed and part of it consumed locally. — DNA

### Eid-ul-Adha preparations picks up momentum in capital

ISLAMABAD: With around two weeks left in the religious festival of Eid-ul-Adha, the people have started preparations for celebrating this important festival with shopping and buying the sacrificial animal. Majority of the people are pondering over adopting the best possible way of buying and sacrificing the animals either through online available shops or visiting markets with following all the precautionary measures to prevent from the Coronavirus. While a number of women can also be seen in the markets and shopping malls for buying dresses, shoes and other essential accessories taking advantage of the good sale offers by various brands amid the expected closure of shops due to the Coronavirus before Eid. "I have completed shopping for my family fearing the increasing rush of people in the coming days", said Shagufta, a mother of three-children. Talking to APP, she said, the overall financial situation of the majority of the people like us is not good due to Coronavirus lockdown which has made it difficult for us to do shopping and buy sacrificial animal at a time, so we are only buying the things which are most needed. — APP

## Government urged for initiating maintenance work in markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Tuesday urged the government for initiating work on repairing of basic infrastructure in the markets of capital city in order to bring them at par with international standards and to facilitate the growth of business activities. In a press statement, ICCI President Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that no development work has

been done in markets and industrial areas of Islamabad for the last four years. Due to which the condition of these business areas has deteriorated, he said adding that the business community was paying multiple taxes and charges to MCI including property tax, water charges, conservancy charges. He stressed the need for utilizing these funds for rehabilitation of infrastructure in markets and industrial areas including repair of roads, footpaths, street

lights, water and sewerage systems and provision of filtration plants and public toilets. Ahmed Waheed mentioned that Islamabad Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz was trying to provide facilities as he has recently done the ground-breaking of a public toilet in F-10 Markaz. However, he said, all the markets and industrial areas in Islamabad were needed urgent repair of basic infrastructure to bring them at par with international standards.

ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Abbasi and Vice President Saif ur Rehman said that lockdown has badly affected business activities in Islamabad. They also urged the MCI to remove all encroachments from markets in Islamabad as they were tarnishing the look of markets and creating hurdles in business promotion. They also urged for reducing taxes and water charges to provide relief to the business community affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

## Five Islamabad sectors still considered virus hotspots

The capital has now reported 14,108 cases of Covid-19 and 155 deaths. There are currently 2,626 active cases in the capital

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: There are still five areas in the capital considered hotspots for the coronavirus, even though the number of new cases reported every day has stayed below 100 for a few days. Capital administration officials said that G-6, G-7, G-8, I-8 and I-10 are still hotspots for the coronavirus; sub-sectors in most of these areas were previously sealed. I-8/3, I-8/4, I-10/1 and I-10/2 were unsealed on July 1 after a two-week lockdown,

and G-6/1, G-6/2 and G-7/2 were unsealed on July 8. The officials said that ground surveillance by the District Health Office has found that these sectors remain hotspots. There 69 confirmed cases of Covid-19 reported from G-7 between July 5 and July 13, followed by 45 from I-8, 42 from G-8, 41 from G-6 and 33 from I-10. The capital has now reported 14,108 cases of Covid-19 and 155 deaths. There are currently 2,626 active cases in the capital. Islamabad reported 181 cases in the

last two days as well as three deaths. G-8 currently has the highest number of confirmed Covid-19 cases with 201. The officials said that 118 restaurants and 599 shops have been sealed between July 5 and July 13 for violating standard operating procedures (SOP) to limit the spread of the coronavirus, along with 34 workshops and 16 industrial units. Fines totalling Rs1.7 million have been imposed on shops for violations as well, while Rs268,650 in fines have been imposed on individuals for violating SOPs.

## HEC to Introduce Competency-based Education

Groundwork with 143 universities and over 1000 key stakeholders completed

ISLAMABAD: Over the last 18 months, HEC has undertaken extensive consultations with over 1,000 individuals in 143 universities on measures needed to enhance student success. The consultations have led to the revamping of the undergraduate curriculum, and the introduction of "competency-based education" at all universities and affiliated colleges across Pakistan. Competencies are defined as combinations of knowledge, skills, behaviour, and interpersonal characteristics that enable individuals to succeed in their future life. Several key meetings were organised in 2019, including two national dialogues, five regional consultations, and 10 thematic workshops. These involved 143 universities from across the country including AJK and GB, and over a thousand individuals, including Vice Chancellors/Rectors, faculty members

from universities as well as colleges, college principals, Secretaries and other officials of higher education departments, and heads and officials of professional councils. The Chairman HEC stated that the purpose of education is to enable students to succeed in their future life, not only in their jobs, but also in their social, political, and personal endeavours. Universities have to work in such a way as to maximise the probability of such success, especially through the undergraduate degree programme, which is the flagship of any higher education system. In practice, however, this has not been the case. A major reason is that very little attention has been given in the past to this question, and therefore to the substance and quality of university education. He said that the new system is based explicitly on "competen-

cies", i.e., the determinants of future student success, and is designed to ensure that educational programmes orient themselves to the future needs of students. This shift will have long-lasting positive impacts on educational achievement and future success. The new system will be rolled out over the coming year, he added. There are numerous and well known critiques of undergraduate education in Pakistan, especially from employers and admissions committees. The old curriculum does not provide Pakistani students with such essential 21st century skills as critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, quantitative analysis, team building, or research methods. The new curriculum is designed specifically to enable the transmission of these skills as well as interpersonal and behavioural

attributes. More importantly, the new curriculum focuses on applying the acquired knowledge and skills to life's challenges, rather than merely acquiring theoretical knowledge. It emphasises exploration, curiosity, discovery, and creativity amongst students. The academic component of the curriculum seeks to balance generalization and specialization. In earlier semesters, every student must complete General Education (GE) courses in the major domains of human knowledge, i.e., Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Quantitative Reasoning, and Expository Writing, in addition to Pakistan Studies and Islamic/Religious Studies. In subsequent semesters, the students will move towards required departmental courses in their areas of specialisation (also called "Majors"). This sequencing is meant to

provide the students with flexibility in the choice of their area of specialisation. Students will also have the flexibility to graduate either with a single Major or a double Major, or a Major plus one or two Minors. In order to respond to the concerns expressed by potential employers, the new curriculum has made practical experience a mandatory requirement for graduation. All students will have to complete a summer internship in an actual work environment. In addition, students will have to choose an additional real world life skill, e.g., entrepreneurship and business development, civic engagement and network building, or participation in sports and competitions, and register for corresponding extracurricular activities in business incubation centres (BICs), student clubs, green clubs, sports, or university magazines.

### IHC seeks arguments in 'Mandir' case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought more arguments from petitioner on maintainability of an intra court appeal against the construction of a 'Mandir' in federal capital's sector H-9/2. The court asked the petitioner to satisfy the bench that how his appeal was maintainable and adjourned hearing sine die. A division bench headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah conducted hearing on an intra court appeal against the decision of a single member bench regarding construction of Mandir for Hindu community. During the course of proceeding, the petitioner's lawyer Tanvir Akhter Advocate pleaded that his client was affectee of paragraph eleven of single member bench's decision. — APP

## Briefs

PNCA remembered  
Sabiha Khanam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sabiha Khanum first lady of the silver screen of her time was paid glowing tribute in an online session arranged by Pakistan National Council of the Arts to recognize her services and contribution towards film industry. Sabiha who passed at the age 85 in United States last month started her career as a stage artist and soon joined silver screen.

Her pair with Santosh Kumar resulted in some of the most memorable films like Ghulam (1953), Gumnam (1954), Qatil (1955), and Sarfarosh (1956). Both the artists became so close to the extent of marriage and became the most adored, romantic couple of film industry.

Her acting, accent, both in Urdu & Punjabi was excellent beyond description. She also holds the credit of making some songs immortal by her unforgettable acting like Payal mein geet hain cham cham key', 'Wasta e rab da' and Ulfat ki nai manzil'.

She also sang two national songs 'Sohni Dharti' and Jug Jug Jeeje', popularity of which never declined. The online session in her honor was aimed to pay tribute to the legendary artist and to enlighten the young generation about the contribution of our iconic heroes, heritage and vira.

## Research students seek a year extension in study time

ISLAMABAD: Welcoming the government's decision for reopening of the educational institutions by September 15, the research students of post graduate studies (higher education) have demanded of the authorities concerned to extend their study time period from six month to one year for completion of research work. In a joint statement issued here on Tuesday, they said that as the government has also announced the opening of research labs in universities only for research students just after Eid ul Azha, but unfortunately now the time is over to complete our thesis.

"Our precious time of research work is wasted due to the pandemic coronavirus. Now we are unable to submit our thesis within limited time" they added.

Therefore, the research students and supervisors are waiting for a clear announcement by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), for extension in time period. — APP

## Telenor Business launches Smart Office Solution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Being a front-runner in providing state of the art solutions, Telenor Business has launched Smart Office Solution for its corporate customers. This solution aims to help the businesses make the most of an opportunity that comes with each call by effectively catering to customer requirements and providing an interface for effective performance management.

With businesses communicating increasingly over calls, especially with their customers, Telenor Smart Office aims to develop a positive relationship between them, one that is nurtured by ease of access, systematic synchronization and analytics for quality control. This solution is for enterprises across industries from public sector to privately owned pharmaceuticals, restaurants and many more.

"Every call brings a new opportunity and with Telenor Smart Office, we aim to help businesses grab every opportunity by having their calls answered and routed by a virtual receptionist", said Ghulam Husnain Nasir, National Director B2B Sales and Service at Telenor Pakistan. Telenor Pakistan has taken leaps towards establishing the foundation to support future needs of businesses and provide effective solutions that support them to operate, collaborate and connect more effectively with their customers and stakeholders.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi is being presented a book on "Blue Economy" by Vice Admiral (Retd) Iftikhar Ahmad Rao. — DNA

## President Arif Alvi Presented with book on 'Blue Economy'

Book is an attempt to describe various elements of Blue Economy and is divided into 14 chapters for ease of understanding

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi was presented with a book titled "Elements of Blue Economy" written by Vice Admiral (Retd) Iftikhar Ahmad Rao. The book is an attempt to describe various elements of Blue Economy and is divided into 14 chapters for ease of understanding. It starts by explaining Blue Economy and geography of oceans and seas, highlights importance of oceans for mankind, discusses sea-

borne trade and related globalization, waterways, inland waterways, ships, their types, shipbuilding, ports, fishing, seabed resources, marine and coastal tourism, law of the seas including IMO, importance of CPEC, and marine spatial planning. The book at its core refers to promote usage of ocean resources for economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas.

## Threat of war will continue to hover over SA: Speakers

Last few months have been the bloodiest months in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. About the rising tide of violence in the region, they said, "Kashmiri people's lives are at risk, and particularly the women folk are always the first casualties to the atrocities

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a live Webinar while highlighting dangerous dimensions of the lingering Kashmir conflict have observed that the ever-present threat of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan will continue to hover on the horizon unless both countries address the core issue of Kashmir that happens to be the root cause of tension in the region.

The webinar convened by Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) in collaboration with World Muslim Congress on the sidelines of the 44th session of United Nations

Human Rights Council titled "Emerging Conflict in South Asia Threat to International peace and security" was addressed by noted British author, biographer and historian Victoria Schofield, Ambassador (r) Arif Kamal, Ershad Mahmud, Brig (r) Dr. Saif Malik, Ahmed Qureshi and others, whereas, the event was moderated by the KIIR Executive Director Sardar Amjad Yousaf Khan.

Referring to the genesis of Kashmir issue, the speakers pointed out that Kashmir, which has now assumed a dangerous dimension, had been a subject of dispute between India and Pakistan since the partition of the In-

dian subcontinent in 1947. Terming Kashmir conflict as the root cause of tension in the region they said that the long drawn conflict, which has consumed Kashmiris' three generations, has been a stumbling block in the way of peace, prosperity and stability in the region.

"It is because of the unresolved Kashmir conflict that the two countries have never been able to be on good terms since 1947", they said adding that the Modi led fascist regime was trying to colonize Kashmir in the same pattern as Israel did in Palestine. Redefinition of domicile rules they said was part of India's nefarious design to

convert Muslim majority state into a minority. They, however, observed that the International community has not appreciated what has happened recently in the restive region. They said that the last few months have been the bloodiest months in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. About the rising tide of violence in the region, they said, "Kashmiri people's lives are at risk, and particularly the women folk are always the first casualties to the atrocities". Regarding the restrictions on print and electronic media they said that "Kashmiri media is facing the worst kind of censorship since the

government of India introduced a new media policy for the region". The speakers hailed International media outlets such as BBC and Aljazeera for giving a huge publicity to Kashmir since 5th August 2019. About the changing world scenario they said, "Since the last one year, countries who avoided talking about the Kashmir issue have started to talk on this issue in their own congress to find stability in the region". Highlighting the global community's role in resolving the dispute peacefully they said, "Only International community can get both the countries to talk and solve the dispute amicably".

## Ehsaas to launch Nash-o-Numa centres

ISLAMABAD: The project of establishing 31 Ehsaas Nash-o-Numa centres across the country will be launched within next few weeks for improving health facilities for new-born babies and their mothers. The programme especially designed to prevent stunted growth in children will be implemented with the support of World Food Programme initially in the nine districts of the country. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr Sania Nishtar briefed the Prime Minister Imran Khan about this initiative the other day. The initiative will be formally launched by the Prime Minister within a few weeks. Besides this initiative, payments were continue under Ehsaas Emergency Cash initiative across the country. An amount of Rs800 million has been disbursed among more than 66,000 beneficiaries in Islamabad. — APP

## 'Pakistan to continue supporting Kashmiris'

Media has an important role to play in further highlighting the issue across the world and exposing the abhorrent face of India: Shehryar Afridi



FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Afridi has said Pakistan

had highlighted the Indian atrocities on the people of Occupied Kashmir and would continue supporting the Kashmiris till realization of their right to self-determination and freedom

from Indian yoke. Talking to a private news channel, he said Prime Minister Imran Khan has highlighted the Kashmiris cause at every world forum and now it had become an international issue. He said media has an important role to play in further highlighting the issue across the world and exposing the abhorrent face of India. He urged the international community to wake up and get stopped the genocide of Kashmiris being committed by the Indian occupation forces.



ISLAMABAD: President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran Ajmal Balouch, along with President Traders union G-9 markaz Raja Javed, Raj Abbasi Chairman and Shahid Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhary and Raja Zulfiqar are also present. — DNA

## ICT launches anti-adulteration drive

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital administration has launched an anti-adulteration drive across the city to ensure the provision of safe and healthy food to the islootes.

The teams comprising assistance commissioners, Tiger Force volunteers, magistrates and police officials carried out raids at several shops and food outlets to check the quality of edibles items, hygienic conditions and other safety standards set under the Pure Food Ordinance. As per details available with APP on Tuesday, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Shalimar sealed three

milk shops, one restaurant and one bakery in Mera Abadi and confiscated fake milk powder being used for preparing contaminated milk.

AC Industrial Area during the drive in sector I-8 and I-9 sealed godown of a spice factory and two bakeries. Samples of spices, oil and other material were taken and sent for further testing. Likewise, AC Saddar inspected industrial units in sector I-10. Samples were taken for legal action as per law.

Magistrate City inspected sector F-7 market for price checking, food adulteration and the SOPs implementa-

tion. Around 25 shops were checked while 10 were sealed. AC City inspected markets in sector G-6 and F-7. A total of 44 shops checked 26 violations were found. Subsequently, three shops and one bakery were sealed and samples were taken and handed over to food department for analysis. Assistant Commissioner (Saddar), Deputy Director Food, visited salt chakkis, salt distribution depots, whole sale food godowns and distributors, restaurants in their respective jurisdictions. Some of the salt chakkis and wholesale food godowns were sealed owing to expired items and

unhygienic conditions in the area of Sabzi Mandi. Samples of stored vegetables like ginger and others were also taken during the drive.

Furthermore, Assistant Commissioner (Rural) sealed two factories for using expired and hazardous flavours and ingredients, while AC (Koral) sealed two edible oil producing units over producing substandard oil. Meanwhile, the federal capital dwellers have complained about the low quality meal, being served at roadside setups as well as on restaurants established near the beds of Nullahs, a big health risk to the visitors.



ISLAMABAD: Women buying shoes from a local shop as Eid nears. — DNA

## RCCI for accelerating work on CPEC economic zones

The joint ventures between Chinese and Pakistani companies will increase the ownership of the key stakeholders, he added.

The more we have local ownership in the projects the more it will be successful

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged the government to accelerate the process and work on CPEC Special Economic Zones.

President RCCI Saboor Malik on Tuesday in a statement said that the industrial parks would be developed aligned with local available resources.

He said COVID-19 has affected our national economy on many fronts; however, keeping in view the announced package for construction by the Government of Pakistan, there is a big opportunity to kick start trade activities via SEZ. Unemployment can only be addressed if the private sector be given more incentives and engagements, he further added. SEZ will help Pakistan to improve its GDP, poverty alleviation and unemployment, he added.

The RCCI president said, "We recognize CPEC as a game changer and we urge the government to focus on the 4th part of CPEC plan, which is Industrial Zones Development." He further said that the CPEC is the flagship project of multi-billion dollar One belt one road (OBOR) and the success of this key mega project will bring the economic revolution in the country and the region.

The joint ventures between Chinese and Pakistani companies will increase the ownership of the key stakeholders, he added. The more we have local ownership in the projects the more it will be successful. He said Pakistan's economy offered great potential to Chinese investors for joint ventures and investments. He said CPEC would be mutually beneficial for Pakistan and China and would ensure a level playing field for the businessmen and investors of both countries. — DNA

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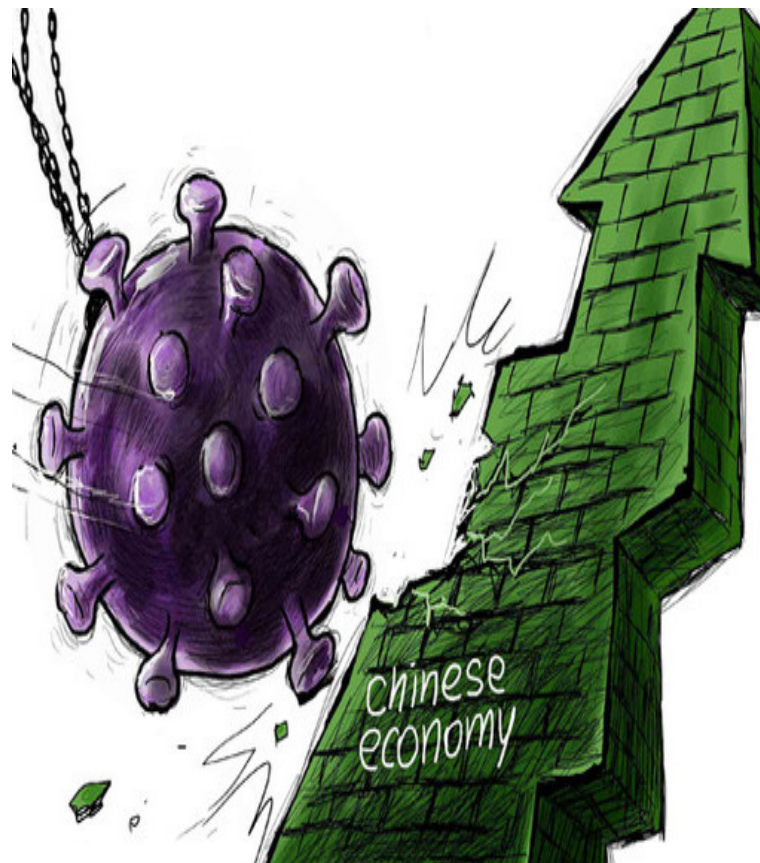
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## Continuing pandemic

**A**ROUND eight months after the coronavirus first appeared in China, the world has realized just what it is dealing with. It is clear now that nations which put in place a tough, early lockdown have fared the best in controlling the virus. These nations include Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand. Sweden's attempt to allow herd immunity to save people essentially failed, with other Scandinavian countries that did impose lockdowns are faring far better. However, the WHO has said it cannot see nations succeeding in wiping out Covid-19 until a vaccine is developed. While there are three different scientific studies on to develop a vaccine which could be launched before the end of this year, experts warn that a poorly tested, poorly understood vaccine should be looked at with caution. Studies on the virus continue globally, with one from Johns Hopkins University suggesting herd immunity cannot work.

There are also warnings that new outbreaks of similar viruses may take place at intervals once again creating the panic we have already seen. Today, the US leads the world in the number of corona infections as well as deaths experienced by any nation. The refusal by governors of certain states such as Florida to make mask-wearing compulsory did not help matters. There is no real evidence that Covid-19 is going away anytime soon in the US, and President Donald Trump's bizarre approach to the problem, at times undermining the risks the virus could bring, did not help. The US economy has taken a huge blow, as has its education and other facets of life. In Pakistan, the government and the chairman of the NCOA Asad Umar have claimed success, stating that the enforcement of SOPs have led to the graph of new infections and deaths falling. There has however been a fierce debate in the country amongst health experts over the number of tests actually carried out each day and the numbers being reported. There is also conjecture that people have stopped going in for tests or visiting hospitals, with many choosing to treat less severe cases at home.

The question now is whether Pakistan will succeed in keeping its graph stable or enabling the fall we would all so like to see. At the present time, the decline in cases is not dramatic. There are also concerns that a new spike may come with Eidul Azha falling at the end of July as people travel once again to hometowns and meet families - and with Muharram at the end of August. We can only hope and pray for good management and good sense from the federal government. So far, we have seen too much petty point scoring between the federal government and the provinces, and a consistently confused policy on lockdowns and other measures. The future then for Pakistan and the world is uncertain. It is not clear when a vaccine may be developed, although the most optimistic experts hope it will be in place by the end of the year. Till then, there can only be a policy of better awareness raising, an insistence on following SOPs including social distancing and the wearing of masks and alongside this steps to save the poor people of our country who the prime minister consistently said he wanted to spare from hardship by establishing schemes to give the tens of thousands who have suddenly lost jobs sources of income, loans or other kinds of safety nets so that they are able to sustain themselves and their families.



## The martyrs of Kashmir

**O**N July 13, for the 89th time, Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control marked Martyrs Day, an event which is held to mark the death of 22 Kashmiris in 1931 under Dogra rule. Since then, Kashmiris have continued their quest for something resembling the right to autonomy and a decision on their own future.

The removal of Article 370 in August last year by the Indian government, removing what autonomy they possessed as a state, and splitting the territory into two parts has only further worsened the condition of Kashmiris with Indian security forces retaining a hold over the Valley and reports of new atrocities coming in at regular intervals. There are also fears that Delhi has already begun a campaign to change the demographic profile of Kashmir by removing the law which allows only Kashmiris to own land in the area.

To mark Martyrs Day, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in Kashmir called for a strike which was widely observed. Leaders of the Conference also said that Kashmiris would not give up their quest for self-autonomy and an end to the repression they have suffered for well over seven decades under Indian rule. This possession has of course grown considerably worse since the election of the Narendra Modi-led government with its determination to make Kashmir an integral part of India.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a tweeted message, has said that the Kashmiris have valiantly fought repression. Pakistan has indeed also tried to take the issue to international forums. But sadly, till now, there are too few voices speaking up for Kashmir and against the human rights violations committed there. Many of these have been captured on camera and are spread across social media. Despite this, the pelting of Kashmiri teenagers and young people with rubber bullets continues as do other forms of horrendous violence. We need a louder voice from the global community to highlight the issue of Kashmir and to speak for its people. The situation in the Valley is beginning to resemble that of Palestine with a risk that Kashmiris will be made a minority in their own home. This must not be allowed to happen and it is the duty of the world, especially Muslim countries, to stop it.

## Lt Gen Nigar Johar: The country's crown jewel

Shujaat Hamza



Lieutenant General Dr. Nigar Johar's family has its own identity and sparkling history of religious, national and military service, which begins with the religious services of her grandfather, Shaykh-ul-Quran Maulana Muhammad Tahir (may Allah have mercy on him). Another man with glorious field work history in her family is Major Amir, who, after joining the army, achieved major feats

**L**AST month's CSS exam had a disappointing result like the overall success rate of 3%, but at the same time a female candidate from Abbottabad set an unprecedented record that has become a feat of pride not only for her family but also for the country. She had become the fifth sister in her family to pass the CSS exam. Her four sisters were already serving the country by passing this important competitive exam.

It is a tradition that even in our society, a women's success in any field is felt with more pride. Pakistani women are second to none in every sphere of life and from the prestigious Prime Minister seat to bureaucracy to military and medical field, their dedication and hard work has been extraordinary.

Recently, a proud daughter from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has received an award for military command that no other woman has received before.

This is Lieutenant General Dr. Nigar Johar, who has been made the first three star general in the history of the country. At the same time, as a surgeon general, she has become the commander of medical corps consisting of thousands of officers and men.

Lt. Gen. Nigar Johar's family has its own identity and sparkling history of religious, national and military service, which begins with the religious services of her grandfather, Shaykh-ul-Quran Maulana Muhammad Tahir (may Allah have mercy on him). Another man with glorious field work history in her family is Major Amir, who, after joining the army, achieved such feats with his talents and patriotism that he became a thorn in the side of the enemies of Pakistan and a star in the eye of the peo-

ple. It is perhaps a coincidence that the responsibility of training Lt. Gen. Nigar Johar also fell to Major Amir.

Dr. Nigar Johar has also seen unforgettable sorrows in life. Such sorrows fill life with despair, but instead of being disappointed with them, she gained strength and continued to move towards the destination with new determination and passion.

Dr. Nigar's father, Col. Abdul Qadir, was also a cousin brother of Major Amir and was the director of the Afghanistan wing of the ISI in the 1980s.

At the same time, he helped keep the intelligence agencies of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan and the United States under ISI's surveillance. And played a key role in defeating the world's largest Soviet army. Colonel Abdul Qadir died 33 years ago in an accident with his wife and two children. Nigar was studying when this calamity fell upon this family. For a teenage girl, there can be no bigger a tragedy than to lose her parents and two brothers in a tragic accident, but even with this mountain of sorrow, Nigar gained a new passion and focused on getting her education.

The compassion and training of her uncle

Major Amir encouraged and supported her at every turn and she became a part of the Pakistan Army after graduating from the Army Medical College, but on one hand her journey of success continued and on the other an emotional test remained. Which happened in the case of the sudden death of her husband Johar Khan. For a woman, the relationship of the husband is the only one after the parents with which there is a special heartfelt and emotional connection.

In this sense, this was another big trauma that befell upon her. But she also endured it patiently and perhaps nature had decided to compile Dr. Nigar's heart and soon the military leadership, after monitoring her professional performance, dedication and hard work record, promoted her to the rank of Lieutenant General. She was promoted to be Pakistan's first female three-star general.

This is undoubtedly an honor not only for her religious and military family of Panj Pir in Swabi district, but also for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan. It is also a denial of gender discrimination in Pakistan and it has been proved that if a person has the ability, every step of development is open for him. And there are equal opportunities for women in every field.

The decision of her promotion was welcomed by the United Nations and Pakistan's friendly countries. With sheer brilliance and hard work, Dr Nigar has not only inked her name in the books of history, but also has become a role model for the women across the country.

Dr Nigar's life proves that with commitment and dedication, the success is inevitable. May Allah give Lt. Gen Nigar Johar more strength to serve the country.



## The United States and Kashmir Conflict

Iqbal Khan

Indian govt by changing the demographic make-up of occupied Kashmir intends to undermine its residents' exercise of their right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN supervision. Through these actions, India seeks to further perpetuate India's occupation of the IOJ&K, while continuing other rights abuses including continued restrictions on daily life, an excruciating military crackdown, extra-judicial killings and arbitrary detentions. Indian security forces are empowered by nearly a dozen draconian laws granting their operatives comprehensive impunity

**L**IVING routines of the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK)—the only Muslim majority state of India—presents a text book case of horrible violations of religious freedom of Muslims. Moreover almost all Human Rights Watchdogs routinely keep pointing out the glaring HR violation in the IOK. The office of International Religious Freedom's, in its 2019 report, has highlighted the violations of freedom of religion in India. This June 10 report is an in-depth coverage and analysis of challenges faced by religious minorities, especially Muslims, Christians and lower caste Hindus (Dalit) in India. The highlight of this report is the religiously motivated killings, assaults, discrimination, and vandalism. It also refers to the Ministry of Home Affairs data, which reported 7,484 incidents of communal violence during 2008-2017 in which more than 1,100 people were killed. These violations of freedom of religion are against the express articles of the Indian Constitution,

The team of state department, which wanted to visit India for understanding the issue in depth was denied visa on the ground that India is not guided by these external observations. It is a tough call, in the globalized World. Almost all presidential candidates talk about resolving outstanding international disputes, including Kashmir. However, they remember very little of that promise, and especially do nothing about Kashmir.

Most of them do not even mention it during their presidential tenures. Joe Biden was part of Obama's promise regarding resolving Kashmir dispute during duo's two electoral campaigns and subsequently two terms as Vice President and President respectively. Both did nothing to move into that direction. Blinded by their anti-China drive both remained more than willing to give anything to India, and not talking about Kashmir was too little a matter for Obama-Biden duo.

However, already caught in the whirlwind of internal strife, economic crises and border disputes with China and Nepal, India was dealt with a blow at the diplomatic front when Joe Biden denounced New Delhi's legislation with regard to minorities and unlimited restrictions in India Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K). Donald Trump had also highlighted the Kashmir issue in his 2016 presidential campaign and also offered to help resolve the dispute in a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan in July 2019. Since then, he has twice reiterated his offer at the UN General Assembly and at an

international forum in Davos, Switzerland. But has not yet moved beyond lip service.

Now, Biden has sought restoration of peoples' rights in Kashmir. He wants India to take necessary steps to restore rights of all Kashmiris, and has expressed disappointment over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act [CAA] and the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. "These measures are inconsistent with the country's long tradition of secularism and with sustaining a multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracy," according to the policy paper - "Joe Biden's agenda for Muslim American community" - posted recently on his campaign website. "In Kashmir, the Indian government should take all necessary steps to restore rights of all the people of Kashmir. Restrictions on dissent, such as preventing peaceful protests or shutting or slowing down the Internet, weakens democracy", paper reads.

Indian News Paper 'The Hindu' reported on June 26, "Joe Biden has been disappointed by the measures that the government of India has taken with the implementation and aftermath of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam and the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act into law, the policy paper said".

While welcoming Biden's statements over the restoration of rights of Kashmiris, Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan has said that Biden's remarks are a proof that the world community has refused to buy the Indian narrative on Occupied Kashmir. Biden as United States Senator for decades and as vice president under President Barack Obama for eight years has been known as one of the best friends of Pakistan. He was instrumental in passage of "Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009" (notoriously known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act). It authorized the release of \$1.5 billion per year to the government of Pakistan as non-military aid from the period of 2010 to 2014.

Pakistan on June 28 rejected the Indian authorities' move to grant domicile certificates of Indian-occupied Kashmir reportedly to thousands of Indian nationals, terming it a part of New Delhi's attempt to change the demographic structure of the disputed region. "As many as 25,000 non-locals have been granted domicile certificates in Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir since May 18, which local politicians believe is the beginning of a move to disturb the demographic profile of the region", Anadolu Agency reported. This certificate entitles a person to

residency and government jobs in the region, which until last year were reserved only for the local population.

These documents issued to non-Kashmiris, including Indian government officials, under the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure), 2020, are "illegal, void and in violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and international law including the 4th Geneva Convention", Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement. This is a vindication of Pakistan's consistent stance that a major intention behind India's move to annex occupied Kashmir on August 5 last year was to change the demographic structure of the region and "turn Kashmiris into a minority in their own land. This has long been RSS-BJP's 'Hindutva' agenda. If this process goes unhindered, it could soon turn the original subjects of AJOJ&K into an equivalent of 'Red Indians' in the US.

Indian government by changing the demographic make-up of occupied Kashmir intends to undermine its residents' exercise of their right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN supervision. Through these actions, India seeks to further perpetuate India's occupation of the IOJ&K, while continuing other rights abuses including continued restrictions on daily life, an excruciating military crackdown, extra-judicial killings and arbitrary detentions. Indian security forces are empowered by nearly a dozen draconian laws granting their operatives comprehensive impunity. No matter what its tactics, India will never be able to break the will of the Kashmiri people.

The United Nations and the international community must take immediate cognizance of these Indian actions, and prevent India from changing the demography of the occupied territory, and hold India accountable for its persistent violations of international law. Hopefully, the international community, especially the UN would pay attention to implications of India's new domicile law and ask her to repeal it ab initio. It is time for the UN Secretary General to appoint his Special Envoy for Kashmir.

We expect that if Joe Biden become the President of the US, he would remember the contents of his paper and would strive to implement its spirit. Hopefully, in his anti-China drive he won't be so blinded to be arm twisted by India for not even pronouncing the world "K".

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## Briefs

## Washington Redskins confirm name to be changed

WASHINGTON: The Washington Redskins confirmed Monday the team is changing its name following pressure from sponsors over a word widely criticized as a racist slur against Native Americans.

Washington announced on July 3 that the Redskins name had been placed under review after a wave of rallies against racial injustice swept across the United States following George Floyd's death on May 25.

"Today, we are announcing we will be retiring the Redskins name and logo upon completion of this review," the NFL team said in a statement. A replacement name was still being worked upon, the statement added.

Washington owner Dan Snyder had long resisted calls to change the team's name but faced mounting demands to rethink that position as protests erupted against systemic racism after the death of Floyd, an unarmed African-American man, during his arrest by police in Minneapolis.

Native American leaders had written to the NFL commissioner Roger Goodell last week demanding an immediate change of the team's name, logo and mascot. — APP

## LAFC fightback stuns Dynamo in MLS thriller

MIAMI: Los Angeles FC staged a second-half fightback to snatch a 3-3 draw with Houston Dynamo on Monday in the 'MLS is Back' restart tournament in Orlando.

Two goals in six minutes from Los Angeles' Uruguayan duo Diego Rossi and Brian Rodriguez secured a share of the points for coach Bob Bradley's side after Houston had roared into a 3-1 lead at half-time.

Houston took a grip on the game in an entertaining first half with two goals from Memo Rodriguez and a header from Honduras international Alberth Elis. Los Angeles, missing striker Carlos Vela who opted to skip the tournament because of fears of the coronavirus, dominated possession throughout the opening period but were left on the ropes after a series of counter-attacks from Houston.

Memo Rodriguez fired Houston into the lead after only nine minutes, beating Los Angeles' Ghanaian midfielder Latif Blessing before unleashing a fierce low shot that beat goalkeeper Kenneth Vermeer at the near post. Los Angeles hit back with a superbly worked equaliser in the 19th minute, Blessing wriggling clear of his marker before releasing Rossi on the left flank. — APP

## UK to make face masks mandatory in shops

LONDON: The British government was on Tuesday to make wearing a face mask mandatory in shops and supermarkets in England from next week.

"The Prime Minister has been clear that people should be wearing face coverings in shops and we will make this mandatory from July 24," said a statement from Boris Johnson's Downing Street office.

"There is growing evidence that wearing a face covering in an enclosed space helps protect individuals and those around them from coronavirus," it added.

Face masks have been mandatory on public transport in England since June 15, and Health Secretary Matt Hancock will formally extend that to shops and supermarkets on Tuesday, said Downing Street.

Those who fail to wear a mask face a fine of up to £100 (\$123, 109 euros) with enforcement to be carried out by the police. Britain has been one of the countries worst hit by the virus, with almost 45,000 deaths attributed to it. — APP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Football club players warming up wearing "Black Lives Matter" shirts ahead of their MLS game against Houston Dynamo. — DNA

## America shuts down again despite Trump's calmness

DNA

WASHINGTON: While President Donald Trump obsesses about his reelection hopes in his White House bubble, state and local leaders are frantically reversing state reopenings that he demanded, which turned America into the world's biggest coronavirus hotspot.

As emergency rooms filled and the virus quickened its relentless march across southern and Western states, Trump stuck to the fiction that the worst is already over: "We had to close it down; now we're opening it up," the President said of the economy at the White House, patting himself on the back for saving "millions of lives."

As new cases of the disease reach 60,000 a day nationwide, many leaders, including those who supported Trump's aggressive approach, now have little choice but to prioritize science over politics, leaving the President looking out of touch with reality.

In Texas, Houston's Democratic Mayor Sylvester Turner proposed a two-week shutdown, days after Republican Gov. Greg Abbott raised the possibility of more stringent measures after issuing a mask wearing mandate that offended conservative orthodoxy. West Virginia called time's up in bars in the worst-hit country.

In California, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered the closure of all indoor restaurants, wineries, movie theaters, zoos, museums and shut all bars. Los Angeles and San Diego said their kids would start the new school year online only. Oregon banned gatherings of more than 10 people inside because of an "alarming rise" of Covid-19 cases in the

state. KFC encouraged franchises in Florida, Texas, Oklahoma and California to stop dine-in service. Florida, which on Saturday set the record for any state in single day data on new infections, now has more Covid-19 cases than all but eight entire countries.

The picture is of a nation that is beginning to shut down again in defiance of the President's triumphant but misleading claims that a "transition to greatness" is under way. Restrictions imposed on cities as large as Houston and Los Angeles could set back the surprising revival in the economy last month.

Modest job gains, trumpeted by the President, could turn into permanent job losses. In remarks likely to further infuriate Trump, who is grousing about Dr. Anthony Fauci's press, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious

Diseases made what is unfortunately becoming an obvious point: fast openings have triggered a disaster.

"It is very clear - and we know this from countries throughout the world - that if you physically separate people, to the point of not allowing the virus to transmit ... we know that we can do that if we shut down," Fauci said on a Stanford School of Medicine webinar.

"We did not shut down entirely - and that's the reason why, when we went up, we started to come down, and then we plateaued at a level that was really quite high - about 20,000 infections a day," Fauci said.

"Then, as we started to reopen, we're seeing the surges that we're seeing today, as we speak, in California ... in Arizona, in Texas, in Florida, and in several other states." There are a few bright spots. For the first time in months, there

were no Covid-19 deaths in New York City in a 24-hour period, a moment of deliverance that Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio called "striking and moving."

Massachusetts announced that its seven-day average of positive tests had fallen to 1.7% - down 94% since mid-April.

The lesson for the states now in the center of the storm - that jumped ahead of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on safe reopening - are sobering. New York and Massachusetts bought what may still be only a temporary truce with the coronavirus by weeks of lockdowns and a strict reopening process that waited for the curve of infections to be properly suppressed before restrictions were lifted. Even now, there's no guarantee the virus won't return at dangerous levels when normal life picks up.

Chicago Marathon cancelled over virus fears

## Chicago Marathon cancelled over virus fears

LOS ANGELES: Chicago Marathon organisers confirmed on Monday that this year's race had been cancelled due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic. A statement said the race, scheduled for October 11, had been shelved after a decision by organisers and the City of Chicago. Chicago's decision had been largely expected, with several other major marathons around the world already suffering the same fate. — APP

## Winter wave of coronavirus 'could be worse than first'

DNA

LONDON: The UK could see about 120,000 new coronavirus deaths in a second wave of infections this winter, scientists say.

Asked to model a "reasonable" worst-case scenario, they suggest a range between 24,500 and 251,000 of virus-related deaths in hospitals alone, peaking in January and February.

To date, there have been 44,830 official deaths in the UK, but this has slowed with 1,100 in July. The estimate does not take

into account any lockdowns, treatments or vaccines.

And the scientists say: "The risk... could be reduced if we take action immediately". The report, requested by the UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, stresses there is still a high degree of uncertainty over how the coronavirus pandemic will play out this winter.

But research suggests the virus can survive longer in colder conditions and is more likely to spread when people spend more time indoors. And experts are concerned

the NHS will be under extreme pressure, not just from a resurgence of coronavirus but also from seasonal flu and a backlog of regular, non-coronavirus workload.

The health service is already severely disrupted in the aftermath of the first pandemic wave, with a waiting list that could stand at 10 million by the end of this year, the report says.

Prof Stephen Holgate, a respiratory specialist from University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust, who chaired the report, said: "This is not

a prediction - but it is a possibility.

"The modelling suggests that deaths could be higher with a new wave of Covid-19 this winter.

"But the risk of this happening could be reduced if we take action immediately." With relatively low numbers of coronavirus cases at the moment, "this is a critical window of opportunity to help us prepare for the worst that winter can throw at us", he added.

Less pessimistic winter scenarios are also possible, with coronavirus deaths in the thousands.

## Huawei: UK prepares to change course

WEB DESK

LONDON: The UK government is preparing to change course over the role of Huawei in its 5G telecoms network. Six months after agreeing it could have a limited role, ministers look set to exclude the Chinese company, with no new equipment installed from next year. The move is in part a result of pressure from Washington. However, the precise time frame and details of the phase-out will be crucial in determining how the decision is received.

In January, after a lengthy delays and hard-fought battles, the government announced that Huawei would be kept out of the sensitive core of the 5G network and limited to 35% market share of its other parts. But now it finds itself revisiting that decision. A key reason is the Trump administration has continued what one UK official calls a campaign of "unrelenting pressure" on the company.

## Remaining matches behind closed doors

MEXICO CITY: The remainder of the 2019-20 PGA Tour will take place behind closed doors as cases of coronavirus continue to soar in the United States. Releasing coordinated statements, the remaining nine tournaments said spectators would not be allowed. The five tournaments that have been played since the Tour's resumption in June have taken place with no fans. Fans had been set to be allowed at the Memorial Tournament in Ohio, which starts on Thursday. The PGA Tour will conclude with the Tour Championship in Atlanta from 4-7 September. "These decisions are never easy," said Tour Championship executive director Allison Fillmore, who added it was the "best decision for all involved". — APP

## Asia's 'shining star' suffers biggest ever slump

DNA

SINGAPORE: Singapore's economy plunged into recession in the last quarter as an extended lockdown hit businesses and retail spending. Economic growth in the city state shrank by 41.2% compared to the previous quarter, the country's biggest contraction on record. Authorities forecast it will be Singapore's worst recession since independence from Malaysia in 1965.

The figures reveal the severity of the virus-driven downturn faced globally. Official data showed Singapore's second quarter gross domestic product (GDP) shrank 12.6% on a year-on-year basis.

As one of first countries to release growth data for the period in which many economies were in lockdown, the numbers from Singapore provide a glimpse of how the ongoing pandemic could affect economies around the world.

## CPEC harbinger of peace, prosperity, says Kanwal

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The project of laying optical fibre cable from China border to Gwadar is being executed under CPEC. Foundation for digital and Information Technology revolution-project was being processed in conjunction with China.

While talking about the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) she said it will create more jobs adding CPEC first phase had already brought relief in energy and infrastructure sector while the second phase would help expanding industrialization and other sectors related to socio economic uplift.

She said nine projects had been completed so far producing 5320 MW electricity with investment of US \$7.9 billion providing jobs to 5000 Pakistanis.

Kanwal Shauzad who is also member of Pakistan-Romania Friendship Forum (PRF) lauded role of the Forum in cementing relations between Pakistan and Romania. She hoped that PRF will contribute significantly towards further strengthening of bilateral relations.

Ms. Kanwal also eulogized services of the Romanian ambassador and wished to work with the Romanian embassy both at government level and at the level of PRF.

Full text of the interview shall be published in coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine.

## Solksjaer expects United to "put it right"

"The mentality has been brilliant. We have had a few setbacks this season. This is another challenge for us," said Solksjaer

SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solksjaer says his players "will put it right" after they missed a chance to climb into the Premier League's top four by conceding an injury-time equaliser against Southampton. United led 2-1 for 73 minutes before substitute Michael Obafemi scored in the 96th minute, bundling in a set-piece at the back post after it had been flicked on by Jan Bednarek.

Stuart Armstrong had given Southampton a 12th-minute lead, but Anthony Martial set up Marcus Rashford to equalise before firing a superb second goal for United. Solksjaer's side were on course to leapfrog top-four rivals Chelsea and Leicester - who both suffered defeats over the weekend - and move up to third but they remain fifth with three games left in the chase for Champions League qualification.



"The mentality has been brilliant. We have had a few setbacks this season. This is another challenge for us," said Solksjaer.

"I am very confident in [the players'] mentality. I'm disappointed of course, but you have to take the disappointments as well as the

positives. We have learned a hard lesson. We will put it right. I trust the boys in that respect."

Armstrong had opened the scoring for Southampton, following Paul Pogba's mistake, and after fighting back to draw, the visitors now sit five points outside of the

top 10 and level on points with Everton.

Despite United's setback, they will still qualify for the Champions League if they win their last three games, as they travel to the King Power Stadium to face Leicester on the final day of the season.

## Briefs

## US rejects China's claims in South China Sea

## NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday rejected China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, drawing an angry response from Beijing, which claimed Washington was trying to inflame tensions in the disputed waters.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said there was no legal basis for China's claims on the sea and it accused Beijing of using intimidatory tactics against other claimant states.

"We are making clear: Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful, as its campaign of bullying to control them," Pompeo said in a statement.

"The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire." In response, the Chinese Embassy in the US described the announcement as "completely unjustified" and accused the US of inflaming the situation.

"Under the pretext of preserving stability, (the US) is flexing muscles, stirring up tension and inciting confrontation in the region."

The relationship between the US and China has become increasingly tense in recent months not only over the coronavirus - where the US is now the world's worst-affected country - but over China's actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. China stakes its claim to the South China Sea on the basis of its so-called "nine-dash line" under which virtually the whole area would belong to China. Countries around the sea including the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia also claim parts of the area, as does Taiwan.

## Apple to send corona kits to employees

## DNA

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple employees working remotely can now get tested for the coronavirus without leaving the house. The tech giant will ship Covid-19 test kits to its workers' homes, the company confirmed to CNN Business on Monday. The news was first reported by Bloomberg.

Apple has been cautious about reopening its offices and retail outlets as coronavirus cases continue to spike in several states. The company reopened more than 100 US stores in early March, but re-closed most of those last month. It is also offering only curbside pickup at several stores and requiring temperature checks for employees and customers at stores that are allowing people inside. The company also reportedly began offering Covid-19 nasal swab tests to employees returning to its headquarters in Cupertino, California, in May.

## New Ebola outbreak grows in Congo

## DNA

LONDON: Ebola is spreading in the western Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with nearly 50 known cases across a large region bordering the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

Mike Ryan, the WHO's top emergencies expert, said on Monday that 48 cases had been confirmed in DRC's Equateur province since authorities announced a new outbreak there on June 1. There were three additional probable cases, he said, while a total of 20 people have died. "This is still a very active outbreak, and I would say it is still a great concern," Ryan told a news briefing. The province includes part of the River Congo, he said, adding that it was a large geographical area where communities were linked, and people travelled long distances. The newest outbreak is the 11th in the DRC since scientists first characterised the disease in 1976.



GWADAR: A spectacular view of Gwadar Port, which is all set to serve as a tool of regional as well as global connectivity. - DNA

## UN: Pandemic could tip 132 million into chronic hunger

Last year, two billion people suffered from food insecurity with some 746 mln people facing severe food insecurity, according to the UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 report

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The coronavirus pandemic may push another 132 million people into chronic hunger by the end of the year, the United Nations warned in a new report released on Monday, as it called on governments to adopt a set of policy tools to help people afford quality, nutritious food.

Last year, two billion people suffered from food insecurity with some 746 million people facing severe food insecurity, according to the UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 report.

With that number now quickly

growing, the UN warns achieving one of its cornerstone goals - eradicating global hunger by 2030 - is in serious jeopardy.

Most poor people around the world simply cannot afford a nutritious and healthy diet, which is far more expensive than the full value of the international poverty line of \$1.90 per person per day, the UN says.

Children queue for food at a school in Blue Downs township near Cape Town, South Africa [File: Mike Hutchings/Reuters] Fighting food insecurity had plateaued in recent years even before the coronavirus pandemic hit. After decades of decline, the number of hungry people has been

growing since 2014. And while Africa has the highest levels of food insecurity, the scourge is accelerating fastest in Latin America and the Caribbean - from 22.9 percent going hungry in 2014 to 31.7 percent in 2019.

The pandemic is also contributing to an increase in child and adult obesity, especially for the poorest populations that already struggled to access nutritious food.

The UN is calling on governments to implement policies and invest in programmes that help reduce the cost of nutritious food and ensure everybody can afford a healthy diet.

Policies such as direct and indirect taxation that penalise food

and agricultural production must be avoided, says the UN, as they tend to have adverse effects on the production of nutritious food and staples.

The UN is also urging countries, especially low-income ones, to revisit subsidies in the food and agriculture sectors.

It says policy tools such as cash transfer programmes, school feeding programmes and the subsidisation of nutritious foods are essential in the time of coronavirus. The pandemic risks wiping out nearly half of all jobs in Africa, the UN has previously warned.

In India, hundreds of millions of daily wage workers are struggling to make ends meet after the coun-

try went into lockdown, leaving them stranded and scrambling to find ways to get back to their home towns and villages.

Migrant workers wait for a bus during an extended coronavirus lockdown in New Delhi, India [File: Adnan Abidi/Reuters] According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 33 million people in South and Southeast Asia have been pushed into acute food insecurity since February 2020.

The UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition report was prepared by its Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the WFP, Unicef and the World Health Organization.

## Russia charges ex-journalist Ivan Safronov with treason



## DNA

MOSCOW: Russia has charged former military journalist Ivan Safronov with state treason, accusations that have sent a chill through Russia's media community which has protested against what it said is his unfair treatment.

The move came on Monday, following the arrest last

week over the accusation that Safronov, - who left journalism and in May became an adviser at Russia's space agency - passed military secrets to the Czech Republic.

He faces up to 20 years in jail if found guilty of a charge he denies. Police took about a dozen journalists in custody on Monday after they gathered outside Safronov's deten-

tion facility to offer their support in a case they said is shrouded in unacceptable secrecy. Details are sparse given its sensitive nature and his trial is likely to be held behind closed doors. Ivan Pavlov, his lawyer, said last week that the information he is accused of handing over concerned Russian arms deliveries to the Middle East and Africa.

## Thousands protest in Russia

## DNA

MOSCOW: Thousands of protesters have gathered for a third consecutive day of protests in Russia's far east against the jailing of a provincial governor accused of involvement in multiple murders.

Monday's demonstrators in Khabarovsk on the border with China rejected the charges against Governor Sergey Furgal as a sham and denounced the federal authorities. The protests reflected widespread anger over the arrest of the popular governor and a simmering discontent with the Kremlin's policies.

The 50-year-old Furgal was arrested in Khabarovsk on Thursday and flown to Moscow, where a court ruled that he should be held for two months as the investigation continues.

## Turkey: Ceasefire in Libya would not benefit GNA

Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based self-styled LNA has been on the back foot after Turkish support helped the GNA turn back his 14-month assault on the capital, Tripoli

## NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkey has dismissed prospects of any ceasefire in Libya saying a deal incorporating the conflict's existing front lines would not benefit the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA).

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the coastal city of Sirte and al-Jufra airbase need to be turned over to the GNA before it agrees to a ceasefire. Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA)

has been on the back foot after Turkish support helped the GNA turn back his 14-month assault on the capital, Tripoli.

Asked about a possible operation against LNA-held Sirte, Cavusoglu said there was a diplomatic effort to solve the issue.

"There are preparations for an operation but we are trying the [negotiation] table. If there is no withdrawal, there is already a military preparation. They [GNA] will show all determination here," he said in an interview with state broadcaster TRT Haber on Monday.

## Libya blames UAE for oil exports' halt

## WEB DESK

DOHA: Libya's National Oil Corp. declared force majeure on exports again, accusing the United Arab Emirates of being behind a blockade as chaos continued to engulf the country's oil industry.

The NOC said Sunday that the UAE had instructed eastern forces in Libya to shut down oil production. The North African country had resumed exports just two days earlier, before eastern commander Khalifa Haftar ordered a halt Saturday night. The swift reversal reflects the persistent turmoil roiling the OPEC nation.

The UAE, along with Russia and Egypt, backs Haftar's army, which has insisted the blockade continue and said a tanker given permission to load oil at Es Sider port was just an exception. The Emirates' instruction is "gravely disappointing, especially following repeated statements by very senior representatives of the UAE last week in support of international efforts to restart oil production in Libya," the NOC said in a statement.

The UAE hasn't responded publicly to the NOC's accusation, but its minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, tweeted on Monday that his country "wants to see a return to oil production in Libya as soon as possible, with safeguards in place to prevent the proceeds fueling further conflict. We continue to work for an immediate cease-fire and return to a political process."

## Prosecutors question Kosovo leader Thaci

## WEB DESK

KOSOVO: President Hashim Thaci has arrived for questioning by war crimes prosecutors in The Hague for the first time, saying that "no body can rewrite history" over his role in the 1990s war. Thaci was indicted in late June for war crimes and crimes against humanity by a special tribunal investigating the 1998-1999 conflict with Serbia. Kosovo declared independence in 2008, a move not recognised by Serbia.

Thaci and others are charged with being "criminally responsible for nearly 100 murders" in addition to other crimes against Serb, Roma and Kosovo Albanian victims while he was the leader of the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

"I am ready to face the new challenge and succeed for my son, my family, my people and my country," Thaci told reporters on Monday outside the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, where banner-waving supporters had gathered.

## Iranian officials urged to unite

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader has addressed the country's parliament amid growing divisions and unanswered questions over the explosion at the Natanz nuclear facility earlier this month. Ayatollah Khamenei called on legislators to unite. - DNA

## Uzbekistan efforts for managing economic challenges

## DR. ULUGBEK SAYDIEV

FOR the last three years, Uzbekistan is progressively implementing its new development strategy, initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The strategy embraces five priority areas: public administration and civil society, rule of law, economy, social issues, and international relations. The global pandemic crisis led to a situation where the Uzbekistan government had to align the strategic development plan with the emergency measures to mitigate the pandemic effect on the health and wellbeing of people and the economy as a whole.

The first cases of infections with COVID-19 emerged in the country in mid-March. In response to the challenges associated with the spread of the pandemic, in March 19, the President signed a decree on priority measures to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic and global economic crisis. A special state commission headed by the Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov and Anti-Crisis Fund of 10 trillion UZS were created by the decree. The first measures included:

- financing the measures to combat the spread of coronavirus infection;
- supporting entrepreneurship and employment;
- expansion of social support for the population;

- ensuring the sustainable functioning of the economy.

To avoid panic among the population, all necessary measures have been undertaken to prevent the dissemination of false and inaccurate information in media. Since March 16, Uzbekistan closed all its transport connections with foreign countries except cargo transportation. All incoming vehicles are treated with special disinfectants. Charter flights are arranged for citizens who want to return home from abroad. All mass events, including sport, cultural and religious, have been suspended. Wedding events have to be held observing the necessary sanitary measures. Most public organizations and all educational establishments were recommended to transfer their work and external connections into the on-line mode.

More than 5,5 thousand specially trained health care professionals are mobilized to combat the spread of infection. Two national level, 14 regional hospitals, and 216 sanitary and epidemiological establishments provide health care measures to combat the pandemic. The epidemiological situation is being assessed based on hourly and daily data. The social protection measures have been undertaken by the government to support the groups of the population whose wellbeing is affected by the pandemic. The people quarantined with infection and suspected with infection, as well as persons with children under the age of 14, are paid tem-

porary disability benefits in the amount of their average salary. A simplified procedure for issuing the document on a temporary disability is set. The allowances to families with children and childcare benefits, which terms ended in March-June, are extended by six months. The number of beneficiaries who receive financial support is increased by 10 percent, up to 60 000. Employees of budgetary organizations who suspended their activity get their salaries in time. The basic foodstuffs and hygiene products (masks, antiseptics, etc.) are delivered to lonely elderly and disabled people. Extraordinary interventions have been undertaken to ensure the stability of prices in the foodstuffs market.

The stability of the banking and payment systems has been provided by means of monetary policy instruments. By October 1, 2020, commercial banks deferred a total sum of 5 trillion UZS loan repayments for four operators, hotel business entities, transport and logistics firms, and other enterprises, including those who are experiencing difficulties due to restrictions on trade. Also, tax holidays were granted to these business entities. Recently, due to the relaxation of quarantine measures, 17 thousand manufacturing and 10 thousand construction enterprises resumed their activity. In most of them, cash flows decreased by 3 times compared to the period before the quarantine regime. The Government and Central Bank of Uzbekistan

make the appropriate measures to provide these enterprises with liquidity.

According to the preliminary estimates, the pandemic affected on the level of unemployment in the country and led to reduction of the income of about 450 thousand families. Appropriate measures are being undertaken to mitigate these challenges on the national and regional levels. An additional 1 trillion UZS were allocated for the implementation of the state family business program. In total, 4 trillion UZS to be allocated for the family business programs this year. To date, 540 thousand families got support from the nationwide charity fund "Generosity and Support" in the amount of 307 billion UZS. In Uzbekistan more than 5.5 thousand medical staff were involved to stop pandemic situation. It was entrusted to provide them with extra 120 percent of salary. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard are monitoring the observance of quarantine by citizens. There were defined special tasks of providing tax holidays and preferences for credit debt, the allocation of budget loans to sectors most exposed to coronavirus

For example, there are growing risks of non-repayment of loans in the amount of 90 billion UZS in the hotel business, in 650 billion UZS in the transport and logistics sector, by 180 billion UZS in the catering sector, by 3.6 trillion UZS in foreign trade enterprises. Travel agencies and hotels continue to pay a tourist fee of \$ 2-3 per day.

In this regard, an instruction was given to extend the maturity of loans of these enterprises, temporarily suspend the collection of tourist fees. In the regions the governors are authorized to provide deferred enterprises with payment of local taxes for up to 6 months. Along with this, tax rates on personal income for individual entrepreneurs and tax on the use of water resources for farmers are reduced by 50 percent. In this case, the loss of local budgets will be reimbursed from the republican budget.

A moratorium on tax audits will be announced before the end of the year, accrual of interest on tax debt of enterprises are suspended. Given the situation in international trade, it was instructed not to apply fines in connection with overdue debts on export-import operations, to increase the product pass through the "green corridors", and to promptly solve the problems associated with cargo transportation.

Solving the tasks set in this direction will not only significantly mitigate the social consequences of the global economic crisis but will also help expand the country's economic potential by creating new jobs and increasing output, which in the long run will increase incomes and living standards of the population.

Center for Economic Research and Reforms under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

**Briefs**

**Iran drops India from Chabahar rail project**

DNA

TEHRAN: The Iranian government has decided to go ahead with the rail line project from the Chabahar port to Zahedan on its own, four years after it inked a deal with New Delhi to begin this project along the border of Afghanistan. The Iranian government has cited a delay in funding from the Indian side to initiate the 628km-long project as the reason for it dropping India from the multi-million dollar project. According to Indian media, the country will now use around \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund, instead of relying on financial assistance from India. The railways project, which will be completed by March 2022, witnessed the inauguration of its track-laying process by Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami last week. The blow to India comes in the backdrop of China finalising a huge \$400 billion strategic partnership deal with Iran.

**UAE delays launch of Mars Mission**

DNA

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' probe mission to Mars was postponed on Tuesday due to weather conditions at the launch site in Japan, the Emirates Space Agency and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center said. The UAE mission to explore Mars will be launched at a later date in July, the agency explained, as weather conditions at the launch site on Tanegashima Island were not suitable. The UAE's Hope Probe was due to set off from Japan's Tanegashima Space Center at 12:51am UAE time on Wednesday (2051 GMT Tuesday) for a seven-month journey to the red planet where it was due to orbit and send back data about the atmosphere.

"The UAE's space mission, the Arab world's first interplanetary mission, will launch on Friday July 17, 2020 at 12:43am UAE time (July 16, 2020 at 8:43pm GMT) from Tanegashima Space Center," the government communications office tweeted.

**Singapore, Malaysia to allow business travel**

DNA

SINGAPORE: Allowing people to cross the border for the first time since most movements were suspended because of the coronavirus in March, Singapore and Malaysia are resuming essential business and official travel between their countries. The neighbours are also putting in place travel arrangements for their residents who hold long-term immigration passes for business and work in the other country, their foreign ministries said in a joint statement. They hope to launch the exchanges on Aug. 10, they said, adding that they had also agreed to develop other schemes for cross-border movements, including for daily commuters by workers.

Before the border was closed to people to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus, tens of thousands of Malaysians commuted daily to wealthy Singapore to work in businesses from restaurants to semiconductor manufacturing. Malaysia is also a major source of staples for Singapore, which imports more than 90% of its food supplies, and goods have been crossing the border since the restrictions on people were imposed in mid-March.

**Armenia bears full responsibility for provocative actions against Azerbaijan**

Actions serve to aggravate tension in the region; The attack of the Armenian forces was prevented by retaliatory measures. As a result of the combat, four servicemen of the Azerbaijani army were killed and five others were wounded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On July 12, 2020, the armed forces of Armenia attempted to attack, using artillery, in order to seize positions in the direction of Tovuz district along the state border between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The attack of the Armenian forces was prevented by retaliatory measures. As a result of the combat, four servicemen of the Azerbaijani army were killed and five others were wounded. The Armenian provocation and shelling of Azerbaijani military positions, as well as civilian populated villages across the Azerbaijan-Armenia border from large-caliber artillery and mortars are still continued, till today. The military analysis of the recent tension in the direction of Tovuz district of the Azerbaijani-Armenian state border shows that the provocation was started by Armenia. Armenia has purposefully prepared itself for this provocation. The Armenian side suddenly started to use artillery, and as a result, the Azerbaijani servicemen were killed. The losses at the Armenian side were caused afterwards - by the retaliatory fire of the Azerbaijani army. Armenia claimed that Azerbaijan allegedly attacked Armenian positions with a UAZ military vehicle, which sounds very ridiculous and nonsense. Had Azerbaijan wanted to attack Armenia, it would not have used light UAZ military vehicle, but armored fighting vehicles and other destructive heavy military suitable for offensive operations, existing in the disposal of its army. Armenia's purpose in committing this provocation was not only to divert attention from the difficult socio-economic situation in the country and the deplorable situation with regard to COVID-19. The aim was also to involve the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which includes six countries of the former Soviet Union and does not enjoy any mandate with regard to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict) into the conflict by creating tensions on its state border. Armenia is trying to enslave the CSTO countries in its ugly policy and hide itself behind this organization. Common sense prevailed within the CSTO, and the organization's scheduled extraordinary Permanent Council meeting on the issue was canceled. The CSTO countries also understand very well Armenia's insidious intentions. This provocative act of the Armenian armed forces should be seen as a continuation of the recent actions and statements of the leadership of aggressor state Armenia, which serve to increase tensions in the region. Recently, Armenia was trying to strengthen its military capabilities and was concentrating military equipment near the line of contact, which proves that it had plans to attack military positions of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Armenian armed forces started to open fire on the nearby residential settlements as well, putting the lives of civilian population under danger. Armenia has purposefully prepared for this provocative offensive, which aimed to avenge Azerbaijan for its successful counteroffensive military operations in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in response to Armenian April 2016 provocations, which resulted with liberation of more than 2000 hectares of Azerbaijani land from Armenian occupation, including the strategically important height of Leletepe and new positions on the Talish Mountain, as well as liberation of 11 thousand hectares of Nakhchevani land of Azerbaijan, including village of Junnut, by Azerbaijan Army, in 2018. Armenia, which has reflected its aggressive policy in the country's recently adopted national security strategy, openly demonstrates that it aims to seize new positions and increase tensions in the region instead of eliminating the consequences of the conflict and withdrawing its occupying forces from the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said in this regard: "On the one hand, Armenian leadership appeals to the international community and asks for help to strengthen the ceasefire on the line of contact of the troops, on the other hand, by carrying out military provocations, it seeks to attack the territory of Azerbaijan, seize our positions, expose the civilian population, our villages". This provocation by Armenia casts serious doubt on the essence of the negotiations mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs (Russia, USA and France) on the settlement of the Armenia - Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions which demand immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied lands of Azerbaijan.



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**Sino-Pak coop on cotton germplasm stressed**

DNA

BEIJING: The cooperation between China and Pakistan in the collection and identification of cotton germplasm resources is of great pith and moment," said Prof. Du Xiongming, Director of Cotton Germplasm Resources Division, Institute of Cotton Research (ICR) of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). "For now the two countries have exchanged over 300 cotton germplasm resources, China Economic Net reported on Tuesday quoting Dr. Du. As per Prof. Du, China and Pakistan have been co-working for many years in the field of collecting and identifying cotton germplasm resources. ICR has joined hands with Cotton Research Institute (CCRI), Multan, University

of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and some other universities and scientific research institutions to identify cotton germplasm's resistance to heat, drought, diseases and insect pests in different places and environments, and jointly published scientific research papers on that. In addition, through the Industry-University-Research (IUR) cooperation, ICR has been devoted to the training of talented Pakistanis in the field of basic cotton research. Prof. Du's laboratory has trained 11 Pakistani doctoral students (including 5 graduates), 2 postdocs and 2 visiting scholars so far. Cotton germplasm resources are the material basis of basic and applied research of cotton. "Pakistan's Asiatic Cotton (G. arboreum) is different from China's

Gossypium hirsutum Linn in term terms of genetic characteristics. China's cotton is known for its high yield, high quality and precocity, while Pakistan's cotton is famous for its resistance to heat, drought, saline-alkali and Cotton Leaf Curl Virus (CLCV)," noted Prof. Du, who received China's National Award for Excellence in Innovation in May. He is of the view that the cooperation between China and Pakistan in the collection and identification of cotton germplasm resources is of great pith and moment. According to Prof. Du, the prevention and control of many major diseases and insect pests are very much related to the research of germplasm resources. For example, that in Asia and Africa the major disease of

cotton is caused by CLCV, and this virus devastated the Pakistan cotton industry in early 1990s where it caused an estimated yield reduction of 30-35%. If Asiatic Cotton (G. arboreum)'s genetic characteristics of resistance to CLCV can be transferred into Gossypium hirsutum Linn. via distant hybridization, the problem caused by CLCV that has troubled Pakistani cotton farmers for many years will be solved. Being in the industry for over 30 years, Du has published 39 SCI papers in the journal Nature Genetics as the first or corresponding author. "Compared with Pakistan, China's germplasm resources research is more comprehensive and systematic, and has advanced from phenotypic identification to genotypic identification," he mentioned.

**China announces retaliatory sanctions on US officials**

DNA

BEIJING: Beijing has announced sanctions against United States officials, including Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, in retaliation for measures announced by Washington last week over Beijing's alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying revealed the new sanctions at a press conference Monday, calling on the US to "stop interfering in China's international affairs." Among the US officials named by Hua are Senators Rubio and Cruz, both former presidential candidates, US Representative

Chris Smith, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback and the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. "I must point out the Xinjiang affairs are China's internal affairs and the US has no right to interfere," Hua said. "We urge the US to immediately withdraw its wrong

decision and stop interfering in China's internal affairs or undermining China's interests. And we will make further reactions based on the development of the situation." Hua said the sanctions would take effect on Monday but provided no further details on the measures or what they might entail.

**Global virus cases surpass 13 million**

The staggering number signals that the world may be losing some of the ground it gained in addressing the pandemic

LOS ANGELES: According to the most recent data from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, more than 13 million people were confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19 globally, an unsurprising milestone that follows news of record-breaking daily confirmed cases in the U.S. and around the world.

The staggering number signals that the world may be losing some of the ground it gained in addressing the pandemic. As of July 13, there were more than 570,000 deaths and 7.1 million recoveries across the world. In the United States alone, there were more than 3.3 million confirmed cases, 135,000 deaths and over 1 million recoveries. - DNA

**Historic pay rises for French health workers**

DNA

PARIS: France has approved pay rises worth 8bn (€7.2bn; \$9bn) for health workers, with the government hailing their role in fighting coronavirus. The deal was signed with trade unions on Monday after weeks of negotiations, and will see wages rise by 183 a month on average. Health workers have been praised throughout the pandemic with regular displays of public appreciation. But they wanted more than recognition and have held protests to demand pay rises and better funding for hospitals. The announcement came as the country prepares to celebrate a scaled-down Bastille Day on Tuesday, a national public holiday during which health workers will be celebrated for their efforts during the pandemic. More than 200,000 infections and 30,000 deaths have been recorded in France, one of Europe's worst-hit countries.

**Court to indict Zardari on Aug 4**

The accountability court, during the hearing today, directed all the accused to appear on August 4

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former president Asif Ali Zardari will be indicted in the Thatta Water Supply reference on August 4. The Thatta

Water Supply is a supplementary reference part of the fake bank accounts and mega money-laundering scam reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against the PPP leader.

**CAA clears 18 pilots working**

ISLAMABAD: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Tuesday cleared the licences of 18 Pakistani pilots working for Oman's SalamAir after the Arab country's civil aviation requested for the verification and clearance of the Pakistani pilots working in Oman's airline company. The names of the pilots cleared by the CAA Pakistan are Captain Fawad Shahab, Sheikh Saifullah, Mohammad Bilal Malik, Mohammad Javed, and Mohammad Rashid. Moreover, the licences of Captain Muhammad Athar Iqbal, Muhammad Asif, Farhan Khan, Babar Sultan, Farukh Bhatti, Sajjad Malik were also cleared, whereas, Captain Zia-ul-Haq, Natasha Sultan, Abbas Rizvi, Omar Jafar, and 3 other captains received clearances from the authority. On July 18, the CAA had suspended licences of 34 pilots of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) suspected of holding fake degrees. The notification issued by the aviation authority had said that the licenses will remain suspended till the inquiry against the pilots has not been completed. - DNA

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