



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

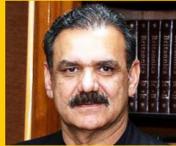
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PM Imran Khan desires maximum relief to needy people

CPEC means a developed Pakistan: Bajwa

Japanese envoy condemns attack on ANF officials



Briefs

Pakistan summons Indian diplomat

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: A senior Indian diplomat was summoned to Foreign Office Monday to register Pakistan's strong protest over the ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the Line of Control today, resulting in serious injuries to an innocent civilian. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqi said due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian occupation forces in Bagasar Sector of the LOC, 20 year old Moin Akhtar son of Muhammad Akhtar, resident of Village Mehtika, sustained serious injuries. She said the Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) have been continuously targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars and automatic weapons. This year, India has committed 1732 ceasefire violations to date, resulting in 14 shahadats and serious injuries to 134 innocent civilians.

No bar on dual nationals



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Monday said legally a person with dual citizenship could not become a member of National Assembly and the Senate, however said that there was no such bar for them to hold any other position. "In democracy, the status of elected representatives is higher because of the people's trust in them, however government's may need non-elected technical experts as their advisers. The practice is common worldwide," Qureshi said in an interview with a private television channel. - APP

Pak reports lowest virus deaths

LAHORE: Pakistan has confirmed 31 deaths in a single day by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 265,083. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 5,599, Dunya News reported on Monday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) 1,587 persons have been tested positive for COVID-19 in 24 hours. - DNA

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PM desires quick relief to needy people

Prime minister directed the Advisor on Finance to undertake complete review of the subsidies

DNA / STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday chaired a meeting of the Finance and Economy think-tank to consider various economic issues and directed for carrying out a comprehensive study in different sectors to extend maximum possible subsidies to the poor and deserving people. The purpose of the economic think-tank was to consider different important economic issues, submit its recommendations and formulate future strategy in this regard. During the meeting, power, gas, fertilizers, utility stores, exports, housing, Ehsaas, budgets of National Highway Authority and others and the grant of subsidies, came under discussion. Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister said provision of subsidies by the government was to extend support and relief to the poor and deserving people. He stressed that complete study of the whole system of subsidy should be carried out to ensure that its affects not only could

reach to the deserving people in a transparent manner but also it should cater to the needs of maximum people. For further improvement in the provision of subsidy in every sector, the prime minister directed the Advisor on Finance to undertake complete review of the subsidies provided by the government and set up a cell in this regard which should submit comprehensive recommendations. The Prime Minister also emphasized upon seeking help from the Ehsaas cash programme database for provision of subsidies to the poor and deserving people in power, gas and utility stores. The meeting was attended by Ministers Hammad Azhar, Senator Shibli Faraz, Umar Ayub, Advisors Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Abdul Razak Dawood, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Special Assistant Dr. Sania Nishtar, and Nadeem Babar. Former finance minister Shaukat Tareen, Sultan Ali Alana, Dr. Ijaz Nabi and Arif Habib participated in the meeting via video-link. PM office media wing in a press release said.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner, Christian Turner meets Federal Minister for Industries & Production, Hammad Azhar. - DNA

FATA merger a good omen, says Shibli

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said on Monday that inclusion of the people of erstwhile FATA into the mainstream democratic process signified a new, strong and prosperous Pakistan. In a tweet, the minister said the tribesmen were very close to the heart of Prime Minister Imran Khan who was determined to empower them. Congratulating the brave and valiant people of erstwhile FATA on completion of one year of democratic process there, he said giving the tribesmen the right to have lawyer, argument and appeal was a change. He expressed the hope that in days to come, they would have more good news and opportunities to progress.

Saudi King Salman admitted to hospital

PM prays for early recovery of King

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has prayed for the swift recovery, good health and long life of Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. In a tweet, he expressed concern about hospitalization of His Majesty. He said the government and people of Pakistan, and I myself, join our Saudi brethren in prayers for the recovery of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz. - DNA

bin Farhan wrote on Twitter. Hours before Kadhemi was to set off on his first trip abroad as premier, his office said they heard King Salman was suffering from "a sudden health issue". "It was decided to postpone the visit to the earliest possible date agreed upon by the two sides," his office said in a statement. - APP

PML-N, PPP agree to call APC after Eid

Recommendations finalized in Monday meeting between PML-N and PPP will be shared with the heads of other opposition parties

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have decided to hold an All Parties Conference (APC) of the opposition against the federal government, media reported on Monday. According to details, a three-member PML-N delegation comprising Ahsan Iqbal, Ayaz Sadiq and Khawaja Saad Rafique called on PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Bilawal House to discuss the APC agenda. PPP's Qamar Zaman Kaira, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Chaudhry Manzoor and Syed Hassan Murtaza were also present in the meeting.

Leaders from both parties discussed the APC agenda which included coronavirus, inflation, economic and financial situation of the country along with flour, sugar and medicine scandals. Furthermore, debate was held over possible amendments in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws, vindictive actions by the government and PPP's suggestion to bring a no-confidence motion against National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser. Recommendations finalized in today's meeting between PML-N and PPP will be shared with the heads of other opposition parties for which a proposal to form an advisory committee is under consideration.

Afghan forces suffer casualties

However, local security officials and the Taliban are yet to comment on the attacks

DNA

KABUL: At least 13 Afghan security forces members were killed, and 10 others wounded in an attack by Taliban insurgents in the northern province of Kunduz early Monday morning. According to the reports, around nine policemen and four army soldiers were killed and ten security forces members were wounded when the Taliban attacked security checkpoints in Kunduz city and on the Kunduz-Ali Abad district highway. The source claim that "The clashes started at 1:00 am and ended after three hours when security forces pushed back the insurgents." The Taliban have also suffered casualties but there is no exact information yet. However, local security officials and the Taliban have yet to comment on the attacks.

Japanese envoy condemns attack on ANF officials

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Matsuda Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the officials of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) of Pakistan on July 18th in Mashkel district of Balochistan, which resulted in the martyrdom of two officials and caused critical injuries to others. "I am deeply saddened and grieved over the loss of precious human lives in this act of terrorism in Balochistan and offer my sincere condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims and pray for the speedy recovery of those who have suffered injuries" said Ambassador MATSUDA in his message of condolence here on Monday. While appreciating the continuous efforts made by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for preventing distribution of illegal drugs in Pakistan, Ambassador MATSUDA paid glowing tributes to the martyred ANF personnel for sacrificing their lives and their contribution towards the realization of a greater cause of rooting-out



the menace of illicit drug trafficking in the country. Ambassador MATSUDA said that controlling illicit drug trafficking is one of the major and challenging issues for the international community as it significantly damages the society and also provides financing to terrorist groups. The Government of Japan has continuously supported countries including Pakistan in their efforts to fight against this menace. In this regard, the Government of Japan has provided assistance worth USD 6.5 million to ANF to strengthen border security against illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organised crime. The Ambassador added that the Government of Japan has been also supporting various projects of counter-terrorism amounting to more than USD 137 million.

NAB lacks expertise, says SC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan lashed out on Monday at the National Accountability Bureau for its "lack of professionalism, expertise and sincerity of cause," which it said was the reason behind its abysmally low conviction rate. "It is because of lack of professionalism, expertise and sincerity of cause that the conviction rate in NAB cases is abysmally low," the two-member bench wrote in its judgment in the Paragon City corruption case against Khawaja Saad Rafique and Khawaja Salman Rafique. The Supreme Court said that NAB failed to provide the control of Khawaja Saad Rafique and Khawaja Salman Rafique on Paragon City. In its written 87-pages judgment in Paragon City corruption case against Khawaja Saad Rafique and Khawaja Salman Rafique, the apex court stated that there were discrepancies between the reference and the investigation report. The judgment stated that unfortunately 72 years have passed since Pakistan was formed and 47 years have passed since the constitution of Pakistan was made but even today the people are not getting their rights given in the constitution.

Uzbek embassy, SCCI mull cooperation

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held between Saadullah Tashmatov, Charge De Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director CGSS and Mian Naeem Javed, Chairman, Sialkot International Airport Limited. During the meeting it was decided that Embassy of Uzbekistan to Pakistan and Sialkot International Airport Limited will mutually collaborate and cooperate for the enhancement of trade and aviation industry between both the countries. Furthermore, CGSS will act as a facilitator and



act as a bridge between both the parties to boost bilateral cooperation and strengthen ties between both the brotherly nations. Sialkot International Airport Limited has the distinction of being the first privately owned public airport in Pakistan. It was built by the business community of Sialkot by their own efforts. All three parties expressed their desire to increase trade relations between the two countries and to establish joint ventures.

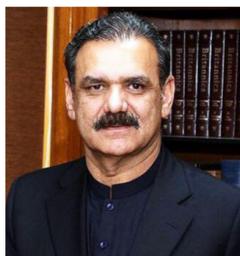
CPEC means a developed Pakistan: Asim Bajwa

Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Senator Siraj-ul-Haq also paid rich tributes to Asim Saleem Bajwa. He said that despite the Coronavirus, the Chairman CPEC Authority did not leave any thirst for answers to any question

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD - The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Chairman Lieutenant General (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that CPEC will revolutionize the construction and development in the country. The ML-1 project will soon be completed and the network of highways will be laid. He said that the transport share of railways will increase from 4% to 20% and a large dry port will be set up at the site of Havelian

and economic zones will be established. According to details, a meeting of the Senate CPEC Standing Committee was held under the chairmanship of Senator Sherry Rehman. Briefing the meeting, Chairman CPEC Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa said that the transmission system of the railways would be replaced under ML-1 project. ECNEC has approved the 7.2 billion ML-1 project and railways transport share will increase from 4% to 20% after the completion of the project.



He said that railway engineers would be trained jointly with Russia, Germany and Britain. The Or-

ange Line train project will also be opened to the public soon. Replying to a question, Chairman CPEC Authority said that border fencing with Iran was being done and 100 km fence would be erected soon. Giving further briefing to the committee, he said that Rashkai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) would be inaugurated soon. Faisalabad and Dhabeji will also become special economic zones and Mansehra Thakot Motorway will also be opened soon, he added. Committee Chairperson Sherry Rehman and other senators

expressed satisfaction over the briefing of the Chairman CPEC Authority and said that the project was moving in the right direction. Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Senator Siraj-ul-Haq also paid rich tributes to Asim Saleem Bajwa. He said that despite the Coronavirus, the Chairman CPEC Authority did not leave any thirst for answers to any question. The senators from Balochistan also could not remain unimpressed by Asim Saleem Bajwa's interest in the construction and development of Balochistan.

Strong winds, rain batter Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: The Meteorological Department had forecast rain with strong winds and thundershowers in different parts of Punjab including Lahore and Islamabad and torrential rain in some places. It also rained in Lahore in the morning after which the sun rose but it was not so intense. As evening approached, the clouds settled in the sky and strong winds began to blow.

Briefs

Resolution against PTV fee submitted

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hina Pervaiz Butt submitted a resolution in the Punjab Assembly against increase in the PTV license fee. The resolution rejected the hike of Rs 65, from 35 to 100 rupees, in the license fee while strongly condemning the decision by the federal government. The resolution stated that Prime Minister Imran Khan in the past declared the PTV fee of Rs 35 as annual robbery of 10 billion rupees by the government, and now he is going to rob people of Rs 30 billion after surging the fee to 100 rupees. The resolution appealed to the Supreme Court of Pakistan to take notice against this anti-public step by the federal government and declare the sudden decision of increasing the PTV license fee as null and void.

'Blood screening process being improved'

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said on Monday that blood screening process was being further improved besides enhancing capacity building of the Punjab Blood Transfusion Authority (PBT). She was presiding over a meeting at Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department here. She said that no illegal blood banks would be allowed to work in the province, adding that non-licensed blood banks would be considered as illegal. She said that blood banks were functional in all public hospitals of the province. She said that performance of blood banks was being improved by giving funds to the Punjab Blood Transfusion Authority. Yasmin Rashid said that vacant posts in the PBT should be filled immediately. She said that standard of blood banks would be brought up to international standards, adding that cleanliness should be ensured in blood banks at all costs. She said blood transfusion system would be centralised as per Punjab Blood Transfusion Safety Act 2016. — APP

Senate body satisfied over CPEC progress

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Special Committee on the project of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Monday expressed satisfaction over the progress of the mega project saying that it was moving ahead in the right direction. Chairperson of the committee Senator Sherry Rehman said that with the development of this mega project, dream of prosperity and development especially in Balochistan province was becoming true. The meeting of the committee was held here with Sherry Rehman in the chair. Briefing the committee on the project, Chairman CPEC Authority and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt. Gen (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said that work on several CPEC projects including Manshara-Thakot motorway did not stop. — APP

5-day anti-polio drive in South Waziristan

PESHAWAR: A five-day anti-polio campaign have started in South Waziristan on Monday, after a break of over four months due to coronavirus alert. According to Health Department, during the campaign over 1,30,000 children below the age of five would be vaccinated against polio. For the campaign 609 teams of trained anti-polio workers have been formed which included 594 mobile and 15 fixed teams. 167 area in-charges have also been deputed for the campaign. The last anti-polio campaign was carried out in February 2020 and during the current year three polio cases have been reported so far. Two of the polio cases were reported from tehsil Shakai while one from Barmal area. The ongoing vaccination was against P-2 virus. — APP



ISLAMABAD: First Lady, Mrs. Samina Alvi being briefed about Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled persons at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. — DNA

National Single Curriculum to create unity, says Shafqat

The minister said the dream of "One Nation" and "United Pakistan" cannot be achieved until the classification system not end in the country

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood on Monday said that only National Single uniform Curriculum can be helpful in bringing all the classes of society at one platform. He was chairing a meeting here at ministry to review the fresh development on Single National Curriculum. Senior officials of the ministry briefed the meeting

about the latest updates regarding Single National Curriculum. The minister said the dream of "One Nation" and "United Pakistan" cannot be achieved until the classification system not end in the country. He said that National Curriculum was implemented in the developed countries of Europe while it was also successfully applied by some Asian Countries.



He assured that the standard of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan will not be lower than international level. The new curriculum will not only increase the capacity building of our children but it would also highlight their natural abilities, he added. Shafqat Mahmood directed the officials to inform the provinces and all relevant stakeholders about

the new development in Single National Curriculum, adding that in that regard at least two monthly meetings would be arranged with the provinces and other stakeholders. He said that "we cannot claim that single national curriculum will at once bring equality in all the education system but it will be first step towards uniformity in the education system. — APP

Wheat import permits for 288 private importers

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of National Food Security and Research has so far issued 288 wheat import permits to private sector importers for ensuring adequate and timely imports of the commodity in order to keep smooth demand and supply of grains and flour across the country. The import permits were issued in compliance of the decision of Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, whereas Department of Plant Protection has issued these permits for the import of wheat in two phases, said Food Security Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Dr Intiaz Ahmed Gopang. Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that for phase-I (out of 500,000 tons) Department of Plant Protection has issued import permits to 122 importers of the private sector for the quantity of 499,500 tons of wheat. Meanwhile, for phase-II (out of 1,000,000 tons) it has issued import permits to 166 importers of the private sector for the quantity of 514,346 tons, he added. As wheat harvesting is expected during the 3rd week of August and September, 2020, he said adding that future trading has already been started. It has been informed by the importers that first shipment carrying about 66,000 tons of wheat will arrive in August, 2020 and second shipment of 70,000 tons is expected to be arrived in September, 2020, he added. Furthermore, trading of two shipments is also in process which would arrive as per schedule to further cementing the demand and supply of grains in the local market, he remarked. — APP

Fawad congratulates UAE scientists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry has congratulated the United Arab Emirates for its historic achievement in its first mission to Mars. He said UAE is investing in new technologies and achieved a milestone in its space exploration programme under the visionary leadership. Fawad chaudhry hailed the UAE Young scientists and Science minister of UAE for the successful launch of Mars mission, adding, this is a great moment not just for the United Arab Emirates, but for all the international partners that are involved in exploring space. He said it is a landmark achievement for the Arab nations in advancing glob-

al knowledge in the field of space and we are also proud for the UAE which was equally giving opportunities to its Emirati women who are working on the Mars mission. UAE Science minister was commendable working on modern space programs with the collaboration of Japan and UAE is the only country who is having separate Artificial Intelligence ministry and Inducting youth. He said Pakistan is looking at increased cooperation with the UAE in the field of space, museums and precision agriculture sectors. Talking about stents, he said the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has already issued a license to the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) to manufacture cardiac stents in the country. In Mid of August

Pakistan will start its local manufacturing as its legal process is almost completed. Fawad said PTI government was working on ensuring wide-range reforms in DRAP and the international standard stents will now be manufactured in Pakistan for the first time in its history. He said Pakistan is also working on local manufacturing of X-ray machines. He said Science ministry was in efforts to compete the international market with exporting our local manufacturing medical equipments. Before the pandemic, hospitals invested less in ventilators as they are expensive and the devices were available mainly in some hospitals in bigger but now Pakistan is capable to manufacture its local ventilators and more with its exports, he mentioned.

Govt rejects reports of approving drug price hike

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) has rejected reports that the government has approved an increase in prices of essential drugs. A spokesperson for the ministry said pharmaceutical companies have a right to annually jack up prices of drugs by seven to ten per cent without the government's approval under Drug Pricing Policy 2018. The federal government revised the drug policy to bring it in lines with Drug Act 1976 and to remove legal lacunae, he added. In doing so, the government created a step-in clause in Drug Pricing Policy whereby it can exclude any category of drugs from the annual increase of price, the spokesperson said. Drug Regulatory Authority (DRAP) recently notified the amendments made by the government to Drug Pricing Policy 2018. "This all was done in the backdrop of an assurance given by the pharmaceutical industry that it will not apply for annual raise of drug prices at least till September 2020. However, it went back on its words and about one hundred drug companies have applied for an annual increase in prices," he disclosed. The spokesperson said the government has the right to step in to freeze any or all drug prices to safeguard public interest in view of the COVID situation.

Aamir pours out his heart in meeting with PM

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf MNA from Karachi and TV host Aamir Liaquat Hussain said on Monday that he presented his four-page long resignation to Prime Minister Imran Khan in today's meeting with him but he didn't accept it. Talking to Twitter shortly after the meeting, the PTI leader said the premier didn't even want to talk about his resignation and termed him an asset of the ruling PTI. His meeting with PM Khan came days after he announced to submit his resignation to the premier. "I poured out my heart to the prime minister who lauded my raising voice over the issues facing Karachi and said this should be the role of an elected leader having political acumen and feeling the pain of public," he tweeted. "You are an asset of the PTI. There is no need to quit as the party needs him. We need to make Pakistan a welfare state together. I value your raising voice for your constituency and Karachi. This was not your voice but that of the PTI and mine. I am happy that Aamir is associated with the PTI," the MNA quoted the premier as having said that. Last week, Aamir Liaquat Hussain had tweeted that he had requested time from Prime Minister Imran Khan and would submit his resignation to him during that meeting. He said he felt "helpless" as an MNA from Karachi. "I cannot see the people of Karachi, especially my constituents, suffer and cannot see them face the lies of [K-Electric CEO] Monis Alvi," the lawmaker said. — DNA

Narowal Sports City case hearing adjourned

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Accountability court on Monday has adjourned the hearing of Narowal Sports City corruption case after National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has failed to file reference against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal. During the hearing, the judge asked about the reference of Narowal Sports City case over which, the NAB representative told that the matter has already been forwarded

to headquarters for approval. The NAB prosecutor sought more time from the court for filing the reference against PML-N stalwart. "The reference against Ahsan Iqbal is under process and we need more time to complete the investigation against PML-N leader," the investigation officer told court. The court, while directing the anti-graft watchdog to file the reference till next hearing, has adjourned the proceedings till August 26. Previously, NAB had sought time from accountability court to submit reference against Ahsan Iqbal,

saying that witnesses were not appearing due to coronavirus fear. The PML-N leader expressed anger over NAB's statement asking why he was put in jail for two months when there were no witnesses. The anti-graft watchdog body alleged that Iqbal had illegally initiated a project of Rs 3 billion in Narowal, causing a loss worth billions to the national exchequer. NAB claimed to have received a complaint that the Narowal Sports City was constructed at a cost of approximately Rs6 billion, which was a violation of rules.

'Electricity tariff should not be increased for Karachi'

DNA

KARACHI: President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, FPCCI's Businessmen Panel Sr Vice Chairman, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday asked the Prime Minister Imran Khan that electricity tariff should not

be increased for Karachi while power utility should be asked to reduce power theft and line losses. He said that a hike of Rs2.89 will hit masses, damage production, and compromise exports and its repercussions would be felt across the country. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Karachi is a commercial and industrial hub of Pakistan and a slight increase in the cost of any

input hits the whole population as well as exports. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that government should think twice before increase the cost of input for industrial centers. The former minister noted that masses, as well as the business community, is already consuming costliest energy in the region and continued hike in the tariff promotes corruption.

Power sector biggest threat to the economy, says Mian Zahid

DNA

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before increase the cost of input for industrial centers. The former minister noted that masses, as well as the business community, is already consuming costliest energy in the region and continued hike in the tariff promotes corruption. Inefficiency, incompetence, cronyism, undue patronage, political interference, and other ills have made power sector a grave threat for the economy while the power sector regulator is as useless as departments regulating other sectors. He said that government is wasting heavy amount on NEPRA which has given free hand to the power companies. The business leader noted that lockdown amid economic slowdown has shocked majority and now unannounced load shedding is hurting people and productive sectors. The government should provide relief to masses in such a challenging environment and should not add to their problems, he observed.

JULY 2020

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs

SC seeks details of constructions along GT Road

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan summoned on Monday a detailed report on all the constructions near the Grand Trunk Road. Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed asked how the National Highway Authority lease out the land to anyone when it doesn't even own it. The NHA is only responsible for constructing roads and fixing them, remarked Justice Ijazul Ahsan. The court has summoned on a report on its lease and asked for details such as when it was leased out and under what conditions. The NHA chairperson has been summoned in person at the next hearing. The Grand Trunk Road, which used to be called Badshahi Sadak, Sadak E Sher Shah, is known as Asia's oldest and longest roads. It covers a distance of over 2,500 kilometres from Bangladesh's Chittagong to Howrah in India then across Northern India through Delhi, passing from Amritsar and the road continues towards Lahore and Peshawar in Pakistan, finally ending in Kabul, Afghanistan.

IHC reserves verdict on petition against CDA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday reserved verdict on petition challenging appointment of board members of Capital Development Authority (CDA). During the hearing, Chief Justice Athar Minallah remarked that the petitioner should file a complaint on Prime Minister Portal and if no one takes action on the complaint, then court should be approached. Chief Justice told the lawyer that with every petition coming to the court, the pending cases affect the entire judiciary as many cases are already pending in the IHC.

Couple killed days after free-will marriage

ABBOTTABAD: A young couple was killed in the name of honour Monday, days after they tied the knot out of their own free-will in Abbottabad, police said. They said the couple had contracted a free-will marriage against the will of their parents a few days back. An FIR of the incident has been registered and investigation launched to arrest the culprit(s). In a separate incident, a woman allegedly murdered her daughter after she refused to marry a person of the former's choice in Daska city in Sialkot district. - APP

45th INSC inaugurated in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The 45th 'International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs' was inaugurated here on Monday to give opportunity to the young and senior scientists of Pakistan as well as the developing world to interact and have scientific discourse through webinars. The INSC was inaugurated by Chairman PAEC Muhammad Naeem (HI, SI), said a news release. Chairman PAEC Muhammad Naeem appreciated the efforts of the organizers of INSC to hold this scientific discourse through webinars and continued the tradition of holding this college on regular basis because, unlike the previous years, Covid-19 made it impossible to gather participants from around the world at one place. - APP



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy family riding their donkey cart at F-10 area. - DNA

Islamabad police to ensure fool proof security on Eid-ul-Azha

All police officials have been directed to remain on high alert and fully prepared to avert any untoward situation during Eid days. He asked to ensure social distancing and use of masks at religious gatherings on Eid day and also at cattle markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have been directed to ensure comprehensive security arrangements in the Capital on eve of Eid-ul-Azha and ensure implementation on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to contain the spread of coronavirus. These directions were made by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan while chairing a meeting held to finalize security arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha. The meeting was attended among others by DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed, DG Safe City Sarfaraz Ahmed Falki, DIG (Headquarters) Muham-

mad Saleem, AIG (Special Branch), AIG (Operations), SSP (Security), SSP (Headquarters), SSP (Traffic), SSP (Counter Terrorism Department), Additional SP and Zonal SPs. The IGP asked DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed to devise elaborate security plan and monitor all arrangements himself in this regard. He asked to ensure implementation on SOPs issued by the government for business activities at markets, shopping centers, public places and cattle markets. He further asked SSP (Traffic) to deploy policemen at various places to ensure smooth flow of traffic. All police officials have been directed to remain on high alert and fully prepared to avert any untoward situation during Eid days. He asked to ensure social distancing and use of masks at religious gatherings on Eid day and also at cattle markets. He asked all police officials to assign security duties in this connection at Masjid and Imambargahs. The squad of Bomb Disposal squad would conduct checking of various areas and parking will not be allowed near worship places or congregation. Police officials were asked to ensure implementation on SOPs issued by the government for business activities in markets during ongoing COVID-19 phase. The IGP said that special deployment should be made at Faisal Mosque on Eid day. He said that awareness campaign should be initiated for those people visiting their



hometowns so that they may leave for their destination after ensuring proper security arrangements at their homes. Special patrolling should be chalked out following which vehicles of police stations, Falcon and Bravo vehicles should patrol in their respective areas while additional vehicles and Reserve Force to be provided to each police station for success of patrolling plan. Islamabad police chief Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan asked DG (Safe City) to ensure high vigilance in the city through safe city cameras. AIG (Special Branch) was asked to ensure installment of walk through gates at Masjid, Imambargahs and other venues of religious congregations. He said that no laxity would be tolerated in case of any lapse in security arrangements. The Zonal SPs were asked to ensure effective security in their respective areas while SSP (Traffic) was assigned task for traffic plan to ensure smooth flow of traffic. DIG (Headquarters) was asked to ensure logistic support to all divisions in connection with security on Eid-ul-Azha. He said that section 144 has been imposed by district administration on some organizations to check collection of hides of sacrificial animals during Eid by district administration. Strict action should be taken against those found involved in such activities despite ban, the IGP added.

Fareena Mazhar assumes charge of Federal Secretary BOI

She led the business reforms exercise and helped Pakistan make an unprecedented 39 positions jump in EODB Rankings in two years



ISLAMABAD: Following the notification, Fareena Mazhar, a distinguished officer of Central Superior Service, has assumed the charge of Secretary Board of Investment (BOI) on Monday. During the last three years, while serving for Board of Investment as Executive Director General, she was leading Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiatives, said a press release issued by BOI here. In this role, she led the business reforms exercise and helped Pakistan make an unprecedented 39 positions jump in EODB Rankings in two years. Fareena Mazhar possesses a strong experience of more than thirty years, working as a Government officer in various organization including Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and Board of Investment. During her career, she took part in a number of senior level trainings and workshops within Pakistan and abroad and also has ample experience in negotiating Free Trade Agreements of Pakistan with different countries. - APP

MoHR launching Child abuse awareness campaign

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights is launching a public awareness campaign on child abuse through videos This campaign will be initiated through social and electronic media. According to a press release issued here on Monday the Pakistan Electronic Media Authority has issued letters to all electronic media to air these video messages free of cost under time allocated for public services messages. These video messages include Pakistani singer and social activist Shahzad Roy. - APP

150 traffic wardens to be deployed

ITP's FM Radio 92.4 would also aware visitors about traffic situation in the city. SSP Traffic has appealed the citizens to cooperate with police

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has decided to deploy 150 personnel to ensure smooth traffic flow around cattle markets set up at sectors L-12, Bhara Kau and Taramiri. The SP (Traffic) Chaudhry Khalid Rashid will overall monitor these arrangements while three DSPs would also assist him in this regard and to take action. Various diversion points would be erected at rush areas for convenience of citizens and they would be properly guided towards alternate routes. Parking lots have been specified for those visiting cattle markets where motorbikes and other vehicles can be parked. Citizens may lodge their complaints at 051-9261992-93 in case of any issue to them. ITP's FM Radio 92.4 would also aware visitors about traffic situation in the city. SSP (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed has appealed the citizens to cooperate with police and avoid purchasing animals by standing on roads. - APP

Gold price rises to Rs111,250 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1600 on Monday and was traded at Rs111,250 as against its trading at Rs109,650 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. Likewise the price of 10 gram gold also witnessed decrease of Rs1371 and was traded at Rs95,379 against its sale at Rs 94,007. The price of per tola silver remained stable at Rs1100 whereas that of 10 gram silver also remained constant at 943.07. The gold prices in the international market increased by \$7 and was traded at \$1813 on Monday against its sale at Rs1806 during the last trading day, the association reported. - APP

Rupee down 97 paises against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee weakened by 97 paises against US dollar in the interbank on Monday to close at Rs 168.30 as compared to the last closing of Rs167.33. However, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of Dollar in open market were recorded at Rs167.15 and Rs167.85 respectively. The State Bank of Pakistan reported that in interbank, the price of Euro appreciated by Rs 2.34 to close at Rs 192.90 against the last day's trading of Rs190.54. The Japanese Yen gained one paisa to close at Rs 1.57, whereas an increase of Rs 1.88 was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound which was traded at Rs 211.76 as compared to its last closing of Rs 209.88. - APP

IESCO issues 2-day power schedule

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued 2-day power suspension programme on July 22 and 23 for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on July 22 from 05:00am to 09:00am, mandra-1, mandra-2, khana east, tarlai, korla feeders. - APP

NTRC's traffic count program

ISLAMABAD: National Transport Research Center (NTRC) has launched Permanent Traffic Count Program on all National Highways and Motorways across the country. The recorded traffic counts would help in developing traffic factors used in planning, design and appraisal of the road projects, a senior official in NTRC told APP on Monday. - APP

Naya Pakistan housing project launched

DNA

ATTOCK: The Naya Pakistan Housing Programme NPHP has entered to its implementation phase as project ground breaking ceremony was held at Hazro town of Attock. Advisor to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam has performed the ground breaking ceremony. Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme spread over 400 kanals of land comprising 658 plots that include 90 plots of 10 marla each, 64 plots of 7 marla each, 189 plots of 5 marla each and 400 plots of 3 marla each. The plots would be given to the people through ballot and on merit. The colony would have a park, walking track and commercial area comprising 38 shops. The project would be completed in December 2021 at the cost of Rs 37,972 million. Speaking at the ceremony, Advisor to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik

Amin Aslam has said The project is not only a step towards fulfilling the commitment made with the public by the party. He said the construction of five million houses for low-income segments of society across the country was a difficult task. The Government would on the other hand, took it as a challenge and necessary legislation was being made to provide loans to people. He said PTI Government was also striving to develop Pakistan as such a welfare state and the Naya Pakistan Housing Project was part of a process. He vowed to help the country's long-neglected stratum move from katchi abadis into swiftly constructed flats and high-rises in a bid to overcome the housing shortage for lower-income groups. He revealed that work on similar project in Attock had also been started and for Naya Pakistan Housing Project 700 kanal of land has acquired.



ISLAMABAD: A man giving bath to his sacrificial animal in front of his residence. - DNA

Briefs

Fawad Ch. excited over launching of Electric Car Charging Station

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Monday expressed excitement over launching of first Electric Car Charging Station in federal capital. In a tweet, the federal minister said, "Extremely excited to see launching of first Electric Car Charging Station in Islamabad. Attock Oil is opening flagship Electric Vehicle charging facility at Jinnah Avenue Islamabad". Chaudhry Fawad said this was another target of Ministry of Science and Technology to encourage E-vehicles as future transportation. — APP

Drive launched to transform 'Panahgahs'

ISLAMABAD: The shelter homes management has launched a comprehensive campaign to transform 'Panahgahs' of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad into healthy and eco-friendly places through active mobilization of human and financial resources. "Panahgahs in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad were buzzing with positive activity and already bear a neat and clean look with successful launching of 'Promoting Healthy Lives' drive," Prime Minister's Focal Person on Shelter Homes Naseem ur Rehman told the media here at a Panahgah of Sector G-9. The drive was launched in collaboration with the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, he added. "Under the drive, the focal person said the management would observe four special weeks at 'Panahgahs' to shine a light on the importance of best practices to avoid health risk, mainly at crowded places. He said almost 30 service providers of all the 'Panahgahs' of twin cities had been given training on four key themes of the drive including cleanliness, clean drinking water, recommended public health screening for crowded places and eradication of tobacco and other harmful substance. — APP

Munaza praises smart lockdown strategy

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus Munaza Hassan on Monday said that decline in cases of coronavirus has vindicated Prime Minister Imran Khan's decisions of smart lockdown strategy. In her message on social media networking site, she said it had already been proved that the country was on right direction since day one. "Today Pakistan was among the countries where death ratio from the COVID-19 is lesser, while more peoples were recovering from the deadliest virus", she said. She said that people should strictly maintain social distancing and SOPs to completely eradicate the virus from the country. — APP

Kufic calligraphy competition on Aug 10

ISLAMABAD: Contemporary Art Studio will organize an online calligraphy competition titled "Kufic Calligraphy Competition" in this pandemic situation to engage people in an artistic activity on 10 August. The competition was aimed at beautifying handwriting as calligraphy is considered as a great source of creativity. Calligraphy is just a beautiful art form and it's a way of writing mindfully whilst creating something stunning at the same time, an official said. He said that you just need to share some information with us including Artist name, size and medium of art work. He said that citizen of twin cities get ready to learn a new skill and unleash their inner artist through this calligraphy competition. He said that competition was being arranged for the calligraphy lovers to put their creative ideas on page with beautiful skilled writing. — APP



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on E-Commerce at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

President Alvi stresses promotion of E commerce

The President asked NITB, FBR, SBP, Ministries of IT and Commerce to expeditiously complete work on their respective pillars

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chaired a meeting on E-commerce to review the action plan with regard to implementation of E-commerce policy in the country. The meeting was attended by Minister for IT & Telecom, Syed Amin ulHaque,

Advisor to PM on Commerce, Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Mr. Jamil Ahmed, Secretary to the President, Mr. Tariq NajeebNajmi, Secretary IT & Telecom, Mr. Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui, Additional Secretary Finance, Dr. Arshad Mahmood, Chairman FBR, Mr. Muhammad Javed Ghanni, Member (IT), M/o

IT&Telecom, Syed Junaid Imam, CEO NITB, Syed Shabhat Ali and Joint Secretary, M/o Commerce, Ms. Aisha HumairaMoriani. While addressing the meeting, the President said that promotion of E-commerce was highly essential for strengthening economy of the country. He said that E-commerce offered huge opportunities

for small and medium enterprises that connected themwith Pakistani Online markets and international markets through global E-commerce platforms. Highlighting the importance of E-commerce, the President said that it provided access to distant markets, reduce cost of doing business and create employment opportunities. The participants were apprized that E-trade in the

country had crossed over Rs. 100 billion. In order to promote E-commerce, the meeting underscored the need for tax incentive packages and availability of IT infrastructure and quality of services in the country. The President asked NITB, FBR, SBP, Ministries of IT and Commerce to expeditiously complete work on their respective pillars.

ASCD Professional Development Program held



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Teacher's Training Session organized by Pakistan ASCD was held at the thinking school from

3rd to 7th July, 2020. The mode of the meeting was an online session. This session was lead by Dr. David and Temara Musiowsky, Thinking School Philosophy Session was

conducted by Dr. David in which he focused on The Thinking Maps and Instructional Strategies, while Whole Child Introduction session was conducted by Tamera Musiowsky in which she shed light upon Whole Child Tenets and Whole Child Indicators. All the teachers at The Thinking School attended the session and actively participated in the program, as per the rules and regulations of The Thinking School, only certified teachers were allowed to enter the classroom. At the end of the session certificates were distributed among the participants.

Mobile phone imports increase 81.32%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 81.32 percent during the fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$1369.947 million during July-June (2019-20) as compared to the imports of US \$755.548 million during July-June (2018-19), showing growth of 81.32 percent, according to the latest data issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). On year-on-year basis, the import of mobile phones

witnessed increased of 300.62 percent in June 2020, as compared to the imports of the same month of last year. The mobile imports during June 2020 were recorded at US \$231.303 million against the imports of US \$57.736 million in June 2019. On month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones also increased by 108.27 percent during June 2020, as compared to the imports of US \$111.059 million during May 2020, according to the data. It is pertinent to mention here that the country's trade deficit witnessed significant reduction during the fiscal year 2019-20 and declined by 27.12% as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The exports witnessed decrease of 6.81% and reached to \$21.394 billion against the exports of \$22.958 billion of the same period of last year. On the other hand, the country's imports witnessed significant decrease of 18.61% and went down from \$54.763 billion last fiscal year to \$44.574 billion of same period of fiscal year 2019-20. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at \$23.180 billion against the deficit of \$31.805 during last year, showing decline of 27.12 percent.

Wardens to take action against encroachments

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi City Traffic Officer (CTO) has directed traffic wardens to take strict action against encroachments and illegal parking particularly at Murree Road and Raja Bazaar and make all out efforts to ensure smooth traffic flow and avoid the traffic congestion on the main arteries. According to a CTP spokesman, CTP has also made special arrangements to clear encroachments. Now lifters and crane would also be available in Raja Bazar and Murree Road areas to remove encroachments. He said, additional force has also been deployed in commercial areas to regulate traffic load. He said that CTP launched a special operation last week against encroachments and illegal parking particularly to clear City Saddar Road, Imperial Market, Gungmandi Road and Bara Market areas. The City Sector Traffic Police on the directives of DSP Traffic, City Sector Rai Bashir, under the supervision of in-charge City Sector, Chaudhary Muhammad Qasim launched an operation and issued challan slips to rules violators. The team also confiscated several hand cards and removed dozens of encroachments to ensure smooth flow of traffic. He said, strict action would be taken against the rules violators particularly encroachers and parking rules violators besides all out efforts to ease the traffic on city roads. — APP

ICCI for initiating development work

ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Abbasi said that being the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad should be the ideal city of the country in terms of development. He said that no development work has been done in the city for the last four years

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Monday urged the government for initiating development work in markets and industrial areas for enhancing trade and commerce activities. In a press statement, ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Abbasi said that being the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad should be the ideal city of the country in terms of development. He said that no development work has been done in the city for the last four years. Due to this situation, markets and industrial areas were presenting a dilapidated look as footpaths and roads were in broken condition and other infrastructure was also in bad shape. He said that Kahuta Industrial Triangle also lacked facilities while traders and customers were facing problems due to lack of parking in business centres. He said that the sewerage system was not properly working in the capital city while 90 percent filtration plants were not functioning. He said the sanitation system was also very poor while most of the city was deprived of street lights except for a few major highways. Tahir Abbasi informed that CDA Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed during a meeting had assured development works but they were not included in the budget. He said that if development works in Islamabad were not started soon, the condition of markets and industrial areas would be further deteriorated which would badly affect the promotion of trade and industrial activities. He urged the CDA to pay urgent attention to this important issue for facilitating the growth of business activities. ICCI Vice President Saif-ur-Rehman Khan said that internal fight between the CDA and the MCI was affecting the city's development. He said that the markets did not seem to be a part of Islamabad due to their dilapidated condition. The MCI had sold the footpaths in markets, so MCI was responsible for the encroachments due to which business activities were also suffering. He urged the authorities concerned to remove the encroachments from markets, improve the sanitation system, start development works soon for the better development of markets and industrial areas in Islamabad. It would facilitate the promotion of business activities ultimately producing beneficial results for the economy, he added. — DNA

FBISE announces SSC-II results

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) on Monday announced the results of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Part-II Annual Exams 2020 under the promotion policy of federal government formulated in wake of novel corona virus. This year SSC Annual Examination 2020 could not be conducted completely due to corona virus while the results had been prepared under the "Promotion Policy of Federal Government". Overall the girls remained dominant and clinched top slots in 2020 SSC Exams, it was announced in a ceremony held at FBISE which was attended by the Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajih Akram as chief guest, Chairman FBISE, Rao Atiq Ahmad, position holder students, parents and teachers. Speaking on the occasion, Parliamentary Secretary Wajih Akram congratulated the students, parents and teachers for achieving the high success in SSC exams and wished them good luck in the future. — APP

AIU offers free education to disables

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) offers free education to the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society, especially transgenders, disables, and prisoners. Vice Chancellor AIU, Professor Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum has directed all administrative, servicing and academic departments of the university to work for provision of free education to those who can not afford education due to some financial, social, cultural or even physical constraints. Director Students Affairs, Rana Tariq Javed informed that AIU Vice Chancellor was determined to eliminate all obstacles in the process of getting education. He further added that according to the Vice Chancellor's instructions, nobody would be deprived of the basic right to education because of either poverty or disability, therefore, AIU would provide free of cost but quality education at the doorstep of such segments of the society. AIU was a national institution and striving hard to realize the dream of "Education for All", he added. Rana Tariq said the university had advertised admissions for Autumn 2020 Semester and transgenders, prisoners or individuals with disability might apply for the advertised programs, however, all such interested candidates would submit admission forms in their respective regional offices. He informed the university did not demand even registration fee from the blind people. AIU not only granted fee concession but also offered scholarships to its students, he added. It is to mention here that the AIU has offered admission to Matric (general), Matric (Darse-Nizami), FA (general), FA (Darse-Nizami), and I Com. Overseas Pakistani who are living in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and America can also take admission in these programmes. They can download admission form university's website. — APP

Ehsaas provides relief to 12,997,237 persons

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Rs2.589 billion have been distributed among 212,024 persons while Rs1.149 billion has been distributed among 94,039 people in Gilgit-Baltistan

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far disbursed emergency cash amount of Rs157.250 billion among 12,997,237 lockdown affected persons under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme in different categories. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme was initiated to disburse cash amount of Rs12,000 among those affected from the coronavirus lockdown. The payment process continued through different centres across the country in different categories of the programme. According to the cash update received on July 20, a total of Rs70.728 billion has been disbursed among 5,845,019 deserving families in Punjab so far while Rs47.252 billion has been disbursed among 3,918,902 families in Sindh. A total of Rs26.877 billion has been disbursed among 2,214,239 beneficiaries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while Rs7.846 billion has been disbursed among 645,936 persons in Balochistan. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Rs2.589 billion have been distributed among 212,024 persons while Rs1.149 billion has been distributed among 94,039 people in Gilgit-Baltistan. An amount of Rs. 0.810 billion has been disbursed among 67,078 beneficiaries in Islamabad. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Sacrificial animals being fed at green belt of G-6 ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. — DNA

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Vol: 01 Issue: 102

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.comWebsite: www.islamabadpost.com.pk

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

Planning death

A Body set up by the government in New Delhi to investigate communal riots which took place in February this year in the Indian capital has found that the deaths and violence which took place were essentially planned by the government with the support of police and administration. Fifty-three persons, most of them Muslims, died during the riots while another 200 were injured.

The protest was staged over the new citizenship act introduced by the government of Narendra Modi under which persons from five neighbouring countries would be given fast-track Indian citizenship, except for Muslims. The law was seen as discriminatory by many groups including India's 170 million Muslims. The Delhi Minorities Commission noted that the worst communal violence seen in India for decades was triggered when groups which supported the law were encouraged by administration to attack Muslims and their supporters staging the protest. While the Commission has recommended action against all those responsible, its findings are not binding and the BJP alongside the police has already denied that any BJP leader was involved in the horrendous violence that took place in the capital city of the world's largest democracy.

India today is a democracy only on paper. The successive actions taken by the BJP make it clear that the party wishes to turn secular India into a Hindu state where Hindus enjoy superiority over other groups.

Muslims, the largest minority in the country, are in particular being targeted. The rest of the world has largely watched this in silence. During the riots, 11 mosques, five madrasahs, a Muslim shrine and a graveyard were attacked and badly damaged.

The controversy over the law is continuing. But the BJP government has made it quite clear that it intends to continue following the controversial policies which it is currently pursuing. While human rights groups in India have protested these actions, there has been a failure to convince PM Modi to change his stance. The riots in New Delhi spelled out the nature of this stance. The report from the DMC has made it clear that the violence was quite deliberately orchestrated and was intended to hurt as many Muslims as possible as a means to prevent further protests and deter opposition to the dangerous new laws the BJP continues to bring in.

We have already seen the manner in which it has effectively snatched away autonomy from the state of Kashmir, turning it into two union territories under federal control. The sentiment against Muslims has spread quickly across India, notably in the electronic media, and some way has to be found to check this before it is too late to reestablish peace in India and give the Muslim minority within it a sense of security.



The horror within

IN a country where morality seems to rule every single second of every single person's life, the rate of child sexual abuse seems blindingly high. Unfortunately, due to the usual lack of reporting and lack of access to reporting we really can't be sure where exactly we stand. What we do know is that the past few years have seen some of the most horrific cases come to light – from Kasur to individual cases.

And now we have an alleged paedophile in Khairpur raping children. As per reports, the man – a retired schoolteacher – was allegedly raping minor students whom he tutored privately; reportedly, he was also filming his assaults. He has been arrested after photographs of him sodomising a young boy went viral on social media. As per NGOs estimations, a total of 2,846 child abuse cases were reported from across the country in 2019, with data showing that more than eight children suffered some form of abuse every day in Pakistan last year. The true number must be a magnitude higher since most cases of child harassment, molestation and rape go unreported.

We only hear of a fraction of these cases, but we need to wake up to the fact that child abuse is a daily occurrence and that it often leads to murder. The fact also is that those who are economically vulnerable do not have the option to always be around for their children, no matter how much they might want to, because they are struggling to make a living and feed their families. And this is why those who are economically insecure make for the easiest targets because of their circumstances, something all predators know. Unfortunately, Pakistan maintains no registry of child sex offenders. There is also no exchange of data between police, the FIA and other security bodies. Given that the rate of sexual abuse continues to increase, concrete measures are required to address such loopholes and also initiate a system under which sex offenders can be identified and their movement monitored.

In other countries for example serial offenders guilty of molesting children, must report in regularly to police, even after completing any prison sentence, and are not permitted to work in any environment where they have easy access to children, such as schools or orphanages. We also desperately need a society that is open to an honest conversation around sexual abuse. That can only happen when we stop brushing everything under the carpet in the name of propriety and 'decency'.

India Continues to Pay the Price of its Military's Cowardice

Iqbal Khan

According to NewsX, China has issued yet another warning to India stating that "India should not misjudge the situation again like 1962". Moreover, Eurasian Times has reported that amid heightening US-China tensions, "the US wants India to 'match its weight by actions' in the South China Sea". Tensions between the US and China were augmented when the US sent in two aircraft carriers in the South China Sea to indicate that "it doesn't welcome China's belligerence in the region". During a National Security Adviser level meeting India has agreed to an unconditional disengagement in Ladakh on Chinese terms, whereby accepting 1959 CCL as new LAC.

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi is running from pillar to post to salvage his political career. He may soon be sent packing by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – the real political power broker ostensibly branded as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Unprecedented humiliation has befallen upon India in the wake of its military's cowardice in Ladakh.

Betraying its earlier projections in the World alongside half-baked assertions in the neighbourhood regarding its self-styled elevation as global power, India came out as a pygmy running around to get war material to face the Chinese military. Serving and retired senior Indian diplomats are suggesting the strengthening of partnerships with the Quadrilateral nations (US, Japan and Australia), France, South Korea and Taiwan. However, with India's repeat poor performance, these alliances and countries may no longer be as keen to cosy up with India.

Regional and global perceptions of the end state of the conflict are at great variance from the domestic Indian insight. In India an artificial "Victory Euphoria" prevails. However, South Asian, Central Asian and East Asian countries are now clear that India is no match to China. It were the two US Navy aircraft carriers that did show of force by patrolling in the conflict zone and much touted Indian Navy (IN) whom the US has been projecting as provider of security net in the Indian Ocean dared not move out of its harbours. In fact IN aircraft carriers were not yet equipped with its air component as its MIG-29 K aircraft are still in Russian factories.

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in fact be the Cease Fire Line. Retired Lieutenant General of Indian Army, H S Panag in his July 09 piece for The Print captioned "Modi, Xi are strong leaders, but for lasting peace at the LAC both need to make compromises...if India and China don't make compromises, then a limited war is inevitable, which neither side wants". "Modi and Xi cannot afford to lose face. It has to be a win-win situation for both the countries, and their leaders", Panag added.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi while riding the state media alongside select privately owned but government subsidised media is trying to portray it as a "Grand Victory", there are credible fact narrating individuals and institutions which consider it as a total surrender. Independent analysts in India are under tremendous pressure to give up their independent but factual conclusions.

With the demise of 1993 LAC, the 1993, 1996, 2005, 2012, and 2015 agreements meant for peace on that LAC have also become null and void. China has decided to go beyond even its 1960 claim line in Ladakh. Hence, the PLA will not vacate the territories it has come to occupy in Galwan, Depsang, Hot Springs and Pangong Tso. Modi hopes to overcome the humiliation by creating a perception in India that the LAC remained inviolable, and no Indian territory has been lost to the PLA. According to Pravin Sawheny, "the Ladakh crisis has two narratives – Indian and Chinese".

Modi's version emanated out of his two Victory speeches in which he "unmistakably said that the battle of Galwan has been won". With the exception of the Congress and the Communists, other political parties appear least bothered about the imbroglio. "The majority in the media is happy parroting the official line". "Retired military officers, with few exceptions, are cheering the government from the side-lines. Those contesting the official line are being labelled 'anti-national'". Modi knows that another border skirmish will not be weapons' free since the government of India has changed the rules of engagement. Even "if one shot is fired, an escalation is assured", which will be controlled by the PLA, being militarily stronger. "Eventually it could lead to war, bringing India face to face with reality".

India fooled the Americans by raising China bo-

gie while amassing Pakistan specific munitions and raising Pakistan specific command & control and war fighting structures. No wonders when the Chinese came, Indian military was caught with his pants down, forcing their Prime Minister for asking Russia, US, Israel and France to fast-track supply of war munitions. China would certainly take note of Israel's undue keenness by offering its own, operating, air defence system as an interim measure to fill in for the lag in arrival of Russian S-400 air defence missile system.

At domestic tier it would sooner than later bring forth the truth that Nehru was Nehru, and Modi is Modi. Notwithstanding, at personal level much like Nehru, Modi will also not be able to survive the psychological impact of humiliation that struck India under his watch. And to offset this effect Modi could plan a limited war with one of its smaller neighbours. As it has tasted the response of Pakistan in Balakot fiasco, Nepal could be the most likely military target if regime change efforts do not materialise there. Notwithstanding, Pakistan should not lower its guard.

Three Divisions of Indian Army have rushed to Ladakh theatre and are counting.

There have been cross theatre movement of troops as well. During the upcoming winters keeping these troops in Ladakh area without a habitat and logistics provisioning through air lift only would imply nightmarish challenges. While the PLA could swiftly amass troops at other pressure points along the LAC.

Brahma Chellaney in a July 09 piece for The Hindustan Times, captioned "China may win, without fighting" wrote: "Instead of insisting on status quo ante, India has helped create a new status quo. Beijing is smiling." "It has changed the South China Sea's geopolitical map without firing a shot or incurring any international costs".

Coming days would witness manifestations of India's sharp fall from the high pedestals of the international system to which it got elevated by hoodwinking the US that it could do the hard lifting as the US proxy against China within the overall "Contain China" framework floated by the US alongside of its nearly a dozen regional countries plus NATO allies.

Writer is a freelance contributor; e-mail: Iqbal.khan@yaahoo.com

Broken Heart Syndrome in COVID-19

Prof. Dr. Nusrat Majid



A few cases of severe Headaches [especially in younger individuals] have also been reported and some of them died due to massive Brain Haemorrhage. A large majority of individuals infected with Corona have mild to moderate ailment, yet a number of those infected develop Heart related problems either out of blue or as a complication of pre-existing Cardiac disease

WE all know that acute respiratory distress is the most dreaded complication of COVID-19, but Heart damage has recently emerged as yet another grim outcome in the virus's repertoire of possible complication.

As we now understand that virus causes micro clots in the blood vessels of the body, so the presenting complaints may also be different from the previously well recognized symptoms of fever, sore throat and body aches. Patients may present with sudden shortness of breath, nausea, Giddiness or even chest pain. One of my patients complained of pain in the fingers of her left hand, I suggested PCR [test for Corona] and it was positive. Since blood vessels are present all over the body, micro clots in them may cause problems in different body parts.

A few cases of severe Headaches [especially in younger individuals] have also been reported and some of them died due to massive Brain Haemorrhage. A large majority of individuals infected with Corona have mild to moderate ailment, yet a number of those infected develop Heart related problems either out of blue or as a complication of pre-existing Cardiac disease.

A report from the early days of epidemic described the extent of cardiac injury among 41 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Wuhan. Twelve pa-

tients had signs of Heart damage, detected by ECG, echocardiogram and the relevant blood tests. Since then other reports have also confirmed that cardiac injury can be part of Corona induced harm.

In these patients the initial symptoms were cardiovascular rather than respiratory in nature. HOW DOES CORONA VIRUS CAUSE HEART DAMAGE?

It is a well-established fact that all viruses do affect the heart muscles, causing VIRAL MYOCARDITIS [Heart enlargement with poor function].

Heart injury could occur in several ways

1- People with preexisting Heart disease are at a greater risk for severe cardiovascular and respiratory complications of Covid-19. Research has shown that influenza virus poses a more severe threat for people with heart disease than those without any cardiac problem.

Heart attacks can actually be brought on by respiratory infections such as common cold and flu.

2- In people with undiagnosed Heart disease, viral infection may unmask the silent symptoms. These people do have blocked blood vessels, inflammation due to infection and fever can disrupt fatty plaques inside the blood vessels resulting in Angina and Heart attacks.

3- In people without any preexisting risk factor for heart disease, the virus attacks the Heart Muscle itself, leading to sudden enlargement of Heart with poor pumping ability. This can be life threatening resulting in collapse and sudden death – we have seen people falling on the street [esp. in Italy during initial days] hence the term BROKEN HEART SYNDROME, also called STRESS CARDIOMYOPATHY [stress changes the shape of heart resulting in poor pump function]. BROKEN HEART SYNDROME has symptoms similar to a Heart Attack.

We all are experiencing different types of stress, from job loss to social isolation and even concerns about ourselves and family getting COVID-19. It is important to deal with stress through self-care including exercise, meditation, prayers, good sleep and immunity boosting food. So it is very important to connect to your inner self, as glossy and sugar coated as it may sound, there is a science behind it to show that it actually works. Important to remain connected with family and friends virtually or on the phone.

Toady's immunity boosting recipe:
1 Olive leaf tea once or twice a day
2 "Dates" Remove the seed and fill it with a pinch of black seed [Kalonji] one to three dates daily – Boost your immunity to combat "Corona" a companion of 2020.

Briefs

Chelsea beat United in semi final

DNA

LONDON: Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea endured a Wembley nightmare as Chelsea stroled to victory and set up an FA Cup final date with Arsenal.

United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer ditched his usual FA Cup keeper Sergio Romero to keep faith with De Gea - but the experienced Spain international produced two horrendous errors either side of half-time to gift Chelsea two goals. De Gea made a flimsy attempt to deal with Olivier Giroud's flick in first-half stoppage time then weakly fumbled Mason Mount's tame 20-yard shot into the net moments after the restart.

Chelsea's excellent performance fully merited this victory and United's abject misery after a dreadful performance was complete when captain Harry Maguire diverted Marcos Alonso's cross into his own net at the near post with 16 minutes left. Frank Lampard's side were in complete control from first to last as they comprehensively ended Manchester United's 19-match unbeaten run in all competitions.

Monaco appoint Niko Kovac as new manager

MONACO: Monaco appointed Niko Kovac as their new manager on Sunday, the former Bayern Munich boss succeeding Robert Moreno, the Ligue 1 club announced.

The 48-year-old former Croatia international has signed a three-year contract with the option of a further year as the under-performing French side act to improve their fortunes.

Kovac was available after his sacking by Bayern in November, months after leading the Bundesliga giants to a league and cup double. "Niko Kovac will take charge of his first training session on Monday," the club confirmed. Ex-Spain coach Moreno, 42, was let go by Monaco on Saturday after barely six months in the job. He had been appointed in December after Leonardo Jardim was dismissed by Monaco for the second time in just over a year. - APP

Real Madrid finish with dramatic draw

MADRID: Newly-crowned La Liga champions Real Madrid dropped points for the first time since the season's restart in a dramatic 2-2 draw that was not enough to save Leganes from relegation.

Leganes, who needed to beat Madrid and hope Celta Vigo failed to win against bottom club Espanyol, almost pulled off a miraculous escape but could not find a winner at the Butarque. The draw means a rotated Madrid side surrendered the perfect record of 11 victories out of 11 since Spanish football came back from its coronavirus-enforced suspension while Karim Benzema fell short of Lionel Messi in the battle for the golden boot. - APP

Mexican president mourns 39,000 dead

MEXICO CITY: Mexican president Manuel Lopez Obrador on Sunday vowed to improve health standards in the nation, which has the fourth-highest coronavirus death toll in the world, as the number of fatalities rose to nearly 39,000.

"We want to remember those who died from the COVID-19 pandemic, and send a loving, fraternal hug to their relatives, to their friends," Lopez Obrador said in a video released on social media.

Mexico, with 127 million inhabitants, had recorded 38,888 deaths from the new coronavirus, according to health authorities on Saturday, with additional suspected coronavirus deaths lifting the total to more than 40,000. - APP



LONDON: Chelsea's French striker Olivier Giroud scores the opener against Manchester United in the FA Cup semi final. - DNA

Heydar Aliyev Foundation to help families of soldiers killed in Armenian provocation

Under Aliyeva's instructions, representative of the Foundation visited the families of Major General Polad Hashimov in Sumgayit and Colonel Ilgar Mirzayev in Baku, Azertag reported on July 20

DNA

BAKU: President of Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva has instructed the foundation to keep under control concerns of the families of the 12 Azerbaijani soldiers killed during the Armenian provocation on the border Tovuz region recently.

Under Aliyeva's instructions, representative of the Foundation visited the families of Major General Polad Hashimov in Sumgayit

and Colonel Ilgar Mirzayev in Baku, Azertag reported on July 20.

It was noted during the visits that the care of the families of the servicemen killed in the Tovuz region will be under the control of the foundation upon the instructions of Mehriban Aliyeva. It was also noted that the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, along with the Azerbaijani government has always paid great attention to the families of martyrs.

In the coming days, representatives of the foundation



will visit the families of fallen soldiers in Agstafa, Tovuz, Gazakh, Ismayilli, Bilasuvar and Masalli districts. The cross-border clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia started on July 12 noon after Armenian troops fired artillery at Azerbaijani military post in Tovuz region.

Three Azerbaijani servicemen died while thwarting the Armenian attack. Azerbaijani armed forces retaliated destroying a stronghold, bombs, vehicles and servicemen on the ter-

ritory of the Armenia's military unit by using artillery, mortars and tanks during the night leading to July 13. Azerbaijan also downed an Armenian UAV.

Azerbaijan lost 12 servicemen, including an army general, during cross-border clashes from July 12 till July 16. Armenian forces have also been shelling civilians in villages in Tovuz. An Azerbaijani civilian in Tovuz's Aghdam village was killed as a result of artillery shelling by the Armenian armed forces on July 14.

Messi breaks La Liga assist record



BARCELONA: Lionel Messi has set a new record for most assists in La Liga in a single season, surpassing former Barcelona team-mate Xavi in the process.

The Barcelona forward played the ball into the box for 17-year-old winger Ansu Fati to knock in for the opening goal against Deportivo Alaves on Sunday.

The assist was Messi's 21st in the league this term, breaking the record his former team-mate Xavi set in 2008-09.

Just 10 minutes after setting up Fati, Messi scored a goal of his own when he ran onto a pass from Riqui Puig before knocking past Alaves goalkeeper Roberto to double the Catalan side's lead.

The Argentina international struck again in the second-half as his side went 5-0 up, taking his tally to 25 goals in La Liga this season, stretching his lead over Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema to five goals.

Messi then claimed the Pichichi Trophy, given to the league's top scorer, for the seventh time in his career when the France international failed to make up the difference in Madrid's final game of the season at Leganes on Sunday. - DNA

China's cinemas start to reopen

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China's cinemas are reopening after being closed for six months to help slow the spread of the coronavirus - cinemas in "low-risk" areas can open their doors again starting this Monday.

As most of the country is now classified as low risk it is expected to be essentially a nationwide reopening.

Cinemas will be subject to a strict set of rules, including screenings being limited to 30% capacity and the number of movies shown at a venue capped at 50% of its previous volume.

Customers' temperatures will be taken, and masks will have to be worn at all times by both cinema goers and staff. China, which was the first epicentre of the pandemic, is the world's second largest market for movies, with the country's box offices taking in \$9.2bn (£7.4bn) in 2019. But that figure is, unsurprisingly, expected to fall sharply due to cinema closures and domestic and Hollywood film releases being cancelled or moved online.

"New Zealand economy doing better than expected"

"No system is 100% fool proof and around the world we are seeing even the most rigorous measures being tested by the virus"

DNA

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Finance Minister Grant Robertson has said the country's economy is currently doing better than expected despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The economy is doing better than expected and is more open than anywhere else in the world," Robertson said in a news conference.

Robertson also said NZ\$14 billion (\$9.16 billion) from a COVID Response and Recovery Fund that was announced in the annual budget earlier this year will now be set aside in the event the country experiences a second wave of infections.

Earlier Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had said New Zealand must prepare for new coronavirus outbreaks as the pandemic spreads globally.

Ardern said the epidemic was now "exploding" outside New Zealand and countries that had been models in the fight against COVID-19 had now experienced further community outbreaks.

The government released a new framework on how it intended to fight the virus in the event of new cases, with elimination still the central strategy.

"No system is 100% fool proof and around the world we are seeing even the most rigorous measures being tested by the virus," she told reporters in Wellington.

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Cuba and the United States: A love-hate relationship

DNA

BERLIN: It was President Barack Obama who initiated the political thaw between the US and Cuba. The US president spoke of a "new beginning after decades of mistrust," before loosening travel restrictions and money transfer provisions.

The first direct talks between the heads of both countries came at the 2015 Summit of the Americas. Obama had Cuba taken off the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, restored diplomatic relations and even sent Secretary of State John Kerry to Havana to re-open the US Embassy there.

In March 2016, Obama himself arrived in Havana for a three-day visit, where Raul Castro called for the complete removal of US sanctions. That did not happen.

Indeed, developments went in quite the opposite direction: On November 8, 2016, two weeks before Fidel Castro died at age 90, Donald Trump won the presidency and immediately began to turn the clock back on Cuban relations. Cuba is now once again considered a terrorist state; the US makes it difficult for Cubans living abroad to send re-

mittance payments, or "Remesas," back home; and it is blocking the delivery of critical medicine despite the coronavirus pandemic.

Sixty years ago, the embargo was "only" on sugar - Cuba's biggest export. US President Dwight D. Eisenhower blocked imports of Cuban sugar and advised US citizens against traveling to the island. The US officially broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba on January 3, 1961.

Washington thought the embargo would break Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries in short order. But those predictions turned out to be very wrong. Then, shortly after entering the Oval Office, President John F. Kennedy bumbled into the Bay of Pigs disaster. In the plan, inherited from his successor, a group of exiled Cuban mercenaries, with the help of the CIA, would attempt to overthrow Castro. When the amateurish invasion plan was put into action on April 17, 1961, it was quickly ended by Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

A year later, on March 24, 1962, Kennedy put Cuba under complete economic embargo. Conflict between the US and the Soviet Union soon escalated and the world found itself at the brink of all-out nuclear

war during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of that year.

Moscow had agreed to Castro's request that Soviet nuclear missiles be stationed in Cuba. Kennedy ordered a naval blockade to prevent Soviet ships from delivering further missiles and demanded those already on the island be dismantled. A 13-day standoff ended with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreeing to the terms in exchange for America's promise not to invade Cuba.

For 15 years, not much happened. Not until 1977, when a peanut farmer from Georgia tried a new approach. President Jimmy Carter loosened travel restrictions and even opened a US Interests Section in Havana. Cuba chose to use the name, too, when it opened its own

offices in Washington.

Carter was still in office when thousands of Cubans occupied the Peruvian Embassy in Havana. Castro allowed them to leave and between April and October 1980, some 125,000 Cubans legally fled to Florida in overcrowded boats. The largest exodus out of Cuba, it became known as the Mariel boatlift - Mariel being the port from which the boats departed.

A decade later, the balance of the conflict had changed fundamentally. The Iron Curtain had fallen, the Cold War was over and Cuba's protector, the Soviet Union, had collapsed. Cuba struggled desperately during the so-called "Special Period in Time of Peace": Power outages were a regular occurrence, facto-

ries shut down and supply shortages became part of everyday life. The Cuban economy shrank by half between 1989 and 1992.

Ronald Reagan's successor, George H. W. Bush, was in the White House by this time, and he immediately spied an opportunity to cut off Cuba's oxygen once and for all. In 1992, Congress passed the Cuban Democracy Act, which prohibited US companies abroad from doing business with Cuba. Most charter flights between Miami and Havana were stopped. The act also gave Bush the power to cut aid to countries that co-operated with Cuba. Postal services remained open, however, and people were still allowed to make phone calls.

A year later, the United Nations General Assembly called on the US to finally lift the embargo, with an 88-4 vote, plus 57 abstentions - the US was of course one of the four voting against.

When thousands of Cubans took to the streets in 1994, to protest difficult living circumstances, Castro once again opened the mass-exodus valve to relieve pressure: Some 33,000 Cubans immediately fled for Florida in homemade rafts called Balsas, which gave the event its name: the Balsas Crisis.

Tens of thousands of Cubans have risked their lives over the years attempting to make it to the US by sea. In the wake of that crisis, Washington agreed to issue 20,000 visas to Cubans annually. In May 1995, this new policy was given the name "wet foot, dry foot." If a Cuban refugee actually reached the US - with a dry foot so to speak - they were allowed to stay. On the other hand, if they were picked up at sea - wet footed - they were returned to Cuba.

President Bill Clinton was ready to ease the embargo, announcing he would veto the Helms-Burton Act passed by Congress. But then Cuba shot down two passenger planes with four exiled Cubans on-board and Clinton signed the bill into law in 1996.

Clinton's successor George W. Bush tightened travel restrictions once again in 2004, meaning Cubans or US citizens of Cuban descent were only allowed to visit their families once every three years rather than every year. In 2008, a frail Fidel Castro handed over control of the country to his brother Raul. The United Nations yet again voted to end the embargo, with now only three against. Still, none of that mattered because the motion was non-binding. - Courtesy DW

Abid Ali cleared of concussion: team doctor

WEB DESK

DERBY: Opener Abid Ali has been cleared of concussion after he was hit on the helmet while playing in an intra-squad match on the tour of England, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said. Abid was fielding at forward short leg on the third day of four at Derby when he was struck by a Haider Ali flick off Mohammad Abbas.

He missed Sunday's fourth and final day as a precaution although the team doctor said he had shown no sign of concussion even after a scan. "Abid is absolutely fine and will be available to resume training on Wednesday following Tuesday's rest day," Dr Sohail Saleem said in a PCB statement.

"He underwent a precautionary CT scan which has also returned normal (findings)." But left-handed batsman Khushdil Shah, a T20 specialist, has been ruled out for up to three weeks after suffering a fracture in his left thumb while batting during a training session on Saturday. Khushdil, not playing in the ongoing intra-squad game, won't be available for the second four-day practice match, which also takes place in the Midlands town of Derby from July 24-27. Pakistan are set to face England in a three-Test series that begins at Old Trafford on August 5 before concluding with two matches at south coast county Hampshire's Ageas Bowl headquarters.

Rahm wins PGA Memorial to seize number one ranking

LOS ANGELES: Jon Rahm became the first Spaniard since Seve Ballesteros in 1989 to hold golf's world number one ranking, fending off a late challenge Sunday to win the US PGA Memorial tournament.

"Anytime I can join Seve at anything, it's incredible," said Rahm, who added, "It's hard to process right now," because his thoughts were with two family members who have died of COVID-19.

"There are so many things going through my mind right now that have nothing to do with golf," he said.

Rahm led by eight shots through nine holes but dropped four strokes in a five-hole span on the back nine with a bogey at the 10th, double-bogey at 11 and a bogey at 14 to see Ryan Palmer pull within three.

But the 25-year-old from Spain would not be denied, holing an amazing chip from 31 feet at the par-3 16th to thwart his American rival and overtake Northern Ireland star Rory McIlroy for the top spot in the rankings.

"Luckily, I pulled out probably the best short game shot I will ever have. That was unbelievable," Rahm said. "For that to go in, that was exactly what I needed."

Jack Nicklaus, the 18-time major winner who hosts the event at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio, called the shot "spectacular" as he congratulated Rahm with a fist bump at the 18th green.

England's Matthew Fitzpatrick was third on 283 after a closing 68 while Australia's Jason Day and England's Matt Wallace shared fourth on 284. - APP



Briefs

US-sought tanker 'hijacked' off UAE now in Iran

DNA

DOHA: A United Nations agency has acknowledged that a US-sought oil tanker "hijacked" off the coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after allegedly smuggling Iranian crude oil is back in Iranian waters.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) on Sunday said the MT Gulf Sky was hijacked on July 5, citing its captain. That mirrors earlier reporting by The Associated Press news agency.

"The vessel was taken to Iran," the ILO said. All 28 Indian crew members disembarked in Iran and all but two of the crew without passports flew from Tehran to India on July 15, it added.

The ILO cited the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network for its information.

The agency earlier filed a report saying the vessel and its sailors had been abandoned by its owners without pay since March off Khorfakkan, a city on the eastern coast of the UAE.

Iranian state media and officials have not acknowledged the hijacking and arrival of the MT Gulf Sky to Iran. The United States government similarly has not commented.

North Macedonia readies for robust coalition

DNA

BERLINA: The pro-European Union Social Democrats said they were ready Thursday to kickstart coalition talks, paving the way for tough power-sharing negotiations after the center-left party narrowly edged out their conservative rivals. Former Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, of the Social Democrats, declared victory on Wednesday in North Macedonia's parliamentary elections. Projections from the state election commission showed the Social Democrats in line to win 36% of the vote, or 46 seats, attaining only two more seats over nationalists VMRO-DPMNE in the 120-member assembly.

The ethnic Albanian Democratic Union of Integration party polled at third with 10.2% support. With the razor-thin margin, VMRO-DPMNE said they could ultimately emerge winners in coalition negotiations and form a government. 'Path cemented' Zaev had spearheaded the country's efforts to resolve the decades-long name dispute with neighboring Greece, a prerequisite before the small Balkan country joined NATO this year, but the move was controversial at home. "The path taking us forward has been cemented," Zaev told supporters after declaring victory Wednesday.

India reports record 40,425 virus cases

DNA

NEW DELHI: India reported more than 40,000 new cases of the coronavirus on Monday, a record high for the country. The 40,425 new cases raised India's total to 1,118,043, including 27,497 deaths.

The ministry said late Sunday that India's coronavirus fatality rate – currently at 2.49 percent – is "progressively falling" due to an effective containment strategy and aggressive testing.

A country of 1.4 billion people, India has been conducting nearly 10,000 tests per million people.

More than 300,000 samples are being tested every day now, compared to just a few hundred in March, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research, India's top medical research body.

Iran executes man convicted of spying for US and Israel

"American dollars to reveal information on adviser convoys, military equipment and communication systems, commanders and their movements, important geographical areas, codes and passwords"

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's judiciary has announced the execution of a man convicted of spying for the intelligence agencies of the United States and Israel.

Mahmoud Mousavi Majd, who was arrested in 2018, was executed on Monday morning "over the charge of espionage so that the case of his betrayal to his country will be closed forever", the judiciary's Mizan Online website said. The former translator had been found guilty of receiving large sums of money from the US's CIA and Israel's Mossad, said judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili.

Last month, the judiciary said Majd had spied on former Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander Qassem Soleimani, adding, however, that the case was not directly connected to the top general's assassination earlier this year.



On January 3, a US drone strike in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, killed Soleimani, leader of the IRGC's



Quds Force, raising fears of a full-blown conflict between the US and Iran. Tehran retaliated for his killing by firing a volley of ballistic



missiles at the bases housing US troops in Iraq. Majd was not an IRGC member "but infiltrated many sensitive

areas under the cover of being a translator", Mizan said. He was found to have been paid "American dollars to reveal information on adviser convoys, military equipment and communication systems, commanders and their movements, important geographical areas, codes and passwords" until he came under scrutiny and his access was downgraded.

Iran said last week it had executed another man convicted of spying for the CIA by selling information about Iran's missile programme.

The latest execution came days after an "unprecedented" online campaign saw Iranians taking to social media in droves to express their opposition to the death sentences handed to three men accused of participating in anti-government protests last November. Their executions have been suspended, one of their lawyers, Babak Paknia, said on Sunday.

UK accuses China of 'gross' human rights abuses

WEB DESK

LONDON: UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has accused China of "gross and egregious" human rights abuses against its Uighur population and said sanctions against those responsible cannot be ruled out. Reports of forced sterilisation and wider persecution of the Muslim group were "reminiscent of something not seen for a long time", he told the BBC.

The UK would work with its allies to take appropriate action, he insisted.

China's UK ambassador said talk of concentration

camps was "fake". Liu Xiaoming told the BBC's Andrew Marr that the Uighurs received the same treatment under the law as other ethnic groups in his country.

Shown drone footage that appears to show Uighurs being blindfolded and led to trains, and which has been authenticated by Australian security services, he said he "did not know" what the video was showing and "sometimes you have a transfer of prisoners, in any country".

"There is no such concentration camps in Xinjiang," he added. "There's a lot of fake accusations

against China." It is believed that up to a million Uighur people have been detained over the past few years in what the Chinese state defines as "re-education camps". China previously denied the existence of the camps, before defending them as a necessary measure against terrorism, following separatist violence in the Xinjiang region.

The authorities have recently been accused of forcing women to be sterilised or fitted with contraceptive devices in an apparent attempt to limit the population, prompting calls for the UN to investigate.

UK signs deals for 90 million virus vaccine doses

DNA

LONDON: The UK government has signed deals for 90 million doses of promising coronavirus vaccines that are being developed.

The vaccines are being researched by an alliance between the pharmaceutical companies BioNTech and Pfizer as well as the firm Valneva.

The new deal is on top of 100 million doses of the Oxford University vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca.

However, it is still uncertain which of the experimental vaccines may work. A vaccine is widely seen as the best chance of getting our lives back to normal.

Research is taking place at an unprecedented scale - the world became aware of coronavirus at the beginning of the year, but already more than 20 vaccines are in clinical trials. Some can provoke an immune response, but none have yet been proven to protect against infection.

Japan exports drop further

DNA

TOKYO: Japan has just got a fresh indicator of how badly measures to slow the spread of coronavirus have hit its economy.

New figures show the country's exports plummeted by 26.2% in June, the fourth month in a row to see a double-digit decline. Japanese goods heading to America were hit particularly hard, plunging by 46.6%. That's as US-bound shipments of cars, car parts and plane engines fell by more than 50%.

The world's third largest economy is now facing its worst recession since the end of World War Two.

200,000 workers stranded on ships

LONDON: Indian ship worker Tejasvi Duseja is desperate to go home after months stranded offshore by coronavirus border closures and lockdowns that have left more than 200,000 seafarers in limbo.

From engineers on cargo ships to waiters on luxury cruise liners, ocean-based workers around the world have been caught up in what the United Nations warns is a growing humanitarian crisis that has been blamed for several suicides. Many have been trapped on vessels for months after their tours were supposed to end as travel restrictions disrupted normal crew rotations.

"Mentally, I am just done with it ... but I'm still holding up because I have no other option," Duseja, 27, told AFP news agency via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger in late June as the Indian-owned cargo vessel he works on floated near Malaysia. Duseja, one of roughly 30,000 Indian workers unable to leave their ships, had extended his seven-month contract a few months before the pandemic struck. "The last time I stepped off from this 200-metre [650-foot] ship was in February," he said.

Seafarers typically work for six to eight months at a stretch before disembarking and flying back to their home countries, with new crews taking their place. But as the deadly virus whipped around the world and paralysed international travel, that was suddenly impossible. Underscoring the growing urgency of the situation, more than a dozen countries at a United Kingdom-hosted International Maritime Summit this month pledged to recognise seafarers as "key workers" to help them get home. - DNA

Egypt's lawmakers to vote on deploying troops to Libya

WEB DESK

CAIRO: Egypt's parliament is to vote Monday to authorise the president to deploy troops to neighboring Libya if Turkey-backed forces there, allied with the UN-supported government in Tripoli, move to retake the strategic coastal city of Sirte.

An Egyptian intervention would further destabilize oil-rich Libya, and put two US allies - Turkey and Egypt - in possible direct confrontation.

The vote was initially scheduled for Sunday but was moved to Monday in a closed session, according to lawmaker Mustafa Bakry. The House of Representatives, packed with supporters of President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, is highly likely

to vote in favor of sending troops to Libya.

Libya was plunged into chaos when a NATO-backed uprising in 2011 toppled longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi who was later killed. The country is now split between a government in the east, allied with military commander Khalifa Haftar, and one in Tripoli, in the west, supported by the United Nations.

The conflict has escalated into a regional proxy war fueled by foreign powers pouring weapons and mercenaries into the country. The US has grown increasingly concerned about Moscow's growing influence in Libya, where hundreds of Russian mercenaries have backed an attempt by Haftar's forces to capture Tripoli.

HK imposes limits amid virus surge

DNA

HONG KONG: Several banks in Hong Kong closed branches or curtailed their working hours on Monday after a spike in the number of new coronavirus cases over the weekend. US President Donald Trump has insisted that the coronavirus will be brought "under control" even as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported at least 67,574 new cases and at least 877 more deaths in the country. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro ventured out of his official residence, Alvorada Palace, on Sunday to speak and greet his supporters even as he recovers from COVID-19. Italy's Lazio region, which includes Rome, is warning citizens that local lockdowns might have to be ordered if there are more clusters of coronavirus infections. The number of deaths from the coronavirus around the world has surpassed 605,000, with the US the worst-affected country. There are more than 14.4 million confirmed cases, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

New cases in Russia lowest since April

MOSCOW: Russia, the world's fourth hardest-hit country in terms of coronavirus infections, on Monday reported fewer than 6,000 new cases for the first time since the end of April.

Health authorities also said 85 people died over the past 24 hours - the lowest daily fatality figure since May 4. The country's COVID-19 death toll is now 12,427 while the number of infections stands at 777,486.

Russia's fatality rate has remained low compared to other badly-hit countries, raising speculation that Moscow could be underreporting figures. Russian authorities began easing anti-virus measures in June ahead of a massive World War II military parade in Moscow and a nationwide vote on constitutional reforms that now allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in power until 2036.

Sci-tech firms raise 200 bln yuan

BEIJING: China's Nasdaq-style sci-tech innovation board, also known as the STAR market, saw a rapid expansion of listed companies in scientific and technological sectors including semiconductors and intelligent manufacturing, Economic Information Daily reported Monday. Since the board started trading on July 22 last year, the STAR market has raised over 200 billion yuan (about 28.6 billion US dollars) for 130 listed enterprises with a total market value of more than 2.42 trillion yuan. The STAR-listed companies mainly focused on the new generation of the information technology industry, high-end equipment manufacturing and bio-pharmaceutical industry, said the newspaper, citing data from financial information provider Wind Info. The listed companies showed a firm commitment to promoting innovation, with the average investment in research and development accounting for 13 percent of their revenues in the past three years.

Germany seeking unity on identifying threats to the EU



DNA

BERLINA: During Germany's presidency of the European Council, the Defense Ministry wants to lay the foundations for a common threat analysis. But other EU countries have different views on co-operating with the US and Russia. There were signs of unity when Germany's defense minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, met her Polish counterpart Mariusz Blaszczak in Warsaw on Wednesday. Kramp-Karrenbauer was keen to stress that NATO and trans-Atlantic relations were the

cornerstone of Europe's security architecture and must remain so, but that the European pillar within NATO must be strengthened.

Both ministers agreed that there must not be any competition between the EU and NATO. "I am pleased that we agree on the fundamental issue, which is that the EU should not rival NATO, but that their capacities and competencies should complement each other," Blaszczak said. He too described this coordination as a guarantee of European security.

EU's strategic compass
In strengthening the European pillar of NATO, one thing Kramp-Karrenbauer

considers particularly important is "the ability to redeploy troops across Europe, for example across Germany to Poland."

Consequently, she said, Poland and Germany stand "side by side" with regard to increasing funds for "military mobility" in the EU budget, which is currently under discussion. In the current compromise proposal, put forward by EU Council President Charles Michel, 7 billion (\$8 billion) are earmarked for the EU's defense funding. Another 1.5 billion will be used to adapt the European transport network to fit military requirements.

The impact of pandemic on business enterprises in Uzbekistan

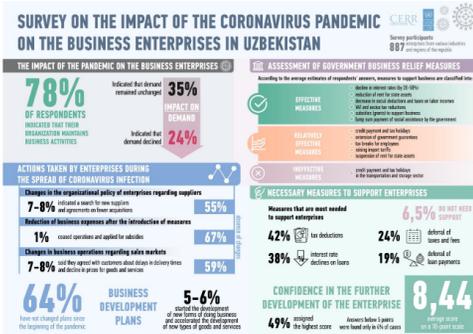
DNA

TASHKENT: In June 2020, the Center for Economic Research and Reforms (CERR), with the support of the United Nations Development Program in Uzbekistan (UNDP), conducted a survey of enterprises on the impact of the pandemic and the government's preventive measures. The quarantine measures undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan influenced both the country's economy as a whole and individual enterprises. Despite the introduction of a package of measures to support the business community, companies continue to experience significant impact in connection with the pandemic. The study, initiated by CERR with the support of UNDP, conducted interviews with entrepreneurs about the impact of the spread of COVID-19, and the preventive measures introduced by the Government on small and medium-sized businesses. The aim of the study was to analyze the impact of the spread of COVID-19 and related preventive measures on enterprises as well as the assessment of the needs

of enterprises in further external support.

The survey involved 887 business managers from 14 regions of the republic aged 18 to 79, of whom the vast majority (79%) were men. On the same token, women-managers of organizations accounted for a fifth of the total number of respondents (21%). The analysis showed that the majority of organizations did not stop their business operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine measures. Employees mainly continued their work. Layoffs were rarely practiced. Among the sectors of the economy, the most affected was the sector of housing (hotel business) and food services. In matters of personnel management, this area is characterized by a massive suspension of activity, the inability to transfer work to a remote format, frequent sending on vacation (especially unpaid), and layoffs, reduction of salaries and additional payments. The least affected sector is agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Here, mainly, the continuation of work and the preservation or even increase in wages were observed. Demand for agricultural products remained at the same level.

Among indicated problems, there were only moderate difficulties in accessing sales markets. **Key findings**
The impact of the pandemic on the business operations. The survey showed that the vast majority of respondents (78%) indicated that their organization continued to conduct business operations in the context of introduced preventive measures related to the pandemic. The most popular answer among enterprises to the question of changes in the level of demand for goods and services over the past 30 days is that the demand



remained unchanged (35%), while only 24% of respondents indicated a decline in demand. **Actions taken by enterprises during the spread of coronavirus infection**
On the issue of changes in the organizational policy of enterprises regarding suppliers during the pandemic, a significant number of respondents (55%) did not note any changes. However, 7-8% of enterprises indicated a search for new suppliers and agreements on fewer acquisitions. In the direction of reducing business expenses after the introduc-

tion of COVID-19 related measures, 67% of enterprises replied that there were no changes. Only 1% of respondents ceased operations and applied for subsidies from government. 59% of the total number of respondents indicated the absence of any changes to the question of changes in the business operations regarding sales markets after the introduction of measures related to the pandemic. However, 7-8% of participants said they agreed with customers about delays in delivery times and decline in prices for goods and services. A significant number of small and medium-sized businesses (64%) have not changed their business development plans since the beginning of the pandemic. Only 5-6% of enterprises started the development of new forms of doing business and accelerated the development of new types of goods and services. **Assessment of government business relief measures**
The group of effective measures includes a significant decline (by 20-50%) in interest rates on short-term loans (up to 1 year), reduction of rents for state assets for the required period, decrease in social deductions and taxes on la-

bor income for the required period, VAT and excise tax reductions for the required period. The list is also complemented by subsidies and grants to support businesses and lump sum payments of social assistance (5 million soums each) to employees of companies. A package of relatively effective measures consists of credit payment and tax holidays, extension of state guarantees (all for a period of 1 year), raising import tariffs and tax breaks for employees. Credit payment and tax holidays in the transportation and storage sector are considered to be ineffective according to the perception of some representatives. Necessary measures to support enterprises
When asked about the measures that are most needed to support enterprises, entrepreneurs most frequently noted tax deductions (42%) and interest rate declines on loans (38%). Next options were deferral of taxes and fees (24%), and deferral of loan payments (19%). Only 6.5% of entrepreneurs stated that their companies do not need any type of support. Respondents showed a very high level of confidence in the further development of their enterprises.

Briefs

Russia bounties story aimed at spoiling deal: Taliban

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: A Taliban official has dismissed as fake a recent report in the US media that accused Russia of paying the militant group to kill American troops in Afghanistan, saying the report was a byproduct of US political infighting and aimed at spoiling a Taliban-Washington peace deal.

In a report last month, the New York Times, citing an unnamed source, claimed that a top-secret unit within the Russian military intelligence, or the GRU, had allegedly offered monetary rewards to Taliban-linked militants to kill US troops in the country last year.

In an interview with Russian media, Taliban spokesperson and US-Taliban negotiator Suhail Shaheen said the story "has to do with internal politics" in the US.

"This Russian bounties, it is not true," he said. "We are not fighting for anyone for money." He did not deny that the Taliban attack US troops in Afghanistan, but said that the group do so based on "ideology."

Malaysia to make masks compulsory

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian government is considering making wearing face masks mandatory in public places, after the discovery of 13 new coronavirus clusters this month, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said.

Malaysian health authorities recorded 21 new coronavirus cases on Monday, lifting the total since the outbreak began to 8,800 cases and 123 deaths. Monday's was the second straight daily double-digit rise in infections, after Malaysia managed to broadly hold daily growth to single digits since the lockdown was eased on June 10.

The number of positive cases climbed by 15 on Sunday, and by 18 two days prior. Muhyiddin said the string of double-digit daily increases, coupled with the new clusters detected in several states across the country, has led the government to think that it may be necessary to make wearing face masks in public compulsory.

"The details will be announced once the relevant regulations are finalised by the government," Muhyiddin said in an address broadcast on national television.

Malaysia was among the earlier countries in the region to impose strict curbs on public activity, closing borders, barring mass movement, and ordering all but key sectors to shut operations in March as it fought to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Protein treatment trial 'a breakthrough'

DNA

SOUTHAMPTON: The preliminary results of a clinical trial suggest a new treatment for Covid-19 dramatically reduces the number of patients needing intensive care, according to the UK company that developed it.

The treatment from Southampton-based biotech Synairgen uses a protein called interferon beta which the body produces when it gets a viral infection.

The protein is inhaled directly into the lungs of patients with coronavirus, using a nebuliser, in the hope that it will stimulate an immune response.

The initial findings suggest the treatment cut the odds of a Covid-19 patient in hospital developing severe disease - such as requiring ventilation - by 79%. Patients were two to three times more likely to recover to the point where everyday activities were not compromised by their illness, Synairgen claims.

JF-17 makes appearance in Virtual Royal Air show

These clips were telecast on the official social media channels of RIAT and were widely appreciated by the online users

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF)'s indigenous creation JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft bagged global acclaim during its maiden appearance at Virtual Royal Air Tattoo Show-2020.

It was a moment of pride for the country when the Pride of Pakistan JF-17 Thunder participated in Virtual Air Tattoo Show-2020 at Royal Air Force Base Fairford (UK), said a PAF press release.

Besides the indigenously manufactured multirole fighter aircraft of No16 Squadron, the time tested C-130 Hercules from No 21 Squadron also participated in the mega event.

This year, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, air forces from all over



the world were asked to send short video clips of the participating aircraft and aircrew.

As per the conditions, PAF sent short video clips of each participating aircraft along with message from the aircrew. These clips

were telecast on the official social media channels of RIAT and were widely appreciated by the online users. The event would go a long way in showcasing the potential of JF-17 for the international market besides projecting the soft image

of the country across the world. Fans of the Royal International Air Tattoo enjoyed a weekend of virtual flying displays, interviews and never seen before aerial footages of modern aircraft. Ranked among the biggest air shows of

the world, Royal International Air Tattoo features aircraft from the leading air forces across the globe. Various Air Forces, aircraft manufacturers, aerospace technology firms participate in this mega show each year.

Great success achieved in CPEC construction: CEN

DNA

BEIJING: So far, remarkable success has been achieved in the CPEC development, that reflects repaidly growing socio-economic partnership between the two countries, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday quoting it's special commentator Cheng Xizhong.

The achievement is mainly manifested in three aspects: First, the governments and enterprises of China and Pakistan are very satisfied with the progress, which shows that the cooperation between both sides is close and the corridor construction is progressing well.

Second, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said recently that the corridor is a declaration of friendship between China and Pakistan and an excellent project for Pakistan's economic and social development.

He also said that Pakistan should complete the corridor construction at all costs. In the past, there were dif-

ferent voices in Pakistan on the construction of the corridor. Now, from the federal government to the local governments, from political parties to the public, they are on the same page. They highly appreciate the great achievements of the corridor construction.

Third, the construction of corridor projects is progressing well. In the first phase, 90% of the 22 major projects have been completed and put into operation, and the rest will be completed within a few months.

The second phase of construction has already started. The construction of CPEC and special economic zones is a catalyst for Pakistan's industrialization, which is promoting the transfer of China's manufacturing industry to Pakistan and pushing Pakistan's development onto a fast track.

Recently, Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman of CPEC Authority said that the construction of CPEC is being accelerated, and the second phase of the construction has started substantially.



The Pakistani government has recently approved the upgrading and reconstruction of the 1726 km long ML-1 trunk railway under the CPEC framework. The development of the 7.2 billion project is of great strategic significance to Pakistan's national transportation and economic development.

After this project is completed, the new railway system will play an important role in the transportation

of goods and passengers. Highway transportation is not only high cost but also time-consuming, but railway will promote social and economic development with more cost-effective and efficient transportation mode, and drive economic activities, especially agricultural economic development in remote areas.

At present, the channels for agricultural products to enter big cities are limited and reasonable prices cannot be

obtained. With the upgrading of the railway system, farmers will get better economic benefits from agricultural products.

New progress has been made in the construction of Gwadar Port. Recently, a ship carrying 16,400 tons fertilizer arrived at Gwadar Port.

The fertilizer was purchased by Afghanistan from Australia and unloaded at Gwadar Port and transported by road to Afghanistan according to the Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement.

This is the first time that the Afghan government has used Gwadar Port to import important materials.

After the completion of construction, Gwadar Port will not only promote the economic development of Balochistan Province and even the whole country of Pakistan, but also become the nearest sea port for Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian land-locked countries, which will connect these countries with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Oman, UAE, Iran and Iraq, and even with China's Xinjiang and other western provinces.

It will become a transit port for regional transshipment, storage and transportation.

On June 5, the signing ceremony of the tripartite agreement for Kohala hydropower project was held at Pakistani PM's office. Imran Khan, leader of Azad Kashmir and Chairman of CPEC Authority attended the ceremony. Kohala hydropower project, with an investment of 2.5 billion, will be the largest independent power generation project in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said that attracting foreign investment and developing hydropower projects is of great importance to Pakistan's economic development, and construction of Kohala hydropower project is an important progress of the CPEC cooperation between China and Pakistan, which will provide cheap power and create employment opportunities for Pakistan.

Private schools to open from Aug 15

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Private School Association has announced that it will reopen private schools across the country from August 15.

In a press conference on Monday, the association chairperson said that the schools can no longer bear their expenses and if they remained closed for more they are likely to get closed down. He said that if the government did not let them open the schools, they will start a long march to Islamabad and stage a protest. "The date given by the government to reopen schools is too late," the chairperson said, adding that the losses faced by students and teachers were getting worse with each passing day. The association assured that all SOPs will be followed at the school premises. Coronavirus is on a decline in the country and its finality time that the schools are reopened, the chairperson added.

ECP hears case against Vawda

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday has conducted hearing on pleas seeking disqualification of Federal Water and Power Minister Faisal Vawda in dual nationality case.

Headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, a five-member bench of the commission heard the case. The bench sought comments on the maintainability of petitions against Faisal Vawda. The commission issued a notice to him to submit his response to the petitions within 15 days. If the minister doesn't respond to its notice, the ECP will decide the case unilaterally, it warned. During the proceedings, no one from Faisal Vawda side appeared before the commission for defence. The commission has warned of holding one sided proceedings if no one represents the federal minister in next hearing.

'ECNEC approved \$7.2 billion ML-1 project'

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority (CPEC), Asim Saleem Bajwa, has informed the Senate committee that the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved Main Line-1 (ML-1) project worth Rs\$7.2 billion, media reported on Monday.

The Senate Special Committee meeting on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was presided over by PPP Senator Sherry Rehman.

Chairman CPEC Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa said that the ML-1 project will change the railway transmission system and the transport share of railways will increase from 4per cent to 20 percent.

"Railways engineers will get training from Moscow, Germany and UK to run the new railway system," he told Senate panel. He informed the meeting that work on CPEC western route is underway while Dry Port is being constructed at Havelian.

"The goods from China will be kept at Havelian Dry Port," he told Senate com-

mittee. Asim Bajwa said that work on Mansehra-Thakot Motorway is underway and was not stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said the motorway section will be inaugurated soon. Speaking about Orange Line Metro Train project, Asim Saleem Bajwa said that there was no political reason for not operating the Lahore metro train.

He said that the civil work of project was not completed which caused a delay in the launch of the project. CPEC chairman informed the committee that Metro Train will be opened for public soon.

'Tiger Force Day' to be celebrated

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday announced to celebrate "Tiger Force Day" immediately after Eidul-Azha. He said this during a meeting with Advisor on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam and Special Assistant on Youth Affairs Usman Dar, who called on him here in Islamabad.

During the meeting, it was decided that Tigers Force volunteers will take part in the plantation drive across the country. Prime Minister's COVID-19 Relief Tigers Force will plant 10 million trees in various districts of the country under the PM's monsoon plantation drive.

It was decided in the meeting to reopen the registration of relief tiger force in order to increase the number of volunteers. Sources

said that PM will release a message, appealing to the Tiger Force volunteers to take part in the tree-planting campaign. Matters of national importance were also discussed in the meeting. Shortly after the meeting, Special Assistant on Youth Affairs Usman Dar, in a statement, said that PM Imran Khan will address Corona Relief Tiger Force on Wednesday in which he will assign new responsibilities to volunteers. He also paid tribute to Corona Tiger Force for carrying out responsibilities in a strong manner during the Coronavirus pandemic. Last week, Prime Minister Imran Khan had inaugurated the monsoon tree plantation campaign in Kahuta and announced that the federal government set a target to plant 10 billion saplings across the country.

UAE launches first mission to Mars

DNA

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' historic first mission to Mars is under way, after a successful lift-off in Japan. The Hope probe launched on an H2-A rocket from Tanegashima spaceport, and is now on a 500-million-km journey to study the planet's weather and climate. Two previous attempts to launch the probe in the past week had to be called off because of adverse weather. Hope's arrival in February 2021 is set to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the UAE's formation.

Her Excellency Sarah Al Amiri, the science lead on Hope, spoke of her excitement and relief in seeing the rocket climb successfully into the sky. And she stated the impact on her country would be the same as that on America when its people watched the Apollo 11 Moon landing 51 years ago, also on 20 July.

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House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.
e-mail: abrar_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 / +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693