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COAS lauds civil admin for fighting COVID-19, Locust
SCO a reliable platform for a polycentric world
Ukraine envoy completes his term in Pakistan


Briefs

Joint session likely before Eid-ul-Azha

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government is likely to summon a joint session of parliament before Eid-ul-Azha to pass important legislation. According to sources, National Assembly (NA) has passed seven bills which could not make it through senate, where ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is not in the majority. So, government has decided to present these bills in joint session of the parliament. Bills including bill of Pakistan Medical Commission, Pakistan Medical Tribunal, increase in number of judges in Islamabad High Court (IHC) and a bill regarding FATF regulations will be presented in the session. Adviser to Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Babar Awan has said that good lawmaking is a prerequisite for good governance and passing legislation for public benefit is responsibility of government as well as opposition.

PTA warning to Tik Tok

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Number of complaints had been received from different segments of the society against immoral, obscene and vulgar content on social media applications particularly TikTok and Bigo, and their extremely negative effects on the society in general and youth in particular. PTA had issued necessary notices to the aforementioned social media companies under law to moderate the socialization and content within legal and moral limits, in accordance with the laws of the country. However, the response of these companies has not been satisfactory. Therefore, in exercise of its powers under PECA, PTA has decided to immediately block Bigo and issue final warning to TikTok to put in place a comprehensive mechanism to control obscenity, vulgarity and immorality through its social media application.

Limited Hajj on July 29

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi authorities announced this year's Hajj will take place on July 29 with only 1,000 pilgrims as the country battles a surge in coronavirus infections. Some 2.5 million people from all over the world usually participate in the ritual that takes place over several days, centred on the holy city of Makkah. This year's Hajj will be held under strict hygiene protocols, with access limited to pilgrims under 65 years old and without any chronic illnesses.

Pak reports lowest number of virus cases

According to the govt's Covid-19 portal, 17,783 tests were conducted in last 24 hours, which led to the emergence of 1,013 new infections

DNA / FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday reported 1,013 new coronavirus cases, the lowest in last four weeks and 40 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the national tally of cases to 266,092 and fatalities to 5,639. According to the government's Covid-19 portal, 17,783 tests were conducted in last 24 hours, which led to the emergence of 1,013 new infections. Thus far, 208,030 patients have recuperated from the disease while 52,447 are undergoing treatment, of whom 261 are struggling for their lives on vents at various hospitals across the country. According to the provincial tally of the cases,

Sindh has reported 113,553 infections thus far, Punjab 90,444, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 32,243, Balochistan 11,441, Islamabad 14,625, Azad Jammu and Kashmir 1,922 and Gilgit Baltistan 1,868. The number of Coronavirus cases across the world has crossed fourteen point six million while the pandemic has so far claimed more than 600,000 lives so far. The United States is the worst hit, where cases have mounted over three point eight million and death toll reached over 143,000. In Brazil, over two million cases and more than 79,000 deaths have been reported so far. More than eight point seven million patients have recovered from the disease across the world.

No wheat shortage in country: Shibli

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has deferred the proposal to enhance license fee of Pakistan Television. Briefing media, after the cabinet meeting, in Islamabad (Tuesday), Information Minister Shibli Faraz said this proposal was discussed in the cabinet in wake of financial difficulties being faced by PTV. He said that the state TV is facing problems in paying pension to its around three thousand pensioners. He said previous governments have brought the PTV to the verge of collapse by making political appointments in the organization. He further said restructuring of PTV has been approved and the proposal regarding enhancing PTV license fee has been deferred till next week.

Journalist's recovery priority

ISLAMABAD: Information minister Shibli Faraz on Tuesday said that it is the government's responsibility to safely recover "kidnapped" journalist Matullah Jan. "I don't have the complete details right now [...] we are trying hard to locate his whereabouts," he said, adding: "It is the government's responsibility to ensure his safe recovery and it will fulfil this responsibility."



for detailed deliberations over the matter. The Minister said the cabinet also appreciated Prime Minister Imran Khan's decision making it compulsory for public office holders to declare their assets to ensure transparency and to increase people's confidence on their representatives. Syed Shibli Faraz said the Prime Minister also directed to pay all the outstanding amounts of media houses by next week.

Seven Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) pilots and a stewardess are among those whose licenses have been cancelled. CAA senior joint secretary told that scrutiny of other pilots with suspicious licenses through forensic audit is ongoing. The Aviation Division stated that the purpose of this inspection is to protect those who are not guilty. On the other hand, the Supreme Court (SC) has directed to file criminal cases against officials who were involved in issuance of fake licensing to pilots. The apex court has ordered authorities to immediately conclude action against pilots who hold fake licenses. The court also expressed dissatisfaction over reports of the CAA and the PIA.

Ukraine ambassador completes his term

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ukraine Volodymyr Lakomov is set to leave Pakistan after completing his tenure here. Ambassador Volodymyr stayed in Pakistan for nine years. Ambassador Volodymyr is the fourth ambassador leaving in the month of July. Ambassadors of Hungary, Sweden and Nigeria have already packed up their wherewithal to say goodbye to Pakistan. Ambassador of Ukraine happens to be the longest serving ambassador among all those who are leaving this month. In the seniority list he was number two after the Bahrain ambassador. Ambassador Volodymyr during his tenure contributed greatly towards promotion of

bilateral relations. During his eventful tenure he hosted a number of jam-packed national day receptions in which Ambassadors of USA AND UK made rare presence. Normally both of them do not attend such functions. Apart from these functions ambassador Volodymyr hosted many events at his embassy including interactions with the media people. Besides, he hosted the Ukraine Diaspora also at the embassy in order to listen to their issues. Ambassador Volodymyr, a down to earth and humble personality, devoted much of his time in promoting the cause of his country and strengthening bilateral relations. He had a chance of becoming Dean of the Diplomatic Corps being the senior most ambassador, however he politely declined the offer for he wanted to focus much on his professional job.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs Cabinet meeting. – DNA

COAS lauds civil admin for fighting COVID-19, Locust

Forum appreciated efforts of Doctors, Healthcare workers, Paramedics across the country

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: The 233rd Corps Commander's Conference was held today at GHQ with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed

Bajwa in chair.

According to a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the forum reviewed operational readiness & evolving threat spectrum in context of external & internal security of the country to maintain high level of combat readiness particularly in the wake of evolving regional security situation. COAS complimented efforts put in by all formations.

The forum also took note of continued atrocities in IOJ&K as illegal actions of August 5, 2019 complete one year next month. Forum paid tribute to brave Kashmiris for their

legitimate struggle for freedom. COAS especially lauded efforts in aid of civil administration in fight against COVID-19 and LOCUST, stressing the need to exercise maximum care with respect to Eid Ul Azha and Muharram to maintain the gains achieved in countering the pandemic. Forum also appreciated efforts of Doctors, Healthcare workers, Paramedics across the country. COAS expressed complete satisfaction with overall operational readiness of Army as the forum reiterated resolve to thwart any threat to Pakistan's security.

– Picture on Back Page

CAA cancels licenses of 28 pilots

Purpose of this inspection is to protect those who are not guilty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has on Tuesday cancelled licenses of 28 pilots and suspended 93 An official notification regarding cancellation of licenses has been issued following approval by the federal government. Seven Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) pilots and a stewardess are among those whose licenses have been cancelled. CAA senior joint secretary told that scrutiny of other pilots with suspicious licenses through forensic audit is ongoing. The Aviation Division stated that the purpose of this inspection is to protect those who are not guilty. On the other hand, the Supreme Court (SC) has directed to file criminal cases against officials who were involved in issuance of fake licensing to pilots. The apex court has ordered authorities to immediately conclude action against pilots who hold fake licenses. The court also expressed dissatisfaction over reports of the CAA and the PIA.

Shahid Khaqan, Miftah Ismael assets frozen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday frozen the moveable and immovable assets of former PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and former finance minister Miftah Ismail in LNG case. According to details, both Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders have been stopped from transferring ownership of vehicles and property. The anti-graft watchdog has also stopped transfer of already sold vehicles of

Abbasi. On the other hand, the accountability court has reserved its decision on plea of Abbasi to allow the transfer of the vehicle. The accountability court in June had directed the National Accountability Bureau to file a supplementary reference against former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal case. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted bail to former finance minister Miftah Ismail and former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) case.

Zardari files new plea

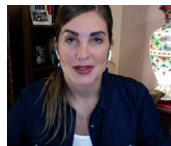
DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday has filed a new petition in accountability court to halt proceedings of Park Lane reference. During the hearing, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor raised objection over Zardari's plea and termed it as a tactic to waste time of the court. It is to be mentioned here that Park Lane case is

being investigated under different sections of the National Accountability Ordinance, NAO 1999, and the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, for Zardari's alleged involvement in extending loan and its misappropriation by M/s Parthenon Private Limited. On March 20, the NAB Rawalpindi had handed over questionnaires comprising 54 questions each to Zardari and his son Bilawal in three cases including Park Lane Estate reference, and subsequently directed them to submit their response within 10 days.

Cynthia summoned by court

DNA



ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court ordered Cynthia D Ritchie and Senator Rehman Malik to appear before it on August 11 to record their statements in the case Malik filed against the American. He filed a request at a district and sessions court in Islamabad under the Office of Qazf (Enforcement of Hadd) Ordinance, 1979. The Ordinance relates to "Whoever by words either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs or by visible representations, makes or publishes an imputation of zina concerning any person intending to harm, or knowing or having reason to believe that such imputation will harm the reputation, or hurt the feelings, of such person, is said except in the cases hereinafter excepted, to commit qazf".

Eid on Aug 01

ISLAMABAD: Eid-ul-Adha in Pakistan will be celebrated on August 1, 2020. According to Mufti Muneeb the moon was sighted on Tuesday therefore Eid will fall on August 01. Earlier the Science Minister Fawad Ch has said that Eid may fall on July 31. – DNA

EU lauds govt's green and clean Pakistan drive

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: European Union's delegation to Pakistan on Tuesday called on the Advisor to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam. Both sides discussed at length various matters of bilateral collaboration and cooperation-related opportunities in the fields of green economic recovery through investment and green job creations, environmental sustainability, climate change, forest management, air pollution and water conservation and protection for boosting latter's climate resilience against unfolding climate change-caused disasters. The EU delegation was led by Anne Marchal, EU Minister and Deputy Head of Mission, Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan. During the meeting, the EU delegation members lauded the present government's green and clean initiatives for creation of green jobs through green economic



recovery, protection of environment, forests, the wildlife and enhancing Pakistan's resilience against negative fallouts of climate change on agriculture, forests, water, food, energy, health, education and lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable communities.

"We are looking forward to contribute our role through our experiences in overall post COVID-19 green recovery through enhanced investment in green sectors including forestry environmental protection and

climate change resilience through mitigation and adaptation initiatives in the country's climate-vulnerable socio-economic sectors," Anne Marchal told the prime minister's advisor. Malik Amin Aslam welcomed the interests of the European Union and its offer to join present government's green and clean initiatives launched over last two years for overall environmental conservation and protection and Pakistan's climate resilience.

"We are happy to hear that the EU is looking towards opportunities for collaboration and cooperation for jointly working and sharing its experiences regarding environmental conservation, water management, disaster risk management and climate resilient-agri-

culture," Malik Amin told the EU Mission's deputy head in Pakistan. He also said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan had also approved the 'Green Stimulus' package in April this year as part of the government's efforts to extend green cover in the county and to create job opportunities for the youth, under which so far over 86,000 green jobs have been created for daily wagers rendered unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, an agreement was signed on Monday according to which the World Bank will provide 188 million US dollars to Pakistan to address environmental degradation, deforestation and climate change-caused disaster risks in the country, the PM's aide added.

EU to provide Rs. 3.6 bn

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The European Union will provide 3.6 billion rupees for Rule of Law support to Pakistan. An agreement to this effect was signed by Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs Noor Ahmed and EU Chargé d' Affaires Anne Marchal in Islamabad on Tuesday. The grant assistance will be utilized in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The Rule of Law Programme will be implemented over a period of five. This programme will also provide technical assistance and capacity building to key government institutions in the security sector and the judiciary at federal and provincial level.

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SCO a reliable platform for forming a polycentric world order: Norov – Page 08

Briefs

Punjab to make 100-bed hospital in Balochistan

DNA

LAHORE: Balochistan Home Minister Mir Zia Ullah Lango called on Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar along with his delegation in Lahore, media reported. Sardar Usman Buzdar said Punjab is playing full role in Balochistan's progress and will make a 100-bed hospital in Turbat along with a community center in Taftan.

A cheque of one billion rupees for both these projects has been handed over to the Balochistan government, he said. A branch of the Bank of Punjab will be opened in Musakhel and transportation along with other facilities will be provided to students, the CM added. Usman Buzdar said Punjab will start rescue service which will shift patients from border areas of Balochistan to Dera Ghazi Khan. The Institute of Cardiology in DG Khan will prove beneficial for the people of Balochistan, he stressed.

Cement export witnesses 4.52 % decrease

ISLAMABAD: The cement exports of the country witnessed a decrease of 4.52 percent during fiscal year 2019-20, against the exports of the corresponding period of last year. The country exported cement worth \$259.441 million during July-June (2019-20) against the exports of \$271.728 million during July-June (2018-19), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) report.

In terms of quantity, the exports of cement increased by 10.79 percent by going up from 6,411,359 metric tons to 7,103,373 metric tons, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the exports of cement increased by 46.52 percent during the month of June 2020 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cement from the country during June 2020 were recorded at \$16.935 million against the exports of \$11.558 million in June 2019. On month-on-month basis, the exports of cement decreased by 12.27 percent during June 2020 as compared to the exports of \$19.303 million in May 2020, the PBS data revealed. — APP

Current Account deficit shrinks 78%

ISLAMABAD: The Current Account Deficit of the country contracted by 78 percent to \$2.966 billion in fiscal year 2019-20 (Jul-Jun) compared to \$13.434 billion in same period of the preceding year (2018-19). On monthly and yearly basis, the current account deficit also witnessed a record fall of 90.2 percent and 72 percent in June this year when compared to the current deficit in June 2019 and May 2020. According to data released by the current account deficit in June, 2020 declined to \$96 million from \$344 million in May 2020 and \$981 million in June 2019. The current account balance without official transfers also declined to \$3.433 billion in Fiscal year 2019-20 compared to \$14.17 billion in the year 2018-29. — APP

16 police officers suspended

DNA

GUJRANWALA: A total of 16 police officers, including sub-inspectors and assistant superintendents, in Gujranwala have been suspended on charges of corruption. According to the police, the officers had been named in multiple cases of bribery and other forms of corruption. They did not have a good reputation, which brought a bad name to the police, a senior police officer said. The officers have also been detained temporarily. An investigation has begun into the matter.

18th Amendment: Impact on Governance in Pakistan

Any and all constitutional amendments should be debated through a broad-based consensual, deliberative political process

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Policy Research Institute organized a special webinar on "18th Amendment: Impact on Governance in Pakistan" here in the capital. Speakers included Mr Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President and Secretary General Board of Directors, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT); and Dr Nadeem ulHaque, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). In his Opening Remarks, Acting President IPRI, Brig. (Retd.) Raashid Wali Janjua

highlighted that following the tenth anniversary of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, serious soul-searching is required to see what it has failed to achieve, whether there are lessons to be learned to modify it and remove bottlenecks to improve its implementation and make changes. He remarked that the most important aspect of 18th Amendment was restructuring of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award under which the provincial share in fiscal resources is 57.5 per cent.

Discussing post-18th Amendment fiscal space issues faced by federal government and possible

solutions, Dr Nadeem ulHaque stressed the need for exhaustive research and debate before any policy is proposed in the National Assembly.

'A white paper should be circulated a year before any policy is set in motion', he said. Dr Haque pointed out the NFC award happened hastily, and has thus far, not been representative nor offers any clarity on what needs to be done, by whom and how. 'Policy decisions taken in a vacuum have serious consequences', he warned. At the same time, he explained that the provinces too have been jealously guarding their turf and not focusing on strengthening local gov-

ernance, an important part of the Amendment.

Albeit, a decade into its passage, terms of the 18th Amendment are yet to be implemented in letter and spirit, he lamented. Discussing the post-18th Amendment governance challenges and possible solutions, Mr Ahmed Bilal Mehboob first provided a historical overview and background of the issue. He stated that since health, education and labour are not part of the Concurrent List, serious issues of coordination have arisen. Sharing the Terms of Reference of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), he opined that despite not being 100%

functional, the CCI has become 'a state within a state' making decision-taking complex and time-consuming. Issues like the annual census is one case in point. He also remarked that unlike the Indian Constitution, the 18th Amendment does not provide a detailed framework for the functioning of local governments such as length of term, number and functions of tiers, direct or indirect election. 'Local governments are imperative for effective governance under Article 140-A, but have been left to the mercy of the provinces, as shockingly 3 of them are without local government,' he remarked. He also pointed towards

the federal government's desperation to wriggle out of locked National Finance Commission provisions under Article 160 (3A). In the interactive Question/Answer session, speakers agreed that implementation of the 18th Amendment has been met with resistance from central bureaucracies that stand to lose political influence if power is devolved effectively from provincial governments to local governments. However, such a challenge might still be an afterthought as local governments are a long way from exercising the level of autonomy guaranteed to them in the Amendment.

Section 144 imposed on illegal cattle markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahead of Eid ul Adha, the city's administration has enacted Section 144 in Karachi and Islamabad, against illegally-formed cattle markets. Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shalwani said that a cattle market set up without prior permission from officials would be deemed illegal. The commissioner said that the city administration will not allow the buying and selling of sacrificial animals apart from the designated cattle markets. Meanwhile, in the federal capital, the local administration has imposed a ban on buying and selling of animals ahead of Eid ul Adha, within the city limits. The Islamabad administration, similar to Karachi, has imposed Section 144 against illegal cattle markets in the city.



ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist on his way at Jinnah Avenue during rain in federal capital. — DNA

System revamping a must to pace up progress on SDGs: experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Development expert and civil society practitioners while speaking to the participants of a webinar identified lack of authentic data, capacity to deliver, skilled human resource and paucity of funds as the key challenges for achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its required pace. Last five years have shown improvement in some of the SDGs indicators while most of them remained unchanged. Slow pace is alarming for Pakistan, and the country needs to review its mechanisms running the SDG regime. The experts suggested wider awareness on grassroots level, fiscal devolution, collaboration and coordination among the stakeholders and partners to pace up progress on achieving the targets. Despite five years in practice, a comprehensive integrated

system is missing while integration of institutional output also lacks besides meagre participation of industry and civil society. The experts also suggested having a universally accessible database and a digital platform to showcase the accumulated output for a well-deserved outlook for the external world. It would bring much needed development partnerships, and technical and financial resources too. The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTNTV on the subject "SDG Regime: Where we are five years after" on Tuesday. The panel of experts included Economic Advisor on SDGs to the Planning Commission of Pakistan Ali Kemal, Senior Technical Advisor to National Assembly Taskforce on SDGs Chaudhary Muhammad Shafiq, Team Lead National Assembly Taskforce on SDGs Hassan

Hakeem, WASH and Water Conservation Expert Nadeem Ahmed, Sustainable Industry expert Bilal Mustafa Syed, Dean Strategy and Marketing Hamdard University Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamran Naqi Khan, and advocacy and outreach expert Zahida Quadri. Devcom-Pakistan and DTNTV Director Munir Ahmed hosted and conducted the webinar. Speaking on the occasion, Ali Kemal said: Pakistan was the first country to endorse the 2030 Development Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. A unanimous resolution to this effect was passed by the National Assembly and since then the SDGs were incorporated in the national development agenda. The stakeholders for the institutionalization of the SDGs include parliamentarians, provincial and local governments, think tanks, academia, private sector and other development partners.

He said as many as 31 focal persons were appointed in different ministries to coordinate the SDGs mainstreaming in the development projects. But unfortunately, every other time they are changed that hamper consistency in the coordination and marred the performance too. Talking about the challenges to SDGs targets, he said financial inclusion, funds and innovation to handle the process of progress on the indicators are major shortcomings. Mainstreaming of SDGs into development projects and mapping of the indicators, grassroots level awareness and data reporting would immensely improve Pakistan's performance on SDGs. He urged the media and civil society to come up with the vibrant solutions to improve the conditions. Chaudhary Shafiq said: The National Assembly taskforce on SDGs has created awareness among the parliamentarians about the importance

of SDGs which they believe would improve quality of life of their voters. Because of the awareness, he said, the parliamentarians adopted the SDGs framework in the National Assembly session. He said the NA Taskforce is going to launch the Constituency Scorecard to measure the development in the context of SDGs indicators after the success of Citizens Scorecard that supported the inclusion of citizens' valuable inputs. Devcom-Pakistan Director Munir Ahmed said: SDG-17 is the last in the row but very important. It is overlooked too despite being the backbone of all – the partnerships. No SDG would have meaningful success without substantial partnerships, sharing of resources, skills and capacity, coordination and collaboration. Segregated efforts would not bring desired results. Unfortunately we could harness the potential of international partnerships but have also to do so at domestic level too.

Youth have great contributions to Kashmir: Masood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has stressed upon Pakistani and Kashmiri students studying across the world particularly in the UK to gear up their efforts to mobilize world opinion and create public awareness on the global level over India's unlawful and illegitimate occupation of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir state. He was talking to a delegation of the UK-based Pakistan Leadership Association of Students and Alumni (PLASA) who called on him here at the Kashmir House on Tuesday under the leadership of student leader and founder of PLASA Mr. Adilur-Rehman. The delegation apprised him about the activities of their organization and discussed the latest situation of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The AJK President said that India was particularly targeting the youth who are peacefully struggling against Indian occupation and the atrocities committed by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir. In order to perpetuate India's illegitimate occupation of the territory, the youth are being killed in fake

encounters, rendered blind through the use of pellet guns while a large number of them have been arrested and put behind the bars and the detention centres where they are being severely tortured, he said. Sardar Masood Khan said that the occupation army was doing all this in order to silence the voices rising for freedom and the right of self-determination. However, he maintained that in spite of all out brutalities by India, the Kashmiri youth were not willing to bow before India and they are determined to get their democratic and legitimate right to self-determination irrespective whatever the price they are required to pay for it. The AJK President said that at present the youth are playing the role of a front-line force in the Kashmir liberation movement. While appreciating the activities of PLASA in educational institutions all over the UK including Queen Mary University, University of Hertfordshire, Kings College and City University London, the AJK President prevailed upon the students to focus on their education keeping in view the situations and the requirements of the ever dynamic job market.

'Govt providing best medical facilities'

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid on Monday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had taken all possible steps to provide best possible medical facilities to the coronavirus patients. She was addressing the current session of Punjab Assembly which started one hour and 33 minutes behind its scheduled time with Panel of Chaiman Mian Shafi Muhammad in the chair. She said the government had given a special discount in Actemra injection to facilitate the patients, adding that all government hospitals were providing best medical treatment to the patients. Dr Yasmin Rashid said that number of testing laboratories in Punjab had been increased, adding, the government had to contribute Rs 5,000 for each test. The minister said that the Expo Center Field Hospital had incurred expenses of only Rs 70 million including electricity bill, adding that medical equipment used in Expo Center Field Hospital could be installed in other government hospitals once the coronavirus pandemic would be controlled. She asserted that when the PTI came into power, 28,000 vacancies were vacant in the Health department which were filled by the incumbent government, adding that the government had also provided 6,000 jobs. — APP

OGRA issues 2018-19 performance report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Tuesday issued its Annual Report 2018-19, showing performance and the measures taken to safeguard public interest through effective regulation in the midstream and downstream petroleum sector. According to the report, the authority, during the period under review, conducted inspections at 447 fuel outlets and issued 182 show cause notices for overcharging, less filling and non-conforming quality, imposing penalty of Rs 64.57 million. Besides, OGRA instantly redressed as many as 663 complaints received against different outlets under the 'Clean and Green Pakistan' initiative. To ensure provision of quality petroleum products across the country, the authority, through Hydrocarbon Development Institute

of Pakistan (HDIP), made 460 quality checks of imported energy products and 725 quality checks for imported non-energy products. In addition to operations, OGRA also granted permission for construction of new oil storages to Attock Petroleum Limited at Sahiwal & Machike, Total Parco Pakistan Limited at Shikarpur & Machike; Gas and Oil Pakistan Limited at Rahim Yar Khan & Hub and Jinn Petroleum at Hub. During the one-year period, OGRA granted licence for construction of a new Oil Refinery (Khyber Oil Refinery) with the capacity of 20,000 barrel per day designed on local crude, which was expected to be constructed within five years at the cost of US\$ 500 Million. The authority granted eleven licences to Lube Oil Blending Plants for construction and operation, and eleven licences to Lubricant Marketing Companies (LMCs) for import of lube oil in the country.

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Briefs

7 gamblers busted, stake money recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police on Tuesday arrested seven gamblers and recovered Rs 18,000 cash stake money, eight mobile phones, six motorcycles and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Kalar Syedan police team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), acting on a tip-off conducted a raid in its jurisdiction and arrested seven gamblers namely Amjad Ishaq, Talab Hussain, Saeed Hussain, Khalil Ahmed, Mian Ahmed, Muhammad Saleem and Yasir as they were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. – APP

50k expelled workers for re-employment

ISLAMABAD: More than 50,000 Pakistani workers, who have lost their overseas jobs due to coronavirus pandemic, have registered themselves with the Overseas Employment Corporation's (OEC) portal in search of job opportunities, training in modern skills and financial assistance. The portal was launched by the OEC last month to facilitate the returning emigrants in locating jobs in the country and abroad after documenting their data. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) has started implementation of the action plan for re-employment of the expelled overseas Pakistani workers, said a senior officer of the ministry. Talking to APP, he said lists of at least 37,189 workers had been shared with officials of the Ehsaas and Kamyab Jawan Programmes. – APP

Bike-lifters arrested: nine stolen bikes recovered

RAWALPINDI: In a crackdown against criminal elements, Kahuta police have arrested two persons involved in motorcycle theft cases and recovered nine stolen motorcycles from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Kahuta police in a raid, arrested Farhan Ahmed and Zeeshan Ali, two bike lifters and recovered nine motorcycles and spare parts from their possession. He informed that the Police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Pirwadhai on the directives of SP Saddar conducted a raid and managed to net two bike lifters. As per preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he added. He stated that other members and facilitators of the bike lifters would also be arrested following preliminary investigations with the detainee culprits. Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Division lauded endeavours of Kahuta police for netting the bike lifters. – APP

36 sites for sacrificial animals

RAWALPINDI: The Livestock Department of Rawalpindi Division has set up 36 places for sale and purchase of sacrificial animals, besides establishing the checkposts and medical camps in the area that would ensure the implementation of corona prevention SOPs, inspection of cattle health and spraying of anti-ticks chemical on cattle. Director Livestock Rawalpindi Division Dr Syed Nadeem Badar said in a departmental briefing held here on Tuesday. He said that all the facilities related to treatment of cattle and to identify other matters would also be available at cattle markets. Nadeem Badar said that veterinary doctors and staff have been posted at check posts who will perform their duties in shifts. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Large number of motorcyclists standing under Zero point bridge waiting for the rain to stop. – DNA

ICCI calls on FBR to expedite payment of refunds

ICCI President said that PM Imran had taken a very positive step by announcing a relief package to address the issue of refunds, but still a large accumulated amount of refunds was stuck up with FBR which was a major issue for the business community

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has called upon the FBR authorities to expedite the payment of refunds in compliance with the commitment of the Prime Minister of Pakistan as undue delay in the payment of outstanding income tax, sales tax and customs duty refunds was creating liquidity issues for the business community and affecting the promotion of business activities. He said that income tax refunds of business community were pending with FBR since 2014-15

and despite the commitment of the government and SBP to clear them, their payment was being delayed, which was unjustified. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had taken a very positive step by announcing a relief package to address the issue of refunds, but still a large accumulated amount of refunds was stuck up with FBR which was a major issue for the business community. He said that field officers of FBR have done assessment of many refund cases, processed them and issued their RPOs (refund payment orders), but still taxpayers have not received them, which was unfortunate.



He said that trade and industrial activities were adversely affected by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic due to which business community was facing great financial problems and it was the right time

for FBR to clear all outstanding refunds for addressing the liquidity issues of business community. However, undue delay in payment of outstanding refunds was increasing the financial woes of the business community that would further affect businesses and trigger more unemployment. ICCI President said that Regional Chief Commissioners of FBR have processed many cases of income tax refunds after due assessment and have submitted them to FBR Headquarter, but the taxpayers were still waiting for their receipt in their bank accounts. He urged that Chairman FBR should take personal interest in this serious matter and pass on

orders for immediate clearance of all refunds including income tax, sales tax and customs duty refunds that would address the financial problems of business community and help them in reviving business activities leading to enhanced tax revenue for the government. He further said in case clearance of all accumulated refunds was not possible for FBR due to any reason, it should consider ICCI proposal for allowing adjustment of payable taxes against outstanding refunds, which would be a win-win arrangement as it would reduce the financial liabilities of the business community and improve the tax revenue of the government.

15 shopkeepers arrested over SOPs' violation

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police have arrested 15 persons over violations of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and preventive measures announced by the Punjab government to prevent spread of the coronavirus. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas conducted raids in different areas in their jurisdiction and checked violation of SOPs issued by the Punjab government. Police arrested 15 shopkeepers namely Muhammad Khurshed, Muhammad Zafar, Tamoor Ali, Kamran, Javed Amjid, Muhammad Aqib, Muhammad Adnan, Muhammad Arif, Sher Khan, Tamoor Iqbal, Arif, Dawood Ahmed, Shahid, Nisar and Danial. He said, the operation against the violators would continue and the violators would be sent behind the bars. He said, Rawalpindi district police were trying to implement directives and SOPs in letter and spirit. – APP

68 ICT policemen transferred

ISLAMABAD: SSP (Operations) here on Tuesday transferred 68 policemen with immediate effect with the purpose to improve efficiency of the police force. According to the notification, 11 Sub-Inspectors, 23 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 34 policemen of lower staff have been reshuffled from one police station to other and Rescue 15. The police spokesman said that reason behind these transfers was to improve efficiency of the force and rotate policemen for better output. – APP

Ehsaas disbursed Rs158.20 bn

ISLAMABAD: The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme has so far disbursed cash amount of Rs158.20 billion among over 13,076,000 lockdown affected persons under different categories. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme was initiated to disburse cash amount of Rs12,000 among those affected from the corona lockdown. According to the cash update received on July 21, a total of Rs71.3 billion has been disbursed among over 5,870,000 deserving families in Punjab so far while Rs47.76 billion has been disbursed among over 3,961,000 families in Sindh. A total of Rs26.95 billion has been disbursed among over 2,220,000 beneficiaries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while Rs7.88 billion has been disbursed among over 649,000 persons in Balochistan. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Rs2.60 billion have been distributed among over 213,000 persons while Rs1.15 billion has been distributed among over 94,000 people in GB.

13 outlaws including four gangsters held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have arrested 13 outlaws including four members of a dacoit's gang and recovered narcotics, wine and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan ordered crackdown against criminal elements. Following these orders, DIG (Operations) Waqar

Ud-Din Syed has directed all zonal officers to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. A team of Aabpara police station arrested four wanted members of a dacoit's gang identified as Junaid, Saleem, Usama and Adnan while police recovered three 30 bore pistols along with ammunition and 2.280 kilogram hashish from their possession. Secretariat police arrest-

ed accused Sadeer and recovered 10 liter alcohol from him. Shams colony police arrested Adnan and recovered 10 liter alcohol from his possession. Separate cases had been registered against them and further investigation was underway. During special crackdown against absconders, Islamabad police nabbed seven proclaimed offenders and court absconders from various area of the city. – APP

Awareness activity held about cleanliness

RAWALPINDI: An awareness activity was carried out at cattle market of Adyala Road with an aim to meet the sellers and buyers of sacrificial animal and sensitize them about the significance of cleanliness to develop a tidy environment on the auspicious occasion of upcoming Eid-ul-Adha.

The people were asked that do not throw offal outside their houses and in open plots rather put it in the waste bags provided by the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC), throw it in the containers in their colony or give it to our sanitary workers or specified vehicle.

The communication teams distributed waste bags and pamphlets to highlight the importance of cleanliness. The team also briefed them about various cleanliness services that the company was providing on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha for the benefit of public.

Netball Seminar on July 28

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Netball Federation (PNF) will hold a One Day Online Netball Seminar-Fast-5 on July 28. According to PNF President Mudassar Arain players, coaches and technical officials would be participating in the online seminar. "Besides, Schools teachers can also register their names for the participation of the seminar from July 23 to 25. The seminar will be conducted online due to the COVID-19 situation in the country," he said. He said various international, national experts and experienced technical officials would deliver lectures to the participants. "The seminar will be very useful for the promotion of sports in the country. Referees and Coaches coaching course will be conducted in the next month (August) after Eid ul Adha," he said. – APP

IRSA releases 291,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 291,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 334,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1457.65 feet, which was 71.65 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 181,700 cusecs and outflow as 150,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1227.00 feet, which was 187.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 31,100 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 216,600, 190,800 and 67,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 54,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 35,800 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. – APP

Virtual International Trade Forum to be held

ABID RAZA

RAWALPINDI: The Virtual International Trade Forum, organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) will be held today. The purpose of the trade forum is to make the business community aware of trade and export opportunities in African markets. Giving details, Chamber President Saboor Malik said that this forum is the continuity of the Africa Trade Forum organized by RCCI last year. The virtual forum will be attended by commercial and trade consular from Pakistan and abroad, officials of the Ministry of Commerce and CEOs of the companies. The trade forum will be inaugurated by PM advisor on Commerce Razaq Dawood. He said that Pakistan would



have to find new markets to boost exports. Africa is a continent of more than fifty countries. Pakistan's trade volume with African countries is only close to 3 billion dollars, which could be doubled in the next three years. He said that an increase in trade in food, textile and pharmaceutical sectors could be made possible. He said that in order to increase Pakistani exports to African countries, new trade avenues would have to be explored.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists heading to their destinations at Kashmir Highway during rain. – DNA

Briefs

Rescue-1122
responds
17,630
emergencies

RAWALPINDI: The District Emergency Service Rawalpindi, Rescue-1122 responded 17,630 Emergencies including 4952 road Traffic crashes in last six months. According to a Rescue-1122 spokesman, Rescue Service Attock dealt 6605 emergencies and 1063 accidents, likewise Rescue Service Jhelum dealt 4351 emergencies including 825 Road Traffic Crashes while total 4034 Emergencies including 961 road traffic crashes were dealt in Chakwal during last six months. He said that currently the Rescue service is responding the emergencies with limited resources and available ambulances of Patients Transfer Service. He informed that the recruitment of staff for few tehsils have been done and they are under training whereas the recruitment of remaining staff would be completed soon. The staff would be deployed in all tehsils of Rawalpindi Division till December 2020. He further informed that more vehicles and equipment would also be available by December 2020. – APP

NIC to
hold online
webinar

ISLAMABAD: National Incubation Center (NIC) will hold an online webinar titled "Inclusive Leadership" to encourage masses to create an inclusive world on 22 July. The webinar will shed light on the traditional leadership concept vs Inclusive Leadership and the importance of communication, exploring different perspectives to create a thriving work culture. According to an official, the webinar will focus on how masses can learn to lead from a place of possibility, rather than limitation, in approaching Life. He said the guest speaker Jiezheng Wu - Equity and Inclusion Fellow at Harvard University will uncover the phenomenon of 'Inclusive Leadership'. He said that she will also discuss the Inclusion and diversity among Women Leadership to become Business woman through Women Empowerment. – APP

'Sur Sangeet'
arranged at
PUCAR

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi (PUCAR) arranged an online musical program "Sur Sangeet" to provide entertainment facility to the residents of twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The program was a part of online activities owing to lockdown due to COVID-19 which was anchored by Mah Rukh Khan while young singer Shakir Kashmiri who is from Attock, sang enchanting folk songs on the occasion. The program was also broadcast on official YouTube channel and Facebook. On the occasion, Punjab Council of the Arts Director Waqar Ahmed said the council had always encouraged the young generation to step forward to unearth their hidden talent in the field of art and culture, Drama, Fine Arts, and Literature. – APP

Four new
cases of corona
in Attock

ATTOCK: The number of patients of COVID-19 surged to 550 in Attock as four new cases have surfaced on Tuesday, according to district health authorities. District Focal person for COVID-19 Dr Asif Arbab Niazi informed that all four new patients belonged to Hazro. Responding to a question, he said there were 153 active patients across the district. He said the number of suspected cases had also been raised in the district to 3930 while screening of as many as 7511 persons have also carried out so far. He said the results of as many as 246 suspected persons in the area were awaited. Asif Arbab Niazi said that out of 550 positive patients as many as 147 were isolated at their homes while others were hospitalized. He said that so far 377 positive patients had recovered from the virus in the district. – APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of thick clouds hovering over the skies of the city. – APP

President stresses upon
transparency in I-voting

The President was briefed about the steps being taken for establishing an effective and reliable I-Voting system for overseas Pakistanis. It was apprised that all measures were being taken for the development of a fool-proof voting system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has urged that the secrecy of vote and transparency in the I-voting (internet-voting) process must be ensured while developing electronic voting system (EVS). He gave these remarks while chairing a meeting to review progress on the EVS, at Awan-e-Sadr, today.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary IT and Telecommunication, Mr. Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui, Secretary to President, Mr. Tariq NajeebNajmi, and Chairman NADRA, Mr. Usman YousafMobin. Officials from Election Commission of Pakistan and NADRA were also present.

The President was briefed about the steps being taken for establishing an effective and reliable I-Voting system for overseas Pa-

kistanis. It was apprised that all measures were being taken for the development of a fool-proof voting system.

The President was also briefed about the technical efficacy, secrecy and safety aspects of the system. The EVS being developed had been pilot tested in the bye-elections, the meeting was informed, and an independent evaluation of the system would also be conducted.

The meeting underscored the primacy of putting the system to test prior to poll-day to detect and overcome any technical issues. President Arif Alvi remarked that I-voting system should be transparent and people should have complete confidence in it. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining voters' secrecy, and fulfilling all the legal requirements. President Alvi stressed that the

system should be efficient possessing the technical capacity to cater the large number of overseas voters on poll-day. The President directed that a committee of experts to be formed to assess the technical capacity and reliability of the system and to propose possible solutions. The report alongwith recommendations would be presented before the Parliament.

Telenor welcomes Open Mind
Programme's 7th Batch

ISLAMABAD: As an equal opportunity employer promoting an accessible environment and inclusive approach, Telenor Pakistan virtually welcomes the seventh batch of its Open Mind Pakistan programme, reiterating its commitment towards reducing inequalities. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Telenor Pakistan, while swiftly adapting to the new normal, remains dedicated towards continuing its flagship programme virtually. The programme focuses on equipping differently-abled trainees at a time of dynamic change to experience new ways of working remotely before they enter a transformed job market. Telenor Pakistan is among the first companies to encourage employment opportunities for differently-abled persons, facilitating the process through accessible technologies in order to provide a level-playing field for all. The seventh batch of Open Mind Pakistan programme includes 15 highly capable individuals who will go through comprehensive on-the-job training, along with an exclusively designed knowledge and skills development programme for a full year.

Under the Open Mind Pakistan programme, Telenor Pakistan has inducted over a 100 extraordinary individuals since 2013, with three-fourth of them managing to land a job. This one-of-a-kind industry-first skills development programme has several success stories including that of Zain Ahmed Malik, who is serving in the Pakistan Merchant Navy as an electrical engineer, and of Wamiq Hasan and Abdul Qadir, who are running a successful startup 'DeafTawk' recognised by the Institute of Engineering and Technology and National Incubation Center (NIC). – DNA

Usman hails 'PM Tiger force's role

Usman Dar said 'Tiger Force volunteers will also take part in a nationwide tree-planting campaign

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Usman Dar Tuesday hailed PM Tiger Force volunteer's active participation and brave spirits in the fight against COVID-19. Talking to a private news channel, he said we should recognize and honor the contributions of volunteers and partners who have all given selflessly of their time, each contributing their expertise and resources in their own unique ways for PM Tiger force's mission. He said Over one million youth had become part of the Tiger Force on the call of Prime Minister Imran Khan and volunteer

Force was actively playing its pivotal role in implementation of the SOPs regarding coronavirus.

He said the government has decided to celebrate 'Tiger Force Day' immediately after Eid-ul-Adha and registration for Tiger Force will be re-opened after eid to increase number of volunteers.

Usman Dar said 'Tiger Force volunteers will also take part in a nationwide tree-planting campaign.

He said that Tiger force would assist district administrations and other relevant organizations in the government's plantation drive across Pakistan. – APP

AIOU starts
admissions
for Overseas

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has begun offering admissions in various academic programs including SSC, HSSC (FA General) and ICom for Pakistanis settled in KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and USA. They can download prospectus and admission form by clicking at the URL: <https://aiou.edu.pk/overseasdel.asp>, a press release said on Tuesday. It is mandatory to attach attested copies of certificates/degrees, transcripts, CNIC, Passport and Visa. Interested candidates are instructed to paste their latest picture on the admission form. Admission form without the picture would not be entertained. Open University is the only Pakistani university offering admission facilities to Pakistanis settled in the Middle East countries for the past many years. Prof. Dr Zia Ul Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIOU, is hopeful that overseas Pakistanis would fully utilize this facility. For further information regarding admission process, Directorate of Regional Services (Overseas Section) Block 2, AIOU may be contacted directly or through the telephone numbers + 92-51-9250175, +92-51-9057165.

NCHD organises
workshop for
employees

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) in collaboration with the UNICEF organized a 2-day training workshop entitled "Transforming Society through Early Childhood Development and Informed Parenting" for its frontline workers here on Tuesday.

The training was aimed at to improve and update traditional parenting practices; sensitize and create awareness among parents, communities, professionals caregivers, and service providers by facilitating knowledge networking opportunities; foster communication, interaction and knowledge sharing among parents and professionals, a press release issued here said.

Addressing to the trainees Director General National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Hassan Baig said that training or development of an employee termed as continued efforts to boost the performance of an individual and organization.

He said when a department invest on training courses

employees feel valued and their engagement and satisfaction level increases which turn positive impacts on achievements of goals of the organizations.

DG Hassan Baig said, "I believe that quality and impact of educational programs impinge upon a number of factors including competence of teachers, suitability of teaching learning resources, planning and management skills"

He said formal education system is supplemented and reinforced by a set of support systems that accomplish various professional tasks adding there are 200 teacher training Institutions (TTIs) and a number of specialized organizations for curriculum, textbook development, examinations and research in the country. Unfortunately, no such mechanism could be created for Non-formal Education (NFE) system so far, he informed.

He told there are more than 40% illiterates (10+ age group) in the country that can never be addressed through formal education system. – APP

Gold price
hits all
time high

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs2250 on Tuesday and was traded at Rs113,500 as against its trading at Rs 111,250 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. Likewise the price of 10 gram gold also witnessed increase of Rs1929 and was trade at Rs97,308 against its sale at Rs95,379.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs20 and was traded at Rs1120 against Rs1100 whereas that of 10 gram silver also went up by Rs17.15 and was trade at Rs960.22 against at 943.07.

The gold prices in the international market increased by \$12 and was traded at \$1825 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs1813 during the last trading day, the association reported. – APP

PNCA
announces
short film
contest

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has announced a short film competition based on the theme 'Promoting Pakistani Culture' in connection with the 74th independence day of Pakistan.

The contest aimed at providing the opportunity for art enthusiasts groups and individuals to pay tribute to motherland with the spirit of celebrating our freedom and national identity especially in these trying times.

According to an official, the top three shortlisted clips or videos will be awarded cash prize by PNCA.

They will also be uploaded on council's official Facebook page on August 14th. The content must be themed based while the duration of the video must not more than 7 minutes.

Interested participants can visit the official website of PNCA where they would find more information and registration link.

Last date to submit entries is August 10. – APP

Tarnol police foils
attempt to smuggle
narcotics

IGP Islamabad & DIG (Operations) have appreciated the performance of CIA Police team and announced cash rewards for them

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Tarnol police has thwarted an attempt to smuggle narcotics and arrested a person in possession of cache of drugs, a police spokesman said. Following orders of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan, he said that DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed had categorically directed all police officers to accelerate their efforts against drug dealers/smugglers and curb this menace from Capital.

Following these directions, SP (Saddar Zone) Sarfraz Ahmed Virk constituted special anti-drug police team under supervision of DSP Khalid Mehmood Awan including SHO Tarnol police station Inspector Arshad Ali, Sub-Inspector Shahid Asghar and others.

This team arrested a drug pusher, identified as Shaikhbaz Khan, from the area of Dhoke Paracha besides recovery of 4.270 kilogram hashish from him.

Case has been registered against him at Tarnol police station and further investigation id underway from him. IGP Islamabad and DIG (Operations) have appreciated the performance of CIA Police team and announced cash rewards for them. DIG (Operations) has said that Islamabad police is accelerating all out efforts for safety and security of citizens. He also requested the citizens to inform police in case of any such suspicious activity in their areas. – APP



RAWALPINDI: A delivery truck carrying sacrificial animals to livestock market at Misrial Road. – APP

Circular debt and inefficiency

ACCORDING to assessments, circular debt in the power sector will almost double by 2025, causing a further economic disaster. The debt which currently stands at Rs2,219 billion is expected to increase to Rs4000 billion in the next 25 years. This will also mean an increase in the power tariff, a fact that is already deterring multinationals from investing in Pakistan. There have been comparisons to countries in the same region including Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Malaysia where prices of power are considerably lower than in Pakistan. A key reason for this is mismanagement. The inefficiency in the running of DISCOs in the country is believed by experts to have been the main factor in the inability to properly manage the power sector. A report, prepared by Engro Corporation, which is titled 'Fixing Pakistan's Power Sector' paints a picture which is hardly positive and not at all reassuring. It notes that prices for residential consumers are 25 percent higher than the domestic tariff for consumers in seven other countries in the region. The industrial tariff is 26 percent higher than the same countries. The DISCOs which are most inefficiently run have been identified as PESCO, QESCO, SESCO and HESCO. It is believed that the inefficiency in these DISCOs adds immensely to the circular debt and that by 2025 this amount will stand at Rs1.5 trillion. This is obviously an immense amount with huge amounts of forex also being lost because of the failure to manage the power sector. The IPPs set up in the past 20 years have added to the debt cycle. While DISCOs have been asked to improve their performance, there is lack of clarity on how they can achieve this until management and the entire setup of the power sector is improved. It seems obvious that the problem needs to be examined very carefully and a proper plan put in place. Without good management and decision-making, we will literally be pouring money down the drain while struggling to cope with the damage the failures in the power sector inflict on our economy. These failures of course also hit the common man very hard. People have no choice but to pay utilities, whether they are domestic consumers or small traders. At the present time, we do not see any serious attempt to correct the faults in the power sector. Instead more and more is added to bills as subsidies are removed and harsher terms put in place. This is a matter the government needs to take up with some urgency if it is to encourage overseas investment in the country and also enable local business to run efficiently and effectively without putting a large percentage of profits into paying ever-growing power bills.

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An unequal world

WHILE delivering the annual lecture for the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Secretary General of the UN Antonio Guterres has said that the coronavirus pandemic has in fact exposed the inequality in the globe and the divide between societies. For more than seven decades the nations which stand at the top of the power hierarchy have refused to institute reforms that could ensure a more equal division of power. As an example, he cited the composition of voting in the UN Security Council and the Bretton Woods Institution which has exacerbated inequality. The Bretton Woods system includes the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, with the US standing firmly behind them. Guterres said that the pandemic has shown there could be no equality in society until the entire system based on lies and foul play was altered. He said it has been proven that free markets cannot deliver health-care for all, that unpaid care work is not work is merely a fiction and that we continue to live amidst racism and other kinds of divide between societies. The lecture is one that should provoke a great deal of thought. The coronavirus has already killed nearly six lakh people worldwide and the UN appeal for richer nations to help poor states has fallen essentially on deaf ears. The UN secretary general said that rich nations had failed to act responsibly and even now, in a time of global crisis, have no interest in bailing out others. What is needed is a stronger system of universal health cover and better social protection for all. This is something we can easily relate to. We have seen efforts to offer charity to those unable to feed families. But charity has its own faults. It leaves out white collar workers unwilling to stand in queues to seek a bowl of soup. There is such obvious poverty even in rich countries that the time has come to deal with the manner in which wealth is divided. The entire system in this respect needs to be rethought. The notion that institutions such as the IMF or World Bank could aid poorer nations has turned out to be a fallacy. Models of governance which do a better job of protecting the poor and offering them basic amenities need to be better studied and better understood so that we can possibly move toward a world that is fairer and less biased towards the wealthy.

Suburban Housing Initiatives in Morocco

Hamid Asghar Khan



The Kingdom has successfully focused on equitable regional development. Instead of one or two major cities, well thought out efforts have been made to improve infrastructure, housing, business, educational and recreational facilities in all regions. This has enabled showcasing of the diverse landscape, promoting tourism attracting over a million tourists a month, contributing 10% to the national economy

COVID-19 has compelled increased reliance on Skype, Zoom and other online platforms. Many feel that these mediums, while useful, are an inadequate substitute for actual meetings. Thus, upon receiving an invitation to meet with the Moroccan Minister for Housing, Land Management & Urban Affairs Mme. Nouzha Bouchareb in person, I leapt at the opportunity. Economies everywhere are struggling with the adverse impact of the pandemic, and Morocco, like Pakistan, views the housing and construction sectors as key to stimulating economic resurgence. A helpful series of incentives and concessions have been unveiled to kickstart housing and construction in both countries. The Kingdom has successfully focused on equitable regional development. Instead of one or two major cities, well thought out efforts have been made to improve infrastructure, housing, business, educational and recreational facilities in all regions. This has enabled showcasing of the diverse landscape, promoting tourism attracting over a million tourists a month, contributing 10% to the national economy. Madame Minister herself is an expert in sustainable development. She dilated upon the "Cities without slums" initiative geared to providing affordable housing for the less fortunate. It is now universally acknowledged that a key goal of modern town planning is to cap the size of large cities to limit urban sprawl. Major challenges are increased traffic, pollution, vanishing green areas, waste management, unaffordable property values and scarce water resources. All of these impact on quality of life, health and mental wellbeing. Megapolis such as New York and Karachi were badly affected by Covid-19. The staggering density of thousands of souls living per square mile, crammed into highly urbanized areas was no doubt a factor. Conversely, the impact of Covid-19 has been far more temperate in rural and open areas. Consequently, an increasing desire of moving to rural areas for a healthier and more relaxed lifestyle, surrounded by the purity and delights of nature is emerging. There are reports of increased interest in suburban and rural living options away from, but within commuting distance of large cities. Sydney, Australia presents an interesting model that our Housing Authority may wish to study. The city center, known as the central business district -CBD- witnesses a huge influx in the morning, only to empty out with amazing speed in the evening as over half a million people takes buses, trains, boats, and cars and to return to their comfortable homes in the suburbs after a day's work. Less than 15% live within the down town city area itself, the vast majority undertake a comfortable commute to the suburbs between 20 minutes to an hour away from

the CBD for quality living. Australia, like Morocco, keeps sustainable development and environmental preservation as key goals. Thus large expanses of green belts and forested areas are maintained between self-contained small villages along train and bus lines, providing eminently manageable living clusters with adequate breathing and living space. Clinics, schools, shopping areas and other essential amenities in local living clusters preclude the need for daily travel to the city. Our Districts in Pakistan are the optimum platform for enabling development of new living clusters. A move away from Karachi, Lahore and Pindi-Islamabad has to be incentivized, with district governments identifying and making available suitable state land for the construction of housing, hospitals, schools, clinics, colleges, petrol pumps and markets. The capacity to innovate is going to be a key factor in the success of our construction and housing initiatives. Karachi suffers from extraordinary challenges of waste management, water supply, traffic, storm drainage and electricity. Similar challenges are fast emerging in Lahore and Pindi-Islamabad where land cost also puts affordable housing beyond the reach of many. The Government has done well in recent years to enhance rural connectivity by constructing a network of highways and interchanges. Consideration must be given to develop new self-contained towns in accessible rural areas, half an hour or so from major cities. The construction of secondary and tertiary access roads in rural areas can greatly enable freeing up hitherto blocked land. Suburban clusters in districts if planned and developed as a strategy can easily address the 9 million housing unit shortage that Pakistan currently faces. This will prevent further overburdening of already overcrowded metropolis' and will contribute to wider, broad based development of hitherto neglected areas. Extension of public transport is essential to enable commuting. The extraordinary differential in raw land price, say between Islamabad, and the mostly uninhabited acres adjacent M2 up to Kallarkahar may be considered. If a new town were announced in this area, a shuttle train service connecting it to Islamabad could be financed through the booking of land alone. This could be a signature project for the government, generating jobs, economic activity and much goodwill in a high visibility, easily accessible area. Thought can also be given to having themes for proposed new clusters, such as conceiving an Education Town, Health Town or Tech Town. District Government's can identify state land for such initiatives on public private partnership basis. Development may also be centered around pre-existing

points of attraction to promote tourism and leisure activities. With the proper infrastructure Taxila could become a mecca for Buddhists. We have already witnessed the attraction of the Kartarpur complex, and the many scenic lakes of Chakwal can afford tremendous leisure opportunities, as can other historic forts, temples and monuments scattered across the Potohar. Banks are already making mortgages more easily available, but it would be beneficial to update the legal regime and enact easy repossession laws to secure loans being extended. Further incentives for the installation of solar energy grids, water harvesting, use of local finishing items, and environment friendly construction materials would help economic revival. The state through robust regulatory oversight must ensure adequate parking, solid waste, sanitation, sewerage systems, and sufficient green areas for leisure are incorporated in projects. A key bottleneck is access to land record. Functionaries such as patwaris, being custodians of land record must remain available at state provided offices to cater for public needs. Much work has been done to computerize records, but further effort is required to ensure transparency and efficiency at the lower end of the revenue spectrum. Procedures for planning permissions also need simplification. Special enabling provisions for districts to develop satellite towns would be attractive not only for local dwellers, but also for workers returning from abroad, now accustomed to more modern housing facilities. The new Housing Authority must secure inputs from the institutes of Architects and Town Planners as well as environmental experts. A careful study of the successful and sustainable development model adopted by many countries including Morocco would be beneficial. A dash of flair and imagination would come in handy as we proceed with creating attractive new living options outside of existing overcrowded cities. We have a rich tradition in architecture. Our own Sir Ganga Ram, the famous civil engineer born in Punjab, left us with iconic architectural splendors such as Aitchison College, Lahore GPO and Lahore Museum among many others that he so ably designed and built. Heritage preservation must invariably form an integral part of the national development agenda. It is for the new housing Authority to seize upon the mandate, incentives and facilities provided by the government, to reflect and plan on the basis of international best practices, and usher in a vibrant new era of excellence in suburban development.

— The author is a Diplomat serving as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Morocco

New US-China rivalry will force the world to take sides

Cornelia Meyer



Washington may have its reasons to ratchet up the rhetoric against Beijing, but in the past three years the US has also withdrawn from multilateral frameworks such as the Paris treaty on climate change and the World Health Organization. China steadfastly supported these organisations, giving it in the eyes of many the status of a friend of the multilateral global order

WHEN a new great power emerges to challenge the status quo, disturbance is inevitable — so it was only a matter of time before the US and China clashed. The gulf between the two nations has grown in the past two years, although neither the Bush nor Obama administrations were unfettered fans of the Beijing regime; they were happy for US companies to collaborate with China and for supply chains to become more integrated, but they understood that while China was open to trade and entrepreneurship, the US and Chinese governments differed greatly on democracy and human rights. Donald Trump is not particularly perturbed by a country's record on those two issues. His aim is to "make America great again" and return jobs to its rust belt. He went toe to toe with Beijing on trade. He had valid points as far as a level playing field was concerned, in terms of opening the investment market, limiting the preferred status of Chinese state-owned enterprises and stopping the theft of intellectual property. There were trade negotiations, and a phase 1 trade agreement. However, there was acrimony about Huawei and fears that China could spy on the US and its allies if they integrated Huawei equipment into their 5G infrastructure. Then the COVID-19 pandemic ratcheted up the controversy as Washington accused Beijing of not reacting appropriately and quickly enough to the virus, allowing it to spread globally. China's new security law for Hong Kong made the rift all the more apparent. It supersedes Hong Kong's constitution, the Basic Law, restricts the civil liberties of Hong Kong citizens, and effectively ends the "one country, two systems" structure that was supposed to last until 2047 under the terms of the Sino-British dec-

laration of 1984. This month Trump terminated Hong Kong's special economic status, and said he did not think there was currently room for further developing a US-China trade deal. Some have suggested that we are on the verge of a new Cold War. We are not. The original Cold War between the Western and Soviet blocs was defined by an arms race and proxy military stand-offs across a series of borders throughout the world. Although this new power struggle has the potential to become military, it is mainly about economic influence. China has embarked on rapid economic and geopolitical expansion. Western nations took some time to realize how far the \$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative was designed to extend China's reach. It was not until Sri Lanka was forced to lease the port of Hambantota to a Chinese state-owned ports company for 99 years in compensation for debt on which it would otherwise have defaulted that Western nations fully understood the BRI's geopolitical dimension. When a new great power emerges to challenge the status quo, disturbance is inevitable — so it was only a matter of time before the US and China clashed. Now the Huawei controversy threatens to split the world into pro-China and pro US camps. The UK has excluded Huawei from its 5G infrastructure, which is a clear victory for Donald Trump. The controversy over Hong Kong has also raised questions about the status of Taiwan, which Beijing regards as part of one China but most Western nations see as independent. Taiwan matters, not just to Japan, which has an old and close relationship with it, but to many other countries too. Taiwan is also

one of the leading manufacturers of semiconductors, so its status matters to the world economy at large. Many of China's southeast Asian neighbours are concerned about its increased military presence, particularly in the South China Sea. China's defense budget has grown steadily in lockstep with its economy; at \$178 billion in 2020 it is the second-largest in the world, and increased by 6.6 percent from 2019 to 2020. China's divergence from the US is therefore ideological, economic and increasingly military too. Washington may have its reasons to ratchet up the rhetoric against Beijing, but in the past three years the US has also withdrawn from multilateral frameworks such as the Paris treaty on climate change and the World Health Organization. China steadfastly supported these organisations, giving it in the eyes of many the status of a friend of the multilateral global order. We are back to where we started: The economic and geopolitical rise of China has coincided with America's skepticism and withdrawal from the post-1945 world order, which is based on multilateralism. It is self-evident that this will lead to friction. Even if Donald Trump loses November's presidential election, we should not expect matters to revert to how they were before. The world and the US have moved on. Anti-China rhetoric has ratcheted up on both sides of the political divide in the US, as Democratic candidate Joe Biden vies with Trump in his skepticism of Beijing. It is now up to the rest of the world to choose where they want to align in this debate, which is not an easy decision.

— Courtesy Arab News

Briefs

Putin names new governor in protest hit region

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin named a new leader of the Far Eastern region of Khabarovsk from the nationalist LDPR party on Monday after the arrest of its popular governor brought thousands to the streets. Putin sacked Sergei Furgal, who was detained this month on murder charges, and named LDPR lawmaker Mikhail Degtyarev, 39, as his replacement.

A Kremlin decree said Furgal was sacked over a "loss of confidence" in his ability to govern. The arrest of 50-year-old Furgal, who defeated a candidate from the ruling United Russia party to win the governorship in 2018, has sparked daily demonstrations in Khabarovsk, a city of 600,000 on the border with China.

Dreamworld charged over accident deaths

WEB DESK

QUEENSLAND: The operator of Australia's Dreamworld theme park has been charged with safety breaches over a water ride malfunction that killed four people in 2016.

Kate Goodchild, Luke Dorsett, Roozbeh Araghi and Cindy Low died almost instantly when their raft collided with another and overturned, crushing them. A coroner's inquiry later found there were "unfathomable" errors with safety at the park on Queensland's Gold Coast. Authorities have filed three charges against parent company Ardent Leisure.

Each charge carries a maximum penalty of A\$1.5m (£800,000; \$1m) under Queensland's Workplace Health and Safety Act. The collision took place at the end of the Thunder River Rapids ride, an attraction that simulated the experience of white-water rafting.

Visitors bypass Berlin museums

BERLIN: Berlin museums might house the iconic Nefertiti bust, the Ishtar gate of ancient Babylon or Rembrandt masterpieces, but they still trail global counterparts in popularity – and the coronavirus is making things worse.

Millions of euros have been poured into the institutions, yet the 19 museums managed by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (SPK) attracted just 4.2 million visitors last year, while the Louvre alone drew 9.6 million.

Alarmed by lacklustre public interest, Germany is planning a major shake-up after a report commissioned by Chancellor Angela Merkel's government slammed the foundation as dysfunctional, outdated and out of touch. – APP



PHILADELPHIA: Players aiming to reach the ball in a Major League Soccer match between Philadelphia Union and Orlando City SC. – DNA

European Union reaches historic COVID-19 recovery deal

“We did it! Europe is strong. Europe is united,” European Council President Charles Michel said at a press conference Tuesday. “This is a good deal, this is a strong deal, and most importantly, this is the right deal for Europe right now”

DNA

BRUSSELS: After almost five days of fraught discussions, European Union leaders have agreed on a 750 billion euro (almost \$858 billion) stimulus plan to help fund Europe's recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

The deal would focus on providing funding across three pillars: creating reforms to help businesses rebound from the pandemic, rolling out new measures to reform economies over the long haul, and investing to help protect from “future

crises.” It would provide hundreds of billions of dollars in grants and loans to member states.

The agreement came after days of deadlock and fractious talks that were described as some of the most bitterly divided in years.

“We did it! Europe is strong. Europe is united,” European Council President Charles Michel said at a press conference Tuesday. “This is a good deal, this is a strong deal, and most importantly, this is the right deal for Europe right now.” Michel described the occasion as the first time that members of the European



Union were “jointly enforcing our economies against the crisis.” The commission also agreed to a core budget of 1.1

trillion euro (nearly \$1.3 trillion) from 2021-2027.

Commenting on the deal, French President Emmanuel Macron hailed the agreement as a “historic day for Europe,” while Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes said that “the European Union has never before decided to invest so ambitiously in the future.”

There had been bitter rows over some of the terms of the deal during the last few days. The agreement came just hours after Michel had presented a new proposal to political leaders on Monday. The European Union is battling a savage recession triggered by the pandemic, and the hardest-hit countries such as Italy and Spain urgently need fresh economic

relief worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Before Tuesday, any agreement had been thwarted by deep divisions over the overall size of the recovery fund, how much assistance should be given as grants or loans, and the conditions that should be attached.

The European Commission said earlier this month that it expects the EU economy to shrink 8.3% in 2020, considerably worse than the 7.4% slump predicted two months ago. The meeting of the EU top brass is the first major in-person gathering of world leaders since the pandemic started.

Wigan's 12-point penalty to be enforced

LONDON: Wigan's 12-point penalty for entering administration will be deducted this season after the troubled Championship club's final game of the campaign, the English Football League said on Tuesday. Wigan are currently 13th in English football's second tier, but will find themselves in the relegation zone after 46 games should they fail to beat Fulham on Wednesday because of the deduction. The 2013 FA Cup winners, who were placed into administration on July 1, could be relegated even if they win against the Cottagers.

If Charlton or Luton win their final games against Leeds and Blackburn respectively, Wigan would finish in the bottom three. However, Wigan, who last played in the Premier League seven years ago, have appealed against the points penalty and could still be saved from relegation to League One. “In the case of Wigan Athletic the 12-point sporting sanction, as a result of the club entering administration, will apply immediately following the end of the game against Fulham but is subject to appeal,” the EFL said in a statement.

“In the specific case of Wednesday evening's final round of Championship matches for season 2019/20, and any potential impact on divisional standings, relegation will be confirmed for the clubs in 22nd, 23rd and 24th positions in the Championship table following the conclusion of those matches and will be subject to the resolution of any ongoing proceedings.” Wigan's appeal will be heard by an independent disciplinary commission, who will have little time to adjudicate on the matter between the end of this season and the start of the 2020-21 campaign. – APP

UK and EU hold latest talks

LONDON: Britain and the European Union resume talks on Tuesday, with the clock running down to a year-end deadline for a new post-Brexit deal to replace half a century of integration. The latest round of negotiations takes place over three days in the British capital, with stalemate in key areas stoking fears of a no-deal scenario Britain formally left the EU in January, following 47 years in the European project but agreed to a standstill transition until December 31 pending new trade terms.

After the coronavirus pandemic combined with the two sides' entrenched positions to stall progress, London and Brussels last month launched five weeks of intensified negotiations. Prime Minister Boris Johnson in June vowed to add “a bit of oomph” into the gridlocked process, and predicted talks could conclude as early as this month. – APP

Guardiola in ‘respect’ jibe at Arsenal

WEB DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola says he respects Arsenal on the pitch - but “not much off the pitch”.

City are understood to believe Arsenal were a chief instigator behind a collective request by eight Premier League clubs for Cas not to allow a delay to the ban pending appeal.

As the case was decided before the end of the season, no delay was needed.

Some senior figures within the game are annoyed City had their punishment for Financial Fair Play regulation breaches reduced, while the club are angry at the behaviour of some of their rivals. Last week, Guardiola demanded an apology and told clubs to stop “whispering” about City behind their backs.

Chelsea, Burnley, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester United, Tottenham and Wolves were the other seven top-flight clubs involved in the collective approach to Cas. Reflecting on City's 2-0 FA Cup semi-final defeat by Arsenal on Saturday, Guardiola said: “Opponents always deserve my respect and credit. I have all the respect for what Arsenal are on the pitch. Not much off the pitch, but on the pitch, a lot.”

Beckham's Inter Miami eliminated from MLS

ORLANDO: David Beckham's Inter Miami became the first side to be eliminated from Major League Soccer's restart competition after stumbling to a 1-0 defeat to New York City FC. A second-half strike from Libya international Ismael Tajouri-Shradi kept New York's hopes of reaching the knockout rounds alive while condemning Miami to a first round exit from Group A in Orlando. In the night match, Mauricio Pereyra's

70th-minute goal helped Orlando City SC earn a 1-1 draw with Philadelphia Union and capture Group A. The teams are level on points at the top of the group, however, Orlando took first place because of a superior goal difference. Miami's tournament ended on a sour note with US striker Juan Agudelo being sent off in the 90th minute for a crude challenge on New York defender Anton Tinnerholm. – APP

BCCI wants IPL in UAE from Sept

NEW DELHI: India's cricket board is seeking government approval to hold the Indian Premier League, the world's richest cricket tournament, in the United Arab Emirates from September, its chairman told AFP on Tuesday.

The postponement of the Twenty20 World Cup until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic has opened the way for the suspended IPL, which the Board of Control for Cricket in India wants to run from September until early November.

“It will be held in the UAE but first the board will seek permission from the Indian government to stage it there,” IPL chairman Brijesh Patel said. – APP

Blades' Euro dreams rocked by Everton

LONDON: Richarlison rocked Sheffield United's bid to qualify for the Europa League on Monday after sealing a 1-0 win for Everton, while Brighton guaranteed their Premier League survival with a goalless draw against Newcastle.

The Blades were handed a second successive defeat as Brazil forward Richarlison struck early in the second half at Bramall Lane.

Chris Wilder's side remain in eighth place, two points behind seventh-placed Wolves who host Crystal Palace later on Monday.

United's hopes of capping a memorable first season back in the Premier League with a Europa League berth will be over if Wolves beat the Eagles.

“I'm disappointed for the players today. But what you try and do in a season is get your club to overachieve and we have ridiculously overachieved,” Wilder said.

“Top six should never have been in the equation from the minute we set foot into the division. There are a lot of clubs that would swap places with us.” – APP

Juve on brink of ninth straight Serie A title

TURIN (ITALY): Cristiano Ronaldo put Juventus on the brink of a ninth consecutive Italian league title on Monday after he scored twice in a 2-1 win over Lazio to become the first player to hit 50 goals in Serie A, La Liga and the Premier League.

Juventus ended a three-match winless run thanks to Ronaldo's second-half brace that moves them eight points clear of second-placed Inter Milan with four games remaining. Maurizio Sarri's side could win the title on Thursday against lowly Udinese, or on Sunday at home against Sampdoria, depending on their rivals' results this week.

“We are missing four points, only after we have achieved them will we then be able to think about the goal achieved,” said Sarri.

“All the games are difficult now, and in the space of six days, we play three games. So, we must stay focused and think about securing the missing points.”

Ronaldo grabbed the first goal from the penalty spot just after the break and was handed a tap-in three minutes later by teammate Paulo Dybala. – APP

An Overview of the Pakistani Tajik Community

DNA

LARGE populations of ethnic Tajiks and Tajik categories exist in the population of Pakistan, though these may be unrecognizable because they speak Pashto and their identity has remained largely subdued and unrecognised till now. Given below is a breakup of the four significant Tajik communities of Pakistan.

Recent Investigations have highlighted the existence of a previously obscure Tajik kingdom in what now comprises north Pakistan and north-east Afghanistan before the Mughal Empire, and coterminous with the Delhi Sultanate, of which it was a subordinate state engendered by the Ghurid Empire. Sufficient evidence is there to confirm the existence of a sizeable community of Dehqans in the Peshawar Valley, Bajaur, Dir and Swat from Sasanian times and earlier. These were part of the Bactrian Dehqans of Badakhshan, and the adjacent Kunar and Laghman. In this regard, the Shalmani Dehqans are well known. These were Zoroastrians who duly converted to Islam at the hands of the Ghaznavids. A clan from among the Shalmanis was known as “Gabri” – from the pejorative Muslim term for Zoroastrian, Gabr – even long after they accepted Islam. In 1339 a Swati

adventurer went and settled in Kashmir, where he set up the Shah Miri Dynasty of the first Muslim Sultanate. The Swat Sultanate/Gabr/Pakhli Sarkar, in its final form as a vassal kingdom of Kashmir – from 1400 to 1519 – was bounded on the north by the Chitral River, to the west by the Sulaiman Mountain range, to the south by River Kabul and on the east by River Indus.

The Swati Sultanate was brought to an end in 1519 by Babur when he was establishing the Mughal Empire. Earlier, mass Pashtun tribal migrations from Sistan and Kabul towards the Gandhara region had been precipitated by Timurid actions during the 1470s and Babur made use of Yusufzai Pashtun refugees to revolt against the last Sultan of Swat, the decadent Sultan Awais Gabri-Swati who fled north to a remote area of Dir where he and his progeny established their petty fief for about a century, before disappearing from history.

Earlier in the same year, Babur had initially attacked and conquered the Bajaur wilayat of the Swat Sultanate, killing its governor Malik Haider Ali Gabri-Swati and reducing his Gabr Fortress called Gabrkot where 3000 inhabitants of the town inside were massacred. Babur immortalizes the gory details of this action in his world renowned autobiography Baburnama, devoting a full chapter to

them. (Shah Miri Kashmir was in turn conquered in 1586 by Babur's grandson Akbar the Great).

A lot of the Swati ruling class and population who escaped death and subservience were dispersed and fled across the Indus into the Hazara region. Elsewhere, most were forcibly Pashtunised and rapidly assimilated into the tribes of the ever invading flood of Sarabani Pashtun invaders, thus undergoing a change in ethnic identity. Heavy absorption is indicated in tribes and clans such as the Nekpikhel, Malezai and Ranizai sections of the Yusufzais; Salarzai, Mamund, Mohmand, Daudzai, Khesht and so on.

Now, only genetic testing can reveal such absorbed Swati-Shalmani bloodlines. Many other Swatis took on the more conducive identity of astanadars (“clerical elite” classes) who although they speak Pashto, are not traditionally regarded as ethnic Pashtuns. With their takeover of the social system of Peshawar Valley, and their own specific form of intimidation and self-glorification, the new “Pashtun” identity of the society became established.

Only in the inaccessible and backward Mansehra District of the remote Hazara Division, do Swatis still retain their old feudal clout, although their old ethnic awareness as Tajiks has almost totally disappeared. They are thought to number about 1.8 million.

Although their ethnic status has remained decidedly ambiguous in the past 500 years, in the 20th Century in particular Swatis have tried to get recognition as being of Pashtun pedigree, and may have succeeded in the era of Pashtun “internet nationalism” as it doesn't require much to get ingratiated in this manner. Other Pashtunised clans of known Tajik Dehqan origin in the Peshawar Valley and surrounding environs are the Papinkhels, Akhundkhels, Farmulis, Sargani, Behsud and Roghani. Suspected also are the Pashtun Utmankhels, Yusufzai Degankhels and Waziri Degankhels.

Besides indigenous Swatis, and Dehqans who live in Talash Valley, Dir is also home to a large Tajik community of labourers who were recently (within the last century) “imported” here after 1897 by its former ruler the Nawab of Dir – from Parwan and Panjsher across the Durand Line.

They comprise of ahingars (blacksmiths) and kamangars (makers of bows and arrows or armourers). They formerly manufactured armaments for the Nawab's armies. Being poor and landless artisans for the most part, they are still looked down upon as an underclass by the other, indigenous Tajiks such as the Swatis and Dehqans who are better off than them.

These Tajiks however, are fully conscious of their Tajik identity and

proudly flaunt it – even though they are totally Pashtunised. Being poor they are deeply conservative and religious. They are pejoratively referred to by their Swati and other detractors as “Shaarey”, a word meaning “barren” or destitute – which is taken from the Village Shaara where one of their prominent ancestors is buried. Many others, such as Kohistani Dards, Gujjars and destitute Pashtuns of the Malezai tribe are also believed to have joined the ranks of these Tajiks, and adopted this name for themselves.

It is widely held that the Pakistani Taliban revolt of 2009 in the Dir-Swat region was actually a broad based class revolt against Pashtun overlordship, and largely consisted of such poor Tajiks, Gujjars and Swatis. Religion merely furnished it with a suitable ideology where none other existed or was acceptable. The notorious Dir cleric Maulana Sufi Muhammad's Tajik roots are known, while his late son-in-law Maulana Fazlullah who was head of the Pakistani Taliban, belonged to the elitist Nekpikhel clan of Yusufzai Pashtuns – a clan known to comprise of 50% “absorbed” and hidden or “occluded” Swati Tajiks.

There exists a very large community of recent Tajik immigrant arrivals in Kili Kabir, a large village within the environs of Quetta Cantonment in Balochistan Province, Pakistan. They

began emigrating to Quetta from the Kandahar area in the early 20th Century and the process continues to date. Most of these Tajiks are established and wealthy, having arrived here before the creation of Pakistan in 1947. They operate in the lucrative fruit and gemstone trades of Quetta City, and own a media publishing house – and are politically and socially influential and respected. Most of them now speak Pashto, but a sizeable number are also fluent in Persian.

However, many people suspect that some prominent leaders of this community facilitate the obtaining of Pakistani identity papers by Afghan refugees to pass themselves off as “Pakistani” Tajiks related to those of Kili Kabir, thus making it easy for them to obtain Pakistani citizenship on questionable grounds. The fact that there exist rival political pressure groups within this community seems to confirm this.

This is a large Tajik community that has been living in Balochistan for about three centuries. Originally, they were brought here by Nader Shah Afshar, to man the bureaucracy of his ally, the Khan of Kalat. Now an influential feudal community of Balochistan, the Dehwaris speak their own dialect of Persian called Dehwari – but they are otherwise also heavily influenced by the local Balochi and Brahui cultures and languages.

Briefs

Egypt: No new virus cases at 14 hospitals

CAIRO: There have been no new coronavirus cases in the past three days at 14 Egyptian hospitals designated for the isolation of patients. The announcement comes during a decline in the number of cases in Egypt in recent days. Around 600 new cases are being reported daily, with deaths ranging between 50 to 60, according to Egypt's Ministry of Health. As of July 19, 4,302 people have died from the disease and 87,775 have been infected since the outbreak began in the country in February. The hospitals that reported no new cases were El-Nujaila and El-Alamein hospitals in Marsa Matrouh governorate near the Libyan border, as well as El-Gomhoria, Sheikh Zayed and Heliopolis in Cairo. Three hospitals in Ismailia city on the Suez Canal declared that they, too, were free of coronavirus cases: Abu Khalifa Hospital, Ismailia General Hospital and Sadr Hospital. In Menoufia governorate, north Cairo, Shebin El-Koum and Berket El-Sabaa General Hospital and Bagour General Hospital reported the same trend. — APP

S. Korea launches first military satellite

WASHINGTON/SEOUL: South Korea's first military communications satellite was successfully launched into space Monday, Seoul's arms procurement agency said, making the country the world's 10th to own a communications satellite for military purposes only. The Anasis-II satellite lifted off atop a Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket manufactured by U.S. commercial space firm SpaceX from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 5:30 p.m. (U.S. time), according to the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). After separating from the rocket, the satellite successfully communicated with the Toulouse Space Operations Center in the French city of Toulouse at 7:19 p.m. DAPA earlier said the satellite was forecast to separate from the rocket 32 minutes after launch at an altitude of about 630 kilometers above the equator and would try to send its first signal to the ground 18 minutes later. In two weeks, the satellite is expected to reach its orbit of 36,000 km. The South Korean military will take over the system in October after manufacturer Airbus Defense and Space tests its functions and operability, according to DAPA. — APP

Bulgaria PM survives no-confidence motion

SOFIA: Bulgaria's third-term Prime Minister Boyko Borisov survived a no-confidence motion in parliament on Tuesday as anti-corruption protests pushing for his ouster have taken to the streets for almost two weeks. The motion tabled by the opposition Socialists "for an infinite series of corruption scandals" gathered only 102 votes, well short of the necessary majority of 121 votes in the 240-seat parliament. The 61-year-old veteran conservative premier was widely expected to survive the motion, but his troubles may not end here. For thirteen days in a row his cabinet has faced street demonstrations gathering thousands of mostly young people rallying against its perceived favoritism of powerful behind-the-scenes oligarchs. Bulgaria is the EU's poorest member and also ranked as the union's most corruption-prone by Transparency International. In a bid to appease people's anger and meet their calls for change, Borisov made three key ministers — of finance, economy and the interior — declare their willingness to resign last week. However, he postponed a cabinet reshuffle for after the no-confidence vote, promising even more sweeping changes. Despite the protests, Borisov has vowed to complete his third four-year term in office, which ends in March 2021. — APP

FTAs, PTAs: FPCCI suggests strategy to benefit local industry

FPCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar suggested that Pakistan should have entered into Free Trade Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements with only those countries where it has a clear and mutual competitive advantage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry has urged the government to redesign the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with a view to promote the domestic industry of Pakistan, as the government has suffered revenue loss of over Rs. 45 billion during FY 2019-20 due to these agreements signed with different countries. Moreover, the general exemption on imports from China under this agreement has caused revenue

loss of Rs 26.86 billion during this period. FPCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar suggested that Pakistan should have entered into Free Trade Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements with only those countries where it has a clear and mutual competitive advantage. He recommended the government to include maximum finished goods which can be exported to China on tariff line offered by China to ASEAN countries. He demanded that the concerned stakeholders should also be taken on board while framing and finalizing the recommendations in this regard. Referring to the data of the Fed-

eral Board of Revenue, he stated that the government has suffered revenue loss of Rs 45.020 billion during current fiscal year due to the FTAs and PTAs signed with different countries. According to the reports, figures reveal that the general exemption on import from SAARC countries caused revenue loss of Rs 231 million during this period. The general exemption on import from SAARC countries under SAFTA Agreement has revenue impact of Rs1.602 billion. Similarly, the general exemption on import from SAARC countries under SAFTA Agreement caused revenue loss of Rs 15 million.

The general exemption on import from China under the FTA has revenue impact of Rs6.911 billion during 2019-20. The general exemption on import from Malaysia under PTA caused revenue loss of Rs 2.517 billion during this period. Under the exemption on import from Indonesia under Pak-Indonesia PTA caused revenue loss of Rs3.65 billion. Mian Anjum Nisar suggested the government to devise a strategy in the light of impact on domestic industry, convincing other countries to liberalize their import policy by reducing tariff lines and easing sensitive list for Pakistan merchandise. He said that during

the first phase of FTA with China, Pakistan's trade deficit had improved from 2.9 billion dollar to over 12 billion dollars over the last decade. FPCCI President said that local cost of production is already high on account of high tariff of electricity and gas, coupled with import duties on inputs, making the local production uncompetitive. He said that Free Trade Agreements signed with different countries without taking the real stakeholders onboard, are damaging the local industry, as imports of several products under FTA with these countries are subject to zero percent import duty.

Nepal to resume flights

KATHMANDU: Nepal said Tuesday it will resume international commercial flights in mid-August, in a boost for its coronavirus-hit tourism sector. The Himalayan nation shut its airports in late March to combat the spread of the virus, which has so far infected 17,844 people and claimed 40 lives in the country. The shutdown hit just before the peak of the tourism season, when hundreds of mountaineers and trekkers visit Nepal, costing the industry — a key part of the economy — millions of dollars. The decision to restart commercial domestic and international flights from August 17 was taken in a cabinet meeting Monday, Nepal's Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Yogesh Bhattarai said. "The ministry is working on safety protocols for airport management, flight operators and passengers for the purpose," he told AFP. All arriving and departing international passengers would need to have a certificate saying they are not carrying the virus. — APP

Thousands of US workers in 'Strike for Black Lives'

NEW YORK: Thousands of US workers walked out of their jobs across the country Monday for a strike in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and other minority groups which suffer racism. The "Strike for Black Lives" saw employees from a broad range of industries briefly walk off their jobs in a call to end "systemic racism." US media reported that tens of thousands of people in more than 200 cities across the country participated in the strike. Although organizers did not have exact figures on how many people took part, they said around 1,500 janitors demonstrated in San Francisco, and nearly 6,000 nurses from 85 different nursing homes in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut also went on strike, according to The Washington Post. In New York, some 100 people marched outside the Trump International Hotel to demand the adoption of the HEROES Act, legislation that would provide financial aid to households struggling during the coronavirus pandemic. The bill was passed in May by the Democrat-majority House of Representatives but has since been blocked by the Senate, which is controlled by Republicans. — APP

Florida teachers sue to stop school openings

MIAMI: Florida's main teachers union on Monday sued Governor Ron DeSantis and other authorities to stop schools from reopening in August, as the state has become a US epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Florida Education Association, which represents 140,000 teachers, says the state constitution asserts that schools must provide a "safe and secure" environment, but that the COVID-19 resurgence "is remarkable and out of control." Florida reported 10,347 new COVID-19 cases and 90 deaths on Monday, bringing the total death toll to 5,072. More than 9,500 novel coronavirus patients have been hospitalized and just 18 percent of intensive care beds are available, officials say. DeSantis "needs a reality check," said FEA President Fredrick Ingram. "Everyone wants schools to reopen, but we don't want to begin in-person teaching, face an explosion of cases and sickness, then be forced to return to distance learning," he said. The lawsuit calls on DeSantis, state education commissioner Richard Corcoran and the mayor of Miami county to desist "from unnecessarily and unconstitutionally forcing millions of public-school students and employees to report to unsafe brick and mortar schools." — APP



WASHINGTON: Members of Azerbaijani community holding a demonstration against Armenian aggression against innocent Azerbaijani people. — DNA

Trump threatens to send more officers

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has threatened to send more federal law enforcement officers to major US cities to control ongoing protests. Mr Trump on Monday criticised a number of cities run by "liberal Democrats", including Chicago and New York, saying their leaders were afraid to act. He said officers sent to Oregon had done a "fantastic job" restoring order amid days of protests in Portland. Local officials say the federal officers are making matters worse. State leaders have demanded Mr Trump remove the personnel from Portland, accusing him of escalating the situation as a political stunt in an election year. Speaking at the White House on Monday, Mr Trump reiterated his call for law and order.

Oxford's vaccine triggers immune response

WEB DESK

LONDON: Results from trials involving three different coronavirus vaccines released Monday, all showing positive results, with evidence the vaccines can produce immune responses that would be expected to protect people against infection. They all also appeared to be safe, although it will take studies with more people to show how safe they really are and whether they can

prevent infection. Early results of a closely watched Phase 1/2 trial published in The Lancet suggest a coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca is safe and induces an immune response. However, researchers stressed more study is needed to know whether the vaccine protects people against the virus. Phase 2 results for one vaccine candidate made by Chinese company CanSino Biologics were also published in the medical journal The

Lancet and early results from Phase 1/2 trials of the vaccine made by Pfizer and BioNTech were released in a pre-print paper that has not yet been peer-reviewed. The Oxford vaccine prompted an antibody response within 28 days and a T-cell response within 14 days, according to the results published Monday. Neutralizing antibodies — so-called because they can neutralize the virus — were detected in most participants after one shot, and in all of them after two.

US couple charged for possessing guns

WASHINGTON: A US couple who became internet infamous for drawing an assault rifle and a handgun on protesters outside their Missouri mansion were charged Monday with a felony. In a viral video, McCloskey and his wife Patricia McCloskey, both lawyers, stand barefoot in their garden in St Louis, Missouri, on June 28 as anti-racism protesters marched down a private street to demonstrate in front of the mayor's house. McCloskey, 63, carried an assault rifle, and his wife, 61, was waving a handgun. "Today my office filed charges against Mark and Patricia McCloskey following an incident involving peaceful, unarmed protesters on June 28th. It is illegal to wave weapons in a threatening manner at those participating in nonviolent protest," the attorney for St Louis, Kimberly Gardner, in a statement. She added that she was open to letting the couple participate in one of the circuit attorney's office's diversion programs that are "designed to reduce unnecessary involvement with the courts." — APP

Egypt denies destroying ancient cemeteries

DNA

CAIRO: The Egyptian government on Monday denied claims circulating on social media that ancient Islamic cemeteries and artifacts were being destroyed to make way for a bridge-building project. Antiquities dating back five centuries in Cairo's City of the Dead were among treasured items online posters said had been wrecked. However, in a statement, head of the Islamic, Coptic and Judaic Antiquities Sector, Osama Talaat, said that the rumors were "completely untrue" and images

of tombs that had appeared on social networking sites were not historic registered monuments. He added that although the pictured tombs were from more recent times, the secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities had still ordered the formation of a scientific technical committee to examine the tombstones and look into the possibility of displaying some of them in museums. An online campaign, launched on Facebook, has been critical of the scheme to build a bridge through the Mamluk Desert Cemetery.

Trump says wearing mask 'patriotic'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, who for months refused to encourage mask wearing as a way to combat the coronavirus, on Monday tweeted a picture of himself with his face covered and touted his patriotism. "We are United in our effort to defeat the Invisible Virus, and many people say that it is Patriotic to wear a face mask when you can't socially distance," Trump wrote. "There is nobody more Patriotic than me, your favorite President!" — APP

Uzbek President reviews the response to COVID-19 in the country

The President noted that starting today, every medical facility that works with patients with corona will have cash desks of commercial banks that will pay doctors' salaries for a 14-day period

DNA

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has begun the working week with a deep critical analysis of the work being carried out in the country to counter coronavirus infection. Thus, the Head of the state has chaired a videoconference and considered the current situation with the pandemic in Tashkent and Tashkent region and measures to stabilize it. Addressing participants, the Head of the state noted that the situation remains difficult. In particular, 1,218 out of 2,136 (57 percent) cases detected in the country over the past four days, occur in the city of Tashkent and Tashkent region. The procedure for admission of all patients with suspected coro-

navirus to medical institutions without documents, confirming the presence of infection, based on clinical signs of lung inflammation and respiratory failure, has been determined. 7 more dispensaries with 850 beds for patients with suspected COVID-19 were created in addition to 16 existing clinics in Tashkent. The issue of additional payment to medical staff of these clinics in the amount of 6 percent of monthly salary for each working day has been resolved. The President noted that starting today, every medical facility that works with patients with coronavirus will have cash desks of commercial banks that will pay doctors' salaries for a 14-day period. Hospitals for patients have been provided with an additional 285 artificial ventilation devices, 155



respiratory support devices, 140 oxygen concentrators and 200 functional beds. A 500-place distribution center is being created at Uzexpocentre National Exhibition Complex to provide first aid to patients with suspected coronavirus. Private clinics are also allowed to provide medical care to such patients, and their list is currently being compiled.

A procedure has been established in accordance with which district departments of the Agency for Sanitary-Epidemiological Wellbeing send results of PCR analysis for coronavirus not to the republican body of the agency, but directly to examined ones, which will reduce waiting time for the results of tests. Working conditions of operators at Tashkent Ambulance Station have been improved, and the number of operators working in one shift has been increased from 40 to 100. An additional power line has been connected to the station, and the number of crews increased to 250. In addition, 100 Damas ambulances were allocated for Tashkent region ambulance service, 25 of which are distributed locally. There are 906 beds for treatment and monitoring persons

with suspected coronavirus, 210 beds for those with a confirmed diagnosis, and a reserve of 350 beds has been prepared in Tashkent region. It is planned to allocate the first 10 billion UZS to create a reserve of 49 types of medicines for treatment of patients with coronavirus. At the meeting, it was noted that the dial-up time to the phone number 103 has been reduced from 1.5 minutes to 15 seconds, as well as the most experienced operators are working during the receipt of the largest number of calls (from 18:00 to 24:00). In addition, it was noted that there is a non-systemic organization of work at places to contain the pandemic. In particular, primary healthcare unit, i.e. family clinics and rural medical centers, has not been switched to 24-hour operation.

Briefs

SC suspends
PHC order

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has suspended the Peshawar High Court (PHC) order for release of 196 alleged terrorists. A three-member bench headed by Justice Mushir Alam passed this direction while hearing the case in Islamabad on Tuesday. The court has sought a record of the cases of these 196 alleged terrorists from the federal government and issued notices to all parties. It is pertinent to mention here that the military courts had sentenced these 196 people for their involvement in terrorism. Earlier on June 16, the two-member bench comprising PHC Chief Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth and Justice Mohammad Naeem Anwar set aside the conviction orders after hearing 300-plus cases of terror suspects convicted by the military courts. The military courts had awarded death sentences, life imprisonment and ten years imprisonment to them. The court allowed the appeals of 200 petitioners and ordered their release from jail. In its short order, the PHC bench said that the accused were convicted on the ground of their confessional statements while they were not provided the opportunity of fair trial.

CJP not
happy with
NDMA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed on Tuesday expressed anger over non-submission of important documents by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) while hearing a suo motu case pertaining to coronavirus. Justice Gulzar Ahmed reprimanded the attorney general and said the NDMA did not submit the required documents despite being directed thrice by the apex court. NDMA Chairman Lt. Gen. Muhammad Afzal has failed to satisfy the court, he said. "What is this non-serious behavior? Shouldn't we send contempt notice to the NDMA chief? It looks like the NDMA should be dissolved. The institution must prove transparency through documents instead of verbal claims only." Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan asked about the details of chartered plane and its expenditures. The chief justice remarked that payment was made to the company which had no link with the matter. Apparently, Pakistani embassy in China gave cash payment, the CJP added.

Anti-polio
drive
continues

DNA

LAHORE: Special anti-polio drive on Tuesday entered second day in three districts of Punjab. According to the spokesperson of anti-polio programme, as many as 12,840 children were vaccinated against the crippling disease in Lahore, 75,000 in Faisalabad and 17,000 children in Attock on the first day of the campaign. "Remaining children would be vaccinated in coming days", the spokesperson added. The campaign kicked-off after suspension of four months on Monday in selected districts across the country. Under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and following the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) guidelines and Polio Oversight Board recommendations, the Pakistan Polio Eradication programme had suspended all Polio related activities in the last week of March, except surveillance. During the campaign, social distance and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is being ensured in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. Masks, sanitizers, infrared thermometers have been provided to the polio workers. The decision to revive the campaigns was taken in consultation with all provinces. The formal approval to resume anti-polio campaign had been sought from the technical advisory group in June.

SCO a reliable platform for forming
a polycentric world order: Norov

Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretariat, Beijing, China gives an exclusive interview to CGSS; says Belt and Road project to ensure peace and prosperity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretariat, Beijing, China gave an exclusive interview to CGSS. It was for the first time that he gave an interview especially for Pakistan's audience after being appointed as Secretary General SCO. CGSS has the distinct honor of conducting this interview. The interview was conducted by Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS. The interview was focused to discuss Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a viable forum for enhanced mutual development and Trans regional integration. In a question asked regarding the development of SCO since Vladimir Norov took office he mentioned that, since assuming office in January 2019, he, along with his colleagues, has been taking steps for the implementation of the SCO's basic documents and the important agreements concluded by the Heads of State of the member countries. He also commented that the Pakistani side in the SCO exercises and activities aimed at maintaining stability in the Organization's area of responsibility. It has become global and

diversified, as well as became possible to establish close ties with the relevant UN structures and with other international organizations, for example, ASEAN and the OSCE and the Paris Pact Initiative. Moreover, he expressed to continue and deepen SCO's cooperation with our Pakistani counterparts. In general, in the last year and a half of this year, the work has been directed effectively on the development of practical areas of cooperation, especially in trade, economic, transport & logistics, infrastructure, scientific & technological, innovation and information & communication spheres, including the development of small and medium-sized businesses. On discussing the role of SCO in uniting the member states on a single platform to discuss current common security challenges, in particular, unconventional security threats, His Excellency, Vladimir Norov stated that SCO has demonstrated to the world an effective mechanism of cooperation, in which there is no place for closed "exclusive" clubs and dividing lines, and multilateralism and cooperation are seen as the only way to protect themselves from global threats and ensure stable development and well-being for all. It is no coincidence that we use the term "SCO family", which



applies not only to member states but also to our observers and dialogue partners.

When asked about the strategy to strike a balance between the trends of globalization and regionalization in today's world for expansion, SCO Secretary General highlighted that according to preliminary estimates, the total GDP of the SCO member countries over the past year amounted to 22.5 % of the global figure (18.4 trillion us dollars). This figure is expected to reach 35-40% of the world's runway by 2030. The SCO acts as a reliable platform for fruitful cooperation in the interests of forming a polycentric world order.

While discussing the new potential areas that should be included in the SCO's scope for future

work, Vladimir Norov stated that, the SCO strives to go in the same rhythm with new trends in the world. Determining the strategy, prospects, and priorities for the development of multidisciplinary cooperation is the prerogative of the Council of Heads of SCO union. Information and communication technologies have great potential not only in the economy and trade but also in providing the population with accessible and high-quality health services. Distance learning should also be one of the promising areas of cooperation within the SCO. The online learning format provides a wide range of opportunities and perspectives for changing and improving educational systems for which a critical situation creates

a forced environment.

Highlighting the active involvement of Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the One Belt One Road initiative, the Secretary General of SCO stressed that the SCO countries cannot stay away from the large-scale economic initiative unfolding in the region. The main routes of the Silk Road Economic Belt lead from China through Central Asia, Russia to Europe, as well as from China through Central and West Asia to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. Ensuring the long-term sustainable development of countries and regions along the Belt and Road objectively necessitates increased transport and communication interconnectivity and interconnected infrastructures, which is particularly important in overcoming the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the global challenge of dealing with COVID-19 and role of international cooperation including SCO, His Excellency Vladimir Norov stated that, the SCO advocates effective engagement with WHO, other international organizations and associations in the fight against coronavirus infection. Meetings of Health Ministers and Heads of Services responsible for the health and epidemiological well-being of countries will be

held in the near future.

Discussing the problems occurring in the functioning of SCO and how can they be addressed by SCO member states, the Secretary of SCO highlighted that the main security challenge for the Organization is the continued fight against international terrorism and extremism, and the illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons, ensuring regional peace, and promoting the work of the UN and other sought-after international organizations. He emphasized that the SCO's international credibility has improved significantly in recent years, cementing its status as a leading multilateral structure in the region and the world.

In his message for youth, he stated that we are now focusing more attention towards the youth of our nations including Pakistan. We have organized their visits to various companies in Beijing, China including Ali Baba.

He thanked Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad for organizing the interview and mentioned that the SCO Secretariat is always ready to share regular news and information with the Pakistani mass media on the important activities of the SCO.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa addressing Corps Commanders conference. – DNA

Pakistanis to benefit from 3G, 4G services

DNA

BEIJING: People living in the far flung areas of Pakistan, mainly the females will largely benefit from 3G and 4G services, said Chinese scholar Prof. Zhou Kong, senior Fellow of Chongyang Institute for Financial Study of Renmin University. In an article published by China Economic Net on Tuesday, he quoted Pakistani Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Aminul Haque

as having said that 3G and 4G services will be provided soon to far-flung areas of Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. The article says, right now the government of Pakistan was committed to promoting the country's technological capacity to develop a globally competitive IT sector and industry. As the minister put it, the project would meet the objective of providing infrastructure in order to ensure access and connectivity for people, provide broadband services to the locals, im-

prove their life standard, create job opportunities, empower women and so on. Some people might not understand why the project may help Pakistani women a lot. We know that the phenomenon of male superiority still exists in Pakistan. The article added: Although there have been a large number of female military people, female medical workers, female journalists, female judicial workers, female scholars, and policewomen in Pakistan, women are still not encouraged to appear in public

places. However, online work driven by 3G and 4G can prevent women from contacting people face to face in public. Relatively speaking, for Pakistan, women's participation in online employment is and will be more acceptable. The federal government now decided to subsidy Rs 650 million, and about two million people may benefit from it. To a certain degree, it has successfully removed pay-wall restriction on coverage of COVID-19. But popularizing 3G and 4G in Pakistan has never been

an easy job. Take online class as an example. On March 13, Pakistan announced the closure of all educational institutions following the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. The federal and provincial governments encouraged online classes long ago, but it was very difficult to implement. Many areas in Balochistan are not equipped with fiber optic lines. Nine out of 32 districts are completely without mobile internet services, as the internet was shut down due to security reasons.

Dr. Mirza says
medicines prices
cannot be increased

DNA

KARACHI: Refuting the increase in the medicine prices, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Zafar Mirza has said that talks are underway with the pharmaceutical companies over hike in prices of medicine.

"Without notification from the ministry, medicine prices cannot be jacked-up", Dr Zafar Mirza said while talking to a private television channel. The SAPM said that prices are reviewed every year after budget and talks are underway with the pharmaceutical companies in this context.

It was reported last week that the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) had approved an increase in prices of medicines up to 10 percent. According to the notification issued on Saturday, the regulator had allowed pharmaceutical companies to increase prices of their lifesaving drugs by up to 7pc and other drugs by up to 10 percent. The decision to raise drug

prices had been taken in line with the consumer price index (CPI).

Earlier in January, the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) had notified reduction in prices of 89 medicines on directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan after the federal cabinet reduced the prices in its meeting.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza said the prices of several life-saving drugs had also been reduced. Meanwhile, Dr Zafar Mirza has said the testing capacity for coronavirus is being further enhanced in the country. He said the death ratio of coronavirus patients remained low in the country due to better arrangements made by the government in this regard. He said it was good thing that the number of COVID-19 positive cases have also declined.

However, he said, the people should follow the standard operating procedure (SOPs) to combat the virus. The SAPM said the government would ensure the implementation of SOPs to control coronavirus.

Chinese doctor's
skill, care win heart
of Pakistani patient

DNA

CHENGDU: "Chinese doctors and nurses are great! Thank you very much! Long live China-Pakistan friendship! I love China!" said a Pakistani Farzana Rizwan and her families in China when presenting a silk banner to the medical staff of Sichuan Integrative Medicine Hospital (SIMH). According to Gwadar Pro on Tuesday, 38-year-old Farzana and her families

live in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. In June, Farzana was admitted to hospital for gallbladder stone. Zhu Zaiyang, a senior doctor of SIMH, carefully inquired Farzana's medical history and symptoms and then decided to perform laparoscopic cholecystectomy for her. However, before the operation, Farzana was worried about the surgery effect, risks, and complications after the surgery. To ease her pressure, Dr

Zhu told her the technical method of laparoscopic cholecystectomy is mature and the risks is controllable. Dr Zhu also shared with her the previous successful cases. After winning Farzana's trust, Dr Zhu made an optimal nursing and recovery plan for her. Considering the daily habits of Farzana, Dr Zhu also arranged a female team for her examination, treatment and nursing, which touched her families deeply. Farzana had the surgery on June 20. She was discharged from hospital upon recovery on June 28, thanks to the sound treatment of Dr Zhu's medical team. Farzana said, "I was taken good care of by doctors and nurses at SIMH. I am very appreciated for that. Therefore, Farzana insisted on presenting a silk banner for Dr Zhu's team to express her heartfelt gratitude. For the occasion, Farzana and her families especially learnt how to speak these expressions in Chinese, the report added.

Dr Asim
allowed to
travel abroad

DNA

KARACHI: An accountability court of Karachi on Tuesday again allowed former petroleum minister Dr Asim Hussain to fly abroad on medical grounds.

Dr Asim has been allowed to fly London and remain there for a month for his medical treatment. The court has directed the former federal minister to return to the country latest by August 25. It is pertinent to mention here that Dr Asim Hussain was permitted to go abroad for medical treatment by the NAB court on November 17, 2018. An accountability court in 2018 had indicted Dr Hussain, ex-petroleum secretary Ejaz Chaudhry and others in an over Rs 460 billion corruption reference. Dr Hussain was taken into custody on August 26, 2015 by Rangers on different corruption charges. Dr Asim faced charges of misusing his authority for getting plots allotted fraudulently and encroaching upon state land for expansion of Dr Ziauddin Hospital/Trust, money laundering, illegal gains, kickbacks, commission through fertilizer cartel for illegal curtailment of gas for exploitative price hike and defrauding people in the name of charity hospital.

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