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European Union teams with Pakistani singer for COVID 19 video

Pakistan condemns restrictions imposed by India in IOK

Australia envoy wishes Pakistanis on Eid-ul-Adha

Briefs

Australian envoy wishes Pakistanis on Eid

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Dr Geoffrey Shaw sends his warmest wishes to Pakistanis celebrating Eid-ul-Adha this week. In a special Eid message, he said, "I send very warm wishes to all Muslims in Pakistan, Australia and around the world who are celebrating Eid ul-Adha. I know that Eid is usually a time for great celebration with family and friends. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it many challenges, and we will not be able to gather in celebration as we have before. Yet, as Eid ul-Adha commemorates the value of sacrifice and service, within this sacred holiday we take heart in the opportunity to recommit in full spirit and joy to our families and our communities. This message of community is one that resonates across faith and creed."

PAF message of Eid

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Directorate of Flight Safety, Pakistan Air Force has issued a public service message on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha as an awareness campaign for safe disposal of animal offals and remains. The message states that the carcasses and remains of sacrificial animals dumped near PAF Bases can attract a large number of big as well as small birds, making them a potential hazard to the PAF aircraft and aircrew, especially during take-off and landing. The birds strike can cause emergency situations, and damaging the aircraft as well as causing loss of precious lives and property on ground. The message also urges the people to pack the animal offal and leftovers in garbage bags and put them at the designated places.

NAB to seize vehicles

DNA

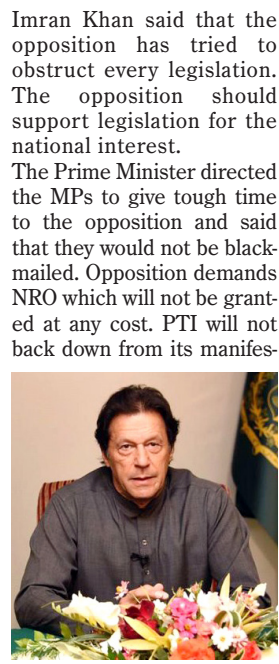
ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has decided to seize vehicles of former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari in Toshakhana case. According to details, the anti-graft watchdog has frozen the ownership of co-chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Asif Zardari's three vehicles including two BMW and one Lexus car.

No NRO in return for legislation

PM Imran Khan says FATF legislation is necessary of Pakistan

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken a firm stand and clarified that legislation related to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is necessary for Pakistan and no NRO will be given in return for legislation in the national interest. According to details, a meeting of the parliamentary party was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Imran Khan in which he apprised the members of the importance of legislation in Parliament. Addressing the members, he said that we are correcting the mistakes of the past while the opposition is using the forum of Parliament to save its politics.



Imran Khan said that the opposition has tried to obstruct every legislation. The opposition should support legislation for the national interest. The Prime Minister directed the MPs to give tough time to the opposition and said that they would not be blackmailed. Opposition demands NRO which will not be granted at any cost. PTI will not back down from its manifesto. If we did that, it would be a disaster, he added. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Imran Khan directed National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chairman to reach Karachi immediately to start the clean up drive in the city in the aftermath of the rain. Prime Minister also asked Pakistan Army to extend help in cleaning up the city in the wake of recent torrential rains. In his message on Twitter, PM Imran said: "I have asked the NDMA Chairman to go to Karachi immediately and start the clean up in the aftermath of the rain." "I have asked the Pak army to also help in cleaning up the city," PM Imran said in his tweet. I have asked the Pak army to also help in cleaning up the city.

America provides 100 more ventilators

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In partnership, Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority and the United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), are working together to fight COVID-19 by contributing a second shipment of 100 respiratory ventilators. The ventilators arrived in Islamabad on July 28 and will be deployed in hospitals across Pakistan. The arrival of these ventilators delivers on President Donald Trump's promise to Prime Minister Imran Khan to stand with the people of Pakistan and bring additional critically needed supplies and support to Pakistan's urgent response to the pandemic. The first 100 ven-

tilators arrived on July 3 and have already been delivered to hospitals and healthcare facilities throughout Pakistan. "The United States is a proud partner with the Government of Pakistan to help stem the tide of this deadly pandemic and these ventilators will help with that fight," said Ambassador Paul W. Jones. The ventilators can also

be used to provide non-invasive respiratory therapy for patients before they become critically ill and help avoid the need for more extreme care. In addition, these ventilators can help treat a number of other respiratory ailments outside of the COVID-19 virus, including pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).



Pak lauds Afghan govt, Taliban's ceasefire

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday welcomed an announcement by Taliban for a three-day ceasefire on the occasion of Eidul Azha and a similar reciprocal statement by the Government of Afghanistan, terming it "a positive development". "We believe this is a positive development towards advancing the goal of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, and hope that further steps will be taken to implement the US-Taliban Peace Agreement leading to Intra-Afghan negotiations," a Foreign Office statement here said.

Taliban to release more prisoners by Eid

DNA / STAFF REPORT

KABUL: Taliban's political spokesman Suhail Shaheen, on Wednesday night, said that the Taliban will release the remaining government prisoners of the 1,000 pledged by Eid to show goodwill. "The other side must also complete the process of releasing the pledged 5,000 detainees in accordance with the Doha Agreement, and the list, in order to facilitate the start of intra-Afghan talks after Eid," Shaheen said. 25 government forces detainees were released by the Taliban in Baghlan and Logar provinces.



ISLAMABAD: Korean Ambassador Kwak Sung-kyu handing over documents to UNHCR representative donating USD one million for Afghan refugees, living in Pakistan. - DNA

Korea donates 1 mln dollars to empower Afghan refugees

Korean Ambassador Kwak Sung-kyu commended the people and the Government of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for four decades

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: The Korean government and UNHCR are working hand-in-hand and making joint efforts to empower Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Korea will contribute 1 million dollars to a new UNHCR project that will strengthen the capacity and resilience of underprivileged refugees, based on the Letter of Understand-

(LOU) signed between the Korean government and UNHCR in Islamabad on Thursday. The one-year project will benefit some 100,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan by providing livelihoods assistance and community-based protection. Speaking at signing ceremony in Islamabad, Korean Ambassador Kwak Sung-kyu commended the people and the Government of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for four decades. "Korea

is stepping up its efforts to support refugees in the spirit of burden and responsibility-sharing. We are hopeful that this aid will be instrumental in empowering young refugees and help make them self-reliant," he added. Ms. Noriko Yoshida, UNHCR Representative in Pakistan, welcomed Korea's valuable contribution, noting that Korea's support will strengthen UNHCR's response and resolve to

protect and assist all those in need. "This project will help many refugees stand on their own two feet," she said. The project will enable refugees, especially youth, to establish small businesses by providing them with agricultural and vocational training. It will also enhance the capacity of refugee volunteers so that they are better equipped to help the refugee community in Pakistan respond to their needs.

Havelian-Thakot highway completed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The whole line of Havelian-Thakot of the Karakoram Highway Phase II (KKH) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been opened to traffic, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The project is now stands completed with an opening ceremony of its Class II Highway section, Mansehra-Thakot. Mahmood Khan, Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said, "This mega road project would prove to be the backbone of the country's economy and provide employment opportunities to a large portion of the population." The 79-kilometer-long Class II Highway Mansehra-Thakot and the Havelian-Mansehra expressway section, launched in November 2019, form the 118 kilometers Havelian-Thakot, Karakoram Highway, the only overland connection between China and Pakistan at present, was built with fund from China during 1966-1978.

No reason to keep Pak in grey list: Qureshi

Shahzad Waseem says the UN had mentioned in a report that India was involved in terrorism in its neighbouring countries

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi Thursday said Pakistan had carried out the legislation to move itself from the grey to white list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Speaking in the Senate, he said, "Pakistan has completed all the phases of the process and now there is no reason to keep it in the grey list." He said the Parliament had amended the Anti-Terrorism Act and the United Nations Security Council Act and now the Asia Pacific Group would analyse the report to be sent by Pakistan. Then the report would be considered in the plenary of FATF in October, which would decide to put Paki-

stan in the white list or vice versa. There were no reasons now to keep Pakistan in the grey list, he viewed. The minister thanked the opposition parties, including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan Peoples Party and Jamaat-e-Islami for supporting the government in the passage of two bills related to the FATF. If Pakistan were included in the white list, it credit would go to both the opposition and treasury benches, he asserted. He said the Senate foiled the designs of India, which wanted to push Pakistan from the grey list to the black one to create economic difficulties for it. The effort of government was to bring Pakistan in the white list, he added.

Elections will be held on time: Shibli



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said the next general elections will be held on time despite the opposition's efforts of early polls and those who committed corruption will be held accountable. The federal minister called on Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar in Lahore on Thursday. The present government is ensuring transparency and merit at all levels, Shibli Faraz affirmed. Minister for Information said opposition's agenda is only protection of personal interests and they do not care about the country and nation. Punjab Governor said the government is taking practical steps to make the country economically strong and indiscriminate accountability is guarantee of development and prosperity of country.

Farewells 2020; new arrivals and yet no diplomatic festivity

EXCLUSIVE

AB KHAN

IT will not be erroneous to say that life of a diplomat is no different than life of a vagabond. Living in different environments, adopting to different culture and traditions and then moving on to another destination for the same. It is a given fact that posting period of diplomats is always numbered and their options to choose their posting stations, limited. It is a norm which is followed in general by all the foreign services carrier diplomats, irrespective of the fact which country one belongs. Of course it differs from station to station and also rules of the game change as per circumstances. The Covid-19 pandemic, no doubt hampered all the diplomatic activities in the capital where seminars, national day receptions, armed forces day celebrations were order of the day. Gone are the days when sirens were buzzing, announcing the arrival of the Chief Guest to cut the cake at the national day receptions, beeline of cars with fluttering flags waiting to navigate through

the gates of Serena and Marriot hotels and long queue's of Pakistani guests being fized at the security gate.. those were the days my friend. The only diplomatic activity these days is the Webinar meet up from time to time. Like, it is a myth that babies for born usually in the night, there is no denying of the fact that in Pakistan we see diplomats completing their posting tenure in summer season. This time too it is no different. The good-bye season is here but the farewells are all in-housed. Diners, luncheons and cocktails parties are weighed as per the popularity ratio of the outgoing diplomat. Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Kingdom of Spain, Fernando Maria Giron Pascual too has been busy saying adieu as his next posting orders have marched in. Fernando, who has spent more than two years in Islamabad, was posted from Kiev, Ukraine and now leaving for Rome, Italy, on his next assignment. Interesting while discussing age of retirement, he informed that very recently the retirement age in Spain has been extended to 70 years. It came as a big surprise to all the guests except for the councilor from the Embassy of

Egypt who proudly announced, "We retire at 65". As the retirement discussion prolonged and the debate on pros and cons of retirement took its toll, everyone agreed that when the rules change in the middle of one's career, it is not good news. It jeopardizes the post-retirement plan, career opportunities go topsy-turvy and promotions are held back leaving a big question mark on "Career planning". One such good recent example to quote was of the last Hungarian ambassador to Pakistan, Istvan Szabo. It was during his stay in Islamabad that the rules changed and the four years posting tenure turned into 5 years, informed the ambassador in one of his chats to the writer. His retirement age was inching close so he requested to let him stay for two more years till his retirement which was agreed. Interestingly, after retirement, ambassador Szabo was given one year extension and so he ended up serving for 8 years as ambassador of Hungry to Pakistan. For Bruno Vandecasteele, First secretary, Embassy of Belgium it was his first posting as a diplomat. The young diplomat is now leaving for Stockholm

Sweden as Deputy Head of Mission after spending more than 3 years in Islamabad and wearing more than one hat during his posting here in Islamabad. He was looking after political affairs, economic affairs, human rights and public affairs in addition to academic cooperation. The couple was quite popular and one could find them in most of the private parties. Bruno always spoke highly of the touristic sites of Northern Pakistan and his visits to Sakdro and Hunza in particular. Sebastien Cartier, Higher Education Attaché, Embassy of France in Pakistan said good bye after serving four years in Islamabad. Sebastien too was much focused and always worked around prompting Pakistani student's interest in academia. He was very much abreast of Higher Education commission, its working style, hierarchy and even bureaucratic hurdles. Sebastian could speak in length on the topic of education in Pakistan whenever the discussion came up. During his tenure in Pakistan, many Pakistani students were facilitated for higher education studies in France including professional degrees and PhD's. Yuji Tokita Counselor, embassy of Japan too left Islamabad in summer this

year. Basically in charge of Economic Affairs, Tokita used to host many Pakistani media and government officials at his house and the menu used to be all Pakistani. An ardent love of Biryani, Tokita was very open minded asking media friends for suggestions on how to improve business relations and trade between the two countries. His favorite topic of discussion was export of Pakistani Mangoes to Japan for which he tried to increase the quota during his stay and the Olympics 2020 in Tokyo which were postponed due to Covid-19. The discussions around the farewells are of course Covid-19 and it is interesting to do comparisons with different countries experience and how they dealt with it to begin with. Yusuke Shindo, the Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan explained why Japan, a country which is number one in the world when it comes to older adults managed to survive Covid-19 pandemic is because, wearing masks, washing hands, using sanitizers is a norm which is followed by everyone in Japan. "Hygiene is engraved in a Japanese person soon after birth", he informs while giving his input to the discussion.

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Briefs

Virus situation in Punjab improving, says Yasmin

SIALKOT: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid has said that COVID-19 pandemic situation in the province is improving, as the number of coronavirus positive cases are decreasing gradually.

Talking to the media here at the inaugural ceremony of a Level-3 free laboratory for coronavirus patients tests here on Thursday, she said the number of coronavirus patients had also decreased in Sialkot district. She said that 19 districts of the province were now free-of-coronavirus pandemic and so far about 92,000 cases had been reported in the province.

She disclosed that PC-1 of a mother and child hospital of 200-bed in Sialkot had been finalised while the project would be completed in Rs 4 billion.

She said the government would construct hospitals in five districts, adding that 50 per cent seats of doctors were lying vacant when the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had taken over the charge. During the last over two years, the PTI government recruited 15,000 doctors.

She said the government increased salaries of doctors and issued 7.2 million Sehat Cards. - APP

CCOE reviews status of energy sector decisions

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) on Thursday reviewed the implementation status of the cabinet decisions on the energy sector. The CCoE meeting chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar discussed the decisions regarding the circular debt reporting format, competitive marketplace for electricity-development plan, capacity charges of government owned power plants, fuel cost optimization of power plants, and governance reforms in power sector.

The committee also reviewed the status of bankable feasibility study covering technical, commercial and financial aspects to connect Thar Coal Mines with suitable station on Mirpurkhas - Khokhropar section of Pakistan.

Further modus operandi of both the initiatives will be discussed in the next meeting of the CCoE.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Petroleum Nadeem Babar, SAPM on Mineral Resources Shahzad Qasim and official of various divisions. - APP

Govt working to root out corruption: Buzdar

LAHORE: The PTI government was working tirelessly to root out corruption from the country.

This was stated by Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar in a statement issued here on Thursday.

He asserted that the incumbent government had promoted the norm of transparency in government affairs and expressed satisfaction that the PTI's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption had yielded positive results.

The government had taken several measures to eliminate corruption and promote a culture of merit and transparency, he said. The credit of decreasing corruption and promotion of the culture of transparency went to the incumbent government, the CM added.

During the previous tenures, corruption and plunder ravaged the country and corrupt elements took personal benefits. There was no room for corrupt elements in the new Pakistan as a transparent Pakistan was the agenda of the incumbent government, he said. It was satisfying that transparent policies of the PTI-led government were also acknowledged internationally, Usman Buzdar said. - APP



LAHORE: Citizens in a big number at Lahore railway station heading to their native cities ahead of Eid. - DNA

Covid-19 cases rate declining in country, says President

The president said corona cases rate is declining in the country due to following of precautionary measures and government's prudent policies and public cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi says by having overcome Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan would emerge as a stronger nation. Addressing a ceremony in the honour of Corona Health Workers at Aiwan-e-Sadr, he termed these frontline workers as heroes of nation who had offered COVID-19

related duties at hospitals across the country. The president said corona cases rate is declining in the country due to following of precautionary measures and government's prudent policies and public cooperation.

While speaking high of the services of Pakistan Baitul Mal and Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme, the president said it gave



the people a sense of solidarity in the hour of distress.

Earlier, the president also distributed shields among the family members of martyred health workers and Eid gifts among those serving COVID-19 related duties.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Social Safety and Poverty Alleviation, Dr Sania Nishtar said during the pandemic, government had played

remarkable role to strengthen health sector by enhancing testing capacity from 450 per day to 80,000 per day, increasing number of laboratories from three to 128, training of 100,000 health workers and addition of 2,000 ICU beds.

While highlighting Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme, she said it would benefit almost half of country's population.



LAHORE: Vendors waiting for customers at Shah Pur Kaanjra cattle market. - DNA

Big decisions to be made in next 4-5 months, says Fawad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry has said the next four to five months will be crucial as Prime Minister Imran Khan will be making major decisions. Speaking to private channel on Thursday, the federal minister said that the two special assistants to the prime minister

who had tendered their resignation amid criticism in the backdrop of great public scrutiny over the matter of dual nationalities - have already made their stance on the issue known. A day earlier, Tania Aidrus and Dr Zafar Mirza tendered their resignation from their posts as the special assistants to the prime minister (SAPM) on Digital Pakistan and National Health, respectively, which

were accepted by the prime minister. Chaudhry said that Aidrus resigned due to her NGO which had raised objections from critics who had alleged that there was a conflict of interest. Speaking about Dr Mirza, he said that when it came to importing medicines from India, it had more to do with the Finance Division than the health sector headed by Mirza.

"Dr Zafar Mirza had nothing to do with the import of medicines from India. According to Article 91, if the prime minister agrees with your position, then you will continue to work. The prime minister has his own powers and executive authority," he added. The federal minister went on to add that one cannot expect reforms from any other leader but Imran Khan in the country.

ICD committed to strengthen Islamic Finance

LAHORE: AlHuda CIBE has launched a Webinar Series on Islamic banking & finance to learn with Islamic finance experts from around the world. The learning series is continuing with the different insightful topics in four major languages i.e. English, Arabic, French, and Russian. During the webinar series by AlHuda CIBE, the global leader, Mr. Ayman Sejny has an interactive session on "How ICD supports its Member Countries during COVID-19". In his valuable session, he shared the insights and highly appreciates the stimulus packages that involve joint efforts between governments and central banks that cover the fiscal, monetary, and macro-financial fronts to various degrees.

He explained that The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) continues to grapple with this pandemic and in the spirit of solidarity, it is imperative for us to join forces and address the multi-faceted impact of the crisis and focus on protecting populations in our member countries. COVID-19 is a game-changer for Digital Transformation. The increasing need for higher technology capabilities to connect businesses, customers, and supply networks is fast-tracking the world into digitalization. He concluded the interactive session by emphasizing that the ICD member countries need to focus on this effort and unlock the potential of SMEs with innovative solutions. The purpose of the webinar is to promote and strengthen organizations and professionals. Besides the promotion of this growing phenomenon, the aim of the webinar series is also to acknowledge the need of giving hype to the system beyond any political and religious refrains. The initiative of the webinar series is also included to spread the awareness among general public and professionals of different industries including banking, Takaful, microfinance, etc. The participants of the webinars from different countries of the world are learning about Islamic finance. The demand for Islamic finance is increasing enormously and many new markets are seen to be emerging on the horizon in the world, there is a need to uplift the knowledge and understanding about this industry focusing on various aspects of the industry. -DNA

Dir Chitral road to start in March 2021: Murad

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Murad Saeed Thursday said the Executive Board of National Highway Authority had approved the maintenance and widening of the Dir Chitral Road and work on it would start in March, 2021.

Speaking in the Senate, he said joint cooperation committee (JCC) on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the past never made Dir Chitral Road part of the western route of CPEC. He said he had asked for a feasibility for construction of Dir Chitral motorway and for making it part of the CPEC. The matter would be taken up with China in the next JCC of the CPEC, he told.

He said PML-N government did not include the construction of Dir Chitral road in the public sector development programme in its last year. During proceedings of the house, Deputy Chairman Saleem Mandviwala referred the issue of increasing use of narcotics among youth to the relevant standing committee. The matter was raised by Senator Rubina Khalid. - APP

PARC and IPO to promote agriculture innovations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO) here Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote and commercialize agriculture innovations and brands.

Under the agreement, IPO to assist PARC About trade mark, copy right and Industrial design filing process, said a press release.

A delegation of Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) headed by Mujeeb Ahmed Khan, Chairman, IPO visited PARC and discussed the areas of collaboration.

As per Agreement, IPO will advise and support to the inventors of PARC in drafting patent applications and its filing.

IPO will also guide PARC about Trade Mark, Copy right and Industrial design filing process and other IP issues. Moreover, IPO share information on IP aspects of commercialization and licensing. - APP

675,586 persons given financial help

FAISALABAD: The divisional administration has so far disbursed financial assistance among 675,586 registered deserving persons in all four districts.

According to a spokesperson, Rs 8.1 billion had been disbursed among deserving people so far. 151 counters have been set up for distribution of financial assistance at 42 Ehsaas centers across division He said that 370,712 deserving persons had received financial help in district Faisalabad; 83,784 in Chiniot; 131,638 in district Jhang, and 89,452 in Toba Tek Singh. - APP

'2.24% decrease in vegetable exports'

The food commodities that contributed in positive growth of vegetable exports included edible vegetables

ISLAMABAD: The exports of vegetables products from the country witnessed decrease of 2.24 percent during fiscal year 2019-20 as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan exported vegetables products worth \$ 3309.086 million during July-June (2019-20) against the exports of \$ 3384.939 million during July-June (2018-19), showing nominal decrease of 2.24 percent, according to the data issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The food commodities that contributed in positive growth of vegetable exports included edible vegetables, export of which grew from \$239.439 million last year to \$291.222 million during the fiscal year under review, showing increase of 21.62 percent. During the fiscal year 2019-20, the exports of cereals also witnessed nominal increase of 0.53 percent, from \$2300.521 million to

\$2312.939 million. On the other hand, the commodities that contributed in negative growth included coffee, tea, Mate and spices, export of which declined from \$124.332 million last year to \$113.716 million during the fiscal year under review, showing negative growth of 8.53 percent. During the period under review, the exports of oil seeds and oleaginous fruits decreased by 16.80 percent from \$108.504 million to \$90.271 million while the export of milling industry product also declined by 70.59 percent from \$131.438 million to \$38.654 million, the data added. The exports of edible fruits and nuts decreased by 3.36 percent from \$428.488 million to \$414.070 million while the export of other vegetable saps and extracts (lac, gums, resins) also declined by 8.43 percent from \$40.873 million to \$37.425 million, the data added.

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Briefs

CTP finalizes traffic plan for Eid

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have chalked out a comprehensive traffic plan for Eid ul Azha under which enhanced number of traffic wardens would be deployed in main city areas aimed at avoiding traffic mess during Eid ul Azha prayers. A control room has been set up at Traffic Police Headquarters to monitor the situation. According to City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Syed Ali Akbar, all out efforts would be made to control traffic on city roads especially on 9th Zil-haj, Youm-e-Arfa (Chand Raat). As many as 520 Traffic Wardens, 76 Traffic Assistant, 30 Inspectors and seven DSPs would be on duty to regulate traffic on city roads. One-wheelers would be dealt in accordance with the law. Traffic wardens have been directed to impound motorcycles of one-wheelers in respective police stations. All the traffic officers and wardens have also been directed to remain present at their duty points so that no traffic jam could be witnessed, he added. The CTO told that all out efforts are being made by Rawalpindi Traffic Police to facilitate the road users.

Lion, lioness of Zoo die in uncertainty

ISLAMABAD: The African species of lion and lioness captivated at Marghazar Zoo had died of uncertain reasons as the staff allegedly mishandled the wild animals during their process of relocation. The lion and lioness were settled in displacement cages placed outside their captivity in active condition where as the latter had died during her journey to Lahore on Tuesday under the supervision of the sanctuary staff, Assistant Director Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Sakhawat Ali told APP. He informed that the fire was lit by the IWMB staff to move the lion towards relocation where as the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) staff deputized at the moment were not cooperating with IWMB personnel to shift the animals. "During the process, the IWMB team has been visiting the nigai or blue bull cage to observe the animals when it came to know about the fire incident and consequently barred the staff from doing so as it could result into any untoward situation. The staff has also been directed to avoid using any tranquilizers for sedating the lions. After the process was halted and later when the lion's health condition had settled it entered the relocation cage at 12am yesterday where he was in active condition." - APP

Archbishop congratulates nation on Eid

RAWALPINDI: Archbishop of twin cities, Joseph Arshad has extended his greetings to the people of the country on the auspicious occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha. In a message issued on occasion of Eidul Azha he said that while cherishing happiness of Eid, it was very important for all of us to remember poor and deserving people around us. He appealed the people to celebrate Eid with simplicity, thinking of and praying for all those, who had been deprived of their loved ones due to the corona virus and prayed that may God bless the dear homeland to get rid of the current situation as soon as possible and let us all be able to live a normal life once again. At the end of the message, he requested the countrymen to follow the health guidelines properly to stop further spreading of the COVID-19, saying, "Be well and safe. Eid Mubarak!" - APP



ISLAMABAD: Sacrificial animals being unloaded at a cattle market. - APP

Academia – Think Tank join hand for greater collaboration in Policy

The online launch held by SDPI and AIOU, was participated by a large number of senior academicians including the Vice-Chancellors of various public and private sector universities and senior researchers

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: To address the critical challenges for the academia and education sector in after Covid19 scenario, a think-tanks and academia joint venture named as Council for the Advancement of Sustainable Policy, Education and Research (CASPER), has been launched formally here on Thursday. The online launch held by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), was participated by a large number of senior academicians including the Vice-Chancellors of various public and private sector universities and senior researchers. The newly formed platform that comprises on several

leading public and private sector universities and academic institutions, aimed to find new and innovative solutions and to make collaborative efforts to improve the quality of research and to promote dialogue for the policies related to higher education in the country. Besides, CASPER would initiate a number of joint initiatives and would provide an active and vibrant platform to quality of education, policy research, new ways of learnings and faculty development in the new paradigm. Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIOU, termed the initiative as a landmark step towards a greater collaboration among the academic institution in Pakistan and said that this forum would serve as platform for the policy dialogue

on higher education and to resolve major issues that the universities and academia face in Pakistan. He emphasized on the need of every member taking ownership of the forum and added further that this non-political platform would be focused on collaboration and resolving issues. Earlier, Dr Shafiqat Munir, Senior Policy Advisor, SDPI, presented a detailed overview of the objectives and vision behind establishing CASPER and said that the launch of this forum is indeed a landmark occasion as it would provide a much needed platform for learning, sharing and benefitting each other with the new knowledge and innovations. He added further that CASPER is the result of a wide range earlier consultative process between the ac-

ademic institutions in Pakistan led by SDPI and AIOU and hence, its reflective of a shared wisdom. Dr Syed M. Ali, Vice Chancellor, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, was of view that Covid19 has provided us a good opportunity to enhance collaboration in the field of research and innovation. He says online knowledge would play critical role in after pandemic scenario and this newly established forum would be instrumental in such knowledge generation and knowledge sharing. Prof. Dr Mazhar Saleem from University of Punjab on the occasion said that the universities in Pakistan have huge potential but lacking in resources to produce best of the results. Therefore, the forum like this would surely contribute

in deliberating on the real issues and to find solutions accordingly. He added. The distinguished speakers from different universities including Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman, Vice Chancellor, Arid Agriculture University (AAU), Dr Uzma Quraishi, Vice Chancellor, Women University Multan, Dr Saima Hamid, Vice Chancellor, Fatima Jinnah University Rawalpindi, Dr. Saiga Imtiaz, Vice Chancellor, Government Sadiq College Women University, Bahawalpur, Dr Shafiq-ur-Rehman, Vice Chancellor, University of Balochistan, Dr M. Asif Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar and Dr Qazi Waseem, President/ VC, Iqra University, also shared their views with the participants and said that CASPER could vital role on knowledge sharing

in Pakistan. Mr Shahid Minhas, of SDPI, earlier, highlighted the importance of newly established forum and said that the higher education was already facing with numerous challenges in Pakistan that range from educational planning, teachers' competencies, curriculum development, and delivery of contents to assessments and quality checks. However, the pandemic has adversely affected every system and the online education has exposed the quality of teaching, technological gaps, management issues, students' behavior, and parents' involvement in enhancing knowledge and skills of their children. Therefore, a forum to find solution with the collective wisdom was the need of hour, he concluded.

Dazaran to provide online service for Eid

ISLAMABAD: The local Chinese digital company Dazaran provides online digital service through its one window operation for sale and purchase of cattle's and slaughter house facility for Eid ul Azha. During the COVID -19 pandemic the customers and buyers were not able to rush to 'Mandi' for purchasing of cattle's, consequently in this challenging situation, Dazaran had provided digital facility for every citizen from the twin cities to avail the chance of online buying and selling of cattle's including the Eid days services, the Senior Director of Digital online E-commerce platform Dazaran, Qurat ul Ain Zaidi told APP here on Thursday. While expressing her views regarding the online service during Eid days She said that "Qurbani Online" services was offering two categories of different packages for customers to avail the online facilities to purchase Goat, sheep, cows, camels and buffalo at affordable prices. She said "We will offer these facilities for people even on all three days of Eid-ul -Azha, customers can reserve their orders for butchers too on variable rates in all three days of Qurbani rituals." Qurat said that in all three days of Eid, butchers would be available at Rs 5000 and on word for the second and third day on the price of Rs 4000, the slaughter service of small cattle including goat and sheep would be provided by Dazaran. - APP

Over Rs1 bln tax recovered by Excise dept

ISLAMABAD: The Excise and Taxation department has recovered over Rs1 billion tax and deposited the amount into national exchequer during the month of July. "It is a biggest achievement of the department in time of COVID-19 when everybody is scared to step out of his home," said Director Excise Bilal Azam while talking to APP on Thursday. All this was made possible after introducing reforms within the excise to boost the revenue collection as well as promoting tax culture among the federal capital citizens, he added. The authorities collected over Rs 340 million for FBR (Federal Board of Revenue) taxes, including Rs 262,967,175 income tax and Rs 78,757,100 advance tax. The department had witnessed a surge in vehicle registration, transfer fee and token payment with Rs 299,188,787, Rs 22,017,850 and Rs 204,112,733 respectively. As many as 3,615 new vehicles were registered and some 14,757 vehicles were transferred during the same period. Around Rs 8,866,206 were collected in terms of professional tax and Rs 13,156,000 fee were charged against issuing special numbers. Highlighting the steps taken by the department to enhance tax collection, the director said, vehicle owner were submitting their token fee on National Database and Registration Authority's (Nadra) e-sahulat centres across the country without visiting excise office.

PUC to observe 'Youm e Istehsal'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ulama Council on Wednesday announced to observe 'Youm e Istehsal' to condemn the annexation of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IoJK) on its anniversary on August 5, 2019. Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi while addressing a Press conference here stated that all Religious Organizations would jointly observe the 'Youm e Istehsal'. He said religious scholars have unanimously supported and endorsed the endeavours for Religious harmony in the country. Leading Ulama and Scholars of different religious schools of thought have urged public to observe preventive and precautionary measure on eve of Eidul Azha following reduction in Coronavirus pandemic. - APP

14 outlaws including 3 gangsters nabbed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have arrested 14 outlaws including three members of a dacoit's gang and recovered snatched cash, valuables and vehicle from their possession, a police said. According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan ordered crackdown against criminals including those involved in dacoity incidents. 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. Following these directions, SP (Rural-Zone) Farooq Amjad Buttar constituted special team under supervision of DSP Qasim Niazi including SHO koral Police station Inspector Asjad Mehmood, ASI Afzal Bajwa along with other officials which successfully busted three members' dacoit gang involved in snatching cash, and other valuables at gun point from the citizens. The gangsters have been identified as Qayyum,

Rashid and Irfan while police team recovered cash, mobile phones, weapons and car used in criminal incidents from their possession. During the preliminary investigation, they confessed their involvement in incidents of looting people in areas of Koral. Separate cases have been registered against them in Koral police stations and further investigation is underway while police team arrested accused Hamza Abbasi involved in aerial firing and recovered one 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from them. Meanwhile, CIA police team apprehended two bike lifters namely Hamad and Yasir and recovered stolen motorbike from their possession. Police team also recovered one 9mm pistol from an accused Nadeem Khan. Margallah police arrested accused Sham Masih and recovered 10 liter alcohol from him Karachi company police arrested three accused Ameer, Bilal Shah and Rawal Saleem and recovered one 30 bore pistol, 115 gram heroin and five liters alcohol from their possession.

Sale of sacrificial animals gets momentum

RAWALPINDI: With just one day to go for the traditional festival of Eid-ul-Azha, sale of sacrificial animals has picked up momentum in the city's cattle markets, where cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep were being herded in from different parts of the province in a bid to get maximum profit in the lucrative markets of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The livestock traders par-

ticularly from different parts of Punjab and KPK provinces besides local traders have brought their animals in large numbers to the temporary animals markets of twin cities to gain maximum profit. Owing to the coronavirus outbreak, the Rawalpindi district administration had banned the sale of sacrificial animals in city areas and finalized arrangements to

bar the animal traders from setting up makeshift cattle markets at different spots of the city ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. The administration had also made arrangements to impose fines and take action against those try to sale their animals by roaming in different city areas. The administration had set up 10 temporary markets in the district under strict SOPs including Adiala Road,

Chakri Road near Al-Haram City, Bhatta Chowk near Koh-e-Noor Mills, Manghal Chowk near Kala Syedan bypass, Famous Marquee Gujar Khan Mandi, Tanki Road near Chan Shah Jalayr Kahota, Chora Bazar Kotli Sattian, Animal Mandi near Timber Market Taxila, Mandi near General Hospital Wah Cantt and Dhoobi Ghat Murree to facilitate the citizens. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Zill-e-Huma, MNA, called on First Lady, Ms. Samina Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Traders slam Punjab govt's lockdown decision

The Punjab government has sunk billions of rupees of traders by locking down the province: Ajmal Baloch

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch, President Anjuman-e-Tajiran Punjab Shahid Ghafoor Paracha and Information Secretary Khalid Mehmood Chaudhry have said that the sudden lockdown in Punjab has broken the back of the rest of the country. Businesses are open in the provinces. It seems that the lockdown in Punjab is part of a conspiracy.

It should be investigated and the loss of traders should be compensated by conspiratorial elements. This wrong decision of the government has destroyed small traders. Do you know how difficult it is to do business? All the wealth is on credit. Now how will the Punjab businessman pay? Where will he pay the salaries of his employees? How will he meet the household expenses who are getting full benefits and salaries? I am meeting them in lakhs and lakhs. What do they know about the difficulties of the trader? Taj has

been traveling for the last 5 months and is also cooperating with the government but neither the government has given any relief to the traders nor the business class. Any reversal of planning has put the business class in trouble at the moment anyway Businesses are closed, shop rents are not being paid, which has led to escalation of disputes with property owners. Electricity bills have been paid by the single-phase government for three months, but the majority of traders are deprived of this assistance gone.

He said that the department is refusing to defer the gas bill. Unemployment is on the rise. If these conditions continue, the turn after Eid will reach to starvation. Prime Minister Imran Khan always spoke of the small class but he also small No announcement for traders. The government should immediately announce aid package for traders. If this is not done, then after Eid we will announce a strong protest movement against the government. Punjab businessman Punjab due to wrong planning of

Punjab government. The Punjab government will realize in the coming time that the current business will be reduced by 40%, many businesses will be completely closed. He added that working hours have increased during the Eid days. If given, there would be no rush in the markets. Lockdown after Eid is still unjustified. Punjab government should reconsider its cruel and wrong decision and allow traders to do business. If there is business, traders will be in a position to pay taxes. Will not be paid.

Briefs

New Metro Bus project to complete in August

ISLAMABAD: The Metro Bus Infrastructure Project from Peshawar Morr to New Islamabad International Airport has achieved over 95 per cent physical progress, an official of the National Highway Authority told APP on Wednesday. He said that it is expected to be completed by mid of August after arrival of Electrical and Mechanical equipment from China and Spain. He said the import was delayed due to the coronavirus outbreak. He said construction of a mini station at the airport and the ancillary works like paint, fixing of windows etc. at some other stations were in progress. He said the total revised cost of the project was Rs. 13,525 million and Rs 3533,661 million were allocated and issued in the previous fiscal year. He said that in PDSP 2020-2021, Rs 1500 million have been allocated for the project. Expenditure occurred till June 2020, was Rs 11679.605 million, whereas the throw forward amount stood at Rs 4748.275 million. He said that the project could not be completed in stipulated time due to reasons beyond control of the NHA. The impediments, he said included relocation of utility lines, land acquisition from sensitive departments, issuance of No Objection Certificate for construction activities from certain departments such as Civil Aviation Authority, funds constraints, huge traffic flow, inclement weather and last but not the least outbreak of coronavirus. — APP

RCB's operation against illegal cattle markets

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has confiscated over 230 animals and shifted them away to a warehouse as it raided illegal cattle markets set up in the different areas including Sehama, Westridge, Range Road, Bakra Mandi and Chungi Number 22. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantt, Faisal Munir Watto. The administration also removed tents raised for temporary animal markets. The RCB spokesman informed APP that the board authorities had allowed to set up a temporary animal market in Bhatta Chowk area and imposed ban on sale and purchase of sacrificial animals in all other cantt areas. He warned the vendors not to violate the orders else strict action would be taken besides heavy fines and animals would also be confiscated. He informed that the operation against illegal cattle markets would continue on Friday. He said that the Cantonment Executive Officer Rawalpindi Cantt had directed the authorities concerned to strictly implement corona Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued to prevent spread of coronavirus. RCB had launched a grand operation against illegal animal markets and took strict action in accordance with the law against the violators, he added. — APP

RCB to deploy 650 sanitary workers on Eid

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) will deploy over 650 sanitary workers under the supervision of six sanitary inspectors and 34 supervisors to ensure cleanliness on Eid-ul-Azha. According to RCB spokesman, the Board has finalized a comprehensive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha to dispose of entrails of sacrificial animals while over 25,000 garbage bags are also being distributed among the residents to facilitate them. He informed that on the directives of Cantonment Executive Officer, RCB, Muhammad Umar Farooq Ali Malik, a cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha had been formulated under which maximum available resources would be utilized to accomplish the task during Eid-ul-Azha holidays. — APP



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful yellow-vented bulbul sits on a tree branch. — APP

'Panahgahs' to finance travelling for 100 elderly on Eid-ul-Adha

"We have carefully identified the needy and poor who cannot afford to be with their family as their effort to survive has touched the rock bottom due to COVID fall out"

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Focal Person on Shelter Homes Naseem ur Rehman Thursday announced to bear travelling expenses for some 100 elderly dwellers of the 'Panahgahs' of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad to let them enjoy the Eid festivities with their family members. He said the initiative was meant to

reunite the deserving elderly with their loved ones on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, a religious festival to be celebrated across the globe on August 1.

"We have finalized the arrangements for sponsoring a senior daily wage travel from 'Panahgah' to his home so that he can be united with his family," Naseem ur Reh-

man told the media here during their routine visit to the Shelter Home of Sector G-9.

He said some 100 deserving elderly residents had been identified in a quick survey which was carried out to determine the financial insolvency of 'Panahgahs Guests'. "We have carefully identified the needy and poor who cannot afford

to be with their family as their effort to survive has touched the rock bottom due to COVID fall out."

He said 'Apni Panahgah Teams' of Islamabad and Rawalpindi composed of dedicated team of volunteers had come forward in a small but significant step to unite elderly migrant daily wagers with their

families on the Eid.

They had generated fund for that purpose, he added.

"Beyond Food and Shelter, Panahgahs are evolving into a flash-point of hope for the migrant daily earners, who have been bearing the brunt of economic slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic," he remarked.

82 banned outfits not allowed to collect hides

RAWALPINDI: As many as 82 proscribed organizations and banned outfits which are on the radar of the Punjab Home Department will not be allowed to collect hides of sacrificial animals on Eid-ul-Azha and individuals or organizations with permission from the Deputy Commissioner will be allowed to collect hides. According to details, the Punjab Home Department has directed the district administration and law enforcement agencies to remain alert so that the banned organizations might not collect hides of sacrificial animal on Eid-ul-Azha.

The authorities concerned have been directed to thoroughly check the violators. The total number of organizations in Punjab is 82 which were banned or put under surveillance. The faithful will sacrifice animals on Eid-ul-Azha and in a spirit of charity, donate the hides of the sacrificial animals to various organizations collecting the hides. Various religious seminaries and charity organizations try to collect maximum hides because it is a lucrative multi-million-rupee business.

The hides are sold to tanneries which willingly take the raw hides, process them into fine leather and sell them on to factories producing leather goods, shoes, bags, coats and other garments, which have a great demand in the fashion industry, domestic and international markets. Additionally, hide collection is a money-spinning business worth billions of rupees through exports. — DNA

Commissioner reviews cattle markets

ABBOTABAD: Commissioner Hazara Division Riaz Khan Mehsood on Thursday visited cattle markets at Dhamor and Havalian to review arrangements of the Livestock Department and inspect implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) against spread of Covid-19.

Deputy Commissioner Abbotabad Muhammad Mughis Sanatullah, Chairman District Reconciliation Committee Lieutenant General Ayaz Saleem Rana also accompanied the commissioner.

The deputy commissioner briefed the commissioner about facilities which had been put up for residents, implementation of SOPs and the steps of the district administration it had taken against illegal cattle markets in the area. On the occasion, the commissioner distributed pamphlets to educate residents about precautionary measures against the contagious disease. He urged people to cooperate with the administration by strictly complying with SOPs to curb spread of corona. — APP

Gold price remain stable

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold increased remain stable on Thursday and was traded at Rs122,750, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. Likewise the price of 10 gram gold also witnessed no change and was traded at Rs105,238. The price of per tola silver decreased Rs50 and was traded at Rs1420 against its sale at Rs1470 whereas that of 10 gram silver also witnessed decreased by Rs42.86 and was traded at Rs1217.42 against its sale at Rs1260.28. — APP

Easypaisa re-defines paying bills

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Easypaisa, the country's leading branchless banking platform has revamped the utility bills payment section of its App. New features have been introduced along with the addition of various billers such as government payments, educational institutes' fee payments and credit card payments to make bill payments easier than ever.

The demand today for the simplicity of a seamless digital payment experience that integrates all possible payment methods for users is greater than it was before. Based on extensive customer research and user experience, the interface has been improved in order to bring more convenience to users. While paying bills, customers will get bill payment alerts, payment stamps, and bill help section in both English and Urdu. Commenting on the devel-

opment, M. Mudassar Aqil, CEO Easypaisa / Telenor Microfinance Bank said, "We have always aspired to introduce effective, simple, and innovative payment solutions for our customers. Digital payments are changing the way users transact, making their lives easier and keeping them safe during the COVID-19 outbreak." Easypaisa remains at the forefront of empowering people through innovative and secure digital financial services.



NOWSHERA: DG ANF being presented shield during his visit to Nowshera cantt. — DNA

International development partners laud flagship report on Ehsaas Cash programme

Dr. Nishtar was joined by country directors and heads of International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other agencies

ISLAMABAD: Ehsaas hosted a webinar on Thursday with donors, international development partners and UN agencies to share key findings of Ehsaas Emergency Cash Report penned by Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation.

Convening the virtual meeting, Dr. Nishtar shared her experience around the design and implementation of Ehsaas Emergency Cash that will support 16.9 million families affected by the COVID-19 induced economic shutdown with cash handout of Rs. 12,000 each. Dr. Nishtar was joined by country directors and heads of International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other agencies.

Narrating her experience, Dr. Nishtar shared, "Pakistan which is the fifth largest country in the world, there are 24 million breadwinners who rely on daily wages or are self-employed in the informal economy and life for them virtually came to a standstill with implementation of a lockdown in March 2020."

Adding further, she said, "To respond to this challenge, the Government of Pakistan created the Ehsaas Emergency Cash program, which is the largest social protection program ever in the country's history. This end to end digital program was rolled-out within 10 days of the lockdown to deliver one-time emergency cash grants. 1.23 billion USD were allocated to support more than 16.9 million families,

which cover around 109 million people which is approximately 50% of the country's population."

Elaborating about how Ehsaas dig-



ital infrastructure was leveraged for emergency cash, Dr. Nishtar continued, "Ehsaas Emergency Cash report takes stock of the digital systems and tools deployed in the design and roll out of the program, which built on digital capabilities established over the past year as part of the overarching Ehsaas framework."

"To ensure compliance with the rule-based procedures, a new biometric payment system, the demand side SMS and web service and wealth-profiling data analytics mechanism were ingrained in the roll out of Ehsaas Emergency Cash. It made the government more agile, data driven, experimental, and ambitious", she added. The donors richly praised the report and congratulated Dr. Nish-

tar and the entire Ehsaas team for taking the lead to reach out to multi-million deserving households in a transparent, cost-effective and fast manner.

The inclusive design of the program was lauded that it has strengthened safety nets and financial inclusion, both of which would bring lasting benefits to recipients and to Pakistan as a whole. They also acknowledged that the case of Pakistan and lessons learnt from the design and real time evaluation of Ehsaas Emergency Cash program provide learning that can also inform initiatives in other countries. It was suggested to convene another round of cross-country experience sharing session around Ehsaas Emergency Cash. — APP

NTCB to submit tourism proposal after eid

ISLAMABAD: The National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) will put forward a proposal for re-opening of the tourism sector to the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) after Eid-ul-Azha. The decision to this effect was taken by the NTCB, which met here with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari in the chair. "A consultative meeting of the NTCB was held on Thursday with all provincial/regional governments to discuss appropriate time to re-open the tourism sector of the country," a news release issued here said. The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Punjab on Tourism Asif Mehmood, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Managing Director Syed Intikhab Alam and NTCB and PTDC board member Aftab Ur Rehman Rana and all provincial and regional tourism secretaries. Discussing the various options for tourism re-opening, the participants unanimously agreed that the decision in that regard should be taken by the NCOC after evaluating on the ground situation of the coronavirus pandemic in the country. — APP

RTA teams conducting raids to check overcharging

RAWALPINDI: Regional Transport Authority (RTA) has launched a grand operation against transporters overcharging public transporter fares from the people going to their hometowns to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their families. Talking to APP, Secretary RTA, Mehr Ghulam Abbas informed that RTA has launched a special grand operation and fines are being imposed on the violators. He urged the commuters to cooperate with the authorities concerned and register complaints on RTA's UAN Number 0800-02345 or on the complaint number 051-9270011 during 8 am to 8 pm, if any transporter charges extra fare or misbehaves with them. He said, stern action is being taken against transporters found overcharging and overloading the passengers. The staff concerned had been directed to check overcharging and overloading of the passengers in buses and vans specially before Eid ul Azha. — APP

Lok Virsa to remain closed for 4 days

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on Thursday announced that both museums will remain closed for public from Thursday, 30th July to Monday, 3rd August 2020. According to the official notification, in line with Government instructions to control Covid-19 on the occasion of Eid both museums administered by Lok Virsa namely Heritage Museum and Pakistan Monument Museum will remain closed for 7 days. — APP

PNSC added two LR1 tankers to fleet

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) under the current regime added two LR1 Tankers taking the total strength of the fleet to 11 vessels in last two years. According to Ministry of Maritime Affairs ERP solutions were acquired and PNSC will be fully digitized by November 2020. Loans worth Rs. 4.7 billion have been repaid. At Karachi Port Trust (KPT) construction of new boat basin jetty finished in early 2020. Bidding for Dry Bulk Terminal has been initiated. Around 11 companies have been shortlisted a lot of them are internationally terminal operators. An amount of Rs. 2.2 billion in liquidated damages have been recovered. Through competitive bidding high reputable audit firms were hired. The first ever store audit has been completed and the first ever KPT hospital audit is underway. Furthermore, the financial audit of the entire organization (KPT) is ongoing from 2010 onwards. — APP

Hajj 2020

THE annual Haj has got underway in Saudi Arabia, albeit in a downsized format. Owing to the restrictions brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, this year the kingdom has gone along an executive strategic plan with strict health protocols in place. The Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah has designated specific places for the arriving pilgrims to finalise their procedures and implement preventive measures set by the country's health authorities. This year only a few thousands will perform the annual Islamic pilgrimage. The six-day long ritual (during which the rites are performed) is a spiritual and religious journey for the faithful who carefully plan the trip over years.

Haj culminates with the Islamic holiday of Eid Al Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice. This year due to the coronavirus outbreak, numbers were greatly restricted with strict social distancing and sanitation measures put into effect. Haj, an important pillar of Islam, usually sees millions assembling in the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah. The pilgrims congregate in the holy cities over a six-day period, which brings people from all over the world together.

It will be a different experience this year with access to the Haj sites at Mina, Muzdalifah and Arafat given by special permits only.

The authorities are also making sure that all pilgrims wear masks, which have been made mandatory throughout the pilgrimage.

Measures have also been put in place to ensure that pebbles used for the 'stoning of the devil' ceremony are sanitised. Pilgrims will not be allowed to touch the Kaaba or kiss the black stone at its corner either.

During prayers, pilgrims have to keep themselves socially distanced from other worshippers, all part of regulations to ensure that the Haj takes place without a glitch and without anyone getting infected. Saudi Arabia has been one of the hardest hit countries in the region. So far the country has close to 269,000 coronavirus cases with more than 2,760 deaths.

The kingdom, often lauded for its efficient preparations to manage Haj, has drawn praise by the World Health Organisation. WHO chief Tedros Ghebreyesus welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to significantly curtail the number of Haj pilgrims amid the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has challenged the world in myriad ways. Not only have economies and lives been severely disrupted, coronavirus has also tested people's faith. To pull off the annual Haj pilgrimage in such a challenging situation is both commendable and uplifting.

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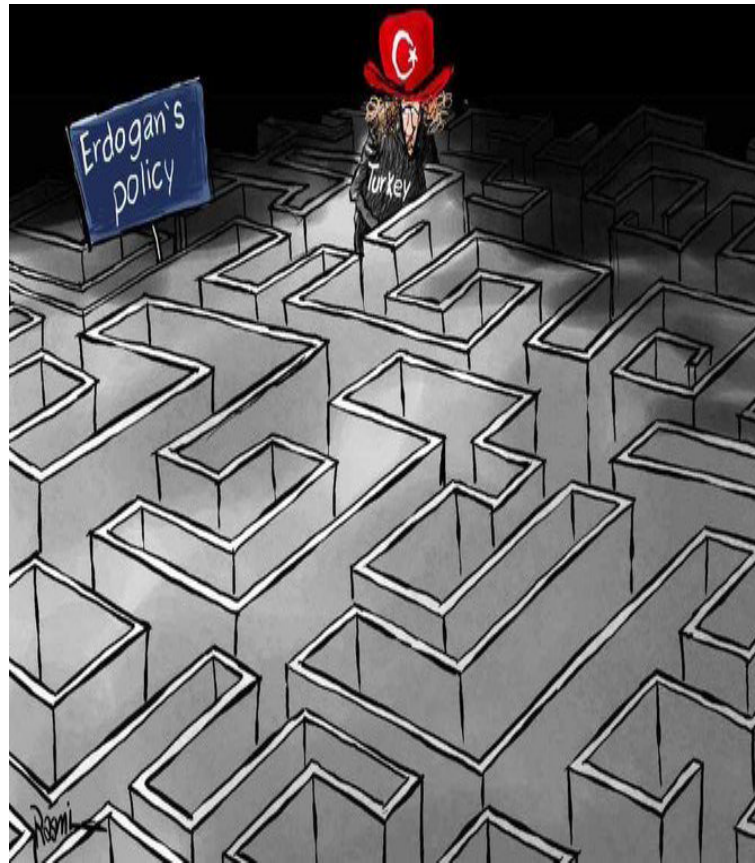
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Opposition politics

THE growing wrath of people over the rise in the prices of atta, sugar, oil and other commodities has been perceptible for some time. The opposition has maintained since the beginning that the PTI government has proved to be unable to manage the complex affairs of the country and in this respect has performed poorly compared to its predecessors; some would say this sentiment is now growing within the people. Following the latest round of talks on amendments in the NAB law and the demands put forward by the FATF, opposition parties have decided to rally their supporters and – more importantly – once again attempt a unified stance against the government.

At a meeting between opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif and PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto both politicians agreed that the present government is leading the country into destruction and needs to be stopped before irreparable damage is inflicted. This may not be quite a democratic way to look at things, though and we have in the past too warned about attempts to bring down sitting governments. However, the opposition seems to think that there is a feeling among people that further years of the PTI in power will simply cause more harm to Pakistan.

The two opposition leaders have also accused the PTI of corruption in scandals involving wheat flour, sugar, petrol and other commodities. Apart from all else, the way NAB has proceeded in the past months has also led to concern not only among the opposition parties but also general observers that the accountability being pursued by the government may not be more than persecution and vendetta.

Problems also seem to arise from the fact that despite calling for talks with the opposition the PTI has been inflexible in its refusal to alter vital content of the NAB Ordinance or to make adjustments sought by the opposition. It has also accused the now united political opposition of trying to blackmail it by refusing to approve FATF demands until the NAB law is changed. The opposition has denied this. Building up what could become a powerful force Bilawal Bhutto has also met JUI-F chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman. A Multi-Party Conference is to be called after Eidul Adha and Shahbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto have said a strategy to alter the current situation will be worked out during it.

This strategy could include a 'march' to Islamabad – something the PTI is quite familiar with. While both Bilawal and Shahbaz Sharif seem to have now agreed on 'some' movement, this meeting too will prove nothing significant unless the Parties' Conference outlines exactly what the opposition is setting out to do. Will things reach a point where a 'dharna' against the PTI turns into a reality? The current circumstances, with joblessness and inflation both on the rise, could make this an effective weapon. We also wait to see if the PTI holds out any kind of olive branch or shows a willingness to undo portions of the NAB law which have essentially been the trigger point for the latest display of anger from the opposition.

Abay Kunanbaiuly: A Immaculate Conception and oblige

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



The scientist Abay is a genius of the Kazakh land of a world level. He sowed the seeds of wisdom for all of humanity. His inspired from the folklore of the Kazakh people, the art of words of the East and West, Russian literature and the study of works on the history of mankind

Abay Kunanbaiuly was pioneer of expansion of national consciousness, self-knowledge and spiritual perfection which he used to win hearts and souls. He was man of respect and reverence which he used an effective way of educating the modern generation. He had strategic vision about modernization Public Consciousness by emphasizing the importance of updating public consciousness. He spread spiritual means to overcome worldly problems.

Undoubtedly, Abay Kunanbayuly left an ineradicable mark on the history of Kazakhstan as a scientist, thinker, poet,

and enlightener, founder of modern national literature, translator and composer. His poems and prose reflected national identity, life, worldview, character, soul, faith, language, traditions and the spirit of the people, which were later rated as a unique phenomenon, called the world of Abay. He gave to the world immortal words. Abay Kunanbayev is the great poet, writer, public figure, founder of modern Kazakh literature, reformer of culture in the spirit of rapprochement with Russian and European culture on the basis of enlightened Islam.

Abay's major work is "The Book of Words" a philosophic treatise and collection of poems where he encourages his fellow Kazakhs to embrace education, literacy, and good moral character in order to escape poverty, enslavement and corruption.

He believed value of harmonization in achieving the desired goals of development and modernization. He termed convergence of nation must for participatory development of the nation to improve, to renew and in order to correspond to the new time. His teachings were so strong that it despite the changing times and changing worlds, it is still relevant. He highlighted the importance of education and science for immense development and glory. Abai wholeheartedly wished that the Kazakhs constantly studied, mastering new knowledge to conquer their inner and outer worlds. His words "Do not brag until you master science" surely depicted strategic importance of education, knowledge, wisdom, and science which he considered essential to reach heights. In place "take possession of science not to get rich" he showcased importance of education and science by connecting both attributes of development with wealth even Adam Smith "Wealth of nations" endorsed his thinking. He correlated profit, and honor with striving of knowledge. Ours is the age of science where we witness wonders of sciences rapidly moving to new heights. The government of Kazakhstan announced various policies and programs to modernize its education system. It has also announced "Law on the Status of a Teacher" which is indeed one of the useful initiatives in this direction which improve the quality of education.

Abay considered study of foreign languages for greater human connectivity through removing psychological barriers and of course development. He termed study of foreign languages vital for eradication of vicious circle of prejudice, hatred and discrimination and instrumental to create cultural diversity.

Being prominent regional expert of Kazakhstan and CIS I amaze that he had vision of "professionalism", "smart knowledge" and last but not least mastering of multidimensional disciplines for human survival and development.

Reflections in his works instill in every person a sense of patriotism in relation to his people, country. That is why one of the directions of modernization and development of

the country is the development by the young generation of the heritage of wise Abay so that his teachings become the life principles of youth.

Abay was strong supporter of statehood for socio-economic prosperity and economic development. He valued rule of law and public order as a universal responsibility. He disliked instability in the system. He spoke of strengthening the power of the country, state and national unity. He promoted the idea of creating a just society.

Being prominent regional expert of Kazakhstan I believe that most recently announced initiative "A State Listening to the Voice of the People" is to develop the idea of a just society. A constructive dialogue having participatory mechanism between the state and society strengthens trust in the state.

Abay highlighted importance of merit, fair-play and equal right to everybody so he nurtured concept of equal right of the today corporate world. He appreciated a man by his merits not by his position. In this sense, the great poet, by his example, directed the Kazakh youth on the right path. Abay disliked negative human traits that impede the development of society and bring discord and confusion. He focused on improving the quality characteristics and competitiveness of our people. He was great admirer of social responsibility. Abay coined the "concept of "Mature, Holistic man" or "A man of integrity". This concept, which is now widespread, was developed and promoted by Abay in the 19th century.

Human life along its entire length is accompanied by the maintenance of various contacts, without them the personality would be separated from society. To him communication is holistic and only means to make bridges of trust and respect. Abay said: "Combine the mind, will and heart in yourself, and then you will become a mature independent person", bearing in mind that a person must have a clear mind, a strong, cold will and a warm, kind heart. The great thinker in his works describes those who, labor and ability to farm, achieve prosperity, calling, thereby, in the interests of improving their well-being, to learn new crafts and professions. The poet praised initiative and honest work. For example, in the tenth word of his book, he concludes: "Who will not become rich, if he works hard, will seek and find his place in life?"

The scientist Abay is a genius of the Kazakh land of a world level. He sowed the seeds of wisdom for all of humanity. His inspired from the folklore of the Kazakh people, the art of words of the East and West, Russian literature and the study of works on the history of mankind.

Abay believed in religion "Allah is true, the word is true, the truth is never false." Obviously, he came to such conclusions as a result of research and comprehension of the works of philosophers of East and West. In the thirty-eighth word, he expresses his attitude towards God.

Religious philosophers who studied the spiritual views of Abay pay special attention to his concept of "Orthodox Muslim." The concept of a "true Muslim" probably concerned not only the Kazakhs, but the entire Muslim world. Abay dreamt of maintaining the spiritual purity of all people on Earth. Abay is an amazing personality among world-class thinkers.

The merits of Abay cannot be overestimated. His instructive life and genuine creativity is role model not only for the Kazakh people, but also for the whole world. Abay's ideas about man and society, education and science, religion and traditions, nature and the environment, state and government, language and communication have not lost their significance for centuries, because the poet's legacy is the spiritual source for all mankind.

According to Kazakhstan government during 2020 more than 500 events of the international, national and regional levels dedicated to the 175th anniversary of Abay will be organized.

The main event will be the International Scientific and Practical Conference "Heritage of Abay and World Spirituality", which will be held in August in the city of Semey in collaboration with UNESCO. Also in October in Nur Sultan an international conference will be held on the topic "Abay and issues of spiritual rebirth." These meetings will make it possible to comprehensively study the personality and heritage of Abay, to outline the directions for using his work for the benefit of the new Kazakhstan of the 21st century.

One of the important projects is the translation and publication of the works of the great poet in ten languages. In particular, the work of Abay will be translated into English, Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, German, Russian, Turkish and French. Several documentaries and the television series "Abay" about the life, heritage of the poet, and his role in the development of Kazakh culture will be prepared.

Celebrations in honor of the poet will include cultural events. This year, international and national theater and music festivals dedicated to Abay's creativity will be held with the presentation of awards to the winners. The State Prize for the best works in the field of literature and art will now be called the Abay State Prize.

Abay Kunanbaiuly was great social reformer who tried to transform his society up the level of a civilized state wherein merit, social justice, rule of the law, accountability, fair play might be achieved through hard work, institutionalization of education and science. He highlighted numerous human traits to get desired goals of national unity and self-dignity. He coined various concepts and disciplines of 21st century mainly, good governance, professionalism, smart economy, emotional intelligence, human psychological development, participatory community development, gender studies, sciences and above all humanities.

Is Pakistan flattening the coronavirus curve?

Mehr Tarar

In the words of M Bilal Lakhani, a Pakistani journalist, and someone whom I like for his constancy about showing the positive side of Pakistan while highlighting its darker aspects, the end-July scenario is "Pakistan's stunning flattening of COVID-19 curve." The word "stunning" sums it up in its twin simplicity: it is very surprising, and it is very impressive. I can't write any of this without adding mashAllah. And without saying alhamdulillah out loud. Allah shows His mercy in countless ways

S UDDENLY, 2020 seems to be in a hurry to wrap up its business of turning the world upside down, pondering at the possibilities of doing something other than putting up a daily global notification of the insignificance of human life. 2020 and its biggest ally, the audacious, merciless, borderless coronavirus. Why do I feel this way this very humid, starkly dull July mid-morning, I don't know. Perhaps my little-slept mind is in its wily old denial mode of looking at the world without wishing to curl up in a foetus shaped comma.

I want the world to be different, safer, happier, mouths uncovered by masks when they curl up in smiles, people holding hands, hugs as free as the tinkling laughter of a six-year-old teasing my 20-year-old son. Sprinkled amidst light and love, there is pain, but there is also the assurance of that inevitability: nothing lasts forever. I sigh, silently peaceful. Today there is something that makes me smile, albeit hesitantly. I do not wish to jinx it. In the last few days, I have been reading about Pakistan getting to a stage where it can sit down for a much-needed respite, taking a cautious glance at the statistics of the cases of COVID-19, and allowing itself to smile. A guarded smile, but smile it is. Maskless in solitude, six feet or more away when in the company of other humans, it is okay to smile, even laugh.

In the words of M Bilal Lakhani, a Pakistani journalist, and someone whom I like for his constancy about showing the positive side of Pakistan while highlighting its darker aspects, the end-July scenario is "Pakistan's stunning flattening of COVID-19 curve." The word "stunning" sums it up in its twin simplicity: it is very surprising, and it is very impressive. I can't write any of this without adding mashAllah. And without saying alhamdulillah out loud. Allah shows His mercy in countless ways. Some are visible, some remain un-understood. Also exist positive signs-verifiable, medically attested, government verified—that are not to be overlooked, not to be underestimated, irrespective of personal biases, political pettiness, cynical pessimism, jaded apathy to the power of science, humanity and nature huddling together to put up a united front against an enigmatic foe. The facts speak for themselves.

Quoting State Minister of Health Dr Zafar Mirza, from Lakhani's Express Tribune article, "First of all, it's a fact that Pakistan crossed its COVID-19 peak in the middle of June. Even by our own estimates, we were expecting the peak to hit us in July or mid-August and there are a number of factors that are driving this early decline." Two of those factors are

"change in human behaviour [Pakistanis understanding the risk of COVID-19 and taking precautions seriously] and early, effective interventions by the government."

Lakhani writes, "Dr Mirza detailed the more than fifty evidence-based policy decisions rooted in data that helped Pakistan flatten the curve ahead of expectations." To Lakhani's "how did you stay grounded in data when there was mass hysteria in the press and political pressure from the opposition to change course?" Dr Mirza's response is an uncomfortable manifestation of the odds of perception and behaviour the government has had to and still continues to fight in addition to the horror of coronavirus: "We quickly identified the source of this hysteria... that came from the upper, middle class of Pakistan, which had the resources to watch Netflix and not worry about their incomes. They wanted to protect themselves by imposing mass lockdowns and ignoring what would happen to everyone else. The lower classes are voiceless and not part of the public discourse."

Dr Mirza says, "Prime Minister Imran Khan had an unshakable resolve to look after the poor people of Pakistan in this catastrophe. No compromise on poor people, he would continue to reiterate in all our policymaking conversations." Without allowing any assumption about the danger of coronavirus becoming a thing of June, Dr Mirza is categorically clear about premature celebration, taking the reality into account: "With Eid and Muharram coming, this is no time for complacency."

In Prime Minister Imran Khan's government's fight against coronavirus, in addition to people's slow and steady resolve to take the terror of COVID-19 seriously, the constant contribution of many people is invaluable. It will continue to be. In Pakistan, countless doctors, nurses, para-medical personnel, and other hospital staff, from superintendents to janitorial staff, work without a pause, to ensure the availability of best possible facilities to patients of COVID-19. Some of them have succumbed to COVID-19 while taking care of patients. Some of them contracted the disease in other ways. Their service is indescribable, their selflessness is unparalleled, their sacrifices are too many to be eulogised in a caption. Pakistan was, is and will remain indebted to each one of them.

Dr Zafar Mirza is Pakistan government's frontline person in national efforts for prevention and treatment of COVID-19. The work of Dr Mirza is indispensable in Pakistan's continuous fight against coronavirus.

The National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) is "nerve centre to synergise and articulate unified national effort against COVID-19, and to implement the decisions of National Coordination Committee on COVID-19." Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs NCOC.

All provinces under the supervision and guidance of their chief ministers and their teams, and their health ministers and their teams, are tirelessly working in the time of coronavirus.

In Punjab, it is Chief Minister Usman Buzdar and Punjab Minister of Health Dr Yasmin Rashid and their teams. In Sindh, it is Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Minister of Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho and their teams. In Balochistan, it is Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Minister for Health Rahmat Saleh Baloch and their teams. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it is Chief Minister Mahmood Khan and Minister for Finance and Health Taimur Khan Jhagra and their teams. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, it is Minister of Health Dr Najeeb Naqi and his team. In Gilgit-Baltistan, it is former Chief Minister Hafeez-ur-Rehman, Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Afzal Khan, Commander FCNA Major General Ehsan Mehmood, Chief Secretary Khurram Agha, Health Secretary Raja Rasheed, and Home Secretary Ali Randhawa. Their work is indispensable in Pakistan's fight against coronavirus.

Pakistan on July 27, 2020, at 12:27pm has 274,289 confirmed cases. The number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 is 241,026. The number of critical patients is 1,229. That deeply saddens me. That is 1,229 families suffering every minute of their loved one's hospitalisation. The number of people who didn't survive is 5,842. That to me is 5,842 families who have lost a loved one, those who cry for their irreplaceable loss every day. May the number do not increase.

Allah's munificence is unlimited. In terms of human actions, Pakistan has its own on-going saga of coronavirus, and it is not over until a vaccine becomes a reality and is injected in the body of every human of the world. Imagine the scale of that. So until that happens, and as long as there is even one Pakistani who has COVID-19, the daily-changing dynamics of coronavirus remain a reality. Sighing in relief is a reflex, but it is a bit too soon to seek a personal and national pass for a full celebration.

May Pakistan be free of coronavirus soon.

May the entire world be free of coronavirus soon.

— Courtesy Gulf News

Briefs

Nate Solder
opts out of
NFL season

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: New York Giants' Nate Solder will not play in the 2020 NFL season because of concerns over his and his family's health during the coronavirus pandemic.

An agreement was reached last week between the NFL and its Players' Association allowing players to opt out of the season if they wished. Left tackle Solder, 32, is a cancer survivor and his five-year-old son is also undergoing cancer treatments. In a statement, Solder said his family decided to "pause for this season".

"We fully recognise that being able to make a decision like this is a privilege," he said. "Our family has health concerns, most notably our son's ongoing battle with cancer, as well as my own bout with cancer."

"We also welcomed a new addition to our family this spring, a baby boy. With fear and trembling, we struggle to keep our priorities in order and, for us, our children's health and the health of our neighbours comes before football."

Solder was set to earn more than £10m this season. Players considered high risk who opt out can earn \$350,000 (£270,000) and an accrued NFL season.

Ronaldo
misses out on
golden boot
advantage

SPORTS DESK

CAGLIARI: Cristiano Ronaldo's hopes of finishing as Europe's top scorer were dealt a blow as he failed to score as champions Juventus were beaten by Cagliari. Ronaldo has scored an incredible 31 Serie A goals this season but found himself frustrated on Wednesday night. Luca Gagliano's close-range finish and Giovanni Simeone's powerful drive secured the win for the hosts.

Ronaldo trails Lazio striker Ciro Immobile by four goals in the battle for Europe's Golden Shoe. Immobile scored his 35th goal of the season as Lazio beat Brescia 2-0 on Wednesday.

With one game of the Serie A season remaining, Immobile is the outright leading scorer in Europe as his latest strike moved him ahead of Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski, who finished the Bundesliga season with 34 goals. Immobile is also just one goal away from equalling the Serie A record for most goals in a season. Gonzalo Higuain scored 36 times for Napoli in the 2015-16 campaign.

Italy warns
of migrant
strain

LAMPEDUSA (Italy): Italy's interior ministry on Wednesday said it was finding the migrant situation "much more complex" than in previous years, and was urging returns to Tunisia as it struggled to house new arrivals.

"The coronavirus emergency and the consequent very serious economic crisis that has hit not only the countries of North Africa hard, (is) feeding an exceptional flow of economic migrants" across the Mediterranean, it said.

Many land on the holiday destination of Lampedusa island, as sunbathers paddling in crystal waters look on. "Autonomous landings on the Italian coasts have more than multiplied in a very short period of time," the ministry said, referring to small boats which make it across from the coast of North Africa without being intercepted.

There were also "organisational complexities" linked to coronavirus, for new arrivals who need to be tested then kept in isolation for a set period of time - and some have been breaking quarantine rules, enraging local populations.

Many of the autonomous landings have been on the picturesque but tiny Lampedusa, which lies close to North Africa, and has seen a rise in the number of small boats landing there from Tunisia in particular. - APP



DERBY: Pakistani batsman Babar Azam playing a drive during a practice match ahead of first test match against England. - DNA

Experts appreciate gender equality
reforms being carried out in Uzbekistan

Last year, in the year of the 40th anniversary of the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", Uzbekistan adopted two new laws - "On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men"

DNA

TASHKENT: An online discussion of the expert group on the topic "Preparing gender-responsive legislation as part of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of the Beijing Declaration: the role of parliamentarians" was held, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the UN division for gender equality and the empowerment of women "UN Women".

It should be noted that parliamentarians from various countries responsible for gender policy issues were represented at the consultations. A member of the Executive Committee of the IPU, First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the

Republic of Uzbekistan A. Saidov also took part in the work of this event.

The main purpose of the event was the exchange of experience and practice on gender equality issues, discussion of the results of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, as well as the project "Guide for parliamentarians on the preparation of legislation with regard to gender aspects."

It was noted that worldwide over 2.5 billion women and girls are under the influence of various kinds of discriminatory laws, and there is no adequate protection for their legal protection. In 2019, IPU, UN Women and a number of other international organizations approved the Fast-Track Strategy "Equality in the Laws of Women and Girls 2030".

In March 2020, the UN has revised and adopted the Political Declaration in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Now they also pay special attention to the prevention of gender discrimination in the adopted laws, which was another breakthrough in ensuring gender equality.

First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber A. Saidov noted that since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Uzbekistan has confirmed its full commitment to creating a society in which the rights and opportunities of both sexes are equal and respected equally. The progress achieved by Uzbekistan in the field of gender equality aroused particular interest in the UN Secretary

General A. Guterres. The founding of the Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family was the cornerstone in preventing violations of women's rights and creating favorable conditions.

Last year, in the year of the 40th anniversary of the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", Uzbekistan adopted two new laws - "On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men" and "On the protection of women from oppression and violence."

For the first time in the history of Uzbek parliamentarism, a woman was elected as the chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, thus Uzbekistan became the 56th state, where a representative of the weaker

sex is at the head of parliament. The President of the Senate also simultaneously heads the Gender Equality Commission.

In turn, the participants of the event highly appreciated the reforms and transformations being carried out in Uzbekistan in the field of ensuring gender equality. In particular, UN Women political adviser Beatrice Duncan stressed that "legislation plays a key role in reflecting and developing social norms regarding what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in society. Therefore, parliamentarians play an important role in drafting laws that can protect women and girls and improve their lives."

B. Duncan also welcomed the efforts of Uzbekistan to

create equal conditions and opportunities for women and girls in the full realization of their potential both in public life and in professional career. At the same time, the role and aspiration of the parliament in solving pressing problems in the field of gender equality were especially emphasized.

At the end of the event, the participants exchanged views on the draft "Guide for parliamentarians on the preparation of legislation with a gender perspective". This Guide is designed for parliamentarians to support them in identifying inequalities in national legislation and preparing gender-sensitive legal reforms. This publication is based on the Fast Track Strategy for Women and Girls Equality 2030, adopted by UN Women in 2019.

Uzbek
Central
Bank signs
agreements
with IFC

DNA

TASHKENT: The Central Bank of Uzbekistan signed agreements with the International Finance Company (IFC) on the implementation of two projects aimed at; improving the regulatory environment for the development of electronic and digital financial services, implementation of programs to improve financial literacy.

The main goal of these projects is to expand the financial availability of financial services for the population. According to the press service of the Central Bank, IFC experts will assist in the development of regulatory documents in the field of electronic and digital financial services, in particular: remote servicing and provision of financial services, implementation of the principles of remote customer identification, a regulatory sandbox for payment systems, attraction of bank payment agents by credit institutions.

In the field of increasing the financial literacy of the population, the IFC will assist the Central Bank in training trainers in commercial banks of the republic for their subsequent consulting (training) of their clients on topics related to budget planning and the principles of money management, responsible borrowing and the formation of savings, as well as with digital financial literacy.

Hamilton
eyes seventh
Silverstone
triumph

SILVERSTONE (UK): Fresh from two dominant triumphs, Lewis Hamilton will seek to complete an early-season hat-trick and extend his home wins record to seven without his usual impassioned supporters in "super weird" circumstances at this weekend's British Grand Prix.

The six-time world champion and current standings leader has always drawn energy from the big crowds that support him at Silverstone, but this year's event will be run behind closed doors in front of empty grandstands.

"The British Grand Prix is the best and that's particularly because of the fans - thousands and thousands always turn up to create a great spectacle," said the Briton. "So, it is going to be super weird to be there without them." For Hamilton, that means no crowd-surfing celebrations and keeping his feet on the ground as he bids to add to his wins at the Styrian and Hungarian Grands Prix as the coronavirus-delayed 2020 season returns. This Sunday's race will be the 71st British Grand Prix and 54th at Silverstone and is followed one week later by a race at the same venue to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the inaugural world championship event in 1950.

Brentford
reaches
Championship
play-off final

LONDON: Brentford booked their place in the Championship play-off final as they powered to an impressive 3-1 win against Swansea on Wednesday. Thomas Frank's side trailed 1-0 after Sunday's semi-final first leg, but they hit back to mark the last match at their Griffin Park stadium with a 3-2 aggregate success. Ollie Watkins cancelled out Swansea's advantage in the opening minutes and Emiliano Marcondes doubled stylish Brentford's lead before the break.

Bryan Mbeumo bagged their third goal after half-time and Rhian Brewster's strike was too late to spark a Swansea revival. Brentford will face local rivals Fulham or Cardiff in the play-off final at Wembley on August 4.

Fulham hold a 2-0 first leg lead heading into Thursday's decisive meeting at Craven Cottage.

Successive defeats at the end of the regular season ruined third placed Brentford's hopes of automatic promotion to the Premier League.

But the unfashionable west London club, forever in the shadow of neighbours Chelsea, remain in the hunt to reach England's top-flight for the first time in 73 years. - APP



BUCHAREST: Dr Zafar Iqbal, Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania presented his letter of credence to the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis. - DNA

Amir joins
Pak squad
in Derby

LAHORE: Fast bowler Mohammad Amir has joined the Pakistan squad in Derby after clearing both Covid-19 tests.

Amir left for England from Lahore on 24 July and, as per the UK government's guidelines, was in isolation for a period of five days during which he was tested twice, said a spokesman of the Pakistan Cricket Board here on Thursday.

Meanwhile, fast bowler Harris Rauf has cleared his second Covid-19 test and is eligible to join the squad in England. As per the protocols he was tested twice - Monday and Wednesday. "He is expected to travel over the weekend. Details of his travel plan will be shared in due course", he added.

World No. 1 tennis star
won't play in US

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Australia's Ashleigh Barty, the top-ranked singles player in women's tennis, has announced she will not play in either the Western & Southern Open or the US Open, citing Covid-19 concerns.

"My team and I have decided that we won't be traveling to the US for the Western and Southern Open and

the US Open this year," said Barty, who won the French Open last year for her first major title, in a statement.

"I love both events so it was a difficult decision but there are still significant risks involved due to Covid 19 and I don't feel comfortable putting my team and I in that position. I wish the USTA all the best for the tournaments and look forward to being back in the US next year. "I will make my decision on

the French Open and the surrounding WTA European tournaments in the coming weeks."

The US Open main draw is scheduled to begin on August 31. The Western & Southern Open, which is normally held in Mason, Ohio, a Cincinnati suburb, will be held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York this year, with main draw play beginning August 22.

Tech chiefs face claims
of 'harmful' power

WASHINGTON: The heads of some of the world's biggest tech companies have appeared before Washington lawmakers to defend their firms against claims they abuse their power to quash competitors. Amazon boss Jeff Bezos said the world

"needs large" firms, while the heads of Facebook, Apple and Google argued their companies had spurred innovation. The appearance comes as lawmakers consider tougher regulation and competition probes are under way. Some critics want the firms

broken up. Congressman David Cicilline, the Democrat leading the congressional committee holding the hearing, said a year-long investigation by lawmakers had showed the online platforms had "wielded their power in destructive, harmful ways in order to expand".

Pelosi orders
US lawmakers
to wear masks

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives has ordered all members and staff to wear face masks as the national death toll from coronavirus rose above 150,000.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said members would be allowed to remove their masks when addressing the chamber but that anyone who broke the new rule faced being removed. Democrats have a majority in the House and party members are considering making lawmakers take tests for the virus before they enter the Capitol complex.

Ms Pelosi took the decision after Louie Gohmert, a Texas Republican often seen around the Capitol without a face covering, tested positive on Wednesday. He had been due to travel that day with US President Donald Trump.

NZ PM aims to help
'stranded' players

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Thursday said officials were "looking to resolve" the plight of two Warriors rugby league players who face being stranded in Australia due to COVID-19 border restrictions. The Warriors this week revealed Eliesa Katoa and Selestino Ravutaumada had been told they could not return to New Zealand when the NRL season ends in Australia because they are not Kiwi citizens.

Warriors chief executive Cameron George said the situation was "devastating" for the two 20-year-olds, who have no family in Australia and have lived

in New Zealand for years after winning schoolboy scholarships. "They're kids, the poor buggers," he told stuff.co.nz, adding: "So what are we going to do? Drop them off and leave them on the shores of Australia?"

Many New Zealanders have expressed support for Katoa, from Tonga, and Fiji citizen Ravutaumada, who has represented his adopted homeland with the Junior Kiwis. "This needs (to be) sorted! Let's do something about this Jacinda Ardern. Never leave our own behind," former Black Caps cricket captain Brendon McCullum tweeted. - APP



Briefs

Boeing reports big loss, signals job cuts

NEW YORK: Boeing suffered a bigger-than-expected loss in the latest quarter, the company announced Wednesday, and signaled additional job cuts are likely as it contends with a protracted air travel downturn amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The aerospace giant, which previously suspended the dividend for shareholders and announced a 10 percent staff downsizing, also said it would phase out production of the iconic 747 jumbo jet and ratchet back production plans on other commercial aircraft due to the weak outlook. Those moves are expected to lead to further job cuts.

"Regretfully, the prolonged impact of COVID-19 causing further reductions in our production rates and lower demand for commercial services means we'll have to further assess the size of our workforce," Chief Executive Dave Calhoun said in a message to employees. "This is difficult news, and I know it adds uncertainty during an already challenging time. We will try to limit the impact on our people as much as possible going forward."

The results underscored anew the battered state of commercial aviation following lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus. It comes on the heels of deep losses by leading US carriers that have announced belt-tightening plans of their own that will remove tens of thousands of jobs. — APP

Japan to lift virus ban on foreign residents

TOKYO: Japan will from next week lift a ban on the re-entry of some foreign residents, imposed to limit the spread of coronavirus, the foreign ministry has announced. Up to 90,000 foreign nationals with residence permits, including students, business people and trainees, are currently stuck outside Japan after authorities banned re-entry from over 100 countries in response to the global pandemic.

From August 5, those who left Japan before their destination countries were added to the ban list will be able to apply to return, the foreign ministry said in a statement late Wednesday.

Those eligible will have to obtain a "re-entry confirmation letter" from the nearest Japanese diplomatic mission and submit evidence of a negative virus test conducted within 72 hours of their flight. From September 1, those conditions will also apply to foreign nationals in other categories, including permanent or long-term residents and spouses and children of Japanese nationals or permanent residents. — APP

Airbus posts net loss of 1.9bn euros

PARIS: Airbus announced Thursday net losses of 1.9 billion euros (\$2.2 bn) in the first six months after aircraft delivery halved as a result of the coronavirus crisis. The leading European company delivered 196 planes over the first six months of 2020 as airlines around the globe slashed schedules and pushed back orders.

"The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our financials is now very visible in the second quarter, with H1 commercial aircraft deliveries halving compared to a year ago," said Airbus chief Guillaume Faury in a statement. Airbus reported revenue fell 39 percent to 18.9 billion euros over the first half — with hefty drop of 55 percent over the second quarter.

That left operational losses of 1.6 billion euros including a 332-million-euro charge for the closure next year of the wide-body A380 programme. Operational losses from COVID-19 were booked at 900 million euros. With air traffic not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels before 2023-2025, Airbus said it has cut production by 40 percent. — APP



MAKKAH: The workers placing a new Kiswa, the black cloth covering, on the Holy Kaaba. — DNA

Huawei overtakes Samsung as top smartphone seller

The British government bowed to growing US pressure and pledged earlier this month to remove Huawei from its 5G network by 2027, despite warnings of retaliation from Beijing

DNA

BEIJING: China's Huawei has overtaken Samsung to become the number-one smartphone seller worldwide in the second quarter on the back of strong domestic demand, industry tracker Canalys said Thursday.

Canalys said the embattled firm, which is facing US sanctions and falling overseas sales, shipped 55.8 million devices — overtaking Samsung for the first time, which shifted 53.7 million units. The findings marked the first quarter in nine years that a com-

pany other than Samsung or Apple has led the market, Canalys said. US sanctions had "stifled" Huawei's business outside mainland China, the research group added, but it had grown to dominate its substantial home market.

More than 70 percent of Huawei smartphones are now sold in the country, Canalys said, where Samsung has a very small share of the market.

Huawei said in a statement it was a sign of "exceptional resilience." Overseas shipments, however, fell nearly a third in the second quarter and Canalys analyst Mo Jia warned that strength in Chi-

na alone "will not be enough to sustain Huawei at the top once the global economy starts to recover."

"Its major channel partners in key regions, such as Europe, are increasingly wary of ranging Huawei devices, taking on fewer models, and bringing in new brands to reduce risk," Mo said.

Huawei — the world's top producer of telecoms networking equipment — has become a pivotal issue in the geopolitical standoff between Beijing and Washington, which claims the firm poses a significant cybersecurity threat.

Washington has essentially barred

Huawei from the US market and waged a global campaign to isolate the company.

The British government bowed to growing US pressure and pledged earlier this month to remove Huawei from its 5G network by 2027, despite warnings of retaliation from Beijing.

The politically-fraught change requires companies to stop buying new 5G equipment from Huawei starting next year and strip out existing gear by the end of 2027.

On Wednesday the US ambassador in Brasilia warned of "consequences" if Brazil chooses Huawei

for the project to develop the next generation of telecommunications technology in Latin America's most populous country.

Australia and Japan have taken steps to block or restrict the Chinese company's participation in their 5G rollouts, and European telecoms operators including Norway's Telenor and Sweden's Telia have passed over Huawei as a supplier.

The US has also requested the extradition of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou on fraud charges, further damaging relations between China and Canada, where she is under house arrest.



KABUL: Ambassador Stefano Pontecorvo meets Afghan National Security Adviser. — DNA

Federal forces to step back from Portland protests

DNA

PORTLAND: The Trump administration is planning to withdraw some federal security forces from Portland, Oregon, after weeks of clashes with protesters.

US Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said the pullout was conditional on local police protecting federal buildings, the focal point of unrest.

Oregon Governor Kate

Brown said federal agents would start leaving the state's biggest city from Thursday.

Portland has been rocked by 62 consecutive days of demonstrations. In his statement, the US homeland security secretary set a timeline for a pullout. But he said he and the governor had "agreed to a joint plan to end the violent activity in Portland directed at federal properties and law enforcement officers".

"That plan includes a robust presence of Oregon State Police in downtown Portland." He added that "state and local law enforcement will begin securing properties and streets, especially those surrounding federal properties, that have been under nightly attack".

The governor tweeted on Wednesday: "They have acted as an occupying force & brought violence. Starting tomorrow, all Customs and Border Protection & ICE

officers will leave downtown Portland." But she added that federal officers from the US Marshals Service and Federal Protective Service will stay at the courthouse, where they are usually based.

Following the announcement, President Trump, a Republican, declared victory, tweeting: "If the Federal Government and its brilliant Law Enforcement (Homeland) didn't go into Portland one week ago, there would be no Portland."

Florida to close test centres as storm bears down

DNA

FLORIDA: Florida, one of the US states worst hit by the coronavirus, says it is to close its testing centres as a tropical storm heads towards the coast.

"All sites have free standing structures including tents and other equipment, which cannot withstand tropical storm force winds, and could cause damage to people and property if not secured," state emergency management officials said.

The sites will close from 17:00 local time (22:00 GMT) on Thursday until further notice, they added.

Tropical Storm Isaias, packing winds of 50mph (80km/h) is due to make landfall in the state by the end of the week, according to the National Hurricane Center. Florida, which has a population of 21 million, has reported more than 450,000 infections and about 6,300 deaths from the virus.

India gets Rafale fighter jets from France

WEB DESK

DELHI: Five French-made jet fighters arrived in India on Wednesday, the first of 36 New Delhi ordered as it moves to upgrade its air force amid a spike in tensions with China.

"The Birds have landed safely in Ambala," Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted. "The touch-down of Rafale combat air-

crafts in India marks the beginning of a new era in our military history." Singh said the twin-engine, multirole fighters would "revolutionize" the Indian Air Force (IAF). Ordered in 2016, they come in one-seat or two-seat versions and can be armed with air-to-air, air-to-ground and anti-ship missiles as well as a 30mm cannon, according to the manufacturer, Dassault Aviation.

Dassault also touts the Rafale's Flight Control System, which includes the ability for it to fly on autopilot in a terrain-following mode in all weather conditions.

"This aircraft has very good flying performance and its weapons, radar and other sensors and electronic warfare capabilities are among the best in the world. Its arrival in India will make the IAF much stronger to deter any

threat that may be posed on our country," Singh is quoted as saying in a government press release.

The arrival of the jets in India comes about six weeks after Indian troops fought with Chinese soldiers along the Line of Actual Control, the disputed border between the two powers high in the Himalayas. Twenty Indians were killed in hand-to-hand combat, and fears linger of further hostilities.

Spanish govt insists country safe for tourism

WEB DESK

MADRID: The Spanish government has attempted to reassure tourists that the nation is a safe destination, despite recent increases in coronavirus cases in some areas. "We want to send a clear message of confidence in our country," said government spokeswoman Maria Jesus Montero. "We are a secure destination that has made preparations and strengthened itself to deal with the virus and any outbreaks."

The tourism industry in Spain has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and even as many national lockdowns are being relaxed, visitors from other countries still appear hesitant to travel because of health fears.

Hotels, resorts and restaurants have been working to restore confidence by implementing safety measures and precautions designed to protect visitors.

US to move 12000 troops from Germany

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States has said it expects to move its European military headquarters out of Stuttgart, Germany to Belgium, as it announced broader plans to shift 12,000 troops out of Germany on orders from President Donald Trump.

Some 6,400 active US troops in Germany will be sent home while nearly 5,600 others will be moved to other NATO countries, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said at a news conference on Wednesday. About 24,000 troops will remain in Germany, a country considered one of the US's closest allies and trading partners since World War II.

Esper said that while the decision was "accelerated" by Trump's previous calls to withdraw troops, which began in June, the moves also promote larger strategic goals to deter Russia, reassure European allies and shift forces further east into the Black Sea and Baltic regions.

Four HK students arrested for 'secession'

HONG KONG: Four students have been arrested in Hong Kong in the first police operation to enforce China's new national security law for the territory.

The four were detained for "inciting secession" on social media after the new law began on 1 July, police said. A pro-independence group said those arrested included its former leader, Tony Chung. Beijing's controversial new law criminalises subversion, secession and collusion with foreign forces. Previous arrests under the new law have been made for slogans and banners at protests.

Critics say China's new law erodes Hong Kong's freedoms. But Beijing has dismissed the criticism, saying that the law is necessary to stop the type of pro-democracy protests seen in Hong Kong during much of 2019.

Three men and a woman aged between 16 and 21 were arrested on suspicion of organising and inciting secession, police said. "Our sources and investigation show that the group recently announced on social media to set up [sic] an organisation that advocates Hong Kong independence," said Li Kwai-wah from the new national security unit inside Hong Kong police. Computers, phones and documents were also seized, he said. — DNA

Jordan elections due for Nov. 10

DNA

AMMAN: Jordan is moving to hold elections for the House of Representatives, according to a Royal Court statement issued on Wednesday.

Ali Khawaldeh, director-general of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, told media the elections will likely take place on Nov. 10. The Independent Election Commission is expected to recommend a date for the elections in the coming days.

Amer Bani Amer, director-general of Rased, a Jordanian NGO that monitors elections and government activities, told media the

current political atmosphere is ripe for a different kind of parliament.

"The robust governmental anti-corruption activities, as well as effective anti-COVID-19 policies, mean that Jordanians are likely to elect a different kind of parliament," he said.

Amer said the effectiveness and success of a younger parliament will encourage the majority of Jordanians, who are young, to vote for younger candidates.

Samar Muhareb, CEO of the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development Society, told media that events in Jordan make her pessimistic about the state of democracy in the country.

India reports record cases as gyms, yoga centres reopen

NEWS DESK

DELHI: India has also set a new record for infections in a 24-hour period, with more than 52,000 people testing positive.

Cases have continued to soar in states including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and

Andhra Pradesh. India has the third highest tally of infections in the world after the US and Brazil, while about 35,000 have died. Despite the mounting caseload, the government further eased restrictions on Wednesday, allowing gym and yoga institutes to reopen from 5 August.

Briefs

19 districts of Punjab corona-free, says Yasmin

ABID RAZA

SIALKOT: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid announced on Thursday that the government had approved building a new 200-bed hospital in Sialkot. The project will cost around Rs4.5 million. Dr Rashid was speaking to reporters in Sialkot, one of the cities she says has the least coronavirus cases. "The coronavirus outbreak is now under control. Nineteen districts of Punjab are now virus-free," she said. On Wednesday, Pakistan reported another 32 deaths and 1,114 infections. A total of 25,347 active cases remain in Pakistan and 246,131 people have defeated the virus so far. The health minister added that seven more districts of Punjab will get new hospitals and Prime Minister Imran Khan will perform the ground breaking ceremony of the facilities. Speaking about Special Assistant to the PM on Health Dr Zafar Mirza resigning from his post, Dr Rashid clarified that it had nothing to do with Dr Mirza's recommendation on medicines that are being given to the coronavirus patients.

'Tania, Zafar resignations not big issue'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Science Minister Fawad Chaudhry feels that news of Special Assistant to the PM on Health Dr Zafar Mirza and Special Assistant to the PM on Digital Pakistan Tania Aidrus resigning from their posts is being highlighted more than it should be. "Frankly, it's not a big political event," he told a private television channel Thursday. "Special assistants aren't part of the federal cabinet. They are technocrats. They only attend cabinet meetings when invited because they are experts in their respective fields." Chaudhry was all praise for both Dr Mirza and Aidrus. He said both performed well, but their appointments had caused "a few problems". The federal minister claimed that confusion emerged when Aidrus was invited to head the Digital Pakistan initiative because this is actually the National Information Technology Board's responsibility. They were confused about who will work to digitise the country so she decided to step down, Chaudhry claimed. However, in her tweet, Aidrus said she was resigning because "the recent discourse in the public sphere about her Canadian nationality will bar her from executing on the long term vision for a Digital Pakistan". Aidrus is a former Google executive who was appointed special assistant in February 2020.

SC to hear APS attack case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has set August 4 as the date to hear the case pertaining to the 2014 attack on Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Gulzar Ahmed will head the two-member bench. A notice has been sent to the attorney general. The judicial commission formed to investigate the 2014 attack on Peshawar's Army Public School had already submitted its report in the Supreme Court. The commission recorded the statements of 101 witnesses and 31 police and other officials of law enforcement agencies for its 3,000-page report. It may be noted that the then chief justice of the Supreme Court Saqib Nisar had ordered judicial inquiry of the carnage in 2018.

EU teams with Pakistani singer for COVID 19 video

Ambassador of the EU to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara said, "As we were unable to celebrate the traditional annual Europe Day, the EU Delegation and the Member States of the EU wanted to increase our awareness efforts to combat COVID-19

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: This year the world has been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, and prevention and precaution against this grave and potentially life threatening illness has been the main message when it comes to keeping the health emergency under control. While the disease is dire, the public message does not need to be. Shehzad Roy, singer and humanitarian, tells the story about the

adventures of a family of Covid19 viruses trying to infect everyone they can using an engaging mix of animated and real life footage. The core message is that even if one does not feel any symptoms (i.e. is an asymptomatic carrier), precautionary measures are necessary to stop the spread of Covid19 and save lives. Organisations like Edhi, Aga Khan Foundation, Citizen's Foundation and companies from across a spectrum of industries have endorsed the message. The European Union, which is



committed to supporting Pakistan in the prevention and fight against COVID-19, has allocated 150 million Euros to the cause. Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara said, "As we were unable to celebrate the traditional annual Europe Day, the EU Delegation and the Member States of the European Union wanted to increase our awareness efforts to combat COVID-19. As such, the financing was repurposed for awareness campaigns. We partnered with Shehzad Roy and this video is the

result. It is being release in time for Eid and hope that as many people as possible will join us to spread this important message in Urdu, Punjabi, Pashtu and Sindhi. Shehzad Roy said, "A few days ago my family and myself contracted the Corona virus infection. With Allah's blessings, we are all fine now. The least I could do was try to create awareness before Eid. In this video you will see what the virus looks like, how it attacked us and then how can we destroy it forever."

Significant improvement in number of recoveries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: There is a significant improvement in the number of recoveries from Covid-19 in Pakistan with the tally reaching 246,131. According to the latest data shared by the National Command and Operation Center, 1114 new cases and 32 deaths were reported during the last twenty four hours. 21,628 tests were carried out during this period. It is pertinent to mention here that number of active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan is 25,347.

9 people shot dead over property dispute in Upper Dir

DNA

UPPER DIR: At least nine people were shot dead over property dispute in Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday. According to the local police, the incident took place in Cheeragalai, an area of Upper Dir, in which unidentified men opened fire after performing funeral prayers. As result of indiscriminate firing nine people lost their lives on the spot, while two others sustained wounds. The bodies and injured were moved to hospital for medico-legal formalities. The police has launched investigation into the matter and conducting raids for the arrest of killers.

Transparency Int'l raises concerns over NAB amends

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On recent development of negotiations on the amendments in NAO 1999, Chairman TI Pakistan Sohail Muzaffar has expressed TI Pakistan's concerns, that changes in NAO 1999 are welcome for Transparent Accountability, but are to be made carefully with respect to Pakistan government's Commitments on Anti Corruption in UNCAC, FATF, OECD Convention and Sustainable Development Goals. Sohail Muzaffar has stated that under the leadership of Chairman Justice R Javed Iqbal, NAB, anticorruption drive in last 34 months has resulted in an impact much needed since its inception, and NAB has so far made recovery of Rs 466 Billion which is a remarkable achievement. Chairman TI Pakistan is also said that Pakistan has ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption UNCAC on 9th August 2007. And the President of Pakistan under Article 6 of UNCAC, has nominated National Accountability Bureau as the Authority which will develop and implement of Pakistan specific anti corruption measures in the country and cooperate at international level.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of coordination committee on housing. - DNA

British Airways Restarts Flights to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: British Airways has announced it will resume flight operations to Pakistan from the UK, signalling the continued importance of ties between the two countries. The airline today said it would start direct flights three times a week to and from Heathrow Airport and Islamabad. The first flight will land in Islamabad on 14 August, and will be taking extra precautionary measures for the safety of its crew and passengers. Today's announcement is another important step in reconnecting the trade ties and people-to-people ties between the UK and Pakistan. Due to COVID-19, passengers will be required to wear masks and will have access to hand sanitisers during the flight. Crew members will wear masks during the flight. There are also extra measures in place at airports to ensure travellers stay safe. The British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner CMG, said this was an important moment for UK-Pakistan links: The resumption of British Airways direct flights is a big boost for the hundreds of thousands of travellers who travel regularly between our two great nations, many who have had their travel plans disrupted by the pandemic. I'd like to thank to the Government of Pakistan, British Airways and my team in Pakistan who have worked hard to deliver this welcome news. Moran Birger, Head of Sales, Asia Pacific and the Middle East at British Airways, said: "We are pleased to once again provide a service between Pakistan and the UK. We know many of our customers in both countries have been waiting to be reunited with friends and family. We look forward to welcoming them back onboard." - DNA

Zardari challenges indictment proceedings

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday has submitted a plea in the court requesting to halt indictment proceedings against him in Thatta Water Supply reference. According to details, the accountability court has issued a notice to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Zardari's plea. It is to be mentioned here that the court had decided to indict Asif Ali Zardari in Thatta water supply reference on August 4. All the accused were also summoned on the same day for further proceedings. Earlier, NAB court had postponed indictment of former president and Asif Ali Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur in mega money laundering case till August 7. In December 2019, former president Asif Ali Zardari was released on medical grounds after an accountability court in Islamabad issued separate rokars [mandamus] in the Park Lane Estate Company and the money laundering through fake bank accounts cases against him.

Pak condemns restrictions imposed by India on Eid prayers in IOK

The transfer of advanced systems, where there is an open intention of conversion into nuclear delivery platforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has urged the world community to dissuade India from its disproportionate arms build-up which could lead to an arms race in South Asia. Addressing weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said the world is already a witness to the bellicose and irresponsible rhetoric by the BJP Government in pursuit of a revisionist agenda in the neighbourhood. Reacting to the reports of recent acquisition of Rafale jets by Indian Air Force, the Spokesperson said India continues to amass military capabilities beyond its genuine security

requirement. The first batch of five French-made Rafale fighter jets arrived at an Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Ambala on Wednesday, following which India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted that "If anyone should be worried about or critical about this new capability ... it should be those who want to threaten our territorial integrity." "The transfer of advanced systems, where there is an open intention of conversion into nuclear delivery platforms, calls into question the commitment of international suppliers to non-proliferation commitments," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said. The Spokesperson said Pakistan has been consistently highlighting the risks of massive Indian arms build-

up as well as their offensive security doctrine and force postures, which are adversely affecting strategic stability in South Asia. She said this arms buildup is being aided and abetted through a policy of exemptions, waivers and supply of advanced equipment, technology and weapons for narrow commercial interests. Aisha Farooqui said such arms transfers also violate the objectives of various export control regimes on preventing destabilizing accumulations of arms in various regions including where there exist outstanding conflicts and disputes. On Pakistan's part, she said, we remain open to consideration of measures for crisis management, risk reduction, and strategic restraint.

Legal rep for Kulbhushan: hearing on Aug 3

The judge remarked that Pakistan and India are signatories of the Vienna Convention "A continued stay of execution constitutes an indispensable condition for the effective review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Mr Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav," it ruled

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday has constituted a bench to hear plea submitted by the federal government under Presidential Ordinance for appointment of legal representative for Indian spy and agent of intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) Kulbhushan Jadhav against his sentence. According to details, the bench headed by IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah will conduct proceedings on the petition on August 3. Earlier on July 22, the government had approached the court stating that Kulbhushan, who was involved in several terrorist activities in Pakistan, had refused to file plea against his sentence. The agent cannot appoint lawyer in Pakistan without assistance from India, it read. On July 2, Pakistan had decided to grant third consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav following his refusal to file review

petition against his sentence. On July 16, 2020, Indian Charge d'affaires reached the Foreign Office as New Delhi accepted Pakistan's offer to give second consular access to Jadhav. The place where the agent was kept had been declared as sub-jail. Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said first consular access under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 was earlier provided by Pakistan on second September last year. She said the mother and wife of commander Jadhav were also allowed to meet him on December 25, 2017. Aisha Farooqui said two consular officers of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad were provided unimpeded and uninterrupted consular access to Commander Jadhav. On July 17, 2019, the ICJ had rejected remedies sought by India, including annulment of military court decision convicting Kulbhushan Jadhav, his release and safe passage to India. Announcing the verdict Judge Abdulqavi Ahmed Yousaf told Paki-

stan to review the death sentence for an alleged Indian spy, saying Islamabad violated his rights to consular visits. The court, in its verdict, rejected a number of Indian demands including annulment of military court decision convicting Jadhav, his release and safe passage to India. The ICJ found that Pakistan deprived India of the right to communicate with and have access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, to visit him in detention and to arrange for his legal representation, and thereby breached obligations incumbent upon it under Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. The tribunal in The Hague ordered an "effective review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav". The judge remarked that Pakistan and India are signatories of the Vienna Convention. "A continued stay of execution constitutes an indispensable condition for the effective review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Mr Kulbhushan

Sudhir Jadhav," it ruled. The court while finding Jadhav guilty of committing terrorist activities inside Pakistan, ordered that the Indian spy cannot be handed over to India. Kulbhushan will remain in Pakistan's custody, it ruled. Pakistani team headed by the attorney general was present in the courtroom. The team also included then Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Muhammad Faisal. Government arrested Jadhav alias Hussein Mubarak Patel in the province of Balochistan on charges of terrorism and spying for India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). The government stated that he was a serving commander in the Indian Navy who was involved in subversive activities inside Pakistan and was arrested on March 3, 2016 during a counter-intelligence operation in Mashkel, Balochistan. The Indian government recognized Jadhav as a former naval officer but denied any current links with him and maintained that he took

premature retirement and was abducted from Iran. On March 25, 2016, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) released the confessional statement of Jadhav where he claimed to be a serving Indian Navy officer. "By 2002, I commenced intelligence operations. In 2003, I established a small business in Chabahar in Iran," he admitted. "As I was able to achieve undetected existence and visits to Karachi in 2003 and 2004. Having done some basic assignments within India for RAW, I was picked up by RAW in 2013 end." He said his purpose was to meet Baloch insurgents and carry out "activities with their collaboration". On April 8, 2017, ISPR lodged a first information report (FIR) against him whereas on April 11, 2017, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa had confirmed death sentence of Jadhav who was tried through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act (PAA). He was tried un-

der section 59 of Pakistan Army Act (PAA) 1952 and Section III of official Secret Act of 1923. FGCM found Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav guilty of all the charges. He confessed before a Magistrate and the Court that he was tasked by RAW to plan, coordinate and organize espionage and sabotage activities aiming to destabilize and wage war against Pakistan by impeding the efforts of Law Enforcement Agencies for restoring peace in Balochistan and Karachi. On May 8, 2017, India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denying consular access to Jadhav. On May 18, 2017, the ICJ stayed the execution pending the final judgment on the case and even on July 13, 2018, ICJ stayed Kulbhushan Jadhav's execution in Pakistan. On June 22, 2017, Jadhav gave a second consular statement where he confessed to carrying out subversive activities in Balochistan. On July 22, 2019, ICJ reserved its judgment in Jadhav case whereas they are going to rule the verdict today on July 17, 2019.