



# Islamabad POST

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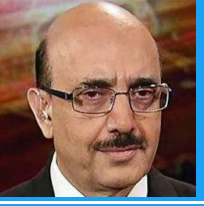
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**Clean & Green  
Pakistan our dream,  
says PM Imran Khan**

**UNGA President  
Volkan Bozkir  
arrives in Pakistan**



**Kashmir a deep  
wound on Ummah's  
body, says Masood**



## Briefs

**Karachi rain:  
21 people  
killed in  
three days**

DNA

KARACHI: At least twenty-one people died in three days of rain in the metropolis. The fourth spell of monsoon that started on Thursday left a trail of havoc in its wake. Among those killed in electrocution, roof collapse and drowning incidents are five children. At least twelve people were electrocuted to death during the recent monsoon spell. Several low-lying areas and major roads in the city inundated because of the rain. The Korangi EBM Causeway was closed for traffic after the Malir River overflowed. Gulbahar's Kashmir neighbourhood flooded after Lyari stormwater drain overflowed. Several parts of the metropolis were deprived of electricity on the third day of rainfall in Karachi on Saturday. Many feeders and PMTs tripped after the rain caused a massive power breakdown in the city.

**Refugees to  
repatriate  
Afghanistan  
today**

DNA

PESHAWAR: The voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan will restart tomorrow. A spokesman of UNHCR Qaiser Afridi told Radio Pakistan that a repatriation center has been set up at Azakhel district Nowshera to register refugees who want to go back to Afghanistan. The spokesman said that the facility to register refugees at the center will be open only on Monday and Tuesday.

**Pak, China  
working  
to ensure  
transparency**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Honorable Justice Javed Chaharman NAB has said that NAB is the focal organization of Pakistan under United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as Pakistan is signatory of UNCAC. Pakistan is the only country in the world to which China has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for eradication of corruption. Pakistan and China are now jointly working for ensuring transparency in China Pakistan Economic Coordination CPEC projects. He said that World Economic Forum Report, Transparency International, Pakistan, PILDAT and Mishal Pakistan has lauded NAB's efforts to aware people about the ill effects of corruption for corruption free Pakistan.

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## Clean & Green Pakistan our dream: PM

**Our wheat production has fallen over the past two years due to climate change and unprecedented rainfall**

DNA / SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan launched the country's largest tree plantation campaign on Sunday with the aim of planting 3.5 million saplings in the country in a single day. Addressing a ceremony in Islamabad, the premier began his address by thanking all those who had participated in today's campaign. He stated that Pakistan was among the top ten countries most affected by climate change. "Our wheat production has fallen over the past two years due to climate change and unprecedented rainfall." If we keep continuing on this path, then some of the areas will become deserts, he said. "It is our responsibility to make the country green for future generations," he said. "The 3.5 million saplings that we have planted today is just the start. This is a constant, ongoing battle, [but] we are not doing

this for us. We are doing it for the coming generations," he said. "This is just the beginning. This is a long battle, but thankfully we have started the process," he said, vowing that trees would be planted in "empty spaces" in cities.

The premier also urged women to participate. "The women have to participate the most," he said. In a tweet on Saturday, the premier had asked members of parliament, the chief ministers of all the provinces and volunteers from the Corona Relief Tiger Force to participate in the plantation drive, which is being carried out on Tiger Force Day. "The target is 35 lakh trees in a day though we will try to exceed it," the premier had said. Special Assistant to PM on Youth Affairs Usman Dar in his message, asked opposition politicians Shehbaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto, Khawaja Asif and others to join the plantation drive. "The Sindh government should [join us in] favour of national interest," the politician had said.

## Pakistan Army, Navy continue relief operation

DNA

JHAL MAGSI: Relief & rescue operation continues in various areas of Dadu, Jhal Magsi. Pakistan Army and Navy rescue teams including medical and Engineering teams assisting civil administration to rescue stranded people to safer places. Hot meal served to 1000 stranded people. Jhal Magsi-Gandawah main colonies connected. Pasi bridge opened for all kind of traffic. Coastal highway connected. In Jhal magsi, All Hindu families struck in Wangu hills rescued to safer places after 8 hours long rescue operation



N-65 blocked near Bibi Nani bridge & Pinjra Bridge due to high level of water. Main Gas transmission line damaged near Bibi nani bridge. Due to rains and Hill torrents Roads Quetta - Jacobabad, Gawadar - Karachi and Sibbi - Kohlu blocked at various places.

## South Africa wants enhanced trade with Pakistan: envoy

ISLAMABAD: South Africa considered Pakistan an important market for business cooperation and wanted to further enhance bilateral trade with it as the two countries have good potential to do trade in many areas. This was observed by Mthuzuzeli Madikiza, High Commissioner of South Africa in Pakistan while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI). Mr. C.J. Janse Van Noordwyk, Deputy Head of Mission also accompanied him at the occasion. Mthuzuzeli Madikiza said that South Africa was now focusing on South-South cooperation whereby Pakistan and South Africa could assist each other by sharing technical and economic knowledge and skills to facilitate reciprocal economic development. He said that South Africa has launched many construction and infrastructure development projects and Pakistani investors should explore them for investment and JVs. He said that South Africa was further improving ease of doing business to facilitate entrepreneurs and it could be an additional attraction for Pakistani investors to focus on his country. He assured that the South African High Commission would facilitate Pakistani business community in linking up with South African counterparts for promoting business collaboration in areas of mutual interest. Speaking at the occasion, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the existing level of bilateral trade between Pakistan and South Africa was not reflective of the actual potential of both countries and more efforts from both sides were required to improve it. He said that Pakistan has formed a "Look Africa Plan" and hoped that it would help in improving Pakistan's trade relations with African countries. He said that many Pakistani products including textiles, marble, furniture, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, cereals, rice, pink salt have good potential to penetrate the South African market and stressed that South Africa should rationalize its tariffs for Pakistani products that would further improve bilateral trade between the two countries. Similarly, many South African products including machinery & equipment, steel scrap, tin sheets and others could find good market in Pakistan. He urged that Pakistan and South Africa should sign a free trade agreement to remove trade barriers and boost two-way trade volume. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohammed Karmoune planting a tree as part of Prime Minister Imran Khan's tree plantation drive. - DNA

## Loya Jirga to release 400 Taliban prisoners

**President Ghani refused to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners saying their crimes were 'very serious' and he cannot make any decision by himself to release them, thus he called for Loya Jirga, a traditional gathering of people's representatives from all over the country**

DNA

KABUL: Afghanistan's Loya Jirga has urged the government to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners so as to move forward intra-Afghan talks. The Loya Jirga was called to determine the fate of the prisoners, convened Friday and wrapped up on Saturday. Over 3,200 including at least 700 women delegates participated which were split up into 50 working committees and discussed the prisoner release issue. All 50 committees recommended the government to free the 400 controversial prisoners. Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of the 2020 Afghanistan peace Loya Jirga and the head of Afghan peace reconciliation office announce on the second day of the meeting that Jirga has decided to agree on the release of another 400 Taliban prisoners. "None of the 50 committees of the jirga categorically opposed the release of 400 high-value Taliban prisoners, a Taliban precondition to allow intra-Afghan negotiations begin", Abdullah

## Pakistan welcomes Jirga's advice

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday welcomed the Afghan Loya Jirga's recommendation to release remaining 400 prisoners, hoping the step would pave way for early commencement of intra-Afghan negotiations. After three-day debates, Afghan Loya Jirga, an assembly of elders, chieftains and notables, Sunday recommended the Afghan government to release 400 Taliban prisoners. The release of prisoners is part of the US-Taliban peace deal inked on February 29 in Doha to facilitate the intra-Afghan dialogue. The Afghan government has already released 4,600 inmates. - APP

and day of the meeting that Jirga has decided to agree on the release of another 400 Taliban prisoners. "None of the 50 committees of the jirga categorically opposed the release of 400 high-value Taliban prisoners, a Taliban precondition to allow intra-Afghan negotiations begin", Abdullah

said. In his tweet, he further added that: "I congratulate all Jirga members divided into 50 working committees for promptly ending their free deliberations. I welcome their input and recommendations as part of this important consultative exercise as we compile & announce the outcome to

morrow." According to Abdullah, the first round of the intra-Afghan negotiations will be held in Doha, if the release of the prisoners is completed promptly. Meanwhile, President Ghani said the other day that the Intra-Afghan dialogue will kick-off within 3 days after the 400 remaining Taliban prisoners are released. This comes as the Afghan government had earlier released 4,600 out of 5,000 Taliban prisoners as per the US-Taliban agreement signed in February. President Ghani refused to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners saying their crimes were 'very serious' and he cannot make any decision by himself to release them, thus he called for Loya Jirga, a traditional gathering of people's representatives from all over the country.

## PML-N slams PTI

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lashed out at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government on Sunday for celebrating 'Tiger Force Day', alleging that members of the volunteer force have been taking bribes in Punjab. "Government should be ashamed of celebrating the Tiger Force day," said PML-N Punjab spokesperson Azma Bokhari said in a statement. She alleged that three volunteers of the force were found taking bribes in Lahore only. Bukhari also told Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar that the billion-tree campaign of the PTI has failed "miserably". She added that local and foreign media both had revealed the "massive corruption" of the Pervez Khattak-led Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in the billion-tree project.

## UNGA President arrives in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President-elect Volkan Bozkir arrived in Islamabad for a two-day visit after his it was postponed last month due to "technical flight problems". He is undertaking the visit at the invitation of the Pakistani government. The Foreign Office, while announcing the visit, said Bozkir will meet Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The visit itself is an important one to inter alia highlight Pakistan's strong and substantive contributions to UN efforts in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, especially through our contribution to the UN Peacekeeping Operations around the world, read the statement by the FO. "Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi will have



wide-ranging talks with President-elect Volkan Bozkir on issues relating to the three main pillars of the United Nations' work, i.e. peace and security, development, and human rights", the Foreign Office said in a statement. Pakistan has said it remains committed to supporting the role of the UNGA on questions relating to international peace and security; economic and social development; promotion of human rights; peaceful settlement of international disputes; refraining from the threat of use of force; and developing friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights.

## Dar lauds diplomats' plantation drive

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar Sunday expressed his gratitude to the foreign diplomats for participating in the country's biggest plantation drive. In a press release, he said the diplomats of brotherly countries had shown the perfect example of love by joining in the government's efforts for clean and green Pakistan. "The government of Pakistan is extremely grateful to you for your cooperation," he added. According to the SAPM's office, the ambassadors of multiple countries including Azerbaijan, China, Kuwait and Yemen had launched the plantation drive by planting saplings. They appreciated the efforts of Prime Minister's Corona Relief Tiger Force for rendering services during the coronavirus pandemic.

## Misuse of imported car facility by diplomats

COMMENT



Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani press reported few days ago that many foreign diplomats have continuously been misusing their privileges available under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic

Relations and selling duty-free imported luxury vehicles to local businessmen, and in some cases, to their near and dear ones. As reports suggest, Pakistan Customs seized very expensive vehicles, four from possession of a single person, that were imported by foreign diplomats but were in the use of private persons. This has not only caused a Rs250-million revenue loss in these cases but also put the security of other diplomats at risk due to the use of fake or duplicate diplomatic number plates. The sources claim, the second list of persons involved in this illegal business is in the process of finalization and shall be shared with media as soon as it gets a green light from the high ups.

Few months back, we had also pin pointed various mafias working in the diplomatic enclave, either in the garb of businessmen, real estate agents; lawyers and even media people. Such people tend to invest in diplomats with a view to cultivating closer ties and then use these relations for illegal businesses such as getting liquor quotas; purchase of cars and in some cases getting visas. The recent car scandal is not a new phenomenon. This practice goes on perhaps ever since the establishment of diplomatic missions in Pakistan however with the passage of time this trend seems to have declined mainly because of strict checks and balances within the foreign missions and continuous warnings

from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. It also remains a fact that all this wrong doing cannot be done without the help of Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials. In recent past the high ups took cognizance of this and similar other matters and consequently those involved in illegal practices were shown the door. A protocol officer of the foreign office was proceeded against for charging heavy amount from embassies officials for issuing permits of importing tones of liquor on the names of diplomats. The senior officer's act caused losses worth billions of rupees by food and beverage permits to foreign embassies in Islamabad. Likewise a couple of officers were fired for issuing Note Verbal to

various embassies for issuance of visas and thus got huge sums in return from the visa seekers. Visas are ostensibly a tricky business and involve huge financial implications. We have heard from reliable sources that some of the embassies also removed their staff involved in issuing visas after taking money. We will share more details about such mafias and their network in the coming days. Coming back to cars issues, after publication of this news the embassies have cautioned their staff to immediately de-register all such cars. In some cases the heads of missions have asked their staff if anybody wants to buy car he or she can do so but the car shall remain in his or her use. A strict vigilance shall

be ensured in all such cases. It is also a fact that those involved in this nasty business are very small in numbers yet as it goes one bad fish spoils the whole pond. One should hope that the quarters concerned shall enforce strict measures in order to put an end to this business for it badly tarnishes image of the foreign mission involved. Likewise, the Pakistani authorities also need to exercise extra care and monitoring so that such incidents are not allowed to happen. Being the host country, greater onus lies on our shoulders for without local support and patronage foreigner cannot do anything. Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore needs to play a lead role in fight against this menace.



## Briefs

### DLA functional from Monday

ISLAMABAD: On the instructions of Inspector General National Highway and Motorways Police (NHMP), Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, the Driver Licensing Authority (DLA) would start working from Monday (tomorrow), said a press release issued here Sunday. The DLA working under NHMP had been inactive since March 24, in a bid to prevent the spread of the coronavirus as a precautionary measure. However, the public is requested to ensure a complete ban on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Government of Pakistan. In the wake of non-renewal of driving licenses (learner and regular) due to lockdown, the public is informed that the NHMP has extended their date for renewal for two months from the date of reopening of the DLA i.e. from August 10. No candidate will be allowed to enter the Driving Licensing Authority, Islamabad without a face mask and gloves. — APP

### Sale of Aug 14 related items at peak

ISLAMABAD: As Azadi festivities getting momentum, sale of Independence day (ID) related items including national flags, bunting, badges, dresses and other decorations at makeshift stalls has reached at its peak all across the country to attract patriotic customers specially kids. Shopkeepers and footpath vendors on different roads of capital city have set up their temporary stalls where people are seen in crowds busy in buying things at cheaper rates. According to roadside vendors, the most enthusiastic are the children who are busy in collecting stickers, badges and also beautifying their bicycles with special stickers inscribed with messages of Independence Day. A vendor at G-7 road while talking to APP said the demand for the National flags and badges was on the rise as August 14 is getting nearer, adding that most of the motorists were buying flags to hoist on their cars. Another seller in G-10 Markaz commented that like every year this year too vendors at their stalls on footpaths were doing a roaring business, trying to sell whatever they had as the entire inventory would go waste on August 15. — APP

## FEBR for reducing production cost

Kashif Anwar, asked the govt to take concrete steps to attract foreign investment, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with various sectors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Economic & Business Reforms (FEBR) President Kashif Anwar has stressed the need for bringing down industrial cost of production, which is very high on account of soaring energy tariffs, expansive fuel and constant rupee depreciation along with rising import duties on inputs, making the local production uncompetitive. In a statement, Kashif Anwar, asked the government to take concrete steps to attract foreign investment, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with various sectors. He observed that the government will have to make visible reduction in taxes to help revive

the businesses in post-corona economic strategy. He said that like the domestic industry Covid-19 crisis has also forced the global investors to put their new investment plans on hold. He said that there is no visible improvement in employment even after the business activities were allowed and countrywide lockdown eased. The small and medium industries (SMEs) — the main providers of jobs are still struggling because of lack of funds and demand. The job losses at the original equipment manufacturers not significant but at auto vendors, where bulk of auto-related jobs exist are operating with minimum possible staff. Kashif Anwar said that the global lockdown imposed to contain the virus badly impacted economic activities, businesses, people's income and their purchasing power. As a result, the demand for many products, except for food and pharmaceuticals, dropped sharply. The revival of demand for products like cement, textile and chemical would attract foreign investment in future, he said. The financial health of companies around the globe is deteriorating. Many of them are filing for bankruptcy. The return of stability to the financial health of global firms is a must to attract new foreign investment in Pakistan. He said that with a view to save the economy from the impacts of the slowdown due to the COVID-19 the government should offer out of the box solution for a cash-strapped SMEs, which represents more than 90 percent of around

3.2 million business enterprises in Pakistan, contributing 40 percent to the GDP, employing more than 80 percent of non-agricultural workforce, and generating 25 percent of export earnings. Expressing dissatisfaction over the financial packages announced so far by the government for industry to deal with the challenges posed by coronavirus, he called for a significant cut in import duties and waiver of sales tax, income tax and additional income taxes which are still being charged in this time of grave crisis. He warned that if smuggling is not checked immediately, the entire industry in general and the emerging industrial sectors in particular will suffer a serious setback. If this policy continues billions of rupees investment in domestic industry

will be shattered, he added. He said that bilateral Trade Agreements such as FTAs and MFNs with countries which have different regulations and protocols, defeat the principle of bilateral trade, as such, our capacity utilization decreases, increasing our cost of production. He asked the government that all impediments which increase the cost such as lower capacity utilization, import duties on inputs and lack of protection against imports need to be addressed for making exports feasible. FTAs particularly with China have given great setback to the local business, especially the industry. The local industry is not competitive in the global market as compared to its regional competitors of India, China and Bangladesh.

### Lok Virsa to open museums for 6-days

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on Sunday announced that both museums will remain open for public six days a week. According to an official notification, with effect from Tuesday, August 11, 2020, both museums namely Heritage Museum and Pakistan Monument Museum will open from Tuesday to Sunday with routine summer timings from 10 am to 8 pm. Strict observance of Covid-19 SOPs will be observed and e-ticketing will remain same, it stated. — APP

### PAL to hold programmes on Aug 14

ISLAMABAD: In connection with "Independence Day Celebrations" Pakistan Academy of Letters will hold grand programmes titled "Pakistan Movement and Kashmiri Literature" and "Independence and Our Myth" on August 14. The programmes were aimed to highlight the struggles for separate homeland of our leaders especially dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam. According to an official different intellectual and writers will participate in programmes including Dr Anwar Ahmed, Intellectual Hamid Shahid and Mubeen Mirza. He said that different articles will be presented including "Allama Iqbal and Pakistan Movement", "Two Nation Theory", Role of Kashmiri writers in Pakistan Movement and effects of Iqbal's poetry on Kashmiri writers. — APP

### IESCO for adopting measures in rainy spell

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has asked the general public to adopt precautionary measures owing to rainy spell as a little carelessness or negligence can lead to fatal accident. The spokesman advised the general public to follow precautionary measures for the sake of saving their lives and for their important belongings. These precautions were: Not to touch naked wire and get repaired defective wiring; use three pin plug along with proper earthing while using iron, washing machine, refrigerator etc; put wooden piece, flapper or dari under your feet and also use rubber sole shoes; use rope while drying clothes instead of electrical wires and do not use water pipe for it; Instruct your children avoid going near electricity installations while playing; do not keep hold the rope of cattle with poles or stay wire and remain at least hundred feet away from high tension wires. He further advised that electrocuted person must be separated from wire with piece of wooden or dry cloth. Do not allow any person or animal to go near the broken electricity wires till the arrival of concerned IESCO staff. Meanwhile, Chief Executive IESCO Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary also directed the staff to remain alert at complaint offices and to make sure the timely redressal of consumer complaints. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada planting a tree as part of Pakistan govt's 10 billion tsunami tree drive.— DNA

### 592 new companies step in IT market

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government, during the last two years, has opened new vistas in the telecommunication sector and attracted around 592 information technology companies, which got themselves registered for new business ventures. The growth in the IT sector remained strong that reflected the investors' confidence in the prudent policies introduced by the government in IT sector. "The number of IT companies have increased to 2354 as of June, 30, 2020 compared to 1762 valid registrations as of June, 30 2018," a senior official of Ministry of Information Technology told APP while sharing two-year performance of the PTI government. During the past two years, Pakistan's IT sector has made remarkable progress due to focus of the present government on ensuring sustainable IT industry growth. — APP

## Punjab Minister revenue listens to public complaints

The purpose of open courts is to give people easy access to officers concerned for solution of their problems

DNA

ATTOCK: Complainants thronged an open court held by Punjab Minister revenue Col (R) Malik Anwar Khan and Deputy Commissioner Attock at the municipal committee in Tehsil Pindi Gheb. During the open court, people from different areas told the Punjab Minister and Deputy Commissioner Attock about various problems being faced by them. Furthermore, a number of complainants were against officials of revenue, health, education and other depart-

ments. The Punjab Minister revenue and deputy commissioner Attock after hearing people's complaints assured them that their problems would be solved and directed the officers concerned to take action on a priority basis. The purpose of open courts is to give people easy access to officers concerned for solution of their problems, he said. The government is fully committed to providing maximum relief to people and holding 'Open Kutcheries' at different public places is the best way to achieve this target, he added. A special programme has

been chalked out to control traffic in the city area and its implementation will be ensured, he said adding that strict action would be taken against inefficient and corrupt government officials without discrimination. Punjab Minister Revenue Col (R) Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan asked all officers concerned to take immediate action and assured that progress on these complaints will be monitored regularly. Assistant Commissioner Mr Hadier Abbas, District and local heads of different departments were also present on the occasion.

## Police arrest 1,110 criminals in July 2020

RAWALPINDI: The Police in their ongoing operations conducted in Rawal, Potohar and Suddar divisions in Rawalpindi district against drug peddlers, bootleggers, lawbreakers and Proclaimed Offenders (POs) managed to net 1,110 criminals including 301 for holding illegal weapons, 311 drug peddlers and bootleggers during July. According to a police spokesman, Police in their successful operations also arrested 32, A-category Proclaimed Offenders (POs) and 243 B-category POs from different areas of Rawal, Potohar and Suddar divisions. Rawal Division police under the supervision of Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal Division Rai Mazhar Iqbal on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas conducted raids against lawbreakers in different areas of the division. He said, the division police netted 90 persons and registered 88 cases against them for possessing illegal weapons. — APP

## AIOU initiates efforts for temporary workers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has initiated the process of regularization of services of its temporary employees by giving them opportunities of competition. According to a statement of the AIOU issued to the press, in the past hundreds of workers were employed in this mega university of the country on temporary basis without adopting any procedure or rules. The number of such employees increased with the passage of time. Taking note of this state of affairs the Executive Council of the university, supreme body of the AIOU, in its 116th meeting directed the university to take steps for regularization of eligible temporary employees after fulfilling the criteria of merit and service rules, the statement said. Following the directives of the Executive Council the present administration of the university regularized

services of 201 temporary employees. Moreover, the university has advertised around 230 posts of BPS 2-5 in the national press last week and is working on advertising another 100 vacancies of BPS 5-15 soon. Professor Dr. Zia ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor AIOU views, "Open University is one of those national institutions on which the whole nation can pride, and hence this is our duty to save its resources and keep its interests higher than our personal ones. There will be no discrimination and nepotism in the selection process against the advertised posts. Rather everyone will be given a fair chance to prove himself and get appointed on merit", the statement further said. It is pertinent to mention here that in the past these contract and daily wage employees were inducted into the university due to one or another reason, but the principle of fair competition was not followed while recruiting them.

## COMSATS' webinar explores climate change impact on South Asian monsoon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Monsoon season holds great significance for South Asian region and is becoming increasingly unpredictable because of global warming and changing climate. Extreme precipitation in South Asia resulting in extreme climate events, i.e., drought and flooding has dire consequences on the agriculture-based economy of the region and livelihoods of farming community. International experts and scientists from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka gathered at COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability (CCCS) webinar on "Impacts of Climate Change on South Asian Monsoon", to share their views on the variability of the monsoon and its relationship with the changing global climate system as well as the adverse impacts of climate-mediated changes on South Asian region at large. Ambassador (R) Shahid A. Kamal, Founder and Head of CCCS, opened the webinar and in his remarks considered monsoon as one of the world's most important weather systems. He deemed under-

standing of changing weather patterns in South Asian region imperative for reliable monsoon forecasting. Speakers participating in the webinar included: Dr. Mohammad Ismail, Associate Professor, Dhaka University, Bangladesh; Dr. Madan Sigdel, Associate Professor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal; Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Babar, Director of Meteorological Department, Pakistan; Ms. Anusha Rashanti Warnasooriya, Director of Department of Meteorology, Sri Lanka; and Dr. Vanisa Surapipith, Senior Researcher at National Astronomical Research Institute, Thailand. The webinar highlighted the gravity of social, economic and environmental implications associated with the abrupt monsoon patterns in South Asia. The speakers discussed the repercussions

of increasing monsoon variability for Nepal as well as disasters caused by extreme weather events; current trends and future projections about the shifting patterns of monsoon in various parts of Pakistan; calamitous impact of summer monsoon in Sri Lanka marked by flooding and drought; impact of atmospheric aerosols, and non-renewable energy resources on precipitation patterns; and the mitigation strategies being taken by the government of Bangladesh to curb the fallout of climate change. Some key recommendations made during the webinar called for research-backed policy formulation to help mitigate the negative impacts of suddenly changing patterns of monsoon on environmental and socioeconomic conditions of the South Asian region; appropriate allocation of re-

sources for strengthening the scientific and technical capacity of South Asian countries; as well as enhanced regional cooperation to promote sharing of good practices and sustainable solutions to aid adaptation with variable trends of monsoon. The webinar was successful in promoting exchange of knowledge and experience among experts from South Asia on climate induced shifts to the monsoon system in the region as well as measures to address the challenges associated with South Asian monsoon. COMSATS Centre for Climate & Sustainability (CCCS) is a virtual and physical network of centres, institutions and organizations working on environmental risks for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CCCS focuses on the nexus between climate change and sustainable development in developing-country settings. The Centre promotes, coordinates and facilitates South-South & Triangular Cooperation for climate action and attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in line with the policy and practices of developing countries and their international obligations.



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## Historic ties

**P**AKISTAN has paid back \$1 billion to Saudi Arabia out of a total of \$3 billion loan it had taken from the kingdom a year and a half back to avert a balance-of-payments crisis. The fiscal gap that the withdrawal of the Saudi lifeline left has been squarely filled in by China.

The sudden return of the part of the Saudi loan has triggered several questions: Why did Islamabad return the mentioned amount only after 18 months – and that too at a time of depleting fiscal space due to the coronavirus-induced closures in the country – even though the loan facility was for a period of three years? Did Islamabad do it voluntarily or was it forced to do so? Has the partial settlement of the Saudi loan by Pakistan anything to do with the changing political dynamics in the region that is witnessing diplomatic realignment of late? Or more specifically, is it linked with Finance Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's vocal frustration on the Riyadh-led OIC continuously ignoring the Kashmir issue?

For an answer, let's analyse the recent remarks from our Foreign Office – that followed Qureshi's fervent call upon the 57-member OIC to “stop dilly-dallying” on convening a meeting of its Council of Foreign Ministers on Kashmir. During a weekly briefing on Friday, the Foreign Office spokesperson said Qureshi's statement made during a TV interview was not against diplomatic norms, and described them as a reflection of people's aspirations and expectations from the OIC to raise the Kashmir issue internationally.

For opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif though, the foreign minister's remarks about a brotherly Muslim country constitute “irresponsible” stance. Ahsan Iqbal, another senior PML-N leader, has accused the government of “playing with” vital interests of Pakistan by issuing statements against a country that had always stood by the Pakistanis in testing times.

While we have all the right to give precedence to our own national and diplomatic interests, nothing should annoy a friend like Saudi Arabia with which our bilateral ties spans our entire existence as a nation. We are sure the incumbent government realises the importance of Pakistan's strategic relations with Saudi Arabia, and knows how to proceed ahead.



## CPEC is moving forward

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

**E**VER since the PTI government took charge in 2018, it seemed as if the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was losing its vigor. However, the recently launched projects under the CPEC banner would instill hope in the mega project's lifeline.

Two hydel power projects were launched in Azad Kashmir while a special economic zone (SEZ) was launched in Faisalabad. The government's plans to launch the CPEC Authority Bill 2020 will also ensure that all phases of the CPEC move ahead as planned. The stakeholders in the CPEC projects will also take a breath of fresh air once the Bill is passed. This Bill will ensure the timely completion of all CPEC projects.

The changing geopolitical fabric across the Middle East may as well prove to be favorable for CPEC. Amid the sanctions imposed by the US on Iran, the latter is edging closer to China. Furthermore, India's hostility against Pakistan may as well be curbed because of China-India border tension.

Furthermore, CPEC Phase-II is showing progress. This includes talks with China on the \$7.2 billion ML-1 railway project, constructing the special economic zones, and the development of the Gwadar Port City.

According to reports, the work on three out of nine priority SEZs including Raskhakai in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Allama Iqbal in Punjab, and Dhabeji in Sindh province has been in progress. A mega project akin to the CPEC needs time for its various phases and sub-projects to complete. The financial aspects of the CPEC are also great.

It takes a while before the funds for each phase are approved and released. With Pakistan and China's all-weathered friendship has been backing CPEC, the project will see its fruition in the years to come. There will be some delays while mobilizing human resources and capital but Pakistan and China will work in unison to make CPEC turn into a reality.

## Babur: A great Conqueror

Dr Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Stephen Dale, a historian of the Moghul period, notes that, “Babur was a personified personality having the qualities of spontaneous bravery, social informality, and a refined appreciation of natural beauty. Babur was courageous, outspoken, straightforward and faithful. He was pre-eminently a man of faith. “Nothing happens” he used to say, “but by the will of God. The victories of Panipat and Kanwaha made him the “Master of Hindustan” and the founder of Mughal Empire in the Sub-continent

**Z**AHIRUDDIN Muhammad Babur, popularly known as “Babur”, meaning lion, was the founder of Mughal Empire in India. He was born in Farghana, in Uzbekistan, on February 14, 1483. The Mughal Empire was founded by him lasted for more than 400 years. He was real son of the soil i.e. Uzbekistan, the home of bravery and human determination. Babur in the history of Uzbekistan is on a par with such political figures and military leaders as Jaloliddin Manguberdi, Amir Timur, Ulugbek and Alisher Navoi. He was a loyal son of Uzbekistan and he fought for its welfare and socio-economic prosperity. According to Prof. Rushbrook Williams “Babur possessed nine fundamental qualities supercilious judgment, moral ambition, the art of victory, the art of government, the art of conferring prosperity upon his people, the talent of ruling mildly the people of God, ability to win the heart of his soldiers and love of justice.”

He was a born leader and a military general. His whole life was full of struggle, determination, sacrifice and adventures. He created one of the most powerful empires in the history of the East. In his case, adversity was a blessing in disguise. He was possessed of such an indomitable will that no amount of difficulties could shake his faith in himself. According to Sir E. Denison Ross, Babur was one of those men who are so active in mind and body that they are never idle and always find time for everything. As a soldier, Babur was fearless in battles. As a general, he was a great tactician with a keen eye to detect any mistake on the part of his opponents.

Stephen Dale, a historian of the Moghul period, notes that, “Babur was a personified personality having the qualities of spontaneous bravery, social informality, and a refined appreciation of natural beauty. Babur was courageous, outspoken, straightforward and faithful. He was pre-eminently a man of faith. “Nothing happens” he used to say, “but by the will of God. The victories of Panipat and Kanwaha made him the “Master of Hindustan” and the founder of Mughal Empire in the Sub-continent. He was the man with rare combinations. He was man of wars and words. He was man of battles and books. He was master of lethal weaponry and literature. He was ideal but rare combination of roughness and romance. He was man of dignity and deadly tactics. Though a die-hard warrior, Babur was far from a barbarous, ignorant soldier. He was a cultured and pious man who wrote fine poetry and schooled himself in the culture, natural history and geography of Central Asia and India.

He believed in unity of command for ruling over the hearts of his soldiers. He was maestro of warfare techniques and strategies (defence-offense) which he applied

many times against his enemies to go beyond all impossibilities. He was one of the first military commanders in Asia to appreciate the value of artillery. He had great skills of communication, dialogue and diplomacy which he exercised while negotiating with opponents, trouble makers, conspirators, Afghans and Indian.

He was man of great character. Through his good governance he defused many dogmas and bigotries from the society and established harmony. According to the Economist, he institutionalized trade liberalization in Kabul. Afterwards, it became a center for religious and cultural tolerance. He unlocked growth by encouraging trade, enforcing a simple and clear taxation system, embracing pluralism, and raising an army reflective of the diverse groups he ruled.

Many prominent European historians are of the opinions that for the first time in the Kabul ancient history, he introduced different custom tariffs and duties regimes for domestic and foreign trade activities which ultimately consolidated his treasury/revenue. Even appropriate income tax system was introduced. Wealth tax was also levied which provided balance between the expenditures-revenues and subsequently created equality in the society at large.

Vast culture diversity, corporate governance and respect for ethnicity were the hallmark of his regime in Kabul where 11 or 12 different languages were spoken. He was more religiously tolerant when compared to many of its contemporary states in Europe. He had equal respect for the Sunni Sufi Naqshbandi orders and the Shi'a Sufi Qizilbash troops in his army. The lion had a similar approach to ethnic groups as well. Babur's army was also diverse, containing Pashtuns, Arabs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other Central Asian ethnic groups.

According to BBC he was a true liberator. Under his rule Hinduism was tolerated and new Hindu temples were built with his permission. Trade with the rest of the Islamic world, especially Persia and through Persia to Europe, was encouraged. Slavery was diminished and peace was restored. Moreover, he was not a barbarian bent on loot and plunder. Instead he had great ideas about civilisation, architecture and administration. He was full of delight and humanity.

He was man of book. His literary gifts have been translated in many languages, and are part of school texts in no less than 25 countries in Central, Western, and Southeast Asia. Babur Namah is considered among the most fascinating oriental and romantic literary works of all times. His rubais delight and inspire many people even today.

Babur Namah is not only a description of the personal life of the author, but also a valuable source for studying

the history, culture and life of the peoples, flora and fauna of various areas visited by him. The opening lines “In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. In the month of Ramadan of the year 899 and in the 12th year of my age, I became ruler in the land of Fergana.” It is a detailed and insightful autobiography which presents vivid picture of his life and times, the peoples he ruled, and the lands they inhabited.

Alongside accounts of military conflicts and strategies, there are well-observed descriptions of landscapes and cities, local economies and customs, plants and animals. Subjects discussed by the him and illustrated in this manuscript include different cultures, traditions, nature, the elephant, rhinoceros and buffalo; the peacock, parrot, and stork; the water-hog, and crocodile; trees and shrubs such as the plantain, tamarind, and oleander; and the author supervising work on his own gardens in Kabul. Babur also provides what is probably the first reliable record of the famous diamond known as Koh-i-Noor, the ‘Mountain of Light’.

It is all about true spirits belonging to humanity, nature, love, peace, comfort, beauty and above all truth. It speaks about the inner journey. It highlights the different traits of human personality attributing towards greater success and larger than life glory.

It is about flowers, trees and greenery which show his love and caring towards eco-system. It is about education and knowledge. It shows the importance of self-reliance, determination and above all self-belief in order to sailing from the seas of uncertainties and reaching to shores of sustainability. It is a critical analysis of weakness and uncertainty. It reflects true spirits of shyness and intimacy between the husband and wife. It is about joy, charm and easiness in life. Music, poetry, and dance are also discussed. It is about partnership and trustfulness.

Babur Namah is about wine and tulips which shows his delightfulness towards life. It is about different colors. It speaks parties and naturalist expedition. It tells about the secret of ups and downs in the life. It is the true depiction of migratory bird that is always in search of save-heaven. It is about national narrative. It is the true reflection of social intercourse, genuine manners, handicrafts, symmetry, methods and quality.

Keeping in view the universality of wisdom, observation, logic and variety of topics, it has been recently declared by many translators as good as the Confessions of St. Augustine and Rousseau, and the memoirs of Gibbon and Newton. It also describes about politics, civility, and military struggle. It is indeed very rich and versatile. It has already been translated in Persian, Dutch, English and Urdu. Undoubtedly, Babur was the real son of the land, Uzbekistan with rare combinations.

## Muslim Demonization over Ram Temple

Farooq Alay

India's archaeological department may justify that Babri mosque had been built over a Hindu temple that might have existed hundreds of years ago but this logic is indigestible that Zahiruddin Babar or his general had built a mosque after demolishing a temple or an already demolished temple, that too of the biggest Hindu god, whose birthplace was the same. Why didn't the Hindu, who were the only community there, let it ruined? Why didn't they protest against Babar or his cohorts? Why didn't they get the issue solved during Mughal-e-Azam Emperor Akbar's rule; after all Akbar was friends to Hindus?

**N**OT that the Ram Temple goes open over the trampled Babri mosque in Ayodhya, the timing of its inauguration by Modi has the significance. He cunningly chose August 5, the day that completes the year of Indians' savagery in Kashmir. With the erecting of this temple, 450 years' history of subcontinent has gone down the drain, courtesy the fanatic Hindu's India today.

The verdict by Indian SC with a strange logic and mocking solution of dividing the site land into three parts and giving Hindus the actual covered area speaks of the judges' fright at the hands of Hindutva. The same court under the British rule had already given verdict in favour of Muslims, contrary to the fact that the British Raj had a visible tilt towards Hindus.

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Couldn't they get justice from Emperor Jahangir or Aurangzeb Alamgir whose system of justice was so transparent? On what basis the British court ruled against the Hindus and gave verdict in favour of Muslims? Were they blind or ignorant to archaeological history? Didn't the check the evidences available to them? It is not believable that Hindus had deliberately ignored the birthplace of their god, for years and centuries.

The decision to build a temple for Lord Ram, and laying its foundation stone on August 5, is highly intriguing. Last year on August 5, the Modi regime had revoked Occupied Jammu & Kashmir's special status, which was already flawed. The abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A withdrew the

special status of the State of J&K that allowed the Kashmiris to have their own flag and separate system of governance.

This is clearly meant to inflict more pain and inner wound to Muslims, not only in India but across the world. Many may endorse the logic that Hindustan is meant for Hindus, but this is not true in the real sense. With this, Modi has fulfilled a long-term promise to its core electorate. This aggressive posturing over issues that have dominated the BJP's politics has raised concerns of Ayodhya-like campaigns in other places with shared Hindu-Muslim heritage and history as well. On the other hand, the judgement is being widely criticized for lacking a sound legal basis as well as signalling a majoritarian push that compromised on India's democratic ethics. The legal trial in the Babri demolition case is yet to be completed, and justice has eluded those who suffered the loss of life and properties in the nationwide violence that ensued in the wake of the destruction of the mosque - often dubbed the darkest chapter of modern India. “The flawed judgment of the Indian SC paving the way to construction of the temple not only reflects the preponderance of faith over justice but also the growing majoritarianism in today's India where minorities, particularly Muslims and their places of worship, are increasingly under attack”, FO spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said while reacting to the intriguing inauguration. She condemned the construction and urged the international community to play its part in saving the Islamic heritage from Hindutva, and ensure protection and religious rights of minorities.

The temple will remain a blot on the fact of so-called democracy for the times to come. The extreme haste in starting the construction amid the ravaging Covid-19 pandemic, anti-Muslim Citizenship Act, the looming National Register of Citizens to disenfranchise Muslims, the targeted killings of Muslims with state complicity and other anti-Muslim measures point to the fact that how Muslims in India are being demonized, dispossessed, mar-

ginalized and subjected to targeted violence. India's gross and systematic human rights violations in IIOJK and Modi government's sinister design to change the demography of occupied territory, all reflect the rising tide of the divisive and extremist ideology in India, which poses threat to religious harmony in India, and to regional peace.

Summing up, a leading newspaper's editorial rightly commented that indeed, the monster of Hindutva has emerged from the rubble of Babri mosque and spread its tentacles across India, smothering minorities, particularly Muslims, and recreating the country in the image of Sangh Parivar.

Whether it is cow vigilantes lynching Muslims on suspicions of eating beef, the shock troops of Hindutva terrorizing Muslim men, women and children, or the Indian state introducing discriminatory legislation designed to disenfranchise the Muslim population, all indications are that hatred and majoritarian arrogance have now been mainstreamed in India.

The ideologues of the Sangh have never accepted Pakistan and constantly seek to provoke this country, while internally they are meting out treatment to Indian Muslims not too different to what the fascists of Europe did to Jews in the 20th century. There is great horror and revulsion over Nazi crimes – and rightly so. But though the Hindutva brigade is seeking to replicate what their ideological twins did in Europe during World War II, the world is mostly quiet, courting the ‘world's largest democracy’ that looks the other way as its Muslim citizens are beaten, harassed and murdered. Coming times will tell what comes next, though there must prevail peace and Modi-BJP's anti-Muslim thirst must at least be quenched, no matter for the time being. This is only a reminder for Muslims of subcontinent and world over to join hands together and take a unified course against Muslim demonization and persecution in India. Otherwise they are doomed to failure rather extinction.

– The writer is Islamabad-based freelance columnist; he can be reached at [farooqalay@gmail.com](mailto:farooqalay@gmail.com)



**Briefs**

**US corona cases top 5 million**

DNA

NEW YORK: The number of coronavirus cases in the United States has topped five million, according to a Reuters tally, as the country's top infectious diseases official offered hope earlier this week that an effective vaccine might be available by year-end. With one out of every 66 residents infected, the United States leads the world in Covid-19 cases, according to a Reuters analysis. The country has recorded more than 160,000 deaths, nearly a quarter of the world's total. The grim milestone comes as President Donald Trump signed executive orders intended to provide economic relief to Americans hurt by the coronavirus pandemic after the White House failed to reach a deal with Congress.

**APHC calls for complete shutdown on Tuesday**

DNA

SRI NAGAR: In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference has called for complete shutdown on Tuesday to pay glowing tributes to senior Hurriyat leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz. Sheikh Abdul Aziz was shot dead by Indian troops while he was leading a procession from Srinagar to the Line of Control on August 11, 2008 against the economic blockade of the Kashmir Valley by Hindu extremists of Jammu. The APHC spokesman in a statement in Srinagar said by observing the shutdown the people of the occupied territory will convey the message to India and the world that they are determined to accomplish the mission of their martyrs at all costs.

**PIA to operate Karachi to Skardu flights twice a week**

DNA

KARACHI: The national flag carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), has decided to operate flights from Karachi to Skardu to facilitate tourists as well as residents of Gilgit Baltistan. Informed sources said the airline's chief executive officer has instructed the sales manager to operationalise the Karachi-Skardu route. They said the national flag carrier will operate flights on this route twice a week. PIA's Airbus 320 will be used for the purpose. Flights will be diverted to Islamabad in case of inclement weather. On August 6, Pakistan International Airlines announced a major cut in its domestic fares ahead of Independence Day. A PIA spokesman said flyers travelling on domestic flights to Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad will be able to avail a 14 per cent cut until August 14.

**137 new corona cases in Punjab**

DNA

LAHORE: In Punjab 137 new cases of novel coronavirus have surfaced in last 24 hours, Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department of the province said on Sunday. According to the spokesperson of the health department, 49 new cases reported in Lahore, 12 cases in Rawalpindi and 13 in Gujranwala districts of Punjab last 24 hours. The total count of corona cases in the province has reached to 94,360 so far, whereas, three more patients succumbed to COVID-19 in last 24 hours, taking the death count to 2,169, the health department spokesperson said. A total of 634 new corona cases and eight deaths were reported across the country over the last 24 hours, taking the national tally of infections to 284,121 and fatalities to 6,082.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Nigeria Maj. Gen Retd Ashimiyu Adebayo Olaniyi planting a tree as part of Prime Minister Imran Khan's tree plantation drive. – DNA

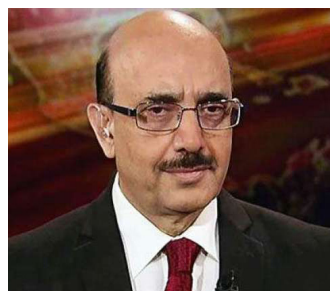
**Masood terms Kashmir as deep wound on Ummah's body**

While describing Kashmir as a deep wound on the body of Muslim ummah, he hoped that the Kashmir people would certainly achieve their goal

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the bonds of love, fraternity and mutual respect among the people of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Kashmir cannot be chained in geographical boundaries. "No one except the Afghan people can better feel the pain of the Kashmiri people who have been bearing the brunt of war, foreign occupation and internal strife for the last four decades," he added. Addressing a webinar on "India's illegal actions and change of demography of occupied Kashmir" organized by Pakistan Embassy

in Kabul, the AJK president expressed his deep sympathies and compassion with the Afghan people who had experienced a painful ordeal because of their struggle to get rid of the foreign subjugation. He said that the people of Pakistan and Kashmir were tied in the religious, cultural and economic bonds like the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan are intertwined. That is why the Kashmiri people had pledged to accede their state to Pakistan in 1947. He maintained that after the independence of Pakistan and India, the people of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan had fought war of independence and had liberated a part of Kashmir as well as Gilgit



Baltistan from the Dogra rule, and the tribesmen of both Pakistan and Afghanistan had supported the Kashmiri people in this war. The AJK President said that the year 2019 was the darkest year for the people of occupied Kashmir because one million Indian troops

had once again attacked Kashmir bifurcated the state, and after bringing it under the direct rule of Delhi started changing the demography of the occupied territory. He cautioned that India's hegemonic designs were not restricted to mere occupied Kashmir, but it was dreaming to occupy Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and the whole territory from Delhi up to Kabul in order to establish Hindu rule and materialize its dream of 'Akhand Bharat'.

Sardar Masood Khan said that Pakistan-Afghanistan economic cooperation was inevitable for the economic progress and prosperity of the whole region and we desire that China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor should be extended up to Afghanistan so that the people of war-ravaged Afghanistan also reap the economic benefits of this gigantic project. On the occasion, a hero of the Afghan liberation war Gollbaddin Hekmatyar declared categorical support of the Afghan people to the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people, and said that India must learn a lesson from the struggle of the Afghan people and realize that no movement can be suppressed through the use of force. While describing Kashmir as a deep wound on the body of Muslim ummah, he hoped that the Kashmir people would certainly achieve their goal.

**World leaders hold aid summit for Beirut**

DNA

PARIS: International leaders held talks on Sunday to raise aid for Beirut, five days after the massive explosion which devastated the Lebanese capital. The virtual conference - set up by France and the United Nations - started at 14:00 Lebanon time (11:00 GMT). Officials estimate the blast at the warehouse, which stored 2,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, caused up to \$15 billion (£11.5bn) in damage. The explosion left at least 158 people dead, 5,000 injured and 300,000 homeless. On Saturday several thousand people took to the streets, with police firing tear gas at stone-throwing protesters and some demonstrators storming government ministries. In a televised address, Lebanese PM Hassan Diab said he would ask for early elections as a way out of the crisis. The issue will be discussed in cabinet on Monday. Lebanon was already mired in a deep economic crisis and struggling to tackle the coronavirus pandemic before the explosion tore through Beirut.

**Car rally organized in solidarity with Kashmiris**

ISLAMABAD: A large number of Kashmiris and Canadians of Pakistani origin organised a car rally in Ottawa to express solidarity with the Kashmiris of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In spite of COVID-19 situation, a huge number of protestors joined the car rally to condemn Indian atrocities in IIOJK and to highlight grave human rights violations, a press release on Sunday said. The rally concluded in front of Indian High Commission in Ottawa where speakers expressed their support for the right of self-determination for the Kashmiris. – APP

**Door-to-door survey starts in KPK, says Dr. Nishtar**

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar Sunday said the official kick-off of the door-to-door Ehsaas survey in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took place at Malakand and Karak yesterday to gather socio-economic household data, a critical imperative post COVID 19. In her tweets, she said a new survey model has been adopted in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Since Ehsaas Survey is end-to-end digital, training is critical. Yesterday, the week-long training of master trainers ended in Malakand. She said "I was delighted to join them in Government High School No.1 Thana and wish to thank the District Administration and the provincial government for their help". The master trainers will now train 1,000 supervisors and enumerators in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for conducting the survey across the province. – APP

**'River Ravi Front project a game changer'**

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Abdul Aleem Khan has said that Ravi River Front project would prove to be a game changer for the province. According to official sources here, he said this while talking to a delegation of party workers on Sunday. He said that prosperous and stable Pakistan was the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan adding that country's situation was improving with every passing day. Each and every person has to play role for bringing about a real change, he maintained. Senior minister announced to plant thousands of fruit giving plants in personal capacity and told that he had donated 1200 fruit giving plants to the Kot Lakhpat Jail. – APP

**Lebanon information minister resigns**

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanon's information minister Manal Abdel Samad on Sunday resigned, becoming the first person from the government to resign since a deadly blast in Beirut killed more than 150 people and injured more than 5,000. "After the enormous Beirut catastrophe, I announce my resignation from government," she said in a statement carried by local media, apologising to the Lebanese public for failing them. The head of Lebanon's Maronite church meanwhile called on the entire government to step down over the August 4 explosion, a blast widely seen as shocking proof of the rot at the core of the state apparatus. Lebanese protesters enraged by the blast vowed to rally again after a night of street clashes in which they stormed several ministries. Maronite patriarch Beshara Rai joined the chorus of people pressing Prime Minister Hassan Diab's cabinet to step down over a blast he said could be "described as a crime against humanity." "It is not enough for a lawmaker to resign here or a minister to resign there," Rai said in a Sunday sermon. "It is necessary, out of sensitivity to the feelings of the Lebanese and the immense responsibility required, for the entire government to resign, because it is incapable of moving the country forward." Rai echoed calls by Diab for early parliamentary polls - a long-standing demand of a protest movement that began in October, demanding the removal of a political class deemed inept and corrupt. – DNA



**Trump walks out of news conference**

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump abruptly ended a Saturday news conference after a reporter challenged him on a lie about veterans health care he has told more than 150 times. Trump, speaking at his Bedminster, New Jersey, golf club, had claimed again that he is the one who got the Veterans Choice program passed, adding, "They've been trying to get that passed for decades and decades and decades and no president's ever been able to do it, and we got it done." "Why do you keep saying that you passed Veterans Choice?" CBS News White House correspondent Paula Reid asked Trump at the Saturday news conference, during which Trump announced executive actions on coronavirus relief. As Trump tried to call on another reporter instead, Reid continued, "You said that you passed Veterans Choice. It was passed in 2014...it was a false statement, sir."

**US to cut troops in Afghanistan to 'less than 5,000'**

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Mark Esper has said Washington plans to cut the number of troops in Afghanistan to "a number less than 5,000" by the end of November. The United States currently has about 8,600 troops in Afghanistan. Trump said in an interview released Monday by Axios that the United States planned to lower that number to about 4,000. Esper announced the lower troop levels in an interview. In May, after President Donald Trump reiterated calls for the Pentagon to bring troops home, AFP had reported that the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan was considerably ahead of schedule. Under a deal the US signed

with the Taliban in February, the Pentagon was to bring troop levels down from about 12,000 to 8,600 by mid-July, before withdrawing all forces by May 2021. But a senior US defence official had said the troop number was already at approximately 8,500, as commanders accelerate the withdrawal over fears of the coronavirus.

**Emirates Skyward: ways to earn miles**

DNA

KARACHI: Emirates Skywards, the award-winning loyalty programme of Emirates and fly dubai, has introduced a thousand new ways to earn Miles while shopping online with popular UK and US brands. Members can now visit skywardsmilesmall.com, 1,500 brands and splurge on shopping - all the while racking up Miles that can be used for discounted flight tickets and other rewards. Shop online: To start earning Miles, visit skywardsmilesmall.com - which can be accessed on the Emirates app or emirates.com. Members can then browse through a list of fantastic offers across fashion, lifestyle and other retail stores. To shop from participating brands, log in using Emirates Skywards account details and continue to the partner brand's website to complete the purchase.

For every GBP 1 spent, members can earn up to 15 Miles; and for every USD 1 spent, members can earn up to 12 Miles. Emirates Skywards co-branded cardholders can earn even more Miles while shopping on skywardsmilesmall.com. Before completing the purchase, customers have the option to calculate eligible Miles on the portal based on transactions made. For a full list of participating brands, please click here.

**'Gwadar Port to promote regional connectivity'**

"Gwadar Port is not simply about port operation, but a comprehensive project," H.E. Yao Jing said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Participants of a interactive meeting jointly organized by CPEC Authority, Chinese Embassy, Chinese Overseas Port and Holding Company (COPHC) expressed the hope that the Gwadar Port will turn into a major source for promoting prosperity and regional connectivity. The meeting themed as "Gwadar Port, Free Economic Zone's Role in the Prosperity of Balochistan & Regional Connectivity" was held online, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. Zhang Baozhong, Chairman of COPHC, presented the latest progress of Gwadar. Through Gwadar Port, the transit trade to Afghanistan has begun for

the first time. "It's also the first time that the bagging of DAP fertilizer has been done in Pakistani port, instead of foreign ports. This move alone has created thousands of jobs for the local people," Zhang Baozhong said. The investment in Gwadar Free Zone keeps growing. Despite COVID-19 pandemic, four plants and workshops have been completed and will go into operation this year. Furthermore, with 12 new investors' registration, the number of investors in the free zone in total has reached 56. The supporting projects including East Bay Expressway, New Gwadar International Airport, China-Pakistan Friendship Hospital, Gwadar Technical & Vocational Institute and Faqueer Colony

Middle School extension building are in the progress, some of which even completed earlier than schedule. Specifically, the long suspending tax incentives issue in Gwadar has been resolved after 14-year suspension and the investment environment has been greatly improved. "It is the shared wish of the people of China and Pakistan to develop Gwadar into a modern emerging city, so as to lead the economic and social development of Baluchistan as a whole, and to enable the hardworking, kind-hearted and peace loving local people of Baluchistan to enjoy modern life," Zhang Baozhong firmly believed in Gwadar's better tomorrow. It's a difficult time for the whole world but we still can see many

new developments and renewed efforts in Gwadar. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China to Pakistan, described this contrast as "Gwadar Phenomenon" in the conference. It demonstrates the resilience and the devotion by Pakistani and Chinese governments and business communities during the coronavirus pandemic. "Gwadar Port is not simply about port operation, but a comprehensive project," H.E. Yao Jing said. The Chinese government supports a lot of affiliated projects in infrastructure to help Gwadar realize its huge potential. Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman of CPEC Authority reviews Gwadar's development, "three years back Gwadar was a desert city. I've seen rapid development." He believes Gwadar will

become a great regional hub. He also mentioned the importance of the chain development between Balochistan and its surrounding areas. "We will develop connectivity with the port and the area in socio-economics so that local people can participate in the economic development," he said. Revealed by Asim Saleem Bajwa, in the third week of this August, the development agreement for Rashakai Special Economic Zone will be signed. DG China MOFA Muhammad Mudassar Tipu, Executive Director of SDPI Dr. Abid Q Suleri, Chairman of ISE (REIT) Zahid Latif Khan, Director ASC, SDPI Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Collector of Custom Dr. Tahir Qureshi and Student of Faqeer School Maheem Sudheer also attended the meeting.