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PTI govt will protect national interest, says Shibli Faraz

Egypt keen to promote trade with Pak: Envoy

Clashes over Maryam Nawaz's NAB appearance



Briefs

FBR suspends 10 more Officers

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) suspended ten more officers over the charges of irregularity, corruption and inefficiency. The suspended Customs officers included seven Inspectors, two superintendents and one appraising officer, said a statement issued here by FBR on Tuesday. Around thirty six officers and nineteen officials have been suspended whereas three employees had been dismissed from service since July, said the statement. The FBR is determined to rid the organization of corrupt and inefficient elements. Prompt action will be taken against the officers and officials found involved in irregularity and inefficiency, said the release. — APP

Peshawar BRT to be launched on August 13

DNA
PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project — the flagship project of the PTI-led Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government — is all set to be launched this week, media reported on Tuesday. Prime Minister Imran Khan along with Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan will inaugurate the Peshawar BRT on August 13, 2020. According to details, Peshawar BRT project, which has faced several delays, was launched by PTI government during its previous term in the province. Reportedly, cost of the project started in October 2017 was evaluated at Rs49 billion with a timeline of 6 months, however, the cost has escalated to over Rs70 billion. The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has also ordered the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to conduct investigation of the BRT project but the provincial government challenged the verdict in Supreme Court of Pakistan.

NZ reports first virus cases in 102 days

WELLINGTON: New Zealand announced its first locally transmitted coronavirus infections more than 100 days on Tuesday and issued a stay-at-home lockdown order for the country's largest city. After receiving global praise for its success containing the virus, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said four cases had been detected in a single family in Auckland from an unknown source. "After 102 days, we have our first cases of COVID-19 outside of managed isolation or quarantine facilities... we have all worked incredibly hard to prevent this scenario," she told the country in a televised address. "We have also planned and prepared for it." Until Tuesday, the World Health Organization had hailed the country as an example to others for having "successfully eliminated community transmission". — APP

PTI govt will protect national interest: Shibli

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz has said that every country cherishes its national interest and we will take the steps necessary to protect ours. He said this while briefing the media after the federal cabinet meeting on Tuesday. He said that Saudi Arabia is a very close and brotherly country which has always stood by Pakistan in difficult times, our relations should not be viewed with suspicion. The Federal Minister said that there are multiple causes for inflation in the country, including coronavirus which has shaken up all countries of the world. He noted however that the situation in Pakistan is better than in India. Shibli Faraz said that international organizations are also acknowledging Pakistan's economic recovery. The previous government had artificially maintained the currency's exchange rate, which is why Pakistan had a 20 billion dollar deficit when PTI took over. Their tactics were short sighted and meant to give the masses a false sense of relief, he added. He said the government adopted the policy of reducing imports and increased exports which resulted in the strengthening of country's economy. The Minister said under Ehsaas program, the government has

Minority community playing vital role in development: Shibli

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz says the minority community has been playing an important role in progress and development of the country. In a tweet on National Minorities' Day on Tuesday, he said National Minorities Day carries special significance in the history of Pakistan. The Minister said the dream of the state of Madina will not be realized without welfare of the minorities. He said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan has been endeavoring to materialize this dream. — DNA

distributed financial assistance to fifteen million families. He said the government adopted the policy of reducing imports and increased exports which resulted in the strengthening of country's economy. Talking about the incident that took place at the NAB appearance of Maryam Nawaz Sharif, he said that Maryam Nawaz should be ashamed of what she has done, her party will have to pay for what it has done to Pakistan.

Clashes over Maryam Nawaz's NAB appearance

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N workers and police clashed outside the National Accountability Bureau's office Tuesday, ahead of party leader Maryam Nawaz's visit to the anti-graft body's office. After a deadlock for over an hour where the PML-N leader refused to leave before NAB recorded her statement, Maryam turned back shortly after the Bureau announced via a press release that today's proceedings had been delayed. However, NAB officials told her to head back as the situation deteriorated outside the Bureau's office when party workers and police clashed. In a video that she posted on Twitter, Maryam alleged that police pelted stones at her car which cracked her

NAB blames Maryam, PML-N workers

LAHORE: In a press release, NAB Lahore said that it had summoned the PML-N vice president to hear her stance on the case registered against her. However, the Bureau alleged that PML-N workers pelted stones and were involved in 'hooliganism' at the time of her appearance. NAB said that it had been treated like this for the first time in the 20 years since the Bureau had been created, stating that its building's windows had been broken and staffers injured. It announced that proceedings against Maryam had been postponed and it condemned PML-N workers for interfering in legal matters in an 'organised' way. The Bureau said that it will register FIRs against PML-N representatives and leaders for interfering in the legal process. — DNA

bulletproof vehicle's windshield. PML-N leader and political heir of the Sharif family, Maryam Nawaz, addressed a press conference later to narrate her ordeal. She called today's incident an act of "state-sponsored terrorism" witnessed by her personally. "Not for me or the PML-N, it is a moment to ponder for the 'fake and selected' government," she said, adding that today the unarmed party workers present near the NAB office were shelled with tear gas and baton-charged.

Putin announces first COVID-19 vaccine

DNA

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia has become the first country in the world to give regulatory approval to a COVID-19 vaccine after barely two months of human trials, a move hailed by Moscow as evidence of its scientific prowess. The development paves the way for the mass inoculation of the Russian population, even as the final stage of clinical trials to test safety and efficacy continue. The speed at which Russia is moving to roll out its vac-

ine highlights its determination to win the global race for an effective product, but has stirred concerns that it may be putting national prestige before sound science and safety. Speaking at a government meeting on state television, Putin said the vaccine, developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute, was safe and that it had even been administered to one of his daughters. "I know that it works quite effectively, forms strong immunity, and I repeat, it has passed all the needed checks," said Putin. He said he hoped the country would soon start mass producing the vaccine. Its approval by the health ministry foreshadows the start of a larger trial involving thousands of participants, commonly known as a Phase III trial. Such trials, which require a certain rate of participants catching the virus to observe the vaccine's effect, are normally considered essential precursors for a vaccine to receive regulatory approval. Russian health workers treating COVID-19 patients will be offered the chance of volunteering to be vaccinated soon after the vaccine's approval, a source told Reuters last month.

India covering up internal failures: experts

Bilateral attempts for promoting neighbourly relations have been spurned by India. Instead of responding to peace, the Indians have been racketing up tensions and even resorting to cross border attacks on LOC; speakers at IPRI webinar noted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Policy Research Institute organized a special webinar on "The Contrast: Indian Hegemonic Policies in South Asia and Pakistan's Quest for Regional Peace and Stability" here in the capital today. The session included Key note Address by Senator Sherry Rehman, followed by Dr Liu Zongyi and Ambassador (R) Ashraf Jehangir Qazi as the speakers. In his Opening Remarks, Acting

President IPRI, Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua highlighted the jingoistic posturing of a Hindutva driven Indian government that has put the peace and security of South Asia in a confrontational limbo. He added that India has problems with every neighbor and has come a long way from its Nehruvian legacy of secular Indian nationalism. "The tactical strategy of BJP was straight out of the playbook of Nazis. Indian government has tried to marginalise and ostracize the muslim community through Citizen Amendment

Act and National Register for Citizens", he averred. The Acting President also mentioned that bilateral attempts for promoting neighbourly relations have been spurned by India. Instead of responding to peace, the Indians have been racketing up tensions and even resorting to cross border attacks on LOC." Senator Sherry Rehman talked about how Pakistan is a particular thorn in Modi's side because it notionally challenges and impedes Modi's ascent as South Asia region's hegemon. She pointed out

that India is using external threats to cover up its internal failures and like a Janus faced entity showing a different image to the world while acting as a misanthropic bully domestically and an implacable hegemon bilaterally. Pakistan's foreign policy as per her needs to be more nuanced and proactive based on a consistent approach backed by a domestic consensus. Ambassador (R) Ashraf Jehangir Qazi stressed on the need for a two tracked policy. Track one should aim at employing diplomacy, law fare and moral suasions whereas

track two should focus on prevention of cultural genocide through all means at disposal of Pakistan. Dr Liu Zongyi of Shanghai Institute for International Studies highlighted the change in Indian approach towards border dispute with China due to militant Hindutva ideology of Modi. He pointed out that India is stoking the fire of conflict in the region on the encouragement of another global power. India as per him was neither capable of winning a war against China nor making peace under the current Indian regime.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran Syed Mohammed Hosseini in a meeting with Ambassador of Turkey Ihsan Mustafa Yudakul, at the Turkish embassy. — DNA

Govt issues SOPs for restaurants

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services on Tuesday issued Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on reopening of food establishments and restaurants in the country to adopt recommended practices to help mitigate the exposure to the COVID-19 virus. According to an official of the ministry, the basic components of the guidelines are food safety, cleaning and sanitizing, social distancing, employee health monitoring and personal hygiene. He said these guidelines provide practices that address specific health and safety concerns related to the spread of COVID-19, and to put protocols into practice for re-opening of food establishments. As per SOPs, indoor dining can reopen with groups of 10 or less and maintaining at least three feet distance among one group and six feet between two groups or tables, indoor seating will be allowed at 50% capacity to maintain recommended social distancing guidelines and ensuring ventilation for indoor seating arrangement. — APP

KP sets new tree plantation record

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has set the new record by planting more trees during the plantation campaign held on Tiger Force Day (August 9). According to a report by KP Ministry of Forest and Wildlife, overall 3.5 million saplings were planted in different cities of the province on the Tiger Force Day observed on August 9. Sindh, Punjab, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir have collectively planted 1.5 million saplings on August 9, according to data. It is pertinent to mention here that Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday launched a record-breaking plantation drive in the country on the Tiger Force Day saying keeping Pakistan green was the responsibility of all citizens.

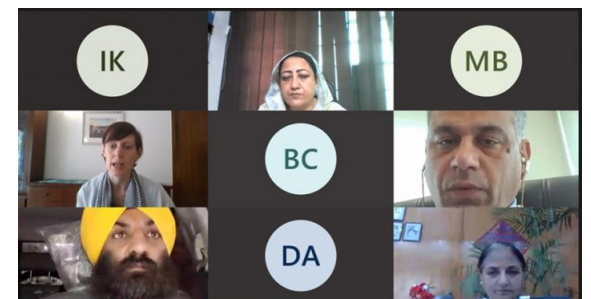
British embassy hosts virtual roundtable

The event, chaired by the British High Commission's Political Counsellor, Iona Thomas, brought together a range of experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission hosted a virtual roundtable discussion to demonstrate the UK's support on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and to mark National Minorities Day.

The event, chaired by the British High Commission's Political Counsellor, Iona Thomas, brought together a range of experts from the world of politics, academia and religious affairs. The British High Commission is proud to embrace Pakistan's immense diversity, and to engage with and bring together members of all religious faiths. Inter-faith harmony and freedom of religion was at the centre of the vision of



Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The list of those attending were: Asiya Nasir — JUI-F member, former parliamentarian and Chairperson Pakistan Christian Forum, Lal Chand Malhi — Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Human Rights, Ramesh Singh Arora — Member Punjab Assembly and General Secretary PML-N Minorities Wing, Jennifer Jag Jeven — Exec-

utive Director of Christian Study Centre and Nadeem Abbas — Academic with specialisation in Islamic Studies. Political Counsellor Iona Thomas, OBE, said, "Delighted to have hosted a roundtable on Freedom of Religion and Belief, bringing together some of Pakistan's brightest minds to discuss this important theme on National Minorities Day."

Egypt keen to promote trade with Pak: Envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tarek Mohamed Hussein Dahroug Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan said that his country was keen to further enhance bilateral trade relations with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to export many high quality products to each other at competitive prices. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He was accompanied by Ibrahim Said Abdelrahim Ibrahim, Deputy Head of Mission. The Egyptian envoy said that he was quite ambitious and ready to go the extra mile in order to promote trade relations between Egypt and Pakistan as it would bring more beneficial results for the economies of both countries. He said by enhancing trade

cooperation with Egypt, Pakistan could get easy access to many markets of African countries including Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Algeria. He said that Pakistan and Egypt should focus on promoting direct exports that would be more competitive in terms of prices for each other. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Egypt enjoyed historically cordial and friendly relations that should be transformed into growing trade and economic relations. He said that Pak-Egypt bilateral trade in 2017 was just around USD 154 million, which was far less given the market size of both countries and urged that both sides should focus on developing strong linkages between their private sectors in order to explore all untapped areas of trade promotion.

Qureshi appreciates opposition's cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has sent separate letters to Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly and President of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhatto Zardari, expressing gratitude for their cooperation and extending support over important legislation in the joint session of parliament on August 6. According to a press release on Tuesday, the foreign minister said that the opposition parties deserved appreciation along with the treasury benches for showing maturity during the joint session of parliament, called over Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Kashmir issue. — APP

PIA to resume flights from Friday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines will resume its flights from different parts of the country to Sukkur, Multan and Gwadar from Friday. According to PIA Spokesperson, the national flag carrier also offered discounted packages on special flights to mark the Independence Day. The Spokesperson said PIA will give 14 percent discount in fares on flights between Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi under Jashan-e-Azadi package.

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Briefs

Rafia Zeeshan releases national song

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Celebrating the 73rd Birthday of Pakistan, the super talented Pakistani Singer "Rafia Zeeshan" has stepped into the music industry with a beautiful National Song called "Dil Tu Jaan Tu". The song is an adequate expression of love and affection for Pakistan. The catchy chorus 'Pakistan' leaves you singing along to it. Rafia giftedly mixes the correct vocals well with the lyrical beauty of the song which seems as if it comes out of the deep rooted spirit of patriotism and love for Pakistan that the talented Artist has. The lyrical content of the song "DilTuJaanTu" is developed by Rafia's talented Husband who happens to be a poet. MrZeeshan has beautifully put the expression of love and gratitude into words and being a Pakistani, one cannot stop falling in love with these beautiful words and the catchy melody. To top it off, Rafia's sweet and melodious voice hooks you like anything.

NACTA holds peace poster contest

ISLAMABAD: The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has arranged a national poster contest to promote and inspire ideas of peace and tolerance among youth. Significant number of contestants participated countrywide with impressive paintings and digital designs based on the concepts of "Peace, Tolerance and Co-existence" said a news release issued here on Tuesday. Concept behind the contest was part of NACTA's Outreach Policy of sensitizing country's youth, which is 62 per cent of the population, on the need of eradication of extremism from the society by promoting harmony, tolerance, co-existence and peace. The contest was held among three categories based on different age groups between the ages of 10 to 25. A four-member panel of jury consisting officers of NACTA and Director NCA, Rawalpindi judged the entrant posters. First position holders were Hamdia Niazi, Komal and Ezzaz Ali from the category of 10-15 years, 16-20 and 21-25, respectively. Cash prizes for the winners of top three positions from each category and certificates for all the participants were announced. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed in meeting with Iranian Ambassador Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini in Ministry of Railways. — APP

People helped govt tackle COVID-19, says Asad Umar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Tuesday said lifting lockdown or reopening of all sectors in the country did not mean that the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. Addressing a media briefing here, the minister said the government had decided to reopen various sectors only for the sake of people but unfortunately were taking impression that the corona had ended now. He said chief secretaries of all provinces had been directed to keep strict vigil on the newly opened sectors to avoid violation of Standard Operating Procedures in these sectors. Asad Umar who is also chairman of National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), said lifting of lockdown could happen only due to peo-

ple's behavior who had so far fully cooperated with the government and followed guidelines issued by the government to contain spread of COVID. "The government was unable to do anything if the people had not cooperated with the government". He also commended role of media by effectively disseminating the government's messages to the people. The minister recalled that by mid June, as study by London based Imperial College predicted alarming situation for Pakistan and said in Pakistan as many as 78000 people would be dying of Corona daily by August 10. However he said due to successful strategy of the government only 15 people were killed in the previous day. He said the government's strategy of contact tracing

system remained effective. Under this strategy, he said 1.1 million contacts were traced out of which over one million tests were conducted and positivity ratio of such tests was 10.5 percent. Further, he informed that out of total 185,000 positive cases in the country, over 100,000 cases confirmed from tests conducted through contact tracing system. He said this strategy remained extremely effective in controlling the disease as with the help of one corona patient they managed to reach 10.8 contacts. Now, he said, NCOC teams were also providing training to all provinces. "South Africa is considered to be role model in contact tracing system and now Pakistan has also reached that level. This is a world class operation in which NCOC is

involved and all provinces are also worked on it successfully," he added. The minister added that so far as many as 2350 smart lockdowns were imposed and at one time about 700-800 lockdowns were imposed across the country. While presently there are 85 lockdowns in 20 districts. Asad Umar informed that the government was now switching towards micro smart lockdown in which small localities such as one building with multiple units or small Mohallas would be targeted instead of big areas. The minister said India in East and Iran in West were still suffering from the pandemic. During last 10 days, he said, positivity ratio of test conducted in Pakistan was three percent while in Iran 9.4 and in India and Bangladesh it was 9.8 percent and 24 percent respective-

ly. Similarly, he said, as compared to Pakistan the death ratio in Iran was 20 times whereas in India it was five times and in Bangladesh it was two times higher. "If all this is happening in our immediate neighborhood, then this can happen in Pakistan as well so I urge the people to please follow SOPs to avoid any new wave of the pandemic in Pakistan", he added. He said at one stage, Pakistan's exports and revenue collection was reduced by 40 percent each due to lockdown. This 40 per cent reduction means the income of millions of people in Pakistan was halted who have no bank balances and they have not savings for even two days expenditures, he said adding with the help of government revenues, development projects run.

Celebrate Azaadi by planting trees, says Shehnaz

RAWALPINDI: Every citizen should plant atleast five saplings on Independence Day to make Pakistan an environment-friendly country as trees are the best weapon against global warming and climate change. Talking to APP, former Olympian Shahnaz Sheikh said that people should take more such activities at individual and collective levels and dispense their national obligation to meet challenges of the climate change and air pollution. He said that during the ongoing campaign of the government, the people should come up and plant trees and should pay special attention to its care after planting, because like any living thing, trees also need attention at an early age. He said through sports, our athletes have made the country and the nation famous on the world stage. There is no shortage of talent in the country, government should take necessary steps to promote and improve sports activities, he said. Our forefathers waged a unique struggle and gave unprecedented sacrifices for achieving Pakistan. Now it is our responsibility to shape Pakistan according to the dreams of its founders and to achieve this objective, he added. Meanwhile, arrangements were also underway for organizing special programmes to celebrate the Independence Day. The city district government has also chalked out a plan in this regard.

Operational and Traffic police to devise traffic plan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar khan has directed Operational and traffic police to devise joint traffic plan for Independence Day and ensure convenience to people. Islamabad police chief Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar khan directed DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed, DIG (Security & Traffic) Sarfaraz Ahmed Falki to prepare a joint traffic plan and ensure protection to the lives and property of the citizens. He asked to ban entry of unnecessary vehicles and irrelevant persons in Red Zone during night at August 13 and for the whole day of August 14. He directed to ensure fool proof security arrangements and smooth traffic flow on August 14 and strict action to be taken against those involved in road stunts like one-wheeling and car racing. He directed for extra deployment at shopping malls, markets and depute special squads to ensure smooth traffic flow besides safety to people. Mr. Aamir Zulfiqar khan asked to conduct strict checking in the city and effective patrolling measures to be made. He said that fire-cracking and upheaval would not be allowed on this occasion and strict legal action to be made against those involved in such activities.

Amin Ul Haque meets DigiSkills freelancers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that the national level training program of the Ministry of IT has imparted 1.28 million trainings to youth in freelancing. Federal Minister for IT Syed Amin Ul Haque was talking to DigiSkills freelancers who called on him on Monday. The Federal Minister for IT & Telecom met DigiSkills freelancers to have a direct account of their experiences of learning and earning through DigiSkills. He said that his ministry is taking necessary steps

to equip the freelancers, students, housewives, professionals, etc. with knowledge, skills, tools & techniques necessary to seize the opportunities available in local and international online marketplaces to earn a decent living. He also informed the visiting freelancers that MoITT has entered into a partnership with JazzCash that will enable them to transfer money from their Payoneer accounts into their JazzCash Mobile Account in real time and at the best exchange rates. In addition to this, DigiSkills freelancers can also register their Payoneer Account from the JazzCash App, eliminating the need for commercial bank accounts.

Federal Minister for IT said that all the issues of freelancers will be resolved. He gave direction for extending outreach of DigiSkills program to school and colleges also. The Federal Minister also gave direction for increasing the ratio of women in DigiSkills program from 23 percent to 33 percent, and incorporating the minorities and educated transgender in this program. Visiting freelancers apprised the IT Minister that in the face of economic crunch DigiSkills Training Program has been a game-changer in their lives that has enabled them to continue their educational pursuits besides supporting their families.

Lions death: Contempt notices issued

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court issued contempt notices to Climate Change State Minister Zartaj Gul and members of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board on Tuesday in the case pertaining to the death of animals at the capital's zoo. Two lions died while being transferred from Islamabad's Marghazar zoo to a farmhouse in Lahore, it was reported on July 30. They were being shifted on the May 22 orders of the Islamabad High Court. A man filed a petition in the court over the negligence of the wildlife authority in the case. During the hearing, Climate Change Secretary Naheed Durrani took responsibility for the lion's death and said that the Federal Cabinet had nothing to do with it. Since the government had given approval for the wildlife boards, it was also responsible. The chief justice asked whether the climate change department wanted notices to be issued to the prime minister. "The PM doesn't even know what has unfolded here."

AIOU offers BS in natural sciences subjects

According to AIOU has offered admissions to BS Physics, BS Mathematics, BS Statistics, BS Chemistry, BS Microbiology and BS Computer Sciences in its Autumn semester 2020

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has initiated admission process for BS (4Years) program of six departments of faculty of sciences. These programmes will be taught face-to-face, said a press release issued here Tuesday. According to details, AIOU has offered admissions to BS Physics, BS Mathematics, BS Statistics, BS Chemistry, BS Microbiology and BS Computer Sciences in its Autumn semester 2020. Face to face classes for BS Computer Sciences will be arranged in various regional campuses of the university including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan. Interested candidates can apply for admission through online

mode only. Admission form and prospectus are available online on the university website. The deadline for the submission of admission form is September 08. The students are required to fill in the online form, print it and deposit 500 processing fee in any of the branch of MCB, ABL, UBL or FWB. Selected candidates will be informed to deposit the admission fee for the 1st semester through SMS or Email. They are required to send the printed admission form, challan form for the fee deposited along with the attested copies of testimonials to the university within the stipulated time period, said the release. — APP

PTI Govt's two years successful for CPEC: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan in its just concluded two-year period successfully carried out the implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. The report says, the PTI's government showed the mettle to survive against all odds ranging from bureaucratic glitches, malicious international propaganda, economic and financial challenges, foreign pressures, and COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2018, Imran Khan expressed his resolve to CPEC's robust traction. In August 2020, he is committed to taking CPEC to its new heights. During the two years, both CPEC and Imran Khan have been exposed to many adversaries but both stayed afloat. The saga of phenomenal development has silenced all malicious critics. Malignant campaigns run amok, branding CPEC as debt trap and Imran's government as incapable. As a matter of fact, a

series of mala fide utterances were proven false. During two years, CPEC played an anchoring role in fixing economic gray areas, mitigating electricity woes, rolling out the construction of dams, creating thousands of jobs, laying down network of roads, revamping ICT and fostering agriculture structure on modern lines. It also plugged up infrastructure gaps, making progress on health corridor, opening up new avenues for the blue economy, intensifying development of Gwadar port, initiation of Afghan transit trade and medical cooperation & assistance to control coronavirus devastation. According to the report, the driving force behind the glories were the establishment of CPEC authority headed by Lt Gen @ Asim Saleem Bajwa, reconstitution of the 15-member business council by Board of Investment (BOI), China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement-II (CPFTA) Pakistan, tangible progress on SEZs, a framework on modern farming, Diamer Basha dam and ML-1 Railway project. The critical analysis of CPEC role in generating

inexpensive and environment-friendly electricity during two years reveals many success stories. In terms of energy that plays a dominant role in the economic development. Pakistan's first joint venture CPHGC's Hub coal-fired power plant producing 1320MW started its operation last year. Before 2018, hydropower projects were not prioritized, forcing Pakistan to produce costly electricity and spend billions of rupees on imported oil. CPEC changed the dynamics with the launch of hydel power projects in two years. Recently, Kohala, Azad Pattan hydro projects to produce 1800 MW with creating 8000 jobs have been launched. Prime Minister Imran Khan personally unveiled construction work of the mega hydroelectric project, the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. The hydel power project would produce 4,500 MW of affordable, environmentally-friendly electricity and along with boosting the cement and steel industry sectors. The project would also generate around 16,000 jobs in the country.

In order to accelerate mass industrialization, three SEZs have been prioritized in two years. They are Rashakai Economic Zone, AllamaIqbal IndustrialCity, Faisalabad, and Dhabaji Special Economic Zone. Allama Iqbal Industrial City Faisalabad groundbreaking is already done. Rashakai SEZ will see development agreement in the third week of August. The opening tender of Dhabaji SEZ is on the way. Regarding Eastern Routs, Multan to Sukkhar section has been completed and one section left is Sukkar to Hyderabad. Gladly its construction work has been approved two or three weeks back. Similarly, on the Western route, two portions have been started already and two more sections are left. During the two years, CPEC has put great emphasis on Port infrastructure. Gwadar Port, being a sister and supporting port, has become operational already. Other infrastructure projects next to the port are free zones of 24 hundred acres, which is also currently under development.

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Digital Exports

HERE has been lots of discussion on Pakistan's future and how we are to move towards more digital avenues for trade and export. The ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's 'Digital Pakistan' initiative is the latest iteration of this ambition to make our country a technological powerhouse. However, what often gets ignored is that even in the present, Pakistan's nascent tech industry is making countless strides and is a valuable addition to our economy. This is evidenced by the fact that the IT industry made \$1302.730 million by exporting its services to other states in the Financial Year 2019-2020. Discussions on the future are imperative, but it is also important to take stock of the current situation and try and facilitate existing IT service exporters in any way possible.

The only way to really do that however, is to understand the industry; it is quite obviously unlike any traditional exporting sectors such as textile or agriculture. To make the IT industry thrive—more so than it is currently—is simple enough if we try and improve three areas in relation to this. The first of these is skill-building; we have to ensure that more and more members of the younger generation can participate in the IT industry, and the only way to do that is by improving skill sets and education in computer science-related subjects. In this sphere, the government is already trying its level-best and seeing results as well. But what the government has so far failed in, are the other two aspects. Conducting business outside the country should be made easier by not overly regulating the internet and it is high time Pakistan also has access to international financial transaction platforms. These are issues that do not prevent the export of IT services, but do make it substantially difficult. Pakistan is brimming with talented minds that can be international leaders in the IT industry, but so far, we are preventing ourselves from realising our true potential. The only way to do that is by completely integrating our IT industry with the international market.



Saving Kashmir

HERE has been deepening concern, notably in Pakistan, over the failure of the world to act in favour of Kashmir and end the human rights violations taking place there. Now finally, the International Crisis Group has urged India's international allies to "strongly encourage it to restore Kashmir's status and end abuses against civilians." The ICG, a global think tank, has said that India must be persuaded to free detained politicians and that its international allies should be working in this direction. In August last year, New Delhi had taken steps which effectively ended autonomy for the state of Kashmir and also permitted outsiders to purchase land in the territory, setting off fears that a demographic change was intended. There is also concern the current tensions could result in setting off an incident between Pakistan and India, a dangerous situation given the nuclear armed status of both countries.

The ICG believes the only way to achieve the intended target of persuading India to engage with Kashmiri politicians rather than use force against citizens is for Pakistan and India to both lower rhetoric and aggressive postures. Instead the group suggests a return to the situation which existed between 2003 and 2007, when a ceasefire was agreed on the Line of Control. Steps such as these can then open up a stage for dialogue to be built and some agreement reached on the future of Kashmir which is acceptable to its people. The current situation in the Valley represents some of the worst human rights abuses in the world. Unfortunately, the world has chosen to a large extent to ignore these. New Delhi needs to be persuaded to change its policies and accept that the territorial dispute over Kashmir cannot be settled by using force.

Pakistan has attempted to gain support from other nations over this. However, so far there has only been an increase in tensions between the two neighbours with very limited intervention from the outside. A strategy will need to be found to alter this. The ICG suggestion is a useful starting point. However, it will need to be taken further.

Youth important support for SCO

Vladimir Norov



“Young people with their energy, innovative and bold ideas are an important support on the way to further development of SCO”, said Vladimir Norov – the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)”

ON August 12, International Youth Day is celebrated each year. The holiday was established by the decision of the UN General Assembly on December 17, 1999, on the proposal of the World Conference of Ministers of Youth, which was held on 8-12 August 1998 in Lisbon. In 1995 the UN adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, which was later expanded in 2007. The document outlined measures to strengthen the Activities of States in youth policy. The Programme of Action covers 15 directions: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health care, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure organization, girls and young women, full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and decision-making process, globalization, information and communication technologies, HIV/AIDS, armed conflicts, and issues of intergenerational relations.

On the threshold of celebrating International Youth Day, the SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov shared his vision of youth development and youth policy of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Young people are a progressive part of society. The world community recognizes that young people in all countries are a major human resource, a key mediator of social change, economic development, and technological innovation. International organizations, especially the United Nations, have also paid considerable attention to youth issues. The UN Youth Agenda is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, which provides a policy framework as well as practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of youth around the world. In his new strategy "Youth 2030", which was launched on the eve of the general policy debate at the 73rd Session of the General Assembly in 2018, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres identified five priority areas to improve the lives of young people: to involve them in solving contemporary problems; to increase access to education and health; to improve their economic situation; to ensure conditions for the exercise of their civil and political rights, and to support young people in conflict and crisis. He stressed that the Youth 2030 strategy would be underpinned by the "Unlimited Opportunity Generation" initiative. The project is aimed to empower young people, especially in terms of quality education and decent work.

1. Youth policy within the SCO.

Today, the world is home to 1.8 billion young people, the largest number in the history of humankind. Almost half of the world's young people live in the SCO region (approximately 800 million people). Young people with their energy, innovative and bold ideas are an important pillar on the way to further development of SCO in various aspects of its activities. That is why our organization is focused on young people. The SCO Member States attach great importance to the development of youth cooperation, aimed at promoting the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the young generation and involving them in large-scale plans for joint development.

The responsible body for implementing the policy is the SCO Youth Council, which was established in 2009 on the initiative of Youth Organizations of the Organization's Member Countries. Its purpose is cooperation and exchange of experiences of representatives of the young generation of SCO countries in various areas of development of young personality to ensure fundamental continuity of SCO policy and contribute to the implementation of its historical mission. The SCO Youth Council is an effective mechanism for protecting young people from various de-

structive ideas by creating favorable conditions for them in terms of availing modern education, acquiring professional skills, generating business opportunities, and innovative projects to accommodate maximum employment, self-realization, enhancing spiritual potential and prosperity.

Involving young people in interstate cultural, economic, scientific and educational processes contributes to the discovery of the creative, social, educational and spiritual and moral potential of the young generation besides strengthening friendship and mutual understanding among the young people of the participating countries, which could serve to further develop good-neighboring relations and strengthen inter-ethnic and interfaith cooperation. For this purpose, discussions, conferences, cultural and sporting events, as well as youth forums are organized annually within the framework of the SCO Youth Council along with the project of the International Service "SCO Youth Map", which successfully implemented international festivals "SCO and BRICS Student Spring", including SCO marathons are held annually. As part of the "Our Common Home" project, the SCO Secretariat works with young people, providing them technical support as well as a platform for organizing various events. These events range from SCO model meetings to intellectual contests on various themes such as "Leader of the 21st Century". Also, since 2016 the SCO Secretariat organizes an "Open Day" for students and schoolchildren every year, during which visitors are given a tour of the SCO headquarters and briefed about the Organization's activities and national peculiarities of its member states. All these events once again confirm that young people are the main bearers of society's intellectual potential. They have great abilities to work, to create life in all spheres, and are capable of mastering new knowledge, professions, and specialties faster than other social groups in the society.

All activities of the Youth Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are built in the spirit of mutual respect and trust, equality and mutual benefit, taking into account the interests of the parties and resolving all issues by consensus under the principles of the "Shanghai spirit" and the Regulations on the Youth Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Last year, the Youth Council celebrated its 10th anniversary. Its activities were highly appreciated by the heads of state at the SCO Summit in Bishkek, which was held on 13-14 June 2019. A vivid illustration of this was the joint photograph of leaders of Member and Observer States with representatives of Youth Council, for the first time in the history of SCO.

2. Interaction within SCO against the radicalization of youth.

In the declaration which was adopted after the Bishkek Summit, the Heads of SCO Member States stressed the importance of intensifying joint efforts of the international community to counter attempts to involving young people in terrorist, separatist and extremist groups. Indeed, young people are considered one of the vulnerable parts of the society. International terrorism and extremism, turbulence in the world economy and aggravation of social problems – these besides other factors exacerbate the challenges faced by the young people. They have been targeted by various destructive and terrorist forces seeking to lure young men and women into criminal activities through the manipulation of the immaculate mind. Statistics have shown that the most extremist and violent crimes in the world are committed by people under the age of 30, including minors. There are about 300,000 young people under the age of 18 in the ranks of religious and extremist organizations across the world. Taking these trends into account, the SCO is also responding appropriately which is aimed at countering the involvement of young people in terrorist, separatist, and extremist structures.

Particularly, following the SCO Summit in Qingdao in 2018, the Heads of states adopted a joint appeal to youth and a Programme of Action, aimed at actively involving young people in creating a decent future, promoting the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the younger generation for its implementation. The documents emphasize the utmost importance of ensuring favorable social and economic conditions, availability of opportunities for education, self-expression, disclosure of creative potential, and realization of labor activity for young population groups.

One of the SCO's events aimed at the practical implementation of the Joint Statement of the Heads of State was the Assembly of Youth Representatives of the Organization's countries which were held in November 2018 in Dushanbe. The event confirmed that the young people of SCO strive for creation and development, and share the goals and principles, ideals, and values which were enshrined in the Heads of States' Addresses. They are ready to contribute to strengthening security and stability as well as to ensuring sustainable joint development in unification.

3. Involvement of youth in Entrepreneurship.

The coronavirus pandemic has ruined the ways, millions of people used to live. In six months, what was considered important in previous decades has been devalued before our eyes. Consumer society has been transformed into a society of safety. People who used to travel found themselves trapped within the borders of their countries, cities, and even apartments. Sports competitions, concerts, and other favorite and familiar entertainment were canceled and, resultantly, has directly affected the routine daily life of the young generation.

Today, one-quarter of the world's working population is young, but it is also worth considering that half of the world's unemployed are also young.

The International Labour Organization has stated that young people are worst affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, and they have been affected by the current crisis in terms of mental and physical health, education, professional development, and civic engagement - in all of the cited areas besides young people also face significant changes and challenges. In the current climate, the development and support of youth entrepreneurship have become a priority for our Governments. For young people, this could be a solution to the problem regarding their employment and self-realization because today many young people want to work and create something socially significant. For young entrepreneurs, the crisis is also a challenge that is not comparable in scale to their capabilities. The situation when old strategies stop working and new ones are yet to be developed, in such dramatically changed conditions many entrepreneurs must master some new areas of activity. Because the old ones are no longer effective and profitable. In this regard, the SCO is actively working to attract young people to business activities. The member states are in favor of developing business incubators to improve the business climate in the region and support youth start-up projects. The project "International Youth Business Incubator of the SCO countries" is being implemented within the framework of the SCO Youth Council, and is designed to assist training mentors for start-ups, opening up a space of business incubators for young people, and conducting internships projects in the Member States.

Since innovation and the digital economy is key a factor of economic growth, therefore, the SCO attaches great importance to cooperation in the development of e-commerce and promotion of startup initiatives. As an example, China and Russia have launched youth incubators to develop startups in the SCO region.

India is also not lagging in this area, with the launch of the "Startup India" movement in 2016 to create an ecosystem for the development of innovations and startups in the country and to involve young professionals in this activity. To ensure knowledge sharing, a single web portal, Startup India Hub, has been launched in 40 different languages, including the languages of all SCO countries: English, Russian, Chinese, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek. Besides, the International Youth Entrepreneurship Forum was held in Qingdao in April 2019, which became an effective platform for promoting youth entrepreneurship and innovation for sustainable economic development in the SCO region.

4. Youth and modern information technologies

Under the circumstances of the pandemic, we are witnessing a real increase in youth activity in the sphere of information and communication technologies. It is worth mentioning that young people's interest in new sciences and technological development has led to the growth of e-commerce, and many experts believe that the world economy will keep afloat. Thanks to the digital economy. The coronavirus pandemic has triggered the development of the digital economy and has forced many to rethink their vision of the future economy. The phenomenon has forced the young generation, considered to be the most advanced in the use of ICT, to seek new solutions to painlessly circumvent the negative effects of the epidemic as well as protecting themselves and others from the virus.

To be more actively involved in this area, the SCO Secretariat, together with the SCOLAR Network - Youth Platform, in partnership with the Innova Technology Park and Alibaba Group, has held a conference on "Digital Economy and E-commerce: Challenges and Opportunities in the SCO Region", and a webinar on "Digital Action for Entrepreneurs in the COVID-19 Era: Lessons from Alibaba". The events were attended by more than 600 young adapted in the digital economy and 45 were from "SCO Family" countries besides Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

In this regard, it is very important for the young generation of the SCO space to actively improve their skills in using software and other eminent platforms that are used by technological specialties. A huge number of training materials, on almost any skill, can be found on the Internet. We need to move towards our goal, to achieve our luck, not to sit back nor to retreat.

5. Ensuring full education in the context of the pandemic

The SCO countries attach importance to channeling the energy of the younger generation to a creative direction, first and foremost, through accessible, high-quality, innovative education that makes it possible to realize the full potential of the individual. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the global crisis caused by the pandemic has put education on the back burner, as governments today are more focused on health, economic, and social policy measures aimed at overcoming the pandemic and its consequences. The main response to the spread of the epidemic, virtually all over the world, has been the closure of educational institutions and the conversion of education into an online format. The crisis came at a time when most education systems were not prepared for the world of digital learning opportunities. This has created a range of problems ranging from a lack of preparedness of infrastructure and teachers to a lack of motivation to educate young people, potentially leading to a significant increase in educational differentiation. Despite the obvious negative consequences of the pandemic, it has provided several opportunities and an understanding of today's unpredictable world. It is essential to bridge the digital divide and develop skills to resist various threats. The crisis has accelerated the process of piloting and adapting online learning in most countries.

As is the case around the world, all, or part of the countries of our Organization have closed their educational institutions and many students have switched to distance learning. In China alone, a total of 120 million students at 140,000 schools across China have returned to classes using DingTalk, a communication application developed by Chinese Internet giant Alibaba. Half of the students in China are now "attending classes" through the app, which was originally a mobile office app.

The pandemic came at a time when most education systems, as shown by the latest round of the OECD's International Student Assessment Programme (ISAP), were unwilling to take advantage of new digital learning opportunities. The closure of higher education institutions, colleges, schools, and the emergency transition to distance learning presents problems mainly due to insufficient technical equipment. Internet bandwidth is sufficient against a significantly increased workload.

Considering these trends, during the first organizational meeting of the SCO University Coordination Council which was held on 30 June 2020, the member states discussed the issues of conversion of educational programmes to distance learning. The SCO Secretariat believes it is important to compile the experience of our countries in the development of distance education and to develop an appropriate multilateral cooperation programme. At the same time, SCO University should become a reliable platform for the development of online education in the SCO region. Education is an integral part of humanitarian cooperation within the SCO. As soon as the spread of COVID-19 became under control, the return of students to educational institutions is now one of the top priorities of the governments of the SCO Member States. The Meeting of Education Ministers of SCO Member States has been effective in this regard.

6. Participation of young people of SCO countries in volunteer activities

I would also like to separately mention the volunteer movements in our countries in which the young people actively participated during the pandemic like; voluntarily assisting physicians, the sick, the poor, and those in need. During these difficult days, they distributing medicines and food and young medical volunteers providing first aid to those who are unable to reach doctors is an invaluable contribution to supporting those who need help during these difficult times.

In the SCO region, almost 200 million young people have volunteered to help their citizens.

In India, volunteer programmes organized by the Government of the country have brought together over 10 million volunteers to help. Moreover, in some states, citizens-initiated community programmes also brought together many volunteers for this purpose.

According to the Ministry of Civil Administration of China, the number of registered volunteers in China has reached 172 million, and 735,000 volunteer organizations were registered in the country, most of which took part in combating the coronavirus epidemic in Wuhan and other cities.

In Kyrgyzstan, since its founding, volunteers from the Daryger Youth Initiative have helped more than 15 hospitals with personal protective equipment, respirators, medicines, soaps, detergents, masks, and antiseptics. To this day, the volunteers continue to provide meals to medical workers and coordination of transportation of doctors from home to work and back.

In Pakistan, hundreds of thousands of young people have registered with the civil youth movement "Tiger Force" to help the government and masses to counter the spread of the epidemic.

In Russia, they have launched the All-Russian Action of Mutual Assistance - "We are together". The participants of the action help the poor and needy segments of the population. Almost 120,000 Russian young people have responded to help medical professionals and the needy during these difficult days.

Tajikistan's young people have also stood by and are helping the population and medical facilities. The Committee on Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has established a volunteer movement "Followers of the Leader of the Nation". Members of this movement have organized mobile groups that deliver necessities to the needy and carry out awareness among the population on prevention and prevention of the spread of the pandemic.

To assist the sick and needy in Uzbekistan, on the initiative of the Agency for Youth Affairs, volunteer.uz website was launched, which currently has several tens of thousands of volunteers registered. They actively assist charitable organizations in distributing food to needy families and work even in the so-called red zones, day, and night, as well as in hospitals to somehow compensate for the shortage of medical personnel.

The courage, firmness, and selflessness shown by young people in the activities of volunteer organizations in the fight against the pandemic, are highly appreciated by the Heads of state of all SCO Member States.

We are deeply convinced that the future development of the entire SCO region depends on the participation of young people in political, socio-economic, and public life at both the national and international levels. That is why we believe that it is necessary to build a society in the SCO region where all young people will have the opportunity to realize their potential, their ability and contribution to the development of their countries, and to building a recognized future.

– The writer is the Secretary General of SCO.

Briefs

Egypt-Gaza crossing opens

RAFAH: The only crossing between Gaza and Egypt opened on Tuesday for 72 hours, allowing people to leave the Palestinian enclave for the first time since the novel coronavirus outbreak began.

The Rafah crossing in southern Gaza was closed in March, as Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the strip, sought to guard against a major virus outbreak in the densely-populated territory with weak health infrastructure.

Rafah was opened for three days in April, but only to allow Gazans stranded abroad to return home. The crossing re-opened for limited two-way movement on Tuesday. Gaza's interior ministry spokesman Iyad Al-Bazam said people who hold foreign passports, foreign residency permits or emergency medical needs "will be allowed to leave".

Hundreds of Gazans had assembled before dawn at a waiting room preparing to exit, AFP reporters said. Gaza resident Hatem al-Mansi told AFP he needed medical care, but voiced concern about infection risks in Egypt, which has registered 95,000 COVID-19 cases, compared to just 81 in Gaza.

"There is a fear of being infected with COVID-19 in cars or buses in Egypt," he told AFP. "In Gaza, we don't have that problem." - APP

FIR of Chaman blast registered

DNA

CHAMAN: The First Information Report (FIR) of the Chaman blast has been filed at a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station. The case was lodged on the complaint of the SHO City under terrorism charges.

At least six people were killed and 21 others sustained wounds when a blast ripped through the Chaman's Mall Road area on Monday. According to police, the bomb was planted in a motorbike and detonated by remote control.

Police inspector Muhammad Mohsin said that the explosion targeted a vehicle of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF). "8 kilograms of explosives were used in the blast," said police.

A medical officer said that out of the 21 injured, 12 of them are in a critical condition. "We have shifted the seriously wounded to Quetta due to closure of operation theatre in Chaman amid coronavirus pandemic," he said.

Furthermore, the evidence gathered from the scene has been sent to the forensic lab. Prime Minister Imran Khan had strongly condemned the Chaman blast and expressed grief over the loss of lives. He prayed for the early recovery of those injured.

First Nash-o-Numa Centre set up at Upper Dir

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr Sania Nishtar Tuesday disclosed that the first Ehsaas Nash-o-Numa Center has been set up at Upper Dir district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to provide mother and child care facilities.

A total of six Nash-o-Numa Centres will be established in Upper Dir to prevent the mothers and newborns from stunting, Dr Nishtar informed through a tweet.

While a total of 33 centres are being set up in nine districts across the country which would provide a number of facilities to the women and their children, Sania Nishtar said. These centres will provide a number of facilities including Consumer Registration, Medical Examination, Awareness Session, Healthy Diet Guidelines and continuous support for maintenance of their health. ATM machines are also being installed at every Nash-o-Numa Centre to facilitate the process of stipends delivery to the registered beneficiaries, Dr. Nishtar said. - APP

No disruption acceptable in CPEC, experts say

'China's concentration is to increase its economic strength while raising its military profile. China or India do not want to enter in a war because both countries are focusing on their economic growth'

DNA

KARACHI: The Institute of Business Management (IoBM) hosted a webinar on "China-India Military Standoff & Security Implications for Pakistan".

The moderator was Ambassador Ghulam Rasool Baluch. The panelists included Ambassador Hussain Haroon, Ambassador Najamuddin Sheikh, and Ambassador Shahid Amin.

Ambassador Shahid Amin said that China's concentration is to increase its economic strength while raising its military profile. He mentioned that China or India do not want to enter in a war because both coun-

tries are focusing on their economic growth. Commenting on the China-India military standoff, he said that China has given India a proof that its military is stronger.

Furthermore, China has signaled to India that no disruption in CPEC will be acceptable. Talking about CPEC, he said that its scope is broadening as more projects are being completed. However, Pakistan must not become dependent on China and should focus on its sovereignty and security.

Ambassador Hussain Haroon said that while the West has put the world into colonies, China is using its economic might to elevate its status.



He said that the Western era is dawning and India does not want to be a part of this equation. Mr. Haroon said that China showed an aggressive stance by building islands in

the South China Sea but the intent of the US against China is also not suitable.

Ambassador Najamuddin Shaikh said that the US and especially the Trump administration are trying to neutralize the US relations with China for Trump's chance for re-election. He said that terrorism has been a long term adversary of the US, China, according to Mr. Shaikh, is the next adversary for the US but a much less belligerent one.

The panelists were of the view that Pakistan needs to work on improving its good governance, fortify its economy and enhance its foreign policy objectives so to counter any security implications that may arise because of China-India military standoff.

Global coronavirus cases pass 20 million

DNA

NEW YORK: The world has reached the grim milestone of 20 million confirmed coronavirus cases and is edging closer to 750,000 deaths globally, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University.

Case numbers have soared exponentially since the first were reported in China in December. The world recorded one million cases more than three months later, on April 2. The tally hit 10 million cases less than three months after that, on June 28, and it has taken just six weeks to double.

The seven-day average for new daily cases has been above a quarter of a million for two weeks.

The rise in cases remains driven in large part by the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as by Asia, where cases are growing again, according to the JHU figures. Death rates remain highest in the former.

Brazil has recorded more than three million cases and 100,000 deaths, second only to the United States, which is by far the

worst affected country with more than five million cases and 160,000 deaths. India has the third-highest number of cases at more than two million, reaching the milestone just three weeks after hitting one million. The country is struggling to cope with the fast-growing outbreak, with critically ill patients turned away from hospitals that lack beds, staff and equipment.

Trump exits briefing as man shot near White House

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump was escorted out of a news conference after Secret Service agents shot and wounded a man who claimed to be armed outside the White House. The Secret Service said the incident happened one block from the compound, when an officer fired on the suspect who had run "aggressively" towards him. An agent then walked on stage as Mr Trump was speaking and led him away.

The president returned minutes later to say the situation was under control. The US Secret Service said the incident happened on Monday on the corner of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Ave - outside the White House perimeter. It said a 51-year-old man, who has not been identified, approached the officer, told him he had weapons and assumed a "shooter's stance", whereupon the officer shot him in the torso. - DNA

Need to be careful on I-D, Muharram: Dr Nausheen

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) Dr Nausheen Hamid said on Tuesday that the people still needed to be very careful on Independence Day (14th August) and Muharram-ul-Haram holidays.

Talking to a private news channel she said that the people should follow SOPs and maintain social distancing during these holidays as the threat of the COVID-19 still remains and it could spread further.

The lockdown was eased as the number of COVID-19 cases decreased, but now

it is the responsibility of the people to fulfill their national duty and eradicate this epidemic, she added. Dr Nausheen said that the people should understand sensitivity of spread of COVID-19 so if precautionary measures are ignored, the virus will spread and the government would be compelled to take tough decisions again.

She said government's smart lockdown strategy was effectively worked to decrease the number of coronavirus cases in the country, while now the whole World appreciated this strategy. - APP

Over \$3017 mn spent over transport imports

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan spent US \$ 3017.222 million by acquiring different transport services from various countries during the eleven months of fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

This shows decrease of 9.15 percent as compared to \$3321.109 million spent through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year (2018-19), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the period under review, the imports of sea transport services declined by 7.73 percent, by going down from US \$ 1850.126

million during last year to US \$ 1707.110 million during fiscal year under review. Among the sea transport services, the imports of freight services witnessed decrease of 8.75 percent by declining from US \$ 1653.376 million to US \$ 1508.780 million whereas the imports of other sea transport services witnessed nominal increase of 0.80 percent from \$196.750 million to \$198.330 million.

The imports of air transport services witnessed decrease of 11.29 percent by going down from \$1440.260 million last year to \$1277.665 million during July-May (2019-20). - APP

Lebanon's government resigns

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanon's government stepped down on Monday night, less than a week after a massive explosion in Beirut killed more than 160 people and sparked days of violent protests.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab addressed the nation, announcing his resignation and that of his government in the wake of the blast, which he called a "disaster beyond measure."

In an impassioned speech, Diab berated Lebanon's ruling political elite for fostering what he called "an apparatus of corruption bigger than the state."

"We have fought valiantly and with dignity," he said, referring to members of his cabinet. "Between us and change is big powerful barrier." Diab compared Tuesday's explosion to an "earthquake that rocked the country" prompting his government to resign. "We have decided to stand with the people," he said.

Three cabinet ministers had already quit, along with seven members of parliament.

CAA to install modern electronic system

DNA

KARACHI: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has decided to install a modern electronic system on major airports for ensuring flight safety from the bird-plane collision incidents, making an end to the traditional procedures.

The automated bioacoustic bird prevention system will effectively use the digital recording of species-specific distress calls to make the runways free of birds instead of using propane cannons and pyrotechnics.

In order to make progress on the project, the CAA director-general Hassan Nasir Jami issued directives to the concerned departments. The bird strike incidents are consistently occurred at the country's airports especially in Karachi and Lahore due to the lack of cleanliness in the adjacent populated areas, posing severe dangers to the aircraft and passengers.

Over 22 incidents of bird strikes on aircraft had been reported during the past seven months in the country, according to statistics provided by the spokesperson of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on July 20. The bird-hit incidents were increasing in the country and added that the national flag-carrier suffered most in term of financial loss due to bird strike incidents, the spokesperson said.

At least 39 died from electrocution in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: At least 39 people died from electrocution in Karachi in last 35 days during the four monsoon rain spells that played havoc in the city. The Edhi Foundation has released a report about the electrocution deaths reported in the port city in the last two months during the monsoon rains.

According to a report, 26 people died due to electrocution in different areas of Karachi in the month of July. Similarly, 13 people electrocuted to death in Karachi during the month of August. Sources said the Karachi police has also started gathering contact details of heirs of the persons died from electrocution in the metropolis.

The police will seek details of the First Investigation Report (FIR) from the victims' families, said sources. On July 29, the Nepra had taken "serious notice" of electrocution deaths during recent rains in Karachi and invited citizens to report such incidents to the regulatory body. In a statement, a spokesperson of NEpra said that in order to ascertain the real causes behind these incidents and to fix responsibility the regulatory body has created a dedicated email address to receive evidence from the general public and affected families.

UK suffers biggest job losses since 2009

DNA

LONDON: The number of people in work in Britain fell by the most since 2009 in the three months through June as the coronavirus crisis took a heavy toll on the labor market, even with the government's huge jobs protection scheme still in place. Led by a record plunge in self-employed workers,

there were 220,000 less people employed in the second quarter, the Office for National Statistics said. Separate tax data for July showed that the number of staff on company payrolls had fallen by 730,000 since March, sounding the alarm about a potentially much bigger rise in joblessness. Mounting job losses are expected as Britain winds down its job retention

scheme which protects employees. It is due to close at the end of October. "The cracks evident in the latest batch of labor market data are likely to soon turn into a chasm," said Ruth Gregory, senior economist at Capital Economics. British finance minister Rishi Sunak said the figures showed the government's support programs were working but job losses were inevitable.

Palestine envoy meets Malaysian PM

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: Palestine Ambassador to Malaysia, Walid Abu Ali met the Prime Minister of Malaysia "Muhyiddin Yassin" and handing him a letter from the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas. Matters on current situation and the brotherly relations between Palestine and Malaysia were discussed.

China, Pakistan's universities to cooperate in textile

The two sides will undertake programs and industry-university collaborations, so as to build a demonstration platform for textile engineering technology exchanges

DNA

BEIJING: Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES) and National Textile University (NTU), Pakistan have renewed their commitment for promoting mutual cooperation in textile sector, under China, Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

According to China Economic Net, they decided to make all possible efforts to "promote bilateral exchanges and cooperation in textile engineering via Internet". It was noted that "COVID-19 did affect the onsite, face-to-face cooperation between China and Pakistan's universities." They hoped that the situation will soon come to normal to interact face-to-face. According to an agreement SUES and NTU signed earlier, they will promote bilateral exchanges and cooperation in teaching, scientific research, academic conferences, seminars, symposiums, long-term and short-term student exchange programs. The two sides will undertake programs and industry-university collaborations, so as to build a demonstration platform for textile



engineering technology exchanges. Officials of SUES told China Economic Net that the 2020 AATCC Sustainability Innovation & Fashion Technology International Conference (AATCC-SIFTIC) will be held in October by School of Fashion Engineering (SFE), SUES in the form of online video

conference, in which professors from NTU will participate. "The majors of NTU and SUES's School of Fashion Engineering is highly consistent with each other," said source from SUES, "therefore, through the agreement, we are committed to promoting the international

IUCs between the two schools, of which the key step is to enroll NTU students into SUES's IUC projects."

SUES added that School of Fashion Engineering (SFE) is a multidisciplinary and coordinated developing school based on textile and fashion engineering technologies. It has built the "Quadra-Cooperative Mode" of "Cooperative Education, Cooperative School-Running, Cooperative Innovation, and Cooperative Employment" with industries.

SFE is also equipped with two ministerial and provincial research bases, and a National Engineering Practical Education Centre co-founded with the enterprise in China. China and Pakistan are iron-clad brothers that enjoy a profound friendship and mutual cooperation," the officials said, adding that the educational exchange and cooperation between the two universities can provide human resources and technical resources for the economic and trade cooperation in fields of textile and apparel.

They hoped that such cooperation will get a big boost under the framework of Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC.