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Highest-ever remittances in July: PM Imran

Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa in Saudi Arabia

Will not change stance on 18th Amendment: Bilawal



Briefs

Gen Bajwa in Saudi Arabia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa on Monday arrived Saudi Arabia. Earlier, DG ISPR Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar had confirmed that the army chief was traveling to Saudi Arabia, saying that the visit was pre-planned and "primarily military affairs oriented."

Last week, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Admiral Nawaf Saeed Al-Malkiy, had met the COAS to discuss matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral defence relations.

NAB files reference against Shehbaz

DNA

LAHORE: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Monday filed a reference against 16 accused including PML-N President and Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif along with his son Hamza Shehbaz in money laundering case.

The case pertaining to Rs-7bn corruption was filed in the court of the admin judge today. The reference, consisting of 55 volumes, also includes the names of Sulaiman Shehbaz, Rabia, Nusrat Shahbaz, and Nisar Ahmad.

Four accused, including Shahid Rafiq, Yasir Mushtaq, Muhammad Mushtaq, and Aftab Mahmood have become approvers against Shabbaz Sharif and others.

Kashmiri youth martyred in Baramulla

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred a Kashmiri youth in Baramulla district on Monday. According to Kashmir Media Service, the youth was killed by the troops during a cordon and search operation in Kreeri area of the north Kashmir's district. Earlier, two personnel of Indian Central Reserve Police Force and a special police officer of Indian police were killed in an attack in the same area. - APP

Committee formed

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that there has been consultation with federal authorities to resolve the issues of Sindh and its capital Karachi and in this regard a committee will be constituted comprising representatives of both the governments in this regard. Addressing a news conference in Karachi on Monday, he said Sindh government has always welcomed federal government's help in resolving the issues of the province.

Highest-ever remittances in July: PM

PM had thanked overseas workers for the remittances, which he said were much higher than the previous year

ALLAWASAYO / DNA

ISLAMABAD: PM Imran shared the statistics, calling it "more good news" for Pakistan's economy Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday that Pakistan recorded highest-ever remittances from overseas Pakistanis in July 2020, reaching \$2,768 million. On Twitter, the prime minister shared the statistics, calling it "more good news" for Pakistan's economy.

"Remittances from overseas Pakistanis reached \$2,768 mn in July 2020, highest ever amount in one month in the history of Pakistan. This is 12.2% increase over June 2020 and 36.5% increase over July 2019," he wrote. Last week, PM Imran had appreciated overseas Pakistani workers for sending more remittances through banking channels.

"Remittances for the past fiscal year came in much higher at 9.7 percent annual growth and totaled \$21.8 billion for the year," Prime Minister Imran Khan said in a tweet. In his statement, the prime minister had thanked overseas workers for the remittances, which he said were much higher than the previous year when they grew only 2.9%.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, overseas Pakistanis remitted \$21,841.50 million during fiscal year 2018-19, showing a growth of 9.68% compared with \$19,913.55mn during the same period in the previous year. Remittances received from Malaysia, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Japan and other countries during June 2019 had amounted to \$198.81mn together as against \$199.47mn received in June 2018.

FM Zarif describes Azerbaijan as brother

The Iranian FM noted that the peoples of Azerbaijan and Iran share a common history, culture, religion and national and spiritual values

DNA

BAKU: "Iran and Azerbaijan are close neighbors, friendly and brotherly countries," said Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif as he introduced Saeed Khatibzadeh, the new spokesman of the Foreign Ministry during a ceremony.

Newly appointed Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyyed Abbas Mousavi also attended the event. FM Zarif congratulated Abbas Mousavi on his appointment as ambassador, while also highlighting Iranian-Azerbaijani relations.

The Iranian FM noted that the peoples of Azerbaijan and Iran shared a common history, culture, religion and national and spiritual values. "These facts require the expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries. Iran and Azerbaijan are close neighbors, friendly and brotherly countries."



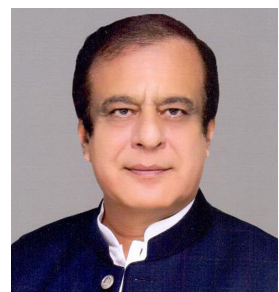
Azerbaijan is an important state for Iran, and official Tehran attaches special importance to the development of cooperation with Baku," Zarif said. He noted that cooperation between the two countries had been developing steadily, describing Azerbaijan as a dear brother of Iran.

Govt mulling over institutional reforms, says Shibli Faraz

He said people must implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

ALLAWASAYO

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz says Karachi is economic hub of the country and joining hands by all stakeholders for betterment of the city is a positive sign. Talking to a news channel, he said despite having dif-



ference of opinion over certain matters, all the political parties should get united over the issues of national interests. The Information Minister said federal cabinet and provincial cabinets of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will present their performance of ongoing tenures before the people tomorrow. He said the government has

prepared a plan for bringing institutional reforms. Replying to a question, he said appearing with procession before the institution is aimed to pressurize the institution which is against the democratic norms and supremacy of law. Meanwhile, in a tweet, Shibli Faraz said that Pakistan has become an attractive destination for tourists from all over the world. He said that 100 per cent booking at tourist destinations was a proof that the tourism industry in Pakistan was gradually growing. It is a clear demonstration of revival of economic activities and the restoration of public confidence, he said. He said people must implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Pak, Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial relations: Sanjrani

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial brotherly ties and both the countries have always stood together through thick and thin. Both the countries have always adopted a unified response on international issues and resolved these through mutual consultation. He expressed these views while talking to Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malkiy who called on the Senate Chief here at Parliament House on Monday. Issues of bilateral mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.



Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that Pakistan would never forget that Saudi Arabia has always supported and stood with Pakistan in difficult times. He expressed the hope

that Saudi Arabia would continue to support Pakistan with same vigour and passion in future. On behalf of the Parliament particularly Senate of Pakistan he reiterated that all possible sacrifices would be offered for the protection of the holy places of the Muslims in Saudi Arabia. Chairman Senate expressed his deep gratitude and best wishes for both the King Salman bin Abdullah and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. He said the Pakistan can never recognise Israel and decision of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) regarding Israel will have far reaching consequences. Saudi Ambassador agreed with the remarks by the Chairman Senate during the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Sheikh Saoud bin Abdul Rehman Al-Thani meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. - DNA

Will not change stance on 18th Amendment: Bilawal

Bilawal alleged that his lawyers were not allowed to go inside the court. "The public and lawyers were not allowed to come to the court. Is this an attempt to pressurise us or the judiciary

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Monday that the National Accountability Bureau can arrest his entire family but it still won't deter him from changing the PPP's stance on democracy, the National Finance Commission and the 18th Amendment.

The PPP chairman was addressing media outside an accountability court on Monday where former president Asif Ali Zardari had attended a hearing related to the Toshakhana reference. Bilawal alleged that his lawyers were not allowed to go inside the court. "The public

Court to indict Zardari on Sept 9

ISLAMABAD: The accountability court hearing the Toshakhana reference against former president Asif Ali Zardari will frame charges against the PPP leader on September 9. On Monday, Zardari appeared before the accountability court to attend a hearing in the reference. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the party leadership had advised workers not to attend his hearing. As soon as the former president arrived in the courtroom, Bilawal called upon party workers present to leave the premises. He urged even the attorneys' assistants to leave the courtroom due to the prevalent COVID-19 situation. - DNA

and lawyers were not allowed to come to the court. Is this an attempt to pressurise us or the judiciary," he asked. "Are you so afraid of president Zardari?" said Bilawal, adding that the "entire police" of Islamabad was deployed at the

court's premises. Bilawal said that the government can do whatever it wants but the PPP will not compromise on the 18th Amendment. "We are feeling that there is pressure on us, we are being threatened

so that we can tow the same line," he said.

The PPP chairperson accused police and administration of misbehaving with the people. "Today is August 17, every jiyala remembers August 17," said the PPP chairman, calling it a "mango day" in reference to the plane crash of former military dictator Zia-ul-Haq. Bilawal continued that there was a "puppet" sitting in the Prime Minister House and "his strings are being operated from elsewhere". The PPP chairman warned that attempts were being made to control everyone like a puppet. "PPP has faced the dictatorships of Yahya Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Musharraf," said Bilawal.

Qatar envoy meets FM Qureshi

A.M.BHATTI

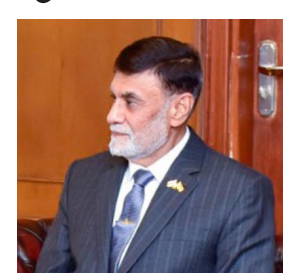
ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Saoud bin Abdul Rehman Al-Thani paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Foreign Minister Qureshi congratulated the Ambassador on assuming his responsibilities and assured him of the Ministry's cooperation and support. The Foreign Minister appreciated the measures taken by Qatar to curtail the spread of Covid-19 and reduce its impact. While appreciating the close fraternal ties between Pakistan and Qatar, the Foreign Minister discussed ways and means of enhancing the existing economic cooperation, investment in food security and other sectors. The Foreign Minister also underscored the important role played by Qatar in the Afghan Peace Process. Views were also exchanged on regional and global developments.

Sri Lankan envoy calls on Qureshi

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The newly-appointed High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Admiral (Retd) Mohan Wijewickrama, called on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi today. The Foreign Minister congratulated the High Commissioner on assuming his responsibilities and expressed the hope that friendly ties between the two countries will be further strengthened during his tenure. During the meeting, views were exchanged on the entire spectrum of bilateral relations. The Foreign Minister felicitated the Government and people of Sri Lanka on successful conduct of Parliamentary Elections, the first elections to be held in South Asia during Covid-19. Foreign Minister Qureshi reaffirmed the importance of strong bilateral ties and underscored the need to further deepen and broaden cooperation in all areas of mu-



tual interest. Expressing satisfaction at the current trajectory of bilateral relations, the Foreign Minister underscored the importance of further strengthening all existing consultations mechanisms between the two countries. He also emphasized the need to enhance the volume of bilateral trade and achieve the annual target of \$ 1 billion. The Foreign Minister conveyed that Pakistan stood as a proud partner of Sri Lanka in its human resource development, security cooperation, fight against terrorism, and progress and prosperity. He wished peace and prosperity for the brotherly people of Sri Lanka.

SHC quashes sugar inquiry report

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday nullified the sugar inquiry commission and its report and ordered authorities concerned to conduct a fair inquiry into the matter. A SHC division bench comprising Justice KK Agha and Justice Omar Sial announced the reserved verdict on a petition filed by the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) against an inquiry commission formed by the government to probe into a sugar crisis that hit the country earlier this year. The SHC declared report of Sugar Inquiry Commission null and void and also ordered National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to carry out an independent inquiry as per law.

Parliamentary Committee on Afghanistan necessary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani experts at a track 1.5/II moot in Islamabad stressed on the urgent formation of a Special Parliamentary Committee on Afghanistan to tackle bilateral issues, particularly transit trade. The meeting was convened by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) as part of its ongoing "Beyond Boundaries" initiative to gauge the impact of the newly opened trade routes, developments in the Afghan peace process, and impact on the security situation in both countries. Experts shed light on the bilateral trade issues, ranging from slow scanning of the containers, to non-availability of trackers, and issues regarding insurance of goods.

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Briefs

PARC, Green System Pak sign MoU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A memorandum of understanding was signed between PARC-PATCO Company and Green System Pakistan Pvt. Limited on August 12, 2020. At this occasion, CEO PATCO, Dr. Muhammad Amjad and CEO Green System Pakistan Pvt. Limited, Rana Tahawar Ali Khan were the signatories while the document was witnessed by Dr. Tariq Sultan, Secretary PATCO and Brigadier (Retd) Azam Effendi, Chairman Effendi group of companies.

Dr. Amjad said, the step is taken to give a fillip to the country's GDP through commercial science based agriculture solutions. Through this MOU we intend to collaborate with Green System Pakistan Pvt. Limited for the development of products like biogas production through modern technology for filling the cylinder, organic fertilizer, controlled dairy farming, diverse range of hydroponic fodder production, milk production and processing, drying of alfalfa, Mombasa, Corn silage, Halal meat production and processing, fruit and vegetable processing and export, renewable power generation, R&D in medicinal plants and tissue culture, plants production of potato seed tuber and date palm.

720 shops, 167 hotels sealed for violating SOPs

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital administration has imposed Rs2, 128,600 fine on ship-owners and sealed around 720 shops over violation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), issued by the government to curb further spread of coronavirus pandemic. Some 167 hotels, 39 work-shops and 26 industrial units were also sealed during the last three month over violations of COVID-19 SOPs, according to a report shared by the Islamabad administration on Monday. Actions were being taken over the non-compliance, following the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, he added. - APP

Lok Virsa to hold online Children's Film Festival

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Cultural and Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold an online International Children's Film Festival on 21 August. In collaboration with The Little Art and Lahore Children's Film Festival (LICFF), Lok Virsa will present 158 films from 24 countries in 16 languages. The main aim was to continue to inspire children through film and brings the community together to watch, learn, and discuss cinema, an official said on Monday. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Tahir Abbasi, Senior Vice President ICICI along with a delegation presenting flower bouquet to Sheikh Ansar Aziz, Mayor Islamabad during visit to MCI. Saif ur Rahman Khan Vice President ICICI, Malik Sohail Hussain and Khalid Chaudhary and Raja Zulsham SG Restaurants Association are also present. - DNA

Mayor Islamabad assures to address food park issues

Sheikh Ansar Aziz said that a Committee would be constituted in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to make the food park functional again and revive its business activities

FIJAZ CHAUDHARY

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry by Tahir Abbasi, Senior Vice President called on Sheikh Ansar Aziz, Mayor Islamabad at his office and discussed with him the key issues of business community for redress. Saif-ur-Rehman Khan Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Malik So-

hail Hussain and Khalid Chaudhry, former Senior Vice Presidents ICICI, and Raja Zulsham, Secretary General, Islamabad Restaurants Association were in the delegation. Addressing the delegation, Sheikh Ansar Aziz, Mayor Islamabad said that the food park was a great project of Islamabad but the situation created by Covid-19 pandemic has badly affected its business. However, he said that a Committee would be constituted in collabora-

tion with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to make the food park functional again and revive its business activities. He said two representatives, each from ICICI, MCI and Islamabad Restaurants Association would be included in the Committee. He said that special concessions would be given to those businesses who have paid regular rent while food park issues would be resolved on priority basis.

Expressing their views, Tahir Abbasi, Senior Vice President, Saif ur Rehman Khan Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Malik Sohail Hussain, Former Senior President ICICI said that the establishment of Food Park in Islamabad was a commendable initiative as it had promoted many businesses in the area while the people were enjoying good food in the facility. However, they said that the business activities in the

food park have been ruined due to the outbreak of coronavirus. They emphasized that MCI should provide special incentives to the businesses of Food Park so that they could revive their business activities. They further said that food outlets have been set up in the green area in F-10 Markaz and urged that Mayor Islamabad should intervene himself to remove all such encroachments from that area.

Rich tribute paid to late psychiatrist

DNA / SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Hundreds of his students, colleagues, friends, family members and followers from different countries joined the online condolence reference in the loving memory of Professor Dr Hussain Mubashir Malik, Pakistan's globally recognized psychiatrist and former vice chancellor University of Health Sciences Punjab, and former principal Rawalpindi Medical College. He died last Monday August 10.

The online condolence reference was organized by Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTNTV on Monday. Moderated by well-known TV actor and anchor Syed Noor ul Hassan, the event was hosted by Devcom-Pakistan director Munir Ahmed.

Main speakers included famous sufi singer Abida Parveen, Brig Dr Mowaddat Hussain Rana, Dr Salman Karim, Ersin Faikzade from Turkey, Dr Ms Saima Farid, Dr Syed Tauqir Shah, Dr Muhammad Imtiaz Mubashar and several others. Abida Parveen said Dr. Hussain Mubashir Malik was a spiritual soul and an extraordinary human being, a very caring father and a humane professional. His multifaceted personality would be a source of inspiration for others forever.

His colleague and friend, Najam Asar



said: he was a professional par excellence in his profession and termed as a giant in the arena of international psychiatry. He led an extraordinary professional life. Brig Rana Mowaddat Hussain mentioned that Prof Mubashar was an energetic man, and achieved great recognition for Pakistan. He made mental health recognized in Pakistan. It was his efforts that the psychiatry departments were established in many of the hospitals. Dr Salman Karim, expert psychiatrist from Manchester, said Prof Dr Malik Hussain Mubashar was a psychiatrist of global recognition and world ranking educationist. Having served as founding VC of the University of Health Sciences Punjab. He played a key role in raising the standards of medical education in Punjab in particular and Pakistan in general. He brought the private medical colleges under the regulatory domain of UHS.

Pims OPDs reopened

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) has reopened its outpatient departments (OPD) on Monday. Because of a surge in Covid-19 cases at the hospital on Saturday, the Pims management has also decided to introduce an appointment system to reduce the number of people present on its premises. Pims OPDs were closed in April because the coronavirus began spreading among healthcare workers in the capital. At the beginning of August, the hospital management made biometric attendance, which was suspended in March because of the coronavirus pandemic, mandatory so that employees could attend to their duties regularly as soon as OPDs were made functional. Pims media coordinator Dr Waseem Khawaja said that half of the wards dedicated to Covid-19 treatment were handed over to other departments. Now that OPDs are being reopened, he said that around 10,000 patients will once again visit the hospital every day.

Health experts warn for covid19 second wave

There is a need to control our behavior and avoid spreading updates regarding COVID-19 situations without authenticity, as it may increase stress and anxiety among people

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Monday appealed the general public to continue maintaining social distancing, wearing face masks ahead of a potential second Covid-19 wave, despite the number of cases continuing to fall. Talking to a private news channel, Medical expert said the situation is now relatively under control, but any mistake can reverse it quickly and urged on public to demonstrate seriousness towards COVID-19. President Pakistan Medical Association Dr Ashraf Nizami said that as the holy month of Muharram is fast approaching and it is high time for general public to observe all precautionary measures to stay safe. Health expert warned that foregoing safety measures will lead to a jump in infection rates and urged the people to wear face masks, particularly in situations where social distancing is not possible, stressing that careless attitude of the public can lead to another spike. He noted that the "use of masks is part of a comprehensive package of the prevention and control measures that can limit the spread of certain respiratory viral diseases in Winters, including Covid-19". Dr Ashraf said children should also wear masks when out in public and once schools reopen. This would protect them and also block them from taking it to their families. Along with masks, good hand hygiene must also be practiced at all times. Health expert said masks and social distancing was very important when it comes to travelling and dining out. There is a need to control our behavior and avoid spreading updates regarding COVID-19 situations without authenticity, as it may increase stress and anxiety among people. We simply have to follow the guidelines that the developing countries are adopting and where the COVID-19 is under control, he added. Renowned Scholar Dr. Atta Ur Rehman said despite constraints of resources, the way Pakistan defeated the coronavirus is appreciable and it has also been acknowledged by the world. The incumbent government took corrective measures in very early stages of the outbreak and prevented the spread of the pandemic, he added. The Pakistani population has natural resistance against coronavirus. The smart lockdown and ban on social gatherings proved to be the best strategy to contain the spread of COVID-19, he explained. People did not follow the SOPs strictly during Eid holidays, he regretted. Work on preparation of vaccine against coronavirus is underway and it will be available in Pakistan at cheaper rates very soon, he added. - APP

IESCO suspends power supply to CDA chairman's office

"Our power supply was suspended without any prior notice," said the spokesperson. "The IESCO owes us more [than what the CDA owes it]"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) suspended power supply to the chairman Capital Development Authority's (CDA) office on Monday, citing non-payment of dues as the reason. According to the power supply company, electricity to the Mayor Office PWD Main Office G-9 sector was also suspended.

The IESCO spokesperson further revealed that power supply to the offices of the deputy director PWD

and the Blue Area deputy director street lights were also suspended. "The CDA hasn't paid dues for street lights," said the IESCO spokesperson. "Power supply was suspended over non-payment of Rs1.40bn,"

he added. IESCO owes us Rs8bn: CDA spokesperson. The CDA spokesperson reacted to the development, stating that the power supply company owed it Rs8bn. "Our power supply was suspended without any pri-

or notice," said the spokesperson. "The IESCO owes us more [than what the CDA owes it]," he said. He said that the IESCO was paid an amount to set up a different meter for streetlights. The CDA spokesperson stated that IESCO uses the authority's land for its offices. "IESCO owes the CDA Rs8bn," he said. "It has to pay us dues in the form of property taxes and rent for land." On the other hand, the IESCO spokesperson responded by stating that the power supply of the CDA had been suspended after giving notice.



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The downfall of Pakistani batting

PAKISTAN is blessed with pace bowlers. Every year we see a number of young guns emerge, which makes Pakistan a factory of fast bowlers. But why can't Pakistan produce quality batsmen in such a flow as the country produces bowlers? There are some basic reasons and causes that can be taken into account. In a country like Pakistan, which is an underdeveloped country, bowling is an economical process. It costs you less. You only need one ball that will cost you approximately \$1 and you can start your practice. In comparison with batting, you will need a helmet, gloves, a pair of pads and high-quality shoes that will easily cost you something near \$100, which is a big amount in our country.

That is why many youngsters – if they have passion for batting – will change their passion toward bowling. As a result there is a pool of bowlers and selectors have to select the best from the best while there is no such pool of batsmen and selectors select from the available batsmen. So the quantity of talent is lesser than bowlers. The other reason behind the lack of quality batsmen is their mentality, which is largely influenced by their coaches.

Many youngsters believe hitting powerful hits in air is the only attribute of batsmen and this view is backed by club-level coaches. As a result, every batsmen likes to hit as hard as they can. They don't care about proper technique and footwork, which makes their batting so one-dimensional and results in poor short selection. When they are somehow selected in the national team, they can't survive for a long time in the international arena because of their bad technique.

Another reason is their lack of temperament. They bat on the spur of the moment. Either they stop the ball or hit the ball. We have seen this throughout the years. This is where the deficiency in Test matches comes from. The majority of our players don't play enough Test matches. Test matches are the best to enhance the temperament of batsmen. In chasing the target, Pakistan's batting collapses even if the target is not so much. Why? Because our players' nerves break down and they cannot hold their calmness. Another reason is the pitches and this is probably the most important one. From club level to domestic and first-class level, the pitches made in Pakistan are mostly dead, which hardly challenges the skills of batsmen. Now it is the time for Pakistan cricket to emerge again in all departments of cricket, especially in batting, where we are short.



The polio battle

PAKISTAN'S polio campaign seems to have been going in reverse the past two years. For Pakistan to officially be declared a polio-free country, it would need to go three consecutive years without a single case of polio. There was a glimmer of hope in mid 2018 when from a high of 306 in 2014, confirmed polio cases in Pakistan fell to 12. All that changed in 2019, when Pakistan recorded 147 cases of polio. So here we are: moving backwards in our fight to save our children. After a lapse of many months due to the Covid-19 situation, parts of the country will see a restart of the anti-polio campaigns (with Covid SOPs intact), starting with a seven-day vaccination campaign that aims to vaccinate 34 million children across the country. The Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) for Polio in Sindh has started the province-wide OPV campaign, which will run till August 21, 2020. The campaign will take place in all 29 districts of Sindh with a total target population of 9.26 million children under five years of age. This is just as well since the virus seems to be showing no signs of being eliminated – just last week, the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad confirmed wild poliovirus in a 14-year-old boy who had expired in the Mayo Hospital on July 27, 2020.

It is unfortunate to see the setback to the polio campaign starting 2019, especially since Pakistan was this close to finally getting rid of its polio problem. There are a number of reasons for that. Some still believe the militant propaganda that polio drops will sterilise their children and so do not welcome polio workers in their communities. Then there has been a question of government will. Hopefully, we will strive to at least get to the levels we had achieved in 2018, and take the fight right up to eliminating this deadly virus.

A report by the Independent Monitoring Board of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative at the beginning of this year had pointed out that there is a lack of coordination between different agencies and that polio has now expanded outside its core reservoirs. The IMB also stressed the need for Afghanistan and Pakistan to work together, given the issue of cross-border transmission. Pakistan has in the past blamed Afghanistan for polio cases in its territory. But a disease should not become a game of political upmanship. Both within the country and in the region health teams must work together if polio is to be ever successfully wiped out and the gains seen till 2018 built on.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan: A partnership too important to fail

Dr. Ali Awadh Asseri



Little surprise that on the eve of the current visit of Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa to Riyadh, Major-General Babar Iftikhar, Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations, has categorically said: Saudi-Pak "relations are historic, very important, have always been excellent and will remain so. There should be no doubt of this ... Nobody should doubt the centrality of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Muslim world. Our hearts beat with the people of Saudi Arabia. So, there is no need to raise any questions on our relations with one another"

IN recent days, disturbing reports have appeared in Pakistani media and then picked up by foreign media that aim to sabotage the historic partnership between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Their apparent motivation is to create a rift in the Muslim Ummah, by questioning the principled position of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) on Kashmir and linking it with Saudi Arabia's economic support to Pakistan.

Even more worrisome is the fact that these damaging reports draw upon the remarks made by Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Pakistan's foreign minister, in an interview to a local new channel on August 5.

In that interview, he warned that if the OIC failed to meet Pakistan's expectation for calling a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, he would be "compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."

FM Qureshi's remarks have been followed up by speculative media accounts about Saudi Arabia suspending its emergency economic support to Pakistan. So much so that the OIC and, by implication, founder Saudi Arabia were blamed for not doing enough for the Kashmir cause.

Sadly, no one has yet bothered to seek the Saudi perspective on the two issues, which are neither remotely connected nor are they factually correct. So, a clarification is very much in order to set the record straight. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have always enjoyed an incomparable level of understanding and friendship based on common religious, cultural and social values.

Their unique relations are rooted in the mutual love of the people and, hence, have historically been immune from any changes in government or

leadership in the two great nations.

That is why, with each passing decade, the Saudi-Pak cooperation in political, security and economic spheres has grown by leaps and bounds.

In February 2019, the strategic relationship assumed added significance when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman paid a state visit to Pakistan, where he was graciously driven by Prime Minister Imran Khan from the Islamabad airport to the Prime Minister House.

Their personal chemistry, developed through frequent interactions in the year before, paid its dividends, as the Crown Prince signed on the emergency economic relief package worth \$6.2 billion for Pakistan, including \$3 billion in loan and \$3.2 oil credit facility on annual basis for the next three years, to shore up its foreign exchange reserves and avert a balance-of-payments crisis.

This emergency relief package conformed to a familiar pattern persisting in the past over two decades, whereby Saudi Arabia would provide oil on deferred payments to Pakistan whenever it ran into economic difficulty. However, the economic crisis was much worse this time, as Pakistan faced the risk of defaulting on its foreign debt obligations.

Hence, Saudi Arabia was the first to come to its rescue in November 2018 by offering the \$6.2 billion relief package. The UAE also joined hands later. This was several months before the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved its \$6 billion bailout for Pakistan in July 2019.

However, a far more important development during the Crown Prince's visit was the conclusion of the largest-ever Saudi investment deals worth \$20 billion in Pakistan, including an oil refinery in Gwadar worth \$10 billion and the remaining investments in petrochemical complex, mining and renewable energy sectors.

It signified that Saudi Arabia was now interested in Pakistan's long-term economic development, as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that ends at the strategic Gwadar port.

It is worth mentioning here that China is the largest importer of Saudi oil, and Saudi Arabia is also diversifying its global economic links through participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and by expanding trade ties with the rest of Asia's emerging economies.

Thus, while the recent expansion in Saudi-Pak economic cooperation is mutually inclusive and not at cross purposes with the BRI or CPEC, it is also important to state that the two brotherly Muslim nations have always stood shoulder to shoulder with each other in difficult times.

For instance, in 1990, Pakistan sent its ground forces to defend Saudi Arabia against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Three decades later, Pakistan's former army chief General Raheel Sharif leads the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism, which is comprised of 41 Muslim nations.

From defending the sanctity of Haramain Sharifain to defeating the scourge of terrorism, Pakistan has always been a key Saudi partner and a major Muslim player.

Having served as the Saudi ambassador to Pakistan during the tumultuous period from 2001 to 2009, I vividly remember the gravity of terrorism that both nations faced post-9/11 and how we confronted this menace together in the heyday of the War on Terror.

I maintained close interaction with the civilian and military leadership to ensure Pakistan remains secure and stable. I also remember the fateful days when a devastating earthquake hit the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Saudi Arabia instantly established an air corridor to provide emergency relief to its victims.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have also closely cooperated to achieve the common goals of regional peace and stability in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Thus, out of my personal conviction, on August 5, when Pakistan officially observed Youm-e-Istehsala-e-Kashmir to express solidarity with the suffering Kashmiris, I penned a piece in these columns to highlight the plight of the Kashmiri Muslims and the urgency of resolving the longstanding Kashmir dispute.

However, the very next morning, I was saddened to come across FM Qureshi's comments on the OIC's role in Kashmir, which are far from reality. The fact is that the OIC's Contact Group on Kashmir, led by Saudi Arabia's Ambassador Yousef M. Aldobeay, had visited the AJK, including the Line of Control, for almost a week in March this year.

The Contact Group subsequently held a virtual meeting in June, inaugurated by OIC Secretary General Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen, who reiter-

ated the "OIC's commitment to finding a peaceful settlement for the Jammu and Kashmir issue as per the relevant resolutions of the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the international legitimacy."

Also, deferring to Pakistani sensitivities on Kashmir post-August 5, the statement issued after the Contact Group's meeting rejected the 'Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Order 2020' and the 'Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate Rules 2020' aimed at changing the demographic structure of the disputed territory.

It "reaffirmed the OIC's continued support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and called on the UN Secretary General to use his good offices to make India abide by the UN Security Council resolutions."

Such a resolute response to the evolving Kashmir tragedy by the OIC Secretary General and the Contact Group on Kashmir, preceded by its fact-finding mission to the AJK, left little scope for yet another declaration by the Council of Foreign Ministers on Kashmir.

Moreover, the global pandemic had limited the scope of holding major diplomatic gatherings. Yet, FM Qureshi has chosen to tarnish the OIC's credibility by insisting on the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting.

Let us not allow baseless rhetoric to jeopardize a time-tested relationship or create a rift within the Ummah

A year ago, Pakistan had, indeed, achieved a major success by managing to convene an emergency consultative session of the UN Security Council immediately after India's annexation of Jammu and Kashmir and imposition of lockdown in the disputed territory.

Unfortunately, since then, the Foreign Ministry under Mr. Qureshi has been unable to build upon this initial success in international diplomacy on Kashmir. So, one plausible explanation for his frustrating bid to blame the OIC is to cover up his own failure in Kashmir.

However, from the Saudi standpoint, FM Qureshi's threat to organize "a meeting of the Islamic countries" on Kashmir without the OIC mandate is more worrying. Saudi Arabia is the citadel of Islam, for being the location of Islam's holiest places of worship at Makkah and Madinah. Therefore, it has always struggled against any effort or instance aimed at dividing the Muslim Ummah.

Last December, Pakistan had acted wisely by boycotting one such gathering in Kuala Lumpur, which was an attempt orchestrated primarily by Turkey and Iran to challenge the leadership of the OIC.

If FM Qureshi's veiled reference is towards any such gathering, then it is a dangerous proposition that could be least expected from a brotherly country whose people, like those of Turkey and Iran, have always craved the unity of Ummah.

Such a step would benefit the current Turkish and Iranian regimes and leaders, who thrive on dividing the Ummah. From Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and Libya, their hands are soaked in the blood of suffering Muslim populations. They support terrorist proxies, and have created mess and mayhem in Muslim lands.

For 40 years, Iran has intruded into Arab affairs for heinous ends. As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has confirmed in his June report to the Security Council, it is arming the rebellious Houthis in Yemen, and sponsoring their missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia.

Last month, FM Qureshi was himself talking on phone with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud to share Pakistan's deep concern on the armed attacks against Saudi Arabia. Then, how come he now contemplates an option sponsored by Tehran?

It is quite unfortunate for Turkey that it is led by a megalomaniac neo-Ottoman whose insatiable quest for domestic control and regional hegemony knows no bounds. For almost two decades, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has invoked old wounds to upset domestic peace and regional geopolitics. His personal spree for dividing the Islamic world has gained momentum more recently.

Strategic partnerships between two nation states take years of patient hard work to build. Hence, they are unlikely to founder with the baseless rhetoric of a misguided individual that became the basis of the alleged rift in Saudi-Pak ties. An exemplary spirit of reciprocity characterizes these ties, whereby both Riyadh and Islamabad understand each other's national sensitivities and limitations. For this reason, Saudi Arabia did not raise an eye-

brow when the Pakistani parliament in 2015 decided not to support its military effort to restore an internationally recognized government in Yemen. The irony in Kashmir's case is that neither Saudi Arabia nor its Gulf allies intend any ill-will that goes against Pakistani interests or Kashmiri aspirations. Then, how can anyone even think of blaming them for not doing enough on Kashmir?

Even if any differences have emerged over any issue due to some misunderstanding, the standard practice is to resolve them mutually through political and diplomatic channels available to both nations.

Of course, it is a reality that Saudi Arabia has invested heavily in India as part of its growing economic engagement with Asia. India also has as many workers in Saudi Arabia, if not more, as Pakistan does, numbering close to 3 million and contributing billions of dollars in remittances back home.

Does such a deepening economic engagement or interlocking dependence not provide Saudi Arabia with a realistic clout to influence India's policy for Kashmir peace? Also, has Pakistan itself ever unilaterally given up the bilateral process for Kashmir settlement with India while simultaneously pressing for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir?

As for the reported issues in Saudi emergency economic relief package for Pakistan, first of all, the media has not verified them from official Saudi sources. Like those of its Gulf allies, the Saudi Arabia's economy has come under severe strain due to the coronavirus pandemic and consequent slide in global oil prices. Both the people and foreign workers are bearing its brunt.

Then, Pakistan, despite the pandemic, does not face the sort of economic crisis it did prior to its economic deal with the IMF. However, even if any differences have emerged over this issue due to some misunderstanding, the standard practice is to resolve them mutually through a multitude of political and diplomatic channels available to both nations.

By bringing such differences into the public domain, as FM Qureshi did through his emotional outburst over OIC's position on Kashmir or the unverified media reports did on the Saudi economic support to Pakistan, we allow the forces inimical to the interests of both nations to sabotage their historic partnership.

Fortunately, the Saudi-Pak ties are so exceptionally rooted in the deep religious, political and social aspirations of the people that they tend to survive untoward instances such as the current one.

In fact, the level of Saudi-Pak defense cooperation is so deep and wide that the present conspiracy to jeopardize our time-tested ties seems to be fizzling out as quickly as it surfaced on the scene.

Little surprise that on the eve of the current visit of Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa to Riyadh, Major-General Babar Iftikhar, Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations, has categorically said: Saudi-Pak "relations are historic, very important, have always been excellent and will remain so. There should be no doubt of this ... Nobody should doubt the centrality of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Muslim world. Our hearts beat with the people of Saudi Arabia. So, there is no need to raise any questions on our relations with one another."

Where does FM Qureshi's diatribe stand after this? Will PM Imran Khan remind him to be careful in future, as any damage to our brotherly ties goes against our respective national interests and public aspirations?

As Saudi Arabia diversifies its economy away from oil under its Vision 2030, a strategic plan that is the brainchild of our young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, we expect millions of more Pakistanis to contribute to the Saudi infrastructure and technological development. The Saudi government has already extended scores of scholarships to educate and train Pakistani youth for this great opportunity. We have long-term political and economic stakes in Pakistan and are gratified to see greater interaction between the businessmen and traders of the two countries in the past couple of years. Is it not wonderful to note that even amid the current pandemic, Pakistani exports to Saudi Arabia were reported to have increased by 34 percent in June? Let me conclude by saying that the Saudi-Pak historic partnership is too important to fail. It will blossom in future, just as it did in history, defeating any attempt to sabotage along the way, with the love and devotion of our two people.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

US: 18 shot in Cincinnati, 4 dead

DNA

CINCINNATI: At least four people have died among 18 people shot in a spate of shootings during an "extremely violent night" across the US city of Cincinnati, according to local media and police.

The bloodshed in the Ohio city of about 300,000 began when three people were shot at about midnight on Saturday (05:00 GMT) in the Walnut Hills neighbourhood. Soon after, at about 12:30am (05:30 GMT) on Sunday, police were called to the Avondale area and found 21-year-old Antonio Blair with gunshot wounds. He was taken to University Hospital and died there, police said in a statement. Three other gunshot victims were also taken to the hospital.

Officers then responded to a report about gunshots in the Over-the-Rhine neighbourhood at 2:15am (07:15 GMT) where 10 people had been shot, police said. One man, 34-year-old Robert Rogers, died at the scene and another, 30-year-old Jaquiez Grant, died at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

Local news outlets reported the shootings took place within 60 to 90 minutes of each other.

Assistant Police Chief Paul Neudigat told reporters they "seem to be separate independent incidents but horrific and tragic".

Zardaris and Sharifs' have no defence: Murad Saeed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed on Monday has said that Zardaris and Sharifs have no answer to save their looted money.

In a statement, the minister said that leaderships of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) escape from the Parliament to avoid political debate.

Saying this from day one that the purpose of their politics is only to conceal their corruption, he alleged. The reaction came after PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he will not get pressurized by the current puppet government and will not allow any changes in 18th amendment even if his whole family is arrested.

Car sale, production fell by 7.70%, 49.73%

ISLAMABAD: The sale and production of cars decreased by 7.70 percent and 49.73 percent respectively during the first month of current financial year 2020-21 compared to corresponding period of last year.

During the July 2020, as many as 10,123 cars were sold against the sale of 10,968 units while the production of cars decreased from 16,472 units to 8,280 units, showing negative growth of 7.70 and 49.73 percent respectively, according to Pakistan automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

Among cars, the sale of Honda cars increased by 52.20 percent from 1,452 units during July 2019 to 2,210 units during July 2020 while Suzuki Swift sale also grew by 4.59 percent from 174 units to 182 units.

The sale of Toyota Corolla went down from 1,981 units to 1,528 units, showing decreased of 22.86 percent, the data revealed. On the other hand, the production of Honda cars went down by 7.50 percent from 2,371 units to 2,193 units during the month under review whereas the production of Suzuki Swift witnessed decline of 84.11 percent from 384 units to 61 units during July 2020. The production of Toyota Corolla decline from 2,827 units to 1,561 units, showing decreased of 44.78 percent, it added. — APP



RIYADH: Chief Of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Bajwa being received upon his arrival in Saudi Arabia. — DNA

Pakistan improved hydropower efficiency with huge potentials

More than 100 countries in the world have declared that they will continue to develop hydropower, and most countries along BRI regard hydropower development as the primary task of current development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Countries along BRI attach importance to the development of hydropower. Among them, Pakistan has improved hydropower efficiently with huge potentials.

This was stated in a report released by China Electric Power, an official journal of China, according to Gwadar Pro on Monday. In Sep 2015, 17 sustainable development goals were proposed by the UN. Subsequently, the Paris Agreement and BRI were also widely recognized by the international community.

Therefore, there are conditions

for international cooperation in hydropower development among BRI countries. The report says affected by the geographical and climatic factors, the global distribution of hydropower resources is uneven, while Asia region possesses an immense potential.

In terms of the distribution of exploitable hydropower, 50% is in Asia, 18% in South America, 14% in North America, 9% in Africa, 8% in Europe and 1% in Oceania.

According to the IHA 2020 report, by the end of 2019, the world's installed hydropower capacity is 1,308 GW, with annual generating capacity of 4,306 TWH.

In 2019, 15.6 GW of new installed capacity and 106 TWH of electric



ity generation were added. Among them, countries along BRI have a

prominent performance, with Pakistan and China in Asia, Brazil in South America, Angola, Uganda and Ethiopia in Africa, and Turkey in Europe making the largest contribution. At present, more than 100 countries in the world have declared that they will continue to develop hydropower, and most countries along BRI regard hydropower development as the primary task of current development.

Among them, Pakistan has the advantage of being a latecomer which has formulated plans for developing high dam and large reservoir. In the future, global hydropower development will focus on including the Indus River (Pakistan and other countries), the Nile (Ethiopia, Egypt, and other countries) and other eight hydrographic nets.

Chinese strength impressive in COVID-19 fight: Report

"Firstly, I want to travel in the beautiful Fujian Province and then I plan to visit Sichuan Province. I would like to have a taste of its hotpot and have a look at the cute pandas there," said Jan

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese strength in fighting against the COVID-19 epidemic is impressive, which shows its comprehensive strength of sci-tech and governance. China makes a good response to the pandemic. We should learn from China," said Syed Sajid Jan, a Pakistani student researching on the novel coronavirus in China, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Monday.

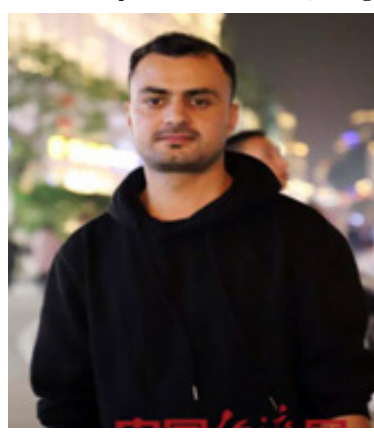
Jan, 26 years old, is a doctoral candidate at Fujian Normal University (FNU), Fujian Province, China. The sudden outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic disturbed the normal life of many people. But it did not affect Jan so much. Instead, the epidemic made Jan decide to research the coronavirus as he is a major in the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. During the pandemic, besides strictly following the regulations on control and prevention of the COVID-19, Jan concentrated on studying the coronavirus.

Sometimes, Jan read at his dormitory

or along a riverside. Sometimes, Jan "met" with his supervisor online to discuss some questions.

Besides these inputs, Jan has written articles on COVID-19. "My first article was on COVID-19 spike protein," Jan said. "I am writing an article on different vaccination strategies for COVID-19," he added.

Jan told CEN the reason why he could keep calm and focus on study amid the worrisome pandemic is that he, along



with other students, have been taken good care of by FNU and its staff.

"FNU has been providing anti-epidemic materials for us. Workers and teachers have strived to meet our daily requirements. Jan told CEN that thanks to the good care, no single confirmed or suspected case has been reported so far among the international students in FNU. It has successfully taken a lead in controlling the spread of the virus domestically. The people's life is almost normal due to the developed e-commerce and logistics. Besides, the Chinese people also performed well, by wearing masks, keeping social distancing and obeying travel ban. In terms of future plan, Jan, as a researcher, plans to publish some research findings. Meanwhile, he wants to learn Chinese well and have more direct communication with friendly Chinese people.

"Firstly, I want to travel in the beautiful Fujian Province and then I plan to visit Sichuan Province. I would like to have a taste of its hotpot and have a look at the cute pandas there," said Jan.

Japan reports its worst GDP on record

"The lack of coherent policy response is really frightening. We need a wise, cautious and broad response to this terrible situation. It is exactly what Abe and Company lack when it comes to the way they are going about things"

TOKYO: Japan just reported its worst GDP on record as the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak dented consumption.

The world's third-largest economy shrank 7.8% in the second quarter compared with the previous quarter, the country's Cabinet Office said on Monday. That translated to an annual rate of decline of 27.8%, the worst since modern records started in 1980 and the third consecutive quarter of contraction. Consumption, which accounts for more than half of Japan's economy, slumped 8.2% for the quarter as businesses across the country shuttered during a six-week national emergency in April and May.

External demand shaved three percentage points off GDP on the quarter as global trade dried up. Japan's job-for-life culture has survived war, earthquakes and now a pandemic. "The lack of coherent policy response is really frightening. We need a wise, cautious and broad response to this terrible situation. It is exactly what [Prime Minister] Abe and Company lack when it comes to the way they are going about things," said Noriko Hama, a professor at Doshisha Business School - part of Doshisha University.

The Japanese government went ahead with a subsidized plan to boost domestic travel in mid-July, just as new virus cases started to surge. — DNA

India's COVID-19 cases top 2.6 million

NEW DELHI: India registered 57,981 COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, crossing the 2.6 million mark, the Ministry of Health said early Monday. The nation's infection tally now stands at 2,647,663. The death toll has reached 51,045, with 961 new fatalities in the past 24 hours. The country has the fourth-highest death toll in the world.

India is the third-most affected country in the world after the US and Brazil. In the last seven days, however, it has added more cases on average compared to those two countries. Over 1,862,258 coronavirus patients have been cured and discharged so far, the ministry said in its statement.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said over 30 million samples have been tested for the coronavirus until Aug. 16, out of which 731,697 samples were tested on Sunday. Meanwhile, Australia witnessed the deadliest day since the outbreak of the COVID-19 reporting 25 deaths in the past 24 hours. According to the country's health authorities, 290 new cases of the infection were also reported in the same period. Most of the cases - 282 - were detected in Victoria state. — APP

'Shipping Policy aims to promote Blue Economy'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi has said that new National Shipping Policy was aimed at to promote Blue Economy in the country. In his statement on social media networking site, he said that "we will overcome challenges and deliver our best realising and maximizing the enormous potential of Blue Economy in Pakistan." He said that government is moving towards all potentials sectors step by step and the Shipping Policy announced recently.

He said that deep sea Fishing Policy would be announced by mid of next month. Currently the fish and seafood exports of Pakistan are limited to \$450 million only, but it can be enhanced to \$ 2.5 billion if we have a proper deep sea fishing policy. — APP

SPI inflation falls 0.22%

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitivity Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on August 13, for the combined consumption group, witnessed decrease of 0.22 percent as compared to the previous week.

The SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 133.94 points against 134.23 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 7.01 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. — APP

Israel-UAE deal: insult to the peace Palestinians want

The tragedy in all of this is that Palestinians will be totally erased from all the talk of "breakthroughs" and "peace." But we know that genuine peace will only come by seriously committing to end the Israeli occupation and creating a democratic and peaceful Palestinian state that can exist side-by-side a safe and secure Israel

DAOUD KUTTAB

AMMAN: The useless agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel is nothing but a ploy to artificially inflate the Trump administration's foreign policy achievements ahead of the election. In real terms, it was nothing but leaders trading with used goods. On Thursday, President Trump announced that U.S. diplomats had brokered a major breakthrough. The agreement basically declares that the corrupt government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will postpone its plans for the unilateral annexation of occupied Palestinian land in return for normalization with a small but rich Arab Gulf state. The problem with the big hoopla around this is that it is neither a genuine

breakthrough nor will it bring peace between Israelis and Arabs anytime soon. Israel's prime minister had already postponed the plans for unilateral annexation after the international community, and more than half of Israelis had rejected the move, which would have been a gross violation of international law. And for their part, the United Arab Emirates had already broken its promises to Palestinians and Arabs by conducting many acts of normalization with Israel. UAE planes carrying aid for Palestinians have been allowed to fly directly to Israeli airports recently. UAE and Israeli athletes participated together in international events to signal warmer ties.

The UAE, a member of the Arab League, originally agreed to the 2002 Saudi-initiated Arab Peace Initiative that called for the normalization of relations in return

for the Israelis ending their 1967 occupation of Arab lands. Palestinians and the world, including the United States, have considered the areas Israel took in June 1967 to be occupied areas, and various regional and international agreements have stressed this fact.

Then came the Trump administration with its ill-advised vision for peace, which gave Israel everything they wanted and didn't even bring Palestinians to the negotiating table. Though now more than ever there's a real, urgent need to bring peace to the region, this so-called breakthrough fails to provide even a road map for the end of the decades-long Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

The timing and context of this agreement can't be ignored. Netanyahu is facing well-documented corruption charges and is trying to wiggle himself out of a

governing deal with the centrist Blue and White party. He's hoping that this will improve his chances for an outright win in a potentially fourth Israeli general election in less than two years.

Trump, trailing badly in the polls, is hoping for a boost from his right-wing Zionist supporters (both Jewish and evangelical Christians) in the form of campaign funding, including from the pro-Netanyahu billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who was upset that Trump didn't support Netanyahu enough in his pursuit of the unilateral annexation plan.

And Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed (known as MBZ), who is also deputy supreme commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, has been suffering military and political defeats both in Yemen and in Libya, and certainly needs a diplomatic victory to

regain his footing, especially with the coronavirus causing major economic problems to his oil-rich and tourism-dependent nation. Had Israel gone through with its unilateral annexation plans, it would have jeopardized its peace agreements with Jordan and Egypt and could have brought sanctions from traditional European supporters such as Germany, Britain and France.

The tragedy in all of this is that Palestinians will be totally erased from all the talk of "breakthroughs" and "peace." But we know that genuine peace will only come by seriously committing to end the Israeli occupation and creating a democratic and peaceful Palestinian state that can exist side-by-side a safe and secure Israel. Until then, all will be just part of an insulting diplomatic circus.

— Courtesy: Washington Post