



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Azerbaijan envoy says relations with Pakistan growing at fast speed**

**Belgium keen to invest in Pakistan, says Ambassador**



**Pakistan, China to enhance anti-terror cooperation**



## Briefs

### Asad Umer welcomes WB country director

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar held an introductory meeting with the newly appointed Country Director of the World Bank in Pakistan, Najy Benhassine. Asad Umar welcomed the Country Director and appreciated the strong working relationship between the government of Pakistan and the World Bank, said a press release issued here Tuesday. Najy Benhassine appreciated the Minister on government's skillful handling of the COVID crisis which had resulted in containing the pandemic to a large extent. He said that the World Bank is supporting the government of Pakistan through COVID-19 emergency response projects to help the country prevent, detect and respond to the pandemic and strengthen public health preparedness. - APP

### OIC urged to play role to curb Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to play its role to curb Islamophobia in the western world. He was talking to Minister for Religious Affairs Noor-ul-Haq Qadri in Islamabad. He said parliament will raise the issue of publication of blasphemous caricatures globally. Minister for Religious Affairs Noor-ul-Haq Qadri said publication of blasphemous caricatures in a French magazine has hurt the sentiments of Muslims around the world. He said blasphemous material will only stoke hate among the followers of different religions.

### UK pledges support for flood victims

ISLAMABAD: The government of UK has pledged to provide life-saving clean water, sanitation and shelter to over 55,000 vulnerable people in Pakistan to help them recover from devastating floods. The announcement was made by Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia at the UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, during a virtual visit to Pakistan where he also discussed with the government of Pakistan how Britain could work with them to tackle climate change. - APP

## KARACHI SITUATION

# PM takes cabinet into confidence

The meeting also approved establishment of a Mass Transit Authority in Islamabad. The Cabinet was also briefed on progress of encroachment operations

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Federal Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday reviewed the political and economic situation of the country. Participants were briefed on various economic indicators and findings. According to sources, the Prime Minister took the Cabinet into confidence on the Karachi Transformation Plan. Briefing the Cabinet on the strategy for the passage of FATF Bills, it was informed that the mandate of the Cabinet Legislative Committee has been extended. The meeting also approved the appointment of Chairman of the Federal Board of Education, recruitment of

judicial officers on ex-cadre posts, LNG terminals in Port Qasim Karachi and launch of ferry service in the country. NEPRA's annual report for 2018 and 2019 was presented to the Cabinet. The meeting also ratified the decisions of the Economic Co-ordination Committee and the decisions of the Energy Committee on August 27. According to sources, the meeting also approved the establishment of a Mass Transit Authority in Islamabad. Apart from this, the Cabinet was briefed on the progress of encroachment operations on Margalla Road and model shelters equipped with quality facilities. The meeting also decided to expand the scope of model shelters across

the country. The Cabinet appreciated the performance of Sania Nishtar and MD Bait-ul-Mal. The Prime Minister said that a welfare state can only be established by focusing on the welfare of the public. The federal cabinet also approved extension of MD Bait-ul-Mal's tenure. In addition, the Federal Cabinet has constituted a committee on the issue of ban on installation of electricity and gas meters in different areas of Islamabad in light of High Court decisions. The committee includes the law minister, interior adviser, advisor parliamentary affairs and officials from the Ministry of Planning. The committee will present its recommendations to the cabinet in 60 days.

## Belgium keen to invest in Pakistan: Envoy

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Philippe Bronchain, Ambassador of Belgium along with his Trade Commissioner Abid Husain visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and addressing the business community said that his country was interested in making investment in Pakistan as it was a potential country for business and investment activities. He discussed various prospects for further enhancing



bilateral trade, investment and JVs between Belgium and Pakistan. He said that he would play a role to build a strong image of Pakistan in his country. Abid Husain, Trade Commissioner, Embassy of Belgium said that Pakistan was

mostly exporting textiles products and some raw materials to Belgium. However, he said that Pakistan needed to invest in technology for producing value added products that would increase its footprint in foreign markets. He said it would also help Pakistan to fully capitalize on the GSP Plus concession of the EU in order to enhance its exports. He said that Pakistani diaspora in Belgium could play a role for upscaling bilateral trade ties between the two countries.

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## Pak, China to enhance anti-terror cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A top Chinese official on Tuesday vowed to bolster cooperation with Pakistan in areas related to anti-terrorism, security along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and law enforcement capacity building. State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi made these remarks during a telephonic



conversation with Interior Minister Ijaz Shah where he said that China is ready to work with Pakistan to earnestly implement the im-

portant consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries. In order to "further strengthen practical cooperation" between the two countries, Zhao Kezhi said Beijing will work Islamabad in different areas including "anti-terrorism, security along the CPEC and law enforcement capacity building, and expand police exchanges and cooperation between their local counterparts to safeguard the common interests.

## DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada meeting with Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser. - DNA

# Pakistan, Azerbaijan share enduring ties

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada said that his country wholeheartedly supports Pakistan's stance on Kashmir

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan share an enduring diplomatic relationship and the similarities between the two countries are striking not only for having a similar cultural, religious, and geopolitical outlook but similar views on regional and international issues. The Speaker said that Azerbaijan being an important country in Asia could play

its role in OIC and other regional forums to raise the plight of people of illegally occupied Kashmir. The Speaker expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada, in Parliament House, today. The Speaker underlined the need for closer cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan inter-parliamentary relations for the development of political and economic relations between the two countries. He said that Pak-Azerbaijan Parli-

amentary friendship group could be an apt forum to enhance those relations. He also stressed the need to reinvigorate Parliamentary Union of ECO Member states (PAECO). Referring to the issue of Kashmir, the Speaker said that it was flash point of South Asia and may trigger escalation if not peacefully settled as per aspiration people of Kashmir. He said that Indian government stripped Kashmir of its autonomy and unique regional identity through the revocation of Ar-

ticle 370 and 35-A of Indian constitution. He said that decision to rescind the statute was followed by an organized brutal crackdown against innocent civilians including women and children and crippling any sign of life in the illegally occupied Valley and other parts of the region. Touching upon the issue of Nagorno Karabakh conflict Speaker said that Pakistan supports Azerbaijan's fair position. He said that Pakistan has always supported

- Continued on Page 04

## Ghani replaces Dastagir as IGP

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan, after consultation with Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar, has approved the removal of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shoaib Dastagir, media reported. The move comes after an alleged dispute between Dastagir and Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Umar Sheikh. According to the sources, Sheikh will continue to discharge his duties as CCPO. Dastagir's removal is the sixth time the post of IGP Punjab has seen a reshuffling. Meanwhile, the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has appointed Inam Ghani as Punjab's sixth Inspector General in last two years after removing IG Punjab Shoaib Dastagir from his post.

## Sindh vows to cooperate with Centre

The city's administration is different as it is ruled under various bodies, therefore, until and unless the federation takes interest in the development of the city

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Amid the recent tussle between the federation and Sindh over the issuance of funds for the restoration of Karachi, Sindh government spokesperson Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday said that the provincial government will sit down with the Centre in good faith to resolve the problems of the port city. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Wahab said that 2.5 million people have been affected in Sindh, whereas one million acres of land and 15,000

villages have been hard-hit due to catastrophic rains. He said relief efforts in the province are underway with people being provided shelter and food. "After the 2011 floods, the federation had helped the provincial governments to mitigate the losses incurred. If the same facilitation is extended by the federal government this time, I am sure we can ease the situation for the people of the city," he said. Wahab said that in February 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan had promised Rs162 billion for Karachi but the promises for the metropolis remain unfulfilled.

## Qureshi to visit Moscow



A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi will leave for Moscow on Wednesday on two-day visit to attend the meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He is paying the visit on the invitation of his Russian Counterpart Sergei Lavrov. According to Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, the Foreign Minister will also have bilateral meetings on the sidelines of SCO-CFM meeting. Pakistan has been actively working to achieve SCO's multi-sectorial agenda through various mechanisms.

## UK youth infected most with virus

LONDON: The UK government on Tuesday imposed tougher coronavirus restrictions in northwest England, as it voiced fears about rising infection rates among younger people. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the "very significant rise" in positive tests to 120 cases per 100,000 people in Bolton, near Manchester, was now the highest in the country. "The rise in cases in Bolton is partly due to socialising by people in their 20s and 30s. We know this from contact tracing," he told parliament in a statement. Hancock announced curbs on hospitality venues in Bolton, including reduced opening hours, and a ban on locals from socialising with others from outside their household. - APP

# Japan extends USD 4.7 million for Islamabad

Keeping the living environment clean is an essential element for people to be free from infectious diseases. Ambassador MATSUDA said

NAVID MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Japan has extended grant assistance of JPY 500 million (approx. USD 4.7 million) to the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) for improving sanitary environment of the capital by procuring garbage disposal vehicles from Japan. Notes to this effect were signed and exchanged between H.E. MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Dr. Noor Ahmad, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in Islamabad on September 8, 2020. MCI is a municipal authority of the Islamabad Capital Territory, which is responsible for various functions including community infra-

structure, solid waste collection and social security. Due to the growing population and continued urbanization, Islamabad generates 550-600 tons of wastes per day, about 60% of which is household garbage. In addition, MCI faces difficulty in collecting garbage because of the shortage and aging deterioration of garbage disposal vehicles. In this program, special vehicles such as the Garbage Compactor, the Skip Lifting Vehicle and the Sewer Jet Sucking machine will be provided to MCI. This grant assistance will help to improve the sanitary environment and beautification of Islamabad. It is also expected that the index of solid waste management, which is one of the five in-

dexes of the "Clean Green Pakistan", advocated by the Imran Khan administration,

will be improved. Keeping the living environment clean is an essential

element for people to be free from infectious diseases. Ambassador MATSUDA



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## Briefs

## Governor Punjab confers civil awards

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, on behalf of President Dr. Arif Alvi, has conferred Civil Awards to Justice (R) Nasira Javaid Iqbal, singer Sahir Ali Bagga, and sixteen other men of letters during an investiture ceremony at the Governor's House on Monday. The ceremony was attended by Provincial Ministers Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr Akhtar Malik, Syed Saeedul Hassan Shah, Sardar Mohsin Laghari, and Chief Secretary Punjab where Governor gave away Civil Awards to various personalities. Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz on COMSATS university professor Dr Arshad Saleem for excellence in the fields of Microelectronics, Nanoscience, & Nanotechnology. Governor Punjab conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz on Justice (R) Nasira Javaid Iqbal in recognition of her public services whereas Chief Executive NESPAK Prof Dr Arshad Saleem was given the Presidential Award of Pride of Performance in the field of Civil Engineering. - APP

## 'Work started to maximize potential of ports'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi on Tuesday said that a concept paper on transshipment has been initiated by Ministry of Maritime Affairs to maximize potential of our ports. The minister sharing a link on social media networking site transshipment@moma.gov.pk requested feedback from Maritime sector fraternity before the policy is formalized. According to Ministry, transshipment is generally understood as the act of off-loading a container from one ship and loading it onto another ship. Cargo needs to be transhipped as in any service operated by shipping line there are practical restrictions in terms of coverage of ports. There is no shipping line that can cover all ports around the world on a single service and therefore the services are segregated into trade lanes. Such lines also have what is known as transshipment hubs which are the ports on their service routes that have transshipment connection options to other parts of the world. The first form is hub-and-spoke transshipment which connects short distance feeder lines with long distance deep-sea lines, linking regional and global shipping networks. The second form is called intersection transshipment, where the transshipment hub acts as a point of interchange several long-distance shipping routes. - APP

## 9 major train mishaps in 2 years

ISLAMABAD: As many as nine major accidents of passenger and goods trains have occurred on Pakistan's Railways entire network across the country from August 2018 to August 2020. In these accidents, around 134 persons died, 167 sustained injuries while the financial damage faced by the Pakistan Railways was above Rs 410 million, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said Pakistan Railways was in process of revamping and upgrading the existing railway infrastructure through installation of Main Line-I project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The ML-1 would help transform the overall organization, besides ensuring safety of the passengers, he added. The official said on the directives of Minister for Railways, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, concentrated efforts were being made to prevent the accidents in future to save the lives of the public. He said upgradation of 550 vulnerable unmanned level crossings was also being carried out throughout Pakistan Railways network in collaboration with the respective provincial governments.

## Yemen envoy for enhancing business relations with Pakistan

The Yemen ambassador appreciated the contributions of Handicrafts Association of Pakistan for organizing different activities for promotion of handicrafts

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Handicrafts Association of Pakistan headed by Chairman HAP Mr. Fahad Barlas called on Ambassador of Yemen in Pakistan H.E. Motahar Alashabi on Tuesday. Former Chairman HAP, Mr. Khurshid Barlas, Senior Members Amin ur Rehman and Malik Mohsin Khalid also present on the occasion. H.E. Mohammad Motahar Alashabi welcomed the delegation members and expressing his sentiments said that Yemen and Pakistan has long lasting brotherly relations and he considered Pakistan as second home. He appreciated the contributions of Handicrafts Association of Pakistan for organizing different activities for



motion of handicrafts and business relations among further promoted with delegations and organizing said bilateral trade and two countries should be the exchange of trade del- exhibitions. He assured

all possible assistance in this behalf and said that businessmen would be facilitated. Mr. Fahad Barlas said that diplomats had actively participated in HAP activities and mutual cooperation would be further strengthened with the passage of time. He said Pakistani handicrafts had great potential of export and depicts the traditional and cultural heritage of Pakistan. He also apprised Ambassador of Yemen about the current and future endeavors of HAP. Mr. Khurshid Barlas talking on the occasion said that after COVID-19 affects there are equal opportunities for all the countries to promote trade and business relations and Pakistan would love to enhance the quantum of bilateral trade with brother country Yemen.

## Court seeks arguments on Zardari's plea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court here on Tuesday sought arguments on an application filed by former president Asif Ali Zardari seeking to quash the Thatta water supply reference filed against him and others by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The accountability judge adjourned the hearing of the case until September 17 after an associate of Farooq H Naek, the former president's lawyer, appeared in court and sought time on his behalf to forward arguments in the case. The court, granting the request, adjourned the hearing with directions for the counsel to forward arguments on next hearing. According to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the case pertains to illegal award of a contract by Special Initiative Department for water supply scheme, Thatta to a private contractor, Harish & Co. Zardari was released after being granted bail by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Dec 11, last year, on medical grounds.

## SC allows company to hire counsel in Dam case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the private construction company to hire a counsel in Winder Dam case. A two-member bench of the apex court comprising Justice Mushir Alam and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed heard the case regarding construction of Winder Dam in Lasbeela, Balochistan. During the course of proceedings, Justice Mushir Alam said that the court could not stop the national project of dams added that stopping construction of the dam would increase its cost. The CEO of a private construction company pleaded the court to grant four weeks time to hire a counsel in the matter. Justice Mushir Alam said if the cost of the project increases, the company would have to pay. - APP

## Pakistan Navy celebrates Navy day with traditional fervor

The day dawned with special prayers offered in all Naval mosques for peace and prosperity of the country and particularly for the success of Kashmir struggle

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy celebrated 55th anniversary of 'Navy Day' to honour heroic achievements of our Ghazis and Shuhadas who fought gallantly against a much bigger adversary with absolute courage and profound faith in Allah SWT. The Navy Day is a glorious reminiscence of daring operation 'SOMNATH', when Pakistan Navy Warships destroyed important shore installations and inflicted irreparable damage to the Indian pride. Pakistan Navy lone Submarine Ghazi reigned and remained unchallenged at sea throughout the war.

In his message on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi said that 8th September, marks a golden chapter in our rich naval history and rekindles hope and pride in our new generation. On this day, Pakistan Navy acknowledges the sacrifices and spirit of our Naval heroes who epitomized grit, courage and valour during the 1965 War. Today, Pakistan Navy being potent naval force in the region is alive to its growing responsibilities and role to vigilantly guard country's maritime



interests. The Naval Chief also underlined that Pakistan Navy is spearheading various initiatives to jump start Pakistan's Blue Economy in line with the Govt's renewed focus on the maritime sector and its decision to declare 2020 as the 'Year of Blue Economy'. He added that all ranks of Pakistan Navy reiterate solidarity

with their Kashmiri brethren and denounce the blatant annexation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). The day dawned with special prayers offered in all Naval mosques for peace and prosperity of the country and particularly for the success of Kashmir struggle. Quran Khawani was arranged for eternal

peace of Shuhada of the 1965 war. Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at all Naval units and establishments. Other activities of the day included Navy Day Boat Rallies prominently in Karachi. Moreover, on the occasion of Navy Day, Pakistan Navy also released a special docufilm, 'SURKHURU' which features the story of Pakistan Navy's

successful detection of Indian submarine and deterring it from entering into Pakistani waters on 4th March, 2019. The story of the docufilm demonstrates the run-down of action and sequence of the incident and pays tribute to its heroes for displaying the true professionalism and valour in safeguarding maritime frontiers.

## Petroleum Division in process formulating Shale gas policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Petroleum Division is in process of formulating a vibrant policy to exploit massive shale gas and oil reserves by attracting multinational companies in exploration sector of the country. "The Shale Gas Policy is in the process of formulation, which will also attract many multinational companies to come to

Pakistan for undertaking exploration to discover Shale gas and oil in the country," according to a latest official document available with APP. In 2015, a study completed in cooperation with the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) had confirmed presence of 10,159 trillion cubic feet (TCF) Shale gas and 2,323 billion of stock tank barrels (BSTB) Shale oil in place resources.

The study covered lower and middle Indus Basin, which geographically spreads over Sindh, southern parts of Punjab and eastern parts of Balochistan. Total area under the study was 271,700km, which is 33 percent of the total sedimentary area of the country. During the study, a detailed analysis of 124 wells was carried out, including laboratory analysis on Shale cores and cuttings in the United States. Objectives of the study were

to validate Shale gas resource estimate, initial findings, assess availability of required technology and infrastructure for Shale gas operations and formulate guidelines for the Shale gas policy. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA) Shale Gas Assessment Report 2015 (USA); Pakistan has around 105 Trillion Cubic Feet of recoverable shale gas and 9.1 Billion Barrels of recoverable shale oil resources.

## Sajid Gondal's family stages protest

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The family of Sajid Gondal, a former journalist and an official of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan who had gone missing in Islamabad on September 3, staged a protest outside Prime Minister's House in Islamabad. His vehicle was found abandoned outside the Agriculture Research Centre in Shehzad Town, according to the police.

## NSC Board formally registers think tanks

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Dr Moeed Yusuf on Tuesday chaired the 4th meeting of Advisory Board of the National Security Committee (NSC) that gave approval to formally register Academia and Think Tanks across the country on portal to connect them with the policy makers. The portal will be on the National Security Division's website, where the registered think tanks and university departments would be able to submit their input and ideas for consideration of the policy makers, said a press release. Speaking on the occasion, he said think tanks and academia carry out valuable work but it does not reach the policy makers readily. With the help of this initiative, think tanks and academia will be able to play a constructive role in the policy development process of the country. Dr Moeed Yusuf said the government aimed to make the policy approach inclusive. He instructed that academic institutions and think tanks across Pakistan should be connected through the portal and a network of think tanks should be created.

## Tourist bus to be launched in Punjab: CM aide

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab for horticulture and tourism Asif Mehmood has said that after receiving overwhelming response from citizen in double-decker tourist bus services, Tourism Development Corporation Punjab (TDCP) will soon launch such service in Multan and Bahawalpur. He said that Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has issued special directives to TDCP for launching such service in Multan and Bahawalpur by end of this month (September). Talking to a private news channel, he said the project aims at promoting tourism, providing opportunity to local as well as foreign tourists to explore rich culture and heritage of main cities of the country, adding that the project would also help generate employment opportunities for locals.

## Mine incident death toll rises to 19

MOHMAND: The death toll from the tragic incident of a rockslide in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mohmand district reached 19 after seven more bodies were retrieved from under the rubble, media reported on Tuesday quoting rescue and police officials. According to the TV report, seven bodies of the labourers working at the marble mine in KP's remote area have so far been pulled out during the rescue operation which restarted earlier today. District Police Officer Mohmand Tariq Habib said that 15-20 people are feared trapped under the debris, adding that rescue operation has been started after it was stopped due to darkness at around 02am. Heavy machinery and manpower were dispatched to the area for assistance in the rescue operation. On Monday, six mines at the Ziarat Ghar mountain had collapsed killing 12 miners and injuring several others. - APP

## Exports declining as govt ignores industrial sector: FPCCI chief

The FPCCI President said that besides liquidity problems and issues of increasing cost, the rains and subsequent urban flooding also caused a significant damage to the infrastructure, disrupting the supply chain and affecting industrial operations

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has expressed grave concern over declining trend in exports, which have posted a downfall of around 20 percent to \$1.58 billion in August 2020, startling especially for the economic managers who claimed that economy was recovering from the adverse

effect of turbulent period of post-corona slowdown. The apex trade body chief Mian Anjum Nisar said that the drop in exports during August period was really surprising, calling for out-of-the-box solutions for economic growth in these crucial times, as COVID-19 has adversely impacted the world economy as well as the Pakistan trade and industrial sectors. According to data, Pakistan's exports during the month of

August recorded a downfall of around 20 percent in dollar terms, as compared to the same period last year. It's amazing that the dip in Aug export figures comes after a surge in exports during July 2020, when Covid-19 restrictions were more stringently in place. In first two months of July-Aug the exports also went down by nearly 4 percent, however, country's trade deficit contracted to \$3.4 billion due to shrinking imports.

The trade deficit, which stood at \$3.7 billion in the comparative period of last fiscal year, shrank to \$3.4 billion during July-August of 2020-21. In absolute terms, there was a reduction of \$307 million or around 8 percent in trade deficit in the current fiscal year. Overall, imports dipped 6.3 percent to around \$7 billion during the July-Aug. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the flooding situation in the country, especially in

Karachi, has also affected the overall industrial operations, indicating the exports volume might not begin to recover in Sept as economic activity was not expected to return to normal immediately. He said that power trippings, slowdown in business activities, delay in transportation and hampering of port operations were some of the issues faced by the exporters due to the unprecedented rains across the country.

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### Briefs

#### RPO directs strict action against land mafia

RAWALPINDI: Newly appointed Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi, Imran Ahmar on Tuesday directed police officers to take strict action against land mafia. Talking to media persons here at his office, he said, zero tolerance policy should be adopted against the land grabbers and there should be no room for the land mafia in Rawalpindi region. He said, delay in registration of FIR would not be tolerated and the corrupt police personnel and those supporting the criminals would be sent behind the bars. "We will make efforts to launch new projects for welfare of police personnel," he said. The RPO informed that police facilitation centers were serving the citizens and over 80,000 applicants were provided immediate relief. He said, improved service delivery would be priority of the police department in the region and "We will make efforts to change 'Thana culture and attitude of police personnel.'" - APP

#### IUCPSS, IUB Sign MOU for students convention

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences (IUCPSS) and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) to organize 4th edition of the students convention in South Punjab. Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Murtaza Noor National Coordinator International Consortium for Promotion of Education signed the memorandum of understanding.

Both the organizations agreed to organize 4th edition of the students convention in South Punjab. A number of activities prior to the event will also be organized to motivate maximum students across Pakistan.

Islamia University of Bahawalpur will also facilitate and actively collaborate with the IUCPSS for establishing Network of Campus based Student Societies and Clubs. - APP

#### Court adjourns hearing in fake accounts case

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) here Tuesday approved request of former president Asif Ali Zardari's counsel and granted time for furnishing arguments in a case pertaining to confiscation of a house situated in Clifton Karachi. AC-I Judge Muhammad Bashir conducted hearing in a petition filed by Asif Ali Zardari against confiscation of his house in Clifton Karachi in fake accounts case. Zardari's counsel Farouk H. Naek appeared before the court in the matter and requested to grant some time for furnishing arguments in such petition. - APP

## Islamabad's water problem a headache for residents

Islamabad gets water from three sources including Khanpur Dam, hundreds of Tube Wells being established in different sectors and household Bore-water

WAHEED HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD: Water resources are really depleting in the country and Islamabad is bitterly hit by the same. No doubt Islamabad is one of the beautiful capital cities in the world, however, the growing population and regular construction of housing colonies on its green land are devastating its natural beauty as well as resources. The Islamabad gets water from three sources including supply from Khanpur Dam, hundreds of Tube Wells being established in different sectors and household Bore-water. Yet need is not fulfilled. In the summer season citizens face problem, in winter the shortage is worse. There is a tanker mafia with the connivance of CDA make millions. Well who cares? If you contact CDA guys de-



puted for the water issues they would simply say either the dam is empty or the area tube well is out of order. When you ask them from where these tankers are

being filled and supplied they would simply say we don't know. The water supply to the residential area is disconnected to make money by tankers. This is not

the problem of only Islamabad but most of the big cities like Karachi face this problem on the regular basis. Few years back the CDA out-sourced water filtration

plants to the private companies. These plants were constructed near the tube wells in various sectors of the city so that people could get the clean drinking water. Unfortunately, today many of these filtration plants are either not being operationalized or out of order. When you talk to the Tube Well operators about their bad condition they reply that these plants are being managed by the private parties not by the CDA. Surely those who had been awarded the contracts must have made lot of money or maybe CDA might not made required payments to them. Whatever is the case main responsibility lies of the CDA and MCI. There is another administrative issue regarding powers and responsibilities between CDA and Islamabad Metropolitan city administration.

#### MoCC committed for 'Clean Green Pakistan'

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Climate Change is committed for 'Clean Green Pakistan' as various campaigns launched to clean the environment in several districts including federal capital. According to a senior official of the Ministry, he said Clean and Green Pakistan initiative would also work on ailing societal issues such as proper sanitation, solid waste and liquid disposal management and safe drinking water. Adding that he said institutions such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was already working on a number of projects related to crisis management and environmental changes. Their focus was to bring rural communities together and train them to conserve natural resources and at the same time working on providing equal opportunities for women he said. Their ongoing project includes a group of women from rural areas building and repairing houses affected by floods he added. - APP

#### Amnesty scheme to regularize illegal buildings

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has advised the owners of illegal residential buildings to get regularized the building maps without fines. According to a RCB spokesman, the board had launched an amnesty scheme for illegal residential buildings under which the owners had been asked to legalise their illegal structures without fines. The amnesty scheme was announced for illegal structures of domestic units, constructed before 2015, he added. The owners of the illegal buildings would pay a fee of Rs 2500 to have their building map made by an approved architect which would be submitted to the Board for formal approval, he said and informed that three field offices had been set up in Allahabad for the residents of Ward Number 1 & 10, Valley Road for Ward Number 2,3,4,8 & 9 and 'Baraf Khana, Masrila Road' for Ward Number 5, 6 & 7. He said, special awareness campaign had also been launched through banners, posters and newspapers ads. - APP

#### IRSA releases 328,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 328,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with equal inflow of 328,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, both Tarbela and Mangla Dams have already attained their maximum conservation level of 1550.00 feet and 1242 feet respectively. Water inflow and outflow in Tarbela dam was recorded as 169,700 cusecs each. Similarly water inflow and outflow in Mangla dam was recorded as 52,700 cusecs each. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 209,700, 398,900 and 401,900 cusecs respectively. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Handicraft Association Pakistan presenting a bouquet to Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz. - DNA

## Islamabad police to strengthen community ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police, being a professional force, is making efforts to promote relations with community and win public support through resolving issues at their door steps. This was stated by the Superintendent of Police (Saddar-Zone) Sarfraz Ahmed Virk while speaking to the participants of 'Open Kutchery' at Sector G-13 on Tuesday. The Open Kutchery was organized following directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan and Deputy Inspector General

of Police (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed who asked for effective interaction of police with people. It was attended among others by SDPOs, Station House Officer, members of conciliatory committees and a large number of notables as well as people of the area. SP Sarfraz Ahmed Virk listened to the problems of the people residing in areas of Saddar-Zone police stations. He gave directions to immediately resolve them so that the public can trust police and culture of friendly policing can be ensured as per prime objective of Islamabad police. He said that Islamabad police was taking every possible

step to maintain peace in the city and the force requires the cooperation of citizens to ensure foolproof security. He said public cooperation is vital for effective policing and crime can be controlled through involving community in policing affairs fairly. He appealed citizens for checking activities of the people in their surroundings and inform the police in case of observing the suspects. Sarfraz Ahmed said that Islamabad police launched effective crackdown against those involved in drug peddling, land occupation and criminal activities in their respective areas. He said that conciliatory committees would be made more effective and appealed more cooperation of citizens with police to resolve public issues. The people thanked IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar, DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed for arranging such activity. They appreciated policing efforts to maintain law and order and ensured their cooperation when needed.



#### Officials not performing will be replaced: Shahbaz Gill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill has said that any government official not doing their job will be replaced, even if 500 IGs have to be changed, the government will do so. Talking to a private television channel on the issue of previous IG Punjab Shoaib Dastgir's transfer, he said that reports of transferring IG Punjab on the complaint of CCPO Lahore are wrong. Both positions have their own domains and there is no political interference in the Punjab police, he added. Dr Shahbaz Gill said that when the status quo is broken, it is initially unseemly. He said we have to change the "thana" culture and it is the status quo that is confused, not the govt. Talking to the tv channel, he said that in previous governments, officials used to lend personal favors, which is why they completed their tenures.

#### IHC seeks record in chairman PTDC case

The court directed the federation to produce the complete relevant record within ten days and adjourned hearing of the case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed additional attorney general to produce complete relevant record on next hearing in a case challenging the appointment of Syed Zulfiqar Bokhari as chairman Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC). Justice Aamer Farooq of IHC conducted hearing on a petition pertaining to the appointment of Zulfi Bokhari as chairman PTDC. Additional Attorney General (AAG) Aamir Rehman and Deputy Attorney General Raja Khalid Mehmood appeared before the court. At the outset of hearing, the petitioner's lawyer Hafiz Arafat pleaded that firstly Zulfi Bokhari had been appointed as acting chairman of the corporation then later he was given permanent

charge of it. Now a new committee under the chair of Bokhari had been set up by the government, he added.

On the query of the bench, the AAG contended that the first notification of the committee was superseded with another notification. The bench asked that whether the acting chairman had been given permanent charge of the department. It further remarked that the tourism subject had been transferred to provinces after the 18th Amendment in Constitution. Justice Farooq said that the court wouldn't interfere into the affairs of federal government's policy and asked the AAG that if all legal requirements had been fulfilled in appointment of chairman PTDC. The court directed the federation to produce the complete relevant record within ten days and adjourned hearing of the case.

## Ehsaas undergraduate scholarship online portal reopens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ehsaas undergraduate scholarship portal has been reopened to receive fresh applications for the academic year 2020-21. All students with family income less than 45,000, studying in any year of an undergraduate program in any of the 119 public sector universities recognized by Higher Education Commission (HEC) are eligible to apply. Eligible students can apply through an online portal: <https://ehsaas.hec.gov.pk/>. The scholarship applications will have to mention the universities to which they are applying. The portal is open to new applications till October 30, 2020. For the year 2019-20, scholarships worth Rs. 4.827 billion were awarded to 50,762 undergraduate students nationwide. The 4-year Ehsaas undergraduate scholarship initiative was formally launched by the Prime Minister Im-

ran Khan on Nov 4, 2019. Under the program, every year, 50,000 students from low-income families will be awarded scholarships for 4 to 5-year undergraduate degree programs. Over four years, 200,000 undergraduate scholarships will be awarded on need and merit basis. Scholarships covers 100% of the tuition fee and a living stipend of 4,000 per month. The geographical spread of the program covers all four provinces, AJK and GB. As part of the program design, 50% of awardees are girls and 2% of awardees are differently abled. Total budget over 4 years is Rs. 24 billion. The students' academic performance will be monitored, and subject to satisfactory academic progress, scholarship recipients will continue to receive scholarship throughout their undergraduate programme. Commenting on the paradigm shift in the scholarship policy of the government, Dr. Nishtar said, "This program

represents three major paradigm shifts. First, this is the largest-ever needs-based scholarship program. It is reserved for students from low-income families aiming to enable them to aspire for higher education. Second, it is the largest-ever national scholarship program and third, it is focused on enhancing the earning potential of the recipients." Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the lead implementing agency for the Ehsaas undergraduate scholarship program. Last year, 132,192 undergraduate students had applied for scholarships through the online portal. The scrutiny of applications received last year to award 50,762 scholarships was finalized early this year with all 119 public sector universities. The project is being overseen by the Ehsaas Scholarships Steering Committee, co-chaired by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar and Chairman HEC, Dr. Tariq Banuri.

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## Briefs

## PBM enrolls 1,730 orphan children

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has enrolled 1,730 orphan children in its Dar-ul-Ehsaas Centres providing them free accommodation and basic amenities of life to marginalized section of society during the Financial Year (FY) 2019-20. According to a report, PBM has established 17 new Dar-ul-Ehsaas Centres across the country. In total, PBM was providing accommodation facilities to over 5,500 orphan children. Resident children are being provided furnished accommodation, free nutritious, balanced diet, free education upto matric and above, free uniform, books, stationary, free summer/winter clothing along with shoes, medical care through government hospitals, skill development, free laundry service, prayer room/religious education, counseling/legal aid for victims of violence and abuse. — APP

## Traders for shifting wholesale markets

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi city traders on Tuesday demanded the Punjab government to shift wholesale markets around the proposed Ring road project to ease traffic jam. President Traders Welfare Association Sharjeel Mir while talking to media said that traders were facing problems in transporting goods to northern areas, Azad Kashmir as well as within the city due to traffic congestion. He said lack of parking space and frequent traffic jams in many markets of downtown area were losing customers and motorists were covering distances of minutes in hours due to acute encroachments and traffic stuckup. Mir said that as the provincial govt has given approval to the Ring road project, he suggested that a residential scheme plan should be devised for business community, so that they can do their businesses near to their residences. He informed that he along with traders representatives of various markets had met Commissioner Capt (Retd) Muhammad Mehmood and conveyed the concern of the traders community who acknowledged the problems the traders were facing. — APP

## Belgium keen to invest in Pakistan: Envoy

From Page 01

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Belgium was one of Pakistan's important trading partners within the European Union, however, the bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Belgium was still below USD 1 billion despite the fact that both countries have the potential to promote trade in many areas. He briefed the Belgium Ambassador about the potential opportunities for JVs and investment in Pakistan. He said that Turkey, Germany, UK and many other countries were taking keen interest in CPEC and stressed that Belgium's investors should bring technology to set up JVs in Pakistan. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that Pakistan and Belgium were doing trade in limited items, which was the main reason of low trade volume and stressed that both countries should focus on diversification of trade to achieve better results. He said that geographical positions of Pakistan and Belgium offered the entrepreneurs of both countries unique opportunities for getting enhanced market access in their respective regions, which could be exploited by developing strong business linkages between private sectors of both countries. He said that the Embassy of Belgium should share list of its top 10 imports so that Pakistani exporters could make efforts to meet its imports needs.



ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi presenting an award to Col. (R) Misbah ur Rahman. —DNA

## Air quality a must for clean environment and public health

Encouraged by the increasing interest of the international community in clean air, and emphasizing the need to make further efforts to improve air quality, the General Assembly decided to designate 7 Sept as the International Day of Clean Air for blue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Several studies have shown that Pakistan's air is not safe for human health and causes thousands of premature deaths annually. Ironically, we don't have ample facilities to measure air quality all over the county and control vehicular and industrial pollution. On the other hand, we have coal plants for energy and cement production adding more pollutants to the air. Well-known environmentalist and Executive Director Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) Munir Ahmed remarked while speaking to a webinar as chief guest,

organized by the IDCLC, on Tuesday to mark the first ever International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. Encouraged by the increasing interest of the international community in clean air, and emphasizing the need to make further efforts to improve air quality, including reducing air pollution, to protect human health, the General Assembly decided to designate 7 September as the International Day of Clean Air for blue. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is responsible for facilitating the observance of this Day, recognizing the need for increased awareness and international cooperation to reduce air pollution.

Ahmed said: Air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health, causing 7 million premature deaths annually from diseases like stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and acute respiratory infections. It is responsible for a substantial amount of disability for those living with these diseases. Many air pollutants are also powerful climate forcers, harming the health and well-being of those living today and making the world less safe for future generations. He said despite citizens' concerns over the increasing air pollutants causing glaciers melt and pacing up the climate impact,

governments worldwide behaving irrationally to control air pollution. Sufficient investments are not made in this regard by the developed world that is responsible for the compromised air quality. Munir Ahmed said we immediately need to work on the air quality of Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Muridke, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. This is ironic to note that Islamabad is 7th most polluted city in Pakistan despite all tall claims of a clean and green city. IDCLC founding president Shaaref Munir said air comprises certain elements that need to stay in their respective proportions. Any

changes in it would lead to pollution or making the air harmful to breathe in. Clean air is primarily a source of sustaining growth and life. By breathing cleaner air, one can reduce the risk of getting a stroke, any heart disease, lung cancer and/or respiratory diseases such as asthma. In the opposite scenario, living in a polluted area would lead to catastrophic short and long-term effects on human health - especially to their respiratory tract. Children and infants' health is most likely to be affected by their surrounding air quality, compared with the other age groups, and may grow up with a number of breathing problems if they're brought up in a pol-

luted environment. Therefore, maintaining air quality is a must for sustaining good human health and the surrounding environment to live in - especially for a country like Pakistan where 35-40 percent of its population comprises children under the age of 15. Sadaf Yasin said the air we breathe knows no borders and envelopes and sustains all living things. Yet our relationship with this most basic life-giving substance has changed. Nine out of 10 people around the world breathe air that does not meet World Health Organization guidelines for clean air. We have the solutions and must take the necessary actions to improve air quality.

## All Islamabad children to be vaccinated, says Ansar Aziz

WHO representative, Dr. Usama appreciated the services of the front line workers.

FAIZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad, Sheikh Ansar Aziz vowed to vaccinate 100% of children of Islamabad, with the help of WHO. He expressed this while addressing a ceremony to distribute motorcycles among immunization field staff in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services MCI and WHO on Tuesday. He was accompanied by WHO representative Dr. Usama and DG Health Dr. Hassan Urooj. The Mayor of Islamabad said that this is the first time that a metropolitan corporation has been formed in Islamabad. Federal capital - Islamabad is the most beautiful city in Pakistan in terms of cleanliness. There were many expectations

from the present government but we were not provided funds as per our need. He said that, Prime Minister Imran Khan used to talk about strengthening local governments but his government has weakened local governments. Despite the problems, the metropolitan corporation has worked tirelessly to establish its position, he added. Mayor lauded the role of MCI staff during Eid ul Adha. He urged the staff to continue the work with same zeal and enthusiasm to keep Islamabad more clean and green. Speaking at the occasion, WHO representative, Dr. Usama appreciated the services of the front line workers. He said "last year, MCI vaccinated 97% of the staff, we are taking steps to vaccinate every child." He assured full support of WHO in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz distributing motor bikes among MCI staff. — DNA

## COMSATS' webinar highlights response of South Asian countries to COVID-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS South Asian Member States gathered to share governmental and institutional experiences in COVID-19 response during an international webinar on 'Digital Health in COVID-19: Sharing Experiences of COMSATS' South Asian Member States'. The event was jointly organized by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and the Commonwealth Centre for Digital Health (CWCDH). The Webinar helped bring forward the COVID-19 related digital health developments and experiences in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka

and Pakistan highlighting the issues faced by digital health stakeholders during these developments. The event was attended by a significant number of relevant individuals from Pakistan and abroad. In his welcome remarks, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi thanked the Commonwealth Centre for Digital Health (CWCDH) led by Dr. Vajira Dissanayake for jointly organizing the webinar and called for joint efforts within the South for due utilization of digital health technologies to fight the pandemic and to strengthen the healthcare systems. The distinguished guests that spoke on the occasion included Dr. Vajira Dissanayake, Chairperson at Commonwealth Cen-

tre for Digital Health; Dr. Selim Reza, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh; Prof. Dr. Md. Aftab Ali Shaikh, Chairman of the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Bangladesh; Dr. Anil Jasinghe, Secretary at the Ministry of Environment and Former Director Gen-

eral, Health Services, Sri Lanka; H.E Vice Admiral (Retd.) Mohan Wijewickrama, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan; and Amb. (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Advisor (SDGs) at COMSATS Secretariat. Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister of Pakistan, on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection and Federal Min-

ister, thanked COMSATS for organizing the present webinar and encouraged COMSATS' role as a leader in the use of digital technologies. Sharing Pakistan's experience, she especially highlighted the role of Government's 'Ehsaas' Programme that helped manage the situation from pandemic response as well as poverty alleviation angles. She informed that Pakistan's experience of dealing with the pandemic is also being shared with missions in Geneva and New York. Dr. Nishtar showed willingness to engage in more international fora on digital health technologies through COMSATS. Chairing the technical session, Dr. Ghazna Khalid, Member PM's Task Force

on COVID-19 Pakistan, congratulated the three COMSATS' member states on working and coming together to create a solidarity drive amid the pandemic that could help share valuable information and experience on the utilization of digital technologies and telehealth. She deemed CDWH a lynchpin in establishing and strengthening such collaborations, while also encouraging 27 member states of COMSATS to create a pandemic solidarity drive. The digital health experts and practitioners from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, further delineated on measures, policies and best practices that were utilized to cope with the pandemic in their countries.

## Admin planning to construct parking plazas

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Capt. (r) Muhammad Mehmood has said that the administration is planning to construct parking plazas in commercial areas of Rawalpindi city aimed at resolving traffic issues on the city roads. According to a spokesman, a tender has been awarded for construction of a parking cum commercial plaza at Children Park Commercial Market, Satellite Town. Construction work on the project would also be started soon, he added. He said, the Commissioner had directed the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) to award contract of Raja Bazaar Fawara Chowk within shortest possible time frame. He also instructed the authorities concerned to inform him about progress on hiring of transaction advisor for Jinnah Road, Bani Market and Fifth Road, Commercial Market parking plazas, he added. — APP

## 'Brand Pakistan' Initiative at final stage

ISLAMABAD: The Brand Pakistan, an initiative of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) for promotion of the country's tourism at global level has entered its final stages, said a senior officer on Tuesday. Talking to media, he said the initiative was meant to promote the country's tourism industry as a customized brand at international level. He said, PTDC had prepared a portal to promote the country's tourist attractions across the globe through virtual galleries, videos and documentaries. "The exclusive e-portal is the part of 'Brand Pakistan' and will be launched with the initiative," he added. The officer said that the portal would provide a world class exposure to Pakistan's tourist attractions through one click. The portal would consist of a user-friendly interface to interact with the prospective tourists and give them necessary and latest information about the country's tourist attractions. He said a ten-year road-map to invigorate tourism industry was also on the cards. — APP

## Pakistan, Azerbaijan share enduring relationship

From Page 01

Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in the settlement of the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh in accordance with the UN resolutions. Referring to the CPEC, the Speaker said that both of the countries can acquire a bigger volume of trade in the upcoming future. He said that immense scope of cooperation exist between both the countries therefore Azerbaijan mission in Islamabad could play a pivotal role in this regard. He suggested closer interaction between Commerce and Agriculture Committees of both the legislatures for further enhancing mutual trade and economic ties. The Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada said that his country also attaches to immense importance to its relations with Pakistan. He said that they are steadily accelerating and both always enjoyed longstanding warm and cordial relations. Ambassador Ali Alizada said that his country wholeheartedly supports Pakistan's stance on Kashmir. He said that his country stands with Kashmiris in their struggle for the right of self-determination. He expressed gratitude to the government of Pakistan for extending diplomatic support on issue of Nagorno Karabakh. He said that Azerbaijan wants to strengthen the economic and cultural ties along with mutual trade. He said that with the operational of CPEC and growing regional connectivity will also provide both the two countries to cooperate in multiple sectors. He agreed for enhancing parliamentary cooperation between two legislatures.

## Rising terrorism

**A** NUMBER of recent terror attacks in North and South Waziristan and Balochistan should be a cause for concern for the government and the armed forces. Security forces are being targeted on a regular basis with one attack occurring a week ago claiming the lives of three soldiers in North Waziristan, and another, a few days later in South Waziristan resulting in a similar body count, including the death of a 23-year old officer. An MPA from North Waziristan narrowly escaped an attack when assailants opened fire on his car last week. Balochistan's security situation is not dissimilar, with frequent IED blasts, a deadly example of which took place a month back when seven soldiers were killed in the same day in two separate incidents. While great strides have been made in the efforts to clamp down on terrorism in the country, a potent threat still clearly remains that emanates from across the Afghan border. The TTP has regrouped with Jamat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) and Hizb-ul-Ahrar (HuA) in Afghanistan with a sole objective to restart terrorist activities in Pakistan. A lot of sacrifices had to be made to eliminate this threat from Pakistan and the era of almost daily large-scale deadly attacks across the country is behind us. But that should never be a source of complacency so long as the TTP and suchlike terrorist outfits continue to operate and plan operations against Pakistan from beyond its borders.

At present, the Afghan peace process is moving along slowly and Pakistan is playing a central role in ensuring it is a success. It would be advisable at this stage that Pakistan uses this leverage to force some meaningful action on part of the Afghan forces and more importantly the United States to at least disable the TTP and its allies to the extent that they pose a more manageable threat to Pakistan. Once the Afghan peace deal is done, the American's will have left the region permanently and Afghanistan will be in a better position to deny any assistance. The time is now to call in favors and nip a potentially lethal threat in the bud.

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## SOPs for educational institutes

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

**T**HE government has decided to reopen educational institutes from September 15. This will be done in phases so as to accommodate all students of schools, colleges, and universities. According to the news report, universities, colleges, and all classes (9 to 12) will resume from September 15. Classes 6 to 8 will begin from September 23 after a review. The primary schools will reopen on September 30, which is said to be the last phase of the reopening of educational institutes. The reopening of all educational institutes must be done under constant supervision. The management of schools, colleges, and universities must adhere to following strict SOPs as defined by the government and doctors. While the students of college and universities will be not that difficult to handle, the main challenge will be to compel primary school students to follow the SOPs. This includes wearing masks, washing hands regularly, and using a sanitizer when needed. The administration and management of all educational institutes must also provide necessary items including masks and sanitizers to its faculty and staff. The modus operandi of classroom teaching will be affected in this post-Covid era. Educational institutions need to strategize how to bring all students into a class while following the SOPs. A hybrid model of education is being applied by some. According to this concept, half of the students will study online at home while half will take physical classes. Technology has aided and facilitated the educational institutions so much so that semesters at universities have been completed online during the lockdown and even when the lockdown was eased. It is yet to be seen what role technology will play when educational institutions will open its doors for students. By following protocol and social distancing measures, the educational institutes need to formulate their strategies approved by their respective management. In this regard, the students, their parents along with the management and faculty of educational institutes need to work in cohesion to bring constructive results.

## SCO endeavors for gender equality

Vladimir Norov



**Women make up 70 percent of the Labour force Worldwide in the medical and social sectors, and almost in all countries, women are exposed to both medical and economic risks. Besides, according to the UN, worldwide, 60 percent of women work in the informal economy, earning less, saving less, and being at greater risk of poverty. As markets fell and businesses closed, millions of women's jobs disappeared**

**O**N the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Humanity has come a long way toward achieving gender equality. From the First International Congress on Women's Rights in Paris in 1878, to the establishment of the International Women's Day on 8th March, the establishment of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Every step on the historic road to the advancement of women in society has spurred the progress of human civilization. More than seventy years of its existence, the UN has certainly contributed to the increased role of women in society. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and platform for action have become an important guide to action in this area. Exactly 25 years ago, in 1995, from 4 to 15 September, Beijing hosted the 4th UN World Conference on the Status of Women. A truly historic event that brought together 17,000 delegates from 189 countries. The conference, determined to achieve the goals of equality and development for all women around the world for the benefit of all humanity, adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, setting out strategic goals and framework policies to promote gender equality and protect women's rights. The Beijing Platform for Action has identified the equality of women and men as an aspect of human rights and a condition for social justice. This implies the need to enshrine the principle of equality of rights and responsibilities between women and men in the family, at work, and in the wider national and international context. The Action Platform called on all governments, the international community to take strategic measures to improve specific problem areas such as inequality in education, health, violence against women, the impact of armed conflict on women, women's unequal rights to participate in economic and political structures, women's inequality in power-sharing and decision-making at all levels, gender inequality in natural resource management, environmental protection discrimination against girls, and violation of their rights, etc. The UN's activities after the Beijing Conference were determined by these problematic areas, stimulating positive changes in the world.

According to experts, in the quarter-century since the Beijing Declaration, the consensus on the importance of gender equality has been strengthened in many countries. In 143 countries, laws to ensure gender equality had been enacted, and obstacles to women's political and economic participation had been removed at the legislative level. However, there is still an imbalance in women's develop-

ment in some countries and regions of the world.

Out of 800 million people in the world living in poverty, more than half of them are women. There are still different forms of discrimination against women in the world, which demonstrates that there is still a massive need for enhancing joint efforts to achieve gender equality. The 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has inflicted devastating social and economic consequences for women and girls.

Women make up 70 percent of the Labour force Worldwide in the medical and social sectors, and almost in all countries, women are exposed to both medical and economic risks. Besides, according to the UN, worldwide, 60 percent of women work in the informal economy, earning less, saving less, and being at greater risk of poverty. As markets fell and businesses closed, millions of women's jobs disappeared. When women lose paid employment, the proportion of unpaid care work they do increases many times because of closures of schools, and increased needs of older persons.

One of the consequences of the pandemic has been the increase in violence against women. In this regard, UN Secretary-General A. Guterres appealed to all countries of the world to take urgent measures to protect women's rights and to increase the capacity to support them. The SCO Member States are committed to the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Today, the SCO is a dynamic region of the world that occupies more than 60 percent of the territory of Eurasia with a population of more than 3.2 billion people, more than half of which are representatives of the wonderful half of humanity, and in every sphere of life in our countries have a "female" part. Equality and the full participation of women in political and socio-economic matters is a prerequisite for economic development, democracy, and social stability in the SCO Member States.

The share of women's employment in the SCO countries and their participation in various sectors of the economy averaged 49 percent. Women are predominantly involved in health, education, agriculture, and trade. Women's representation in politics is on the rise. For example, in the SCO Member States, the proportion of women in parliament is about 20 percent and women in ministerial positions are about 10 percent. This demonstrates the commitment of the SCO countries to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure effective gender equality and to empower women.

I would like to emphasize that the goals of SCO Development Strategy 2025 and the UN Sustainable Development

ment Goals 2030 are largely the same, particularly in matters of gender equality, access to the full range of services, and key components of human activities. During the 25 years of the Beijing Platform of Action, most SCO countries have made significant progress in achieving gender equality. All SCO countries have ratified and implemented the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against, and other international conventions on human rights, women, and children, as well as national legal frameworks, have been laid to achieve gender equality. Gender equality priorities, as an integral part of all areas of life in our societies, can serve as an effective platform for consolidating the women's potential of the SCO countries. Thanks to the initiatives of the Governments of the SCO Member States and the activities of the relevant women's movements and organizations and efforts have been made within the SCO in recent years to develop a "female" line of cooperation. At the initiative of the All-China Women's Federation, the First SCO Women's Forum was held in Beijing in May 2018, which brought together representatives not only of member states but also of Observer countries and SCO Dialogue Partners. The forum was held under the slogan "Women's Forces for Joint Development" and showed women's interest in consolidating efforts to promote regional cooperation and strengthen the "Shanghai spirit". During the Second SCO Women's Forum, which took place in May 2019, Bishkek discussed more substantive issues on "Gender aspects of SCO cooperation in the context of the regional review of the Beijing Platform for Action and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." The main outcome of the Forum was the unity of opinion of the participants on the need to establish cooperation on gender issues within the SCO.

I think that the introduction of gender development issues into the SCO Agenda in the future will give impetus to the exchange of experience, implementation of joint projects, and the development of joint action measures. In this regard, it is important to establish the forum's work and establish a specific mechanism for cooperation within the SCO through women's organizations for the systematic and effective work and active participation of women in the SCO's activities.

In general, much has been done at the global and regional levels to improve the status of women, but more is needed to be done including the creation of favorable conditions for women and girls in line with the new realities of the present time - the age of globalization, interconnectedness and information technology.

*The writer is the Secretary General of SCO.*

## Identifying and tackling the online propaganda

Shujaat Hamza



**Pakistan is perhaps the only country in the world which has been under a constant threat from two / third of its borders. During the rise of terrorism in mid 2000's, the momentum of threat shifted from outside the boundary lines to inside the country. There was a time when a week didn't go by without any terrorism activity and incident**

**T**HE great Abbasid Caliphate had its own many reasons that led to its eventual fall. One of the most obvious and big reason was the rising influence of "Turks" in the matters of Caliphate, which the Persians and Arabs would not approve. Another very disastrous factor was the growing "Shia", "Sunni" conflict, which even made the Abbasid Caliphs to take sides. Overall, these inner rivalries and conflicts gradually put an end to the once most dominant and fast growing power of the world.

It's a reality that whenever the seed of hatred and rift starts growing in a healthy and steady society, the result has always been perilous. The most recent example of the consequences of hate among a society is the fall of East Pakistan. Small events, fueled carefully by the enemies, turned the other half of Quaid's beloved Pakistan against its own brothers. If the current scenario of our country is analyzed, it becomes very obvious that once again the enemies are on the move, aiding and sponsoring every kind of violence, hatred and intolerance in our society and country. We are facing a huge wave of sectarianism and ethnic violence. The enemies are playing their part as cautiously as they had during the events of East Pakistan. The most dangerous game is being played in the northwestern and western front of our country, i.e Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It is a fact that the modern warzone has shifted from open battlefields to electronic warfare. The fifth generation war is very real and make no mistake, we are unconsciously into it. A careful campaign, escalated by some very unfortunate events, has been going on to create a negative image of our national institutions, specifically the security forces. The narratives like "Army budget khaati hai" have been distributed and sadly, a part of our youth and "experts" have even bought it. Every social media platform is loaded

with anti-army content. Any online material that somehow ridicules and pokes fun at armed forces is shared massively throughout the social media. It's safe to say that slamming the armed forces has become the new cool. The biggest drawback of social media is that it has transformed anybody with an internet connection, into an expert of everything. Baseless and self-made stories made by trolls are taken seriously by some segments, which ultimately results in growing hatred for our national institutions.

The other day I came across such a post on social media which mentioned that the army takes 80% budget but still we couldn't even win one war. I couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry at such a misleading piece of information, (I am not sure if it can even be called information at first place) which unfortunately, is bought by many among us. When the truth is that despite getting comparatively low defense budget, our armed forces are still capable of competing at the top level and are a formidable rival to a far bigger and significantly wealthier enemy.

Pakistan is perhaps the only country in the world which has been under a constant threat from two/third of its borders. During the rise of terrorism in mid 2000's, the momentum of threat shifted from outside the boundary lines to inside the country. There was a time when a week didn't go by without any terrorism activity and incident. From the deserted mountains in the northwest to the safest of places in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, terrorism had made its presence felt everywhere. Sporting activities were suspended and even the foreign leadership would only visit our country when it's extremely necessary. The only thing that stood still was ever green determination of our nation and the valor and bravery of our armed forces. Together, we had defeated this unprecedented enemy like we have overcome a lot of oth-

er disasters and calamities, and came out victorious. The history will note it down that when the mighty superpower and it's shinning allies were returning empty handed after suffering from the most financially devastating war in Afghanistan, our country was rebounding and coming out victorious from the war that was imposed upon us.

The sports activities have begun. Foreign leaders are visiting again. In the last five years, Pakistan has been honored with visits from Turkish, Saudi Arabian, Malaysian, British and Chinese leadership among others. Pakistan also hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's session, which had participants including the leaders of Iran and Turkey. Recently the President of Intra-Parliamentary Union, and the United Nations General Assembly's President-elect graced us with their visits.

If there is any institution or body which deserves to be credited with the progress and restoration of peace, it has to be the armed forces of Pakistan, who have defeated the enemy among ourselves and from across the border with great valor and effective planning. There is no denying in the efforts made by governments to assist the armed forces. The same areas which were vacated due to large influence and terror activities of terrorists, are now hosting sports and cultural events, all thanks to the sacrifices and courage of security forces as well as the locals.

It is the need of time that we identify our enemy. From where the roots of this hatred are originating and which forces are actively participating in creating a rift between different sectors of our society. We have to learn from mistakes which led to the heart-wrenching events of 1971. We must not allow, as a society, the enemy to derail our country from the path of progress. That is what Allah Almighty directs us to do, to not indulge in sectarianism and remain united as a nation, as a UMMAH.

## Briefs

## Japan ruling party launches race for Abe's successor

DNA

TOKYO: Japan's ruling party on Tuesday kicked off the race to pick Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's successor, with his powerful right-hand man Yoshihide Suga commanding an all-but-insurmountable lead.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, the 71-year-old son of a strawberry farmer, has already secured the support of major factions in the Liberal Democratic Party ahead of its leadership vote on September 14.

But he isn't running unchallenged, with a popular former defence minister and the party's policy chief standing against him.

With the LDP commanding a solid legislative majority, the race's winner is certain to win a parliamentary vote on September 16 and be named the country's next prime minister.

The LDP race began after Abe, modern Japan's longest-serving premier, abruptly announced in late August that he would resign for health reasons.

There is now speculation that the new leader may also call a snap election to shore up public support.

On Tuesday morning, representatives for Suga and his rivals - former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba and party policy chief Fumio Kishida - formally registered their candidacies.

## At least 11 dead in massacres in Colombia

DNA

BOGOTA: At least 11 people were killed in three separate group killings in Colombia, police said Monday, one of the deadliest days since FARC guerrillas signed a peace accord with the government in 2016. The massacres - homicides of three or more people in the same event - took place in the past three days in the regions of Antioquia in the northwest, Bolivar in the north and Cesar in the northeast of the country. In a slaying Monday in Antioquia, five people were killed "presumably by an armed group" in the town of Zaragoza, Colonel Ever Gomez, the head of the region's police force, told reporters. Also Monday, three men died in an attack in the area of Simiti, a town in the region of Bolivar. The victims had not immediately been identified, a police spokesperson told AFP.

## Brazil clubs turn to DJs for atmosphere

DNA

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's top soccer clubs are turning to DJs to pump up the volume to support their players and help mask the eerie silence of coronavirus-era empty stadiums.

DJ Franklin Scheleger sets the mood for Rio de Janeiro club Fluminense, who play their home games at the legendary Maracana, where in the absence of fans the vast stands would otherwise echo with the shouts of players or coaches.

"The challenge is to be connected with the action," says Scheleger as he works a sound deck high up the stands.

Scheleger, 29, used to host events organized by the club, but now he is tasked with making up for the absence of Fluminense's famously noisy fans by blasting out their recorded cheers and chants at home games. "I am very honored to represent the supporters of my favorite team, it's an incredible feeling. Indescribable!" he says.

Deprived of their supporters, Brazilian clubs are relying on DJs not so much to recreate the incandescent atmosphere of the games - that would be impossible - but to help their team forget the closed-door nature of football after authorities banned crowds to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Marcos Costi, 38, mixes the sound for Sao Paulo-based Palmeiras, the most successful club in Brazilian football.



AMSTERDAM: Nicolo Barella celebrates scoring for Italy against Netherlands in Uefa Nations League match. - DNA

## Belarus opposition figure 'detained' at Ukraine border

The circumstances of her attempted journey to Ukraine were not immediately clear, with some media reports initially suggesting she had made it across the border, something border guards on both sides later denied

DNA

MINSK: Belarusian protest leader Maria Kolesnikova has been detained while trying to enter Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday morning, according to Belarusian border officials, a day after her allies said she had been grabbed off the street by masked men. The circumstances of her attempted journey to Ukraine were not immediately clear, with some media reports initially suggesting she had made it across the border, something border guards on both sides later denied.

The opposition movement on Monday said that unidentified men had taken Kolesnikova in central Minsk and driven her off in a minivan, while two other activists disappeared later. Those two allies successfully crossed into Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the Ukrainian border ser-



vice said. "Kolesnikova has now been detained. I can't say concretely where she is, but she has been detained," Anton Bychkovsky, a representative of the Belaru-

sian border service, told Reuters by phone. "She was detained in connection with the circumstances under which they (the group) left the territory of Belarus," he

said. The official Belta news agency said she had been travelling with the two other activists who made it into Ukraine. Kolesnikova could not immediately be reached for comment.

## EU demands 'immediate liberation' of jailed activists

DNA

BRUSSELS: The EU's top diplomat on Monday called on Belarus to immediately free the more than 600 people jailed following a crackdown on protests after

Belta quoted border officials as saying the three had tried to cross the border in a BMW car about 4am on Tuesday, and said Kolesnikova's car had accelerated sharply after being confronted by a border guard. "Kolesnikova was outside the vehicle. In fact, she was pushed from it and it continued moving towards the Ukrainian side," Belta quoted the border service as saying.

a controversial August presidential election.

"The EU expects the Belarusian authorities to ensure the immediate release of all detained on political grounds before and after the falsified 9 August presidential elections," Josep Borrell said.

According to the Interfax Ukraine news agency, Kolesnikova ripped up her passport to thwart an attempt to deport her to neighbouring Ukraine. Deputy Ukrainian Interior Minister Anton Gerashchenko said on Facebook that Kolesnikova, who had been missing for the past 24 hours, had successfully prevented "a forcible expulsion from her native country"

## UK police arrest man following mass stabbings

DNA

LONDON: Police on Monday arrested a man on suspicion of murder following a series of stabbings in Birmingham, Britain's second city, that left one person dead and three critically injured. The 27-year-old suspect was held in a pre-dawn raid in the Selly Oak area following the apparently random attacks around the city centre in the early hours of Sunday morning. The man killed was named as Jacob Billington, 23, who had been on a night out with friends when he was stabbed. In a statement, his family said they were devastated that "the light of our life" had gone, adding: "He was

a funny, caring and wonderful person who was loved by every single person he met." Seven people were injured, including one of Billington's friends, also 23, who is in a critical condition in hospital. Another man aged 30 and a 22-year-old woman, attacked in different parts of the city centre, are also critically ill in hospital, police said. The murder suspect "remains in custody on suspicion of murder and seven counts of attempted murder," they said, adding that three other people were arrested at the same address on suspicion of assisting him. The attack occurred at four separate locations in the busy city centre between 12:30 and 2:30 am on Sunday.

## Egypt: Lawyers say Morsi's son killed by 'lethal substance'

WEB DESK

CAIRO: Lawyers for the family of Egypt's ex-president Mohamed Morsi said they obtained information showing his youngest son was killed by "a lethal substance" and not a heart attack as authorities earlier claimed. Abdullah Morsi, 25, died a year ago on September 4 in a hospital in Giza, southwest of the Egyptian capital Cairo.

A government report at the time said Abdullah was driving his car when he had sudden spasms, and he was immediately taken to a hospital, but doctors were unable to revive him. Several local news sites reported the death saying there was no



criminal suspicion, while noting Morsi's son had suffered several previous health scares, and that he was saddened by his father's recent death.

Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, died on June 17, 2019, after years in prison while awaiting trial on charges that he and legal

observers said were politically motivated. He was deposed in a 2013 military coup carried out by current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi following a year in power.

## China attempts to take lead on global data security

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is scheduled to announce the initiative on Tuesday at a seminar in Beijing on global digital governance, the report said. Chinese diplomats have approached a number of foreign governments to seek their support for Beijing's initiative, according to the report

DNA

NEW YORK: China is launching an initiative to set global standards on data security, countering US efforts to persuade countries to ringfence their networks from Chinese technology, the Wall Street Journal has reported. Under its "Global Initiative on Data Security," China would call on all countries to handle data security in a "compre-

hensive, objective and evidence-based manner," the Journal said on Monday, citing a draft that it had reviewed. The initiative would urge countries to oppose "mass surveillance against other states" and call on tech companies not to install "back doors in their products and services to illegally obtain users' data, control or manipulate users' systems and devices". Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is scheduled to announce the

initiative on Tuesday at a seminar in Beijing on global digital governance, the report said. Chinese diplomats have approached a number of foreign governments to seek their support for Beijing's initiative, according to the report. In recent months, the administration of United States President Donald Trump has clamped down on what it describes as national-security threats from Chinese technology firms such as Huawei Technologies - a global leader in advanced

mobile telecommunications - and popular Chinese apps including ByteDance Ltd's TikTok and Tencent Holdings Ltd's WeChat. Washington has also rolled out a "Clean Network" initiative to exclude Chinese tech firms perceived as threatening national security. Chinese officials, meanwhile, have accused the US of trying to sabotage the efforts of Chinese businesses to expand. Separately, Trump on Monday raised the idea of separating the US and Chinese economies, sug-

gesting the US would not lose money if the world's two biggest economies no longer did business. "We lose billions of dollars and if we didn't do business with [China] we wouldn't lose billions of dollars," US President Donald Trump told reporters [Sarah Silbiger/Reuters] "So when you mention the word decouple, it's an interesting word," Trump told a Labor Day news conference at the White House in which he promised to bring jobs home from China.

## Paris, Washington at odds over Hezbollah

BEIRUT: When it comes to Lebanon, the US and France have similar outlooks, but one major point of difference involves the Hezbollah movement - shunned by Washington but tolerated by a pragmatic Parisian leadership.

While the United States seeks to isolate and curb the influence of the Iran-backed group it has designated a "terrorist" organisation and punished with sanctions, France recognises it as a key political actor whose cooperation is needed to lift Lebanon out of crisis.

Lebanon's government stepped down last month amid popular anger over a massive blast at Beirut's port on August 4 that killed 191 people, wounded thousands and ravaged large parts of the capital.

Both Western powers have agreed Lebanon needs a cabinet different from its predecessors to tackle urgent reforms, but all consensus seems to end there. "France's approach tends to be more realistic," analyst Karim Bitar told AFP.

"France views Lebanon as it is, while the (US President Donald) Trump administration tends to view Lebanon as it would like it to be."

The US view is that Hezbollah - the only group not to have disarmed after the 1975-1990 civil war - holds excessive influence in Lebanon, "which needs to be contained", Bitar said.

The United States has been following closely as French President Emmanuel Macron twice visited Lebanon since August 4 to press for political change and reforms to unlock financial aid. - APP

## Japan's economy shrinks

TOKYO: Japan's economy shrank slightly more than initially thought in the April-June quarter, official data released Tuesday showed, deepening a contraction that was already the worst in the nation's modern history.

The world's third-largest economy shrank 7.9 percent in the second quarter of this year from the previous quarter, more than the initial 7.8 percent in the preliminary data, the Cabinet Office said. The downward revision comes with corporate investment weaker than in the preliminary data released last month, as the coronavirus deepens the country's economic woes.

The latest headline figure was modestly better than market consensus of an 8.0 percent contraction, but it is the worst figure for Japan since comparable data became available in 1980, beyond the brutal impact of the 2008 global financial crisis. Separate data released by the internal affairs ministry Tuesday showed Japan's household spending in July dropped 7.6 percent on-year, also underlining the impact of the coronavirus on the economy.

The 7.6 percent drop was the 10th consecutive monthly decline and comes after a 1.2 percent slide in June and 16.2 percent dive in May.

The figure came in much worse than economist expectations of a 3.7 percent decline, Bloomberg said.

Japan's economy was in recession even before the coronavirus hit due to damage from a powerful typhoon last year, and a sale tax hike in October. - APP

## EU hobbled over Navalny sanctions response

DNA

BRUSSELS: European countries have threatened sanctions on Russia over the alleged nerve agent attack on opposition leader Alexei Navalny, but a concerted decision will be tough to reach given the interests at stake.

Western governments are united - at least in outrage - over the latest in a long line of assassination attempts against critics of President Vladimir Putin. And the Navalny case also raises particular concerns as German doctors say it involved the use of the Novichok nerve agent.

The EU last week condemned the use of a chemical weapon as "a serious breach of international law" and warned Moscow it may respond with "appropriate actions, including through restrictive measures".

## Briefs

## Mandela foundation slams Trump

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Nelson Mandela Foundation has hit back at disparaging comments attributed to US President Donald Trump about Black world leaders, including the late anti-apartheid hero and South Africa's first Black president.

In a book to be published this week, Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen alleges that the president described Mandela as a poor leader, according to the Washington Post which reported on Saturday that it had obtained a copy of the book. According to the newspaper, Cohen wrote that following Mandela's death in 2013, Trump said: "Mandela f\*\*\*ed the whole country up. Now it's a s\*\*\*hole. F\*\*\* Mandela. He was no leader."

Cohen also alleged that Trump said: "Tell me one country run by a Black person that isn't a s\*\*\*hole. They are all complete f\*\*\*ing toilets." In a statement on Monday, the foundation said it did not believe leaders conducting themselves in the way Trump did were "in position to offer authoritative commentary on the life and work" of Mandela. Using the Xhosa clan name by which Mandela was affectionately known, the statement added: "Reflecting on leadership, Madiba once said: 'A good leader can engage in a debate frankly and thoroughly, knowing that at the end he and the other side must be closer, and thus emerge stronger. You don't have that idea when you are arrogant, superficial, and uninformed.' We would recommend these words to Mr Trump for consideration."

## French economy to bounce back as lockdown lifted

PARIS: France's economy, which like those of other countries was pushed into a bruising recession by the coronavirus, will bounce back now that lockdown measures are lifted but will still contract over the year as a whole, official data showed Tuesday.

France's gross domestic product, which had shrunk by a record 13.8 percent in the second quarter, is forecast to grow by 17 percent in the subsequent three months, the national statistics office Insee calculated. Nevertheless, the rebound was not quite as strong as expected and Insee said it was sticking to its forecast for an overall economic contraction of 9.0 percent for the year as a whole. If the easing of lockdown measures "has enabled a relatively rapid rebound in parts of economic activity," the economy is returning after the summer break "rather like an engine that is being cranked up and choked at the same time," Insee said.

While activity in key areas such as air transport and culture and entertainment continued to be throttled by the coronavirus restrictions, some sectors were still benefiting from the emergency economic measures put in place by the government, the statisticians said. Insee pointed to the risk of a "significant shock to demand", with consumer spending and household confidence expected to remain below pre-crisis levels. — APP

## Asian markets rise after rout

HONG KONG: Asian markets ticked higher Tuesday after last week's steep drops as investors brushed off Donald Trump's latest anti-China salvo, while sterling suffered more selling pressure on fears over Brexit talks. Despite continued uncertainty about the timetable for economic recovery — and with no coronavirus vaccine yet available — investors remain convinced central banks around the world are willing to play backstop and keep monetary policy supportive for years to come. The wall of cash put up by authorities has been credited with fuelling an incredible surge in world markets from March troughs — led by tech firms which have benefited from people staying at home during the pandemic. — APP

## India, China accuse each other of firing shots at tense border

New Delhi was swift to give its own account, accusing Chinese border forces of "blatantly violating agreements" and firing "a few rounds in the air" to intimidate their Indian rivals

DNA

BEIJING: China and India have accused each other of firing shots on their flashpoint Himalayan border, in a further escalation of military tension between the nuclear-armed Asian rivals.

The relationship between the two countries has deteriorated since a clash in the Ladakh region on June 15 in which 20 Indian troops were killed.

Experts fear the latest incident will intensify a months-long standoff between the Asian giants that erupted in late April.

Beijing's defence ministry accused India of "severe military provocation" after soldiers crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the western border region on Monday and "opened fire to threaten the Chinese border defence patrol of

ficers".

New Delhi was swift to give its own account, accusing Chinese border forces of "blatantly violating agreements" and firing "a few rounds in the air" to intimidate their Indian rivals. "It is the PLA that has been blatantly violating agreements and carrying out aggressive manoeuvres," the Indian army said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Despite the grave provocation, (our) own troops exercised great restraint and behaved in a mature and responsible manner," the statement said.

The countries fought a brief border war in 1962, but officially no shots have been fired in the area since 1975 when four Indian troops were killed in an ambush.

A spokesperson for the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) gave no specifics on the apparent retaliation and did not report casu-

## China says forced to take 'countermeasures' against India

DNA

BEIJING: China on Tuesday said its troops were forced to take "countermeasures" after Indian soldiers crossed their tense Himalayan border and opened fire.

The relationship between the two nuclear-armed neighbours has deteriorated since a clash in the Ladakh region on June 15 in which 20 Indian troops were killed.

Beijing's defence ministry accused India of "severe

military provocation" after soldiers crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the western border region Monday and "opened fire to threaten the Chinese border defence patrol officers". "The Chinese border defence troops were forced to take corresponding countermeasures to stabilise the terrain situation," said Zhang Shuili, spokesperson for the Western Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

China's western military command said the incursion occurred on

Monday along the southern coast of Pangong Tso lake in the area known in Chinese as Shenpaoshan. On the Indian side, the area is known as Chushul where the two countries' local military commanders have held several rounds of talks to defuse the tense standoff.

Zhang Shuili, the spokesperson for the Western Theater Command of the PLA, said India had violated agreements reached by the two countries and warned their actions could "easily cause misunderstandings and misjudgements".

India has deployed thousands of soldiers following deadly border clashes in June [File: Danish Ismail/Reuters]

China's foreign ministry said Indian troops had illegally crossed the LAC and were the first to fire shots. "This is a serious military provocation," spokesman Zhao Lijian told a daily news conference in Beijing on

Tuesday.

Late last month, India said its soldiers thwarted the Chinese military's moves "to change the status quo" in violation of a consensus reached in past efforts to settle the standoff. In turn, China also accused Indian troops of crossing established lines of control.

The activity last month and on Monday was alleged to have occurred in the Chushul area on the southern bank of Pangong Lake, a glacial lake divided by the de facto frontier and where the India-China face-off began on its northern flank in early May.

Both sides have sent tens of thousands of troops to the disputed Himalayan border, which sits at an altitude of more than 4,000 metres (13,500 feet).

Their troops have had several show-downs since the June 15 clash. China has also acknowledged it has had casualties but not given figures.

## One in 14 employees at risk of losing jobs

DNA

WELLINGTON: About one in 14 workers say they expect to lose their job or business by mid-2021, New Zealand's statistics department Stats NZ said on Tuesday.

A survey of employed people in the June 2020 quarter showed 7 percent felt there was a high or almost certain chance of losing their job or business within the next 12 months, Stats NZ said.

At a national level this represented 185,000 workers. A further 18 percent, or 468,000, felt there was a medium chance, while 4 percent, or 105,000, stated they did not know what their job security was going to be over the following year, it said.

Most people surveyed said there was little or no chance of losing their job or business, which was 71 percent or 1.86 million, statistics showed.



BERLIN: Dr. Faisal Pakistan's Ambassador to Germany met Manori Unambuwe, Ambassador of Sri Lanka. — DNA

## India becomes second-worst-hit country by coronavirus after United States

At least 200 UN staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in Syria, according to a leaked document, as the organisation steps up efforts to contain the spread of the disease in the war-torn country

DNA

NEW DELHI: India's health ministry reported another daily record of 90,802 cases on Monday, bringing the total to over 4.2 million and overtaking Brazil to become the second-hardest-hit country.

COVID-19 cases are rising in 22 of the states in the US, according to a Reuters analysis, as the country celebrates its end-of-summer Labor Day weekend. The world's coronavirus cases have hit 27 million, more than 18 million peo-

ple have recovered and more than 882,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. Indian health ministry reports another daily record of 90,802 COVID-19 cases raising total to over 27 million worldwide. India overtakes Brazil as country second-worst-hit by COVID-19

UK gov't admits surge in daily coronavirus cases 'concerning' India's health ministry reported another daily record of 90,802 cases on Monday, bringing the total to over 4.2 million

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to a leaked document, as the organisation steps up efforts to contain the spread of the disease in the war-torn country.

Indonesia reported 2,880 new coronavirus infections and 105 more coronavirus-related deaths, data issued by the country's COVID-19 task force showed.

It was the lowest rise in daily infections in six days and brought the Southeast Asian country's total cases to 196,989, while fatalities rose to 8,130.

A new cluster of novel coronavirus cases is

feared to have emerged in a Malaysian town after a football referee tested positive for the disease, local media reported.

According to local media outlet The Star, health official G. Navindran said those who were involved in a football competition at the Tawau Prison field and Tawau Municipal Council stadium recently, including spectators, should immediately get tested for COVID-19.

At least 200 UN staff have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in Syria, according to a leaked document, as the organisation steps up ef-

orts to contain the spread of the disease in the war-torn country.

Russia reported 5,185 new coronavirus cases on Monday, pushing its national tally to 1,030,690, the fourth largest in the world.

Authorities confirmed 51 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the official death toll to 17,871.

Russia will complete early-stage trials on a second potential COVID-19 vaccine produced by the Vector Institute on Sept. 30, the RIA news agency cited Russia's consumer health safety watchdog as saying,

## What is behind the hype about the new Iran-China partnership?

Tom Hussain



The mainstream US media and think-tanks based along the Washington, DC, beltway have been gripped by two recent momentous developments in the Middle East, both interpreted as escalations in the geopolitical conflict between the US and Iran: the news of a prospective strategic partnership agreement between Iran and China, and the normalisation of relations between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel. In fact, the first development was a media creation. The New York Times (NYT) ran a front-page story citing a "leaked" draft of the 25-year strategic partnership agreement under negotiation between China and Iran since 2016.

It was provocatively headlined: De-

fying US, China and Iran near trade and military partnership.

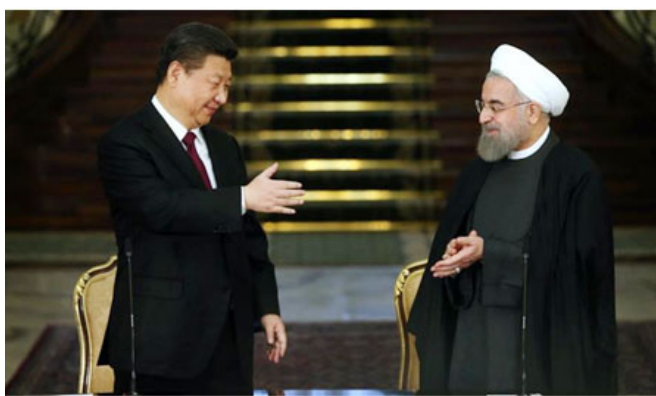
"The investment and security pact would vastly extend China's influence in the Middle East, throwing Iran an economic lifeline and creating new flashpoints with the United States," read the accompanying blurb.

There was no mention of a military partnership in the reported draft agreement, however, and speculation that Iran could lease strategic Gulf islands to China was spread by former-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and members of Iran's parliament suspicious of Beijing's intentions. Nonetheless, the NYT headline set the breathless tone for the US media's coverage of the August 13 establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the UAE.

It was not long before the US media was discussing how the UAE-Israel agreement represented the formation of a US-led grand alliance against a new "axis of evil" between Iran, China and possibly also Turkey. This echoed earlier US media scoops about confidential negotiations between Israeli and Emirati leaders.

Gripping, is it not? Well, it is also a disservice to the media's audiences. There is no grand alliance or "evil axis" — just tentative

diplomacy and proxy warfare amid shifts in the balance of power in the Middle East, necessitated in part by the withdrawal of US combat forces from the region, as well as the seepage of power to Beijing from Washington. This information is not hard to come by. A little digging quickly uncovers the large, eloquent body of research and analysis that is maintained and constantly updated by very capable academics. These genuine experts are easy to find on Twitter, where they share each other's work and chat about the latest news. Unsurprisingly, they have not been impressed with the mainstream media's melodramatic coverage of US-China competition in the Mid-



dle East. Guy Burton, author of the recently published book, China and Middle East Conflicts, took exception to a story published by The Hill, headlined: A China-Iran partnership would make China the Middle East arbiter. "Articles like this overplay China's investment and influence in Iran (and Israel)," Burton tweeted. "How much of this is intentional (to influence US policy) or because of a misunderstanding of Chinese interest and capacity?" he asked.

Ironically, his question was answered by the State Department's own media arm, Voice of America (VoA), in a nicely balanced article pegged to Sec-

retary of State Mike Pompeo's recent bombast on the subject.

In an August 2 interview with Fox News, Pompeo claimed that the prospective China-Iran deal would put Communist cash in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps's hands. "China's entry into Iran will destabilise the Middle East. It'll put Israel at risk. It'll put the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates at risk as well," Pompeo said.

The VoA report quoted two Washington-based think-tank hawks supportive of Pompeo's rhetoric. Then braving the Trump administration's campaign to turn the VoA into a partisan parrot — the report cited interviews with three acknowledged experts on the region who debunked Pompeo's rhetoric. And relatedly, Young said, the US security strategy that explicitly mentions the importance of allies and shared values has failed to rely on those strengths in counterarguments to the Chinese "choice." Burton explained that the real target of Washington is Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While the Trump administration was busy setting the Middle East alight by withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, the Chinese were building ports and industrial zones around the region. Primarily a means

of projecting soft power, the BRI may eventually become a cause of conflict in the Middle East because it may result in greater competition by countries to attract Chinese interest and investment, Burton said. "The outcome may be that China ceases to be an outside observer of conflict and becomes an active — albeit reluctant — participant," he said. In other words, China risks being sucked into other nations' rivalries, but it will not be the one to pick a fight.

At the risk of spotlighting my own inadequacies as a journalist, I can not help wondering why editors and writers seem so willing to fan the flames of war.

They have evoked painful memories of how the US media — with the Pulitzer Prize-winning exception of Knight Ridder — unquestioningly propagated the entirely false "weapons of mass destruction" justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The long-suffering peoples of the Middle East could do without journalists once again playing cheerleader for American politicians who perpetuate their domestic power by igniting conflict in others' backyards.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance. Courtesy Al Jazeera

**Briefs**

**Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan decrease 43.61%**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed decrease of 43.61 percent during the first month of current financial year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$ 61.255 million during July 2020 against exports of US \$ 108.642 million during July 2019, showing negative growth of 43.61 percent, SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed decline of 14.57 percent in first month, from US \$ 2.216 billion to US \$ 1.893 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the period under review were recorded at US \$ 4.216 million against US \$ 9.752 million last year, showing decreased of 56.76 percent in July 2020.

The overall imports into the country decreased by 13.26 percent, from US \$ 4.184 billion to US \$ 3.629 billion, according to the data.

**COVID-19: Malaysia tightens entry rules**

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia announced on Monday that it was restricting the entry of people from 23 countries, including Pakistan to stem the spread of coronavirus. Malaysia's immigration department announced on social media that it was restricting the entry of "Long Term Visit Pass Holders" from the 23 countries as they had reported over 150,000 COVID-19 cases.

Apart from Pakistan, the other countries included in the ban are India, USA, Brazil, Russia, Peru, Colombia, South Africa, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Chile, Iran, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, France, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Iraq, Philippines and Indonesia.

The country's health authorities reported 62 new coronavirus cases on Monday, the sharpest spike since early June, just as the government began barring long-term immigration pass holders from countries with high infection numbers. Of the total new cases reported, 50 were detected in an existing cluster in Sabah state on Malaysian Borneo, stemming from the detention of two undocumented migrants two weeks earlier, the health ministry said.

**NAB recovers Rs 23 billion through plea bargain**

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Rawalpindi recovered over Rs 23 billion through plea bargain in fake account and illegal allotment of land cases besides sentencing 18 suspects while disqualifying them for 10 years under plea bargain laws.

According to national graft busters' progress report issued on Tuesday regarding fake account and illegal allotment of land cases, some 10 references were filed from out of 43 cases of fake account and allotment of land.

As many as 52 suspects including former president Asif Ali Zardari, Faray Talpur, Omni Group, Bilal Shaikh, Hussain Lawai has been arrested.

The arrest warrants of 64 accused in fake accounts cases were issued of which 12 suspects had already been declared proclaimed offenders.

As many as 12 cases were at investigation stage and inquiries of 21 cases were continuing right now. The names of 186 suspects in same cases were put on Exit Control List (ECL). - APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs cabinet meeting on Tuesday. - DNA

**Pakistan's future lies with china: Maleeha**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Maleeha Lodhi has said that Pakistan's ties with China are strategic, historic and pivotal to the country's foreign policy.

This was stated in a webinar organized by Muslim Youth University (MYU), International Relations department titled "Multidimensional challenges to the Foreign Policy Pakistan: A way forward."

The former envoy said that Pakistan faces daunting foreign policy challenges in a turbulent global and regional environment. Rising tensions between the US and China have a direct bearing on Pakistan. Lodhi further added that CPEC is emblematic of China's aim to strengthen Pakistan, economically and strategically and must be our overriding priority.

On Afghanistan, She said that Pakistan should extend whatever assistance it can to the much-delayed peace process. Islamabad should also need to think long term policy and prepare for different scenarios that might emerge in Afghanistan.

While discussing UAE-Israel peace agreement, she said that deal betrayal the Palestinian cause. Pakistan always stands for two-state nations. She also said that the military use of new technology creates new challenges.

Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, while providing an overview of changing international strategic environment and imperatives of Pakistan foreign policy stated that the foreign policy should be a priority for the government and also try to manage better relations with a neighbouring state.

**PML-N demands resignation of PM Imran, CM Punjab**

DNA

LAHORE: Spokesperson of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that Chief Minister of Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar and Prime Minister Imran Khan have lost confidence of people and bureaucracy and demanded their resignation.

Responding to differences between CCPO Lahore and IG Punjab, Marriyum said that refusal of IG Punjab to work with the Chief Minister is proof of government's failure. She also expressed concern about IG's statement on misconduct and said that in simple words, Shoaib Dastgir's statement means that corruption, incompetence and nepotism are common in the government.

She also alleged that rulers are using institutions of the country for politics and said that opposition is pointing out interference in institutions for last two years. It is pertinent to mention here Federal and Punjab government on Tuesday decided not to transfer Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore after differences emerged between him and Inspector General (IG) Punjab Shoaib Dastgir. According to official of Centre, the appointment of CCPO was made after due consideration and government cannot take decisions against law and merit.

**U.S. embassy helps students prepare for civil service exam**

The six sessions led by American professors from renowned U.S. universities focused on topics suggested by students and Central Superior Service (CSS) exam coaching academies, while keeping in mind the Civil Service American History exam

DNA/SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, in partnership with the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS), hosted a virtual series engaging U.S. academics and Pakistani students preparing for the Civil Service exam. The six sessions led by American professors from renowned U.S. universities focused on topics suggested by students and Central Superior Service (CSS) exam coaching academies, while keeping in mind the Civil Service American History exam, which is an optional but popular subject among applicants. There was great enthusiasm among the hundreds of students who proactively engaged the U.S. experts in the Q&A sessions after each lecture.

"We were pleased to be able to support Pakistanis preparing for the very prestigious civil service exam and wish these future leaders all the best on the exam and with



Prof. Stacy Cordery



Prof. Courtney Fullilove



Professor Farhat Haq



Prof. Andre P. Audette



Prof. Eric Kasper



Prof. Dianne Pinderhughes

their careers in public service," said U.S. Chargé d'affaires Angela Aggeler.

"We at the American Institute of Pakistan Studies were delighted to cooperate with the United States Embassy in Islamabad to organize the CSS speaker series on American culture and politics," said AIPS President Dr. Farhat Haq. "We showcased some of the best scholars and teachers of American history and politics, and these scholars were impressed by the depth of engagement of Pakistani participants."

American speakers included Dr. Eric Kasper, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, who presented on the U.S. Constitution; Dr. Andre Audette, Monmouth College, on the U.S. Congress and U.S. Presidential Elections; Dr. Dianne Pinderhughes, University of Notre Dame, on the Civil Rights Movement; Dr. Courtney Fullilove, Wesleyan University, on The Forces that Shaped Modern America; and Dr. Stacy Cordery, Iowa State University, on U.S. Society and Culture.

**CPEC to expand despite propaganda: China**

KARACHI: China has said China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will continue to grow and expand despite the negative propaganda by certain countries as it is flagship project of "One Belt and One Road Initiative" of China. The Chinese Consul General in Karachi, Li Bijian, in an interactive meeting with representatives of Karachi Editors Club at the Consulate, said the project covers entire Pakistan and is moving forward despite COVID-19 pandemic. - DNA

**Women's involvement in political issues vital for stable society: SCO**

BEIJING: Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretary General Vladimir Norov has said that equality and full involvement of women in addressing political and socioeconomic issues were a prerequisite for economic development, democracy and a stable society in the SCO member states. He made the remarks in articles on the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, according to a statement issued by the SCO Secretariat here on Tuesday. The SCO Secretary General, in his

articles, noted the importance of the United Nations in achieving gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women. Exactly 25 years ago in September 1995, he said, Beijing hosted the Fourth World Conference on Women, during which the participants adopted the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which defined strategic goals and policy framework to promote gender equality and to protect women's rights. Vladimir Norov said the Platform for Action defined equality between

women and men as an aspect of human rights and a prerequisite for ensuring social justice. It called on the governments of all countries and the international community to adopt strategic measures to improve the situation in specific problem areas, including inequality in education, healthcare, violence against women, unequal women's rights when participating in economic and political bodies, discrimination against girls and violation of their rights. The SCO Secretary General also

noted that over the 25 years of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, most of the SCO countries had made significant strides in achieving gender equality. "The SCO countries have ratified and are implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international conventions on human rights and the rights of women and children; in addition, national legal frameworks have been laid for achieving gender equality," he concluded. - APP

**Pakistani youth has a bright future: Uzbek envoy**

Major General Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery HI(M), (Retd), President, CGSS during his speech appreciated and applauded the students of The Millennium Education for their wide participation

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant Colonel Saadullah Tashmatov, Charge de Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan has stated that the youth of Pakistan is very energetic and he envisions a bright future of Pakistan. He appreciated the role of CGSS for organizing this competition in crucial times. He stated that these children acted as the ray of hope in the gloomiest times. Youth has a very important role in cultural connectivity which has been exhibited through this art competition.

He said this during a Prize Distribution Ceremony held for the winners and participants of the Motivational Art Competition "Defeating COVID-19" at The Millennium Education (TME), Wahid Campus, Islamabad. This

art competition was jointly organized by, "Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), and Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Pakistan. The Ceremony was moderated by Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS and formally commenced with the Presentation by Ms. Mehreen Gul, Director CGSS who gave an overview of the Competition and shared various artworks that were sent by the students from across Pakistan and Uzbekistan. She stated that such activities are significant for the youth to mitigate the negativities in the post COVID-19 era.

Major General Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery HI(M), (Retd), President, CGSS during his speech appreciated and applauded the students of The Millennium Education for their wide participation. He stated that the role of The Millennium Education, Pakistan is commendable as they encouraged their students to actively participate in this competition. Ms. Sabina Zakir, Director



Communication, Community & Outreach, Roots Millennium Schools, Pakistan welcomed the participants while appreciating CGSS and Embassy of the Re-

public of Uzbekistan for organizing such healthy activity for the students amid the pandemic. She stated that CGSS always takes initiatives to create opportunities for students for their portfolio building. She stated that we are happy to see our children back to school.

The speeches were followed by the prize distribution including certificates and medals for the position holders. All other participants were also awarded with the Certificate of Appreciation. This art competition was organized when educational institutions were closed due to the pandemic lockdown with the aim to keep the students busy and provide them the opportunity to showcase their creativity in a healthy manner and bring hope in the crisis situation to fight against COVID-19. This competition also proved to be a source of

increased and strengthened people to people contact between Pakistan & Uzbekistan. The competition was open for students all over Pakistan & Uzbekistan for children aging 8-15 years. This competition received 577 total entries including 44 from Uzbekistan and 246 from other schools of Pakistan. It is worth mentioning that the students of The Millennium Education (TME), Pakistan widely participated in the art competition with a total number of 287 entries. The names of the position holders are as below:

- First Position: Ms. Dua Ahmed - Roots Millennium School, One World Campus
- Second Position: Mr. Hassaan Tahir Roots Millennium School, Waterloo Campus, PWD
- Third Position: Mr. Syed Ibrahim Raza Roots Millennium School, Wahid Campus