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Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan rescheduled

Nepalese envoy Sewa Adhikari set to leave Pakistan

Ehsaas cash second phase to start: Dr Sania

Pakistan's future linked to China, says PM Imran

We probably have the best relationship with US right now as compared to a few years ago, because in Afghanistan, we are 'partners with peace'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan enjoyed good relationship with both China and the United States without siding with any particular "camp". "Pakistan does not have to be in any camp. Why can't we have good relationship with everyone?" the Prime Minister said in an interview with Aljazeera television, aired on Thursday. The interview with senior correspondent Hashem Ahebarra at 'Talk to Aljazeera' programme gave an insight into PM Imran Khan's views on his first two years in office, fight against corruption, coping with geopolitical changes, economy, media freedom and the country's response to coronavirus pandemic.

PM fears India-Pakistan conflict on Kashmir

SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has warned the world of serious implications of breakout of any conflict between Pakistan and India over the disputed region of Kashmir. In an exclusive interview with Aljazeera, he said Pakistan has raised the lingering dispute at all the forums and it will continue doing so. He said the world is not responding on the issue as unfortunately they are willing to ignore the huge travesty of justice for their commercial interests with India. He said it does not mean we sit down quietly and accept the injustice.

The prime minister said every country looked to its own interests and for Pakistan, "Our future is now linked to China, progressing at faster pace than any other country in the world". He dismissed any renegotiation with China over amending the terms of \$62 billion Economic Corridor, saying

that "the relationship with China was better than even before". Imran Khan said Pakistan would like to benefit from the way China made progress and lifted its people out of poverty. Asked if Pakistan considered 'resetting' ties with the US being critical of CPEC, he said, "We probably have

the best relationship with US right now as compared to a few years ago, because in Afghanistan, we are 'partners with peace'."

Would Pakistan favour a power-sharing agreement in future between government of Afghanistan and Taliban, the Prime Minister said, "Whatever the Afghans think is good for them, is good for us...After Afghanistan, the country which has stakes in the Afghan peace, is in fact Pakistan." "With 19 years of war and bloodshed in Afghanistan, anyone to believe in this utopia that suddenly they will all live together, I am afraid it is a very complicated situation," he said. He mentioned that Pakistan tried its best to somehow get Taliban and the Afghan government sit on negotiation table, adding that "This is a miracle that's actually happening."



KARACHI: Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zaabi, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, distributing food items among rain affectees in Samu Goth, Malir, organized by Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation. – APP

Four Army personal embrace shahadat

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Four soldiers of Pakistan Army were martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in North Waziristan tribal district, on Thursday evening. According to the initial reports, Lt Nasir Khalid from Pakistan Army embraced Shahadat in an IED blast in NW. He was a graduate of Royal Military Academy Australia. He was the only child of his parents. His father was martyred while serving in Police.

Afghanistan peace vital for region: FM

FM Qureshi expressed satisfaction at the successful Second Review meeting of APAPPS while having a telephonic conversation with Afghan Acting FM

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Haneef Atmar called Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi Thursday. The subjects covered during the call include bilateral relations and progress on the Afghan peace process. Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed satisfaction at the successful holding of the Second Review meeting of Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) in Kabul recently. He emphasized that the positive momentum after the APAPPS should be fol-

Afghan talks critical move to peace: China

BEIJING: China on Thursday said that the forthcoming intra-Afghan talks was a critical move to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan and vowed it would be watching the development in this regard as neighbor and friend of the country. "Intra-Afghan talks is a critical move to peace and stability in Afghanistan. As the largest neighbor and sincere friend of the country, we will be watching this development closely," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Hua Chunying said during her regular briefing while commenting on intra-Afghan dialogue likely to be held in Doha, Qatar. – DNA

lowed up by implementing all its decisions. Both sides agreed that APAPPS provides a comprehensive and pertinent forum to address all issues on key tracks of

the bilateral relations. FM Qureshi assured his Afghan counterpart of Pakistan's consistent support to Afghanistan on its path to peace and development.

Briefs

President Xi's Pakistan visit rescheduled

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan has been rescheduled due to coronavirus. The leader was scheduled to visit Pakistan this year. This was announced by Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing in a conversation with the media on Thursday. He said that President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan this year has been rescheduled due to Covid-19. The Ambassador said the two governments were working on deciding a new date for President Xi's visit to Pakistan and that it would be announced soon. Prime Minister Imran Khan had invited the Chinese President to Pakistan during his visit to China. He said that the Chinese government is satisfied with the progress of CPEC and both governments are aware of the dangers facing the economic corridor. Together, Pakistan and China will defeat these threats, he added. He said that we will not allow our enemies to succeed in their nefarious designs and CPEC projects will continue despite the challenge of Covid-19 on both sides.

Pakistan values Kuwait ties, says Mandviwalla

ADNAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwalla has underlined the need of enhancing trade with Kuwait which also offers good potential for export of many Pakistani products. He expressed these views in a meeting with Ambassador of Kuwait Nasar Abdul Rahman J. Almutairi at the Parliament House on Thursday. He said that Kuwait has tremendous potential, especially for Pakistani Halal food products and a seri-



ous attention towards this particular sector could give a quantum jump to our exports. He emphasized close collaboration between the two sides in various other fields of mutual interests

including agriculture, energy, trade, commerce and investment and proposed strong linkages between trade chambers to explore new avenues of mutual collaborations and interactions with right counterparts.

PM Imran to visit Karachi on Saturday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was scheduled to visit rain-hit Karachi, will now visit the metropolis on Saturday. The decision regarding the change of prime minister's scheduled visit to Karachi has been taken during a meeting presided over by Imran Khan on Karachi's transformation plan. According to sources, the premier was briefed in detail about the plan during the meeting.

Pakistanis stranded in India return

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nearly 200 hundred Pakistanis stranded in India due to the coronavirus lockdown in both the countries, returned home via the Attari-Wagah border on Thursday. Train service between Islamabad and New Delhi was suspended on August 15 after the coronavirus outbreak, leaving hundreds of Pakistanis stranded on the other side of the border.

Court directs return of Palestine envoy's vehicle

Chief Justice IHC remarked that the relations of the two countries had been placed on risk for the sake of just one vehicle

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday directed custom's collector to return another vehicle of Palestine's ambassador to Pakistan and maintained its decision stopping the action against him for two more weeks. Chief Justice Athar Minallah, hearing the case filed by ambassador of Palestine, expressed displeasure over seizing of his vehicles by the custom's officials and remarked that the relations of the two countries had been placed on risk for the sake of just one vehicle. The chief justice remarked that even this court did not interfere into the affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Justice Minallah questioned the counsel for custom that whether his department had asked the PO before confiscating the vehicle. The ambassador could be informed through foreign office if there was any legal matter, he remarked. The court remarked that what benefit the department received by confiscating the vehicle, adding that the matters should be seen in wider prospects. After this, the court adjourned hearing of the case. – DNA

IHC tells govt to raise Jadhav lawyer issue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Thursday asked the government to approach India once more regarding the appointment of a counsel for Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav. The government has petitioned the court to appoint a counsel for Jadhav so that the International Court of Justice's verdict which requires Pakistan to review Jadhav's death sentence can be implemented. According to the petition, the Indian spy cannot appoint a lawyer in Pakistan without India's assistance, while New Delhi is also reluctant to avail the facility under the International

Court of Justice (Review and Reconsideration) Ordinance, 2020, which was enacted to implement the ICJ verdict. The case was heard today by a larger bench headed by Justice Athar Minallah and comprising Justice Amir Farooq and Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb. Attorney General Khalid Javed, Additional Attorney General Tariq Khokhar, and Deputy Attorney General Tayyab Shah were also present, besides senior lawyer Hamid Khan who was there in the capacity of a judicial assistant. The petition has named the defence secretary and Judge Advocate General Branch GHQ as respondents.

Qureshi denounces French magazine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has strongly denounced the publication of blasphemous caricatures by French Magazine Charlie Hebdo. In a video statement on Thursday, the foreign minister said these caricatures have hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims across the world. "Pakistan has conveyed its concerns to the French government on the despicable act," said Qureshi and added that those behind the publication of blasphemous caricatures must be taken to task. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Prime Minister Imran Khan last year had raised the issue of blasphemous caricatures in the UNGA session.

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Nepalese envoy Sewa Adhikari set to leave Pakistan

Relations between Nepal and Pakistan are getting stronger with the each passing. Both countries have huge potential in various fields, which if exploited, can further strengthen bilateral ties

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Nepal Sewa Lamsal Adhikari is set to leave Pakistan after completing her tenure. During her tenure she contributed greatly towards strengthening of bilateral relations. Relations between Nepal and Pakistan are getting stronger with the each passing. Both countries have huge potential in various fields, which if exploited, can further strengthen bilateral ties. Our relations are based on friendship, goodwill, mutual respect, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other. These relations are time tested and have been growing strengths to strengths at all levels". The bond of friendship is as tall

as the mighty Himalaya, and as old as the Gandhara civilization. Both the countries deeply value the teachings of Gautam Buddha which underpins peace, love, harmony and shared prosperity among the people. "Both the countries deeply value the Charter of the UN and the principles of NAM and share common views in the regional and multilateral forums. We are committed to fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy, backwardness and uplift our people through the effective implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development", Ambassador Sewa told this scribe in a recent interview. In order to improve trade and investment ties between the two countries, there was a need to identify the potential sectors in both countries. There was



possibility of exporting surgical, pharmaceutical, textiles, leather products, Gems & jewelry, lawn fabrics, fruits, vegetables and agricultural products particularly dates which are not being produced in Nepal. Nepal has been producing good quality big cardamoms which are being exported to numerous countries. Pakistan has also been import-

ing cardamoms from other countries to overcome local demand. Nepal is also one of the best quality producers of coffee. Hence, the Pakistani coffee entrepreneurs must avail advantage of geographic proximity in having these products at competitive price. Pakistan and Nepal hold strong potential to enter into joint ventures particularly in the

fields of textile, pharmaceutical, health and human development. Agriculture has special potential for expansion of bilateral trade. Nepal and Pakistan can explore products of comparative advantage favored by specific climatic zones in both countries. Nepal has been celebrating Mount Everest Day since 2008. Nepal celebrates Mt. Everest Day every year in memory of the first summit of Mt. Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa on the day in 1953. The day is celebrated with memorial events, processions, and special events in Kathmandu and the Everest region. Foreign Secretary of Nepal, Ambassador Shanker Das Bairagi, during his recent visit met with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other Pakistani digni-

taries. Ambassador Shankar was leading the delegation for the 4th Round of Pakistan-Nepal Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC). President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister of Nepal Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli held a fruitful meeting on the sidelines of the NAM Summit in Baku. Both sides expressed desire to play role for strengthening peace and stability in the region. Both sides noted with satisfaction that bilateral cooperation has been expanding steadily in various fields of mutual interest. Both leaders affirmed to enhance economic relations between the two countries. Both leaders expressed their desire to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between Pakistan and Nepal and to further diversify the bilateral relations in diverse fields of mutual interest.

Briefs

Fakhar for examining food security situation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research (NFSR), Syed Fakhar Imam on Thursday highlighted the need for examining food security situation in the region amid spread of COVID-19. "The region needs to examine the present situation of food security, with a particular emphasis on implications linked to the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on food systems," he said while addressing the 35th virtual session of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Pacific Regional Conference. The minister said that Pakistan's agriculture sector was sharing 19.3 percent to country's GDP while 75 percent of its exports were agriculture based, he added. He said that climate change was another aggravating factor menacing efforts to increase resilience across food systems, adding Pakistan was also facing issue of locust. He said the government's priority was to reduce poverty in rural areas. — APP

Distillery raided, liquor recovered

ISLAMABAD: A distillery was raided in Ghouri Town area which led to the recovery of a huge quantity of liquor, wine and other material used in the manufacturing process, a police spokesman on Thursday said. He said renewed efforts are underway to curb bootlegging and drug peddling activities in the city following the directions of IGP Aamir Zulfiqar Khan. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed has conducted special meetings with heads of police stations and directed them to accelerate efforts against anti-social elements, the spokesman added. SP (Investigation) Malik Naeem Iqbal constituted a team under the supervision of DSP Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) Hakim Khan including ASIs Sadeer Ahmed, Jaffer Ali and others. The team conducted a raid at a distillery in Ghouri Town area of Koral police station and arrested bootleggers namely Sajjad Sohail Masih s/o Boota Masih resident of sector F-6/2 Islamabad and recovered 400 wine bottles, 330 liters alcohol, 220 empty bottles, stickers and other materials used in the manufacturing process. — APP

Operation against encroachments begin

ABBOTTABAD: The district administration Abbottabad has launched an operation to remove encroachments on tourist destinations as per the orders of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the Peshawar High Court. In this regard, on the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Muhammad Maghith Sanullah, an operation was carried out against illegal encroachments in the vicinity of Samandarkatha Lake in Galyat. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training and National Heritage, Shafqat Mahmood warmly receives Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf Bin said Al-Maliki at his office. — DNA

10,988 beggars nabbed during ongoing year

DIG (Operations) said this campaign against the professional alm-seekers will be made more effective and strict action to be taken against those who force children and women to adopt the ugly business

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have nabbed 10,988 beggars during the ongoing year in its crackdown against professional alm seekers and their handlers with the purpose to curb this menace, a police spokesman said on Thursday. Following directions of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar

khan, DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed constituted teams to ensure arrest of beggars' handlers while legal process is ensured to register FIRs against the professional alm-seekers. During efforts to curb this menace, police arrested 10,988 professional beggars from various areas of the city during current year. Mr. Waqar Uddin Syed has said that this social evil would be curbed and those backing the pro-

essional beggars would be dealt with an iron hand. He said that strict action would be taken against beggars those found around commercial centers, signals and other business areas. During the ongoing year, a total of 10,988 beggars were arrested and 'Qalandarjat' were compiled against 702 women, 511 men and 32 transgenders. A total of 78 cases were also registered against the beggars and cas-

es were forwarded to the relevant courts. A total of 129 children were shifted to Child Protection Center while 2941 boys, 1788 girls, 2797 men, 1882 women and 206 transgenders involved in begging were shifted to Edhi Home. DIG (Operations) said this campaign against the professional alm-seekers will be made more effective and strict action to be taken against those who force

children and women to adopt the ugly business. He directed all officials to take legal action against those involved in begging at traffic signals, worship places, streets and main chowks. He directed strict action against those groups and criminal gangs involved in backing the professional alm-seekers and depriving the deserved persons from assistance.



ISLAMABAD: EU Ambassador Androulla Kaminara met with WHO Pakistan representative Dr. Palitha Mahipala to discuss the current COVID19 situation. — DNA

ANF seizes 216.300 kg drugs; arrests 14

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan, on the special directives of the Director General (DG) ANF, Major General Muhammad Arif Malik, has accelerated the ongoing campaign against narcotics. According to an ANF spokesman, the Force has seized 216.300 kg narcotics worth of 12.60 million in international market, arrested 14 culprits, impounded seven vehicles while conducting nine counter-narcotic strikes across the country. The seized drugs comprised of 130.3 kg Hashish, 48 kg Opium, 20 kg Heroin and 18 kg Methamphetamine. ANF Rawalpindi established a Naka at Motorway Link Road, Tehsil & District Islamabad, intercepted a car and recovered 1.100 kg Hashish from the car. Muhammad Shakeel resident of Charsadda was arrested at the spot. ANF Punjab, staff of Police Station Regional Directorate Lahore raided near Salmat Pura Chowk Sanda Road, Lahore and arrested Rana Muhammad Hussain r/o Lahore. ANF recovered 500 grams Hashish from his possession and impounded a motorcycle. In another operation, ANF Punjab in collaboration with

Pakistan Rangers Wagha, Lahore, apprehended two accused namely Muhammad Zulfiqar and Ali Ahmed r/o Lahore with recovery of six kg Heroin and impounded a Suzuki pickup. The seizure was made at Pul Hadyara Drain Manahala, Tehsil and District Lahore. In third operation, ANF Punjab, Police Station Multan established a Naka near Railway Phattak Sakhi Sarwar road District DG Khan, intercepted a pickup and recovered 24 kg Opium and 60 kg Hashish. Three accused namely Muhammad Arif, Ghulam Murata r/o of DG Khan and Suleman r/o Charsadda were arrested. In fourth operation, ANF Punjab, staff of Police Station Multan established a naka at near Sakhi Sarwar road, toll Plaza Sakhi Sarwar District DG Khan, intercepted a pickup and recovered 24 kg Opium and 66 kg Hashish. Three accused namely Sher Badshah, Anwar Khan and Muhammad Israr r/o Charsadda were arrested. On a tip off, ANF KP, Police Station Peshawar intercepted a Vigo vehicle near Kohat road. Three persons onboard the vehicle managed to escape but chased by ANF team.

PTCL concludes Internship Program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) concluded its flagship internship program Experia 2020, despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the company engaged with the students virtually and provided them with ample learning opportunities and mentorship. For this flagship program, 25 students from well-renowned universities such as LUMS, IBA Karachi, NUST, FAST and Bahria University were selected out of 1200 students through online Gamified Assessment, said a news release. On the occasion, Syed Mazhar Husain, Group Chief Human Resource Officer, PTCL & Ufone, said, "Our commitment to the youth of Pakistan remains strong as we create ample opportunities of learning and mentoring. Experia is one of the flagship internship program at PTCL, where we nurture and groom the best talent from various universities in Pakistan. We made efforts to ensure that this program continues in its true spirit even in COVID-19 by adding virtual mechanism in place." Selected students were given an online orientation of a detailed six-week plan and were assigned to their respective projects and departments. As part of Experia's holistic learning, the interns were provided access to PTCL's internal Learning Management System known as 'LearnX' along with a recommended in-house built program 'Developing Managerial Skills'.

NAB begins probe into paintings theft

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice Javed (Retd) Javed Iqbal on Thursday directed (NAB's) Rawalpindi bureau to investigate the report the art napping of precious and rare paintings from Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA). According to NAB spokesman, the chairman sought compliance report of the within a fortnight while directing Rawalpindi bureau to ensure that the missing paintings must not be gifted to anyone or shifted to any other place. Chairman also directed Rawalpindi bureau to investigate illegal appointments and corruption in Pakistan National Council of Arts and submit a report, so that the culprits could be punished. — APP

Dengue awareness campaign launched

RAWALPINDI: The communication teams of Al-bayrak carried out dengue awareness campaign at Kotha Kalan, UC-81 to educate people about preventive measures that can protect from dengue virus. The purpose of this drive was to teach the localities, shopkeepers and grocery vendors about the precautionary measures against dengue fever and to nullify the breeding of dengue larvae, said a spokesman. — APP

'Aviation sector to bear brunt of COVID-19'

The CASS webinar was titled "Global Aviation and Aerospace in Post-Coronavirus world" which hosted Professor Dr Karl Moore of McGill University who was expert in strategy and organisation

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at webinar organised by Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) on Thursday highlighted that the aviation industry particularly the airlines were going to bear the brunt of COVID-19 pandemic as slow revival was projected till 2024 like pre-COVID situation. The CASS webinar was titled "Global Aviation and Aerospace in Post-Coronavirus world" hosted Professor Dr Karl Moore of McGill University who was expert in strategy and organisation. Dr Karl Moore enunciated the major and minor impacts of the contagion outbreak with respect to countries like US, Canada and those of Europe-



an Union having major chunk of aviation as part of their economy due to overwhelming tourism share. He added that the global experts predicted a decline in the corporate and leisure travelling whereas no com-

plete death of the sector could occur. Dr Karl also quoted the International Air Transport Association (IATA) that estimated global passengers would not return to pre-COVID levels until 2024 as 40 percent of global air travel markets were affected including that of the US. President CASS Air Chief Marshal (R) Kaleem Saadat in his thanking remarks extended his gratitude to Prof Karl Moore for his valuable insights on the subject of aviation industry in a complex scenario. He proposed that there was need to work out a mutually acceptable framework with all stakeholders on board to assist the stressed aviation sector. — APP

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Briefs

AIOU
announces
admissions
in BA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Thursday announced admissions for Autumn 2020 semester of BA (Associate Degree) in five different fields. Admission announced in the fields of BA General (Associate Degree in Arts), BA Dares Nizami (Associate Degree in Dares Nizami), BA Mass Communication (Associate Degree in Mass Communication), B.Com (Associate Degree in Commerce) and BA BLIS (Associate Degree in Library and Information Sciences).

According to the press release, as per HEC policy, students enrolled in any of these BA programs will earn associate degree in their respective fields.

Director Admissions, Mian Muhammad Riaz, informed that AIOU has offered MA/MSc for the last time as per HEC policy. The details regarding these programs are available online on the university website. These programs would not be offered in upcoming admissions for Spring 2021 semester. Admission forms and prospectuses of these programs have been uploaded on the university website. Continuing and fresh admission students are instructed to apply online before the deadline October 15, 2020. – APP

Ajoka Theater
to hold acting
course

ISLAMABAD: Ajoka Theater Pakistan will hold three months Acting course titled "Art of Acting" to provide the students with practical experience about acting and enable them to understand and perform various roles from September 18. Students will be presented with a detailed and unique study plan, culminating in a live performance as well as the opportunity to perform in a well publicized web-series. The Course will be conducted in a large open air space, following social distancing and other protocols, along with additional Online Classes if required, an official told on Thursday. The course is designed specifically for furthering Career, Life and Creative Potential and this experience will help the students in their development in the area of their choice of a creative career on stage, screen or television. He said that they would receive specialist training in voice, movement emotive skills adding that this course would equip the students with the skills they would need to become a professional actor. – APP

RCB starts
amnesty
scheme

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board has launched an amnesty scheme for illegal residential buildings under which the owners have been asked to legalise their illegal structures without fines. According to a RCB spokesman, the amnesty scheme has been announced for illegal structures of domestic units, constructed before 2015. The owners of the illegal buildings would pay a fee of Rs2500 to have their building map made by an approved architect which would be submitted to the Board for formal approval, he added. He said the amnesty scheme has been launched to legalise all illegal structures in the cantonment areas to bring the practice to an end. He said several residents had constructed residential buildings without approved building plans which causes problems for the civic body. – APP

ICT admin
directed
to remove
encroachments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The chief commissioner Islamabad has directed authorities to take strict action against illegal encroachments in the capital city. The commissioner has asked the Municipal Corporation and police authorities to take legal action and submit a report in this regard within 14 days. The letter is written to DIG Police, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Officer, and further asked to examine the situation in context of law and order.



ISLAMABAD: DG Nadra Zulfiqar Ahmed called on DG ANF Major General Muhammad Arif Malik. – DNA

Applications open for the
Chevening Scholarships

The British High Commission in Pakistan encourages the interested candidates to apply if they meet the scholarship eligibility criteria and other requirements

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Applications for Chevening Scholarships to study in the UK are open between 3rd September and 3rd November 2020, with applications to be submitted via www.chevening.org/apply. Chevening is the UK government's international awards programme aimed at developing global leaders. The scheme is fully funded by the Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and offers two types of award – Chevening Scholarships and Chevening Fellowships. The programme enables outstanding mid-career professionals from all over the world to pursue a one-year master's degree in the UK. It is a life changing opportunity for those who have ambition, leadership qualities, and a strong academic background. The British High Commission in Pakistan encourages the interested candidates to apply if they meet the scholarship eligibility criteria and other requirements by visiting the Chevening website www.chevening.org/apply. The High Commission's ambition is to have an equal number of male and female Chevening scholars from Pakistan. Since 1983, over 50,000 brilliant scholars from across the world including approx. 2,000 from Pakistan have availed this excel-

lent opportunity and studied in the UK's world renowned universities through the Chevening scheme. These dynamic scholars are now leaders and innovators, who are breaking boundaries across a variety of professional fields, including politics, business, media, civil society, science and technology, and academia. UK universities provide an environment for scholars to flourish, whilst developing their skills. According to the

Higher Education Statistics Agency, 86% of students who completed a postgraduate master's in the UK were in full-time employment following graduation. The call for new applicants follows the selection of 53 scholars from Pakistan, who won an award to study at a UK university this year. Successful applicants have been sharing their stories through the #ChosenForChevening hashtag on Twitter and Instagram. Visit www.chevening.org/

scholarships for detailed information on the eligibility criteria and scholarship specifications. Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the F (FCO) and partner organisations. The scholarships support study at UK universities – mostly one year taught master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers.

Excise teams recover
six stolen vehicles

The stolen vehicles had been brought to the excise office for registration: Director Excise Bilal Azam

ISLAMABAD: Excise and Taxation department teams have seized four stolen vehicles and handed them over to the Rawalpindi police so that they can be processed before being returned to their real owners. The stolen vehicles had been brought to the excise office for registration, Director Excise Bilal Azam told media on Thursday. While checking the records and conducting a physical

examination, it was discovered that the vehicles were stolen after which the police were notified, he added. He added that vehicles were also physically checked while ownership of registered vehicles was verified to avoid tampered vehicles from being registered anew. A few months ago, the department had recovered around 18 vehicles where a physical inspection had disclosed that their chassis

number had been tampered with and were registered as stolen with various police stations in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. To a query, he said the department had decided to issue ETags for every vehicle to minimize car theft incidents in the federal capital. Each ETag will carry a coded identification number that the driver can paste on the windshield or number plate of the vehicle, Bialal added. – APP

Police arrest
five suspected
dacoits

RAWALPINDI: Saddar Baroni Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested five suspected dacoits including their ring leader during an encounter. According to a police spokesman, Saddar Baroni police intercepted a suspected vehicle and motorcycle near 'Shagaf Pulli' in the area of 'Raniyal', but the suspected dacoits opened fire on the police party and managed to escape from the scene towards Chakri Road. A police mobile chased and intercepted them near Kohala, but the accused again opened firing at police. – APP

Blind murder during
mobile snatching traced

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Noon police station has traced a blind murder committed in the advent of this year by unknown persons during mobile snatching attempt, a police spokesman said. He said that Zain Javed was killed on January 3, 2020 when he resisted unknown person during a mobile snatching attempt. Following this incident, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar Khan directed DIG (Operations) to ensure the arrest of the killer. He constituted a special team headed by SP (Industrial Area) Zubair Ahmed Sheikh and others including Sub-Inspector Niaz Ahmed. This team worked hard, investigated the case following modern investigation techniques and succeeded to arrest an accused Adil Khan s/o Muhammad Azam r/o Kali Tali Tehsil Hawelian district Haripur. 4 A pistol used a murder toll was also recovered from him while further investigation is underway from him to ensure arrest of his other accomplices. DIG (Operations) Waqar Ud Din Syed has appreciated the performance of SP Industrial Area Zubair Ahmed Sheikh as well as his team and announced cash prizes and commendation certificates for them. – DNA

WECs impart technical
skills among women

ISLAMABAD: Women Empowerment Centres (WEC) of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal have so far imparted technical training among 190,222 destitute women to enable them to start their own business and make them self sufficient. According to official report, these centres were aimed to provide opportunities to deserving women for suitable employment to alleviate the population living below the poverty line in the country. These centres have been equipped with state of the art computer labs and broadband infrastructure. The WECs have trained 30,000 women with the cost of Rs 638 million during the financial year of 2019-20. Some 93,256 deserving women have been imparted training in the last five years. The technical training was being imparted in these WECs in two shifts.

The trainees were also being paid daily stipend. Currently 19,888 widows, orphans, poor girls were being imparted free technical training, drafting, cutting, sewing, knitting, hand, machine embroidery, Computer, use of office equipment, photocopyers, printers, interior decoration, beautician, cooking, tie & dye and glass painting etc, according to the requirement of area. The WECs have been registered with respective Provincial Technical Boards. Established in 1995, the focus of WEC was to enable orphan girls to generating income on their own. PBM has planned to establish at least one vocational dastkari school in each district. Latest IT courses have been introduced in these centres and passed out women were being offered soft loans to initiate their own business. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing and KPK govt spokesman Kamran Bangash giving award to senior journalist Javed Siddiq. – DNA

Dawood directs for resolving exporters' issues

Despite the decline in August, some of the products, like tractors, iron and steel, chemicals and cement have posted a growth of 186%, 100%, 90% and 30% respectively

ISLAMABAD: The Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Thursday directed Ministry of Commerce to resolve the issues of the exporters on war-footings in these unprecedented times. "Exporters are encouraged that despite the calamity of rain and flooding, we must pursue 'Make in Pakistan' and export led growth", stated the Adviser. He expressed these views during internal review meeting at Min-

istry of Commerce, said a press release issued by Ministry of Commerce here. "I have every confidence in our exporters that they will make up for the loss in the subsequent months", he added. Talking in the meeting, the Adviser hoped that the exports would begin to recover in September as normalcy should return to Karachi. The adviser noted that although exports have temporarily fallen, the trade balance

continues to improve. During internal review meeting, it discussed that the overall trade balance has improved by 20.6% in August 2020, as compared to same month last year. They also discussed that the exports for the month of August 2020, have recorded a downfall of 19.5%, in dollar value terms, as compared to the same period last year. Similarly, during the same month, the imports have also dropped by

20%, in dollar value terms, as compared to August 2019. Despite the decline in August, some of the products, like tractors, iron and steel, chemicals and cement have posted a growth of 186%, 100%, 90% and 30% respectively, in dollar value terms, as compared to August 2019. It was told in the meeting that due to heavy rains in the country, there were some delays in obtaining and analyzing the data. It was further discussed in the

meeting that the rains and consequential urban flooding, particularly in Karachi, caused significant problems in the existing infrastructure, disrupting the supply chains and affecting the exports for the month of August. The Power outages, slowdown in business activities, delays in transportation and hampering of port operations are some of the issues faced by the exporters due to unprecedented monsoon rains in the country. – APP

CTO directs
to keep
traffic flow
smooth

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Syed Ali Akbar on Thursday issued directives to the traffic wardens to maintain smooth flow of traffic during rains. He said that additional staff was deployed at Airport, Murree road, Mall road, Peshwar road, Raja Bazaar, Pirwadhi, Commercial Market, Sadiqabad, Adiala road, Dhoke Syedan, Masrail road, Chungi No 22, Jhelum road and other important roads to avoid a traffic mess during rain.

The CTO said that cash reward and commendatory certificates would be awarded to those traffic officials who perform their duties with responsibility, adding that the DSPs and sector in-charges have also been directed to issue continuous instructions for maintaining a smooth traffic flow during rains.

He said the CTP has put in place effective parking measures besides taking action against encroachers. He urged the citizens to lodge their complaints on traffic police helpline 051-9272839, 051-9272616 or get guidance during driving.

Three held
for looting
passengers

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have busted a gang of swindlers who used to loot passengers and recovered two gold bracelets along with hard cash from them, a police spokesman said. A police team of Sihala police station headed by Station House Officer (SHO) Sihala Muhammad Basheer nabbed Gulshan Bibi, Zobi and Abdul Qadir involved in looting people. They confessed their involvement in looting passengers in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad while raids were being conducted to arrest their accomplices.

Meanwhile, a team of Industrial area police station arrested four accused, Shahzaib, Hazrat Nabi, Qasim Jan and Kamran Yusuf and recovered a total of 365 gram hashish and 30 bore pistol from them. Secretariat police held an accused Atif and recovered an iron punch from his possession. Bharakahu police arrested Abdul Basit and recovered a 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from him. Industrial Area police arrested accused Minhas Ahmed and recovered a pistol while Koral police arrested two accused Shafiq and Ishaq for having 200 gram heroin and 220 gram hashish respectively. Cases have been registered against the nabbed persons and further investigation was underway from them.

Hafeez assures
support to
telecom sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Irfan Wahab Khan CEO of Telenor Pakistan called on the Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh here at the Finance Division. The CEO briefed the Adviser about the brief history and services of the company and expressed the intention to increase the company's investment in the country with help and assistance from the Government.

He briefed that this week they have received additional capital of Rs7.4 B (45 M USD) into Telenor Microfinance Bank from Ant Financial and Telenor. This brings the total FDI to \$185 million in the last 2 years alone as equity injection into Telenor Bank/Easypaisa to grow Pakistan's digital payment ecosystem. He said during the Corona Virus pandemic the use of IT services has helped the economy in a positive way but as the resources of the people are shrinking they are also optimizing, he requested the Adviser to grant certain concessions for the further growth of the sector.

The CEO requested that in view of the ongoing economic situation of businesses in the country FBR may be asked to rationalize the withholding tax/ GST on telecommunication services. He also requested that the issue of SIM Issuance Tax may be settled out of court to bring on an amicable end to this matter. Other issues regarding the renewal of licenses were also discussed.

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The rough road ahead

DESPITE receiving PM Nawaz Sharif's medical reports, a vindictive PTI government rejected the request for extension in his bail on medical grounds. The government then petitioned to the court to declare the former PM an absconder. In comparison the government has shown no interest in bringing back Gen (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf who faces much more serious cases in the courts including High Treason. This cannot be called even-handedness.

The urgency shown by the government to bring back Nawaz Sharif is likely to cost it dear. It would bring together the doves and the hawks inside the desperate PML-N. There are signs of the opposition parties moving faster than before to hold an APC. As indicated by the undiluted remarks of PML-N VP Maryam Nawaz, the campaign against the government is going to be bitter and nasty. She has questioned the integrity of the Prime Minister for failing to take notice of the alleged mega scale corruption by his appointees.

The opposition has exerted little pressure on the government outside Parliament during the last two years of its tenure. Failing to make the PTI administration responsive, it is preparing to take the issues directly to the masses now. A number of cases that worry large sections of the population have by chance come together. Justice Seth's remarks on Musharraf's case indicate the issue is not dead despite PTI taking no notice if it. There are the two cases the government has pursued with grim determination, the one against Mian Nawaz Sharif and the other against SC judge Qazi Faez Isa. Things once confined to social media are now being reported in mainstream media. Unless justice is seen to be done, the issues are likely to turn up at public rallies by the opposition parties where comparisons would be made, conclusions drawn and translated into slogans. To stop this, manipulation needs to give place to transparency, even-handedness and justice.



A holistic social agenda

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

PAKISTAN has been existing under invisible borders for decades. Ever since its creation, the country has been marred by ethnic unrest. The metropolitan cities of the country, including Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, among others, have housing societies and areas where a specific population resides. Take Karachi for instance. Those residing in the posh localities are unaware of the hardships the people of underprivileged areas go through. The lanes of Orangi Town, for instance, resemble that of a river during monsoon. The residents need to keep awake throughout the night during the rainy season, as their homes get inundated with rainwater. People from the lower-income groups cannot send their children to private educational institutes and some cannot even afford to pay the fees of a public educational institute. Moreover, one can witness that the waiters and the staff members of high-end restaurants reside in such areas where the population cannot imagine dining in at such eateries. This social variance has been expanding with each passing day. A society and a nation develop when all of its population enjoys the same necessities and luxuries of life. The maids and servants working at the homes of the elite cannot enjoy even one percent of the luxuries they witness at their homes. In metropolitan cities, some areas present a modern look while some areas present a dystopian-era setting. The political stakeholders need to come on the same page if they envision to follow a holistic social agenda to bring a national change. The invisible boundaries must be abolished and the entire city along with its areas and districts must be given the same importance as is given to areas that are termed modern and posh. The government must uplift the lifestyle of the residents of all cities of Pakistan so that they can widen their mental horizon and work to elevate their life and career in real terms.

Shrewd posturing for intra-Afghan dialogue!

Iqbal Khan

Negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan authorities were expected within days of Loya Jirga's approval of the release of 400 Taliban prisoners. While Afghan authorities freed 80 Taliban prisoners on August 13, there have been no further releases since then. President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said "two countries had shared their concerns and reservations" about six or seven prisoners among the 400. The Afghan government is working with its partners to address the concerns about these prisoners"

FORMER Afghan President Hamid Karzai has declined to join the government sponsored team for intra-Afghan dialogue. His team now comprises of 16 male and five female delegates. The Taliban side has also finalized a negotiating team that is to have sweeping decision-making powers in upcoming intra-Afghan negotiations. According to Alexander Zemlianichenko of the Associated Press, Maulvi Hibatullah Akhonzada has "hand-picked the 20-member team, 13 of whom come from the Taliban's leadership council." Team will have the "authority to set agendas, to decide strategy and even to sign agreements with the political leadership of the Afghan government". In the meanwhile, a Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar - the head of the Afghan Taliban's political office in Doha has visited Pakistan to discuss the way forward in the Afghan peace process. "Yes, we have invited the Afghan Taliban delegation to visit Pakistan to discuss the way forward in the Afghan peace process," the foreign office spokesperson stated. However, according to a recent Foreign Policy South Asia Brief, by Ravi Agrawal, start of intra Afghan talks is once again uncertain as prisoner release has once again stalled. France and Australia have objected to the release of several Taliban prisoners accused of killing French and Australian nationals and soldiers. Afghanistan's government is withholding the release of the final tranche of 320 Taliban prisoners, going against the decision of Loya Jirga. Moreover, Afghan government has also accused Taliban for not releasing its prisoners. "If we take this bold step, releasing all these guys, all these bad people, why are the Taliban not releasing our captives, which is a very small number?" government spokesperson Sediq Sediqqi told The Associated Press. Negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan authorities were expected within days of Loya Jirga's approval of the release of 400 Taliban prisoners. While Afghan authorities freed 80 Taliban prisoners on August 13, there have been no further releases since then. President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said "two countries had shared their concerns and reservations" about six or seven prisoners among the 400. "The Afghan government is working with its partners to address the concerns about these prisoners," he told reporters. France is "firmly opposed to the liberation of individuals sentenced for crimes against French nationals, especially soldiers and humanitarian workers," the French foreign ministry said on August 15. "We have consequently asked Afghan authorities not to proceed with the liberation of

these terrorists." Bettina Goisard, a French employee of the UN's refugee agency, was murdered by two Taliban militants in 2003, and a former Afghan soldier had killed five French troops and injured 13 others in 2012 in Kapisa province. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison last week said he had lobbied against the release of a former Afghan army soldier who went rogue and killed three Australian partners. President Ashraf Ghani has himself warned that the 400 militants were a "danger to the world". Their release is part of a prisoner swap agreed in February between the Taliban and Washington as a precondition for peace talks. That deal stipulated that Kabul release 5,000 Taliban prisoners in return for 1,000 Afghan security personnel held by the militants. Afghan authorities say they too have released almost all prisoners, except those remaining from the 400. The Taliban claim to have released all the 1,000 captives, but Sediqqi said the insurgents were still holding some Afghan soldiers. "They should have completed this release by now. This exchange cannot be a one-way road," Sediqqi said, adding Taliban violence remained "very high". The Taliban have said they are willing to begin peace talks "within a week" after all 400 prisoners are freed, and blamed Kabul for delaying the negotiations. "The matter is stalled because the other side is not releasing the remaining prisoners despite promises," Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen told AFP. Distracted by multiple other happenings and with declining interest in Afghanistan, US President Donald Trump still remains focused on getting American forces out of the country. Under pressure from the US, the traditional Afghan grand Council, Loya Jirga, voted for release of 400 prisoners on August 09, but urged the Taliban to adopt a ceasefire. "In order to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public, the Jirga approves the release of 400 prisoners as demanded by the Taliban," Jirga member Atefa Tayeb announced on August 09. The Jirga urged the government to give assurances to the population that the released prisoners would be monitored and would not be allowed to return to the battlefield, adding that foreign fighters should be sent back to their respective countries. The council's decision to free the Taliban prisoners did not come as a surprise, as delegates were urged by the US at the start of the council, or Jirga, on August 07 to take "this difficult action" so that negotiations could begin to bring an end to the war. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had pushed for the release of the detainees, while recognising

the decision would be "unpopular". The prisoners included 44 fighters of particular concern to the US and other countries for their role in "high-profile" attacks. Five are linked to the 2018 attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul that killed 40 people, including 14 foreigners. Chief US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad was quick to herald Jirga's decision, tweeting: "With these bold steps, after 40 years of war, a historic opportunity for peace is now possible; one that benefits all Afghans and contributes to regional stability and global security." Calling the Jirga's decision "a good step, a positive step." Amid continued violence, the US continues to press for the peace process to move forward, five months after intra-Afghan negotiations were scheduled to begin on March 10. Khalilzad said the two sides are to meet in Doha, after the prisoner releases "in the next few days", he expects negotiating teams to travel to Doha "and from there the immediate start of intra-Afghan negotiations". Former president Hamid Karzai told the Jirga he understood that the talks "would begin within two to three days" after the prisoners are released. President Donald Trump's repeated commitment to pulling out American forces has undermined the Afghan government's negotiating position. Time is on Taliban's side. Though Trump is keen to pull-out troops he is also committed to "always have a presence" in Afghanistan for counterterrorism. According to JP Lawrence, Taliban negotiators are likely to oppose any proposal to retain a lasting US counterterrorism presence in Afghanistan during their upcoming peace talks with the Afghan government. Prospects of any sort of retention of foreign military presence is a nonstarter among Taliban leadership as well as their rank and file. According to a White House press briefing in February, Trump envisions Taliban helping the US fight Daesh. Some lawmakers, including Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, have also proposed leaving a compatible residual US force to prevent the country being used again as a launch-pad for global terrorism. Divergence of end objective from both sides is phenomenal that betrays achieving early and or lasting peace. With a pattern of one step forward and to backwards, Taliban are proving pretty shrewd negotiators, not only capable of timing out Trump's current term but also the next one if at all he stands returned on November 08, 2020. And with Joe Biden in White House, they could seek a new start up.

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The making of a Hindu India: An indepth analysis

Uday Chandra



Scholars have attributed the invention of "Hinduism" as much to men from dominant castes who sought to reform and remake a colonised society as to colonial missionaries. These 19th-century reformers sought to go back to ancient texts such as the Vedas or the Upanishads to propose a de-ritualised, quasi-monotheistic creed for a modern India. The reformers were answering British criticisms of Indic polytheisms as "beastly" and "superstitious"

ON August 5, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for a Hindu temple in the northern city of Ayodhya. This fulfilled the orders of India's Supreme Court, which last November awarded a victory to those who have long been campaigning to build a temple there, in place of a Mughal-era mosque that was demolished by a right-wing Hindu mob in 1992. The speculation that the mosque was built on the ruins of an ancient temple marking the mythological birthplace of the epic hero Ram remains unproven. The groundbreaking ceremony for the temple was set on that particular date to commemorate the altering of the country's constitution to justify a shift from indirect to direct colonialism in the disputed Muslim-majority region of Jammu and Kashmir exactly a year ago. The temple construction in Ayodhya, just like the constitutional amendment that revoked the Indian-administered Kashmir's limited autonomy, is a calculated move by the Modi government to consolidate the new majoritarian polity in India. Today, we are witnessing the final stages of the project to remake India into a Hindu nation, but little is being said about the fabulous falsehoods and cunning sleights of hand that this ambitious project was built upon. The word "Hindu" is a Persianate derivative of "Sindhu", Sanskrit for the Indus River. Only during India's colonial encounter in the 19th century did "Hindu" become an ascriptive label for a wide range of practices and ideas across South Asia that do not fall within the three world religions labelled "Islam", "Christianity", and "Buddhism". But this term defined by negation did not mean much to those located within a mosaic of Indic ritual and philosophical traditions that lacked a holy book based on divine revelation. Scholars have attributed the invention of "Hinduism" as much to men from dominant castes who sought to reform and remake a colonised society as to colonial missionaries. These 19th-century reformers sought to go back to ancient texts such as the Vedas or the Upanishads to propose a de-ritualised, quasi-monotheistic creed for a modern India. The reformers were answering British criticisms of Indic polytheisms as "beastly" and "superstitious". They enthusiastically embraced the colonial view of Muslims being wholly separate from Hindus, ignoring the accommodations and intermixing over centuries that had produced shared ritual, intellectual, sartorial, culinary, and musical traditions between the two groups. As the reforming Hindu men worked to draw sharp lines between "Hindus" and "Muslims", the newly emerging print media became their accomplice. The adoption of the Nagri script by reformist groups such as the Arya Samaj contrasted with the shared orality of a public sphere defined by the Hindustani language. Devanagari, the divine Nagri as it became known, also started to be used alongside Urdu and English in the new world of print technology, helping reformists in their efforts to create a distinct Hindu identity. Then, as it is now, the chief obstacle to transforming India into a Hindu nation was the caste sys-

tem which divided society into strict hierarchical groups. To accommodate the lower orders of society, the conservatism of the Brahmins, the traditional priestly class who sit atop the rigid caste hierarchy, had to be diluted. But to de-brahminise Hinduism would have dissolved the abstract non-polity of the reformers' imagination into a melange of lived traditions across the localities and regions of India. The principal critics of the Gandhian solution - anti-caste thinkers such as Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and theorists of Hindu nationalism such as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar - preferred a modern and egalitarian solution to the problem faced by the 19th-century reformers. Both Ambedkar and Savarkar sought equality in politics and society, not hierarchy. Yet Ambedkar reposed his faith in new constitutional liberalism derived from the French and American constitutions. Savarkar endeavoured, by contrast, to create a new political religion, called Hindutva (Hindu-ness) to unify India along the lines of the Italian Risorgimento. In the early decades after independence, the Congress governments balanced the hierarchical accommodationist view proposed by Gandhi with modernism rooted in equal citizenship regardless of caste or faith. This was an era in which all were equal citizens of India, even Kashmiris, even if long-standing social hierarchies remained intact. Elite Muslims and Christians featured prominently in public life just as they had done in the colonial era. With economic liberalisation and neoliberal globalisation since 1980, the old hierarchies have been shaken up. The myriad castes that constitute Indian society have been shattered into infinitesimal fragments, which have given rise to fractalised identities vying for equality at the expense of each other. The centrifugal force in pursuit of equality in public life led to dissensus, not a new national consensus. In response, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), particularly under Modi, has revived Savarkar's vision of Hindutva as a political religion, albeit in a distinctly populist vein. One's religious beliefs and practices matter less in Hindutva than an absolute commitment to a Hindu "rashtra" or polity. The fractalised selves of post-liberalisation have been brought together by the centripetal force of electoral rituals, digital media, and a new Hindu state, all of which offer an insurgent sense of equality. Rhetorically, the Hindu rashtra is opposed to discrimination based on caste for political Hindus. Modi's own humble origins and his rise to power are presented as clinching evidence of a new egalitarian modernism. But, in practice, Hindutva is willing to accommodate the everyday oppressions that define Indian society. In effect, some are more equal than others. Conservatism is now couched increasingly in the modern semantics of class ("rich" and "poor") rather than in traditional caste terms. Those who do not identify as political Hindus - Muslims, Christians, leftists, anti-caste activists - are the new objects of discrimination and exclusion. In principle, if individuals from these groups embrace Hindutva, they, too, would be considered political Hindus. The lines are, in

sum, permeable, and everything is negotiable in the new Hindu polity. At least for now, the Hindu rashtra is a highly personalised regime, almost a cult, in which Modi is the state and countenances no opposition, not even from the judiciary or the central bank. Civil society, the media and academia are treated with suspicion because they breed dissent. Through a mix of carrot and stick, the media have been compelled to voice propaganda, and prominent journalists, activists, and academics have been arrested or bullied into silence. The electoral system is now dominated by a single political party committed to Hindutva, namely, the BJP. Other parties, including the Congress, have been compelled now to speak the language of Hindutva and acquiesce in the new political religion. Oddly enough, we know little about the ritual lives and personal beliefs of Modi or his predecessors. The new political religion of Hindutva seems to define itself almost entirely by negation vis-a-vis the Muslim (or Christian) Other. Other Indic traditions defined traditionally in opposition to Hinduism - Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism - are simply seen as Hindu offshoots. The territorial boundaries of the nation are sacralised in Hindu India. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Kashmir, where long-standing legal arrangements have been forcibly undone. These violent rituals of integration are meant to build communities among political Hindus, the true citizens of the new polity. Settler colonialism is now expected to complete this process of national integration. Kashmiri Muslims as colonial subjects stand metonymically for all Indian Muslims. The project of subjugating religious minorities is now regarded as a sacred duty in the service of the nation. By contrast, ethnic minorities in northeast India are encouraged to negotiate the terms of their political assimilation within Hindu India. In response to activists' claims about indigeneity in these regions bordering China and Myanmar, the BJP now claims that all Indigenous peoples of India are Hindu, and all Hindus are, by definition, indigenous to India. Hindutva is, undoubtedly, an abstract political religion, stripped of contextual or historical depth. This is precisely what the colonial-era reformers and Savarkar had dreamed of: an all-India Hinduism that reins in the problem of caste via the dazzling dream of equal citizenship. Not only is a Hindu rashtra now a reality, but the Muslim Other has been subjugated within it. The inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, much like the colonisation of Kashmir, has accomplished both tasks in the highly symbolic and theatrical world of Hindutva. If India is today a Hindu nation, it is also a tinderbox in which the self is defined by the perpetual hatred of others. Whenever India's youth tire of this majoritarian politics of hate, they will reflect on the paths not taken to make their country a prosperous, equitable, and decent.

- Courtesy: Al Jazeera