



ISLAMABAD: A family purchasing shoes at shop after the government eased the nationwide lockdown.

## Govt releases Rs 85.9b for development projects of NHA

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far released Rs 85.9 billion for development projects of National Highway Authority (NHA) out of total allocation of Rs 95.67 billion under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2019-20.

According to latest data released by the Planning Commission, an amount of Rs 18.5 billion has been released for construction of motorway from Burhan-Hakla on M-1 to Dera Ismail Khan.

For construction of infrastructure and allied works for metro bus services Peshawar Morr-New International Airport Islamabad, the amount released so far was Rs 3.533 billion, while total allocation for this project for the year 2019-20 is Rs 4.5 billion.

Similarly, the government also issued Rs 3.5 billion for construction of black top road Yakmatch-Kharan via Dostain Wadh Khurmaga, whereas for Rs 2.6 billion has been released for construction of 6-lane highway from Kala Shah Kaku to Lahore ring road. For improvement, upgrade and widening of Jaglot-Skardu road, an amount of Rs 5.5 billion has been released out of total allocation of Rs 7.4 billion while for Lahore-Multan Motorway, the government released Rs 4.5 billion.

Likewise an amount of Rs 4 billion out of total allocation of Rs 6.5 billion has been released for Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway, whereas for improvement and widening of additional 2-lanes on either side of Thokar Niaz Baig to Hudyara Drain Multan Road, Lahore, an amount of Rs 2 billion has been released.

For the dualization of Indus Highway Saral Gambala to Kohat Section, the amount released was Rs 5 billion whereas for dualization and improvement of pingigheb-

Kohat road Rs 2 billion were released. An amount of Rs 2.5 billion was released for Peshawar Northern Bypass whereas Rs 2 billion have been released for Sukkur-Multan Motorway.

The government also released Rs 3.02 billion for land acquisition of Zhob-Kuchlak road whereas R 1.025 billion have been released for Zhob to Kuchlak road.

**Strict action against one wheeling directed**  
Chief Traffic Officer, (CTO) Rawalpindi, Syed Ali Akbar said that strict orders have been issued to all the traffic wardens, inspectors, deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) of all the sectors that action in accordance with the law should be taken against the one-wheelers during Sehar and Ifat time.

The motorcycles, especially prepared for one wheeling should also be impounded. He said that several arrangements were made to curb the activity, particularly at the Airport Road, Peshawar Road, Jhelum Road, Ayub Park, and other areas aimed at protecting the youngsters as one-wheeling is one of the causes of death and severe injuries for the riders.

CTO said that though the activity was already being checked by the traffic officials deputed on the city roads but special arrangements have also been made to control the rash and dangerous driving and one-wheeling in the city. He said that the traffic wardens were directed to keep a vigilant eye on the one-wheelers so that action in accordance with the law could be taken against them. He said that the one-wheelers are not only playing with their own lives but also is a threat for other road users. He urged the parents to play their role to curb the activity as one-wheeling, rash, and negligent driving are the main causes for fatal accidents. —APP

## India plotting to shift blame on Pakistan for renewed Kashmir uprising: Masood

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan on Sunday said the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Indian occupation forces and intelligence agencies were hatching a plot against Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Taking advantage of the world's focus on COVID-19 and diversion of attention from the ongoing genocide in Kashmir the occupation authorities had intensified killing of Kashmiri youth and escalated the situation along the Line of Control, he said in a statement issued by the AJK Presidential Secretariat.

The AJK president said in the past month, they (occupation forces) had killed more than 40 young men in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) in staged encounters. "These are all extrajudicial killings and crimes against humanity", said Masood Khan.

He said the occupation authorities, however, did not expect two reactions to their murderous campaign in the occupied territory. First, the Kashmiris, despite being under a nine-month old siege and COVID-19 lockdown came out in large numbers to openly protest against the Indian repression and scorched earth policy. "The uprising is reminiscent of the mass protests and boycotts by Kashmiris after the martyr-

dom of Burhan Wani in 2016," he said.

Second, he said, the international media once again was shining a spotlight on Indian atrocities and killings.

Unable to handle the two unforeseen developments, he said, the Indian army and intelligence high command had decided to shift blame to Pakistan by weaving weak suspicious stories that Pakistan was creating and funding new entities to fight the Indian occupation apparatus.

"They know that the resistance is 100% indigenous", he said, adding in addition to frequently violating the ceasefire along the LoC, the Indian intelligence hierarchy was making preparations for a false-flag operation, and wargaming to target different parts of Pakistan through proxy wars.

"The Indian occupiers have started to play the victim once again. Pakistan should prepare to counter different forms of aggression by India that it is poised to unleash against Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. This includes sabotage, espionage and propaganda," he said.

Sardar Masood said until recently the Indian authorities used to quote a figure of 230 indigenous "militants". Now they reported a spike of an additional 350 and were talking about fictitious "launch pads" in Azad Kashmir. They were preparing the ground for more oppression, more aggression.

"When you are pushed against the wall, you rise and reclaim what is

yours. Victimhood paves the way for annihilation," he said. "Kashmiris now say that enough is enough and have risen once again against unrelenting repression."

He said the held Kashmir police buried the slain martyrs secretly and did not release their bodies to the families out of fear of massive funerals and demonstrations. "Now they are even scared of the dead bodies of Kashmiris. How are they going to deal with the living?" he asked.

The AJK president condemned the use of pellet guns, tear gas and live ammunition to quell protests in the IOJK. "Many would lose their eyesight. There would be blinding. There are fatalities," he said.

President Masood said while the international media and Zoom webinars had started highlighting the killing spree in the IOJK, the United Nations Security Council remained silent. It had not uttered a single word over the New Domiciles Rules introduced to colonise the Jammu and Kashmir territory and enslave its people.

"It must be clearly understood that the killing spree in the occupied territory and the ceasefire violations along the LoC are designed to create a smokescreen to implement the vicious agenda of New Domiciles Rules modelled on Hitler's Nuremberg Laws. Kashmiris would be disenfranchised, displaced, forced out, massacred — all designed to

## President Cantonment Board visits Dodhocha dam project site

RAWALPINDI: President Cantonment Board Brig. Ijaz Qamar Kiani has visited Dodhocha Dam project site and inspected the area.

According to RCB Spokesman Qaiser Mehmood, Executive Engineer Small Dams, Umair Sadaqat and Assistant Commissioner Saddar, Rawalpindi Mansoor Qazi briefed the president cantonment. He was informed that the construction work of Dodhocha dam project would be completed at a cost of Rs 6 billion in three years. The construction of the dam would fulfill requirements of Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas and help lessen the load on

underground water. Additional Cantonment Executive Officer Faisal Wattoo and other officers were present on the occasion. The president cantonment board was also informed that the project would help ensure availability of 25 million gallons of water for the city and cantt areas per day.

The dam would have a storage capacity of 60,000 acres feet, for supplying 25 million gallons per day while the dam would have dead level storage capacity of 15,000 acres feet and live storage capacity of 45,000 acres feet. A mainline for supply of water from the dam to Rawalpindi city areas would be constructed besides a water treatment plant. —APP

## UK's Johnson to set out 5-tier COVID-19 warning system

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson will set out a five-tier warning system for the coronavirus in England on Sunday when he outlines the government's roadmap for gradually easing lockdown measures that have shut down much of the economy for nearly seven weeks. Johnson will use a televised address at 6pm GMT to announce limited changes, including encouraging more of those who cannot work from home to return to their offices and factories, and allowing people to exercise more than once a day, according to a government minister and British media. The government's flagship "stay at home" slogan will be replaced with "stay alert", a decision that drew criticism from opposition parties for being too ambiguous. "We need to have a broader message because we want to slowly and cautiously restart the economy and the country," housing minister Robert Jenrick told Sky News, adding that Johnson would be setting out the roadmap

for "the weeks and months ahead". In a separate interview on BBC TV, Jenrick said staying at home would still be an important part of the government's message, and there would be "no grand reopening of the economy tonight". Britain has reported 31,587 deaths from the coronavirus, the second-highest death toll in the world after the United States, and some 215,260 confirmed infections. The Sunday Times reported that scientific advisers had told the government that deaths could exceed 100,000 by the end of the year if lockdown measures are relaxed too fast. Johnson will detail a five-tier warning system for England, ranging from "green" at level 1 to "red" at level 5 to flag the COVID-19 risk in different areas and to allow the government to increase restrictions where necessary. The government wants the United Kingdom's other constituent nations - Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland - to follow the same steps but they have the power to diverge in

their measures. Jenrick said the country is currently at 4 on the scale and authorities want that brought down to 3 as fast as possible. "At each stage ... we will be in a position to open up and restart more aspects of the economy and of our lives," he said, adding that changes would be conditional on keeping the virus under control. Colour-coded systems to distinguish regions with more or less risk have been used in other countries as they emerge from lockdowns, including France and India. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said on Twitter that her message to Scotland would continue to be to stay at home. Opposition parties criticised the government's new "stay alert" slogan as confusing. "There is no room for nuance," the Labour Party's health spokesman, Jonathan Ashworth, told BBC TV. "Many people will be puzzled by it ... This virus really does exploit ambivalence and thrive on ambiguity, we need clarity at all times." —Agencies



HONG KONG: Small flashmob demonstrations breaks out in at least eight malls, prompting riot police to rush in and disperse heckling crowds of activists and shoppers.

## Riot police chase Hong Kong Mother's Day protesters

HONG KONG: Riot police chased protesters through Hong Kong shopping malls on Sunday as activists launched Mother's Day flash mob rallies calling for independence and the city's unpopular leader to resign. The city was convulsed by seven straight months of often-violent protests last year with millions hitting the streets. Mass arrests and the coronavirus pandemic ushered in a period of enforced calm. But with the finance hub successfully tackling its outbreak small protests have bubbled up once more in the last fortnight.

Small flashmob demonstrations broke out in at least eight malls throughout Sunday afternoon prompting riot police to rush in and disperse heckling crowds of activists and shoppers. At least three arrests were made while groups of officers conducted multiple stop and searches. Live broadcasts also showed police issuing HK\$2,000 (US\$260) on the spot fines to those allegedly breaching emergency anti-virus measures banning more than eight people gathering in public. Hong Kong celebrates the American Mother's Day and protester chat groups had pushed the occasion to focus on chief executive Carrie Lam, a Beijing loyalist appointee. At the start of last year's protests, Lam likened herself to an exasperated mother - and protesting Hong Kongers to demanding children - in comments that only poured oil on the fire of public anger at the time. Authorities banned an application for a Mother's Day march so small groups of masked protesters instead played cat and mouse with police in different shopping centres, a tactic used frequently last year. —AFP

## Brazil tops 10,000 deaths from COVID-19

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil, the hardest-hit Latin American country in the coronavirus pandemic, has surpassed 10,000 deaths, according to figures released by the Ministry of Health. While Brazil's numbers are high - 10,627 deaths and 155,939 confirmed cases - scientists think the real figures could be 15 or even 20 times worse, given the country's inability to carry out widespread testing. Congress and the Supreme Court decreed an official mourning period of three days and lawmakers asked Brazilians to follow health authorities' recommendations to reduce infection rates while the country prepares for "a safe and definitive return back to normal". Meanwhile President Jair Bolsonaro, who opposes stay-at-home measures due to their impact on the country's economy, was seen jet skiing on Lake Paranao in Brasilia, according to the Metropoles news website.

Officials told AFP he did not plan to make a statement on the country reaching 10,000 deaths. In the last 24 hours alone, the nation saw 10,611 new cases and 730 fatalities. Brazil's second-highest daily death toll, after a record set on Friday (751 deaths).

"SITUATION IS DIRE" Resisting pressure from Bolsonaro, the governors of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states have said they will extend the partial quarantine measures in force since March until the end of May. The pandemic has given rise to ongoing governmental clashes, pitting the president against governors and mayors who have implemented social distancing and confinement measures to contain the virus' spread - efforts supported by the country's Supreme Court. In announcing that his state's lockdown would be prolonged, Sao Paulo Governor Joao Doria said Friday: "We are at the height of this pandemic. The situation is dire." His southeastern state of almost 46 million inhabitants has seen more than 3,600 deaths and over 44,400 cases. Neighboring Rio de Janeiro state, home to more than 16 million people, follows with 1,653 deaths and 16,929 infections. Less populated states such as Ceara, Pernambuco and Amazonas already have around a thousand dead each. Amazonas, home to a number of indigenous tribes that are extremely vulnerable to the virus, has recorded 232 deaths per million inhabitants, almost three times the rate in Sao Paulo state. While Brazil's coronavirus peak is not expected for several more weeks, seven states have already seen their intensive care units fill to 90 per cent capacity. Bolsonaro, who has compared the coronavirus to a "little flu," tweeted Saturday that the country's "army of unemployed continues to grow" in reference to a factory closure in the northeast, before asking "is chaos coming?". On Thursday the country's economy minister, Paulo Guedes, said Brazil could face "economic collapse" in a month's time due to stay-at-home measures. According to the IMF, Brazil risks a 5.3 per cent contraction in GDP this year. Worldwide the virus has claimed more than 277,000 lives and the number of coronavirus cases has surpassed four million, according to an AFP tally. —AFP

## US Supreme Court to take on Trump taxes and presidential immunity

WASHINGTON: Can Donald Trump refuse to turn over his tax returns and financial records to Congress and New York prosecutors? The Supreme Court takes up this politically charged question on Tuesday and it may use the occasion to better define the limits of presidential immunity. The high court's nine justices, confined at home by the novel coronavirus pandemic, will question lawyers for both sides by telephone in a highly anticipated session to be broadcast live. The hearing, initially set for late March, is being held now to allow time for the justices to render a decision before the presidential election in November, as Trump seeks a second term. The former real estate magnate, who used his fortune as an argument in his 2016 election campaign, is the first president since Richard Nixon in the 1970s to refuse to release his tax returns - prompting speculation about his true worth and his possible financial entanglements.

"There is clearly something in these documents that the president does not want us to see," Steven Mazie, an author and educator, said during a webinar. Since retaking control of the House of Representatives in midterm elections in 2018, the Democratic opposition has been eager to find out just what that "something" might be. Several congressional committees have issued subpoenas to Trump's longtime accounting firm, Mazars, as well as to Deutsche Bank and Capital One bank, demanding Trump's financial records for the 2011-2018 period. Manhattan prosecutor Cyrus Vance, a Democrat, meantime made a similar demand to Mazars as part of an investigation into payments to the porn actress known as Stormy Daniels to buy her silence about an alleged liaison with the billionaire. Trump immediately sued to block the documents' release. "What they are doing is not legal," he said on Twitter, adding, "the Witch Hunt continues." Having lost his argument in the lower courts, Trump turned to the nation's highest legal body. With two conservative Trump appointees on the nine-justice panel, the high court has taken a clear turn to the right.

"TO TORMENT THE PRESIDENT" The justices will devote the first hour of Tuesday's oral arguments to the congressional subpoenas, highlighting a fierce battle over the legislature's investigative powers. "Unleashing each and every House committee to torment the president with legislative subpoena after legislative subpoena is a recipe for constitutional crisis," the president's lawyers said in a brief to the court. Yet such requests are nothing new, House lawyers responded in their own brief, citing examples involving presidents Richard Nixon, a Republican, and Jimmy Carter, a Democrat. "What is unprecedented," they added, "is the extraordinary breadth of the arguments that President Trump and the solicitor general make about the supposed power of a president to thwart investigations." The high court may be tempted to sidestep the central issue. In late April, it asked both sides to respond in writing to the question of whether the matter was political and not legal in nature. If the former is true, justices can close the file without taking a position. "No," both sides said on Friday, clearly hoping for resolution by the high court.

MURDER ON FIFTH AVENUE In a second phase of Tuesday's session, the justices will take up the case involving the Manhattan prosecutor, which raises the critical question of the extent of presidential immunity before the law. Trump's attorneys argue that a president enjoys total immunity so long as he is in the White House. One Trump lawyer even argued before an appeals court that Trump could shoot someone dead on New York's Fifth Avenue and face no legal penalty - while in office. "Nothing could be done?" a skeptical judge asked. "That is correct," the president's attorney replied. To Trump's legal team, the need for immunity is "particularly acute when it comes to state and local prosecutors". "The president must be allowed to execute his official functions without fear that a state or locality will use criminal process to register their dissatisfaction with his performance," they wrote in their brief. But law professors Claire Finkelstein and Richard Painter say this vision is contradicted by the record of the Supreme Court itself. The high court required Richard Nixon to turn over secret White House recordings to the special prosecutor investigating the Watergate scandal. —Reuters