

# CDWP approves WASA mega scheme to improve Multan sewerage system

**MULTAN:** The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved Rs 2.80 billion historical mega scheme for WASA Multan which would help to improve the sewerage system of the city.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) would provide latest machinery and vehicles to WASA for operation and maintenance under this scheme.

Managing Director Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Khalid Naseem Chandio told this agency here on Saturday that the mega project would help to provide better services to citizens. He informed that the existing machinery was too old and insufficient for covering the whole area of the city.

WASA was spending about Rs 15 million annually for maintenance of old machinery which

would be saved after new machinery.

WASA was providing services at 68 UCs first with 12 suckers and 12 flusher machines while now it covers 94 Union Councils with same machinery.

JICA had already worked with Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala and WASA Multan requested it to assist for betterment of sewerage system in the city.

The JICA engineers and experts had stayed one month in the city and reviewed deteriorated condition of WASA machinery and vehicles and prepared a mega scheme. Earlier this scheme had also been approved by Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP).

Water and Sanitation Agency Multan was not only providing services in the city rather it also

working in Bahawalpur, Vehari, DG Khan, Burewala on request of district administration, said MD WASA.

Chandio said that it was dire need to add new machinery in the system and hoped that latest machinery and vehicles will be handed over to WASA by December this year. The machinery included 27 dumpers, 27 flushers, dumpers, pumps, plugging machines and other.

Water and Sanitation Agency spokesperson Hassan Bukhari said that they would be able to dump the garbage of sewerage lines and disposal stations as dumper trucks also be part of new machinery as first they requested waste management company to lift the sewerage. The latest plugging machinery would also help to resolve the sewerage lines issues effective-



ISLAMABAD: Young children enjoy in swings at Sector G-7. —Online

## Gwadar port to be a node in global shipping: COPHC CEO

**RAWALPINDI:** Gwadar-related activities are progressing well as more than \$ 250 million has been initially spent on port renovation with more investments in the pipeline, Zhang Baozhong, Chief Executive Officer of China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) which operates Gwadar Port and Free Trade Zone said.

In addition, new cranes have been added for unloading cargo along with works on the establishment of a business center, a desalination plant and sewage disposal systems, China Economic Net reported on Saturday. As for the necessity of desalination plants, they are needed to meet the acute scarcity of water and to meet future needs of the locals. Here, annual rainfall is less than four inches.

The cost of desalination plant being built on priority basis by COPHC is Rs 1.95 billion. It will provide 5,000 gallons of water per day to people.

Power supply is another important factor. In this area, the construction of a local 300-mw power, imported-coal-fired plant started some months ago, with the original cost of the project being \$ 542 million.

While saying that this port is becoming a node in international shipping, Zhang adds, "Of course, the progress is not very fast but it takes time. By 2030, we believe that Gwadar will be a new economic hub of Pakistan and the highest GDP contributor to Pakistan's economy."

At Gwadar, a free trade zone was also established in 2015. Nine companies including a Chinese steelmaker and a Pakistani producer of edible oil signed up at that

time to be followed by 30 more firms that came up for Free Zone's Phase-1, closer to the site of the new airport. Zhang, however, said that twice that number of companies applied, including some from Europe.

Economists and analysts in Pakistan are of the considered opinion that once the global and regional economy takes off in new form, these foreign companies will enhance their investments in Gwadar projects besides putting them on a fast track.

Last year, Prime Minister, Imran Khan visited Gwadar and broke ground on a new international airport site. A new contract was also announced that schools and a hospital will be built in addition to other structures.

The name of the hospital being built by China on 68 acres of land is Pak-China Friendship Hospital and it would cost \$ 100 million. China is also building Pak-China Technical and Vocational Training Institute in Gwadar at the cost of \$ 10 million. It will create job opportunities for the locals.

### 628 new cases of corona reported in KP

As many as 628 new cases of corona have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ten persons lost their life while fighting the virus.

According to KP Health Department here on Friday, total count of corona patients have reached to 16415. So far, 642 patients have died of corona among which 335 were reported in provincial metropolises.

The number of recoveries in 24 hours is 163 while 95112 screening tests have been conducted. —APP

## 'Govt to continue minority relief steps during next financial year'

**ISLAMABAD:** The government would continue providing valuable relief to deserving members of minority community during next financial year.

According to annual development plan 2020-21, different relief packages would be provided to vulnerable segment of society especially minority communities during COVID-19 crisis.

The new annual plan envisages promoting interfaith harmony and culture of tolerance among all segments of the society and recognizes society's diversity to promote the inclusive society.

The plan aimed at providing immediate financial support to religious minorities in Pakistan without any discrimination or bias and protecting worship places of religious minorities. Concentrated

efforts would be in place to uplift socio-economic conditions of minority's communities of the country during and after COVID-19 crisis.

Many initiatives including opening of Kartarpur Corridor, 5 percent job quota for minorities in Federal Government jobs, declaration of August 11, as 'Minorities Day' and celebration of minorities' religious festivals officially, provision of financial assistance to minority communities under the Minorities Welfare Fund (MWF), marriage grant to daughters, widows and orphan girls of minority communities in Pakistan had already been in place for minorities.

### Suspect held, weapons recovered during search operation

The joint task team (JTT) has arrested a suspect during house-to-

house search operation launched here at two different police station areas here on Saturday.

According to police spokesman, accompanying law enforcement agencies officials, the police teams encircled the area and blocked the traffic on the road passing through Gulshan-e-Sadaat Colony, Sadaf Colony, Raam Kuli and suburban areas respectively in premises of New Multan and Mumtazabad police stations.

Police teams combed the area and targeted dozens of houses and make bio-metric identification of 43 people. The JTT teams arrested a suspect and also recovered illegal weapons during the search operation.

Further investigations were underway from the arrested criminal, he added. —APP

## Minneapolis City Council resolves to replace police with community-led model

**MINNEAPOLIS:** The Minneapolis City Council unanimously passed a resolution to pursue a community-led public safety system to replace the police department following the death of George Floyd at the hands of the city's police.

The move comes days after a veto-proof majority of the council voted to disband the police department after the country erupted in protest over the killing of Floyd, a black man who died when a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

"The murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, by Minneapolis police officers is a tragedy that shows that no amount of reforms will prevent lethal violence and abuse by some members of the Police Department against members of our community, especially Black people and people of color," five council members wrote in the resolution.

The movement to "defund the police," as some advocates have termed it, predates the current protests. It has won new support since a video of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressing his knee to the neck of Floyd horrified viewers around the world.

More than a dozen Minneapolis



police officers published an open letter on Thursday to condemn the actions of Chauvin and express support for police reforms, the Star Tribune reported.

The city's mayor, Jacob Frey, has stopped short of vying to abolish the police department, although he said this week he supported "massive structural reform to revise a structurally racist system."

According to the resolution, the city council will begin a year-long process of engaging "with every willing community member in Minneapolis" to come up with a new public safety model. The council commissioned a new work group to deliver recommendations by July 24 on how to engage with community stakeholders to transform the public safety system. —Reuters

## Italy's PM says COVID-19 crisis should be opportunity to reform country

**ROME:** Italy cannot afford to return to normality after the coronavirus emergency but should turn the crisis into an opportunity to reform the country, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said.

"This is the time to work on a clear project to come out of the crisis," Conte said in the opening speech of a nine-day policy consultation in Rome.

"We must take advantage (of the situation) to turn the crisis into an opportunity, and remove all the obstacles that have slowed (Italy) down," he added.

Conte said his coalition government was preparing a plan of reforms to simplify bureaucracy, push



digital investments and green energy, improve education, support the poorest and bring more women into the workforce.

Italy's government expects the national economy to contract by at

least 8 per cent this year. The country is among the worst-hit by the coronavirus in Europe, having reported more than 236,000 cases and more than 34,000 deaths.

Addressing Italian policymakers at the congress via video-link, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said Italy must deliver planned reforms to access money from EU funds to help pull the country out of its coronavirus-induced slump.

"As we invest to shape the economy of the future, we must also work on ambitious reforms... Reforms will lead to recovery. And reforms need your leadership and ownership," von der Leyen said. —AFP

## Thousands march for racial justice in Australia



**PERTH:** Thousands of protestors rallied for racial equality in cities across Australia despite official warnings the demonstrations could undermine the country's success in suppressing the coronavirus.

The biggest demonstration took place in the Western Australian capital, Perth, where several thousand people gathered in a park wearing "Black Lives Matter" signs and Aboriginal flags.

Smaller protests for Aboriginal rights were held in Darwin, capital of the Northern Territory, and towns in neighboring Queensland - both regions with numerous indigenous communities. "We are here to support our future as indigenous people and to walk against the injustices of... what happens to our people, with over 400 black deaths in custody," one unidentified protestor told public broadcaster ABC at the Darwin march.

With the exception of the Darwin demonstration, which had authorisation, the other protests violated official injunctions against mass gatherings instituted three months ago to curb the spread of the coronavirus. But organisers made efforts to keep the protestors spread out and mostly wearing face masks, and police did not intervene.

It was the second straight weekend of large protests in Australia, initially organised in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States following the killing by a white policeman of African-American George Floyd.

The movement has resonated particularly strongly with many in Australia, a country also wrestling with the legacy of racial injustice towards the country's indigenous peoples. Aboriginal Australians are vastly over-represented in the prison population, and there have been more than 400 indigenous deaths in custody in the last three decades.

No prosecutions have been brought over the deaths, despite dozens of investigations, inquests and in some cases video evidence of abuse.

Many protestors carried signs reflecting the Aboriginal experience, including "Stop deaths in custody" and "White Australia stop lying to yourselves". In parallel with the Black Lives Matter rallies, dozens of people protested in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne against the prolonged detention of asylum-seekers under the government's tough refugee policies. —Reuters

## Australia's largest first local virus case in weeks

**SYDNEY:** Australia's largest state of New South Wales reported its first locally transmitted COVID-19 case since late May, a sign the threat from the pandemic is far from over as social distancing restrictions continue to be eased.

The state recorded four new coronavirus cases overnight, taking the total number in Australia to nearly 7,300.

The local case was a man in his 20s, and according to health authorities, he did not attend any of the recent Black Lives Matter protests in Sydney.

"The virus is likely still circulating in the community."

"People with mild symptoms or no obvious symptoms can unknowingly pass the infection on to other people," NSW Health said.

Two of the four new cases were travellers who are already in hotel quarantine, while one was linked to a previously reported infection at a public school.

Australia has so far been successful in curbing the spread of the coronavirus, with many parts of the country claiming to have eliminated the disease already.

The country has reported 102 deaths and is on track to fully re-open its economy by next month. Our comprehensive coverage of the

## Eight wounded in shooting at bar in San Antonio, Texas

**REUTERS:** A gunman shot and wounded eight people outside a San Antonio, Texas, bar late Friday night, but there were no fatalities, police said.

San Antonio Police Chief William McManus told an early morning news briefing that a group of people were denied entry to the bar around midnight.

A man in the group went to a vehicle, got a rifle, walked across the street and started shooting people, McManus said. Police said that the victims included five women and three men, between the ages of 23 to 41. All were listed in stable conditions at local hospitals, police said.

Neither the alleged shooter nor the victims were identified. Few other details were immediately available.

Calls to the San Antonio police representatives seeking more details were not immediately returned early Saturday. —AFP

## Mothers infected with COVID-19 should continue breastfeeding their babies

**ZURICH:** New mothers infected with COVID-19 should generally continue breastfeeding and should not be separated from their babies, the World Health Organization said, stressing that the benefits outweighed the risks.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that it had carefully investigated the risks of women transmitting COVID-19 to their babies during breastfeeding.

"We know that children are at relatively low risk of COVID-19, but are at high risk of numerous other diseases and conditions that breastfeeding prevents,"

Tedros told a news conference.

"Based on the available evidence, WHO's advice is that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19.

"Mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate and continue breastfeeding and not be separated from their infants, unless the mother is too unwell," Tedros said.

Anshu Banerjee, a senior advisor in WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research, said that only "fragments" of the virus had been detected in breast milk, not live virus. —AFP

