

Online moot identifies new areas of ties between Pak, Uzbekistan

ISLAMABAD: An Online International Conference on "Regional Connectivity Strategy: Pakistan & Uzbekistan-A New Regional Commitment" was jointly organized by the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, and the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The online conference was commenced with the welcome remarks by Aybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan. —DNA

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WHO assures to deliver vaccines

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organisation has said that WHO and COVAX partners are committed to delivering coronavirus vaccines to all countries, including Pakistan, despite supply hiccups. WHO Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said this in a tweet on Wednesday after a phone call with Special Assistant to the PM for National Health Services, Dr Faisal Sultan. "Thanks for a good call, Faisal Sultan, Prime Minister Imran Khan's Special Assistant for National Health Services. —TLTP

Pak envoy opens pictorial show to celebrate Pak Day

The Business Report

TOKYO: A photo exhibition was held at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo to commemorate Pakistan Day. The theme of the exhibition was Pakistan's nature and diversity.

Speaking at the inauguration Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad said that Pakistan is one of those few countries which is blessed with rich diversity. We have relics of some of the oldest civilizations in the world, exquisite scenic beauty, highest peaks, sacred religious and historical places, seasonal variations, unique arts and crafts, rich traditions and delicious cuisine. Preserving precious memories, bonds, and moments in photographs is an important part of human culture, the Ambassador said.

The exhibition displayed photos of Pakistan's wildlife, landscapes, costumes, crafts and sporting events. Visitors admired the work of Mahnoor Saghir, Fakhr-e-Alam, Qammer Wazir and Nauman.



TOKYO: Ambassador Imtiaz Ahmad views the displayed stuff after inauguration of pictorial exhibition to commemorate Pakistan Day.

FO urges world to mitigate Rohingya crisis

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday urged the international community to work together to "mitigate" the simmering Rohingya crisis. Expressing grief over the deaths of more than a dozen Rohingya refugees after a massive fire swept through a shelter camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar earlier this week, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry said in a tweet the incident is a "sad reminder of continued sufferings of Rohingya Muslims."

At least 55,000 refugees were affected by the fire in the camps as over 10,000 shelters became unusable. A field hospital built by Turkey in the refugee camp was also inoperable due to the massive fire that killed at least 15 refugees and injured over 550.

The crowded camp currently houses 1.2 million Rohingya, most of whom have fled a crackdown by the Myanmar military in 2017. The fire incident came at a time when there is growing frustration among Rohingya refugees over the Bangladesh government's attempt to relocate them to a remote island in the Bay of Bengal. Amid opposition by UN agencies, the government has relocated 14,000 people to the Bhasan Char island, which is prone to natural disasters. In the first phase, the government wants to relocate 100,000 refugees on the island. —TLTP

Virus claims 30 lives, infects 3,301 more people

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases on Wednesday recorded 36,849 with 3,301 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 957 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours.

Thirty corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 29 of whom were under treatment in hospital and one out of the hospital in his or her respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa followed by the Punjab.

Out of the total 30 deaths occurred during last 24 hours, eight of the deceased had died on ventilators during their treatment.

The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 52 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 57 percent, Peshawar 35 percent and Lahore 50 percent.

The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major areas of Gujrat 96 percent, Peshawar 68 percent, ICT 47 percent and Rawalpindi 37 percent. Around 364 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in AJK, Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan. Some 38,282 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 6,304 in Sindh, 17,933 in Punjab, 6,786 in KP, 5,226 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 684 in Balochistan, 279 in GB, and 1,070 in AJK. Around 586,228 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. —DNA

New SOPs for inspection of units, says DG PFA

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has formed new SOPs in the last board meeting for inspection of the units.

This was stated by the Director General Punjab Food Authority Rafaqat Ali while speaking at a meeting at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI). LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry also spoke while Executive Committee Members Haji Muhammad Asif Sehar, Fiaz Haider, Dr. Riaz Ahmed, Wasif Yousaf, Mardan Ali Zaidi and Wadood Alvi were also present. The DG PFA said that under the SOPs, the Food Units having international standards would be given plan, their representatives would be taken on board while having inspection and inspection report would be shared.

He said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has representation in the board of PFA which gives approval for the rules and regulations. He said that the Punjab Food Authority has specialized staff in food technology while special attention is being given on their further training and refreshing courses.

The DG said that the Authority notifies the regulations after aligning with the in-

ternational standards. "Punjab Food Authority wants to bridge communication gap with the stakeholders to make the things smoother", he added.

LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that the officials of Punjab Food Authority conduct raids without prior notice and sometimes, they come for inspection after normal working hours.

The LCCI Vice President said that Food Technologists at Punjab Food Authority should be experienced and well aware of the ground realities despite Post-Graduate Degrees. He said that only those degree holders should be appointed by PFA who have done related specialization.

Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that Punjab Food Authority should prepare the Food Rules after consultation with stakeholders. He mentioned that these (food related) rules should be uniform among all cities and other provinces of the country.

The LCCI Vice President said that the business community associated with food industry has to acquire six different licenses from various departments to run their operations. This requirement of licenses should be rationalized. He proposed that government should merge all the relevant departments that issue food related li-

censes into a single competent body.

LCCI condoles death of former LCCI President Syed Mohsin Raza

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has expressed deep grief and sorrow over demise of the former Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) President Syed Mohsin Raza Bukhari.

In a condolence message, President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry and Executive Committee Members said that entire business community is depressed due to demise of the former Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) President.

They said that Syed Mohsin Raza Bukhari was a great man and his services for the cause of business community will always be remembered. Being President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Syed Mohsin Raza Bukhari rendered matchless services for the cause of trade, industry and economy. "They said that the demise of Syed Mohsin Raza Bukhari is an irreparable loss." They prayed to the Almighty Allah to keep the departed soul in peace and let the family bear this loss with fortitude.

Industrial areas in Capital in a shambles, says ICCI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has said that industrial areas in the federal capital are dilapidated conditions due to multiple problems, which are affecting industrial activities.

Acting President of ICCI, Fatma Azim said this on Wednesday when she along with a delegation of local industrialists called on Tariq Sadiq and congratulated him on being elected as the President of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA).

She called upon the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Municipal Corporation of Islamabad (MCI) to focus on better development of industrial areas in the federal capital that would boost industrialisation in the region and enhance exports. She assured that ICCI would cooperate with IIA in its efforts for resolving the key issues of local industries.

IIA President Tariq Sadiq said that he would work in coordination with ICCI for improvement of infrastructure in industrial areas of Islamabad. He said that the roads and footpaths in Islamabad's industrial areas are broken due to which heavy duty vehicles are facing problems in transportation of goods. He said that the water,

sanitation and sewerage systems in industrial areas are in pathetic condition while some street lights are also not working.

He emphasised that Capital Development Authority (CDA) and MCI should take urgent measures to address these issues. He said that industrial areas in Islamabad are providing jobs to thousands of people, but no serious efforts are made to develop them on modern lines. He stressed that CDA should develop all industrial areas in Islamabad on modern lines that would produce multiple benefits for the economy as it would promote industrialization, exports, employment, tax revenue and fast economic growth of the region.

Mian Akram Farid, Chairman Founder Group said that the best option for the government to uplift the economy, reduce unemployment and enhance tax revenue is to promote industrialisation. He said that the domestic industry needs up-gradation for JVs and investment in CPEC and urged that the government should minimise taxes and duties on the import of industrial machinery, plants and equipment for up-gradation of industrial units and make them more competitive for producing value

added products and promoting exports.

Development on Digital Pakistan 2021 Policy initiated

The Ministry of IT & Telecommunication has initiated the development process on the Digital Pakistan 2021 Policy.

The Policy will also serve as the foundation for the construction of a holistic digital ecosystem with advanced concepts and components for the rapid delivery of next generation digital services, applications and content. It will serve as an aggregator of demand for innovative digital services and as a supplier of data for value added services and applications.

Member IT, Ministry of IT & Telecom, Syed Junaid Imam, kicked off the Digital Pakistan Policy 2021 Roundtable sessions in Lahore on Wednesday. The Consultations sessions with all the relevant stakeholders will also be held in Karachi and Islamabad, and would include a broad cross section of Pakistan's ICT Industry.

Federal Minister for IT Syed Amin Ul Haque in his message to the participating stakeholders said "Pakistan is on the verge of digital revolution as we see progress happening in the country on daily basis. Ministry of IT & Telecom has envisioned

Towels exports up by record 16.31pc increase

ISLAMABAD: Towels exports during first eight months of FY 2020-21 grew by 16.31 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July 20-Feb 21, Towels worth US\$ 640,684 thousand were exported as compared to worth US\$ 525,048 thousand of same period of last year.

According to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the exports of bed wear increased by 13.71 per cent, worth US\$ 1,816,882 thousand were exported as compared to the exports of US\$ 1,597,686 thousand of same period of last year.

Meanwhile Knitwear exports increased by 18.04 per cent, worth US\$ 2,467,006 thousand were exported in current financial year as compared to the exports of valuing US\$ 2,090,039 thousand of same period of last year.

During the period of under view, exports of Readymade Garments increased by 2.56 per cent, worth US\$ 2,011,505 thousand were exported in current financial year as compared to the exports of valuing US\$ 1,961,293 thousand of same period of last year. —APP

'Deployment of rangers at NAB office decided'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed Wednesday said that the ministry has approved deployment of Rangers outside the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore office on Punjab government's request.

Addressing a news conference, he said the Punjab government had requested the federal government to maintain law and order in the provincial capital ahead of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz appearance before the NAB, on Friday (March 26). The minister clarified that the Punjab police would lead from the front in providing security to the NAB's Lahore office.

Earlier, the NAB, Lahore sought foolproof security from the Law Enforcement Agencies including Punjab police and Rangers to protect its building from the PML-N goons.

The NAB also asked the authorities concerned to declare its Lahore office 'red zone' after the PML-N directed to its political leadership to accompany Maryam during her appearing before the anti-graft watchdog. He said PML-N vice president intends to secure interim bail from Lahore High Court ahead of her hearing and at the same time, convincing people to gather outside NAB on March 26.

"A genuine political leader do not use workers as a shield rather lead them from the front," said the minister. He said, PML-N's show of power outside NAB office is not for the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf but to pressurize the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The opposition's moves had always provided political benefits to Prime Minister Imran Khan, he maintained. He noted that both the parties PPP and PML-N had always dug political pit falls for each other and there were many instances in that regard. Now, they disagreed with each other over the selection of leader of the opposition in the Senate.

Criticizing the Pakistan Democratic Movement chief, he said Maulana Fazlur Rehman's political career has come to an end and now he had become a rolling stone between the PML-N and PPP. The Interior minister made a passionate appeal to the masses to refrain from participating in any public gathering as Lahore had witnessed a spike in the corona virus cases with 14 percent positivity rate. —APP

Zardari, Fazl agree to resolve differences

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: PDM Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Former President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday agreed to resolve all differences together. The development was made during a telephonic conversation between both the leaders.

According to reports, Jamiat ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief said all parties of the PDM should respect joint decisions.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman reportedly said the seat of the 'Leader of the Opposition' in the Senate belongs to the PML-N. He hoped that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would respect the joint decisions of the PDM.

IMF chief to propose \$650b reserve expansion by June

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva has said that she would present the IMF's executive board with a formal proposal for a possible \$650 billion expansion of the Fund's emergency reserves by June.

She said this in a statement issued here in the wee hours of Wednesday at the conclusion of an informal discussion of the IMF's Executive Directors on the technical case for a Special Drawing Rights (SDR) general allocation.

She said, "I am very encouraged by initial discussions on a possible SDR allocation of \$650 billion. By addressing the long-term global need for reserve assets, a new SDR allocation would benefit all our

member countries and support the global recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. It would also be a powerful signal of the IMF membership's determination to do everything possible to overcome the worst recession since the Great Depression."

She said that executive directors conveyed broad support among Fund members for IMF staff to formulate a proposal for a new SDR allocation equivalent to \$650 billion to provide additional liquidity to the global economic system by supplementing the reserve assets of the Fund's 190 member countries.

Georgieva said if approved, the new allocation of SDRs would add a substantial, direct liquidity boost to countries, without adding to debt burdens. She added, "It would also

free up badly needed resources for member countries to help fight the pandemic, including to support vaccination programs and other urgent measures. And it would complement the range of tools deployed by the IMF to support our membership in this time of crisis."

It is pertinent to mention that under the IMF's Articles of Agreement, the managing director may make a proposal of an SDR allocation if the managing director is satisfied that the allocation would help meet a long-term global need to supplement existing reserve assets in a manner that will avoid stagnation and deflation as well as excess demand and inflation, and there is broad support among IMF members for the allocation. —TLTP



LAHORE: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif arrives for his hearing at the Accountability Court.