

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Current Affairs MCQs
- Current Events

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- Which area of North Waziristan District was attacked by explosive devices on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020?  
A. Gwadar      B. Gilgit  
C. **Razmak**      D. Orakzai  
**Explanation:** On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the Razmak area of North Waziristan district was bombed with explosive devices. The attack resulted in 6 deaths.
- An airstrike on a Madrassa in the village \_\_\_\_\_, Afghanistan took the lives of 12 civilians on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.  
A. **Hazara Qarluq**  
B. None of these  
C. Hazara Kunduz  
D. Hazara Kabul  
**Explanation:** The village of Hazara Qarluq was hit by an airstrike on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. The airstrike struck a Madrassa, taking the lives of 12 civilians, 11 out of whom were children.
- What is the estimated worth of the weaponry deal between United States and Taiwan of October, 2020?  
A. 1.8 million      B. 7 million  
C. 66 million      D. **1.8 billion**  
**Explanation:** The weaponry and artillery trade deal between United States of America and Taiwan was estimated to be worth 1.8 billion dollars.
- The Election Commission of Pakistan reported a gender gap of \_\_\_\_\_ between male and female voters countrywide.  
A. 13.6 million      B. 7.8 billion  
C. **12.41 million**      D. 99 million  
**Explanation:** After a statistical analysis of voting districts, the Election Commission of Pakistan reported a gender gap of 3 million in Lahore only and a total gender gap of **12.41 million** between male and female voters in Pakistan.
- The Second Libyan Civil War is a conflict between:  
A. Libya and Germany  
B. **Libyan National Army and Government of National Accord**  
C. Libyan National Army and Turkish National Army  
D. Government of Libya and Government of National Accord  
**Explanation:** The Second Libyan Civil War was an armed conflict between **Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Government of National Accord (GNA)** that began in 2014.
- The Gambia filed a lawsuit against \_\_\_\_\_ to the International Court of Justice over the persecution and genocide of Rohingyas.  
A. **Myanmar**      B. Pakistan  
C. China      D. Afghanistan  
**Explanation:** Myanmar's genocidal persecution of Rohingya Muslims prompted The Gambia to file a 5000-page memorial to the International Court of Justice in October 2020 following the lawsuit in November 2019.
- The Financial Action Task Force's ruled for Pakistan to remain on the 'grey-list' in October, 2020. The extension for Pakistan to fulfil at least six of its proposed 27 targets on anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) was to last until \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. January 2022      B. December 2020  
C. January 2023      D. **February 2021**  
**Explanation:** In October 2020, the FTAf granted Pakistan an extension until **February 2021** to reach its targets, until which it would remain on the grey list.

8. Where was the PDM power show held on October 25, 2020?  
 A. Peshawar      **B. Quetta**  
 C. Murree      D. Lahore

**Explanation:** Pakistan Democratic Movement held a power show as opposition to the Pakistan government in **Quetta, Baluchistan** on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

9. The Aegean Sea Earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 mainly hit which two countries on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020?  
 A. Turkey and Pakistan  
**B. Turkey and Greece**  
 C. Turkey and France  
 D. Greece and Croatia

**Explanation:** Turkey and Greece were hit by the Earthquake on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2020. The death toll which was reported to be 22 rose to 35 after bodies were discovered in the rubble in Izmir, Turkey. Approximately a 100 people were reportedly wounded.

10. Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan pledged universal healthcare through which system to Punjab and KPK, in October 2020?  
 A. Sehat Card      **B. Sehat Insaf Card**  
 C. Insaf Card      D. Healthcare Card

**Explanation:** Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan pledged to make universal healthcare possible, in phases, in Punjab and KPK through the Sehat Insaf Card system.

11. Which electricity powered, mass transit system was opened to the public of Lahore, Pakistan in October, 2020?  
 A. Metrobus  
 B. Subway  
**C. Orange Line Metro Train**  
 D. none of these

**Explanation:** The Orange Line Metro Train was opened on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in Lahore for public use. The train, with a fare of 40 PKR was meant to be open and accessible mode of transportation for 250,000 citizens daily.

12. Which former journalist and editor of Dawn's news side passed away in November of 2020?

- A. Syed Fazle Saleem Asmi**  
 B. Mahmoud Haroon  
 C. Zaffar Abbas  
 D. Muhammad Ali Jinnah

**Explanation:** Syed Fazle Saleem Asmi, former journalist and editor of Dawn passed away at the age of 85 on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Saleem Asmi was the first Dawn news editor and worked in the field for over fifty years.

13. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the United States of America withdrew from the \_\_\_\_\_ which worked in the interest of globally reducing the temperature to 2C in order to tackle rapid climate change.  
 A. United Nations  
 B. NATO  
**C. United Nations Paris Agreement**  
 D. United Nations Peace Agreement

**Explanation:** On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the United States of America withdrew from the **United Nations Paris Agreement** which worked in the interest of globally reducing the temperature to 2C in order to tackle rapid climate change. Though the withdrawal was proposed in June, it came into effect in November.

14. How many stolen rare antique pieces were returned to Pakistan by the Manhattan District Attorney's office after being seized from Nayef Homsis's black market dealings in November, 2020?  
 A. 67      B. 4  
 C. 54      **D. 45**

**Explanation:** The Manhattan District Attorney's office returned approximately 45 rare antiquities to Pakistan that had previously been stolen and trafficked from the country by antiquities trafficker Nayef Homsis.

15. Which Southeast Asian country entered arecession, after two decades, in November of 2020?

- A. China            B. India  
**C. Indonesia**    D. Pakistan

**Explanation:** Indonesia entered a recession for the first time in two decades after the last recession struck the country in 1998. The country's economy has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Lockdown restrictions were lifted thus to allow the economy to flourish.

16. Pakistan signed a bilateral agreement with which country in November of 2020 that outlined the repatriation of 3000 illegal Pakistani immigrants?  
 A. China  
**B. Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
 C. India  
 D. Norway  
**Explanation:** Pakistan signed a bilateral agreement with **Bosnia and Herzegovina** allowing for the repatriation of approximately 3000 illegal migrants from Pakistan. Both countries additionally agreed on extending their relations to trade and defense as well.
17. Who is the first female Vice President of the United States of America?  
 A. Hillary Clinton  
 B. Ivanka Trump  
 C. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
**D. Kamala Harris**  
**Explanation:** **Kamala Harris** is the first female Vice President elect of the United States. She is also the first Asian-American to be elected as the Vice President.
18. Who is the oldest person to be appointed in the White House as the President of the United States of America?  
 A. John F. Kennedy  
**B. Joe Biden**  
 C. Bill Clinton  
 D. Donald Trump  
**Explanation:** **Joe Biden**, who is nearly 78, is the oldest person to ever be elected to the White House as the US President.

19. Pakistan and Iran agreed on a bilateral trade agreement in the interest of which access points in their borders would be opened to either countries. It was decided that Pakistan would open the \_\_\_\_\_ crossing point and Iran would open the \_\_\_\_\_ crossing point at the border for facilitation of trade.

- A. Gabd and Rimdan**  
 B. Durand and Rimdan  
 C. Tehran and Gabd  
 D. Pakistan and Iran

**Explanation:** Pakistan and Iran bilaterally decided to open the **Gabd** access point on Pakistan's side and the **Rimdan** crossing point on Iran's side, to facilitate trade.

20. The ongoing armed conflict in Ethiopia is between the government of Ethiopia and \_\_\_\_\_ over the disputed region of Tigray.  
 A. Ethiopian National Army  
**B. Tigray People's Liberation Front**  
 C. Ethiopia Liberation Movement  
 D. Tigray National Army  
**Explanation:** Ethiopia has witnessed mass casualties and civilian deaths due to the armed conflict between **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** and the government of Ethiopia.
21. Cross-border shelling between Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_ resulted in the deaths of 5 security personnel and 10 civilians, on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.  
 A. China            B. Iran  
 C. Afghanistan    **D. India**  
**Explanation:** **India** and Pakistan engaged in cross border shelling on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2020, killing ten civilians and five security officers in the crossfires. Both countries' troops reportedly accused each other for unprovoked attacks which began the shelling.
22. After twenty years of a ceasefire, a war is declared between the Moroccan government and Western Sahara independence group \_\_\_\_\_, over the disputed region

of Western Sahara near Algeria, occupied by Morocco.

- A. Saharan Liberation Front
- B. West Sahara Independence Front
- C. Polisario Front**
- D. Algeria

**Explanation:** After two decades of a ceasefire, war is declared upon Morocco by the Western Sahara independence group **Polisario Front** led by Brahim Ghali, over disputed Western Saharan land near Algeria.

23. On November 14<sup>th</sup>, unprovoked shelling at the \_\_\_\_\_ in Azad Jammu and Kashmir by Indian Troops killed 5 civilians and 1 soldier as well as injuring 35 others.

- A. Line of Control**
- B. border
- C. Capital
- D. Residential area

**Explanation:** The line of control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir was shelled by Indian Troops on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2020. The attack took the lives of 6 people and wounded 35 others.

24. Ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and five Asia-Pacific countries signed the world's biggest free trade agreement on November 15, 2020. This agreement is called \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**
- B. Comprehensive Partnership 2020
- C. Asian Regional Trade Treaty
- D. Regional Economic Agreement 2020

**Explanation:** The world's biggest free trade agreement; **The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**, was signed between ten ASEAN and five Asia-Pacific countries on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.

25. Which country moved to ban the use of Facebook in November of 2020 in order to deter cyber-bullying and hate speech against its government?

- A. Cayman Islands

- B. Pakistan
- C. Hawaii
- D. Solomon Islands**

**The Solomon Islands** moved to ban the social media platform Facebook in the country in an attempt to curb cyber bullying and hate-speech against the government.

26. Turkey and \_\_\_\_\_ oversaw the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and proposed the creation of a monitoring center in Azerbaijan.

- A. Iran
- B. Pakistan
- C. Russia**
- D. China

**Explanation:** Turkey and **Russia** oversaw the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020. There were also talks to set up a monitoring center in Azerbaijan to monitor the peace keeping in the disputed region.

27. Which team won the Pakistan Super League Final on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2020?

- A. Lahore Qalandars
- B. Multan Sultans
- C. Karachi Kings**
- D. Peshawar Zalmi

**Explanation:** The Pakistan Super League (PSL) Final of 2020 was won by **Karachi Kings** in a match against Lahore Qalandars on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

28. Which Middle Eastern country banned the issuance of visit visas to Pakistanis in November, 2020?

- A. Dubai
- B. Saudi Arabia
- C. United Arab Emirates**
- D. Qatar

**Explanation:** **The United Arab Emirates (UAE)** suspended visit visas being issued to Pakistan among eleven other cities, in November 2020. This was done on the basis on non-compliance of criteria by Pakistani visitors going to the UAE. The ban did not extend to currently active visit visas.

29. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced at the G20 summit that the \_\_\_\_\_ vaccine would be made available to countries that need it.  
**A. Sputnik V** B. BIONtech  
 C. Pfizer D. Oxford  
**Explanation:** Vladimir Putin announced at the G20 forum that the **Sputnik V vaccine** created by Russia would be offered to countries after its completion.
30. Who was appointed as the new leader of Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) after the death of former leader, in November 2020?  
 A. Abdelmalek Droukdel  
 B. George Bush  
**C. Abu Obaida Yusuf al-Annabi**  
 D. None of the above  
**Explanation:** **Abu Obaida Yusuf al-Annabi** was appointed the new leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) in November, 2020. Al-Annabi is a notorious propagandist of religious extremism.
31. **The Namaz-i-Janaza of deceased right-wing cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi was held at \_\_\_\_\_, Lahore.**  
 A. Aiwan-e-Iqbal  
 B. Badshahi Mosque  
**C. Minar-i-Pakistan**  
 D. Lahore Press Club  
**Explanation:** The Namaz-i-Janaza of Khadim Hussain Rizvi, a religious cleric and right-wing preacher was held at **Minar-i-Pakistan**, Lahore on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020.
32. The United States of America withdrew from the \_\_\_\_\_ in November 2020.  
**A. Open Skies treaty**  
 B. United States treaty  
 C. Peace treaty  
 D. United Nations treaty  
**Explanation:** USA withdrew itself from the **Open Skies** Treaty between 34 countries which allowed them to observe each other's military activity through flyover planes. This treaty was meant to build mutual trust between the countries involved.
33. How many troops did USA call back from Afghanistan and Iraq respectively in November of 2020?  
 A. 1000 and 2000  
 B. 1000 and 1000  
**C. 1500 and 500**  
 D. 5000 and 7000  
**Explanation:** USA withdrew **1500** troops from Afghanistan and **500** troops from Iraq in November of 2020, leaving 2500 remaining troops in each country.
34. Who was elected the President of United States of America in 2020 after the November Presidential elections?  
 A. Donald Trump  
**B. Joe Biden**  
 C. George W. Bush  
 D. Hilary Clinton  
**Explanation:** **Joe Biden** was elected the President of United States of America following the Presidential elections in November 2020.
35. Pakistan had a surplus of \_\_\_\_\_ in October 2020 as evident in the data collected by State Bank of Pakistan.  
 A. 500 million USD  
 B. 5 billion USD  
**C. 382 million USD**  
 D. 10 million USD  
**Explanation:** It was reported and observed in data collected by the State Bank of Pakistan that Pakistan had a surplus of **382 million USD** in October 2020.
36. Educational institutions were ordered to close down on \_\_\_\_\_ due to the rise in Covid-19 active cases and deaths in Pakistan.  
 A. October 12<sup>th</sup> 2020  
**B. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2020**  
 C. August 11<sup>th</sup> 2020  
 D. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2020  
**Explanation:** It was announced by the federal government of Pakistan that educational institutions will be closed down

again and online learning will start again effective on **26th November 2020**.

37. \_\_\_\_\_, a top nuclear scientist in Iran was assassinated on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020.  
 A. Mohammad Falekzadi  
 B. Fakhrizadeh Ali  
**C. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh**  
 D. Mohsin Mohammad  
**Explanation:** **Mohsen Fakhrizadeh**, a leading nuclear scientist in Iran was gunned down near Tehran on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2020. Fakhrizadeh was the residing head of the Ministry of Defense's Research and Innovation Organization. His involvement in Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Iranian officials reportedly accused Israel of carrying out the assassination.
38. The status of 'province' was granted to \_\_\_\_\_ by the government of Pakistan, on its 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day.  
 A. Sindh                      **B. Gilgit Baltistan**  
 C. FATA                      D. Lahore  
**Explanation:** Prime Minister Imran Khan grants the status of province to **Gilgit Baltistan** on its 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day. The region was granted a "provisional provincial status", giving the people of Gilgit Baltistan constitutional rights afforded to other provinces of Pakistan.
39. A resolution was passed by the United Nations to deem \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem as a Muslim holy site by the name of al-haram al-Sharif.  
 A. Mount Zion  
 B. Mount Sinai  
 C. Mount of Olives  
**D. Temple Mount**  
**Explanation:** The United Nations passed a resolution in November 2020, referring to the **Temple Mount** in Jerusalem as a Muslim holy site; al-Haram al-Sharif. 138 countries voted in favor of this resolution entitled "Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including east

Jerusalem.", while 9 countries opposed the resolution.

40. By the end of November, daily Covid-19 cases had risen over \_\_\_\_\_ in the second wave of the pandemic.  
 A. 6000                      B. 1000  
**C. 3000**                      D. 3500  
**Explanation:** By the end of November, daily Covid-19 cases surpassed **3000** as active cases reached 43,963 around Pakistan, amid the second wave of the pandemic.
41. Several gunmen opened fire at the \_\_\_\_\_ of Afghanistan on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, during an Iranian book fair. The terrorist attack resulted in the deaths of approximately 20 civilians.  
 A. Tehran university  
 B. Iran University  
 C. Afghan University  
**D. Kabul University**  
**Explanation:** On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, **Kabul University of Afghanistan** was attacked by several gunmen during an Iranian book fair. Gunmen opened fire at civilians, resulting in twenty deaths, reportedly.
42. On November 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, An army base in the Afghan city of \_\_\_\_\_ was hit with an explosion after a suicide car bomber detonated the vehicle in front of the army base.  
 A. Kabul                      B. Herat  
**C. Ghazni**                      D. Kunduz  
**Explanation:** An army-base in **Ghazni**, Afghanistan was struck with a suicide car bomber. The terrorist attack took the lives of at least 30 security personnel and injuring over twenty other security officers.
43. Which automotive company was to pay the USA a settlement of \$180 million after allegations of misconduct due to failure to disclose defects in automobile emissions?  
 A. Yamaha                      **B. Toyota**  
 C. Mitsubishi                      D. Suzuki

**Explanation:** The automotive company Toyota is to pay \$180 million in settlement to the United States of America on charges of misconduct as the company allegedly failed to report defects in emission, as is mandatory for automobile companies in the US.

44. The \_\_\_\_\_ Island of Indonesia was struck by an earthquake of 6.2 magnitude on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, claiming the lives 35 people and causing numerous aftershocks.  
 A. Bali                      B. Sri Lanka  
 C. Mali                      D. **Sulawesi**  
**Explanation:** The Sulawesi Island of Indonesia was struck by an earthquake of 6.2 magnitude on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, claiming the lives 35 people and causing numerous aftershocks. The earthquake damaged infrastructure significantly and left hundreds homeless.
45. On January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021, \_\_\_\_\_ carried out a number of airstrikes against Syria, killing 57 people, including Syrian and Iranian soldiers.  
 A. Palestine              B. USA  
 C. **Israel**                      D. Russia  
**Explanation:** On January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021, Israel carried out a number of airstrikes against Syria, killing 57 people, including Syrian and Iranian soldiers. This is being referred to as the deadliest Israeli airstrike on Syria to date.
46. Which US President was banned across several notable social media and streaming platforms such Twitter, Facebook and YouTube in 2021 for inciting the violent riots in the US Capitol?  
 A. Joe Biden              B. **Donald Trump**  
 C. Bill Clinton            D. George W. Bush  
**Explanation:** Donald Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America was banned from posting and streaming on YouTube. In addition to this, his accounts on Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Twitter were suspended, with platforms citing his

encouragement of anti-democratic violence and protests leading up to the riots in the US Capitol.

47. In January 2021, Saudi Arabia agreed to restore ties with \_\_\_\_\_ after a three-year freeze on relations with the country upheld by UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt.  
 A. Kuwait                  B. Pakistan  
 C. Sudan                    D. **Qatar**  
**Explanation:** In January 2021, Saudi Arabia agreed to restore ties with Qatar after a three-year freeze on relations with the country upheld by UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Qatar's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to discuss the restoration of Gulf Cooperation Council and reopening of airspace and borders.
48. Which minority community belonging to the Shia sect staged a sit-in protest in Quetta in January 2021?  
 A. Shia                      B. None of these  
 C. **Hazara**                    D. Sunni  
**Explanation:** Members of the minority Hazara community staged a sit-in protest in Quetta in early January 2021. This was a response to the abduction and slaughter of 11 coal miners in Mach, for which the terrorist group Islamic State took responsibility.
49. Which country was the first in the world to vaccinate approximately 10% of its population with the COVID-19 vaccine?  
 A. **Israel**                      B. Japan  
 C. Pakistan                D. United Kingdom  
**Explanation:** Israel vaccinated approximately 900,000 citizens, around 10% of its population with the COVID-19 vaccine, becoming the first country in the world to accomplish this.
50. Iran issued a \_\_\_\_\_ at Interpol for the arrest of US President Donald Trump and 47 other US officials in their connection to the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

- A. Blue notice B. None of these  
C. Yellow notice **D. Red notice**

**Explanation:** Iran issued a red notice at Interpol for the arrest of US President Donald Trump and 47 other US officials in their connection to the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. This comes after thousands of Iranians gathered to protest US occupation in Iran earlier.

51. When did pro-Trump protestors storm the US Capitol building in Washington D.C?  
**A. January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021**  
B. February 14<sup>th</sup> 2014  
C. December 1<sup>st</sup> 2020  
D. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2011

**Explanation:** On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the US Capitol building was stormed by pro-Trump protestors, protesting the results of the US Presidential elections in November of 2020. These protests came weeks before Trump was meant to exit office and President-elect Joe Biden was supposed to take office.

52. In January 2021, Sudan signed the \_\_\_\_\_, normalizing international relations with Israel.  
A. Israel Accords  
B. Normalization Treaty  
**C. Abraham Accords**  
D. Peace Accords

**Explanation:** In January 2021, Sudan signed the Abraham Accords, normalizing international relations with Israel. This accord was originally brokered between United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Israel in August of 2020.

53. Which prominent government building was stormed by pro-Trump protestors, causing a riot, on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021?  
A. White House  
B. National History Museum  
C. Oval Office  
**D. US Capitol**

**Explanation:** Protesters stormed the US Capitol building in Washington D.C in a pro-Trump protest following the US Presidential

election results in November of last year. Thousands of armed and unarmed pro-trump protesters crowded into the Capitol building and breached the security. Several protesters and policemen were injured and one female protestor succumbed to gunshot wound sustained during the violent protest.

54. The Abaraham Accords is a deal co-signed by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and Israel to normalize international relations with Israel.  
A. United Arab Emirates, Russia  
**B. United Arab Emirates, United States of America**  
C. United Nations, Israel  
D. None of the above

**Explanation:** The Abaraham Accords is a deal co-signed by United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Israel to normalize international relations with Israel. The deal was brokered by US President Donald Trump in 2020.

55. Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi a senior member of the militant group \_\_\_\_\_ was sentenced to five years in prison due to alleged connections with Mumbai attacks of 2013 and other terrorist financing cases in countries including Bosnia, Iraq, Chechnya and Afghanistan.  
A. Taliban B. Daesh  
C. Islamic State **D. Lashkar-e-Taiba**

**Explanation:** Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi a senior member of the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba was sentenced to five years in prison due to alleged connections with Mumbai attacks of 2013 and other terrorist financing cases in countries including Bosnia, Iraq, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

56. Which social media networking and blogging site was removed by Google and Apple from Play Store and App Store, respectively, due to pro-Trump propaganda in relation to the US Capitol riots in January 2021?  
A. Twitter **B. Parler**  
C. Facebook D. Medium

**Explanation:** Google and Apple suspended the blogging app Parler from Play Store and App Store respectively, due to concerns of incitement of violence on the platform following the US Capitol riots. The app has a large user-base in pro-Trump accounts and has been accused of hosting anti-democratic rhetoric on the platform. Following this decision, Amazon suspended cloud computing servers for Parler as well.

57. What is the name of Pakistan's first instant digital payment system, launched on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2021?

A. Pak-pay      B. Raast  
C. Easypaisa    D. Venmo

**Explanation:** Launched on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2021, "Raast" was Pakistan's first instant digital payment system. Raast would take the country's population away from cash economy and boost tax payments through digital transactions and transfers.

58. The Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act mandated that \_\_\_\_\_ of the merit-based scholarships would be given to Pakistani women to help them pursue higher education.

A. 10%            B. 100%  
C. 40%            D. 50%

**Explanation:** President Trump signed the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act bill, making it a law that the merit-based Malala Yousafzai Scholarships be awarded in 50% to Pakistani women. These scholarships will allow women from Pakistan from various disciplines to pursue higher education from 2020 to 2022.

59. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced a three-year plan for the creation of \_\_\_\_\_ through a government grant of 8 billion PKR.

A. University of Engineering Technology  
B. Kinnaird College for Women University  
C. Lahore School of Economics  
D. **Swat University of Engineering and Technology**

**Explanation:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced a three-year plan for the creation of Swat University of Engineering and Technology through a government grant of 8 billion PKR. The university is meant to be a self-sustained setup of research and entrepreneurship programs.

60. Which Multi-Launch Rocket System (MLRS) was successfully tested by Pakistan in January of 2021?

A. Airforce 1      B. none of these  
C. **Fatah-1**        D. MLRS-2000

**Explanation:** Pakistan successfully tested Multi-Launch Rocket System (MLRS) called Fatah-1 in January of 2021. This guided rocket system would equip the army to strike enemy territory with precision, as reported by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

61. Which aerospace company agreed to pay \$2.5 billion in settlement on charges of criminal fraudulence which caused two plane crashes in 2018 and 2019, claiming the lives of 346 passengers?

A. Emirates      B. Tesla  
C. **Boeing**        D. Airbus

**Explanation:** Boeing agreed to pay \$2.5 billion to settle charges of criminal fraudulence and hiding crucial information about their planes' automated flight control systems which resulted in two plane crashes in 2018 and 2019 killing 346 passengers in total. \$500 million of this settlement will go to the families of the deceased.

62. Which country passed a law allowing pop stars to defer mandatory military service, in December 2020?

A. K-pop            B. Pakistan  
C. **South Korea**    D. North Korea

**Explanation:** South Korea passed a law allowing pop stars such as popular music group BTS to defer their military service which is ordinarily mandatory for able-bodied men of ages 18-28. This allowance came in light of the fact that pop stars

increase the tourism and boost the economy of their country.

63. Which former Prime Minister of Pakistan passed away in December 2020?

A. **Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali**  
 B. Yahya Khan  
 C. Quaid-e-Azam  
 D. Zulfikar Bhutto

**Explanation:** Former Prime Minister of Pakistan **Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali** passed away at age 76 in Rawalpindi on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020. He was the only Premier from Baluchistan in Pakistan's history.

64. South Asian Film Festival of Montréal 2020 awarded the Best Film [Short Documentary] Award to a Pakistani short film called \_\_\_\_\_.

A. Home32      **B. HOME1947**  
 C. HOME47      D. HOME1943

**Explanation:** South Asian Film Festival of Montréal 2020 awarded the Best Film [Short Documentary] Award to a Pakistani short film called **HOME1947**. The film depicts the displacement and first-hand experiences of citizens during the partition of the Sub-Continent.

65. Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) Pakistan was awarded the gold prize at the \_\_\_\_\_.

A. World Health Awards  
**B. World Habitat Awards**  
 C. World Awards  
 D. Environment Awards

**Explanation:** Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) Pakistan project to tackle climate change was awarded the gold prize at the **World Habitat Awards**. The project, through drone and satellite images aimed to educate and train local villagers in disaster risk management.

66. Where was late former Prime Minister of Pakistan Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali laid to rest?

A. **Rojhan Jamali** B. Jhang

C. Islamabad      D. Lahore

**Explanation:** Former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali was laid to rest in his native village **Rojhan Jamali** where thousands of mourners gathered to pay their respects.

67. On December 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, it was announced that a railway is set to be built between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ which stretches from Chaman to Spin Boldak.

A. China, Russia  
 B. Pakistan, Iran  
**C. Pakistan, Afghanistan**  
 D. Afghanistan, Iran

**Explanation:** On December 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, it was announced that a railway is set to be built between **Pakistan** and **Afghanistan** which stretches from Chaman to Spin Boldak. This railway track will be 11 km long and will be extended granted the initial creation is successful.

68. Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) approved the operation of which British airline for an initial eight-flight per week operation in December 2020?

A. Emirates      B. United Airlines  
 C. PIA      **D. Virgin Atlantic**

**Explanation:** Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) approved the operation of eight flights weekly from **Virgin Atlantic** airlines in Pakistan in December 2020.

69. Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) announced a three-day closure in mourning for which renowned businessman's passing on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2020?

A. Allama Iqbal      **B. Siraj Kassam Teli**  
 C. Khadim Rizvi      D. none of the above

**Explanation:** Renowned businessman **Siraj Kassam Teli** passed away on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2020. In mourning for the former president of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the Karachi Chamber announced a three-day closure where only

the attestation and media department would've been partially operational.

70. How many young Pakistanis were named in the Forbes 30 under 30 list of 2020?
- A. Three                    **B. Four**  
C. One                        D. none

**Explanation:** The Forbes 30 under 30 list of 2020 named **four** young Pakistanis; Sana Khan, Asad J Malik, Danish Dhamani and Faizan Bhatti.

71. Which world renowned social theorist and linguist appeared at the sixth Yohsin Lecture at Habib University in Karachi?
- A. Reza Aslan  
**B. Noam Chomsky**  
C. Margaret Atwood  
D. Michel Foucault

**Explanation:** Renowned linguist, social and political theorist **Noam Chomsky** appeared at the sixth Yohsin Lecture at Habib University. Chomsky delivered a lecture titled "Bullet Dodged or Merely delayed?" detailing the state of the world amidst the pandemic, imperialism and Pakistan's progress in the world.

72. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam, in December 2020, announced that the Marghazar Zoo will be converted into \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The Margalla Wildlife Conservation Centre**  
B. Marghazar Wildlife Conservatory  
C. Margalla Sanctuary  
D. Margalla Hills Centre

**Explanation:** Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam announced that the Marghazar Zoo will be converted into **The Margalla Wildlife Conservation Centre** which will be used for educational and research purposes.

73. UK placed sanctions on a former member of the Karachi police; \_\_\_\_\_ for his human rights violations regarding 190 target killings

done by him which resulted in 400 deaths in total.

- A. Anwar Ahmad  
B. Ahmad Rao  
**C. Rao Anwar Ahmed Khan**  
D. None of the above

**Explanation:** UK placed sanctions on a former member of the Karachi police; **Rao Anwar Ahmed Khan** for his human rights violations regarding 190 target killings done by him which resulted in 400 deaths in total. Khan is said to have served as an "encounter specialist".

74. Who was the Prime Minister of Armenia against whom the Armenians protested in December 2020?

- A. Abiy Ahmad    B. Vladimir Putin  
C. Imran Khan    **D. Nikol Pashinian**

**Explanation:** **Nikol Pashinian** is the Prime Minister of Armenia. After the ceasefire of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Pashinian signed a treaty handing back control of several territories that were previously controlled by Armenian forces. Armenian citizens protested in the streets of Yerevan against this agreement.

75. Which terrorist group was responsible for the attack and abduction of over 300 schoolboys from the Government Science school of Kankara, Nigeria, in December 2020?

- A. Taliban  
B. Tigray People's Movement  
C. Kankara Group  
**D. Boko Haram**

**Explanation:** Government Science school of Kankara was attacked by **Boko Haram**; around 300 boys were abducted from the school. The group Boko Haram is also known as The Islamic State in West Africa or the Islamic State's West Africa Province. It is a terrorist group aiming to mitigate westernization in Nigeria.

76. Prime Minister Imran Khan, at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 in December stated that by 2030, Pakistan intends to make \_\_\_\_\_ of its energy clean and renewable.

- A. 100%                      B. 10%  
**C. 60%**                      D. None of the above.

**Explanation:** Prime Minister Imran Khan, at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 in December stated that by 2030, Pakistan intends to make **60%** of its energy clean and renewable. Pakistan intends to play its part in the fight against climate change.

77. Which journalist was executed by the Iranian government on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 for his contribution to anti-state sentiment?

- A. Ruhollah Zam**  
 B. Zam Rahatullah  
 C. Rao Anwar Ahmad  
 D. None of the above

**Explanation:** **Ruhollah Zam**, a journalist and blogger, was executed by the Iranian government for inciting Iran's anti-state protests on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Zam had created a channel on app Telegram along with a news website called AmadNews which was used to convey protest timings and information regarding government officials that could be used against them

78. Third world countries in need of the vaccine, according to World Health Organization, will be given doses of the COVID-19 vaccine through an organization created by Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator called \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Vaccines Worldwide  
 B. World Vaccination Organization  
**C. COVAX**  
 D. Covid Vaccination Global

**Explanation:** Third world countries in need of the vaccine, according to World Health Organization, will be given doses of the COVID-19 vaccine through an organization created by Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator called **COVAX**. COVAX was founded in 2020 to provide vaccines

equitably to financially strained countries around the world.

79. Who was the highest paid YouTuber in 2020 according to a list published by Forbes?

- A. Logan Paul    B. PewDiePie  
**C. Ryan Kaji**    D. Markiplier

**Explanation:** **Ryan Kaji**, a 9-year-old boy from Texas who tests and reviews toys, was the highest paid YouTuber in 2020 according to Forbes. Kaji, with a following of 27 million on YouTube has raked in 200 million dollars in earnings.

80. A border crossing at \_\_\_\_\_ was opened between Iran and Pakistan on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.

- A. Chaman-Taftan  
**B. Gwadar-Ramdhan**  
 C. Ramdhan-Chaman  
 D. Gwadar-Spin Boldak

**Explanation:** A border crossing at **Gwadar-Ramdhan** was opened between Iran and Pakistan on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This crossing point at Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan and Pakistan's Baluchistan area connects the Gwadar port to Iran.

81. The rare occurrence when Saturn and Jupiter closely align is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Great Alignment  
 B. Saturn-Jupiter  
**C. Great Conjunction**  
 D. Planetary Conjunction

**Explanation:** The rare occurrence when Saturn and Jupiter planets closely align is known as the **Great Conjunction**. A great conjunction occurred on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020, making Saturn and Jupiter align the closest they have in 400 years.

82. Late political activist Karima Baloch was the founder of what Baloch rights organization?

- A. Baloch Students Organization - Azad and the Baloch National Front (BNF) Baluchistan**  
 B. Azad and the Baloch National Front (BNF) Baluchistan

- C. Baloch Rights Front
- D. None of the above.

**Explanation:** Karima Baloch, who passed away in December of 2020, was the founder of **Baloch Students Organization - Azad and the Baloch National Front (BNF) Baluchistan**.

83. Which Russian president passed a bill granting former Russian presidents immunity during and after their time in office for any crimes they commit?

- A. Vladimir Putin
- B. Donald Trump
- C. Emanuel Macron
- D. Imran Khan

**Explanation:** Russian President **Vladimir Putin** passes a bill which allows former presidents of Russia and their families immunity for their lifetime, even when they leave office. Russian presidents under this bill cannot be prosecuted for any crimes they commit.

84. What is the name of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford?

- A. Pfizer
- B. BioNTech
- C. Moderna
- D. AstraZeneca

**Explanation:** The University of Oxford developed a vaccine against the COVID-19 virus called the **AstraZeneca** vaccine, in 2020.

85. Who is the first female president of Moldova?

- A. Maya Sanders
- B. Maia Sandu
- C. Barbara Sandu
- D. None of the above

**Explanation:** **Maia Sandu**, an economist for the World Bank, is the first female president of Moldova. She was elected on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

86. 8 Pakistani women were named in the \_\_\_\_\_ list 2020.

- A. 100 Outstanding Women Nurse and Midwife Leaders
- B. 100 Brilliant Nurses

- C. 10 Outstanding Doctors and Nurses
- D. 1000 Outstanding Women

**Explanation:** 8 Pakistani women were named in the **100 Outstanding Women Nurse and Midwife Leaders** list in 2020. The list is published by Women in Global Health (WGH) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund, Nursing Now, International Council of Nurses and International Confederation of Midwives, in order to honor female healthcare workers during the global pandemic

87. Corrado Augias returned the \_\_\_\_\_ award to France after it was also given to President of Egypt Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi who is known to have committed various human rights abuses around the world.

- A. Award of Honor
- B. Legion Award
- C. Gold Award
- D. Legion of Honor

**Explanation:** Corrado Augias returned the **Legion of Honor** award to France after it was also given to President of Egypt Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi who is known to have committed various human rights abuses around the world.

88. On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Tehran court sentenced \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to eight and seven years in prison respectively for allegedly conspiring with the USA against Iran and Islam.

- A. Hoda Amid, Najmeh Vahedi
- B. Najmeh Vahedi, Hoda Ahmad
- C. Amid Ahmad, Hoda Anwar
- D. None of the above

**Explanation:** On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Tehran court sentenced **Hoda Amid** and **Najmeh Vahedi** to eight and seven years in prison respectively for allegedly conspiring with the USA against Iran and Islam. Amid, a lawyer and Vahedi, a sociologist are women's rights activists who held 'marriage workshops' for Iranian women to learn their rights within marriage.

89. The UK began deployment of 300 troops to Mali in light of the United Nations’ \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. **Minusma Peacekeeping Mission**
- B. Mali Peace Treaty
- C. United Mali
- D. Mali Mission

**Explanation:** The UK began deployment of 300 troops to Mali in light of the United Nations’ **Minusma Peacekeeping Mission**. 56 other countries have participated in the UN’s mission to curb the civil war in Mali.

90. On December 4th 2020, it was announced by the Bangladeshi government that it intends to relocate its Rohingya refugees to \_\_\_\_\_ near the Bay of Bengal.

- A. **Bhasan Char Island**
- B. Bengal Island
- C. Myanmar
- D. Pakistan

**Explanation:** On December 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, it was announced by the Bangladeshi government that it intends to relocate its Rohingya refugees to **Bhasan Char Island** near the Bay of Bengal. Though the Bangladeshi

government claimed that the refugees volunteered to move, refugees claimed they were being forced to relocate.

91. The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan was founded by \_\_\_\_\_ and Yasmin Lari in 1980.

- A. Suhail Ahmad
- B. Zaheer Khan
- C. **Suhail Zaheer Lari**
- D. None of the above

**Explanation:** The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan was founded by **Suhail Zaheer Lari** and Yasmin Lari in 1980. Lari passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020 from COVID-19.

92. Which famed Formula One racer was knighted in December 2020?

- A. Sebastian Vittel
- B. LeBron James
- C. **Lewis Hamilton**
- D. Michael Schumacher

**Explanation:** **Lewis Hamilton**, famous Formula One racer and winner of the 2020 Formula One World Championship was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

# CURRENT EVENTS

## JANUARY 2020

### Jan 1, 2020

Pakistan imposed heavy fines and sentences for smuggling currency, gold and gems out of Pakistan. the move is in line with the demand of the UN's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as pre conditions for not slapping sanctions on the country.

### Jan 2, 2020

All opposition parties in the national assembly, except JUI of Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Pushtoon nationalist parties, agreed upon the draft legislation extending the term/retiring age of the chief of the Army and other forces to 64 years. The support by PML-N and PPP was surprising since the two parties had been strongly opposing the move in the past few months, particularly since November last when supreme court rejected the notification of 3-years extension in service of Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa as illegal and directed parliament to make necessary legislation in this regard.

### Jan 3, 2020

US drone attack at Baghdad airport killed a dozen military officials in two vehicles including the most feared chief of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, General Qasim Soleimani and the deputy head of Iraqi paramilitary force Hashed al Shaabi, Abu Mehdi al Mohandis, creating fears of a fresh US-Iran war in the middle east as thousands of protestors across Iran made president Rouhani called for avenging US with tough response.

### Jan. 4, 2020

fresh wave of protests spread in major Indian cities against anti-Muslim citizenship law after groups of masked men wielding batons and iron rods attacked Delhi's Jawah Lal Nehru university where students had been raising strong voices against the controversial law, leaving scores of students wounded and also attacked the doctors and nurses who came to treat the wounded students.

### Jan. 5, 2020

DG ISPR Gen Asif Ghafoor categorically declared that Pakistan would neither become part of any war nor allow its soil to be used for war, as foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi phoned the counterparts of

Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey to offer mediation in resolving the prevailing tension and war threats.

### Jan 6, 2020

As the US-Iran tension escalates with verbal threats from each side, Iraqi parliament reiterated its last months stance, calling for all US and allied troops to leave the country immediately. The US president Trump responded to the withdrawal demand with a threat to impose tougher sanctions unless Iraq paid back multi billion dollars spent on building military bases and infrastructure in Iraq.

### Jan. 7, 2020

National Assembly hastily passed amendment in Army Act extending the tenure of armed forces' chiefs upto 64 years of age within just 20 minutes as opposition displayed a rare harmony with the government after PPP withdrew its amendments. the dissent came from JUI-F and Jamaat Islami legislators and the two independent MNAs from tribal areas, Mohsin Dawar and Ali Wazir.

### Jan. 8, 2020

Iran fired several missiles on a US military base in Iraq to avenge the killing of Gen Suleimani claiming several deaths but US said no casualty occurred as its troops had evacuated the base after Iran had informed Iraq before the attack. Iranian officials and people celebrated the attack as successful but US president Trump said Iran deliberately missed targets to reduce escalation of war threats.

The Senate also passed amendment in Army Act in a quick 22 minutes sitting extending the retirement age of services chiefs as JJ, JUI-F, PkMAP and NP opposed the legislation.

### Jan 9, 2020

After DG ISPR, Prime Minister Imran Khan also announced that Pakistan would not join others war since the country had already suffered huge losses due to fighting others war in the past.

### Jan 11, 2020

President Tsai Ing-wen won 57% of the vote in Taiwan. This will be the president's second term.

### Jan 12, 2020

mass anti-government protests hit the streets of Iran. The protests are in response to the downed plane that was later revealed to have been accidentally shot down by Iranian officials. Demonstrators are calling for the Supreme Leader to step down.

**Jan 14, 2020**

The UN revealed that human rights advocates and community leaders in Colombia are being killed at an alarming rate. So far, 10 activists have already been killed in 2020. The UN is urging Colombia politicians to change this trend.

**Jan 18, 2020**

Protesters in Paris attempted to storm a theater President Macron was in. Police were called to help protect the political figure. The protesters are fighting the new pension reforms in France.

**Jan 20, 2020**

China announced it reached 139 cases of pneumonia caused by a new strain of coronavirus. So far, three

**FEBRUARY 2020**

**Feb 1, 2020**

US Senate rejected a Democratic plea 51 against 49 votes, that called for presenting new witnesses at President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, paving way for his acquittal next week of charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. White House and Republicans are more than sure Trump will be acquitted by the Senate, having 53 Republicans to 47 Democrats, and a two-thirds majority 67 senators are needed to remove a president from office.

As the Coronavirus threat in China turned into a full fledged epidemic with hundreds reported dead and thousands affected, Pakistan announced it will not evacuate thousands of its citizens stranded there, including students, businessmen, employees etc. till full recovery from the threat.

**Feb 3, 2020**

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers meeting at Jeddah rejected US President Donald Trump's peace plan for the Middle East, calling on its 57 member states not to help implement it. The communique of the pan-Islamic body of over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide, "rejects this US-Israeli plan as it does not meet the minimum aspirations and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and contradicts the terms of reference of the peace process".

people have died from the virus, which is mostly in Beijing.

**Jan 22, 2020**

Katerina Sakellaropoulou was elected, becoming the first female president in Greece. Sakellaropoulou was previously a high court judge and human rights activist.

**Jan 24, 2020**

Nearly 100 days after the protests in Lebanon began, a new government has taken place. The government has been cut to one-third of the original size, and Prime Minister Hassan Diab has replaced Saad Hariri, who resigned a few weeks after the protests began.

**Jan 28, 2020**

It was revealed that over 3,500 schools have closed in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali over the last two years. Growing violence between terrorists and citizens has left 8 million children without schools.

**Feb 4, 2020**

Prime Minister Imran Khan who finally visited Malaysia after skipping the Kuala Lumpur summit last month, expressed his deep regret for not attending the Summit, saying some countries impression that the conference would divide the Muslim Ummah was wrong. Addressing a joint press conference with Malaysian PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Imran said he wanted to say how sad he was when he couldn't attend the summit. "Unfortunately, our friends, who are very close to Pakistan as well, felt that somehow the conference was going to divide the Ummah. It was clearly a misconception because that was not the purpose of the conference as evident from when the conference took place," he said.

A South African court issued arrest warrant for embattled former President Jacob Zuma, charged with corruption in 90's arms deal after he failed to appear for a pre-trial hearing as lawyers of 77-years old said he was ill and under treatment in Cuba.

**Feb 5, 2020**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in Parliament that a trust had been finalised to oversee the project of constructing a grand Hindu temple at the site of historic Babri masjid, taking a big stride in dream temple after Indian supreme court allowed construction of Temple following decades litigation.

**Feb 6, 2020**

Former spokesman of Tehrik Taliban Pakistan, Ehsanullah Ehsan, escaped from custody of security agencies at an Army safe house under mysterious circumstances and fled to some foreign land along with his wife and two daughters. He had claimed attacking Malala Yusufzai in 2012, 134 students of Peshawar Army school in 2014, and several other terror acts, and surrendered before security agencies in 2017. He disclosed his escape on social media via audio recording. Authorities arrested his father, Sher Mohamad, brother, Shafiq, and uncle Sher Badshah for interrogation.

California based Silicon Valley robotics company, Nuro, announced that it obtained US regulatory authority clearance to operate a fully autonomous self-driving delivery vehicle and would soon begin testing it in Texas to deliver, consumer products, groceries, and hot food from local stores and restaurants. Nuro said its R2 vehicle, designed to operate without any human driver, would be partnering with local businesses for deliveries. The move comes amid initiatives around the world on autonomous vehicles for transporting both people and goods. Former Google car unit Waymo has begun limited rideshare testing without any drivers in Arizona. And General Motors unit Cruise has unveiled its autonomous shuttle it is producing without any steering wheel or pedals.

**Feb 8, 2020**

Two days after US President Trump was acquitted of impeachment charges by his Republican Party's majority Senate, his administration ousted two key witnesses who provided the most damaging testimony during his impeachment investigation, Army Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman and Ambassador to EU, Gordon Sondland.

**Feb 9, 2020**

African Union countries at their summit at Addis Ababa, rejected US president Trump's middle east peace plan, called Deal of the Century, terming it unjustified and illegitimate. Protest rallies continued in many African countries against Trump's deal, as tens of thousands people marched and demanded fundamental rights of Palestinians. .

**Feb 11, 2020**

Indian PM Narendra Modi's BJP suffered a humiliating defeat in Delhi Assembly polls at the hands of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmy Party which won 62 seats out of total 70, showing a barometer of

minority sentiments against the Hindu fanatic BJP's anti-Muslim policies and legislations in the recent past.

**Feb 12, 2020**

Jamaat ud Dawah ameer Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and his aide Zafar Iqbal were sentenced to 11 years by an anti terrorism court on charges of terror financing and running banned outfit. His lawyer commenting on judgment alleged that fund raising for terrorism purposes could not be established by the same prosecution before the trial court, and sentence was awarded to fulfil the requirements of financial Action Task Force (FATF), besides pleasing US and India.

**Feb 13, 2020**

Islamabad High Court banned corporal punishment to children at schools and directed the Interior Ministry to take steps for prevention of school punishment under Article 14 of the Constitution. On a petition filed by singer Shehzad Roy, indicating the beating practice at schools which caused several deaths, the court also inquired government about the legislation passed on the matter. Shehzad Roy told the court that the legislation process was delayed due to political reasons.

**Feb 14, 2020**

Global spending on defence rose by over four percent in 2019, the largest growth in 10 years, as US and China, both hiked defense budgets by 6.6 percent, said annual "Military Balance" report by International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). The report said the US hike followed Beijing's military modernisation programme which includes developing new hard-to-detect hypersonic missiles.

The US defense budget from 2018 to 2019 was \$53.4 billion, which was almost equal to Britain's entire defence budget.

**Feb 16, 2020**

UN secretary General Antonio Guterres, after arriving in Islamabad, praised Pakistan for weeding out terrorism and terror financing, reiterated mediation offer to India and Pakistan for resolving Kashmir issue. But Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi readily rejected the offer. Addressing a rally, Modi vowed to resist world pressure against all the controversial anti-Muslim decisions of his government, and ruled out reviewing citizenship act and annexation of Kashmir by scrapping Article 370 of the constitution.

**Feb 17, 2020**

British government and media outraged over Indian government's denying entry to prominent politician and Labour MP Debbie Abrahams, Chair of Parliament's All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kashmir, and known for supporting Kashmiris against Modi regime's anti-Muslim laws and policies. Despite having a visa, she was refused entry at Delhi airport, visa was canceled, treated rudely and deported to Dubai.

**Feb 18, 2020**

Urology surgeon, Dr Fawad Mumtaz, accused of performing illegal kidney transplant of the daughter of veteran comedian Umar Sharif, Hira Umar, 36, which caused her death, fled from his house minutes before FIA and Human Organ Transplant Authority (HOTA) raided there. He charged 3.4 million rupees for the illegal surgery conducted at some undisclosed location in Azad Kashmir, but the woman died of developing complications and infections.

**Feb 19, 2020**

Britain will close its borders to unskilled, non English-speaking workers after a fundamental overhaul of immigration laws that will end the era of cheap EU labour in factories, warehouses, hotels and restaurants. Unveiling its Australian-style points system after exiting from the EU, new London policy changes aim at taking "full control of borders for the first time in decades". The policy met immediate widespread criticism as it will damage the economy with job losses and closures in factories and the high street.

**Feb 20, 2020**

FATF withheld Pakistan in the grey list for another 4 months, expressing dissatisfaction with the compliance of the state with its 27 point action plan as Islamabad could comply with only 14 of them. The Paris based financial watchdog warned Pakistan of the danger of becoming blacklisted if the remaining 13 points were not complied with till June 2020.

**Feb 21, 2020**

US and Taliban agreed to sign a historic peace deal on Feb 29 in Doha to end the 18 year war in Afghanistan, the costliest and longest war in US history that left millions dead, wounded and handicapped, as Washington agreed to pull out its forces if the week-long ceasefire by both sides prior to signing the deal worked out. Taliban and US Secretary of State Mike

Pompeo said the deal would be signed after a week-long truce beginning now.

US president Donald Trump's long time advisor Roger Stone was sentenced to 40 months by a federal judge on charges of lying and impeding Congressional investigation, tampering with witnesses, and obstructing House investigations into whether Trump campaign conspired with Russia to cheat in 2016 US elections. Trump told the media that it was a miscarriage of justice, accusing jury of being biased and hoped Stone would be cleared in the review, adding that "I personally think he was treated very unfairly," and hinted he would at some time award Stone presidential pardon. .

Prime minister of small African country Lesotho, Thomas Thabane, 80, sneaked to neighboring South Africa overnight instead of appearing before the court where he was due to be charged sheeted with murdering his divorced wife, Lilopelo Thabane, 58, two days before taking oath as PM in 2017. PM office told the court he had not fled but gone for a medical check up. His current wife Maesaiah Thabane, 42, whom he married two months after Lipolelo's death, is a co-accused in the murder. .

**Feb 22, 2020**

Corona virus threat sounded alarm bells in Pakistan as authorities feared its entry into the country from neighboring Iran where its outbreak killed nearly a dozen people and dozens more were tested positive. Iran and Pakistan considered closing land borders where no screening facility is available to detect the virus which had killed over three thousand people in China and affected over fifty thousand. .

**Feb 23, 2020**

An Israeli cycling team raced through Dubai in the Middle East's top cycle race, The UAE Tour, for the first time in history despite the fact that the two countries have no diplomatic relations. On Palestine issue, all Arab countries, except Jordan and Egypt, have no official relations with Israel which has been quietly working to woo Gulf Arab countries on the basis of shared security interests and a common rival - Iran.

**Feb 24, 2020**

Fresh wave of violence swept Indian capital Delhi and other cities in northern areas killing at least a dozen people and wounding over two hundred as US president Trump began 2-day visit, after BJP workers turned maniac over Muslims protesting against anti-Muslim citizenship Act. Scores of Modi backers armed with batons and guns were brought in Delhi from

nearby cities in buses who set fire to Muslim properties, shops and mausoleums, following BJP ministers incited people to shoot those speaking ill of India.

**Feb 25, 2020**

Deadly anti-Muslim riots by BJP zealots in Delhi, unleashed on the arrival of US president Trump, continued for third day as over 40 Muslims were killed and over three hundred wounded by baton-wielding and slogan chanting Hindu extremists coming from far

**March, 2020**

**March 1, 2020**

Just a day after the Taliban and US signed the Afghan peace deal in Qatar, the new Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, threatened to derail the entire peace process by refusing to release 5000 Taliban prisoners agreed to by the US as a swap of 1000 Afghan government prisoners which were to be released later by Taliban.

The Sindh government extended the closure of educational institutions in the province, from the earlier date of Feb 28, upto March 13 in view of the growing threats of Coronavirus outbreak, despite the fact that only one case had been reported in Karachi.

**March 2, 2020**

Afghan Peace Deal looked shattered just after two days as the Taliban refused to join intra-Afghan talks scheduled in Oslo on March 10 unless the condition of releasing 5000 prisoners was fulfilled, which president Ashraf Ghani had rejected a day before. Taliban decided to revoke the conditional ceasefire, ordering fighters to resume attacks against Afghan forces, as Kabul rocked with an immediate bomb blast. Taliban spokesman said they would not target foreign forces at present.

New cases of Coronavirus reported from the US, Europe and Saudi Arabia, death toll reached well above 3000 and total affected people over 100,000, as the virus reached over 60 countries.

**March 3, 2020**

After US president Trump talked to Taliban chief negotiator Mulla Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban agreed to extend their offer to meet Afghan officials in dialogue next week but not before they had carried out dozens of attacks against Afghan army bases following the revoking of conditional truce in response to president Ghani's refusal to release Taliban prisoners.

off places and taking the capital nearly hostage, torching buildings, vehicles, mosques and attacking journalists, forcing the authorities to enforce curfew and order 'shoot down the rioters'. Social media reported BJP leader like Kapil Mishra, openly threatened to kill Muslim protesters and inciting the Hindus to kill.

In Pakistan, the government directed the provinces to protect minority Hindus against possible backlash and provide protection to them.

**March 4, 2020**

Taliban killed at least 20 Afghan soldiers after resuming deadly attacks while US forces also responded with airstrikes and missile attacks on Taliban to defend Afghan forces, as the peace deal's future became hopeless in the wake of president Ghani's refusal to honor the peace deal and release 5000 Taliban prisoners promised by the US.

Saudi Arabia suspended round the year Umrah pilgrimage for its citizens and residents just one month ahead of the peak season in the holy month of Ramadan, in an unprecedented move, raising uncertainty over annual Hajj pilgrimage only four months away, after the fears of a coronavirus outbreak grew further. Indian PM Modi also announced to refrain from going to the biggest festival, Holi, while several other world leaders and celebrities announced the observation of seclusion in the wake of the virus outbreak.

Senate passed the Zainab Alert Bill, the law to punish child molesters with sentences from 7-years to 14-years, and establishing the authority to promptly respond the cases, as Jamaat Islami and other religious parties voted against it, alleging that it aimed at protecting the child molesters since it had no provision of death sentence.

**March 5, 2020**

As the fourth case of coronavirus was reported from Karachi, the total number of cases in Pakistan reached 6. Saudi authorities evacuated pilgrims from Holy Kaaba, emptying the place around it for sterilization in its efforts to prevent the outbreak, but declaring that the upper floors would remain open for tawaf and worship, as three new cases of coronavirus reported in the kingdom, bringing the total to five. UAE asked the mosques to reduce Friday sermon to only ten minutes, while reducing the normal prayer timings as well. Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei urged India to control BJP extremists massacring and

persecuting Muslim population, just days after Indian government expressed resentment on Iranian foreign minister Javed Zariif's statement on the same issue, calling it interference in India's internal affairs.

**March 6, 2020**

In fast escalating violence in Afghanistan, a bomb blast in Kabul killed 32 and injured 70, as US president Trump warned that Taliban could take over Afghanistan again after US and foreign troops withdrew if the Kabul regime did not learn to defend itself without the US.

**March 7, 2020**

Saudi authorities averted an alleged coup plot against Saudi crown prince Muhammad Bin Salman, arresting among several royal family members and princes, the three top princes, including King Salman's only surviving full brother and prominent critic of the Royal policies, prince Ahmad bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, besides prince Muhammad Bin Nayef who was crown prince till 2017 when King Salman removed him to nominate his own son Muhammad, and prince Nawaf bin Nayef. Only a day after US intelligence reports said Taliban were not serious in abiding by the peace deal with US, a statement from Taliban spokesman claimed they were the legal ruler of Afghanistan and US peace deal did not change that fact, adding that Taliban were bound by Islamic law to re-establish Islamic regime after foreign troops withdrawal.

**March 8, 2020**

In a drastic step, Italy locked down one third of its area, include the north regions around Venice and financial capital Milan, closing cinemas, theaters, markets and offices, putting nearly one fourth population (16 m) in self quarantine zones till April 3, after coronavirus deaths crossed one hundred, making it third most hit country after China (3000 deaths) and Iran (over 200).

**March 9, 2020**

World stock markets showed sharp declines in last 24 hours on the fears of fast spreading coronavirus that now reached 100 countries, losing billions of dollars, while oil prices recorded their biggest one-day crash since the first Gulf War in 1991.

**March 10, 2020**

As the coronavirus hit nearly 100 countries including many in Europe, with nearly 3500 deaths and over 100,000 suffering, Italian government extended the lock down and self quarantine to the entire country

after the death toll from coronavirus reached 450 and affected over 9000. US also reported 27 deaths as over 700 affected, while the death toll in Iran crossed 500. On the other hand, the spread of the virus was halted in China as the number of new affected persons reduced considerably. Total number of affected in Pakistan reached to 19, with 15 in Sindh only.

**March 11, 2020**

The World Health Organization (WHO) stepped up the level of Coronavirus threat, declaring it a global pandemic after it reached nearly one hundred countries including many European and Asian nations, ringing alarm bells for the governments responding to it either slowly or with inaction.

Afghan Taliban refused to join intra Afghan talks in Oslo unless 5000 prisoners were released in advance as part of the peace accord, and also rejected conditional release offered by Kabul, pushing the deal's future on the verge of collapse.

**March 12, 2020**

NAB arrested Jang/Geo TV chief editor Mir Shakil ur Rehman in a 35-year old property exchange deal made with LDA, in what appears a victimization as overwhelming criticism in the country and abroad accused PTI government of attacking media freedom. As the US, Saudi Arabia and many European countries halted flight operations mainly from those countries affected with coronavirus, a fresh wave of panic gripped the world after thousands of stranded passengers flocked airports, train and bus stations, and world stock markets dropped to record depths.

**March 13, 2020**

As the global death toll of coronavirus crossed 5000 with nearly 150,000 suffering, Pakistan closed down borders with Iran and Afghanistan, extended closure of educational institutions till April 13, banned wedding and other gatherings including Tablighi Ijtima at Raiwind, cinemas, offices etc for at least 15 days, changed PSL cricket schedule to hold both semi finals on March 17 and final on 18th.

Blame game between China and the US over which country was the origin of coronavirus intensified after China's foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian again claimed the US was its birthplace and in a tweet reiterated the allegation that the US army brought it to Wuhan. He referred to a video on China's twitter-like Weibo showing a US Health official, Dr Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, claiming that some among the thousands of Flu victims last year were posthumously tested to

have died of coronavirus, saying it proved his claim. With cases falling in China and rising abroad, Beijing is bent upon rejecting the widely held claim that Wuhan was the origin of the outbreak.

**March 14, 2020**

After the death toll reached 5800 and affected over 150,000, Coronavirus began crippling the whole world as many more countries in Europe and middle east halted flight operations, issuing visas except diplomatic, closing down markets, gatherings and transport. With a number of top government officials across the world testing positive, including Canadian first lady Sophie Trudeau, Iranian president appealed to the UN to lift sanctions which were hindering its fight against coronavirus.

**March 15, 2020**

After the corona virus reached nearly 140 countries, killing over 6000 and affecting 160,000 people, many countries including India, Kuwait, Iraq etc, shut land borders, banned mass prayers, shopping malls, offices etc. extremely restricting the internal flights and transport systems. In Pakistan, the affectees tally crossed 50, as 22 new cases took the number to 52, majority of whom visited Iran in recent weeks.

**March 16, 2020**

With death toll crossing 7300 and suffering 180,000, corona cases in Pakistan jumped to 183, with only 150 in Sindh, as more countries of the world halted flights, transport systems, schools, colleges, restaurants and businesses, Turkey suspended mass prayers in mosques until the risk of coronavirus outbreak passes. Israel shut down Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and Dome of the Rock, asking Jewish worshippers not to kiss Western Wall. However, Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said govt had no plan to ban Friday congregations, yet the noted clerics appealed to limit the Friday prayers to only two Rakats, asking the believers to pray the remaining Salat at homes. Sindh chief minister blamed federal government for not properly quarantining the pilgrims from Iran and let them in without testing, fearing more of them had gone to Punjab than Sindh, fearing an outbreak in Punjab soon.

After the world financial markets crashed sharply, Pakistan stock exchange also collapsed registering the historic one day decline of 2375 points, vanishing the assets of thousands of investors who joined millions of people abroad, becoming poor overnight.

**March 17, 2020**

In a major move, Sindh government ordered a lock down of all markets, hotels and restaurants besides the government offices, except grocery stores, meat and vegetable shops.

**March 18, 2020**

Coronavirus began taking a toll on Pakistan as two died in KP and the infected tally reached 295, while the panicked world sealed off borders including those of EU, US-Canada and a number of countries in middle east and Asia, with total deaths crossed 8000 and infected over 200,000. Poor nations appealed to the rich countries to pump in financial help to fight the global pandemic, while China expelled three US journalists representing top journals accusing them of biased and racist, as the war of words intensified between Beijing and Washington on which country spread coronavirus in the world.

**March 19, 2020**

The Army was called in to assist the civil administration deal with the coronavirus threat, setting up a command and control center to monitor the situation and provide latest updates on the situation.

**March 20, 2020**

Sindh imposed a 3-day lock down in the province to counter coronavirus spread, after reporting its first death from the virus, closing offices, markets and businesses except vital needs, and banning more than five people to gather, as chief minister Murad Ali Shah asked people to go in complete isolation. Four accused of notorious gang rape and murder of a girl in moving bus were hanged in Delhi's Tihar jail, bringing an end to the case titled Nirbhaya case that rocked the entire country since 2012.

**March 21, 2020**

Pakistan suspended all flight operations for two weeks except diplomatic and cargo, besides allowing the scheduled return flights to the country as 3 deaths were reported with nearly 600 patients. Punjab and Balochistan also ordered partial lockdown after Sindh clamped it two days ago to prevent coronavirus spread. America and many european countries all major cities under lockdown amidst rising death toll, putting over one billion people in isolation to ward off the deadly disease.

US and China again accused each other of spreading coronavirus, as US secretary of State Mike Pompeo also demanded China to share the coronavirus cure data with the world to save lives, besides accusing

Beijing of allowing affected people to leave Wuhan to Italy, Spain and other parts of the world. While Chinese Foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying accused the US of trying to shift blame to China, adding that Beijing prevented world lives by struggling hard to contain the virus as WHO also praised its efforts.

**March 22, 2020**

Punjab and Balochistan also reached out to the Army to help them counter the spread of coronavirus despite that prime minister Imran Khan opposes complete lock down in the country to prevent miseries to the poor and middle classes. as the death toll in the country surged to five with over 750 patients. Media reports and opposition leaders accused PM's advisor on overseas Pakistanis and son-in-law of first lady Bushra Bibi, Zulfi Bukhari of spreading the coronavirus in the country by using his influence to bring in a number of pilgrims from Iran without mandatory quarantine after Irani authorities pushed them into Pakistan for want of facilities to keep them.

**March 23, 2020**

Finally, the federal government imposed a countrywide lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus, two days after Sindh and Islamabad had already locked down their territories, as the tally of deadly virus affectees reached close to 900 and six people had died.

As China recovered from the Corona pandemic and life in Wuhan began returning to normalcy after 90 days of lockdown, people began returning to jobs and markets reopening after no new deaths or infections were reported.

**March 24, 2020**

As India imposed a complete countrywide lock down against the coronavirus threat, over one third of the world population has now been placed under curfew, including several cities of Europe which now remains the heart of the epidemic. First Italy and now Spain's death toll have overtaken that of China, while Britain's Prince Charles became the latest prominent figure to test positive.

**March 25, 2020**

In response to a request by President Arif Alvi, Egypt's historic seminary Jamia Al Azhar University issued an edict, saying congregational prayers, including Friday and daily prayers, could be suspended in times of a serious epidemic threatening spread among the masses. President Alvi, in a tweet, said he had asked for the edict after many countries already suspended

congregational prayers including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

As India enforced an abrupt lockdown and suspended all transport, factories, markets and businesses etc, millions of migrant workers and commuters were left stranded and jobless and panicky scenes were witnessed at the massively crowded trains and bus stations. The Modi government was massively criticised after slamming a complete lockdown without prior planning giving only four hours' notice to its 1.3 billion population.

**March 26, 2020**

Saudi government asked Pakistan not to book Hajj pilgrims for this year and wait for a final decision by King Salman later, as the greatest Muslim worship may be canceled in view of the coronavirus threat. Following the Jamia Al-Azhar edict to ban mass congregational prayers, Sindh government banned congregational prayers in mosques including Friday prayers, limiting the number to 5 persons in prayers including mosque staff.

**March 27, 2020**

World saw the deadliest day in over 3 months' disaster of coronavirus as 2975 deaths were recorded in a single day, pushing the death toll to over 28,000 and total affectees in 183 countries reached over 600,000. The influx of the virus which surfaced in China in December, is now directed towards europe and US, as the US surpassed China with over 87,000 affectees with 1350 deaths, followed by Italy which has 83,000 affectees with 9461 deaths, Spain has 72000 affectees with 5700 deaths and Iran 35,000 affectees with 2400 deaths. In Pakistan the corona cases reached 1373 with 11 deaths.

**March 28, 2020**

The fast rising death toll from coronavirus reached upto 31,000 with over 3000 deaths reported in a single day after it reached over 190 countries, among them the US became the worst hit with 105,000 patients and 1751 deaths, while Italy's death toll reached over 10,000 with 89,000 patients. On the other hand, China partially lifted lock down of Wuhan city, the epicenter of the coronavirus, as locked out residents and workers returned to the city after 10 weeks, but the passengers and the residents were in complete protective kits, showing that the danger was not over. Legendary Squash player Azam Khan who won four British open, died of coronavirus in England.

Afghan Taliban rejected to meet the negotiating team formed by Afghan government for starting the much awaited intra Afghan talks, accusing Kabul of violating the conditions of peace deal requiring release of 5000 Taliban prisoners and including all Afghan factions in the talks.

**March 29, 2020**

The global death toll of coronavirus reached 33,600 as number of infected persons reached 715,000, and the worst hit were Europe and US where the life came to a stand still after president Trump who announced quarantining New York, reversing his earlier decision of not shutting the city down which accounted for one third of all 2500 deaths in the country. Italy and Spain are staggering as death toll is climbing high with over 10,000 and 6000 respectively. Spain's 86 years old princess Maria Teresa became the first royal figure to die of coronavirus, while Germany's Hesse state's finance minister, Thomas Schaefer, committed suicide due to the mounting economic crises of coronavirus.

**APRIL 2020**

**April 1, 2020**

As the coronavirus death toll in Pakistan reached 30, with 2250 confirmed cases, the federal government extended the lockdown of major cities for two weeks, up to April 15, extending the suspension of domestic flight operations till April 11. Globally, coronavirus pandemic has claimed over 40,000 lives in 206 countries, over 33,000 in Europe alone, as the UN described it as humanity's worst crisis since World War II, though half of the planet's population is already under some form of lockdown in a battle to halt the contagion. Spain reported a record 864 deaths in 24 hours, pushing the total deaths past 9,000, while Italy's 12,500 people were killed. US President Donald Trump warned America to brace for a "very, very painful two weeks" as the pandemic was projected to take 100,000 to 240,000 lives.

Indian government of BJP announced new laws, that experts and residents fear will alter the demographic status of the Muslim-majority Himalayan region, by allowing such Hindus to become permanent residents and domicile holders of Muslim majority state of Kashmir who have resided for a period of 15 years in Kashmir or studied for a period of seven years and appeared in Class 10/12 examinations in educational institutions located in the region.

In Pakistan, death toll reached 17 and affected reached 1500, despite the major parts of the country were under volunteer lockdown, since PM Imran Khan refused a forced shutdown saying half the population would die of hunger as a result.

**March 30, 2020**

Government said that the rate of coronavirus infections decreased during the last 24 hours compared to the past few days, as only 99 new cases were reported, while total deaths reached 25 with five deaths reported during the last 24 hours, and total patients reached 1,776, of which 566 in Sindh, Punjab 651, Balochistan 144, KP 217, Islamabad 51, Gilgit Baltistan 142 and JK 6. PM's advisor Dr Zafar Mirza said that the number of recovered patients would increase in the coming days, hoping that the rate of infections would also decrease.

**April 2, 2020**

The coronavirus death toll in the world crossed 52,000, with 5,500 deaths in one day, the worst so far. The Saudi authorities put holy cities of Makkah and Madinah under 24-hour curfew to prevent the spread. Europe bore the brunt of deaths, 1355 in France, 760 in Italy, 709 Spain, 705 in US and 569 in UK, as the number of patients in the world crosses one million.

Deciding appeals in US journalist Daniel Pearl kidnapping for ransom and murder case, Sindh High Court revoked the death sentence of British citizen Ahmed Omer Sheikh and life imprisonment of 3 Pakistanis Fahad Naseem, Syed Salman Saqib and Sheikh Mohammad Adil, awarded by anti-terrorism court 18 years ago. The court observed "kidnapping for ransom and murder charges could not be established against the accused," but convicted Omer Sheikh of abducting Daniel Pearl "by deceitful means", and sentenced him to 7 years and Rs.2 million fine which he had already undergone.

The broken Afghan peace deal found fresh hope after the Kabul regime announced the release of 100 Taliban militants in a prisoner swap for 20 of its soldiers, as part of the larger swap of 5000 Taliban for 1000 Afghan soldiers, agreed in Feb 28 Peace Deal at Doha. The Peace Deal was dealt with a serious blow when the Taliban refused to join the intra Afghan dialogue

scheduled in Oslo after Kabul had earlier refused to release Taliban prisoners.

**April 3, 2020**

The financial gurus declared that the coronavirus could cause the world economy to suffer over 4 trillion dollars losses. Prime Minister Imran Khan announced huge incentives for the construction industry, lifting all taxes, duties, relieving investors from disclosing source of income and exempting capital gains tax on sale, purchase of houses, and 90 per cent tax exemption for investors of Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme.

The coronavirus death toll crossed 58,000 as the world registered the worst day with 5400 deaths, including 1120 in France, US 857, Italy 766, UK 684 and Spain 661.

A veteran Indian politician, ruling BJP's MP, Subramunim Swami revealed the true Muslim-hater face of Hindu extremists, declaring that Muslims are not equal citizens as they pose threat to the world when their number grows from 30 per cent of the population. Giving an interview to a western journalist Isobel Yeung, Mr Swami said that the article 14 of Indian constitution ensuring equal rights to all citizens has been misunderstood regarding Muslims who were not equal citizens.

**April 4, 2020**

PTI government was jolted at the most troubled time of its political career after a report into the sugar and flour crises in past few months held that the major beneficiaries of the shortage of those commodities Rs 3 billion subsidy on Sugar export were the mills owned by top PTI leaders including Jahangir Tareen, Federal Minister Khusro Bakhtiar, his brother and Punjab Minister Hashim Jawan Bakht, and coalition partner in PML-Q, Chaudhri Moonis Elahi, and Chaudhri Munir. The investigation by a 3 member FIA team headed by Wajid Zia was appointed by Prime Minister Imran Khan himself.

Deaths from corona virus in Pakistan reached 43, while the number of patients rose to 2815. A government report said the number of patients could reach 50,000 by April 25, expressing satisfaction that after 35 days of suffering from the virus, the number of affectees so far was far less than the European countries during this period. Globally, the number of affectees crossed 1.1 million with 60,000 deaths, as the US became the top country with nearly 300,000 patients followed by Spain 130,000, Italy 125,000, Germany 97,000 and France

89,000. But the death toll in Italy is higher (15,400) than Spain (12,500) followed by France (7500) while in Germany it is 1470.

**April 5, 2020**

Afghan Taliban warned the US and Kabul regimes that the Doha peace deal was nearing a breaking point, accusing them of violating the deal by frequent drone attacks on civilians and delaying the promised release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners. A Taliban spokesman said they had abided by the deal by halting attacks on foreign forces and restricting attacks on Afghan security forces. They threatened to resume attacks if the US, Kabul continued violations and created an atmosphere of mistrust.

Global fatalities from the coronavirus pandemic soared past 69,000, with the US becoming the new center, reporting 9,550 deaths including 1,084 in the last 24 hours and the total patients reaching 333,000. Europe continues to bear the brunt of the epidemic, claiming over 45,000 of the worldwide deaths, as over 1.27 million confirmed coronavirus cases around the planet, half of which is locked down, shutting schools, businesses, markets taking a huge cost to the global economy. Italy and Spain took some sigh of relief, with Rome reporting a drop in the number of intensive care cases from 4,068 to 3,994 in the last 24 hours. Spain, which is under a near-total lockdown, saw a second successive daily fall in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities, which totaled 11,744. In Pakistan, Coronavirus cases reached 3161 with 47 deaths.

**April 6, 2020**

Pakistan saw 600 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours, as the number of patients reached 3766 and deaths to 52. Both heads were doubled during the week before, forcing the authorities to consider extending the lockdown beyond April 14.

Prime Minister Imran Khan reshuffled the cabinet in the wake of an inquiry report accusing PTI top leaders and ministers of directly benefiting from the billions of subsidy on sugar and flour export, changing the portfolio of Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar, one of the main accused, from minister of food security to finance affairs, while other accused Jahangir Khan Tareen was removed from the chair of the taskforce on Agriculture.

**April 7, 2020**

Afghan peace process halted after the Taliban suspended talks with the Kabul regime on prisoner

exchange and called back its 3-member delegation to Doha just a couple of days in Kabul, as the regime refused to release those 15 prisoners who were to identify and verify the 5000 Taliban prisoners. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threatened to withdraw all troops and halt \$1 Billion aid to Kabul if it failed to reach an agreement with Taliban.

#### **April 8, 2020**

Nearly three weeks after Prime Minister Imran Khan announced a relief package to poor workers affected by coronavirus lockdown, he finally declared that a Rs 12000, 4-month stipend will begin to be distributed among 12,000,000 families from 17,000 distribution centers from April 9.

The Kabul regime released 100 low-ranking Taliban prisoners a day after the Taliban had walked out of talks and withdrew their delegation following Kabul's refusal to first release 15 important Taliban to identify and verify the 5000 prisoners in Afghan jails. Taliban spokesman said it was not yet verified if the released prisoners were on their list.

#### **April 9, 2020**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that the coronavirus pandemic has pushed the world economy to the worst recession since the Great Depression of 1930's, with emerging markets and low-income nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia at particularly high risk after the closure of businesses, industries and agriculture sparked huge unemployment and starvation. IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva said emergency financing to world countries demanded over \$100 billion, for a partial recovery in the global economy in 2021 if the pandemic fades in the second half of this year to allow a gradual lifting of lockdown measures. But, if it continued, things may get even worse.

UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet warned countries against using the coronavirus crisis as a "blank cheque" to crush civil liberties, adopting "unlimited" emergency powers to penalize journalists and opponents for criticizing extreme restrictions. The former Chilean president warned certain governments including the US employing "needless and unproportionate emergency measures" to justify repressive changes to regular legislation, which will remain in force long after the emergency is over." She cited reports of journalists being penalised for reporting a lack of masks, health-workers reprimanded for saying they lack protection, and ordinary people

arrested for social media postings about the pandemic. "Criticism is not a crime. Bachelet also called on governments to "greatly increase access to accurate information and statistics" on the pandemic, stressing that "transparency is paramount and can be life-saving in a health crisis".

#### **April 10, 2020**

Chief Justice took suo motu notice of the "inadequate facilities and relief measures" in the country to combat coronavirus, asking the attorney general to provide details of facilities provided at the hospitals to contain the virus.

Global death toll of coronavirus reached 102,099 with total confirmed cases standing at 1,685,610, with the US now emerging as the global hotspot of the virus as over 1,700 people died in one day pushing total deaths at 18,331, people died followed by 18,849 deaths in Italy, 15,970 in Spain, 13,197 in France, 8,958 in UK and 4,232 in Iran.

Some 17 million Americans have so far lost their jobs, prompting the US government to launch a \$2.3 trillion rescue package, while the European Union late Thursday struck a 500-billion euro (\$550 billion) deal to help hard-hit member states.

#### **April 11, 2020**

United States announced a 10 million-dollar reward for "any information on the activities, networks and associates" of Muhammad Kawtharani, a Lebanese Hezbollah commander accused of playing a key role in coordinating Iran-backed Shiite movement in Iraq, taking over General Qasim Sulemani who was killed two months ago by the US. The US State Department said Kawtharani is coordinating Iran-backed military groups organized by Sulemani.

The United States surpassed Italy to have the highest coronavirus deaths, reporting more than 19,600 fatalities since the outbreak began, Italy has second highest death toll of 19,468, followed by Spain with 16,353, France with 13,832 and Britain with 8,975 deaths. The global death toll reached 108,000 with over 5,700 new deaths, as infections reached 1,765,500 with over 400,000 recoveries.

#### **April 12, 2020**

Hundreds of millions of Christians around the world spend the Easter holiday at home, as lockdown measures intensify to combat the coronavirus, with governments forcing businesses to close and limiting the movement of half the world's population, halting economic activity.

Bangladesh executed by hanging an ex-captain Abdul Majed accused of assassinating PM Hasina Wajed's father and country's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rehman along with family in a military coup on August 15, 1975, less than a week after counter terrorism police arrested him driving a rickshaw in Dhaka on the run for 45 years. Abdul Majed was sentenced to death in absentia in 1998, along with a dozen other army officers over the murders, five of the killers were executed in 2009 after the Supreme Court upheld the verdict.

**April 13, 2020**

The National Coordination Committee (NCC) has decided extending the nationwide lockdown to another 14 days on the recommendation of Sindh Chief Syed Murad Ali Shah who had demanded Prime Minister Imran Khan to do that in view of incessant spread of coronavirus, saying the economy was revivable but not the dead humans. The government also decided to extend closure of all borders of the country to further two weeks.

**April 14, 2020**

Prime Minister Imran Khan, on the recommendations of National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), extended countrywide lockdown for two weeks, but allowed the opening of low risk economic activities under SoPs till 5 pm. The businesses allowed to open to minimize financial hardships of low income groups, included construction, fertiliser, agricultural goods, import industry, all industrial and commercial entities that are part of the supply chain of food items, medicines, pharmacy, agriculture, fuel, media, banks and philanthropic organisations. Shops of dry cleaners, electricians, plumbers, stationery and hair dressers etc will open under standard operating procedures (SoPs). The transport of all goods in the country shall also continue to take place without interruption. But shopping malls, markets, cinema houses, sports stadiums, educational institutions and public places will remain completely closed

Top ulema and scholars of all schools of thought announced to reopen mosques for congregational prayers and taraweeh in coming Ramadan, rejecting the government's restrictions allowing only five worshipers in prayers three weeks back, but said mosques would observe all government SoPs and take precautionary measures. At a press conference, Mufti Taqi Usmani, Mufti Munibur Rehman and others said the government's ban on mosque prayers were unjustified as crowds violating SoPs were seen

everywhere, especially in markets, ration distributions and political meetings. They urged people coming to mosques to observe precautions, including practicing social distancing, use sanitisers, wear masks and perform ablution at homes. They said mosques would remove carpets, clean floors, and ensure sanitizers and soaps available. They said by arresting prayer leaders and lodging FIRs against them, the government violated its agreement with the clerics, demanded immediate release and quashing of cases.

**April 15, 2020**

US President Donald Trump announced halting its share of \$400 m annual funding to the World Health Organization (to its \$4.8 billion budget), accusing the world body of severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus, bungling the response and failing to accurately assess and timely communicate the disease's threat in China which would have contained it "with very little deaths". Trumps' move was seen as an attempt to deflect scrutiny of his own administration's slow response to the outbreak. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said, it was unwise and untimely since WHO's role was vital in the fight against the virus.

**April 17, 2020**

COVID-19 cases witnessed a sharp increase as 497 were reported in 24 hours, and rose to 7,404, while 11 died during the last 24 hours which took the death toll to 138. Out of total 7,404 cases, Sindh has 2,217, Punjab 3,391, KP 993, Balochistan 351, Islamabad 154, Gilgit-Baltistan 250 and AJK 48. Out of total 138 deaths, KP reported 45, Sindh 47, Balochistan 5, Gilgit-Baltistan 3, Punjab 37 and Islamabad one death. Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz Al al-Sheikh warned that Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan and Eid Al Fitr should be performed at home if the coronavirus outbreak continues. Saudi Arabia in mid-March stopped people performing regular and Friday prayers inside mosques. The kingdom has 6,380 cases of COVID-19, and 83 deaths so far.

**April 18, 2020**

Government conditionally lifted a ban on congregation prayers in mosques, provided strict SoPs and social distancing observed in the coming Ramadan. A meeting of scholars from all schools of thought and government ministers chaired by president Arif Alvi at the President House agreed on a 20-point code of conduct for opening mosques and allowing Taraweeh prayers in Ramadan.

**April 19, 2020**

Coronavirus deaths in Pakistan rose to 169 with record 24 new deaths in a day, as the number of infections reached 8,411. Out of total cases, Punjab has 3,822, Sindh 2,537, KP 1,137, Balochistan 432, Islamabad 171, Gilgit-Baltistan 263 and Azad Kashmir 49. So far 56 people died in Sindh, 41 in Punjab, 60 in KP, 2 in Islamabad, 5 in Balochistan and 3 in GB.

Saudi Arabia's top council of religious clergy urged the Muslims worldwide to pray at home during Ramadan if their countries required social distancing to combat coronavirus. Saudi Grand Mufti Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Aal-e-Sheikh had appealed Muslims to offer Taraweeh and Eid prayers at home if the coronavirus situation continued.

**April 20, 2020**

Crude oil prices crashed below \$0 for the first time in history, amid a coronavirus-induced surplus supply, recording a stunning minus \$37.63 a barrel as desperate traders paid to get rid of oil after the world was left with practically no storage capacity. Refiners processing far below than normal, so hundreds of millions of barrels were stocked into storage facilities worldwide. Traders have hired vessels just to anchor them and fill them with the excess oil. A record 160 million barrels is sitting in tankers around the world.

**April 21, 2020**

Saudi religious authorities cut down Taraweeh prayers at Holy Kaaba and Masjid Nabawi Makkah to 10 Rakaat instead of regular 20 in the holy month of Ramadan performed by only the staff without public attendance, under persisting coronavirus fears. Head of the Two Holy Mosques, Sheikh Dr. Abdurrahman bin Abdulaziz Al Sudais, said Aitakaf had been cancelled at both the mosques, while Umrah pilgrimage will remain suspended until further notice.

COVID-19 cases in Pakistan approached 10,000, as they rose to 9,739 with the death toll reaching 209. Total cases in Sindh are 3,053, Punjab 4,328, KP 1,345, Balochistan 495, Islamabad 185, Gilgit-Baltistan 283 and Azad Jammu and Kashmir 50. Death toll in KP is 80, Sindh 66, Balochistan 6, Gilgit-Baltistan 3, Punjab 51, and three in Islamabad.

**April 23, 2020**

Following attacks on 5G internet towers in European countries and China spurred by social media calls, Twitter announced removing comments calling to destroy 5G internet towers, backing a conspiracy

theory that linked 5G to the coronavirus spread.

Twitter said it broadened policy to remove unverified claims inciting harmful activity, to the destruction or damage of critical 5G infrastructure, or to widespread panic, social unrest, or large-scale disorder.

**April 24, 2020**

About 1.8 b Muslims across the world began a bleak month of Ramadan fasting under COVID-19 pandemic locked down, with cancelled iftar feasts, suspended mosque prayers and festive shopping and charities, dampening Ramazan spirit like never before in history. In majority of Muslim countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia, grand religious authorities had banned or drastically curtailed congregational taraweeh night prayers, urging believers to perform them at home, and warning that Eid congregation could also be cancelled if threat persisted.

As coronavirus cases rose to 11,700 with deaths rising to 248, government extended the lockdown to May 9, mid of Ramadan.

**April 25, 2020**

Saudi Kingdom abolished flogging as a form of punishment, to be replaced by prison sentences or fines, or a mixture of both. Country's top court, General Commission for the Supreme Court, announced the decision was "an extension of the human rights reforms introduced under the direction of King Salman and the direct supervision of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman." Awwad Alwwad, president of the Kingdom's Human Rights Commission, said "This reform is a momentous step forward in Saudi Arabia's human rights agenda, and merely one of the many recent reforms in the Kingdom."

As the death toll from coronavirus crossed 200,000, infecting over 2.8 million, leaving half of humanity locked down, an effective cure is still far off despite the UN pushing the world to speed up vaccine development. The World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that recovering from coronavirus may not protect people against re-infection. WHO also warned western governments starting to ease lockdown restrictions after the daily death toll seems to be falling, a sign hopeful epidemiologists had been looking for. WHO said it risked a second wave of infections. The United States is the hardest-hit country with 53,000 deaths and over 900,000 infections. Europe is the continent hardest hit with 1,249,334 cases and 119,621 deaths, more than three quarters of those deaths in Italy, France, Spain and Britain. Italy tops the death list with 26,334 followed by Spain 22,902, France

22,245 and Britain 20,319. In Asia Iran is the worst hit with 5,650 deaths.

#### **April 26, 2020**

After flogging, Saudi kingdom also abolished death punishment for accused under 18 years. It also applied to those who were minors (below 18 in Saudi law) when they committed crimes. Instead, the minor accused will receive a prison sentence of no longer than 10 years in a juvenile detention facility. Human Rights Commission president Awwad Alawwad, citing the royal decree said, the change helped the Kingdom in establishing a more modern penal code.

As the graph of daily coronavirus deaths slowed down or levelled in some hard-hit western countries like US, France, Italy, Spain, Saudi Arabia, governments began easing lockdown measures to slowly reopen economies after nearly two months to avoid a sudden rush back to normal life -- and the risk of a second wave of infections -- amid warnings from the World Health Organisation that recovered people might not be immune to reinfection. Spain let children out to play and ride bicycles in parks and streets, while Italy eased restrictions but said schools would reopen in September. Business in some European countries could be reopened next week with new SoPs, Saudi Arabia lifted a 24-hour curfew for a few hours in many cities except the holy city of Makkah.

The Pakistani government declared the persistence of coronavirus till June, after which it would be controlled. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health, Dr Zafar Mirza, said Europe and America are likely to control the pandemic till May as some stability at the global level was appearing.

#### **April 28, 2020**

After many Arabian countries raised concerns over Muslim persecution in India, including Oman, UAE and Kuwait, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has reentered India into the list of countries persecuting religious minorities and violating religious freedoms, recommending Washington to impose targeted sanctions by freezing those

## **MAY 2020**

#### **May 2, 2020**

As the US-Taliban peace deal in doldrums with the continued violence and Kabul's refusal to release Taliban prisoners, the US military in Afghanistan warned both Taliban and Kabul regime to "return to the political path" or face tough response. In a rare

individuals' assets and barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities. The USCIRF annual report put India in the list of 13 countries of "particular concern" citing Modi government's policies and discriminatory laws against Muslim population. It said India has the worst and most alarming violations in religious freedoms, citing "The Citizenship (Amendment) Act in India that put millions of Muslims to detention, deportation, and statelessness when the government completes its planned nationwide National Register of Citizens." The USCIRF Commissioner appreciated Pakistan's efforts saying, Islamabad has been willing to engage in dialogue about how religious freedom concerns can be addressed."

China accused the US army again for planting coronavirus in Wuhan under cover of military games there weeks before the pandemic began. Western media cited Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian alleging that COVID-19 was created in US military lab, and a US Army reservist Maatje Benassi was the patient zero, who brought the virus registering as a cyclist in military world games in Wuhan and left after becoming wounded in a crash.

#### **April 30, 2020**

Tens of thousands of people rallied in major US cities protesting against the extended lockdown in the wake of coronavirus, calling it unjustified and unnecessary, demanding immediate reopening of businesses.

Prime Minister Imran Khan hinted his helplessness in the country's decision making by saying that the elite decided to impose lockdown after the coronavirus pandemic without thinking of the starvation of the poor. He said Indian PM Modi proved himself cowardly when he locked down entire India at once, forcing millions to starvation. His statement, while addressing a ceremony at Comstech to receive a consignment of ventilators and related medical equipment, came at a time when he had already taken several U-turns in favor of or opposing the lockdown in the country.

open letter addressed to Taliban, US Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Colonel Sonny Leggett demanded all sides must sit down now to evolve future political peace. In a short reply on Twitter, Taliban Zabihullah Mujahid scolded the US for making

"provocative statements", saying "We are committed to our end, you honor your own obligations."

After the anti-lockdown protests spread to major cities, more US states eased coronavirus lockdowns despite another spike in deaths, as US president Trump approved an experimental drug for emergency use on coronavirus patients. The drug Remdesivir, an antiviral drug initially developed to treat Ebola, was approved after a major trial found that it boosted recovery in serious COVID-19 patients. It incorporates itself into the virus's genome, short-circuiting its replication process.

An emergency field hospital erected in New York's Central Park to treat COVID-19 patients has been closed, as the Samaritan's Purse, a US-based Christian global relief agency running it announced coronavirus cases continued to decline in the city.

#### **May 3, 2020**

Tanzanian President John Magufuli suspected a "dirty game" in coronavirus testing, casting doubts over the figures shown on media, saying he had secretly tested a variety of animals, fruits and vehicle oil samples, including a papaya, a quail and a goat which proved "positive". A chemistry graduate himself, the president ordered authorities to investigate "sabotage" at the national laboratory after virus cases multiplied several times within days, saying the imported reagents could be programmed and technicians could have been bought to mislead, and the people tested positive may not be sick at all.

With 20 deaths in 24 hours, the death toll of coronavirus in Pakistan reached 462 and total cases rose to 20,134. Sindh reported 7,465 cases, Punjab 7,494, KP 3,129, Balochistan 1,218, Islamabad 393, Gilgit-Baltistan 364 and AJK 71. KP reported 180 deaths, Sindh 130, Balochistan 21, Gilgit-Baltistan 3, Punjab 121, and Islamabad 4.

As the coronavirus pandemic showed signs of slowing down, Europe prepared for a further cautious easing of lockdown restrictions, as hard-hit Italy with the second highest number of deaths set to follow Spain in allowing people outside after a two-month lockdown, to stroll in parks and visit relatives.

#### **May 4, 2020**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) again denied the claims of US president Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that COVID-19 originated from a Chinese lab in Wuhan city, saying Washington had provided no evidence or data to support its "speculative" claims. WHO emergencies director

Michael Ryan said in the absence of evidence this claim remains speculative.

The Supreme Court questioned the lack of transparency and harmony in PTI government's measures for controlling the coronavirus, and directed the government to formulate a unified policy across the country. A full bench headed by chief justice Gulzar Ahmad hearing a suo motu notice says the lack of coordinated policy was the reason the federal government failed to deliver.

#### **May 5, 2020**

The 2020 Pulitzer Prize in feature photography was awarded to three Associated Press photographers based in Indian held Kashmir, Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand who opened a window into the iron-curtain valley showing the world everyday life under Indian occupation army, finding ways to sneak their pictures out of the unprecedented lockdown, suspension of internet and phone service under the longest sweeping curfew in history. They recalled risking their lives, snaking around roadblocks, sometimes taking cover in strangers' homes and hiding cameras in vegetable bags, capturing images of protests, police and army action and the daily life of captive people. They hang around at the airport to persuade travelers to carry the photo files out with them to the AP's office in New Delhi. "It was always cat-and-mouse," they recalled.

#### **May 6, 2020**

Hundreds of celebrities, stars, scientists and Nobel Laureates demanded radical changes in the world to reverse the unbridled pursuit of profits and consumerism killing the life and ecosystem, rather than "a return to normal" after the coronavirus lockdowns. In an open letter they signed published in the French daily Le Monde, Hollywood stars Madonna, Robert de Niro, Cate Blanchett, Jane Fonda, Marion Cotillard and Monica Bellucci, besides noted scientists and Nobel laureates including peace prize winner Muhammad Yunus, warned this tragic pandemic was a chance for humanity to "mend its ways". It said "the ongoing ecological catastrophe is a meta-crisis, demanding not mere adjustments but systemic changes, a profound overhaul of our goals, values, and radical transformation of economies to help save the planet. "Unlike a pandemic, a global ecological collapse will have immeasurable consequences," it said. "Blind obsession with consumerism and productivity have led the world to deny the value of life itself, causing pollution, climate change, and the destruction of the planet itself, it said.

**May 7, 2020**

Despite that death toll of coronavirus touching 600 and affected nearing 25,000, the government decided to substantially ease the lockdown from May 9 after consensus with the provinces. But the shopping malls, mega stores, restaurants, hotels, marriage halls, cinema halls, automobile manufacturers, inter- intra-city transport, trains will remain shut. Ban on concerts, public rallies, sport events will continue, while educational institutions will be closed till July 15 as all board exams of classes 9th to 12th were canceled.

**May 8, 2020**

With the addition of record 1,791 new cases in a day, Pakistan dropped two points in global ranking in respect to COVID-19, from 24th to 22nd after having 26,806 total cases and 622 deaths, as PTI government set to lift lockdown restrictions substantially to help restore businesses and industry. Sindh reported 9,691 cases 176 deaths, Punjab 10,033 cases 194 deaths, KP 4,327 cases 221 deaths, Balochistan 1,725 cases 24 deaths, Islamabad 558 cases 4 deaths, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) 394 cases 3 deaths and Azad Kashmir (AJK) 78 cases.

**May 9, 2020**

United States prevented voting on a UN Security Council resolution for a ceasefire in various conflicts around the world to help troubled nations better fight the coronavirus pandemic, after agreeing to its text a day earlier. The State Department spokesperson said Washington was concerned that China would use this resolution to advance false narratives about its response to the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan.

**May 10, 2020**

Easing lockdowns countries complained of re-emergence of COVID-19 as many countries registered a sharp surge in infections and even China reported the first case in Wuhan after more than a month following the lifting of lockdown. European and Asian countries registering rise in COVID-19 cases fear a re-emergence, while the European and US authorities were struggling to control and calm down the anti-lockdown protests.

**May 11, 2020**

As Pakistani government allowed partial reopening of markets after nearly six weeks of lockdown, desperate people thronged the markets in a near mad rush with no care for SOPs and masks protection, raising concerns for a faster spread of coronavirus.

Russia surpassed Italy to become the country with third highest coronavirus cases (221,344), behind the US and Spain.

As FBI, the security and investigation agency of US, formally accused Chinese hackers of trying to steal the research of developing coronavirus vaccine, both the countries also engaged in a diplomatic war over restricting the visas and expelling each other's journalists. Following Washington's curtailing Chinese journalists visas to a maximum of 90 days, against the usual practice of according to the length of their deployment, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman warned of a similar move in coming days if the decision was not reversed.

**May 12, 2020**

With reopening of schools not in sight in near future despite closure of two months, Sindh government announced promoting students of class I to VIII to next grades without exams, but allowing schools to take exams of key subjects afterwards. The decision to promote students of class IX and X will be taken by a special committee on the next day in consultation with the representatives of public and private examination boards, and will be approved by the government.

The US Supreme Court will take up the most politically charged case of the year — President Donald Trump's refusal to turn over his tax returns and financial records to Congress and a New York prosecutor, a case that may define the limits of presidential immunity. The judges confined at home by the novel coronavirus pandemic will question lawyers for both sides by telephone to be broadcast live.

**May 13, 2020**

After two days of frantic shopping without SOPs, Sindh government sealed several markets for not observing SOPs, and announced that a fine of maximum one million rupees could be imposed on violators. The traders protested against the dist administration complaining they had been deprived of buyers with Eid just round the corner.

Dubai, the hub of UAE business and tourism, has reopened public parks, private beaches with physical distancing SOPs, after nearly two months of coronavirus restrictions. Earlier, on April 24, Dubai had eased a full curfew to eight hours at night, and allowed dine-in restaurants and shopping malls to reopen at limited capacity. Mosques, cinemas, public beaches and nightclubs remain closed.

**May 14, 2020**

Government announced promoting students of class 9 and 11 without exams, while results of students of classes 10 and 12 would be evaluated on the basis of marks obtained in classes 9 and 11, provided the students had cleared all the subjects, and these students would be awarded three per cent extra marks. special exams would be held between September and November for students of four categories, first those students wishing to improve class 11 results in class 12, second those students who were to appear for composite exams this year, third those students who wish to improve their results in a few subjects, and fourth those students who fail in more than 40 per cent subjects in class 11. These students must inform their boards by July 1.

World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned citing a study that coronavirus may never go away and populations will have to learn to live with it just as they have with HIV. Besides, a US immunologist Dr Rick Bright who was dismissed from state service after he had warned Trump admin was not taking necessary measures to prevent coronavirus spread several months ago, has again warned of the US having the darkest winter in modern history if the Trump administration didn't take preventive measures against rebound of the virus. The US Federal Reserve has also made gloomy forecasts against the prolonged shutdowns to stem the virus spread, saying it could cause lasting economic damage to the country.

**May 15, 2020**

As the total coronavirus cases reached 38,741 and death toll 834, Prime Minister Imran Khan warned that worldwide health experts believed vaccine cure could take another year to be found and that the nation would have to learn to live with the virus until at least the year end. He requested the provinces to open public transport for providing relief and livelihood opportunities to the people.

As UK struggles to gradually reopen after lockdown, London mayor Sadiq Khan announced banishing cars from streets in central London, making it car-free zone to encourage more walking and cycling and help public transport cope with social distancing restrictions.

**May 16, 2020**

While the public protests are fading away in Europe as the lockdown restrictions being eased, the protestors are increasing in Germany against tough lockdown measures or a purported vaccination of the world plan

by Bill Gates and the likely cut in civil liberties. The growing wave of demonstrations saw tens of thousands in major cities, displaying anger against the policies of chancellor Angela Merkel.

**May 17, 2020**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani signed a power-sharing deal with his arch political rival Dr Abdullah Abdullah to end a four month political crisis that had been allowing Taliban to gain more political ground following their peace deal with the US. Abdullah who had declared him a parallel president after a swearing in ceremony in March, the day Ghani was sworn in as president, will now lead the National Reconciliation High Commission and members of his team will be included in the cabinet.

**May 18, 2020**

Supreme Court ordered reopening of shopping malls and markets for the whole week all-over the country, overruling the decision of National Coordination Committee for maintaining complete lockdown on Saturday and Sunday except for essential services. Hearing a suo moto case regarding combating the coronavirus pandemic, a full bench termed it against the fundamental rights, warning that closure of markets for long would cause a human disaster as reviving industry would become difficult and millions of workers could starve.

**May 19, 2020**

After India annoyed Nepal last month ignoring its protests against an 80-kilometre road Delhi built in Uttarakhand state leading up to Lipu Lekh pass disputed between the two countries, Nepal took a tougher stance and drawn-up a new political map that includes strategically important territories of Lipu Lekh pass and zones in Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, comprising over 300 square kilometres, and considered important because it is where the Nepalese and Indian borders touch China. Nepal claims the Kalapani region adjoining Lipu Lekh pass, even though Indian troops have been deployed there since India and China fought a border war in 1962, and both India and Nepal had shown Kalapani and Lipu Lekh in their political maps.

**May 20, 2020**

Addressing an online session of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Prime Minister Imran Khan demanded the developed countries to provide debt relief to poorer nations struggling against the coronavirus crisis that had crushed their economies.

**May 21, 2020**

PM Imran Khan's government faced another political crisis after he allowed making public the forensic report on the sugar crisis that also held responsible the sugar mills of his close aide Jahangir Tareen and allied partner from PML-Q Moonis Elahi, Omar Sheharyar, Omni Group and Sharif Group of committing corporate frauds of billions of rupees. The forensic report uncovers the gross misconduct by sugar industry in the form of under-reported sugar sales, sales to unnamed buyers, double booking, over-invoicing, under-invoiced sale of bagasse and molasses causing cost inflation and many other corporate frauds were detected in the transactions of sugar mills.

Saudi Arabia was hit by social media criticism after two Ramadan television drama series on Saudi-controlled network stirred controversy as they test public perceptions of quietly normalizing relations with Zionist state of Israel. Riyadh had already been accused in the recent past of quietly pursuing to furtively build relations on the basis of shared animosity towards Iran like some other Arab states, but the TV shows fuelled speculation that Riyadh is on the verge of openly normalising closer ties with Israel, as as one of the Saudi characters in the shows justifies establishing trade ties with Israel, arguing that Palestinians are the real "enemy" for insulting the kingdom "day and night" despite decades of financial support.

**May 22, 2020**

In a major aviation disaster, a PIA airbus crashed over densely populated area of Model Colony adjacent to Karachi airport, killing at least 97 on board and several residents. The plane coming from Lahore crashed on houses few seconds before touch down in its second attempt to land after the landing gears could not open in the first. Two lucky passengers survived including the president of Bank of Punjab Zafar Masud.

The sons of noted journalist and tough critic of Saudi regime, Jamal Khashoggi who was killed and body dismembered in Saudi consulate in Istanbul in Oct 2018, announced forgiving the killers of their father, a move that can potentially grant leniency to five convicted officials of Saudi intelligence facing death penalty. Khashoggi's murder tarnished the reputation of de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who was believed to have ordered the killing. .

Pakistan Army sent a gift of huge quantity of N-95 masks and medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) against the coronavirus to the US Army as a

gesture of solidarity with the US. 100,000 masks and 25,000 PPEs were transported by a C-130 plane from Islamabad to Andrews Air Force Base Maryland.

**May 23, 2020**

Only two survived in PIA airbus that crashed the previous day on houses, killing 97 on board, while dozens of residents were wounded besides suffering loss of property, as search for more survivors ended. Initial inquiry put the blame on the pilot who failed to inform about the fault in landing gears.

**May 25, 2020**

WHO warned of a second wave hitting the countries where coronavirus infections are declining, and they could still face an "immediate second peak" if they let up preventive measures soon. WHO emergencies head Dr Mike Ryan told a briefing that the world was still in the middle of the first wave of the coronavirus outbreak, and cases are declining in many European countries but still increasing in Central and South America, South Asia and Africa, with total cases went past 5.6 million and total deaths reached over 350,000.

**May 26, 2020**

Delhi's construction of new roads and air strips in disputed border area with China in Galwan valley in Ladakh region, in an attempt to compete with Beijing's spreading Belt and Road initiative, pushed both the countries on the verge of an armed clash after hundreds of soldiers positioned in tents and trenches on both sides of border accusing each other of trespassing the territory where they had fought a war in 1962.

**May 27, 2020**

Thousands of black Americans protested in Minneapolis after a video went viral showing four white policemen pinning a handcuffed black man kneeling on his neck for several minutes despite his pleading "I cant breath, I cant breath" and ultimately choking him to death by ignoring his pleas. The victim named George Floyd was suspected of giving a fake \$ 20 note to a shopkeeper, which was later found out to be not fake, was shown being arrested, handcuffed and laying on the road with policeman sitting on his neck kneeling. Minneapolis mayor Jacob Frey sacked the four officers, after protestors spread in city holding signs saying "Justice for George Floyd" and "Black Lives Matter", and he ignored the calls for them to be prosecuted for murder.

**May 28, 2020**

US Congress authorized sanctions against China for massive human rights violations of Uighur Muslims, accusing Beijing of “state-sponsored cultural genocide” by keeping one million of Uighurs and other Turkish Muslims in Xinjiang region incarcerated in concentration camps in a huge brainwashing campaign with few modern parallels. The House of Representatives voted with just one dissent in favor of the Uighur Human Rights Act, hours after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took a major step to press China on another major issue — the autonomy of Hong Kong. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi warned that if America kept silence against human rights violations in China for commercial interests, then it would lose all moral authority to speak out on HR violations anywhere in the world.

Protests in US city Minneapolis against the police killing of a black man George Floyd grew larger on the second day as thousands of demonstrators clashed with police, looted stores and set fires while police fatally shot a man, fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the angry protestors. UN HR chief Michelle Bachelet voiced alarm demanding US authorities take “serious action” to put an end to police killings of unarmed African Americans, saying the latest was in a long line of killings of unarmed African Americans by US police officers and white supremacists.

Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been sacked from the Malay-centric party he co-founded and led to victory in 2018 general election. The 94-year-old leader immediately challenged the move, and along with four key allies in the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) released a statement saying they refused the sacking. Making a countermove they sacked the party’s working secretary for sending out the termination letters. The drama occurred amid speculation that Mahathir had managed to garner enough support from MPs in the 222-seat legislature to make a dramatic return to the prime ministership for the third time, after his shock removal from power in February.

**May 29, 2020**

Coronavirus epidemic surged rapidly in Pakistan as death of 96 patients on a single day marked the deadliest day so far in the epidemic as 2,363 cases were reported. Four doctors were among the 96 new deaths, 29 of them were in Punjab, 31 in Sindh, 13 in KP, 4 in Islamabad and 19 in Balochistan.

Black Lives Matter protests starting from Minneapolis spread to many other US cities as thousands of protestors looted shops, set fire to police stations and vehicles, while police in Kentucky shot seven protestors, as riots spread beyond Minnesota, to Denver, Colorado and Phoenix. The Kentucky protests were held over the death of a black woman Breonna Taylor who was shot after police entered her home in March. President Trump added fuel to the fire with his tweet saying "These THUGS are dishonouring the memory of George Floyd and I won't let that happen."

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order removing some of the legal protections given to social media platforms, just days after Twitter termed his two tweets as potentially misleading and violated the terms about glorifying violence, and subjected them to fact check. Trump has regularly accused platforms such as Twitter and Facebook of monopolising the opinions and stifling conservative voices, and having "unchecked power" to censure and edit the views of users. He accused Twitter of election interference after it added a warning label to the tweets about claims of widespread fraud in mail-in voting - also known as postal votes. Twitter and other social media platforms strongly condemned the executive order.

**May 30, 2020**

Rapidly spreading coronavirus begun getting out of control in the country that saw over 90 patients dying for the last few days, jumping the death toll to 1,443, and total cases to 68,301. Of the total cases, Sindh has 27,360, Punjab 24,104, Balochistan 4,193, KP 9,540, Gilgit Baltistan 678, Islamabad 2,192 and Azad Jammu and Kashmir 234. KP reported 453 deaths, Punjab 439, Sindh 427, Balochistan 46, Gilgit-Baltistan 11, Islamabad 23, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir 6.

**May 31, 2020**

Curfews, hundreds of arrests and continuous patrolling by US National Guards failed to quell the rioting, arsoning and clashes with police, as thousands of protestors took to streets under Black Lives Matters. Violence spread to dozens of US cities, bringing the country to a civil war like situation. Police fired rubber bullets in many cities to control the mobs including New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Denver, Cincinnati, Portland, Oregon, Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, and Dallas, Louisville, Kentucky.

## JUNE 2020

### 7 June.

Pakistan names Mohammad Sadiq as special envoy for Afghanistan

### 10 June

WHO urges two-week lockdown, more tests. It's says Pakistan among top 10 countries reporting Covid-19 cases; warns govt of high positivity rate with weak surveillance system. Pakistan among latest countries to get Paris Club debt relief. The latest agreements bring to 12 the number of countries to receive debt relief under the deal. Palestinian PM submits 'counter-proposal' to Trump plan. The plan proposes creation of a "sovereign Palestinian state, independent and demilitarised", says Palestinian PM Mohammed Shtayyeh.

### 11 June

Christopher Columbus statue beheaded in Boston  
Boston's mayor Marty Walsh condemned the beheading but added that the statue would be removed pending a decision about its future.

ADB okays \$500m loan to Pakistan

Loan would deliver social protection programmes to the poor and vulnerable, ADB says

### 13 June

Nasa names first woman to head human spaceflight  
"Kathy Lueders has been selected to lead NASA's Human Exploration & Operations Mission Directorate."  
Two 'Indian spies' arrested in Gilgit-Baltistan after crossing LoC.

### 16 June

Steroid drug hailed as 'major breakthrough' in Covid-19 as trial shows it saves lives

"Dexamethasone is inexpensive, on the shelf, and can be used immediately to save lives worldwide," says Peter Horby, an expert.

### 18 June

Kristen Stewart will play Princess Diana in upcoming biopic

Titled Spencer, the film will show Lady Diana's journey of finding herself and who she is meant to be.

## JULY 2020

### July 2, 2020

After sixteen days in the hospital for coronavirus, Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernandez was released. Many hospitals in Honduras are collapsing due to the overwhelming number of COVID cases. On

India, Mexico, Norway, Ireland elected to UN Security Council

"Rather than felicitated, [India] must be held accountable, asked to abide by the UNSC's resolutions," says FO spokesperson. Zehra Nigah given Allama Iqbal Award for new poetry book. Gul Chandni is Ms Nigah's fourth collection of poems.

### 20 June

Lord of the Rings actor Ian Holm dies at 88

The actor died from a Parkinson's related illness.

### 25 June

The WHO reported the first rise in coronavirus cases in Europe since reopening. The WHO has also stated that Africa and South America should still expect a worse peak in the coming future. About 20,000 cases and 700 deaths are being reported each day. On June 25, a court ruled that President Bolsonaro of Brazil is required to wear a mask out in public. The ruling comes as Brazil opens up despite rising cases.

### 27 June

Parts of Delhi, India were placed on alert after locusts swarmed a suburban area. The swarm is one of the worst locust invasions the country has seen in decades. The locusts have destroyed crops across various states.

### 29 June

Shots were fired at a Pakistan stock exchange in Karachi, killing 5 people. Many of the deceased are policemen and security officials. The four attackers have also been killed. The Baluchistan Liberation Army group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### 30 June

China officially passed the controversial national security law proposed last month. This law affects Hong Kong through a loophole in its constitution. China will now be able to enforce these four laws laid out by the bill: secession, subversion against the central Chinese government, terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security. This bill allows Chinese officials to operate in Hong Kong, which has already led to the arrests of many protesters.

July 3, the CDC reported that hundreds of thousands could die from coronavirus in Latin America. So far, 121,000 people have died in Latin America, but the CDC predicts that number could increase by 300,000 by October. On July 3, bars and restaurants in Brazil

reopened, causing officials to fear for the worst. On July 4, after four months of quarantine, England reopened bars and pubs. Many worry this will only worsen the pandemic as weeks before, thousands flocked to beaches without masks. On July 4, about 3,000 residents in 9 tower blocks in Melbourne were told not to leave their homes for any reason for at least five days. At least 23 coronavirus cases were confirmed in two of the estate towers.

**July 4, 2020**

200,000 people in Northern Spain were placed on lockdown after a spike in COVID cases.

**July 6, 2020**

It was reported by CNN that there is a suspected case of the bubonic plague in Mongolia. The bubonic plague caused the Black Death pandemic. The city of Bayannur is now on Level 3 warning of plague prevention until the end of the year. People are urged to practice extra sanitary precautions and avoid hunting and eating animals that could carry the plague.

**July 14, 2020**

The WHO announced that there are over 163 COVID-19 vaccines in development around the world. Only a select few have reached Phase 3, and only 23 are using humans in the clinical trial. Despite Brazil's raising cases, many countries are looking at the South American giant to help with the vaccine. Many hope to use infected Brazilians, as the country has surpassed 2 million cases.

**July 17, 2020**

India recorded 34,956 new cases in just 24 hours, causing the country to surpass 1 million cases overall. India becomes the third nation (after Brazil and the United States) to hit that milestone. On July 18, it was reported that over 2,000 healthcare workers in Ghana have tested positive for coronavirus. Thus far, six have died, devastating the country.

**July 18, 2020**

A fire broke out in France's Nantes Cathedral. The fire is currently being investigated as arson. Officials have stated that the fire is not as devastating as that of Notre Dame, and the roof is still in good condition despite the flames.

**July 20, 2020**

It was reported that Oxford University has made progress in developing a vaccine. The current clinical trial has yielded positive results, triggering an immune response in patients. The UK has ordered 100 million doses of the vaccine. On July 20, France ruled that all masks are mandatory as the number of cases rises.

France's health minister has said there are 400 or 500 clusters of the virus currently. On July 20, a "wartime" lockdown was declared in the city of Urumqi, located in China's Xinjiang. The city contains a large Muslim population and has recorded 47 new cases after having none for 5 months. The lockdown measures are incredibly strict and prevent nearly 3.5 million people from leaving their homes. On July 23, China offered a \$1 billion loan to the Caribbean and Latin America to help countries secure a coronavirus vaccine. On July 25, CNN reported that cases in the Middle East and Northern Africa are on the rise. Iraq and Egypt are seeing some of the highest coronavirus cases in the past few weeks. Iran and Saudi Arabia are seeing another spike after the spread slowed briefly.

**July 20, 2020**

The UK announced that it will suspend the extradition treaty with Hong Kong due to the controversial security law that was passed next month. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab warned Beijing that the UK is watching and keeping track of the rights of Hong Kong citizens.

**July 22, 2020**

A hostage situation in Brazil ended after President Zelensky agreed to endorse a 2005 documentary on animal abuse. The gunman hijacked a bus of 13 people and threatened to blow it up before making his demands.

**July 25, 2020**

Attacks in northern Nigeria left dozens of people dead. Government officials believe the attacks were carried out by militant groups. These attacks have been ongoing since January, but a rise in violence has been noticed.

**July 27, 2020**

China officially closed the US Consulate in Chengdu. The decision comes weeks after the US announced it is closing the Chinese Consulate in Houston. The decision has caused rising tensions.

**July 29, 2020**

A new research report suggested that coronavirus capable of infecting humans may have been undetected in bats for decades. Scientists have stated that the crossover between bats and humans was likely at some point. CNN reported that Bolivian lawmakers are fighting to have the health ministry recognize a toxic cleaning agent as a COVID-19 cure. Health officials have warned that its use could be deadly.

**July 30, 2020**

Russia announced that it plans to have a coronavirus vaccine in just two weeks, as the country strives to be the first to develop it. The lab hopes to gain approval by August 10.

**July 30, 2020**

Four students were arrested under China's new security law. The students were accused of "inciting secession" on social media, which became illegal after the law was passed earlier this month. Other people were arrested for creating banners and slogans for protests.

**July 31, 2020**

Brazil's President Bolsonaro stated he had "mold in his lungs" after his wife tested positive for COVID-19. Bolsonaro tested positive a few weeks earlier and believes he now has an infection.

**July 31, 2020**

Vietnam recorded its first two COVID-19 deaths: a 70-year-old man and a 61-year-old woman.

**July 31, 2020**

Hong Kong announced that it is seeking to arrest 6 activists who have fled to the UK.

**AUGUST 2020**

**August 3, 2020**

Juan Carlos, the former king of Spain, left the country after much scrutiny about financial mishandlings. Carlos is best known for steering the country from dictatorship to democracy. Many officials have stated that the king has left, but they refuse to reveal his location.

**August 4, 2020**

A giant explosion in Beirut, Lebanon killed 135 people and injured another 5000. Many people are still missing after the explosion, and over 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes. On August 5, it was revealed that the blast may have been caused by stored ammonium nitrate. Many have blamed a fire at the firecracker warehouse.

**August 5, 2020**

France recorded its largest number of cases in the last two months. The country had 1,695 cases in the last 24 hours. With 30,000 deaths, France now has the third-highest deaths in Europe, following the UK and Italy.

**August 7, 2020**

India officially passed 2 million coronavirus cases. The country hit 1 million only three weeks prior. India is the third country to reach 2 million marks, behind the US (at 4.9 million cases) and Brazil (at 2.9 million cases). On August 7, Africa reached 1 million coronavirus cases across the continent; however, the number is expected to be higher as only a select few are being tested.

**August 9, 2020**

Protests in Belarus erupted after the election results came in. Current President Alexander Lukashenko beat opposition candidate Sventia Tikhanovskya after receiving 80% of the votes. Tikhanovskya has refused

to accept the election results, stating that it was clear more people voted for him. Riots erupted as exit polls were released, resulting in 3,000 arrests and many injuries. Several protesters later stormed ministries as the violent protests escalated. On August 11, it was reported that Tikhanovskya has fled to Lithuania amid a government crackdown on protests.

**August 11, 2020**

New Zealand reinstated coronavirus restrictions after the first locally transmitted case in 102 days. Four new cases appeared in Auckland, which will go back to Level 3 restrictions for the time being.

**August 12, 2020**

Russia announced that it has developed the world's first vaccination for COVID. Various health experts have questioned the reliability of this vaccine, as it has only spent about a week in Phase 3 testing (a phase which normally continues over various months). Russia has yet to release scientific data regarding the new vaccination.

**August 18, 2020**

Australia struck a deal with AstraZeneca that would give a COVID-19 vaccine to all its citizens for free. Advanced trials are underway as the company works with Oxford University. On

**August 18, 2020**

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his prime minister were arrested by soldiers during a military coup. The coup comes after mass anti-government protests and an uprising of Islamist militarists. Upon his arrest, Keita announced his resignation in a televised address. He stated that the government would be dissolved to avoid bloodshed.

**August 24, 2020**

It was reported that Kim Jong Un is allegedly in a coma, and photos of him alive and well in May were fake. The rumor goes on to state that his sister, Kim Yo Jong is geared up to be his successor. On August 26, South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young stated that he did not believe there was enough evidence to suggest that Kim Jong Un is in a coma or that his sister would be the successor. Many officials have stated that Kim Jong Un has delegated to top officials, one of whom is Kim Yo Jong, to ease his workload.

**August 26, 2020**

Kim Jong Un appeared at a party meeting, warning North Korea about the dangers of the coronavirus pandemic and Typhoon Bavi, which is making headway towards the country. In his appearance, Kim Jong Un appeared healthy and well, briefly silencing the rumors

**September 2020**

**September 1**

The Punjab government has created 15 full-fledged administrative departments in the newly-established south Punjab secretariat but without a proper transition plan in place.

Lebanon's under-fire leaders on August 31, 2020 designated a new prime minister, diplomat Mustapha Adib, to tackle the country's deep political and economic crisis, hours before French President Emmanuel Macron was due to visit.

A US-Israeli delegation, led by White House adviser Jared Kushner, arrived on August 31, 2020, on the historic first commercial flight from Tel Aviv to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE.

Former Indian president Pranab Mukherjee, a veteran powerbroker once described in leaked US diplomatic cables as 'the ultimate Congress Party fixer', died on Monday at the age of 84.

**September 3**

Organization of Islamic Cooperation Chief Dr Yousef Al-Othaimeen yesterday pledged unstinted support to the Kashmir cause.

A seasoned officer of the Police Service of Pakistan Muhammad Umar Sheikh has been appointed as Lahore Capital City Police Officer.

In another breakthrough for Israel's rapprochement with the Arab Gulf, and a major boon for Israeli air travel, Saudi Arabia on September 2, 2020 announced that it will henceforth allow flights from "all countries"

of his coma. He also has still not reported any coronavirus cases in the country.

**August 28, 2020**

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan announced his resignation, citing health concerns. Abe, the longest-serving prime minister, suffers from colitis, an incurable bowel disease. He has expressed his regret that he must resign during a pandemic. Abe had managed to control his disease for 8 years before symptoms returned.

**August 31, 2020**

India entered a new phase of reopening which will see subways and trains. The reopening comes despite the fact that the country's coronavirus cases are surging. Just last week, the country recorded 85,687 cases in a 24 hour period

to cross over its airspace on flights to or from the United Arab Emirates.

**September 5**

The Defence Day will be observed in the country with national zeal and fervour on September 5, 2020.

Prime Minister Imran Khan on September 5, 2020 announced an ambitious Rs1,113 billion package for the development of the country's financial capital and set up a coordination and implementation committee led by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to bring all 'stakeholders and authorities' together to make key decisions, remove hurdles and ensure their implementation.

Sudan on September 5, 2020 declared a three-month national state of emergency after record-breaking torrential floods that cost 99 lives.

**September 9**

The Pakistan Army has shot down an Indian spying drone along the heavily militarised Line of Control (LoC) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Prime Minister Imran Khan on September 9, 2020 took a significant decision of appointing experienced personnel from the open market in grades 19 and 20 and approving 88 additional posts in the Secretariat Group.

The US announced a sharp cut on September 9, 2020 to troop numbers in Iraq, as President Donald Trump seeks to honour his pledge to halt the country's 'endless wars' overseas, with just two months to go until the election.

**September 10**

Prof Dr Asghar Zaidi, the Vice-Chancellor of Government College University (GCU) Lahore, has been given additional charge of the post of Vice-Chancellor, Baba Guru Nanak University.

British actress Diana Rigg, who came to fame in the cult 1960s TV show, *The Avengers*, and enjoyed a distinguished and varied career on stage and screen from James Bond to *Game of Thrones*, died on September 10, 2020 aged 82.

**September 12**

Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on September 12, 2020 formally launched 'Nai Zindagi' and 'Punjab Human Capital Investment Project' at a cost of Rs53.25 billion.

**September 15**

The National Assembly on September 15, 2020 passed a Financial Action Task Force related bill, the Anti-Terrorism Act (amendment) Bill, 2020, while another bill was laid in the house that suggested punishment of up to two years, or up to Rs500,000 fine or both for 'maligning' armed forces of the country and their personnel.

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed agreements on September 15, 2020 for normalising relations with Israel, becoming the latest Arab states to break a longstanding taboo in a strategic realignment of Middle Eastern countries.

**September 19**

A contingent of Pakistan Armed Forces participated in the opening ceremony of the multinational military exercise, Kavkaz 2020, held at Astrakhan region, Russia.

**October 2020**

**October 1**

The government on September 30, 2020 designated Vice Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi as the next Chief of Naval Staff (CNS).

Kuwait's late ruler Sheikh Sabah al Ahmad Al-Sabah, an acclaimed diplomat and mediator, was laid to rest on Wednesday, shortly after his half-brother was sworn in as the new emir.

**October 5**

Pakistan ranked top in Asia having the highest response to social protection amid COVID-19 crises at a global conference hosted by the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) on October 5, 2020.

**September 22**

The Palestinians have stepped down from a key Arab League role in protest at the regional bloc's failure to take a stand against Israeli-Arab deals, an official said on September 22, 2020.

**September 24**

Kashmiri photojournalist Masrat Zahra on September 24, 2020 received the Peter Mackler prize for courageous and ethical journalism thanks to her coverage of women impacted by decades of unrest in India held Kashmir.

Dean Jones, the former Australia batsman, has died of a heart attack aged 59. Jones was in Mumbai as part of the commentary team at Star Sports for IPL 2020 when he passed away on September, 24 September.

**September 27**

Arch foes Armenia and Azerbaijan on September 27, 2020 accused each other of initiating deadly clashes that claimed at least 23 lives over a decades-long territorial dispute and threatened to draw in regional powers Russia and Turkey.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on September 27, 2020 unveiled a new naval ballistic missile with a potential range of over 700 kilometres (430 miles), local media reported, following months of tensions with the arch-enemy United States.

Former Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh, who brought New Delhi and Islamabad tantalisingly close to a peace deal over Kashmir in Agra, died here on September 27, 2020 at the age of 82.

Americans Harvey Alter and Charles Rice together with Briton Michael Houghton won the Nobel Medicine Prize on October 5, 2020 for the discovery of the Hepatitis C virus, paving the way for a cure, the Nobel jury said.

**October 6**

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa inaugurated state-of-the-art Software Technology Park, an initiative of the Special Communication Organisation (SCO), in Gilgit.

Roger Penrose of Britain, Reinhard Genzel of Germany and Andrea Ghez of the US won the Nobel Physics Prize on October 6, 2020 for their research into what the Nobel committee called 'one of the most exotic phenomena in the universe, the black hole'.

**October 8**

The first police station of Bajaur tribal district was opened in Qazafi town, the tehsil headquarters of Utmankhel, on October 8, 2020.

The Roosevelt Hotel, a Pakistani possession in the heart of Manhattan, announced on October 8, 2020 it would shut its doors on guests permanently on Oct 31.

The National Resilience Day was observed on Thursday (October 8) to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic October 2005 earthquake.

Turkish troops on October 8, 2020 reopened parts of a Cyprus seaside resort that became a ghost town amid war in 1974, sparking controversy days ahead of an election in the Turkish north.

American poet Louise Gluck won the 2020 Nobel Literature Prize on October 8, 2020, an unexpected choice known for themes of childhood and family life that draw inspiration from myths and classical motifs.

**October 10**

Pakistan and International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) on October 12, 2020 has signed agreement amounting \$386 million for the import of oil and LNG.

US economists Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson won the Nobel Economics Prize on October 12, 2020 for work on commercial auctions, including for goods and services difficult to sell in traditional ways such as radio frequencies, the Nobel Committee said.

Russia said on October 12, 2020 it was expelling two Bulgarian diplomats in a tit-for-tat move after two Russians were ordered out of the EU country on accusations of spying for the military.

Germany-Researchers on the world's biggest mission to the North Pole returned to Germany on Monday, bringing home devastating proof of a dying Arctic Ocean and warnings of ice-free summers in just decades.

**October 15**

President Dr Arif Alvi on October 15, 2020 conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz upon Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi during a ceremony held at Aiwan-i-Sadr.

Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov resigned on October 15, 2020, leaving power in the hands of a nationalist rival whose supporters freed him from jail last week.

**October 18**

Turkish Cypriots in breakaway northern Cyprus on Sunday elected rightwing nationalist Ersin Tatar, backed by Ankara, in a run-off poll, at a time of heightened tensions in the eastern Mediterranean.

**October 21**

After a four-year journey, Nasa's robotic spacecraft Osiris-Rex briefly touched down on asteroid Bennu's boulder-strewn surface to collect rock and dust samples in a precision operation 200 million miles (330 million kilometres) from Earth.

Noted naat khwaan Mehboob Ahmed Hamdani passed away here on Wednesday. He was 72.

**October 24**

Polling stations opened October 24, 2020 in Egypt for parliamentary elections in which there was little doubt of a sweeping victory for supporters of hardline President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi.

More than 150 monuments and buildings across Europe will be lit up blue on October 24, 2020 to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations.

**October 26**

The federal government on October 26, 2020 has reconstituted the Pay and Pension Commission by appointing former federal secretary Nargis Sethi as its chairperson.

There may be far more water on the Moon than previously thought, according to two studies published on October 26, 2020 raising the tantalising prospect that astronauts on future space missions could find refreshment and maybe even fuel on the lunar surface.

**October 28**

The Committee to Protect Journalists has released its Global Impunity Index 2020 where it spotlights countries where journalists have been slain and their killers set free.

Pakistan is the ninth worst country on the list, just rising up one place from 2019, when it was the eighth worst country. Somalia, Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan are on the top of the list, in that order, because of war and political instability.

Like other parts of the globe, World Stroke Day will be observed across Pakistan today (October 28, 2020) to raise awareness about prevention and treatment of the condition, and ensure better care and support for survivors.

**October 29**

PTI Senator Faisal Javed October 29, 2020 resigned as the head of Pak-French Parliamentary Friendship

**November 2020**

**November 4**

Pakistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina on November 4, 2020 signed a bilateral readmission agreement paving the way for repatriation of nearly 3,000 illegal Pakistani migrants.

Federal government has approved three-year "Rolling Spectrum Strategy 2020-2023" to ensure fast telecom network.

The federal Cabinet has posted Zahida Parveen, a BS-22 officer of Information group as Secretary Information, Establishment and Broadcasting Division has issued the notification in this regard.

**November 6**

Bangladesh opened its first Islamic school for transgender Muslims on November 6, 2020 with clerics calling it a first step towards integrating the discriminated minority into society.

**November 8**

Opening ceremony of Pak-Russian Federation Joint exercise 'DRUZHBA-V' was held at Tarbela on November 8, 2020.

Prominent constitutional lawyer and activist Hina Jilani was elected as the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) for the next three years in an election concluded here on November 8, 2020.

**November 11**

Pakistan Navy Ship ZULFIQAR, with embarked helicopter visited Port Aksaz (Turkey) to participate in Exercise MAVI BALINA 2020, the 5<sup>th</sup> PN-TN Bilateral Exercise TURGUTREIS-V and Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) with Turkish Navy.

Bahrain's Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the world's longest-serving prime minister who had held the post since independence in 1971, died on November 11, 2020 at the age of 84, state media announced.

**November 16**

Justice Qaiser Rashid Khan was sworn in as the acting chief justice of the Peshawar High Court here at the Governor's House on November 16, 2020.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country jumped by 67.9 per cent month on-month to \$317.3

Group to protest the French president's support to the publication of blasphemous sketches of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

million in October compared to \$189m in September, latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan showed on November 16, 2020.

Maia Sandu, a former World Bank economist who favours closer ties with the European Union, has won Moldova's presidential runoff vote, decisively defeating the staunchly pro-Russian incumbent, according to preliminary results released on November 16, 2020.

Four astronauts were successfully launched on the SpaceX Crew Dragon 'Resilience' to the International Space Station on November 16, 2020, the first of what the US hopes will be many routine missions following a successful test flight in late spring.

**November 18**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has temporarily suspended issuance of new visit visas for Pakistan and 11 other countries, the Foreign Office (FO) said on November 18, 2020.

Iraq and Saudi Arabia on November 18, 2020 reopened their land border for the first time in 30 years, with closer trade ties between the two countries irking allies of Riyadh's rival, Tehran.

**November 20**

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar on November 20, 2020 inaugurated Ba-himmat Bazurg Programme and distributed cards among the elderly women.

Pakistan celebrated World Children's Day on Friday with 30 iconic monuments and landmarks across the country turning blue from Khyber Pass to Mazar-i-Quaid in Karachi, from Lahore Fort to Quaid-i-Azam Residency in Ziarat and through Pakistan Monument in Islamabad.

Pakistan's rank on trading across border index jumped by 28 places in 2020 mainly due to considerably improved implementation of several measures under the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) contributing to Ease of Doing Business.

**November 22**

Sahibzada Muhammad Ali Sultan won the final round of 5<sup>th</sup> Thal Desert Jeep Rally on November 22, 2020

A 45.5metre (150-foot) deep diving pool with artificial underwater caves and Mayan ruins, the world's deepest such structure, opened near Warsaw this weekend.

**November 25**

The Punjab Higher Education Department (HED) and the School Education Department (SED) on November 25, 2020 announced closure of the public and private

**December 2020**

**December 1**

Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau announces COVID-19 restrictions will be maintained with the US and borders will not open until an improvement in seen in the country's COVID-19 response and case rates.

Information Minister Shibli Faraz and SAPM on Health Dr Faisal Sultan announce the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine in the first quarter of 2021. It was also announced that Economic Coordination Committee's (ECC) suggested the federal cabinet to allocate \$150 million to the acquirement of the vaccine which was approved. According to the spokespeople, the vaccine will be distributed in three stages to the public; healthcare workers will make up the first stage, followed elderly and individuals with terminal illnesses in the second stage, and then the general public will make up the third stage.

South Korean government announces that the popular musical group BTS will be allowed to defer their mandatory military service until they turn 30. The Military Service Act was enacted so that the K-pop stars who boost the tourism and economy of South Korea be exempted temporarily from serving in the military as is legally mandatory for able-bodied South Korean men (ages 18-28).

Fraser Island in Australia burns from bushfires which have so far claimed over half the island. The island is said to have a unique ecosystem which is permanently altered due to the fires.

Pfizer and BioNTech seek out the European Medicines Agency for approval of their developed vaccines.

schools, colleges and universities in the province due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona, widely regarded as one of the game's greatest ever players, died of a heart attack on November 25, 2020.

**December 2, 2020**

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali passes away at age 76 in Rawalpindi. The former Prime Minister served briefly during Gen. Musharraf's military regime and was the only elected Prime Minister in Pakistan from Baluchistan. Martial law restrictions imposed by Armenia are announced to be expected to drop, following the Nagorno-Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Spokespeople for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine announce that testing on children from ages 12 to 17 will begin.

*HOME1947*, a short film from Pakistan is awarded the Best Film [Short Documentary] Award at the South Asian Film Festival of Montréal 2020. The film depicts the displacement and first-hand experiences of citizens during the partition of the Sub-Continent into India and Pakistan.

In light of the Minusma Peacekeeping Mission, UK begins deployment of 300 troops that are set to be deployed over the next 3 years. 56 countries have come together in the UN's efforts to curb the civil war in Mali. Extremist groups under the title Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Musulimin (JNIM) have been terrorizing Gao for years; causing 500 civilian deaths in 2019.

Facebook announces that misinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic on the site will be banned in light of the distribution of the vaccine globally.

**December 3, 2020**

Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) Pakistan project is awarded the gold prize at the World Habitat Awards. The project sought to tackle climate change in Pakistan by training 50, 000 village residents on how better to protect their communities from climate change. Through satellite images and drones, the project aims for better disaster risk management by creating “resilient, sustainable communities capable of living in dignity”.

It is reported that government as well as private hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have run out of beds due to rapid rise in COVID-19 cases. The accommodation of COVID-19 patients has been said to be because of the “non-serious” attitude of the opposition such as PDM who are hosting rallies amidst the pandemic, according to Culture and Labour Minister Shaukat Ali Yousafzai.

**December 4, 2020**

Bangladesh set to relocate 1600 Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char, an island near the Bay of Bengal that is said to have frequent flooding. According to Bangladeshi government, the refugees voluntarily agreed to move to the Island while the refugees maintain that the relocation is being done by force. The refugees had fled from Myanmar during its military crackdown and previously occupied the refugee camp in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh.

A blast near Rawalpindi's Pir Wadhai bus station claims the life of 1 civilian and wounds 7 others. The bomb was made out of explosives and ball bearings and placed outside a grocery store. This is the third attack in Rawalpindi in 2020 and has been suspected to be linked to terrorist activity.

Arshad Malik, a former Accountability Judge, passes away. The former judge is said to have suffered from COVID-19 and had passed away shortly after being placed on ventilator.

Former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali is laid to rest in his native village Rojhan Jamali. Thousands of mourners, including prominent political

figures and social workers gathered for the funeral procession.

It is announced by Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed that a railway is to be built between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The railway track, which is set to be 11km-long will stretch from Chaman city of Pakistan to the Spin Boldak town of Afghanistan. It was also hoped that after laying this track, granted the Afghan government's willingness, the track would be extended from Spin Boldak to Kandahar of Afghanistan.

**December 5, 2020**

Prominent politician Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari passes away at the age of 90. Mazari was the founder of National Democratic Party (NDP) in the 1970s and a former member of the National Assembly.

Belgian government announces that their troops in Afghanistan will be withdrawn in the next year 2021. These troops were previously sent to aid and train the country's army amidst the Afghan war.

Judges in the Pattoki tehsil courts hand in a 10-day leave application and refusal to work due to alleged misconduct of the president of the local bar association; Mudassar Naeem Bhatti. The accused is said to have been verbally abusive towards a female judge. Other judges have corroborated the pattern of abuse by referring to their working environment as a series of “unending abuse, harassment and disrespect”.

Pfizer announces the submission of their COVID-19 vaccine to India, pending approval.

**December 6, 2020**

Ongoing anti-polio campaign reaches its 98 per cent target in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In spite of the deaths of 25 polio workers and 11 security personnel in attacks against polio workers, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has made significant progress in immunizing the population.

Renowned historian Suhail Zaheer Lari passes away from COVID-19 in his early 80s. Lari was the author of numerous books and a co-founder of the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan along with his wife Yasmin Lari.

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) approves the operation of flights from Virgin Atlantic airlines in Pakistan. The British airline will be set to have a weekly eight-flight operation from London and Manchester to Lahore and Islamabad.

Italy's COVID-19 death toll goes over 60,000. The country among the most adversely affected by the pandemic, with over 1.7 million cases recorded to date.

Indonesia's Social Affairs Minister Juliari Batubara is detained by the government's Corruption Eradication Commission. Batubara, who is a part of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, is alleged to have stolen public money allotted to providing food for the poor during the pandemic.

**December 7, 2020**

Due to a short oxygen supply, six patients at the Khyber Teaching Hospital pass away. The hospital's COVID-19 ward had admitted 90 patients of which many were in need of oxygen supply through oxygen masks. According to reports, operators at the oxygen plant were not at their posts, causing the oxygen pressure for the hospital to be zero. Furthermore, after investigation it was concluded that the oxygen plant had never filled the hospital's tank to its full capacity. The hospital only had one oxygen tank and the lack of backups caused the death of six patients. The staff of the hospital, including the director are suspended for negligence.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's aide Dr. Faisal Sultan reports that Pakistan is currently in negotiations with Russia and China in efforts to procure the vaccine for COVID-19. If negotiations are successful, the vaccine will be available in the first quarter of 2021.

Several members and leaders of JUI-F and PML-N, as well as 150 party workers are booked under an FIR for violation of SOPs amidst the second wave of the pandemic. This is after a rally was held in Rawalpindi by the leaders of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The International Olympic Committee bans Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko from future games. Lukashenko has been the leader of the Belarus Olympic Committee for over two decades. He is currently serving his sixth term as President and has been alleged to be elected through vote rigging. The IOC accused Lukashenko of failing to protect its athletes from discrimination.

The first ever all-woman-five-kilometer race, organized by Born2Run called the "Women Power Run" is held in Karachi. Haani Mazari won the five-kilometer race, with Sidra Khalid Khan as a runner up.

Various resolutions are discussed during 13th International Urdu Conference, put together by the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi. Speakers encouraged the attendees to raise their voice for the underprivileged in Pakistan that are currently bearing the brunt of the pandemic. Moreover, it was discussed that translation centers will be set up across the country to translate literature into Urdu.

Elections in Venezuela conclude as President Nicolás Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela wins by a majority vote. United States, European Union as well as 50 other countries reject the legitimacy of the election, accusing Maduro's party of rigging the election and swaying voters through intimidation and illegal activity.

The vehicle of Islamic cleric Rizieq Shihab is attacked, killing six security personnel. The cleric is the leader of Islamic Defender's Front (FPI) in Indonesia and recently returned to the country after a three-year self-imposed exile in Saudi Arabia. Shihab is known to be on a 'moral crusade' against the government of Indonesia, previously causing the imprisonment of Christian governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama for alleged blasphemy.

300 people hospitalized after the outbreak of an unidentified illness sweeps Andhra Pradesh in Southeastern India. The patients in question tested negative for COVID-19 and reported symptoms such as seizures, nausea and fainting.

**December 8, 2020**

Outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N8 Avian flu is reported in France at a duck farm. The virus has been found in wild birds as well as birds sold at farms. The particular strain of the virus has been detected in humans also, causing the French government to be on high alert and imposing SOPs on bird farmers.

**December 8, 2020**

Renowned businessman Siraj Kassam Teli passes away. In mourning for the former president of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the Karachi Chamber has announced a three-day closure where only the attestation and media department will be partially operational.

Qais Javed, a journalist for local newspaper Ehadnama, is shot dead in his home. Suspicions of religious motivations have been ignited as Javed was of the Christian faith. Since the year 2000, 70 journalists have been killed in Pakistan.

The Forbes 30 under 30 list honors four young Pakistanis. Among those was Sana Khan, a Program Manager at Google's cloud gaming service Stadia. Khan initiated the 'Stadia's Free Play Days' in consideration for gamers that were financially limited due to the pandemic. Asad J Malik, the CEO of Jadu AR was also mentioned for his use of artificial intelligence and augmented reality for storytelling in film Terminal3. Danish Dhamani, the co-creator of the speech training app Orai was mentioned. Lastly, Faizan Bhatti, the co-founder of Halo Cars was mentioned; Halo Cars sought to display targeted ads in Uber and Lyft in order to help drivers earn more, it was bought by Lyft shortly after its creation.

UK gives its first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to an elderly grandmother Margaret Keenan as part of its national COVID-19 vaccination program. The United Kingdom is administering doses of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech to the nation's seniors and frontline healthcare workers to mark the start of the mass inoculation against the virus.

**December 9, 2020**

Negotiations between UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Union continue as the deadline for a

trade agreement is set between the two amidst Brexit. If a decision is not made by 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the United Kingdom will have to leave the European Single Market and European Union Customs Union by the start of 2021.

Judge involved in Arzoo Raja's underage marriage and conversion case books her husband under the charges of sexual assault. Additionally, the religious cleric Qazi Abdul Rasool Naqshbandi, Justice of Peace Muhammad Azharuddin and Junaid Ali Siddiqui for bearing witness to the underage marriage, under the Sindh Marriage Restraint Act 2013.

**December 10, 2020**

Renowned linguist, social and political theorist Noam Chomsky appears at the sixth Yohsin Lecture at Habib University. Chomsky discussed the state of the world amid the pandemic and the nuances of class and imperialism in the contemporary world. The UN ambassador when asked for a message for Pakistan concluded his address by saying that Pakistan will have "no future if it was going to live in a world of religious superstition".

Abbottabad jail relocates 103 prisoners to Mansehra Prison after a COVID-19 outbreak. 20 people, including a police constable tested positive for the virus. The relocated prisoners will be kept in isolation until they are cleared and tested negative for the virus.

It is announced by the Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam that the Marghar Zoo will be converted a wildlife conservation centre for the animals. The Margalla Wildlife Conservation Centre will be a centre for entertainment, research and education regarding wildlife species.

Unidentified illness claims the lives of six people in the Thal Tegowal Village in Namal Valley. The deceased had tested negative for COVID-19 but experienced high fever among other symptoms before their passing.

Afghan journalist and women's and children's rights activist Malalai Maiwand is shot dead on her way to Jalalabad in Nangarhar. Maiwand's driver was also shot dead. The militant Islamic group from Iraq; Islamic

State – Khorasan Province, take responsibility for the targeted killing.

Morocco becomes the fourth Arab country to begin normalization process with Israel. A normalization agreement was reached between Israel and Morocco's King Mohammed VI. US President Donald Trump facilitated this deal in efforts to unite the Arab countries against Iran's regional control. Sudan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates have likewise begun dealings with Israel.

**December 11, 2020**

US Federal Trade Commission and various other US filed lawsuits against Facebook Inc could force the company to sell off Instagram and WhatsApp. The company is alleged to have bought the smaller companies to curb rival platforms; as stated by New York Attorney General Letitia James "For nearly a decade, Facebook has used its dominance and monopoly power to crush smaller rivals, snuff out competition, all at the expense of everyday users". Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook in a post on the platform to his employees claims he is not worried about the lawsuit's consequences on individual employees.

Rao Anwar Ahmed Khan, a former member of the Karachi police and a "encounter specialist" is the subject of UK placed sanctions for alleged human rights abuses. Anwar is said to have been responsible for 400 target killings across Pakistan. The UK also placed sanctions on the former president and dictator of The Gambia Yahya Jammeh.

Protests begin against the Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian of Armenia after the recent ceasefire of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenian citizens crowded the streets of Yerevan in protest against the ceasefire handing over previously Armenia-controlled territories to Azerbaijan. The streets rang with slogans such as "Nikol must go!" And "Armenia without Nikol" as riot police detained approximately 40 protesters.

At a summit in Brussels, the European Union signs a deal stating that it will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by the year 2030. It was also

discussed that the European Union might begin taxing bordering states if they fail to regulate their carbon emissions.

Government Science school of Kankara is raided by Boko Haram; around 300 boys are kidnapped from the school. The group Boko Haram, also known as The Islamic State in West Africa or the Islamic State's West Africa Province is a terrorist group that seeks to curb westernization in Nigeria. A video was released by Boko Haram showing numerous boys that had been taken from the school, claiming responsibility for the attack.

**December 12, 2020**

Prime Minister Imran Khan gives an address at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020. The Prime Minister stated that the government intends to reduce Pakistan's carbon emissions and replace fossil fuel energy with 'clean' renewable energy. By the year 2030, ideally, 60% of Pakistan's energy will be renewable. This address came at the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement for climate change.

Blogger/journalist Ruhollah Zam is executed by the Iranian government for inciting Iran's anti-state protests. Zam had created a channel on app Telegram along with a news website called AmadNews which was used to convey protest timings and information regarding government officials that could be used against them. Zam had returned to Iran from his exile in Paris recently.

Farmers continue to protest in India against their working and living conditions. The farmers formed a blockade in New Delhi in protest against the agriculture sector's conditions which have plunged farmers into food shortages, poverty and made them vulnerable to floods and climate change. Over 10, 000 farmers took their own lives in 2019 and over 300, 000 farmers have reportedly taken their own lives in past three decades.

President Donald Trump in a video posted to his Twitter announces USA's procurement of the COVID-19 vaccine made by Pfizer and BioNTech, stating that

vaccinations will begin in 24 hours. USA also ordered a 100 million doses of the Moderna vaccine.

Doctors in India go on strike against passing of new federal government rule. Around a million doctors went on strike in India in protest against a rule that allows Ayurvedic practitioners to perform minor surgeries. The government intended to train Ayurvedic practitioners to do surgical procedures. Doctors protested that this normalization of surgery minimalizes the seriousness of their profession.

**December 13, 2020**

Tehran court sentences journalists Hoda Amid and Najmeh Vahedi to prison. Vahedi has been sentenced to seven years and Amid has been sentenced to eight years in prison and a two-year ban on practicing law. The lawyer and sociologist have been accused of conspiring with the US government against Islam with regards to their 'marriage workshops' which sought to educate women about their rights in marriage.

An explosion near Rawalpindi's Ganj Mandi Police Station leaves 25 people wounded, of which 3 are in critical condition. The explosive that caused the blast is under investigation along with who orchestrated the blast.

**December 14, 2020**

Pakistan Democratic Movement addresses the media in Lahore. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the speaker, states that if the PTI government does not step down from office by the end of January 2021 PDM will begin a long march.

Two prominent Italian holders of France's Legion of Honor return their medals. Giovanni Melandri the president of Rome's Maxxi museum and culture minister announced that she intends to give her prize back after Corrado Augias a journalist for La Repubblica returned his prize to the French embassy. This gesture came after the President of Egypt Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi was awarded the Legion of Honor's Grand-Croix, or Grand-Cross, the highest level of the award. El-Sissi has been known to commit various human rights violations, such as the torture and killing of Italian student Giulio Regeni while he was in Cairo.

Google services suffer an outage as Gmail, YouTube and Pokémon Go appear to be down across the world. The issue was not officially addressed and servers came back up shortly after.

In Kandahar, Aghan militants and Aghan security officers engage in an overnight battle. The fighting resulted in the killing of 7 civilians in a car bombing. 51 terrorists were killed by the Afghan security forces and nine were wounded.

**December 15, 2020**

Farmers continue to protest in India as leaders go on a 24-hour hunger strike. The protesters have been on strike against the government regulation of their prices which demands that they give buyers wholesale minimum price for their produce. Farmers from all around India have gathered; those who tried to join in the strike from Rajasthan were not allowed to enter Delhi by government's security personnel.

Shahid Mahmood, a former test cricketer for Pakistan passes away at the age of 81. Mahmood was a batsman and the first bowler in Pakistan's history to capture all 10 wickets in a single inning for Karachi Whites during a test match between Karachi Whites and Khairpur in 1969-70.

Tokyo District Court in Tachikawa sentences Takahiro Shiraishi; the "Twitter Killer" to the death penalty. Shiraishi is reported to have lured suicidal individuals on Twitter to his apartment claiming to be able to 'help them die'; claiming the lives of eight young women and one young man. Shiraishi intends to wait out his turn on the death row.

Famed author David John Moore Cornwell, more prominently known as John Le Carre dies at the age of 89. Le Carre has authored many spy and thriller novels such as the bestseller Tinker Tailor Solider Spy.

**December 16, 2020**

Bermuda elects Rena Lalgie as its governor. Lalgie is the first female to serve as the governor of Bermuda is also the first black woman to be governor in a British territory in the Atlantic.

A checkpoint in Baghlan province of Afghanistan is attacked by gunmen, killing 13 security officers. No group has taken responsibility for the attack thus far, the government suspects it to be work of the Taliban.

Twitter announces that it will ban misinformation regarding the COVID-19 vaccine on the platform following the beginning of COVID-19 vaccinations in various countries.

Late Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Abdus Salam's home in London is turned into a heritage site. Dr. Salam was a renowned physicist and founder of the theoretical physics department of Imperial College in London. He was the first Pakistani to be awarded the Nobel Prize for his work on electroweak unification theory. A blue plaque, a plaque of honor placed outside historically significant sites is placed outside his house which reads "Abdus Salam 1926-1996, Physicist, Nobel Laureate and Champion of Science in developing countries, lived here".

Pakistan repays 1 billion dollars back to Saudi Arabia, part of a 'soft loan' of 3 billion dollars it had taken. The Pakistani government has consequently sought out China for a loan in order to repay another 1 billion dollars to Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Imran Khan in an inaugural speech at a hospital in Peshawar mourns the loss of innocent children and teachers on the sixth anniversary of the Peshawar Army Public School (APS) mass shooting. Politicians and government officials express grief and vow to never forget the incident and to keep fighting terrorism in Pakistan.

**December 17, 2020**

Himalayan Brown Bears 'Suzie' and 'Bubloo' are set to depart for Jordan's bear sanctuary after Islamabad High Court allowed the relocation. Ministry of Climate Change and the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) and Four Paws spearheaded the process to give the elderly brown bears a comfortable place for the remainder of their life.

344 boys who had been kidnapped by Boko Haram in Kankara are returned. The boys had been abducted

and held in Zamfara's Rugu Forest for a week before being released.

Leader of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and MNA Ali Wazir is arrested by the Sindh Police. Wazir was charged for inciting anti-state conspiracies and passing anti-state remarks. Other members of the PTM such as Manzoor Pashteen and several others were also booked on conspiracy charges FIR.

Court of Arbitration for Sport passes a ruling banning Russia from participating in any world sports championships for the next two years. This ruling comes after the initial four-year ban ruling in response to Russia tampering with state-ordered drug tests of its players. Russia can still play in International championships such as the Tokyo Olympics.

Jean-Luc Brunel, an alleged associate of sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein is arrested in Senegal. Brunel is the founder of a modelling agency called M21 and had allegedly supplied Epstein with his victims.

Joe Biden, President elect of the United States of America appoints Ali Zaidi on his team to tackle climate change. Zaidi is a Pakistan-American and is appointed the deputy White House Climate Coordinator.

**December 18, 2020**

15 civilians are killed and 20 are wounded after an explosion in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan. The explosion took place during a religious gathering wherein attendees were reciting the Quran. No group has taken responsibility for the explosion.

Asad Umar, Pakistan's Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives tests positive for COVID-19. The second wave of the pandemic continues to claim lives as death toll goes up along with positivity rates countrywide.

It is announced by the World Health Organization that third world countries will receive the COVID-19 vaccine through the COVAX facility in the beginning of 2021. The Covax facility was founded by the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to grant countries across the world equal access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

**December 19, 2020**

Ryan Kaji, a 9-year-old boy from Texas is the highest paid YouTuber in 2020, according to Forbes. Kaji, with a following of 27 million on YouTube has raked in 200 million dollars in earnings. He tests out and reviews toys on his channel.

**December 20, 2020**

A border crossing point Gwadar-Ramdhan is opened between Iran and Pakistan. This is the second border crossing point after the one at Taftan which has been in use for nearly 70 years. This crossing point at Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan and Pakistan's Baluchistan area connects the Gwadar port to Iran.

Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar tests positive for COVID-19. Buzdar is reported to have minor symptoms and has been quarantining since the diagnosis.

Nine civilians are killed and 20 are wounded in a car bombing in Kabul. The bomb is said to have been targeting Lawmaker Khan Mohammad Wardak who was also injured in the attack.

**December 21, 2020**

While speaking to reporters after the Urs of Hazrat Shah Rukn-i-Alam processions Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated that he reiterated Pakistan's stance on Israel to UAE's foreign minister. Pakistan stands resolute on not recognizing or forming relations with Israel until its issues with Palestine are resolved.

Rahmatullah Nikzad, a prolific journalist and head of the journalists' union in Ghazni is assassinated. An unknown assailant shot Nikzad three times in the chest outside his house in Ghazni city.

Confederate soldier Robert E. Lee's statue is replaced by civil rights activist Barbara Johns' statue in the United States Capitol in Washington. Johns is known for playing a major role in the desegregation of schools in the USA. House speaker Nancy Pelosi, stated; "The Congress will continue our work to rid the Capitol of homages to hate, as we fight to end the scourge of racism in our country".

Saturn and Jupiter align at the closest distance they have in 400 years, since 1623. This rare occurrence, when these two planets are closely aligned is known as the Great Conjunction.

**December 22, 2020**

Karima Baloch, an exiled Baloch political activist found dead in her Toronto home. Baloch reportedly went missing the day prior to her death. The police have ruled her death as 'non-criminal' amid suspicions of foul play. Baloch was nominated in BBC's list of 100 most inspirational women and was the founder of Baloch Students Organization - Azad and the Baloch National Front (BNF) Baluchistan.

In Kabul, a bomb attached to a car explodes, killing four prison doctors inside the vehicle and one civilian. The prison doctors worked at the Pul-e-Charkhi where hundreds of incarcerated members of the Taliban are kept.

**December 23, 2020**

Over 100 villagers are massacred and nearly 30 are critically wounded in the Bekuj village in the Benishangul-Gumuz of Ethiopia. The victims were stabbed and shot by unknown assailants. This attack is suspected to be the work of opposing forces in the Tigray region.

A fiery asteroid, measuring ~8 metres (26 ft) falls in the Nangqian county of China. Since 2018's Kamchatka meteor, this is the largest asteroid to hit Earth.

Russian President Vladimir Putin passes a bill which allows former presidents of Russia and their families immunity for their lifetime, even when they leave office. Russian presidents under this bill cannot be prosecuted for any crimes they commit.

**December 24, 2020**

The trial for the AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19 created by the University of Oxford is amended, with one additional trial of participants added. This came following the discovery that the researchers had only delivered half a dose to prior participants. Researchers announced that following up with a full dose after a

half dose made the vaccine 90 percent effective against COVID-19.

Sindh High Court moves to release Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, who was found guilty in the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl along with three others. Sheikh was previously sentenced to the death penalty for his crime. Both Pearl's family and the government have opposed this decision with Pearl's family filing for an appeal.

Moldova elects its first woman President; Maia Sandu. Sandu is an economist for the World Bank. World Bank economist

**December 25, 2020**

In a study published by the Centre for Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, scientists warn of an emerging strain of COVID-19 in the UK which is 56% stronger than the original virus.

The highest number of single-day deaths in the second wave of the pandemic are recorded countrywide as 111 people die from the virus.

The "Governor's Youth Pehchan Program" ceremony is held in Quetta. Baluchistan Governor Amanullah Khan Yasinzai identifies the initiative as a way for students in underdeveloped areas to receive education, training and career counselling in order to boost their access to different opportunities.

**December 26, 2020**

Israel airstrikes the Gaza strip in retaliation to airstrikes on Israel, wounding two Palestinians among which was a six-year-old girl. The attack damaged a children's hospital and caused a power outage in the eastern areas of the strip.

The Indian government arrests 75 political leaders of Kashmir. The arrests have reportedly been made as a preventative measure to curb violent uprisings or unrest following the win of Kashmir-associated political parties in the local The District Development Council elections.

**December 27, 2020**

Terrorists open fire at the Frontier Corps (FC) post in Harnai district of Baluchistan. The attack caused the deaths of seven soldiers. This is among numerous other incidents of terrorist violence in Baluchistan this year.

**December 28, 2020**

100 Outstanding Women Nurse and Midwife Leaders 2020 names 8 Pakistani women. The list is the work of Women in Global Health (WGH) along with World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund, Nursing Now, International Council of Nurses and International Confederation of Midwives, in order to honor female healthcare workers during the global pandemic.

Loujain al-Hathloul, a women's rights activist in Saudi Arabia is sentenced to five years and 8 months in prison. Hathloul has previously been held in custody since being arrested in May of 2018 for posing harm to national security and seeking to alter Saudi Arabia's political system. Hathloul had risen to public limelight after her campaigns for women's right to drive in 2018.

**December 29, 2020**

European Union and the United Kingdom arrive at a trade deal which is approved by ambassadors of member countries. The EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement will become a law effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Famed French fashion designer and couturier Pierre Cardin dies at the age of 98. The couturier's career spanned six decades wherein he became mentor to many other famous designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier.

Britain signs a free-trade agreement with Vietnam. Amid Brexit, this deal will replace the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) as UK prepares to leave the European Union.

**December 30, 2020**

An airport in the city of Aden in Yemen is hit with an explosion, claiming the lives of 25 people and wounding approximately 111 people. The blast is

reported to have occurred after important members of the cabinet landed at the airport. While the Houthis have been suspected to have orchestrated the attack, they have not claimed responsibility.

Paleontologists in Siberia discover a well-preserved carcass of a woolly rhino from the Ice Age. The carcass is the most well-preserved discovery of an Ice Age specie ever and is said to be 50, 000 years old.

**December 31, 2020**

It is announced in a press conference by Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani that an embassy will be opened in Djibouti in East Africa. This is an effort to improve and diversify Pakistan's diplomatic relations in light of the Engage Africa Policy. The chairman met with the African Union Parliament acting Chairman and President Djibouti National Parliament Mohamed Ali Houmedat Parliament House to discuss this new development.

Three cases of the new strain of COVID-19 which is 56% stronger than the original virus have been reported in Pakistan. This is cause for alarm amidst the second wave of the pandemic in Pakistan which has claimed thousands of lives already.

Lewis Hamilton, world-famous Formula One racer is knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. Sir Lewis Hamilton has previously been named GQ's Game Changer Of The Year, BBC sports personality of the year, and was named in Time Magazine 100 most influential people, as well as Laureus World Sportsman Of The Year.

**JANUARY 2021**

**January 1, 2021**

Israel vaccinates approximately 10% of its population with the COVID-19 vaccine, becoming the first country in the world to do so.

Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) of Lahore; Umar Sheikh is removed from his post. Sheikh was transferred to Feroqabad as the Deputy Inspector General of Police/Deputy Commandant of Punjab Constabulary. Ghulam Mehmood Dogar, who has

served as a police officer for nearly 30 years has been appointed the CCPO of Lahore.

Healthcare workers around the country, most notably employees at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) stage a sit-in protest after marching to D-Chowk in Islamabad. This came as a response to the promulgation of The Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Ordinance which decreed that PIMS be run by a Board of Governors that are to be appointed by the National Health services (NHS).

Two patients in Sindh test positive for the new strain of the COVID-19 virus being referred to as the 'UK-variant'. The new strain of the virus is said to be more dangerous as it is 70% more transmittable.

Ambassador Nong Rong of China and federal Minister for Economic Affairs Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar of Pakistan sign an agreement for the rehabilitation of a highway in Sindh. The highway stretches from Hala to Moro and has been granted 100 million USD by China for its revival. Previously, some parts of this highway had been repaired in 2011 and 2016 through another Pak-China agreement.

**January 2, 2021**

Besmullah Adel Aimaq, Editor-in-Chief of *Voice of Ghor* radio in Afghanistan is shot dead in his car in Firoz Koh city. No party has taken responsibility for the attack. This assassination comes weeks after another prominent journalist was killed in December 2020.

The third phase of the Sehat Card Plus commences as the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa extends the reach of the program to more districts in KPK; Charsadda, Swabi, Peshawar Nowshera, Haripur and Mardan. The Sehat Card Plus seeks to provide free healthcare to citizens through government funded public healthcare facilities.

Eleven coal miners are abducted and brutally murdered in the town of Mach in Quetta, Baluchistan. The miners belonged to the Hazara community, a minority group within the Shia sect. The terrorist group Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack.

After a 20 year pause on death penalties, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan signs off on abolishment of capital punishment in the country. Prisoners previously sentenced to the death penalty will serve lifetime sentences in prison.

**January 3, 2021**

A committee is set up by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan to overlook damage repair to a Hindu shrine in Teri of Karak district. The shrine had previously been vandalized and had sustained damage which will be repaired by the KPK government.

Iraqi civilians protest at Baghdad's Tahrir Square against the occupation of American army troops in Iraq. These protests come at the first death anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis who were assassinated in a US drone strike previously in 2021. Slogans and flags of Hashd al-Shaabi or Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) were raised in honor of al-Muhandis.

**January 4, 2021**

United States Congress passes a bill extending the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship program to Pakistani women. 50% of the merit-based scholarships will now be awarded to Pakistani women. The bill awaits the approval of President Trump to make it into a law.

Mourners from the Hazara community hold a sit-in protest with the bodies of the deceased coal miners following their brutal abduction and murders. 2500 protesters called for an end to systematic acts of terrorism towards the Hazara community.

Education ministers of Pakistan announce the re-opening of educational institutions from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Schools, colleges and universities will reopen in phases wherein the first phase beginning on 18<sup>th</sup> January grades 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> will open. Grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> will follow on January 25<sup>th</sup> and Higher Educational classes will resume on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**January 5, 2021**

Saudi Arabia and Qatar restore trade and travel ties after a Saudi Arabia led coalition three years ago.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Qatar's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to discuss the restoration of Gulf Cooperation Council. Previously, due to strained ties, Bahrain, Egypt and United Arab Emirates had cut ties with Qatar in allegiance to Saudi Arabia will reopen its land, sea and airspace borders to Qatar

Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa and US Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Amb Zalmay Khalilzad in a meeting reaffirm their intentions to restore peace in Afghanistan through mutual cooperation. These discussions ensued after a substantial increase in Taliban-led violence in Afghanistan.

Iran issues a 'red notice' for President Trump's arrest at Interpol for his role in the assassination of their General Qassem Soleimani. 47 officials in addition to President Trump were identified for the 'red notice' arrest as announced by spokesperson Gholamhossein Esmaili.

**January 6, 2021**

Protesters storm the US Capitol building in Washington D.C in a pro-Trump protest following the US Presidential election results in November of last year. Thousands of armed and unarmed pro-trump protesters crowded into the Capitol building and breached the security. Several protesters and policemen were injured and one female protestor succumbed to gunshot wound sustained during the violent protest. President Trump has contested the results of the US Presidential elections following Joe Biden's win and has encouraged his supporters to hold nationwide rallies and protests. Numerous US officials tweeted about the incident, referring to it as a 'violent insurrection' and a 'coup d'état'.

The Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan writes a letter to the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan in reference to the abduction and slaughter of coal miners in Mach, Baluchistan. According to the Consulate General, seven of the slaughtered miners were Afghan nationals and their bodies should be returned to Afghanistan accordingly.

**January 6, 2021**

The Recording Academy issued a statement announcing that the 63rd Annual GRAMMY Awards, which were previously set to air on January 31<sup>st</sup> have been postponed to March 14<sup>th</sup>. This is in light of the increasing COVID-19 cases and restrictions in the United States of America.

Abraham Accords is signed by Sudan. This accord, between United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Israel, seeks to normalize international relations with Israel.

**January 7, 2021**

Elon Musk becomes the richest man in the world, overtaking previous spot holder Jeff Bezos. Musk is the founder and CEO of Tesla and SpaceX among other multibillion dollar companies, his net worth is estimated to be \$153.2 billion.

Social media platforms Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat block President Trump's accounts due to accusations of Trump inciting rallies and violence around the country in addition to spreading misinformation about the US Presidential election. This ban will last until the end of Trump's presidential term.

All Azad Kashmir Schoolteachers Organization protesters gather in Upper Chattar Chowk in Muzaffarabad. 2000 schoolteachers gathered in protest, urging the government to uphold a promise made to them in 2013 by the PPP government headed by Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, this agreement stated that the post of schoolteacher would be raised to BS-14 from BS-7. In addition to this, the post junior teacher would be upgraded to BS-16 from BS-14 and the post of senior teacher to BS-17 from BS-16. This agreement was never fulfilled by succeeding governments. Several protestors were injured and arrested after police curbed the rally through the use of tear gas and batons.

Boeing agrees to pay \$2.5 billion to settle charges of criminal fraudulence and hiding crucial information about their planes' automated flight control systems which resulted in two plane crashes in 2018 and 2019

killing 346 passengers in total. \$500 million of this settlement will go to the families of the deceased.

**January 8, 2021**

Pakistan successfully tests Multi-Launch Rocket System (MLRS) called Fatah-1. This guided rocket system would equip the army to strike enemy territory with precision, as reported by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao and Secretary of Transportation Betsy DeVos turn in their resignations following the storming of pro-Trump protestors into the US Capitol earlier this year. Many other US officials and politicians have turned in resignations and expressed urgency to impeach President Trump after the incident.

Deceased coal miners are buried in Hazara Town cemetery in Quetta. The funeral processions led by Allama Raja Nasir Abbas were attended by thousands of mourners and several government officials. The mourners, who had previously refused to bury the bodies until Prime Minister Imran Khan visited the area, gave in after negotiations with the government to do so.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran banned the country's government from procuring the COVID-19 vaccine through imports from USA and UK. Khamenei expressed suspicion over the import of vaccine from USA and Europe, citing 'HIV-tainted vaccines from France' as indicative of their attempts to contaminate their country.

**January 9, 2021**

Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi a senior member of the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is sentenced to five years in prison by a court in Pakistan. Lakhvi had been accused by United Nations and India on his ties with the Mumbai attacks in 2013 which killed 160 people and several other cases of terrorist financing across the world in countries such as Bosnia, Iraq, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

Social media platform suspended the account of President of United States of America Donald Trump,

permanently. The platform cited the President's pattern of inciting violence and spreading misinformation on Twitter as the reason.

Google and Apple announce the suspension of blogging app *Parler* from Play Store and App Store respectively, due to concerns of incitement of violence on the platform following the US Capitol protests earlier this year. The app has a large user-base in pro-Trump accounts and has been accused of hosting anti-democratic rhetoric on the platform.

A hospital fire in Maharashtra's Bhandara District General Hospital in India kills ten newborn babies. The fire, caused by an electrical short-circuit broke out in the maternity ward of the hospital, took the lives of infants some of which were only a few days old. Authorities are investigating the incident.

**January 10, 2021**

A nationwide power outage plunges the Pakistan in darkness for hours on Sunday. Several of the country's areas regained power in a few hours while others regained power nearly 24 hours after the power breakdown.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide reaches 90 million. Additionally, more transmittable and stronger strains of the virus have been identified around the world. The USA currently has the highest number of active COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic in late 2019.

**January 11, 2021**

"Raast", Pakistan's first instant digital payment system is launched. Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed optimism for the boost of Pakistan's economy after this launch. Raast would take the country's population away from cash economy and boost tax payments through digital transactions and transfers.

Amazon suspends cloud computing servers afforded to *Parler* to host their site. The site is currently down due to scarcity of servers to host the platform.

A grenade detonated in a market in Turbat, Baluchistan severely wounds 5 civilians. The party

responsible for the attack has not come forward, authorities are investigating the incident.

Uzbekistan extends travel and air restrictions from several countries until February 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. The country had placed these restrictions on countries observed to have cases of new variants of the COVID-19 virus. These countries include; Australia, Italy, South Africa, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Britain.

Zia Wadan a prolific former journalist and prominent spokesperson in Afghanistan is assassinated along with two other colleagues in a car bombing in Kabul. The President of Afghanistan suspects Taliban to be responsible for the attack.

**January 12, 2021**

Egypt reopens airspace to Qatar, allowing for direct travel to and from the country in light of the Gulf Cooperation Council's decision to restore ties with Qatar. This restoration comes after three years of freeze against Qatar by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain in addition to Egypt since 2017.

Ugandan government blocks social media platforms across the country including Facebook and Twitter. This is thought by the public to be a retaliatory action against Facebook previously blocking pro-government propaganda on the platform.

**January 13, 2021**

Israeli airstrikes against Syria in the Deir el-Zour, Mayadeen and Boukamal regions claim the lives of 57 individuals which included army personnel, Syrian and Iranian soldiers. An intelligence officer from the United States claimed that the attacks were in response to information gathered against Syrian forces storing Iranian weapons in a warehouse. This is being referred to as the deadliest Israeli airstrike on Syria to date.

YouTube suspends President Trump's channel from uploading or live streaming for a week due to Trump's inciting of violence following the riot in the US Capitol earlier this year.

Rick Snyder, the former Governor of Michigan is charged with willful negligence in relation to the Flint

water crisis of 2014. The use of the water from Flint River for the city's pipelines in 2014 caused citizens to have to consume contaminated water for years and caused the mass outbreak of 'legionnaires disease' causing 12 civilian deaths.

President Donald Trump of the United States of America is impeached by the House through votes by both Republicans and Democrats on charges of 'inciting insurrection' following the riots in the US Capitol in early January of this year. The trial for the impeachment is set to begin next week, just before Joe Biden is initiated into office. A successful impeachment after the trials will prevent Trump from running for President for a second term.

**January 14, 2021**

Joe Biden, the US President-elect reveals a 1.9 trillion USD relief package for Americans. This would increase their COVID-19 stimulus check from \$600 to \$2000.

Toyota is set to pay \$180 million to the United States of America on charges of misconduct. The company allegedly failed to report defects in emission, as is mandatory for automobile companies in the US.

**January 15, 2021**

Sulawesi Island in Indonesia is struck with an earthquake of 6.2 magnitude, claiming the lives of approximately 35 people reportedly. The earthquake damaged infrastructure, burying civilians under rubble and cutting electricity throughout the city. The earthquake was followed by 26 aftershocks according to reports.

Taliban forces attack two checkpoints in Kunduz, Afghanistan, killing nine security officers in the cross-fire. This is one of the many incidents of Taliban-led attacks in Afghanistan.

Russia announces its intended withdrawal from the 'Treaty of Open Skies' after the USA announced its withdrawal last year. The Treaty of Open Skies has been signed by 34 countries allowing signatory nations to fly unarmed surveillance aircrafts over one another's territories.

It is announced by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas that the legislative elections are set to take place on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 while presidential election will begin on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2021. These are the first elections in Palestine since 2006.

**January 16, 2021**

The mother of former President of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf; Begum Zarin Musharraf, passes away at the age of 100. She had been undergoing treatment in UAE after a long battle with an illness.

PSA and Fiat Chrysler finalize the 50-50 merger of their companies. The resultant company is called "Stellantis" which is now the world's fourth biggest automotive company. The constituent brands under each company such as Alfa Romeo, Citroen, Fiat, Maserati, Peugeot, Chrysler, and Jeep will continue to operate under Stellantis.

**January 17, 2021**

Two female judges belonging to the Supreme Court are shot dead by gunmen in Kabul, Afghanistan. This is one of the many attacks against politicians, journalists, judges, police and civilians in Afghanistan in recent years.

It is announced that President Trump signed the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act bill, making it into a law that the merit-based Malala Yousafzai scholarships be awarded in 50% to Pakistani women. These scholarships will allow women from Pakistan from various disciplines to pursue higher education from 2020 to 2022.

**January 18, 2021**

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced the creation of Swat University of Engineering and Technology through a government grant of 8 billion PKR. The university will be set up in three years' time and will be self-sustainable. This university will have research and entrepreneurship programs to sustain itself and create university graduates from Swat that are able to fare in the current job market.

The methane emission in 2020 was 70 trillion metric tons, 10% lower than emissions in 2019, according to reports from The International Energy Agency. Due to the pandemic, global activity slowed down significantly, decreasing industrial activity as well.

**January 19, 2021**

Joe Biden takes office and gives speech at the inaugural ceremony as he bids goodbye to his family home in Delaware. Joe Biden is set to be the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. It was also announced

that he plans to lay out an eight-year citizenship program to grant citizenship to illegal immigrants in the USA. This plan will be unveiled after Biden's oath-taking into office.

Trump administration amid Trump's exit from office denounces China's violence against the Uyghur Muslims and ethnic minority groups. In a tweet made by Secretary Pompeo, it is stated that China's actions against the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Province are 'genocidal'.