

# Positive Post

A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy



Greenwich University  
Pakistan - Mauritius

## September in History

### September 30, 1947:

*Pakistan becomes member of United Nations (UN) by a unanimous vote of the Security Council.*

### September 11, 1948:

*Founding father of nation Quaid-e-Azam dies in Karachi due to stroke.*

### September 14, 1948:

*Khawaja Nazimuddin becomes Governor General of Pakistan.*

### September 6, 1950:

*General Mohammad Ayub Khan, the first Pakistani, is appointed C-in-C of Pakistan Army.*

### September 12, 1956:

*Huseyn Shabeed Suharwardy assumes office of appointed Prime Minister.*

### September 16 1959:

*Government establishes Islamic Research Institute.*

### September 9, 1960:

*Pakistan achieved its first Gold Medal in Olympics, defeating India in hockey by 1-0 at Rome.*

### September 17, 1964:

*Fatima Jinnah filed her paper as candidate for the Presidential election.*

### September 23, 1990:

*Sandak project signed between Pakistan and China at Beijing.*

## Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

### Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2018 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

### DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan ranked 112th out of 167 countries in the Democracy Index scoring 4.17 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 4.26 in 2017.

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

### PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 139th out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index scoring 43.24 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 43.55 in 2017.

Index from 0 (most press freedom) to 100 (least press freedom)

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

### TERRORISM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 5th out of 163 countries in the Terrorism Index scoring 8.18 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 8.40 in 2017.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering : Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

### ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 131st out of 180 countries in the Economic Freedom Index scoring 54.4 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 52.8 out of 100 in 2017.

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic and Political outcomes.

## Greenwich University Live Sessions Beyond the Pandemic

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, as the nation adjusts to the new normal, a number of institutions are going online to carry the educational journey forward

through curriculum but through experiential learning as well. To guide our students, we invited more than 180 renowned personalities on our show, who through their success stories motivated many.



venues and hotels shut down, and negativity

The purpose of these session was manifold, strengthening the Alumni network, extending the outreach of Greenwich Vision by providing platform to people across the globe and promoting new talent.

Our RJ Umer Khan was the spine of the

during these trying times.

Greenwich University does not believe only in paving careers

With universities,



escalated, we at Greenwich have tried to motivate the audience through success stories, music, literary reviews, interviews and so much was offered to satiate the intellectual minds. We started the Greenwich University Live Sessions from May 1, 2020 and personalities with renowned and celebrated reputation from different arenas were with us to share their joy and journey and kept the audience engaged and motivated.

show, his captivation and charming persona was the highlight of the show. He has hosted over 4000 live shows in the past 11 years of his media career locally and internationally.

*By Umer Khan*



## Pakistan's Fight Against COVID-19 Has Made Imran Khan Stronger

Pakistan decided to reopen all educational institutions in phases starting on September 15. The decision was made a month after the federal government decided to open public places like restaurants, gyms and tourist destinations. That the rate of coronavirus infections has not spiked, even after the resumption of business activities, Eid-ul-Azha and Muharram processions, is an indication that Pakistan is finally getting back to normalcy. Recent reports and analyses have described Pakistan as a COVID-19 bright spot a sharp turnaround from a few months ago, when it was feared that the country's inept handling of the crisis would lead to disaster. That Pakistan has turned the tables in a matter of months is a win for its Prime Minister Imran Khan, whose position has now become stronger than ever.

There are three reasons why Pakistan's fight against COVID-19 has ensconced Khan in a comfortable position vis à vis his opponents.

First, Pakistan's COVID-19 response was channeled through a cooperative mechanism between the government and the military, something that has led to cohesion and institutional harmony. Civil-military cooperation in fighting the pandemic has been visible through the National Coordination Committee (NCC) and its operational arm, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), which include both civilian ministers and military leaders. The NCC, headed by the prime minister, is the apex decision-making body on matters related to COVID-19, and involves the military's top brass in its deliberations on future courses of action.

The workings of the NCOC have likewise amplified how effectively both civil and military officials have worked together to synergize all efforts and implement the decisions made by the NCC. The NCOC is headed by Federal Minister Asad Umar and comprises several high-ranking civil and military officials. Furthermore, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA),



headed by a serving three star general, has also been at the forefront of managing this gargantuan crisis.

Pakistan's model of civil-military cooperation has certainly delivered, indicating that ties between Khan and the military are robust. It also indicates that reports of a possible estrangement between the military and Khan were overblown. Indeed, Pundits who were predicting a doomsday scenario for Khan talked about "in-house change" and the "minus-one" formula, both of which would have involved him being removed from the prime ministership.

Second, Pakistan's COVID-19 countermeasures were in line with Khan's consistent policy of saving lives and livelihoods. Since the very beginning, Khan, citing Pakistan's specific circumstances, vehemently opposed a full-scale lockdown. While Khan advocated for and enforced a targeted lockdown in a bid to keep the economy afloat, the Pakistan Peoples Party-led Sindh provincial government foisted a complete lockdown in that province. However, the results were not encouraging, to say the least. Ultimately, the Sindh government had to impose a smart lockdown along the lines Khan had advocated. The smart lockdown approach showed its positive effects in the provinces governed by Khan's party. Punjab is a perfect example. Once a veritable coronavirus hotspot, the province has been able to avert a major health crisis due to the implementation of a set of smart lockdowns. With the intensity of the crisis fading noticeably, Khan continues to highlight

how determined he was to stick to his smart-lockdown policy, despite constant denunciation and resistance.

Third, Khan's government has been given some respite due to the encouraging statistics on the state of the economy. Pakistan recently recorded a current account surplus, after running a mammoth deficit for years. Additionally, the country received record remittances in the month of July, giving the prime minister an opportunity to announce the good news on Twitter. With Pakistan expected to witness a GDP growth of 1 percent for the current fiscal year, it could be argued that the economy as a whole has not been crippled as a result of the pandemic. Economic recovery is being anticipated, as evidenced by bullish trends in Pakistani stock markets and an increase in business confidence. The outlook might not be ideal, but is not bad enough for the opposition to berate the government and for the latter to feel enfeebled. Moreover, Pakistan's exports returned to their pre-COVID-19 level earlier this year. That Pakistan's government has managed to mitigate the deleterious effects of COVID-19 on the economy is a sigh of relief for its prime minister. Greater or more lasting damage to the economy would have offered an ideal opportunity for the opposition to pin down Khan.

As Pakistan slowly extricates itself from the shackles of the COVID-19 pandemic, Khan finds himself perched in a stronger position at the helm. This breathing space could be used to further consolidate his hold on power.

## Govt Plans to Build Underground Gas Storages

Due to an increasing gas deficit, the government is looking to build underground gas storage in order to bridge the higher demand-supply gap in winters.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Petroleum Nadeem Babar chaired a meeting on the development of Strategic Underground Gas Storages (SUGS) aimed at meeting the country's growing domestic and commercial needs, especially during the winter.



The initiative is being supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), while a consortium of European oil & gas equipment companies is leading the study, a Petroleum Division news release said.

The meeting agreed to expeditiously complete the study report on the methodology of underground gas storages till May 2021, so that availability of funds for the facility will be met in due course of time.

The final report will provide a blueprint for a facility with respect to size, modulation, and secure supply of gas.

Earlier, in 2019, Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan and Petroleum SAPM Nadeem Babar had discussed SUGS with ADB, who agreed to undertake a feasibility study for the project and allocated a grant.

Inter-State Gas Systems (Pvt) Ltd., a fully government-owned entity, will be the focal agency for the project.

ADB has completed its competitive bidding process and appointed the international consultant for preparing a feasibility study. Project infrastructure could be funded through Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC).

The SUGS facilities are crucial for the country in view of the committed supplies of imported gas under the international gas agreements and fast-growing gas demand in the country to keep pace with the economic progress.

The project will also significantly enhance Pakistan's capability to provide an uninterrupted gas supply for sustainable economic growth

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Skywell Automobile to Invest \$50 Million in Pakistan to Launch Electric Vehicles



In a session with the local media, the Federal Minister Science & Technology, Fawad Chaudhry announced that Skywell Automobile will be bringing in an investment of 50 million dollars to launch electric buses in Pakistan.

The investment is planned for the first phase. The next phase shall see the beginning of the local manufacturing of electric buses in Pakistan. The Minister informed that these buses will begin rolling on routes in Islamabad and Lahore later this year.

A signing ceremony of Strategic Alliance Agreement between Daewoo Pakistan and Skywell Automobile took place at Serena Hotel in Islamabad last week, where the Federal Minister was invited as a chief guest.

As per the agreement, Skywell Automobiles China and Daewoo Express Pakistan will work jointly to launch electric buses as well as other electric means of commute in Pakistan and form a technical support base in the country.

Fawad Chaudhry expressed his delight pertaining to the said development, stating that this venture will usher in a new age for Pakistan, boosting economic growth and job opportunities, while also ensuring a clean and green Pakistan.

He also said that a value chain for electric transport will be established in Pakistan. He added that the battery bus service will be made operational before 2021 in Pakistan.

*Courtesy: ProPakistani*

## September green bond flurry puts market on track for record year



Global green bond sales are heading for another record year as a flurry of September deals, including Germany's debut sovereign issue, have roused the market from a coronavirus-induced lull.

Smoke and steam billows from Belchatow Power Station, Europe's largest coal-fired power plant operated by PGE Group, near Belchatow, Poland November 28, 2018. Picture taken November 28, 2018.

Green issues, which source financing for environmentally beneficial expenditures, are crucial to the growing pool of money dedicated to investing sustainably. Sales slumped when the pandemic erupted but are now back on track.

Worth around \$700 billion worldwide, the market's prospects were boosted this year by the European Union's 750 billion-euro coronavirus recovery fund. Around a third of it

should be financed by green debt, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said.

Issuance of EU green debt, which may eventually double the global green bond universe, is yet to start but year-to-date issuance by other borrowers has reached \$150 billion, topping that raised by this point last year, according to data from Dealogic.

Most notable was Germany's debut green bond, the first step towards establishing a pricing reference point for regional borrowers which should entice more borrowers into the market.

Other big names hitting green markets in September were Sweden, JPMorgan JPM and Daimler DAIGN.DE. Volkswagen VOWG p.DE saw big demand for its green deal despite being tainted by an old emissions cheating scandal.

*www.channelnewsasia.com*

## Green bond market on track for growth

Joshua Kendall, head of responsible investment research and stewardship at Insight Investment, expects green issuance to surpass the 2019 record of \$206 billion -- unless the pandemic slows markets again. Another forecast, by ratings agency Moody's, says full-year issuance could hit as much as \$225 billion.

"Companies are recognising that they had to, maybe, hold off on their plans, but I don't think there was any concern that it would be a permanent change or an adjustment," Kendall said.

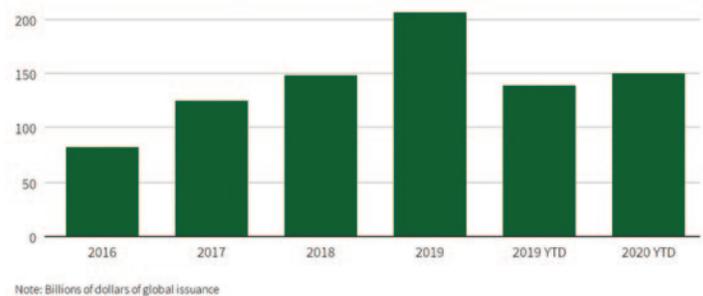
"The (green) bond market is fairly resilient and companies are very

committed to this issue."

Despite its fast paced growth, the green bond market only accounted for 3.5% of last year's total global bond issuance of \$7.15 trillion, according to the Bank for International Settlement.

And the lead green debt enjoyed over the other two main avenues of sustainable fundraising - social bonds and sustainable bonds, a blend of green and social - has been eroded this year.

That's because the coronavirus outbreak has spurred a rise in social bond sales, many earmarked to fund



coronavirus-related spending.

Social bonds account for 21% of all sustainable issuance this year, versus 6% in 2019, while the share of green bonds has declined to 62%, down from 79% last year, Dealogic data up to Sept 10 shows.

Finnish public sector lender MuniFin and French agency Caisse d'Amortissement de la Dette So-

ciale (CADES) are among those to have issued social bonds in September.

"As we're normalising to the COVID economy, I don't think green is going anywhere," said Trisha Taneja, head of ESG advisory at Deutsche Bank, one of the banks which managed the German sale.

*Courtesy:www.refinitiv.com/*

## PM seeks action plan to boost agriculture productivity

Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed to prepare a timeframe-based action plan for the medium and long-term projects to enhance agriculture produce in the country. Presiding over a meeting to review progress on agriculture reforms and food security initiatives on Wednesday, the prime minister said that ensuring food security is a top priority of his government.

He directed the restructuring of agro-ecological zones in Pakistan in order to compile data pertaining to the country's potential for enhanced crop productivity and diversification.

He also ordered the compilation of



accurate data based on the production of different food commodities. He issued directives to concerned ministries for paying special attention to special economic zones

dedicated to the processing of food commodities. Farmers should be attracted and provided required assistance to produce vital crops for exports, said the PM.

The PM directed to operationalise the Food Security Dash Board at the Ministry of Food Security in collaboration with all provinces and relevant departments. He also directed to pay special attention towards economic zones for the processing of agricultural produce.

Emphasizing on getting benefits from Chinese experience, the PM said technical expertise of Chinese should be fully exploited. He also directed to establish an integrated and coordinated system between all stakeholders including research institutions, universities and other concerned departments.

*Courtesy: profit.pakistantoday.com*

## Pak envoy invites Chinese entrepreneurs to take advantage of SEZs

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque has invited Chinese businessmen to take advantage of the dividend of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) being set up under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Pakistan has identified nine special economic zones and three of them are now in advanced stage of preparation. "We are going to share all the details very soon," he said in an interview with Economic Daily-China Economic Net (CEN). Pakistan has been committed to building industrial clusters in recent years to improve its ability to undertake the relocation of Chinese industries.

Chinese companies have also been paying continuous attention to the implementation of preferential policies in Pakistan's special economic zones. In this regard, Haque said: "We have learned a lot from the Chinese experience of developing special economic zones."

Talking about China-Pakistan trade relations during the COVID-19 pandemic, he pointed out: "First of all, we are very happy that China has posted a very positive and more than 3% growth in the second quarter. Despite the pandemic, the first quarter of this year we saw our bilateral trade increase."

In this second quarter, there was a



little dip because of the disruption of international travel. The updated FTA is very important. Over 300 items are now enjoying duty-free access to each other countries, including fisheries and pharmaceuticals. "So there are many opportunities for the traders of the two countries to work in this area. We hope that in the months and years to come, our trade will increase from our previous figures."

Talking about his experience in the first month of his new duty, Ambassador Haque first mentioned the second strategic dialogue between China and Pakistan which was held in August in south China's Hainan Province.

"While thanking China for its very valuable support to us during the pandemic, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi appreciated the announcement made by Chinese President Xi Jinping that whenever a vaccine is developed, it would be considered a public good.

## Pakistan & Uzbekistan Sign MoU for Increasing Trade & Joint Projects

Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Affairs for trade enhancement, promotion of intergovernmental projects in different sectors, and improvement of connectivity.

The pact was signed by the Prime Minister's Advisor on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood, and the visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Investments & Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov.

In the discussions held with the Advisor, both sides agreed to start negotiations for a bilateral Early Harvest Plan, proceeding to Preferential Trade Agreement to provide increased market access to each other's products.

It was also agreed to have Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for harmonization of standards and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Both sides agreed to arrange a business forum for the private sector of their countries.

During the bilateral discussion, Pakistan and Uzbekistan resolved to optimally utilize trade and investment opportunities and work expeditiously to achieve the shared

goal of strengthening political and commercial ties.

The nine-member delegation comprising First Deputy Foreign Affairs and Deputy Ministers of Investment & Foreign Trade, Transport, and senior officials of the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade called on the Prime Minister and the Chief of Army Staff.



The delegation also held meetings with the Ministers for Industries & Production and Maritime Affairs to actualize existing investment opportunities in the fields of textile, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. Both sides pledged to endeavor to work towards improved connectivity through land borders and shipping. Uzbekistan is particularly interested in using seaports of Pakistan for shipment of imports and exports.

## From Hocanes to Khans: Pakistan's most successful celebrity fashion lines

They say clever are those who think about what will come tomorrow. Several personalities in Pakistan's showbiz industry must have kept this in mind when branching out into business at the peak of their careers.

Among showbiz personalities trying to safeguard their futures by operating their own businesses while acting are sisters Mawra and Urwa Hocane. The two launched their fashion label 'UXM' in June 2019. Their collection features Western-style clothing and accessories.

After Mawra and Urwa, twin sisters Aiman and Minal Khan also launched their fashion brand 'A&M Closet' in November 2019. Their clothing showcases Eastern influences but in keeping with the times, they have also included Western-



style clothing.

Actress Komal Aziz has been heading her brand 'Omal by Komal' since mid-2019. Her designs are predominantly Western in style.

Up and coming actress Areeba Habib is also among those pursuing their childhood passions with the

launch of 'Areeba Habib Clothing'. Clothing needs to be complemented by stylish shoes, which is exactly what model Amna Babar kept in mind when she launched her trendy shoe brand 'Cocoon by Amna Babar'.

Starting her career as a child star, actress Arisha Razi also started her

business 'It's for you'.

Actor Fawad Khan and his wife are managing fashion brands 'Silk' and 'SFK' respectively. Actor Ahsan Khan is also known for his business 'Ahsan Khan Clothings'.

She also received the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Award in 2010. Later in 2016, Mavalvala was part of a team of scientists credited with the discovery of gravitational waves, a new window for studying the cosmos.

"We are really witnessing the opening of a new tool for doing astronomy," Mavalvala had said in an interview at the time. "We have turned on a new sense. We have been able to see and now we will be able to hear as well."

*Courtesy: Samaa TV*

## Facebook Agrees to Share Data With FIA



Social networking site Facebook agreed to share its data with Pakistani authorities to investigate and eradicate cybercrime.

The company's administration has signed an agreement with the cybercrime wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to share the data with Pakistani authorities in a bid to secure the digital space and curb the leeway cybercriminals enjoyed.

The team of Facebook's technical experts also concurred with Pakistan's aspiration for expediting cybercrime investigations.

The investigation watchdog will now have access to data from the social networking site in order to expand its investigation in

cybercrime cases.

Earlier, the cybercrime wing of FIA could not access the information from Facebook due to which many cases could not be proceeded or disposed of.

Facebook has now agreed to Pakistan's requests and has asked the authorities in the cybercrime wing to delegate a focal person to contact FB for data requests.

The focal person will request information from FB in the cases of cyber crimes against women and children. It has also expressed inclination towards expanding the data-sharing pact to curb cyber crimes in the future.

*Courtesy: Samaa TV*

## Low-cost Turkish airline Pegasus to begin flights to, from Karachi



A low-cost Turkish airline, Pegasus, is launching flights from Karachi to Istanbul.

Pegasus' Karachi – Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen flights will start September 25. Flights from Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport to Quaid-e-Azam International Airport will operate every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 8:35pm, while flights from Quaid-e-Azam International Airport to Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport will depart every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 04:55am.

Pegasus Airlines will connect passengers from Karachi to its destinations in Manchester, London, Zurich, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Stockholm, Frankfurt, Berlin, Vienna, Rome,

Cologne, Brussels, Kyiv, Bucharest, Kharkiv, Moscow, Stuttgart, Geneva, Barcelona, Marseille, Zaporizhia and Prague, via Istanbul.

The airline was founded in 1990 and is Turkey's first low-cost airline. It has partnered with Gerry's Group in Pakistan, according to a press statement.

Recently, Virgin Atlantic announced that it was starting direct flights from the UK to Pakistan.

The airline said that it will start direct flights from Heathrow Airport, London to Lahore and Islamabad from December 2020. It will also operate direct flights from Manchester Airport to Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore

*Courtesy: ProPakistani*

## Educational institutions reopen after six months Grade 9 and above to resume physical classes in first phase

- Imran terms it collective responsibility to ensure safety of schoolchildren
- NCOC issues SOPs to prevent spread of virus
- Govt vows to take action against non-complying schools

After a six-month hiatus, educational institutions across the country are all set to open their doors to students.

From September 15, schools (Classes 9th and 10th only), colleges and universities are going to reopen in phases while ensuring compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to avoid spread of novel coronavirus disease in accordance with the last week decision of the inter-provincial education ministers' conference (IPEMC). Secondary and primary classes will resume later this month.

All educational institutions have been lying closed since March 15, weeks after the virus outbreak in the country.

Just a day before the reopening of educational institutions, Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted: "Tomorrow we will welcome



millions of children back to school. It is our priority & collective responsibility to ensure that every child can go to school safely to learn. We have worked to ensure that school operations are aligned with public health safety rules on #COVID19."

Speaking to Dawn, federal Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood said Tuesday was very important for the country's education sector. The reopening of educational institutions was not an easy decision, he said, but the IPEMC following the health ministry's advice decided to open the educational institutions in phases under the SOPs so that the education system

could move ahead.

"It's a big responsibility of teachers, schools administrators and parents and adult students as well to ensure implementation of the SOP in true letter and spirit," Mr Mahmood said, adding that the government could take action against the institutions which would not implement SOPs.

"Being federal minister, I will monitor implementation of SOP in the capital city. I will also make visits to some institutions on Tuesday, while provincial government will ensure implementation of SOP in their respective provinces," Mr Mahmood said, claiming that

safety and wellbeing of students was government's top priority.

According to education ministry officials, major points of the SOPs are reduction in number of students to ideally 20, depending on classroom size, ensuring social distance in classrooms, wearing of masks by students and school staff, no entry without mask in institutions etc.

While educational institutions are going to reopen when the number of active cases of Covid-19 had already dropped down to less than 6,000 across the country, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has advised parents to ensure their children follow SOPs including wearing of face masks.

"Don't send them to school with symptoms of cough and fever. Get them tested in case of severe symptoms of Covid-19 and inform the educational institution if report is found positive. Ensure social distancing among children and suggest them to use hand sanitizers. Moreover, transporters should also maintain social distancing, in vehicles, while shifting them to schools," the NCOC advised.

*Courtesy: Dawn*

## Balochistan to plant 400k olive trees

Approximately 0.4 million olive trees would be planted in Balochistan during the current year to promote low water-consuming farming, aimed to fight water scarcity in the province.

According to sources, the Balochistan Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) would plant 221,000 olive saplings while the remaining would be planted by Balochistan Agriculture Research and Development Centre as part of its upcoming low water consuming project.

Talking to APP, Director General (DG) BARI, Juma Khan Tareen said, "it will also provide farmers an alternative crop which will help bring prosperity to the backward areas."



He added that the saplings of olive trees were being imported from Spain and would be provided to farmers free of charge for their economic development. "They are also working to produce

saplings of olive trees in its own nurseries," he said. "For extraction of olive oil, plants were being established in various cities of the province."

DG Tareen also said that BARI has begun training programmes for farmers and landowners of the province on modern farming methods. "Cultivation of 400,000 olive plants will be done on 4,000 acres to resist climate change issue besides introducing a good source of income for poor farmers."

He maintained that it was BARI's top priority to make barren land cultivable for promotion of livestock and agriculture sector in the province. "This new initiative would help generate revenue for the province, besides bringing large areas of barren land under cultivation."

*Courtesy: The Express Tribune*

## PM Imran Khan says technology to play key role in Balochistan's uplift

After reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the country, the government has allowed primary schools to resume classes from September 30.

Federal Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood, after attending a meeting at the National Command Operation Centre (NCOC), said the decision to reopen schools has been taken with consensus.

“We took the decision after we saw 0.8% positive rate after reopening educational institutes in the country,” the minister said, adding that the authorities will continue to monitor the situation and any carelessness in the implementation of the COVID-19 SOPs will be dealt with sternly.

The federal education minister assured the parents that the government took the step after meticulous research and inspection.

Shafqat Mahmood further said that



it was the collective effort of parents, administrators and teachers that allowed the government to take the decision.

Stressing upon the need to adhere to the SOPs, the minister said that young children cannot take care of themselves properly so wearing of face mask and density of the students in the classroom should be maintained.

On September 15, universities and

colleges and 9th and 10th grade students had resumed on-campus learning, however, students of classes 6th, 7th, and 8th returned to classrooms on September 22 after a six-month break.

Sindh had delayed the recommencement of middle classes by a week but allowed the schools to reopen after reviewing the pandemic situation.

Spokesperson of the Balochistan

government, Liaquat Shahwani on Monday had said that the provincial authorities have decided to propose a 15-day delay in the reopening of primary schools in today's meeting of the NCOC.

The statement from the spokesperson came after Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan reported the highest positivity rates in the country over the last week.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) reports, the test positive percentage in Balochistan registered a spike of 11.9% in a single day on September 23, which fell to 7.8% on September 26.

A positivity rate is the percentage of coronavirus tests performed that return back positive. In May, the WHO recommended that the percent positive should remain below 5% for at least two weeks before governments can consider reopening.

*Courtesy: The News*

## Urdu comic book Little Master helps fight COVID-19 misinformation

The world isn't just fighting the coronavirus pandemic but also misinformation spreading regarding it. An Urdu comic book, Little Master, aims to keep children safe from fake news.

Released on Monday, the comic tells the story of a young boy from Karachi's Lyari who has taken on a mission to learn about the coronavirus to help the people of his community and society stay safe from the infectious disease.

The main audience of Little Master, published by Mehrdar Art & Production, is children.

It has been written by Inam Hassan



while the illustrations are by Umair Najeeb Khan, the creator of Pakistan's first superhero comic book series Paak-Legion.

“Books are still the best method to convey a message to the masses,” said Muhammad Faheem,

documentary filmmaker and MAP founder.

“This comic book will provide maximum COVID-19 related information to the children and counter all sorts of misinformation and myths about the infectious

disease.”

According to the details shared in a press statement, the story focuses on little master's journey understanding the pandemic and trying to spread awareness on following SOPs, countering extreme narratives and trying to maintain peace within different socio-economic classes, cultures, belief systems, and castes living within his community. Team Mehrdar Art & Production will be printing 10,000 copies of the six-chapter comic book and will distribute it in multiple neighbourhoods of Karachi such as Lyari, Mauripur, Ibrahim Hyderi, Korangi and Surjani Town.

*Courtesy: Daily Times*

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