

PM Imran Khan Wishes Hindus A Very Happy And Peaceful Holi

Agencies

Dubai: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan never misses the chance to greet minorities on the special occasions.

The Prime Minister on Monday greeted the Hindu community of Pakistan on the occasion of Holi which is being celebrated across the country today.

Imran tweeted: "Wishing all our Hindu community a very happy and peaceful Holi, the festival of colours."

Wishing all our Hindu community a very happy and peaceful Holi, the festival of colours.



Holi is a popular ancient Hindu festival which is celebrated by the Hindus around the world. It is celebrated predominantly in India.

Holi is popularly known as the Indian 'festival of colours'. On Sunday, the provincial govern-

ment of Balochistan announced two-day holidays on March 9 and 10 for the Hindu community to celebrate Holi.

The ancient Hindu festival of Holi, which heralds the end of winter and the victory of good over evil, is marked with a national public holiday in India and sees revellers pour onto streets splashing colours on one another.

Hindu population in Pakistan

Though there are no exact official numbers available, the Pakistan Hindu Council says that there are more than 8 million Hindus currently living in Pakistan.

They constitute about 4 per cent of the population of 220 million. They live primarily in the urban areas of the province of Sindh in the lower Indus valley and more than half are concentrated in the south-east district of Tharparkar which borders India.

For the most part, Hindus in Pakistan are well educated and active in commerce, trade and the civil service. According to the Council, approximately 94 per cent of Hindus are living in Sindh Province, and more than 4 per cent are living in Punjab Province of Pakistan, where as a small portion of this population is settled in Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Provinces.

Pakistan's Aurat March: Stones, Shoes Hurlled At Women Marchers

Agencies

Islamabad: Islamists pelted stones, shoes and sticks at campaigners as they marched through Pakistan's capital on Sunday to mark International Women's Day.

Women and men joined the event in Islamabad, one of several rallies across the country, for what is known in Pakistan as the 'Aurat March', the Urdu term for women.

Hundreds of men and women

for violating the law and attempting to attack the women's march.

The event organisers said some of those marching hit by stones and bricks were injured.

One of the organisers Ammar Rashid posted a photo on Twitter of a secular woman leader Ismat Shahjahan with a head injury.

Police said they were investigating the claim.

There has been an uproar in conservative circles over slogans



An activist of the Aurat (Woman) March, with a slogan reading freed woman painted in her face attend a rally to mark the International Women's Day in Islamabad (AFP)

from the Red Mosque brigade, consisting of several local militant groups, and a Taliban allied religious party staged a rival rally just across from the women's march venue, District Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafiqat said.

Police official Mazhar Niazi said the officers blocked the Islamists as they tried to break through a cordon to attack the marchers.

Niazi said the Islamists threw stones, bricks, sticks and shoes at the marchers. He added that no one was injured.

He said a criminal case would be registered against the Islamists

used at the past two such events, including "My body, my choice", "My body is not your battleground" and "Stop being menstrual phobic".

Following last year's event, organisers said they faced a backlash including murder and rape threats.

Ahead of this year's event, organisers say posters and murals were vandalised, including one by the Islamists from the Red Mosque.

Marches in other cities across Pakistan were held peacefully amid tight security with a large participation from students, civil rights groups and other women's organisations.



Italy Locks Down Millions As Its Coronavirus Deaths Jump

Agencies

MILAN: Italy ordered a virtual lockdown across much of its wealthy north, including the financial capital Milan, in a drastic new attempt to try to contain an outbreak of coronavirus that saw the number of deaths leap again sharply on Sunday.

The unprecedented restrictions, which aim to limit gatherings and curb movement, will impact some 16 million people and stay in force until April 3. They were signed into law overnight by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.

The new measures say people should not enter or leave Lombardy, Italy's richest region, as well as 14 provinces in four other regions, including the cities of Venice, Modena, Parma, Piacenza, Reggio Emilia and Rimini.

Only people with proven, work-related reasons, or health problems will be able to move in and out of the exclusion zones. Leave has been canceled for health workers.

"We are facing a national emergency. We chose from the beginning to take the line of truth and transparency and now we're moving with lucidity and courage, with firmness and determination," said Conte.

"We have to limit the spread of the virus and prevent our hos-

pitals from being overwhelmed," he told a news conference called in the early hours of Sunday.

Italy has been hit harder by the crisis than anywhere else in Europe so far and Sunday's latest figures showed that starkly.

The number of coronavirus cases jumped 25% in a 24-hour period to 7,375, while deaths climbed 57% to 366 deaths. It was the largest daily increase for both readings since the contagion came to light on Feb 21.

Antonio Pesenti, head of the Lombardy regional crisis response unit, told the Corriere della Sera newspaper the health system in Lombardy was "a step away from collapse" as intensive care facilities came under growing strain from the new cases.

"We're now being forced to set up intensive care treatment in corridors, in operating theaters, in recovery rooms. We've emptied entire hospital sections to make space for seriously sick people," he said.

The Milan stock exchange, whose all-share index has plunged 17% since the crisis broke, was scheduled to open normally on Monday but one trader said he expected "a violent sell-off" as markets digested the lockdown of Italy's economic heartland.

The World Health Organisation said it fully supported the ac-

tions taken by Italy, which were in line with its guidelines for containing the spread of the virus.

But with the Italian economy already on the edge of recession, some local politicians pushed back against the measures, which leaked out before the regions were consulted.

The head of Veneto, Luca Zaia, complained he had not been properly consulted and was unhappy that three provinces in his region, including Venice, had been included in the clampdown.

"We do not understand the rationale of a measure that appears scientifically disproportionate to the epidemiological trend," he wrote on Facebook.

CHURCHES, MUSEUMS, SPORTS EVENTS CLOSED

On Saturday, health officials had expressed alarm at the apparent lack of concern in the general public, as fine weekend weather attracted large crowds to the ski slopes outside Milan. But streets were notably quieter than normal as northern cities woke up to the news on Sunday.

"What is happening in my city is worrying me and it is also sad, because Milan is a lively city and to see it like this today is almost a defeat for me," said resident Lucia Navone. "I never would have thought this would happen."

Qatar announces closure of schools, universities over coronavirus

Agencies

Doha: Qatar on Monday announced a nationwide closure of schools and universities amid fears over the coronavirus outbreak, adding that the closure will come into effect on March 10.

In a statement carried by the state-run Qatar News Agency on Monday, the Qatari government said that the suspension would take place "until further notice".

The move came a day after Qatar's Ministry of Health said it is temporarily banning the entry of travellers from 14 countries as the number of cases in the Gulf country rose to 15.

In a statement, the ministry said the ban covers Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq,

Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand.

"The decision affects all individuals intending to enter from these countries, including visas upon arrival, those with a residence or work permit, and temporary visitors," the statement read.

Qatar Airways, the country's national carrier, had already suspended flights to and from Italy, one of the hardest-hit countries.

Meanwhile, Qatari nationals and residents were called on to avoid all but essential travel at this time.

The latest cases in Qatar were all foreign residents and had been placed in complete isolation, the ministry said.

"All those who were sharing the accommodation were sub-

jected to quarantine, including all people who came in contact with the patients, to make sure they are healthy and that no infection was transmitted to them," it added.

The ministry said it is subjecting the patients' accommodation to a thorough examination and tracing the three individuals' movements.

The 12 previous cases all involved Qatari citizens evacuated in late February from Iran, a country that has emerged as regional outbreak hotspot.

During a news conference on Sunday, Mohammed bin Hamad Al Thani, director of public health at the ministry, said the current situation in the Gulf country does "not require closing schools given that the spread of the disease in Qatar remains low".

Afghan Presidential Rivals Hold Parallel Inauguration Ceremonies

Agencies

KABUL: Afghan President-elect Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah have held rival swearing-in ceremonies, suggesting that their US-brokered talks over a disputed presidential race have yielded no result.

Television footage showed Ghani taking an oath at the presidential palace in Kabul at a ceremony attended by a number of foreign diplomats, including US Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad.

Meanwhile, there were reports that the inauguration ceremony was temporarily disrupted by the sound of a rocket explosion in Kabul, but that President Ghani was unharmed and continued to address the event.

Presidential candidate and rival in the September 2019 disputed election Abdullah Abdullah held his own ceremony at a similar time.

nounce Ghani as the winner of the presidential election, proclaiming himself to be the president-elect.

An official who declined to be named said Ghani, Abdullah and Khalilzad held meetings on Monday morning as they worked towards a deal to prevent two parallel inauguration ceremonies.

Abdullah's office confirmed that Khalilzad on Monday had held three meetings with the chief executive to "find a solution" for the matter, but had not succeeded.

Afghan politicians had earlier voiced concerns about the future of an attempt to hold two inauguration ceremonies in a single day, believing it will push the country into a new political crisis. The country's previous presidential election was also marred by a similar dispute involving Ghani and Abdullah, which was resolved by a US-brokered power-sharing agreement.

The new row comes just days



The two rivals had earlier postponed their plans to hold parallel inauguration ceremonies to allow for more time to resolve their differences over the 2019 vote.

Abdullah, who serves as the chief executive officer of the outgoing administration, has rejected a decision by Afghanistan's Election Commission last month to an-

after the US and the Afghan Taliban militant group reached a tentative deal on the withdrawal of foreign forces from the country following months-long talks, which excluded the Kabul government.

The Afghan government should now be preparing for talks with the militant group following the US-Taliban deal.

20 Killed In Road Accident In Pakistan



Agencies

Islamabad: At least 20 people were killed and six others injured when a passenger bus veered off a mountain road and plunged into a deep ravine in northern Pakistan on Monday, authorities said.

The bus was on its way from Rawalpindi to Skardu when it fell into the ravine at Roundu near Gilgit, according to Faizullah Firaq, the spokesperson of the Gilgit Baltistan government.

Firaq said that 25 passengers were onboard the vehicle when the accident occurred, adding that the cause of the mishap was not known.

Police and rescue teams arrived at the spot and were helping to shift the injured and dead to hospitals.

Eight bodies have been recovered, he said, adding that Pakistan Army helicopters are carrying out operations to retrieve the remaining bodies.

Gilgit Baltistan Governor Raja Jalal Hussain Maqpoon expressed grief over the tragedy and instructed the authorities to speed up the rescue operations. Road accidents are common in Pakistan. Most of them are caused due to reckless driving and bad roads.

In September, at least 27 people, including 10 Pakistan Army soldiers, were killed and more than 15 wounded when a passenger bus rammed into a mountain in Babusar Pass which connects Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with Gilgit Baltistan.

Saudi crown prince wants to become king before G20 Summit: Report

Saudi Arabia's ambitious Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is trying to become king before a G20 Summit planned for November in Riyadh, which he intends to use as a stage for his succession, the Middle East Eye reports.

The heir to the throne, who is also known as MBS, has already launched a purge of senior members of the royal family to pave the way for the succession.

On Saturday, The Wall Street Journal said Saudi Arabia had detained a fourth prince in a new purge of royal family members over an alleged coup attempt to unseat King Salman and his son.

Two Saudis close to the royal family said Nayef bin Ahmed bin Abdulaziz had been arrested on Saturday, the newspaper reported.



He was the fourth prince taken into custody after the detention of his father Ahmed bin Abdulaziz, along with former Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and his half brother Nawaf on Friday.

According to London-based Middle East Online, bin Salman would not wait for his father King Salman to die. Instead, the

crown prince would force his father who suffers from dementia to abdicate.

"He wants to be sure while his father is there, he becomes the king," one source said.

The sources said Prince Ahmed had been asked to back bin Salman's succession, which he refused.

Ahmed did not plan a coup -- an apparent reason given for his arrest -- and was apprehended right after entering the palace, where he had been told that an audience with King Salman awaited him. "He did not see the king. It was total betrayal," one source said.

Back in 2017, bin Salman ordered a purge of dozens of Saudi royal figures, ministers, and businessmen in an "anti-corruption" campaign, which was seen as an attempt to muffle dissent to his potential enthronement.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son /I have applied for JKEDI Loan under NMDFC Scheme for which I require income certificate form concerned Tehsil Office. The income certificate has been issued in my favour bearing No.2655/MM Dated 24/02/20. The total income from all sources in Rs.46000/= which has been mentioned in the certificate. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file has objection in the office of JKEDI Anantnag within a period of seven days for the dated of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Fathers Name:-Mohd Yousuf Reshi
F/O Sartaj Ahmad Reshi
R/O Deethu Shangus Anantnag
MOJA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son Hamid Gulzar have applied for JKEDI Loan under NMDFC Scheme for which I require income certificate form concerned Tehsil Office. The income certificate has been issued in my favour bearing No.969/NTKGR Dated 20/01/2020. The total income from all sources in Rs.6000/= which has been mentioned in the certificate. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file has objection in the office of JKEDI Anantnag within a period of seven days for the dated of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Fathers Name:-Gulzar Ahamd Lone
F/O Hamid Gulzar
R/O Gassipor Wanpoh Anantnag
#

GOVT. OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR Office Of The Executive Engineer Sub-Transmission Division Pulwama

CANCELLATION OFNIT 52/STD/PUL of 2019-20 Dated:-17.02.2020

Subject:-Cancellation of Tender due to poor response.

The NIT No 52/STD/Pul of 2019-20 Dated:-17.02.2020 having tender id 2020_PDD_93019.1 for Supply,Installation, testing and commissioning of 33KV VCB alongwith Installation,testing and commissioning of 33KV C&R Panel at R/stn Mastpora Keller.is here by cancelled because of the poor response.

No:- STD/Pul/ 2209-14
Date:-02/03/2020

DIPK-NB-2165/19

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
STD Pulwama