



Wasim believes Faheem Ashraf could be 'match winner' for Pakistan

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With eye on 2020, Trump seizes on abortion issue

NAB submits reports in fake accounts case probe to SC

■ NAB taking action against the corrupt elements sans pressure, says Javed

By Our Special Correspondent

LAHORE: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal chaired a meeting at the bureau's headquarters here on Friday. During the meeting, the performance of NAB's operation and prosecution divisions was evaluated.

The NAB chairman emphasised that the bureau was using all means to extradite corrupt individuals who have fled the country. Justice (ret'd) Iqbal said justice would be served to those who had fled with billions from the national exchequer.

The chairman added that NAB had devised a strategy to tackle corruption in the country and was taking action against corrupt elements without any pressure.

According to the chairman, NAB had a conviction rate of 70.8 percent in 2018. During the last 13 months NAB received 54,344 complaints and after scrutiny 2,125 complaints were probed. There was an inquiry on 1,059 complaints and investigations were approved for 302. 590 corruption references were filled in accountability courts and 561 arrests were made.

He further said that during the last year those impacted by housing society scandals had been returned over Rs1 billion.

Another report adds: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday submitted to the Supreme Court its first progress report on the ongoing investigation in the fake accounts case.

The SC had last month tasked NAB with probing the case after a joint investigation team report

revealed that at least 29 bank accounts identified as fake had been used for money laundering to the tune of Rs42 billion. The report implicated former president Asif Ali Zardari, his sister Faryal Talpur, prominent banker Hussain Lawai, Omni Group's Anwar Majeed and other prominent bankers and businessmen.

The top court had given two months to NAB to conclude its investigation. It had also ordered the body to submit a progress report every 15 days. According to the report prepared by NAB Rawalpindi Director General Irfan Mangi, the anti-corruption watchdog has asked relevant departments for their records and is collecting additional evidence in order to determine whether a reference should be filed. Last month, NAB Chairman Javed Iqbal had formed a combined investigation team (CIT) in a high-level meeting to probe the case. It was decided that investigations into fake bank accounts and money laundering would be taken to their logical conclusion in the light of the judgement of the apex court and on the basis of solid evidence.

Normally when a complaint is filed with NAB, the bureau initiates an inquiry. In case credible evidence is found, the inquiry is turned into an investigation, after which it is decided whether or not a reference should be filed in an accountability court. In this specific case, the PM's Special Assistant on Accountability Shahzad Akbar had said that NAB will not go for an inquiry but will initiate investigation on the basis of the inquiry conducted by the JIT formed by the SC.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of the Task Force on Civil Service Reforms at the PM's Office.

Track down those mentioned in Panama papers, says Imran

■ PM promises depoliticisation of bureaucracy

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that those mentioned in the Panama papers must be tracked down, according to reports.

More than 250 people mentioned in the papers have availed tax amnesty while a major number of companies have shifted to China, reports further suggest.

While talking about bureaucracy, he said the government is firmly committed to undertake structural reforms in bureaucracy to make it efficient and responsive, Radio Pakistan reported. The premier made the comments while chairing a meeting of Task Force on Civil Service Reforms in Islamabad on Friday.

Imran expressed regret that bureaucracy was heavily politicised during the past ten years which resulted in its inefficiency and created a fear among the bureaucrats. He said bureaucracy will be depoliticised and insulated from all kinds of political pressures.

The premier elaborated that the existing government system cannot compete with private sector where merit determines the positions and seniority.

He said no system can sustain or deliver if accountability and merit is missing. PM Imran emphasised the need to restructure and reform bureaucracy to make it pro-progress and innovative.

He further stressed that there is a dire need to promote professionalism in every sphere. During the meeting, the prime minister said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government is committed to protect integrity and security of tenure of bureaucrats so that they could devote their energies towards translating the political vision into a reality.

The existing system, he said, does not allow the large pool of talent in the country to emerge. The premier said that the incumbent government is introducing a new local government system wherein local representatives will be fully empowered to carry out public welfare work, adding that it is important to check the wastage of resources as well.

Another report adds: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced his government's firm commitment towards structural reforms in the bureaucratic setup to make it efficient and responsive to the needs of time, Radio Pakistan reported. The prime minister, while chairing a meeting of the Task Force on Civil Service Reforms in Islamabad, regretted the alleged heavy politicisation of the bureaucracy over the last 10 years, which he claimed had resulted in inefficiency and fostered fear among bureaucrats.

He promised that the bureaucracy would be depoliticised and insulated from all kinds of political pressures.

The prime minister said that the existing system of government could not compete with the private sector, where merit determined positions and seniority, adding that no system could sustain or deliver if accountability and merit were missing. He stressed the need to promote professionalism in every sphere, and to restructure and reform the bureaucracy to make it pro-progress and innovative.

Imran reiterated his gov't commitment towards protecting the integrity and security of the tenure of bureaucrats.

Pak to manufacture railway passenger coaches from 2020

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Friday announced that all passenger bogies would be manufactured indigenously at the Pakistan Railway Carriage Factory (PRCF) from next year.

Addressing workers of the Pakistan Railways Carriage Factory, he said "I promise that no passenger coach will be imported in future from next year and all the passenger bogies will be prepared in Pakistan Railway factory. Sheikh Rashid said Asad Qaisar, speaker National Assembly (NA) possesses no discretionary powers to prevent him from becoming part of PAC.

"I want to bring Railway police salary at par with Punjab police salary, he added. On not including him in PAC by NA speaker he said he does not accept Shahbaz Sharif in PAC. I will not sit silent if no decision will be taken about Shahbaz Sharif till next Monday.

"Speaker is badshah and speaker has no prerogative to prevent me from becoming part of PAC. This is right of party leader to whom he wants to include in PAC. Speaker has no powers to call Shahbaz Sharif during remand. Speaker said: you have done wrong thing. I am the sen-

ior most parliamentarian of Pakistan. I am silent due to Imran Khan. I don't care for ministry. I am worried only about my poor people with whom Imran Khan has made pledges", he remarked. He went on to say "After meeting Imran Khan I have become sure that Imran Khan does not believe in any deal and dhel.

Rs3000 allowance for Pakistan Railways workers
On behalf of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Friday announced Rs 3,000 allowance for Pakistan Railways workers.

He was speaking to the media during visit to the Railways Carriage Factory in Islamabad.

Previous governments looted the national resources and purchased machinery worth billions of rupees which resulted in the destruction of the institution, the minister said adding that now the PTI will work for the betterment of the workers keeping in mind our budgetary allocations.

He announced that the prime minister will inaugurate Thar Express on 10th February. The minister said that he wanted to bring the pay structure of Railways Police at par with that of the Punjab Police. From next fiscal year, the Railways will present its budget separately in the NA.

Dialogue with IMF now at final stage: Asad Umar

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Asad Umar has said that talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have entered into final phase.

The sources said that another contact was made between Pakistan and IMF but both sides could not reach any conclusion. Although talks were positive in which differences of two parties were diminished, but it could not end in fruitful way. The spokesman of Ministry of Finance Dr Khaqan Najeeb said that it is hoped that before the spring session of IMF's Executive Board, the matter would be resolved. The programme of IMF is not only to get

dollars but it would also be helpful in carrying out international agreements.

"Pakistan has made it clear that it has not any urgency to get the programme of IMF but it would take it on favorable conditions. Pakistan would not make such a deal in hurry which would be not conducive to economy and people of the country", he added.

Another report adds: Pakistan and the IMF are yet to reach an agreement over a new loan programme, sources said Friday, despite a recent contact between the two sides. Sources within the Ministry of Finance said that Pakistan once again approached the global lender for provision of loan, however, the two sides

could not reach a consensus. They said the difference of view between the two sides has reduced, but talks could not yield any results.

It is hoped that matters would be finalised before a meeting of the IMF Executive Board, the sources said further.

They said it has been cleared to the IMF that Pakistan is in no haste to get the new programme. "An agreement would be signed with the IMF as soon as a favourable programme is given," said a spokesman for the Ministry of Finance, terming the recent talks "positive."

The spokesman further clarified that Pakistan is not getting the IMF programme for the sake of dollars only.

FBR mulls avoiding advance, early payment of refunds

■ International Conference on Tax

By M J Hayat

LAHORE: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Jahanzeb Khan has said that the board is mulling to get rid of the advance tax collections and ensure early reimbursement of the refunds and rebates enabling the business community to circulate their funds in order to develop their business.

He was addressing the concluding session of the International Conference on Tax at the Directorate of Training and Research, Lahore on Friday.

To a question about the revenue

shortfall of Rs 190 billion, he said that the board has collected 45 percent of the revenue collection target and in the next six months the remaining 55 percent will be collected.

Jahanzeb Khan said that the board is cognizant of the fact that it has a short-

fall and naturally the efforts in the second half will be enhanced to meet the target. He said that in order to introduce and develop the board on modern lines, the government has assured all-out support and investment in the board, especially for benefiting from

the information technology. The FBR Chairman, however, said that the FBR's total budget is 0.6 percent of the total revenue collection of which 78 percent is spent under the head of salaries and remaining 22 percent goes to rents of buildings and other expenses that leave nothing for the development and innovations in the Board for research.

However, he said that the PM has assured to provide funds for the development and growth of FBR within the next five years. To a question about Aleema Khan tax issue, he replied that she has deposited 25 percent of the due amount and for the remaining amount she will be treated in such manners as the other tax payers are dealt with.

He also mentioned of the five tax regime after the NFC Award and said Pakistan needs to simply the tax collection for the tax payers. He said that the major concern of the government is to simplify the tax system for which efforts are underway.

On this occasion Indian tax expert Perakash Kumar presented how the Indian tax authorities successfully adopted 'One Nation One Tax' system while an expert on artificial intelligence Tajamal Hussain informed the meeting about how to deal with the big data and broadening of tax base. Director General DoT Ms Iram Adnan, Director Aftab Alam and a large number of FBR officers were present on the occasion.



Nawaz suffering from heart issues, says report

The Business Report

LAHORE: The medical report of former PM and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif has been sent to Punjab Home Department.

According to media sources, his medical report stated that Nawaz Sharif is suffering from heart-related issues and he may need a doctor for 24 hours.

The report further recommended the authorities to shift the PML-N supreme to cardiac hospital as he is diagnosed with heart-related issues in the Thalassemia test. The medical board went on to say that the former prime minister's blood pressure and sugar level is under control, however, information could be gathered from Sharif's personal doctor regarding his heart related issues.

On Thursday, the incarcerated former premier was shifted back to Kot Lakhpat jail from Services Hospital in Lahore.

Pak to present evidences in Jadhav case

The Business Report

MANCHESTER: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi says Pakistan's legal team will present its stance in Kulbhushan Jadhav case at International Court of Justice in The Hague on 19th of this month.

Speaking at a reception in Manchester, he said Kulbhushan Jadhav has confessed involvement in subversive activities carried out in Pakistan.

The Minister said the government has effectively highlighted the issue of Kashmir in British Parliament and we want to promote Intra-Kashmir trade. He said India seems worried over the worsening situation in occupied Kashmir as young generation of Kashmiris is fed up with India policies.

The Minister said Pakistan is playing an active role for peace in Afghanistan as a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan.

The foreign minister said India was committing gross human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir.

He said the reports of UN Human Rights Office and British Parliament's All Parties Parliamentary Group on Kashmir had also acknowledged the atrocities being committed by Indian forces against innocent civilians in Occupied Kashmir.

Saudi Arabian oil supply starts

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Supply of borrowed oil from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan has been started.

Oil worth \$500 million will be provided to Pakistan this month.

Supply of oil was also included in the Aid Package announced by Saudi Arabia to Pakistan during the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan. However, a persistent delay was seen in the provision of oil after which it was said that oil supply will be started after the visit of Saudi Crown Prince to Pakistan but now the provision of borrowed oil from Saudi-Arabia to Pakistan has been started.