



▼ P09  
Trump says phase one trade deal with China to be signed 'very shortly'

# The Business

An English Daily published simultaneously from Lahore and Faisalabad



▼ P10  
Azhar Ali, Babar Azam score tons as Pakistan set huge target for SL

## No change in visa policy for residents of IOK, says FO

By Our Staff Correspondent

**ISLAMABAD:** The Foreign Office on Sunday refuted the media reports about the change in Pakistan's visa policy for residents of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOK), which has been under a complete lockdown since August 5.

"Media reports, which appeared in a section of media, about changes in Pakistan's visa policy for residents of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, are completely baseless and incorrect," Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqi said in a statement issued on Sunday.

She also clarified that the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi would continue to issue visas to the residents of IOK in accordance with the visa policy of the government and related bilateral agreements between Pakistan and India.

"There has been no change in the visa policy for residents of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir," the FO spokesperson maintained.

According to the statement, the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi is already taking into consideration the "peculiar humanitarian situation" in the occupied region while approving the visa applications for the resident of IOK.

"The High Commission is making all efforts to facilitate as much as possible, the genuine visa applicants, particularly those from IOJ&K," said Farooqi, adding that those who fulfill the visa requirements continue to be issued visas as quickly as possible.

## Enemies funded Imran to power so he can sabotage CPEC: Ahsan

The Business report

**SWAT:** Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal has claimed that the anti-Pakistan foreign elements funded Prime Minister Imran Khan to power so that he could ravage the country's economy and sabotage the multi-billion dollar CPEC project.

"Prime Minister Imran Khan is using delaying tactics to avoid accountability in the foreign funding case because he received funds from anti-Pakistan elements who tasked him to sabotage the country's economy and the CPEC," Ahsan said while addressing the party workers in Swat, a district in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, on Sunday.

The foreign funding case, which is currently pending before the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), was filed by the ruling PTI's disgruntled member Akbar S Babar in 2014 after he developed differences with the party chairman, Imran Khan over alleged internal corruption and abuse of laws governing the political funding.

During the PML-N tenure, Ahsan said, the country was fast moving on the path of development but now due to the flawed policies of incumbent government, Pakistan's economic growth has become the lowest in the whole of South Asia.

Despite the incarceration of top party leadership, the party stood undeterred before the government not for any vested interest but for the betterment of the country, he added.

The PML-N stalwart also took a swipe at the premier for skipping the recently concluded Kuala Lumpur Summit, saying "[Malaysian prime minister] Mahathir Mohamad did not know about the U-turn Khan".

The Malaysian premier hosted the summit last week to discuss and tackle issues that have agitated Muslims across the world. PM Imran however skipped it to "maintain neutrality in the Muslim Ummah".

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, another prominent leader of the Muslim world like PM Mahathir, reportedly claimed that Premier Imran stayed away from the summit because of Saudi Arabia's threats of economic sanctions. A claim Riyadh has categorically rejected.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participate in Kashmir March to demonstrate protest against the violation of Human Rights by India in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

# 'Befitting response' being given to India over LoC violations

■ Qureshi says minorities protesting against Indian discriminatory legislation

By Our Staff Correspondent

**ISLAMABAD:** Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday said that a "befitting response" is being given to India's ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC), resulting in large number of casualties to Indian soldiers.

Several Indian checkpoints involved in the cross-border firing have also been damaged by the brave Pakistani troops, he said in a statement.

Besides ceasefire violations, Qureshi said, PM Modi's government can also resort to a "false flag operation" to divert world's attention from violent protests being carried out across India against the anti-Muslim Citizenship Act. The foreign

minister said all minorities particularly Muslims in India have been protesting against the discriminatory legislation. All opposition parties are also protesting against the BJP gov't's highly controversial move, he added.

Qureshi said that he has already informed the UN Security Council about Pakistan's apprehensions in his letter written on December 12.

He once again urged the international community to take notice of dangerous steps being taken by the Indian government, which he added, are adversely affecting peace in the region. In his Dec 12 letter, Foreign Minister Qureshi had urged the UNSC president to convene a session at the earliest to discuss the recent Indian actions along the LoC.

The statement comes a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan warned the international community that if India staged a false flag operation, then it would receive a "befitting response" from Pakistan.

Frustrated by its failure to deal with escalating raging violent protests over the highly divisive new citizenship law, the Narendra Modi-led government could stage a 'false flag operation' in an attempt to fire up Hindu nationalism against Pakistan - something he has repeatedly done in the past for political gains.

In a series of tweets, Premier Imran said that during the past five years, Modi's government had been taking India towards Hindu Rashtra with its Hindutva supremacist and fascist ideology.

He added that India could resort to a false flag operation to divert attention from domestic chaos and whip up war hysteria to mobilise Hindu nationalism.

"Now, with the Citizens Amendment Act, all those Indians who want a pluralist India are beginning to protest and it is becoming a mass movement," he said. "At the same time the siege by Indian occupation forces in IOJ&K continues and a bloodbath can be expected when it is lifted," he added.

The Modi government stripped Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) of its constitutional semi-autonomous status on August 5 and clamped a draconian curfew which remains in place ever since with millions of Kashmiris literally

# Now Indians remembering Two-Nation Theory: Firdous

■ Says Modi tried to impose Indian Citizenship Law

**SIALKOT:** Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Sunday

said the Two-Nation Theory of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had won in India and now Indians were remembering the heroes of the theory.

Addressing a press conference in Kubbay Chak here, she said Indian PM Narendra Modi tried to impose the Indian Citizenship Law due to which Indians were protesting on roads against Modi's extremism.

The SAPM said that Modi's Hindutava had miserably failed, adding that good treatment of minorities had won the hearts of Indian people.

She said that Indian Prime Minister Modi's extremist policies had also ruined its secular state status in the world, adding that Indian people had strongly rejected extremist ideology of Modi. "India was facing in-

ternal conflicts and confrontation due to which India was diverting the world's attention by promoting disinformation and targeting the civilian population by unprovoked shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) and killing innocent people," Dr Firdous said, adding that the Pak Army responded in an effective way to Indian aggression. She said those who plundered the country were now posing as people's representatives.

Referring to Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's speech, she said that the Party only seems to making arrangements to remember Benazir Bhutto, whose death anniversary falls on Dec 27. Democracy is not the name of power, saying that it is the name of public opinion, she added. "The Prime Minister is not in favour of the type of democracy where you worry about the well

being of your own children and not that of the nation's. "Your own conduct is undemocratic.

You should apply democracy to your own province," she suggested Bilawal. Dr Firdous said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Maryam Nawaz has moved the court for removal of her name from the Exit Control List. "During elections, you used to raise the slogan 'Vote ko izzat do' (give respect to vote). You claimed that you would stand by the people during their hardships. So why are you all fleeing the country one by one," she asked.

"Imran Khan is the saviour of this country. He will enable the nation to stand on its own two feet," she added. Dr Firdous said that harmony among institutions is need of the hour. Replying to a question, Dr Firdous Ashiq said that on the directions of the Prime Minister, the authorities concerned had been di-

rected to ensure supply of gas to domestic consumers even at the cost of CNG stations.

Later, addressing a press conference in Sialkot on Sunday, she said that false claims were being made regarding hike in gas prices. "The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) is merely a regulator, which forwards its input to the government while keeping in view the people's needs and problems. "The Prime Minister is aware of the people's problems and the government understands that citizens cannot afford costly gas. "We cannot act on the recommendations put forth by the Authority. We must come up with a realistic strategy so that we do not put additional burden on the nation," she said.

She said that winter has gripped the country these days, which is why there has been an increase in gas consumption. —DNA

## CDNS achieves collection target of Rs 112b by Dec 20

**ISLAMABAD:** The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved collection net target of Rs112 billion by December 20, of fiscal year 2019-20.

The CDNS has set Rs 350 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs324 billion for the previous year's 2018-19 to enhance savings and promoting saving culture in the country, senior official of CDNS told APP here on Sunday.

The directorate has also revised and increased the gross target of Rs1570 billion for fiscal year 2019-20, he said. Replying to a question, he said CDNS had collected Rs 410 billion by June 30, exceeding the target of Rs 324 billion set for the year while during the preceding year of 2017-18, CDNS collected Rs155 billion.

The total savings held by the CDNS stood at Rs 1,150 billion by June 30 while the directorate had Rs 774 billion savings by the same date, a year ago, he said.

The senior official said due to the rationalization of CDNS certificates' rates, the directorate had collected more savings than expected, therefore CDNS revised its target upward from Rs 224 to 324 billion for FY 2018-19.

Replying to a question, he said CDNS has decreased the interest rate on the investment bonds due to current market situation.

The CDNS interest rates were decreased due to lower rates of Pakistan Investment Board (PIB), he said.

"The National Savings interest rates are linked with the policy of PIB set by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)", said a senior official of CDNS said. CDNS has decided to change and lower the rates of different Certificates for November 1, 2019, he said.

The senior official said the new rate for Defence Savings Certificate has been increased from 13.01 percent to 10.68 while the rate of Special Saving Certificate from 12.90 to 11.13, Regular Income Certificate from 12.96 to 10.92 percent.

Likewise, the rates of savings accounts have been decreased from 10.25 to 8.20 percent while the rates of Bahbood Savings Certificates and Pensioners' Benefit Account were decreased from 14.76 to 12.48 percent.

He said the government had also decided to un-change the short-term (3mo12mths), medium-term (6 months) and long-term (12 months) certificates. Short-term certificates rates have been retained at percent to 12.08 percent, medium-term at 12.18, while the rate of long-term certificate has been same at 12.28 percent. —DNA

## 'Seven agri, livestock projects approved for Fata'

**PESHAWAR:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has approved seven gigantic projects worth Rs4.20 billion to promote agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors in erst-while Fata.

An Official of Agriculture and Livestock Department told APP on Sunday that 10 new projects focusing on enhancement of meat and milk production, water conservation, livestock and dairy development have been prepared after consultation with all stakeholders to alleviate poverty and generate employment opportunities for the tribesmen. Out of these projects, seven were approved by the competent forum on which around Rs4.20 billion would be spent during current fiscal year.

The Government has expedited work on Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP) 2019-20 by approving four mega projects for which Rs665 million have been already released. Similarly, PC-1 of the two gigantic projects worth Rs 12 billion has been prepared and were being sent to concerned forum for approval.

The department has achieved 92% success in the allotted targets pertaining to development and provision of services to people.

As per the department's report for financial year 2019-20, PC-1 of the 15 new projects have been developed out of which approval of 14 projects including 11 Public Sector Development Projects (PSDP) worth Rs 44 billion were taken and funds of 10 projects have been already released.

## 'Ghani wins majority in presidential poll'

The Business report

**KABUL:** Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani was on track to win a second term on Sunday, after election officials announced he had scored a majority in the presidential polls.

But despite Ghani's apparent clean win, the fallout from the bitterly contested September 28 election looked set to continue, with top rival Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah saying he would contest the result.

According to the Independent Election Commission, Ghani won 50.64 per cent of the vote in the September 28 poll, easily beating Abdullah, who scored 39.52 per cent.

Candidates now have the right to file any complaints they may have before final results are announced, probably within a few weeks.

As soon as the result was announced, Abdullah's office said in a statement he would contest it.

# OGRA's high gas rates to put burden on consumers

By Our Staff Reporter

**LAHORE:** The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Sunday blasted the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) for approving massive hike in gas rates by up to 221 percent putting additional burden of about Rs40b on consumers.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, PIAF chairman Mian Nauman Kabir said that OGRA has proposed the government to allow gas companies to charge heavy losses of their system from the consumers instead of improving their efficiency, which is a sheer injustice, leading to destruction

of the industrial base.

He said that repeated irrational increases in power and gas tariffs are not solution to energy sector problems but the government would have to address inefficiencies in the system.

He said that to meet the revenue shortfall of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited the OGRA has given approval of gas tariff by up to 221 percent, applicable from next year on Jan 1. This is the third time that the government is going to approve such a dramatic surge in gas prices. According to reports, an increase of 191 percent has been approved for the prices

of domestic gas and the fertilizer sector will see a hike of 135 percent. Likewise, a 31 percent price increase has been approved for the consumers who fall in the category of roti tandoor, commercial, industrial, zero-rated export industry, captive power plants, compressed natural gas (CNG), cement and power plants. Nauman kabir said that after the implementation of this raise, the price for the local gas in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh will be even more expensive than imported gas while the Punjab industry had already been consuming expensive gas.

According to reports, tariff for the

first slab of domestic gas consumers has been increased from Rs121 per million British Thermal Unit (MMBTU) to Rs232/MMBTU; second slab tariff has been increased from Rs300/MMBTU to Rs353/MMBTU; third slab tariff has been fixed at Rs530/MMBTU; fourth set at Rs706/MMBTU; fifth at Rs1273/MMBTU; while sixth tariff slab has been fixed at Rs1679/MMBTU.

Likewise, the tariff for tandoor category of gas consumers has been drastically increased up from Rs780/MMBTU to Rs1,026/MMBTU. Similarly, that for commercial gas consumers has been

increased from Rs1,283/MMBTU to Rs1,687/MMBTU.

Mian Nauman said that OGRA is continuously allowing raise in gas prices due to inefficiency in collection of gas dues and its failure to stop theft.

These inefficiencies are actually an unjust tax on honest gas consumers. The industrial sector as a whole pays its dues in-time and there is no line losses/theft in most of the industrial estates and industrial estates in Lahore are one example. He said that the business community is shocked that instead of taking measures to control line losses, policies were being evolved to add to miseries of traders.