

TAPL denies giving kick back to Sharifs

ISLAMABAD: Technical Associates Pakistan Pvt Ltd (TAPL) has rejected the allegations levelled by the Advisor to Prime Minister on Accountability Shehzad Akbar on Thursday. Shahzad Akbar alleged that TAPL, a company who is partial contractor of New Islamabad Airport (NIA), got the airport's design changed resulting in time enhancement and that resulted in cost enhancement benefiting TAPL. —Online

NAB amend Ord to exempt taxes, laid before NA

ISLAMABAD: An amended National Accountability Ordinance for exempting matters pertaining to federal and provincial taxation, levies or imposts from the purview of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was laid before the National Assembly on Thursday.

According to the ordinance laid before the house by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan under clause(2) of article 89 of the constitution, the inquiries and investigations regarding the federal and provincial taxation, levies and imposts shall be transferred to the respective authorities or departments which administer the relevant laws regarding such matters.

The trials shall stand transferred from the relevant Accountability Courts to the criminal courts which deal with offences under the respective laws pertaining to taxes and levies in question.

It will also not apply to any procedural lapses in any government project or scheme. No action under this ordinance shall be taken against any holder of public office, unless it was shown that the holder of public office had materially benefited by gaining any asset or monetary benefit which was disproportionate to his known sources of income, or where such material benefit could not be reasonably accounted for, and there was evidence to corroborate the acquiring of such material benefit. —APP

Pak informs US of FBR using software

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Thursday that a software, which is being used by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and considered as pirated, had been provided by a vendor and it was embedded in different programmes and the situation was not known to the FBR authorities.

"However after being informed about the factual position FBR has asked its IT team to take up matters with the vendor and start working on the alternate solutions," the finance ministry said after a news item appeared in a section of press on Thursday.

The report stated that Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has been using a pirated version of a US Software and that the US authorities have informed FBR about the situation and asked that they should refrain from doing it. The finance ministry said it is expected that a solution will be available to the FBR team within two months. The same has been conveyed to the US officials, according to the statement. —DNA

Foreign reserves jump to \$18.36 b

ISLAMABAD: The total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$18,362.7million as on January 24, 2020, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported Thursday.

According to break up figures, the foreign reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stood at \$11,915.2million whereas the net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded at \$6,447.5million

During the week ending on January 24, the SBP reserves increased by \$84 million to \$11,915.2 million, it added. —APP

Three children injured in toy bomb explosion

LOWER DIR: Three children were injured when a toy bomb exploded in Khanabad area, Maidan here on Thursday.

According to police, the explosion occurred when these children were cutting grass from a field. The injured were shifted to District Headquarters Hospital Taimergarah and investigations are underway. The injured were identified as Amin, Haseena and Ubaid. —APP

GGTTI 2019 ranking places SDPI as leading think-tank

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: University of Pennsylvania Global Go To Think Tank Index (GGTTI) report's 14th edition released across the world on Thursday ranked Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) number 1 in Pakistan, 15th among South East Asia and the Pacific and 52nd best independent think tanks in the world.

Launching the GGTTI report 2019, the Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said despite all constraints faced by global civil society and think tanks, SDPI had not only retained its ranking but also improved in seven categories in the index as compared to the last year.

He said, "The SDPI, with two points improvement, emerged as the 42nd think-tank

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KARACHI: President of Bahrain International Federation of Business Shaikha Hind Bint Salman Al-Khalifa in a group photo during 10th International Women Leaders Summit.

CDWP approves six projects worth Rs 10.3 billion

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) Thursday approved six projects worth of Rs 10.3 billion and recommended two projects worth Rs 30 billion to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC).

The meeting of the CDWP was held here under the chairmanship of Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan and was attended by Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan, senior officials from federal and provincial governments.

The meeting approved a project titled "220kV Haripur substation" worth Rs. 3626.54 million.

The main objective of the project is construction of Haripur Station at 220 kV level along with associated transmission line to meet the additional load demand & voltage profile improvement of Hattar Special Economic Zone region which falls under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The CDWP also approved "Evacuation of Power from 330 MW Siddiq Sons Energy Coal Fired Power Plant at Thar" worth Rs 2354.32 million.

Two projects related to Physical Planning & Housing were presented in the meeting. Meanwhile the meeting approved "Construction of 15 Superintendent of Police Residence Sector H-11, Islamabad" worth Rs 151.971

million and "Construction of 04 Police Stations in various sector in Islamabad" worth Rs 150.836.

A project related to Science & Technology was presented namely "National Electronics Complex of Pakistan (NECOP) phase-1" worth Rs 17918.251 million was referred to ECNEC. Similarly the CDWP also approved two projects related to transport and communication namely "Construction of Road from Sibi Talli (20 km) and Kohala- Rakhni (80 km)" worth Rs 4000 million.

The project envisages construction and widening of 116 km long existing road from Sibi Talli (25 km) and Kohlu- Rakhni (91 km) to a width of 24ft with 6ft shoulders on each side. The meeting referred a project titled "Construction of Lodhran-Multan Section (North bound 62 Kms) of N-5 and construction of two Flyovers at Railways Crossing on Lodhran Bypass" worth Rs 12945.202 million to ECNEC.

A project related to Education was presented titled "Construction of Boundary Walls in Government School of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Tameer-e- School Programme" worth Rs 203.675 million was also approved by CDWP. Two position papers "Up-gradation of Atomic Energy Cancer Hospital - KIRAN (AECH-KIRAN)" and "Up-gradation of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Facilities at BINO Bahawalpur" worth Rs. 4 billion were approved by CDWP.

ISLAMABAD: Plea seeking acquittal from NAB references by Abdul Ghani Majeed key accused in mega money laundering case was heard in Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad on Thursday.

NAB opposed acquittal petition of Abdul Ghani Majeed. Abdul Ghani had submitted acquittal petition in references filed against him under NAB ordinance.

NAB prosecutor told to court that Abdul Ghani Majeed is a key accused in fake account case and Omni group beneficiary while NAB is investigating Abdul Ghani Majeed in different fake accounts cases.

Abdul Ghani Majeed is a close ally of former DG Sindh Building Control Authority, prosecutor stated. NAB requested the court to reject Abdul Ghani Majeed acquittal petition. NAB has submitted its written reply in AC Islamabad. —Online

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Pakistan stands with China in trying time, says FO

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan stands with China in trying time and steps are being taken along with Chinese government for pulling out Pakistanis marooned in China.

"Chinese government is taking measures regarding corona virus. We are grateful to them for providing facilities to Pakistanis living in China. Pakistan stands with China in trying time. Steps are being taken to pull out Pakistanis marooned in China," this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Ayesha Farooqui in her weekly press briefing here Thursday.

She said Pakistan has constituted Power Technical Committee (PTC) on corona virus. National Health Institute has issued advisory about corona virus.

She said "we are taking steps along with Chinese government for pulling out Pakistanis marooned in Aronchi at China. Earlier we made request to Chinese government for looking after Pakistani students.

About measures being taken by Pakistan government for pulling out Pakistani students

marooned in China she said we have asked Pakistani students in China to register them with embassy in China as soon as possible.

During opening remarks on Kashmir she said clamp down has entered into 179th day in Occupied Kashmir. Pakistan special campaign on Kashmir issue is underway at national and international level, she added.

She went on to say that India is giving such provocative statements to divert world attention from its internal affairs while Pakistan has rejected Indian Prime Minister (PM) statement. She stated Chinese government has taken consistent steps with reference to Corona virus. Pakistan embassy is in contact with Pakistani students in China. We are extending every possible help to Pakistani students in China.

She underlined government has constituted a high level committee for prevention of corona virus. National Institute of Health (NIH) has declared emergency and emergency centre has also been set up.

She said Pakistanis who are not on data

base in China have been asked to contact Pakistan embassy. Universities administration officers also took up the issue with reference to food.

She remarked "no evacuation of their citizens has been made by any country from China so far. Government will take all steps for Pakistanis living in China. No country has formally pulled out its citizens from China.

She indicated Foreign Minister (FM) Shah Mehmood Qureshi is on an important visit of Kenya which is robust Pakistan export partner. Government has started trade diplomacy. FM will chair an international conference in Nairobi. She underscored Pakistan is adhering to policy of independent Palestine. She held provocative statements come from India and provocative statements are not better for the region in any way.

Regarding protest outside Pakistan embassy in Afghanistan she said protest outside Pakistani embassy in Kabul has been noted but Pakistan embassy is continuing its work therein. —Online

Pakistan's role for regional peace crucial, says Iranian Envoy

ISLAMABAD: Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini on Thursday reminded that tensions in the Middle East continue unabated and called for renewal of peace efforts.

Delivering a lecture at Islamabad Policy Institute (IPI), a local think tank, on 'Pak-Iran Peace and Security Cooperation', Hosseini said that Pakistan had a vital role for maintenance of regional peace and stability. —APP

ADB approves \$15m loan for Urban Development Planning

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$15 million loan that will help seven cities in Punjab province in Pakistan design comprehensive investment and public service delivery plans in preparation for upcoming urban development projects.

The loan will fund the preparation of spatial master plans, detailed engineering designs, and operational business plans for proposed projects in the cities of Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan, Rawalpindi, and Sargodha. It will help to ensure a high level of readiness ahead of the ensuing Punjab urban development projects and complement ADB's existing technical assistance to Pakistan to conduct feasibility studies and explore innovations to improve the quality of urban services.

"The Government of Punjab has taken a proactive role in tackling urban development challenges in the province," said ADB Senior Urban Development Specialist for Central and West Asia Jude Kohlhasse. "This loan will help the local governments improve spatial and urban planning, prepare environmental assessments, put in place gender action plans with a special focus on gender equality, and incorporate climate resilient designs for priority investments." —Online

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Nawaz provides insufficient documents: MBPG

LAHORE: Medical Board of Punjab Government (MBPG) has declared the documents provided by Nawaz Sharif inadequate and summoned all reports of Nawaz Sharif within three days.

According to media reports, a letter was sent to Nawaz Sharif by Punjab government saying Nawaz Sharif Dec 23 reports and documents were sent to medical board headed by Dr Mehmood Ayaz.

Medical board declared inadequate these documents. It was further said in the letter that Nawaz Sharif should send all medical reports in three days. Punjab government will decide about extension in Nawaz Sharif bail in the light of medical reports. —Online

Al-khair University sells degrees: CJP

LAHORE: Plea against the re-appointment of teacher has been registered for hearing in Supreme Court Lahore registry. Court has ordered to club the cases of nature.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed remarked "Al-Khair University sells degrees and we do not recognise it.

According to media report, a hearing of the petition filed against the re-appointment of teacher was held in SC bench presided over by CJP. Court has ordered the parties to produce more documents. "Will we accept a Phd degree of five years old child if attested by the Higher Education Commission (HEC)?" said the CJ.

IHC approves pray of taking back plea seeking orders to stop exhibition of "Zindagi Tamasha movie"

Islamabad High Court (IHC) has heard the plea seeking to stop exhibition of film "Zindagi Tamasha".

IHC Justice Amir Farooq took up the case for hearing on Thursday.

During the course of hearing, Counsel of petitioner prayed that he wants to take back the plea that was approved by the court.

Justice Amir Farooq while inquiring Counsel of petitioner remarked, "Where has the film gone on air? You are telling the thing which is not even known to the nation, Have you seen the movie? Where have you watched it? When was movie released?"

Counsel of petitioner informed the court that they didn't watch the movie.

Upon it Justice Amir Farooq observed, "When you didn't even watch the movie then you should not do advertisement of it.

Defense Counsel told the court that promo of film was released on the social media in which Naat Khawan (Naat Reciter) was mocked at. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of China, Yao Jing attend a meeting on resumption of implementation of agreement between Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan on transit traffic.