

PPP MPA Ansari laid to rest in Naushahro Feroze

KARACHI: The funeral prayers of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and Member of Sindh Assembly (MPA) Shahnaz Ansari were offered in Naushahro Feroze on Sunday morning.

According to media reports, a number of PPP leaders, party workers and others attended the funeral prayers. She was laid to rest at Ismail Shah graveyard in Naushahro Feroze. —Online

Balochistan to expedite uplift work in SEZs

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Minister for Commerce and Industries, Muhammad Khan Utmankhail has said the provincial government had decided to expedite development work on special economic zones to boost significant economic activities in the province.

Talking to APP, the minister said the government had initiated the development work on eight special economic zones with the collaboration of the federal government.

He urged the federal government to expand its financial support for Balochistan's special economic zones to create economic activities in the province.

Utmankhail reviewed the plan for setting up 13 border markets at the adjacent border areas of Iran and Afghanistan. The federal government's assistance was required for developing infrastructure including communication network, water supply and electricity in the market areas, he added.

Balochistan was rich in mineral reserves due to which the provincial government had declared three districts as marble cities to facilitate the investors and help empower underprivileged locals economically, the minister mentioned.

Unemployment, he said, being one of the major challenge for the province and believed that the trained and skilled including unskilled workers would soon get jobs.

"With the establishment of special economic zones, it would help create employment opportunities for 30,000 locals and entire province would benefit from its associated benefits," he added.

Muhammad Khan said, "The provincial assets and other resources would be utilized for the progress and prosperity of the people under proper planning." —APP

New disclosures revealed in mega container scandal

ISLAMABAD: New and astonishing disclosures have been revealed in mega container scandal. Director General Customs Intelligence has revealed in its latest report that 115 more containers vale goods worth billion of rupees have allegedly cleared without any duty clearance. These containers were cleared in 2019.

Earlier DG had disclosed that 335 containers were cleared in three months and report has also submitted to the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in this regard. Sources stated that Chairman FBR has taken action on report and dismissed ex-member customs operation Jawad Agha and five collectors from the posts.

He directed Chief Collector Dr. Asif Jaha to conduct further inquiry of this matter. However, Dr. Asif Jaha told in inquiry report that 238 containers had paid Rs 140 million and no negligence was reported in this regard. Director General Intelligence has also told FBR Chairman that his information is hundred percent right and formulated report after review all record.

It was worth mentioned here that Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) has recently directed senior customs officials to record their statements in the container scandal. Customs officials have been directed to appear before an FIA assistant director in Lahore on February 17, along with an inquiry report and forensic audit report against Faisalabad ex-collector customs Shaukat Ali. Subsequently, FBR and federal tax ombudsman initiated an inquiry and asked FIA to probe matter. —Online

Nawaz's mother arrives in London to meet son

LONDON: Ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's mother Begum Shamim has arrived in London to meet her ailing son.

According to media reports, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyeh Aurangzeb said Begum Shamim was advised not to travel in the light of her health and age but she insisted to remain present with Nawaz Sharif as he undergoes medical treatment in London. —Online

Turkey keen to explore more business opportunities in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A Turkish delegation led by Chairman and Alpay Cepni CEO visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and showed keen interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan.

They said that business interests in many fields including real estate, mining, tourism, education in Turkey and they have come to study Pakistani market for JVs and investment. They said that Pakistan's economy was starting to grow and it was the right time to seek business prospects in the country.

The Turkish delegation said that exports of Turkey were over \$100 billion, but Turkey-Pakistan bilateral trade of around \$800 million was far less than the actual potential of both countries. However, it could be significantly improved by mutual efforts



SIALKOT: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Usman Dar addresses to media persons during public campaign to submit taxes.

ICCI sees more trade after Pakistan-Turkey FTA agreement

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) M. Waheed on Sunday observed huge trade opportunities after signing of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Turkey, which will also help balancing the trade volume between the two sides.

After finalizing the FTA between the two countries, bilateral trade can increase from existing \$800 million to \$5 billion, which will also help decreasing country's trade and foreign account deficit.

After the recent official visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan, he hoped that both of the countries evolved consensus for finalizing the FTA, which would start a new era of growing trade and economic relations between the two countries.

President ICCI said the 9th round of negotiation on FTA had completed between the two country and before the 10th round of negotiation both sides had agreed to formalize a Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) during the Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Turkey in January this year and a committee was also formed to finalize the SEF draft.

Now after the approval by the prime minister, the SEF draft was sent to Turkey on

February 20 which has now been approved and signed by both of leaders in Turkey's President Visit to Pakistan, he said.

Replying to a question, he said that through the SEF, Pakistan would get tariff free access in potential Turkish markets to increase the bilateral trade between the two countries.

He informed that two sides had agreed to prepare a "scoping list" to examine their respective sectors of strength, with an ultimate aim to boost the bilateral trade volume.

He further said that Pakistan's top 20 high-potential exports can go up from \$400 million to \$2,600 million; while Turkey's top 20 high potential exports to Pakistan can be enhanced to \$2.6 billion from \$200 million.

He said that major exports to Turkey included denim PET, ethanol, cotton yarn, fabric and rice, garments, leather, carpets, surgical instruments, sports goods, and chemicals. The two sides held discussions on goods, services and investment. After signing a new FTA, the two countries would be able to improve their trade balance, he added.

He said after the finalization of FTA, Pakistan would get market space in agriculture and pharmaceutical sectors in Turkey.

Replying to another question, he said that Pakistan's major imports from Turkey in-

cluded manmade textiles, towels, steel structure, tanning and plastic chemicals, processed milk and whey.

Through the FTA both side would also enhance the business to business relations and cooperation between the business communities of the two countries.

"We can increase cooperation with Turkish companies and expand it more from textiles to other potential sectors for benefiting from their expertise in different sectors, mainly construction, tourism, engineering, food processing, chemicals, and information technology" he said.

While replying to a question on new potential markets for multilateral trade, he said the government must have to search the new potential markets in different parts of the world to increase trade. He added that as already the government is working on different regions including Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), African region and North and South Americas.

Replying to a question, he said that industrial and investment cooperation was also on the card through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Board of investment of Turkey and Pakistan for cooperation and facilitation in local Special Economic Zones (SEZs). —DNA

Dialogue a must for addressing water crisis: Amin

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam Sunday said the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan overlooked climate changes and decreasing level of underground water that were creating water crisis in the country.

He made these remarks addressing a special talk on "Sustainable Development and Climate Change here. Amin said there had been a shift in the monsoon season's pattern that increased dry weather in the region that caused the ground water (aquifer) to deplete and overall water resources.

The adviser said, "There should be a dialogue on this issue to incorporate climate pattern shifts and aquifer depletion in the Indus Water Treaty as it is causing serious water scarcity in the country. But the present situation is not favourable in this regard."

He added that Pakistan for the past decade had continuously been among the top 10 most vulnerable countries due to climate change and at present, was placed at number 5 in terms of vulnerability and serious risks

due to climate change. "The adaptation cost for mitigating climate change affects was US\$ 6 to 14 billion per year," he added.

Pakistan, he said, was facing serious impacts of environmental degradation that was mainly due to its topography and geography which was disaster-prone in nature.

A recent World Bank report placed Pakistan among the most hot countries in the world where the world's highest temperature was recorded in Jacobabad city of Pakistan, he added. "Prime Minister Imran Khan is the first person in Pakistan who highlighted environmental degradation occurring in the region in his book 'Indus Journey' back in 1980's when nobody was aware of the issue in the country. He tasked me to develop Billion Tree Tsunami (BTT) plantation project which proved to be major shift in the policy and implementation of the country," he added.

"BTT has managed to create half a million jobs that empowered impoverished women, youth and unemployed masses and resulted in a green economy," he noted. He said it was

the first project in the country's history put to third party evaluation where global forums like WWF, FAO, WEF and IUCN called a beyond the target successful project.

Amin said we had developed a green five-point agenda that comprises 40 percent nature based solutions and energy shift to renewable and eco-friendly solutions.

"The green agenda comprises of 10 BTT, Plastic Bags Ban, Clean Green Pakistan Index, Recharge Pakistan and Electric Vehicle Policy. We are targeting transport transition to 30 percent to electric vehicles by 2030 as it will help reduce 70 percent running cost of automobiles and reduction in oil import bill of the country," he added.

It had been for the first time that Pakistan managed to get huge amounts of grants from Green Climate Fund (GCF) as US\$ 200 million funding was released for various projects including 40 monitoring stations to be installed in the Northern glaciers, Karachi Zero emissions metro bus, climate smart agriculture project and others, he added. —APP

Rocket attack hits near US embassy in Baghdad

BAGHDAD: Multiple rockets hit an Iraqi base hosting American troops near the United States embassy early Sunday, the latest in a flurry of attacks against US assets in the country.

"The coalition confirms small rockets impacted the Iraqi base hosting (coalition) troops in the International Zone [...] no casualties," said coalition spokesman Myles Caggins. —AFP

90,000 Pakistanis get overseas jobs in first 40 days of 2020

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development has facilitated some 90,000 Pakistanis, to secure jobs in multiple fields of international labour market during the first 40 days of 2020.

"This is a good start for '2020' and it seems that we will accomplish the target of 750,000 set for the current year," a senior officer in the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) told APP.

The foreign remittances, sent by Pakistani expatriates, were a potential source of boosting the country's forex reserve (FER), he added.

The officer said over 63 per cent growth in manpower export was observed during the last year as 625,203 Pakistanis went abroad for overseas employment in multiple trades compared to 382,439 in 2018.

Citing the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) as the source, he said the foreign remittances had reached to \$11.4 billion during the first half of 2019-20.

He hoped that the government might achieve \$24 billion target of foreign remittances set for the current financial year.

The officer said the government had chalked out a comprehensive plan to boost flow of foreign remittances in the country by providing incentives to the Pakistani expatriates for using legal channels to send money to their homes.

The idea was worked out by a committee on remittances chaired by the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance & Revenue Hafeez Sheikh, he added.

He said the initiative would be launched shortly as the overseas ministry had suggested during the recent meeting that the plan should be implemented before the holy month of Ramadan due to high flow of remittances from Pakistani expatriates on the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Under the initiative, the officer said a card would be issued for the emigrants to give them multiple incentives like concession in air tickets and permission for bringing some extra quantity of luggage against the approved weight and two mobile phones.

The card holders' families might be offered some packages on purchasing edible items from the utility stores, he added.

He said an expatriate would get the incentives against some points that he/she earned on swiping the card for the transfer of remittances. —APP

SSGC connecting newly developed fields with system

ISLAMABAD: The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has started connecting newly developed fields with its production gathering system to bridge the increasing demand and supply gap of the commodity.

During this winter, the company faced shortfall of around 80-85 MMCFD gas, which was approximately 40-45 MMCFD during the last winter," according to an official document available with APP.

To meet the increased demand, the company has recently laid 48-kilometer pipeline of 12-inch diameter and started injected around 15 Million Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) gas in the system from the Rehman Gas Field, while 20 MMCFD more would be added from the same field after completion of some formalities.

Similarly, the SSGC laid 28-kilometer pipelines of 8-inch diameter to connect two matured wells, Ayesha and Amina, of the Badin IV South Field with the system from where around 23 MMCFD additional gas would be injected as the pipelines testing was in the progress.

Earlier, a senior official told APP that the Petroleum Division would continue to work in national interest and was cognizant of its responsibilities to ensure uninterrupted supply in the country.

The official said it was on record that most of the discoveries made during last 10 years in Sindh and Balochistan had been allocated to Sui Southern Gas Company. —APP

Farm tractors' sale up by 92pc in January

ISLAMABAD: Farm tractors' sale in the country rose by 92 percent to 2,213 units in January 2020 as compare to sale of 1,153 tractors in the preceding month (December 2019).

On yearly basis the sale of farm tractors in January 2020 however witnessed a decrease of 36.51 percent when compared to the sale of 3,486 tractors in January 2019.

According to a latest data issued by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA), the farm tractor's sale during first seven months (July-January) of current fiscal year also posted a decrease of 37.62 percent to 17,447 units from sale of 27,969 units in same period of the previous fiscal year.

The details show that sale of Fiat tractors rose to 882 units in January this year from 140 units in the preceding month, however on year-on-year basis it declined when compared to the sale of 1,452 units in January 2019.

The sale of Messey Ferguson tractors declined to 10,537 units during July-January (2019-20) as compared to the sale of 18,060 units in same period of last year whereas in January 2020, the sale declined to 1309 units from 1950 units in January 2019 and it posted an increase against the sale of 1,005 units in December 2019.

Similarly the sale of Orient IMT tractors declined to 104 units in July-January (2019-20) against the sale of 144 units in same period of previous year whereas on year-on-year and monthly basis the sale declined to 22 units in January 2020 from 4 units in same month last year and in December 2019 the sale was recorded at eight units. —APP



KARACHI: Special Assistant to PM on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Aashiq Awan talks to media person outside the Naemul Haq's residency.