

## Ch Sugar Mills case: Court exempts Nawaz, Maryam from appearance

LAHORE: Court has exempted former PM Nawaz Sharif, his daughter and PML-N vice-president Maryam Nawaz and nephew Yousaf Abbas from personal appearance in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. According to details, the Sharifs have been granted exemption till reference is filed in the case by the NAB. Nawaz Sharif's counsel took the stance that the bail of all three suspects has been approved by high court and requested. —APP

## SNGPL launches mobile app for bill payment

ISLAMABAD: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has formed a mobile application (app) for payment of gas bills from home.

This was stated by a spokesperson of Petroleum Division in an official statement on Monday. He said that Petroleum Division tasked the two gas utilities, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL), to undertake immediate measures that could facilitate the people during the COVID-19 pandemic as per exclusive instructions of the PM of Pakistan.

As a result, consumers are now able to pay their gas bills through SNGPL bill app. They can also view their bills and pay the same through the mobile application. Same mobile app will be made available by SSGCL soon. Bills can also be submitted through online banking, mobile banking, digital payment, etc, he added. —TLTP

## Saudia to boost oil exports to 10.6m barrels per day

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia plans to boost its oil exports to 10.6m barrels per day from May because the country is burning less oil for power generation and there is also lower domestic consumption, a Saudi energy ministry official said on Monday.

The world's top oil exporter has already made plans to boost its crude supply and exports sharply after the collapse earlier this month of a three-year deal between the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers, led by Russia. The rise in crude oil exports will be "starting from May by about 600,000 barrels per day," the official said. "This increase came as a result of displacing crude with natural gas from the Al-Fadhili gas plant as a fuel for generating electricity," the official said. He also said it followed a decrease in local demand for petroleum products due to the reduction in transportation as a result of precautionary measures in place to limit the coronavirus outbreak. Saudi Arabia had said this month it had directed national oil company Aramco to keep supplying

# The Business

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ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh chairs a special meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

## PCDMA for taking back income, ST, WHT & audit notices

KARACHI: Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) chairman and former director Karachi Stock Exchange Amin Yousuf Balgamwala has protested against notices sending to commercial importers and demanded to withdraw all notices.

In a statement, chairman PCDMA has requested to waive all notices including income tax, sales tax, WHT and all proceeding in this regard for 2 months due to the worst economic crisis, as due to coronavirus pandemic, all the business activities have stopped and commercial importers are already facing huge financial crises. Amin Yousuf Balgamwala said we are surprised on receiving FBR notices, as whole country is lockdown for prevention of coronavirus pandemic, so chairman FBR to issue directives to chief commissioner and all RTOs to stop harassment to commercial importers,

so that import activities could be restored after the lockdown period.

"If wheel of trade & industry will continue to rotate, will create more opportunities for employment as the country develops," he said. Chairman PCDMA further said that if all notices including income tax, sales tax, WHT and other proceeding not stopped for at least 2 months then the textile industry will be badly affected which is the backbone of the domestic economy as commercial importers are the largest means of providing raw materials to the textile industry to continue production activities.

Amin Yusuf Balgamwala also demanded to defer the condition of the CNIC on the sale of goods to unregistered persons for six months so that the business community, especially small traders should be protected from destruction.

### Call to lift ban on movement of fleet operators and goods transporters

President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF), President All Karachi Industrial Alliance (AKIA), Senior Vice Chairman of the Businessmen Panel of FPCCI and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday said the government has broken the back of hoarders and profiteers planning another artificial crisis by lifting ban on the movement of fleet operators and goods transporters.

The provincial governments should also follow the suit and allow the food-related industry to start operations to deal a fatal blow to the unholy designs enemies of the masses, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that government should direct the Customs, Railway and district administration officials to facilitate imports and exports. —DNA

## Miran Shah: Policeman injured in bomb blast

MIRAN SHAH: A policeman sustained critical injuries in a remote-controlled bomb blast in Miran Shah. According to media reports, the explosion occurred in a car parked in Mir Ali Bazar. The injured official is a muharar at Mir Ali police station and has been shifted to hospital. Heavy contingents of police and security forces reached the incident spot and collected evidences. The area has been sealed and search operation. —APP

## Businessmen want substantial package to cope with virus

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The business community has expressed dissatisfaction over the financial package announced by the government to cope with the challenges posed by coronavirus, saying it must have taken more steps to give maximum relief to the poverty-stricken people.

"However, we appreciate the PM's incentives for the export industry, demanding to extend the same benefits to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which was being affected seriously in the wake of coronavirus pandemic", observed Friends of Economic and Business Reforms (FEBR) President Kashif Anwar. In a statement issued here on Monday, he added that the government should have brought down the prices of the petroleum products to at least Rs75 per litre by announcing cut of Rs35 per litre to provide some visible relief to the people. He said that the current relief was not enough keeping in view of magnitude of the crisis.

It is to be noted that the price of petroleum products has been slashed by just Rs15 as a breather for the public under a complete lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak in Pakistan. According to a notification issued by the federal finance ministry, after the cost reduction, petrol is available for Rs96.58 per litre. High diesel costs Rs107.25, while light diesel is being sold for Rs62.51 per litre.

He lamented that the government last month had jacked up the petroleum levy on POL products through consumption of two major products of petrol and diesel. The petroleum levy on diesel and petrol was increased, which is very unfortunate.

## No Pak passengers in transit at any airports: Moeed

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Division (SAPM) Moeed Yusuf on Monday said there were no Pakistani passengers in transit at any airports of the world adding that all such passengers either have been airlifted to Pakistan or their visas were extended at their respective countries.

Addressing a press conference along with Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal and SAPM on Health Dr Zafar Mirza, he said all Pakistani stranded at Thailand were brought back to the country and their Coronavirus tests were negative. While categorically rejecting the media reports about resuming rail and air operation in the country from April 1 and April 5 respectively, he said that no final decision was made in this regard. He said the government was working on various options but it was not yet decided to resume railways and air traffic from April 1. —Online

## NEWSPAPERS ARE SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS.

Newspapers are the most unlikely object to get affected with the COVID-19. There has never been a documented incident whereby the COVID-19 virus has been transmitted from a print newspaper, print magazine, print letter, or print package, according to the world's top doctors and scientists.

Source: Earl J. Wilkinson, Executive Director and CEO, International News Media Association (INMA), Dallas, Texas, United States.

### You can't catch coronavirus from newspapers, WHO confirms.

The World Health Organization has confirmed newspapers remain safe to read during the coronavirus pandemic.

The WHO has stated that the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, and therefore the risk of contracting COVID-19 through receipt of a printed paper is infinitesimally small.

A study from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), UCLA, and Princeton University scientists showed the coronavirus lasts longest on smooth, non-porous surfaces. For newspaper, which is much more porous than cardboard, virus viability is presumably even shorter.

A virologist at John Innes Centre George Lomanosoff, stated: "Newspapers are pretty sterile because of the way they are printed and the process they've been through. Traditionally, people have eaten fish and chips out of them for that very reason. So all of the ink and the print makes them actually quite sterile. The chances of that are infinitesimal."



"A freshly delivered newspaper as such is safe, but it is advisable that hands are washed for 20 seconds, with soap, after a newspaper is read."

Nabeel Ahmad Awan (PAS).

Secretary, Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department Punjab-Pakistan.

The Guardian

The New York Times

The Washington Post

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

人民日报

THE AUSTRALIAN

During these unprecedented times of a once in a generation global pandemic, newspapers are committed to reporting credible news to keep readers informed.

CPNE

Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors

## Easy paisas, U paisas shops to remain open

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad /District Magistrate Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat directed to open the shops of easy paisas, U paisas, Jazz cash and others online payment services for three days from 12 pm to 4 pm with immediate effect.

Keeping in view the difficulties faced by general public sending and receiving remittances the DC took this initiative. In his letter Hamza Shafiqat directed that all shops strictly abide by notified SOP dated March 24, 2020 for shops of the Islamabad Capital Territory. He said the shopkeepers would also ensure that measures required for maintaining social distancing by the customers was strictly adhered with. —DNA

## President visits quarantine centre at Taxila

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Monday visited a quarantine center established at the University of Technology, Taxila and reviewed available health facilities for the patients of coronavirus infection. During the visit, First Lady Begum Samina Alvi also accompanied the president, a press release said. The president also visited the control room and inquired from the medical staff about the health and care facilities for the patients. —APP

## ICCI demands deferring of markup on bank loans

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Monday urged the government to issue directions to commercial banks to immediately defer the receipt of markup from industrialists for a few months to save the industry from further troubles.

The ICCI high-ups in a press statement said that despite closure of industrial activities, industrialists have to pay markup of banks on daily basis, which is putting more pressure on them. They stressed that the government should also issue directions to commercial banks to immediately defer the receipt of markup from industrialists for few months to save the industry from further troubles.

They said that due to coronavirus issue, businesses and industrial units are closed but they have to pay the monthly commercial bills of gas and electricity, which is adding to their difficulties. The ICCI appealed to the government that receipt of commercial bills of gas and electricity from business and industry should be deferred for few months so that business community could be able to cope with the current crisis.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that if deferral of receipt of utility bills is not possible, business community should be allowed to pay monthly commercial bills in three installments till the time the coronavirus issue is over.

Waheed said that whole country including the federal capital is in lockdown situation due to which markets and industrial units are closed. However, business community has to pay the wages of workers and meet day to day expenses as well. He said that in these circumstances, deferring the receipt of commercial bills of gas and electricity for few months or allowing them to pay monthly bills in 3 in-

stallments would provide significant relief to the business community.

Senior Vice President ICCI Tahir Abbasi and Vice President ICCI Saifur Rehman Khan said that despite closure of industrial activities, industrialists have to pay markup of banks on daily basis, which is putting more pressure on them. They urged that the government should also issue directions to commercial banks to immediately stop the receipt of markup from industrialists for a few months. They further said that in these difficult circumstances, instead of earning profits, banks should realize the problems of industry and freeze the receipt of their markup for few months to save the industrial units from closure.

### Zulfi sends Rs1b defamation notice to Kh Asif

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis Zulfiqar Bukhari has sent a Rs1 billion defamation notice to PML-N stalwart Khawaja Asif over allegations that the PM's aide used his influence to allow pilgrims from Iran to return to the country via Taftan without fulfilling proper requirements.

In the notice, Bukhari outlines that Asif — while speaking to the media outside the Supreme Court on March 17 — had alleged that he (Bukhari) "was responsible for allowing a flood of Zaireen [to enter Pakistan] from Iran without any quarantine or isolation as required by law and social responsibility norms". "You have essentially blamed me for the spread of the coronavirus," Bukhari says in his notice, adding that Asif later tweeted that those responsible for the Covid-19 deaths in the country were Prime Minister Imran Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza, Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar

## Virus toll 20, total cases reach at 1,685

Continued from front page

"Sadly we have lost another soul to #COVID19 today," Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said in a late-night tweet. "A 68-year-old lady who came from KSA and was under treatment in RYK [Rahim Yar Khan]." The confirmed Coronavirus infection cases in the country have reached 1625.

These include 593 cases in Punjab, 508 in Sindh, 195 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 144 in Balochistan, 51 in Islamabad, 128 in Gilgit Baltistan and six cases in Azad Kashmir.

11 patients infected with the virus are being said in critical conditions and some among them were put on ventilators. The patients who have recovered from the disease were 28 so far.

Earlier on Sunday, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Zafar Mirza said that 1,106 new sus-

pected cases were reported within the last 24 hours, whereas, 420 patients were locally transmitted. DNA

### All resources being utilised to contain virus: Firdous

Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said all available resources are being utilized to contain the spread of coronavirus. In a series of tweets on Monday, she expressed the confidence to surmount this challenge with collective national efforts. The Special Assistant said health of public is the foremost priority of PM Imran Khan. She said the PTI govt has increased the budget for the health which reflects its sincerity and seriousness to strengthen this sector.

Firdous Ashiq Awan noted that development of the health sector is the genuine national service. She said that statistics are proving that this sector was not the priority of previous regimes and they

only installed plaques of their names.

### 289 more held for violation of lockdown in Sindh

Police crackdown against violators of provision of lockdown continues in Sindh as 289 more persons were taken into custody from different cities of the province on Sunday. Police have also registered 72 cases against the arrested persons. According to sources, 2453 persons have so far been detained in the province for violating the lockdown to stem the spread of coronavirus. At least 277 cases have also been registered.

At least 84 persons were arrested from different parts of Karachi on the 7th day of lockdown imposed by the provincial government and 26 cases were registered against them. On the other hand, five persons were arrested in Hyderabad for lockdown violation and two cases were registered while 11 persons were detained by police.