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China can face 'consequences' over COVID-19 pandemic, Trump warns

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Govt releases Rs962.7m for Revenue Division projects

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Federal government has so far authorized release of Rs 962.725 million for various ongoing and new projects of Revenue Division under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2019-20, as against its total allocation of Rs1728.238 million.

Out of the total amount, Rs265.416 million have been authorized to be released for establishment of Inland Revenue offices in the country, out of its total allocations of Rs331.770 million earmarked for the current fiscal year, according to the data released by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Likewise, another Rs190 million have been authorized for release to carry out development of Integrated Transit Trade Management System (ITMS) under ADB's Regional Improving Border Services Project for which Rs480 million were budgeted in the current fiscal year.

An amount of Rs162.5 million have been authorized for release for construction of Regional Tax Office at Islamabad, for which Rs325 million were earmarked.

The ministry also provided authorization for release of Rs160 million for construction of Model Custom Collectorate at Gwadar, for which Rs200 million were allocated in the current budget.

The ministry also had given approval to release the total earmarked amount Rs27.5 million for construction of additional office block for Model Customs Collectorate at Hyderabad. The minister had also given approval to the release of Rs22.352 million for construction of additional floor on existing Transit Accommodation (Inland Revenue), Sutlej Block, Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore; Rs10 million for construction for Additional office block for RTO Abbottabad and Rs24.88 million for construction of regional tax office at D.I.Khan.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Federal government has so far authorized release of Rs 470.793 billion for various ongoing and new social sector uplift projects under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2019-20, as against the total allocation of Rs701 billion.

Indian govt targeting Muslims over COVID-19 policy: PM

FROM OUR Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday said that the Indian government was targeting Muslims under the cover of the coronavirus outbreak.

In his latest tweet, the prime minister said, "The deliberate and violent targeting of Muslims in India by Modi government to divert the backlash over its COVID-19 policy is akin to what Nazis did to Jews in Germany." He said, "This has left thousands stranded and hungry and is yet more proof of the racist Hindutva supremacist ideology of Modi government."

Tiger Force has no political ambition: Dar

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Usman Dar on Sunday categorically denied that the Tiger Force, recently formed for effective assistance in countrywide emergency relief programme, had no any political ambition as its volunteers' have no affiliations with PTL.

"It was purely non-political national force working for the betterment of its countrymen in distress," he expressed these views in a private news channel.

He informed that the need of formation of such a national level force of volunteers was felt in demands in some areas of the country, particularly the Sindh province.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Farogh Naseem and Parliamentary Secretary for Law Barrister Maleeka Ali Bukhari jointly address a press conference at PID Media Centre.

Govt introduces hoarding Ord to ease common man: Farogh

— New Ordinance contained three-year sentence, summary trial and confiscation of material

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Law and Justice Barrister Dr. Farogh Naseem on Sunday said that the government had promulgated an ordinance against hoarding of essential commodities amidst spread of coronavirus to protect the interest of a common man.

The new Ordinance contained three-year sentence, summary trial and confiscation of the material for hoarding of wheat, sugar, flour, ghee, sanitizers, face masks and other essential items, he said while addressing a press conference here at PID Islamabad along with Parliamentary Secretary on Law and Justice Mulaeka Bokhari.

The minister said that the government had also prepared an Anti-Smuggling Ordinance to stop the smuggling of dollars and essential commodities like wheat and sugar through the undeclared routes. The Ordinance had been sent to the office of prime minister for vetting. This law was likely to be promulgated by Monday or Tuesday, he said. The minister said that stern actions would be taken against those involved in smuggling essential items.

He said that no one would be allowed to take

advantage of the current prevailing situation in wake of coronavirus. He said that though customs would be a focal department to stop this practice, however, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) would be authorized to dedicate powers to any state institution like Intelligence Bureau (IB) Inter Services Intelligence Bureau (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI) to seek their assistance against smuggling.

The federal minister said that district administrations had been made bound to also share available information pertaining to any act of smuggling or hoarding to the relevant institution to take action against it. A copy of this information would also be sent to secretary law and justice who would view the actions taken by the department concerned on it, he maintained.

Stern action, he said, would also be taken against the officers for showing negligence on the matter. The minister said that changing could be introduced in Ordinance in extraordinary situations if necessary.

The minister said that a summary trial against the culprits would be initiated in accordance of the law, adding that the judges for the summary trial would be appointed with the consultation of chief

justice of Pakistan.

He said that his ministry was introducing laws keeping in view the current situation on directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan to safeguard the interest of a common man.

Barrister Farogh said that COVID-19 was a global pandemic and it was need of hour to work collectively to defeat this menace. All provinces should work together with the federal government in current situation, he maintained.

The minister said that the only way to tackle pandemic COVID-19 was precautionary measures, adding that Pakistani people were aware and educated in this regard.

Earlier, Farogh Naseem said that Ministry of Law and Justice had resolved a total of 60,649 cases during twenty months which was a ratio of 99 percent. His ministry had been working round the clock during last several days to prepared ordinances against hoarding and smuggling, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Mulaeka Bokhari said that these laws were manifestation of the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and fulfillment of the PTI's manifesto. She said the hoarding and anti-smuggling laws would bring ease in the life of the

Alvi, ulema played laudable role in issuance of joint declaration: Firdous

By Our Staff Correspondent

SIALKOT: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan has hailed the issuance of a joint declaration by the President Dr Arif Alvi and the Ulema regarding holding the prayers in the mosques during Ramzan.

Dr Firdous while talking to the newsmen here on Sunday said that the President Dr Arif Alvi and the Ulema were playing laudable role in combating coronavirus pandemic.

She said that government would ensure the early implementation on joint declaration between government and the Ulema regarding prayers during Ramzan. Dr Firdous urged the Ulema to continue playing their role in promoting anti coronavirus awareness among the people besides performing their religious obligations and duties in the motherland. Prime Minister Imran Khan was successfully fighting against the coronavirus pandemic and the whole of the nation was standing with him, SAPM said, adding that "Nation must be united to battle against coronavirus".

She said that the COVID-19 testing capacity would be increased up to 20,000 tests on daily

basis by the end of this month.

SAPM said that the government was providing financial assistance through 'Ehsaas Cash Emergency Programme' saying that and the programme reflected Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision toward poor and deprived segment of the society.

She said that "Prime Minister Imran Khan proved that he feels the pain of masses and takes keen interest in providing relief to them."

She said that the smooth, easy and transparent distribution of money to the deserving people was the important part of the 'Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme', as the government was giving this emergency financial assistance to all the deserving people purely on merit.

Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said that the government would announce maximum financial relief for the small shopkeepers and businessmen, adding that "Stern legal action against all the profiteers and hoarders who are trying to get advantage of the prevailing hard time and situation in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic will be taken."

She said that the government would purchase wheat in more than a bulk quantity keeping in view the future needs of Pakistan in prevailing coronavirus pandemic scenario.

She said that government was giving special subsidy of billions of rupees on 19 different daily used commodities at the Utility Stores across the Pakistan.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan stated that government is pursuing a strategy to contain spread of coronavirus and save people from unemployment.

Addressing a news conference in Sialkot on Sunday, she said 144 billion rupees are being distributed among the deserving families under Ehsaas Emergency Cash programme. The Special Assistant said the Prime Minister will soon announce a package for small businessmen, whose businesses have been affected by the ongoing partial lockdown. She said steps are also being taken to check smuggling and hoarding of edible items. She said mobile utility stores will provide essential commodities to people in the far flung areas of the country during Ramazan.

The Special Assistant expressed confidence that religious scholars will ensure implementation of the 20-point strategy of precautionary measures for congregational prayers in mosques during Ramazan.

Qureshi terms EECF as biggest relief package for the poor

From Our Staff Correspondent

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday said that Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme (EECP) was one of the biggest relief package for the poor in the country's history.

He expressed these views during visiting Ehsaas Emergency Cash Centres at Manzooraabad and Qasimpur Colony.

Foreign Minister Qureshi inspected the procedure for provision of financial assistance to the poor and expressed satisfaction in this regard. "Under this financial assistance programme, Rs 144 billions are being distributed among 12.5 million families. The people are given assistance without any political affiliation. The programme is transparent through digital system", Qureshi remarked.

Multan was at top in terms of distribution of financial assistance in Punjab so far as Rs 1.36 billions have been distributed among the people, he maintained and also appreciated performance of Deputy Commissioner Aamir Khattak and his team for incomparable work.

He said that Multan quarantine was also one of the biggest facility in the country. The city's quarantine facility has honoured to host zaireen (pilgrims), hailing from across the country. Lauding the efforts of local administration, Qureshi stated that he would inform Prime Minister Imran about performance of Multan as it remained on top to serve zaireen.

He advised people to follow social distancing and avoid shaking hands.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Aamir Khattak briefed Foreign Minister about Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme in the city. He informed that a total of 25 centres were established to disburse cash among people. During first phase, they provided cash to 100,358 families. In second phase, the financial assistance was being given to 37961 persons.

Pak-USA trade surplus decreases by 1.90pc in 8 months: SBP

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's goods and trade services with United State of America (USA) witnessed decrease of 1.90 percent in surplus during first eight months of current financial year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The overall exports to USA were recorded at \$275.213 million during July-February (2019-20) against exports of \$2687.053 million during July-February (2018-19), showing growth of 2.53 percent, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 2.64 percent in eight months, from \$16.009 billion to \$16.433 billion, the SBP data revealed.

SC larger bench to take up corona suo moto case today

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: A five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed would hear the suo moto notice case on the coronavirus pandemic today (Monday).

On previous hearing, the court had issued notices to the chief secretaries of all provinces in addition to summoning the federal interior secretary, chief commissioner Islamabad and the Gilgit Baltistan chief secretary. The Sindh government also submitted a report in relation to the government measures regarding the coronavirus crisis. In the report, the provincial government said that there were only 144 ventilators for coronavirus patients in the province. There were 383 working ventilators in Sindh, said the report, adding that around 21 coronavirus patients were in critical con-

CPEC: Financing matters with Chinese govt for ML-1 at advanced stage

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority General (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that the financing matters with the Chinese government for the mega railway project, Main Line (ML-1) were at advanced stage and the project would soon be on ground.

Dispelling rumours and misgivings being spread about ML-1 that the project

was halted or slowed down, the Chairman said the rumours were baseless as "ML-1 is our high priority mega railway project, being pursued on fast track basis".

In his tweet on Sunday, Bajwa said all feasibility and evaluations of the project had already been done and stakeholders and experts were being consulted for the purpose.

"ML-1 is the largest single CPEC infrastructure to generate huge employment, revolutionize railway and improve logistics," he said adding focus is on making it best project for Pakistan to be presented to Central Development Working Party (CDWP), after refining all aspects, soon as per process.

The ML-1 project is part of CPEC under which, the 1,872 kilometers railway track from Peshawar to Karachi would be upgraded at an estimated cost of around US \$9 billion.

Mechanisms established for timely completion of CPEC projects

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Naghmana Hashmi has said that a number of mechanisms had been established to complete all projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) within the prescribed time frame in order to achieve the desired goals.

"This is a transformative project that, through a radical overhaul of

Pakistan's energy and infrastructure, has laid a solid foundation for our future socio-economic development and has produced tangible results on the ground," she said in an interview.

Ambassador Hashmi remarked that the CPEC was the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping and had played an important role in the development agenda of the present government in Pakistan.

CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN	
Confirmed cases:	8,212
ICT:	171
Punjab:	3,686
Sindh:	2,537
KP:	1,137
Balochistan:	376
AJK:	48
GB:	257
Recovered:	1,868
Deaths:	167