

Flour mills to be allowed for seven days wheat storage instead of 72 hours: Aleem

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A 10-member delegation of Flour Mills Association (FMA) called on Senior Food Minister Punjab Abdul Aleem Khan and announced to end the strike on assurance that their concerns would be allayed. Central Chairman Asim Raza and Provincial President Abdul Rauf Mukhtar who were heading this delegation agreed that flour prices would not increase till Eid-ul-Fitr and the district administration not to raid the flour

mills while the Food Department would have access to these mills. Aleem Khan said that flour mills would be allowed for 7 days wheat storage instead of 72 hours. He said that permission in this regard was being given but the flour mills would declare their stocks. He telephoned the Chief Secretary Punjab during the meeting and asked him to convey the new instructions up to the division and district level. Abdul said that this year wheat was being bought but intends to create a new mechanism for the affairs of flour mills for which the con-

cerned stakeholders should be on the same page. He said that for this purpose a joint meeting of the Food Department and Flour Mills Association will be held immediately after Eid. The Senior Minister clarified that the Government's job should not be to procure raw materials but to regulate and facilitate flour mills. He said that the Punjab Government spends huge amount on procurement of wheat while storing and re-shifting is another exercise. He added that a new strategy would be

worked out for the procurement of wheat and "bar dana" in the coming years. Senior Minister Abdul Aleem Khan asked the officials of the Flour Mills Association to formulate their proposals in the light of which the next road map will be designed. The meeting decided that after Eid flour mills of KPK will also be given wheat but KPK Food Department would by wheat in Punjab in collaboration with Punjab Government. Central Chairman Flour Mills Association Asim Raza, Provincial President Abdul Rauf Mukhtar, Mian

Nadeem Nisar, Ifikhar Muttoo and Khurram Shehzad informed about the problems of flour mills in different districts. Liaquat Ali Khan, Mian Riaz, Hafiz Ahmed, Farrukh Shehzad and Mian Naseem also said that the situation has worsened in Sargodha, Multan, Gujrat and Kasur districts where flour mills do not have wheat for threshing. The delegation of the Association thanked Senior & Food Minister Abdul Aleem Khan who listened to their demands patiently and resolved them immediately.

Recruitment orders of family claim distributed among families of deceased



By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: As per directions of Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Shoaib Dastagir, at Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) headquarters, recruitment orders of junior clerk, Naib Qasid and Langry have been distributed among families of those officials who died during their duties. Addl IG PHP captain retired Zafar Iqbal Awan while distributing orders said that your parents have rendered remarkable services in PHP and I hope the same form all of you that you will become the asset of this department by hard work, honesty and diligence and also enhance prestige of the department by ensuring better public service.

Daraz, HBL sign strategic partnership agreement



By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Daraz and HBL have signed a strategic partnership agreement to enable the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by inviting SMEs to set up online shops on Daraz, and avail HBL's extensive banking solutions to meet their financial needs.

HBL is Pakistan's largest bank and a leader in the SME segment while Daraz is the country's leading e-commerce platform. As part of the partnership, HBL is encouraging its SME clients to set up their online ventures on Daraz thereby availing the business and financial support the platform is offering under the recently launched Daraz Humqadam program.

The Humqadam program includes commission fees waiver for May and June, free-of-cost educational support and training on Daraz University.

METRO Pakistan holds blood donation drive

KARACHI: METRO Pakistan as part of its life savers campaign managed a blood collection drive and set up blood camps at six of its stores in and Islamabad, Faisalabad, and Lahore, to give its employees and customers an opportunity to donate blood.

During this pandemic the blood donors have reduced massively due to lock down and as a moral duty, METRO Pakistan decided to step up by collaborating with Sundus Foundation, a charitable organization, registered with the Government of Punjab, and affiliated with the Thalassemia International Federation, particularly to cater the Thalassemia patients, who are in dire need of blood transfusion. —PR

India cannot change status of Held Kashmir: Governor

— Appeals UN, US and other world bodies to play their role in stopping genocide



By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said India cannot change the controversial status of the Indian Held Kashmir through its plan of new domicile law.

Since Indian Hindus are massacring humanity, the Governor appealed that the United Nations, the US and other world bodies to play their role to stop genocide in Kashmir as the world witnessed in Bosnia. "The history will not forgive those, who will not play their due role in stopping Muslims' genocide in Kashmir and India," he said.

The Governor strongly con-

Governor says Modi govt in India put peace under constant threat as its war hysteria was increasing

demned terrorism in Balochistan and added that the whole nation was standing with those who laid their lines in the line of their duty while fighting war against terrorism.

Governor was speaking to a delegation led by provincial minister Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed, PTI central Punjab president Ejaz Chaudhry and Mirza Safdar Jaraal from Azad

Kashmir that called on him at Governor's House on Tuesday.

The Governor said India had completely failed in suppressing the voice of Kashmiris despite imposing worst ever ongoing 289 days' curfew in the valley.

And now under new plan, he said, the India was trying to settle Hindus in Kashmir and offering them Held Kashmir domiciles to convert majority

Muslims into minority. Stating that India's this move was a threat to peace in the region, Chaudhry Sarwar stressed that the United Nations and other world bodies should break their silence and stand with the Kashmiris and stop India from introducing new domicile law.

He said the Narendra Modi government in India and put peace under constant threat as its war hysteria was increasing.

He said all minorities including Muslims in India had become unsafe as the RSS goons on the behest of Narendra Modi massacring minorities.

The Governor expressed his grief over the martyrdom of Pakistan Army men in terrorist activities in Balochistan.

'Spending for welfare of ailing humanity greatest service'

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Philanthropists who spend their wealth generously for the welfare of humanity doing a great service to the mankind and are the proud of our society.

Corporate sector is also fulfilling its social responsibilities and helping a lot for COVID-19 patients. It was stated by the Chairman Board of Management (BOM), Institute of Public Health (IPH) and former Governor Punjab, Lt Gen (retired) Khalid Maqbool while addressing a ceremony to acknowledge the contribution of donors for providing funds and equipment to establish Bio-Safety Level 3 Lab at IPH for Corona tests, here on Tuesday. Gen Khalid Maqbool distributed appreciation shields amongst the representatives of World Health Organization (WHO), Allied Bank, Faisal Bank, Islamic Bank and FINCA Bank.

SNGPL chief listens to public grievances

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) on Tuesday organised e-Kachehri at its Head Office under the directions of Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU). Managing Director SNGPL Amer Tufail listened to public complaints and directed the relevant executives for immediate redressal of complaints.

It is pertinent to mention here that in the wake of coronavirus and to ensure safety of consumers, Prime Minister Imran Khan had directed the utility companies to organise e-Kachehri to ensure quick resolution of public complaints. The SNGPL led the way by organising e-Kachehri initially at its regional offices where the regional heads listened to the consumers' complaints. Consumers lodged their complaints related to provision of connection, gas pressure and billing at the Head Office.

The Managing Director SNGPL Amer Tufail, while directing the relevant executives, ensured consumers of quick resolution of their complaints. The consumers appreciated the initiative of e-Kachehri terming it as a welcoming move which helped them in directly approaching the Managing Director. They were of the opinion that other utility companies should follow the SNGPL as e-Kachehri is helpful in facilitating the consumers while improving transparency in utility companies.

Emirates SkyCargo's global network grows to 75 destinations

LAHORE: Emirates SkyCargo has expanded its weekly scheduled cargo flight operations to cover 75 destinations across six continents. Through its wider reach, Emirates SkyCargo is able to transport essential commodities and other urgently needed cargo more rapidly across the world, allowing exporters and importers across markets to benefit from direct access to wide body cargo capacity.

Some of the destinations recently included in Emirates SkyCargo's network include Colombo, Conakry, Dakar, Dhaka, Dublin, Khartoum, Kuala Lumpur, Perth and Quito. In addition, Emirates SkyCargo has also upped frequency of flights to several key destinations such as Amsterdam, Beijing, Bengaluru, Brussels, Chennai, Chicago, Frankfurt, Hanoi, Johannesburg and London allowing businesses more choice and flexibility in having their cargo shipped to customers and supplementing additional cargo capacity for the transport of urgent and necessary goods. —PR



LAHORE: Ladies motorcyclists on their way on Empress Road without any helmet which may cause any incident any time. —Online

Pakistan facing hurdles in dealing with COVID-19

Faiqa Basit

Pakistan is among those 180+ countries dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, a phenomenon which has overwhelmed society and nation alike.

It will not be easy for Pakistan to mitigate the health emergency and the degree of economic downturn during these difficult times.

The country of over 200 million people is already undergoing a microeconomic stabilisation and is below average according to the human development indicators (HDI).

Death tolls from coronavirus has already increased from the death tolls of other deadly pandemics of the past; MERS, SARS and Ebola. Fatalities in Pakistan as of April 20-hit 176, with more than 8,418 confirmed cases and many more are still unreported.

Pakistan government is currently facing great challenges brought about

by the virus.

Nevertheless, the policy makers have initiated various steps to ensure the safety of the nation and to fight the pandemic. There are five major factors that have caused problems in dealing with the pandemic- a fractured health system, lack of cooperation among different levels of the government, resistance shown by citizens and religious parties with respect to the steps taken, mismanagement of pilgrims that came from Iran and the falling economy of the country.

Outbreaks of such pandemics expose the gaps and fractures in the underlying health systems.

These gaps can either be related to detection of the disease, availability of healthcare resources or even the procedures involved or needed for quarantine, etc. Pakistan being a developing country, only spends two percent of its GDP on healthcare; however, the global average lies at 10 percent.

This is one of the reasons why Pakistan's policy makers are intense since there is lack of resources and facilities available for healthcare workers.

In Pakistan, healthcare workers are voicing concerns related to the incompetence of the health system in treating the COVID-19 patients since they are increasing day by day.

Various healthcare professionals stress on the idea that there is a dire need to prevent the collapse of our healthcare system which might happen if the country runs out of doctors, hospital staff, beds, ventilators, or other necessary supplies.

Cooperation obstacles are found within the Pakistan's government which must be overcome timely. Federal and provincial governments lack coordination which is critical to produce efficient responses in times of the corona crisis.

The month of March was mostly unclear with respect to the decisions made by federal government regard-

ing lockdowns and curfews. However, provincial leaders have shown efficiency in imposing a lockdown and closing all public gatherings including schools, markets, shopping malls, etc, especially in Sindh. It is best to acknowledge the fact that serving the community is essential right now instead of focussing on political differences and COVID-19 can be best fought if everyone remains on one page and cooperate to resolve problems.

Pakistan is facing a lot of hurdles and obstacles in dealing with the corona virus in respect to social, cultural and political factors. Pakistan is currently encountering great struggle because of the resistance caused by the differing communities present, the religious people and their beliefs, political differences and instability and economic vulnerabilities. According to the experts the local community and even the authorities are taking corona virus lightly even though the cases are steadily increas-

ing every day. Instructions are issued by Pakistan Health Ministry regarding protection from corona virus where people are urged to maintain social distancing, wash hands regularly and cover their faces with masks. But despite these many common people tend to ignore all these warnings. Some people have failed to comply with the rules, mostly which are living below the poverty line since they regard corona virus as the least of their problems. Pakistani policy makers haven't yet imposed bans on mosques because of the fear of backlash from religious people or parties. However, congregational prayers were restrained. Similarly, strong social ties and traditions of Pakistani society have imposed yet another pressure on the lockdown situation. Even though marriage ceremonies and other celebrations which involve large number of gatherings are banned, but people still do not refrain from conducting such events and parties. Majority of people still

have disobeyed the restrictions and ignored the warnings by authorities, mostly in the rural areas of the country.

COVID-19 has proved to be of great danger to the already strained economy of Pakistan. The daily wages and self-employed people are the most affected due to this crisis as they are falling short of finances to run their households. This is the major reason why Imran Khan isn't in favour of imposing a strict lockdown across the country. Recently the government announced the opening of the construction industry which was positively welcomed by people who think the economy needs a start but at the same time was criticized because more contacts among people is likely to spread the infection. Apart from this, since major cities are closed, farmers are facing a lot of problems since their crops are ready but aren't harvested because there is no labour available.

The writer is a freelance contributor