

SC to resume hearing of Justice Isa case on June 2

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) will resume hearing of the Justice Qazi Faez Isa case on June 2. A 10-member bench of the apex court headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Maqbool Baqar, Justice Manzoor Ahmad Malik, Justice Faisal Arab, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed will resume hearing of the case. —APP

The Business

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Two PBC officials died of virus: Shibli, secy condole

ISLAMABAD: Two professionals, an engineer and an Urdu newscaster of Radio Pakistan died of coronavirus on Thursday. Muhammad Ashfaq, 48, a Senior Broadcast Engineer was a regular employee of Radio Pakistan and known for his competence and dedication to technical work. Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Shibli Faraz, Information Secretary Akber Hussain Durrani, Director General PBC Ambreen Jan, and all the directors and staff have condoned the sad demise of both the PBC professionals. —APP

PTI warns Sindh govt against lockdown

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Khurram Sher Zaman on Thursday warned the Sindh government against reimposing a lockdown in the port city to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Speaking at a press conference, he said his party will oppose the Sindh Govt any such move, alleging the PPP-led govt wants to cause economic damage by imposing the lockdown. Khurram Sher Zaman said the world is coming to the realisation that the lockdown is no solution. He said the Sindh Govt decision to close shops and other businesses at 5pm will not help control the deadly virus.

He asked Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to share facts about the coronavirus situation instead of frightening people.

He demanded of the government to allow fuel stations to stay open round the clock to facilitate motorists. The PTI MPA from Karachi further demanded that barbershops and beauty salons be also allowed to reopen. Recounting hardships faced by the common man due to closure of public transport, he asked the government to allow public transporters to bring their buses on the roads to mitigate the suffering of commuters.

He claimed hundreds of thousands of people are losing their livelihoods daily because of the government's measures. —DNA

ICCI calls for slashing tax on rental income

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to cut high taxes on rental income to 10 percent in the forthcoming budget that would facilitate the growth of business activities and improve tax revenue of the government as well.

He said that up to 35 percent tax on rental income has increased rents of offices manifold due to which many companies were facing great problems. He said that due to the coronavirus issue and lockdown, many business companies were facing severe difficulties in paying their rents. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that with the imposition of 35% tax on rental income, Islamabad has also become a very expensive city. Therefore, there was a need to reduce this tax appropriately, which would reduce the hardships of companies and the people.

He demanded that government should review the tax on rental income tax in the next budget and bring it down to 10 percent final tax, which will significantly reduce rents, reduce problems of business community, improve business activities and enhance tax revenue of the government. Mohammad Ahmed Waheed said that previous 10 percent uniform tax was levied rental income as final liability which was affordable for tenants and improved tax revenue of the government.

But later on eight slabs of this tax were introduced increasing maximum tax to 35 percent which not only increased the rent for companies unnecessarily and also increased the difficulties of the business class and encouraged tax evasion as well.

Therefore, he demanded that in the next budget, government should rationalise this tax by introducing a uniform tax of 10 percent on rental income as final liability. —DNA

IHC seeks Centre reply on Hafeez' inclusion in NFC

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday directed the federal government to submit its response as it took up a petition questioning the inclusion of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Abdul Hafeez Shaikh in the 10th National Finance Commission (NFC) without consultation in accordance with Article 160(1) of the Constitution.

The constitution of the commission — which is aimed at distributing between the Centre and the provinces the net proceeds of five major tax categories, besides looking into expenditure requirements for special areas and special needs of the country — was challenged by opposition PML-N MP Khurram Dastgir Khan.



KARACHI: Security officials busy in removing of wreckage from the site after the Pakistan International Airlines, plane crash.

Restaurants, super market owners seek LCCI help

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Lahore Restaurants Unity (LRU) and Lahore Super Markets Association (LSMA) have sought help of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry for opening of their business under strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

"Restaurants owners and Marriage Halls Association have demanded opening of businesses while Super Markets Association has called for extended time for businesses. LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, along with Senior Vice President Ali Hussain Asghar and Vice President Mian Zahid Jawaid Ahmad, met with the delegations Lahore Restaurants Unity and Lahore Super Markets Association and listened their grievance to be discussed with the higher authorities. Chairman Lahore Restaurants Unity Amir Rafiq Qureshi and President Lahore Super Markets Association Ahmad Nawaz and Chairman Marriage Halls Association Mian Muhammad Ilyas also spoke on the occasion. LCCI EC Members Aamir Anwar, Ch. Khadim Hussain and Wasif Yousef and others were present on the occasion.

They demanded of the government to allow resumption of their businesses immediately as prolonged lockdown has destroyed their businesses to the extent and heading towards no point of return.

They said that closure of restaurants has not only put investment of billions of rupees on stake but has also rendered thousands of employees jobless and they are facing starvation. "Hundreds of restaurants have been closed, which cost jobs of thousands of daily-wage earners and labourers besides loss to the national exchequer", they said and added that government has allowed various other businesses to open but these businesses are kept closed.

They said that restaurants and marriage hall owners are ready to follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) set by the government to contain coronavirus but businesses should be opened immediately.

LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry is well aware of the miseries of traders and has already taken up these issues at highest level. LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that a number countries including Turkey have already opened hotel industry. "Now we have to live with coronavirus like various other diseases therefore government should manage and open the businesses.

He said that business community is the backbone of the economy and playing a great role in providing employment to the people and revenue to the government.

He said that coronavirus has already caused a huge loss the country and it can-

not bear more. People should take safety measures by themselves, not only to save their lives but for further ease in lockdown. Lahore Restaurants Unity on the occasion demanded that relief in rents should be given to the restaurants situated at the government, semi-government's buildings. 100 percent utility bills of small restaurants while 50% bills of large restaurants for three months should be waved off. Restaurants should be allowed to work 24/7 from 08 am to 12 pm.

SITE demands army role to ensure SOPs compliance

Patron Zubair Motiwala and President Suleman Chawla of SITE Association of Industry has fully endorsed the views of BMG Leader Siraj Kassam Teli to ease up lockdown and deploy army jawans across the city to check and guide the people to follow the prescribed SOPs in letter and spirit to save from corona virus bedside earning livelihood.

They said the strict compliance to SOPs is a must to continue businesses without risking lives of people amid corona virus which may last for long and added that the national economy has already suffered huge losses during past more than two months due to lockdown and as such, immediate opening of all industrial and commercial activities has become a must to save the country from total economic collapse.

SCCI lauds Razak role for export sector

SIALKOT: Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Muhammad Ashraf Malik has lauded the role of the commerce ministry, especially PM's Adviser Razak Dawood, for leading country's export sector in the right direction during COVID-19 global pandemic.

In a press release, issued here on Thursday, he said that tough times demanded innovative measures for which the business community of Sialkot was thankful to the Ministry of Commerce. He said the ministry, especially PM's adviser on commerce, textile, industry, production and investment, realised the gravity of the situation and made arrangements for opening of factories to resume exports.

The SCCI president said the COVID-19 pandemic had had far greater impact on the national economy and the exports of Pakistan than expected as the whole supply chain had been disrupted. He said those exporters who had confirmed orders were facing troubles in dispatching their consignments due to freight rates that had skyrocketed since the implemen-

tation of nationwide lockdown.

He said that according to an estimate, the industry was experiencing a sharp increase of 200 percent to 300 percent both in oceanic and air freight, respectively. He said that the sudden increase in the freight rates had caused troubles for exporters who had previously settled the payment terms with their clients and were facing losses as their calculations and estimates had been disturbed. The SCCI president urged said the govt should give a freight subsidy amidst the pandemic to the entire export sector of Pakistan for all global markets to help them in the crunch times.

He said in the prevailing situation, the only solution to protect the export sector was a freight subsidy, like the one previously given to the industry in 2003.

NAB reviews progress in mega corruption cases

NAB on Thursday reviewed the progress in mega corruption cases and decided to utilise all available resources for the recovery of the looted money.

A NAB press release said that the meet-

ing, chaired by Chairman NAB Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal, decided to file early hearing pleas in accountability courts besides filing appeals for cancellation of bails of the suspects released on bail.

The meeting reviewed progress in the investigations/ inquiries of mega corruption white collar crime cases against various personalities including former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, former chief minister Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz, Salman Shehbaz, Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Nawaz, Ahmad Cheema, Fawad Hassan Fawad, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal, Miftah Ismael, Imran-ul-Haq Sheikh and others.

The meeting also reviewed progress in the investigation of fake account cases against former president Asif Ali Zardari, Abdul Ghani Majeed, Anwar Majeed and others and mulled recovering the looted money and depositing it in the national exchequer. The progress in the investigations of 56 companies of Punjab and the latest situation about recovery of looted amount from CEOs and deposit in national exchequer, was also discussed. —APP

Kuwait Airways to lay off 1,500 expat workers

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Airways is planning to lay off as many as 1,500 expatriate employees in response to the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

The state-owned carrier is currently assessing the plan and the process should take about two weeks to complete. The layoff will involve employees across all departments. The loss-making airline employs about 7,800 staff, of which 1,350 are Kuwaiti nationals. Before the virus crisis hit, it had planned to hire an additional 1,000 people this year. —TLTP

Imran taking wise, tough decisions, says Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad Thursday said that the PM Imran Khan was taking strict and wise decisions to control spread of the pandemic and to overcome the economic crisis engulfing the country.

Railway minister claimed that the federal government has taken corrective measures as compared to Sindh government in order to contain the spread of Coronavirus. The government has taken acknowledge able steps keeping in view the health safety of people and economic situation of the country which was appreciated globally, he mentioned. He said that all political parties should cooperate with federal government to contain the spread of Coronavirus.

Rashid said that we needed to form a joint strategy to eliminate this natural diseases, otherwise all segments of society; the common people, the government and opposition would be equally vulnerable to it. "To fight for diseases we need to shut down politics for some period of time," he emphasised. Replying a question, the railways minister said whosoever was involved in the sugar and wheat crises should get an exemplary punishment. The PTI-led government has taken a landmark step by exposing sugar mafia to set an example, he added.

He further said the Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched an inquiry against his own party members. This is one of the major development, but there is still a long way to go. Ministers including me, if found involved in corruption, will have to face strict action by the prime minister", he remarked. —DNA

Murad assures KCCI to reopening local businesses

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday assured the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to review all its suggestions with regard to the re-opening of the local industries, businesses, restaurants and saloons, etc.

This assurance was given by Chief Minister Sindh during a meeting with a business delegation led by Chairman BMG. While briefing the Chief Minister, Chairman BMG and former President KCCI Siraj Kassam Teli urged the Sindh government to completely wind-up the lockdown so that all types of businesses and industries could restart their operations with full swing. He also advised to deploy troops from the army whose presence and patrolling at various commercial markets would ensure strict adherence to the SOPs devised to contain further spread of coronavirus pandemic.

He was of the opinion that economy was already in deep crisis and the country cannot afford further damages hence, it was really critical to restart all businesses with normal timings and get back to routine life in the presence of virus. "On one hand, we have to contain virus but on the other we also have to save the already ailing economy", he said.

Youm-e-Takbeer observed

ISLAMABAD: Youm-e-Takbeer was observed on Thursday to commemorate historic nuclear tests Pakistan conducted on this day in 1998. The nuclear explosions, which were conducted in self-defence to respond to India's aggression of nuclear tests, made Pakistan's defence invincible. As a result, Pakistan be-



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance & Revenue, Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh chairs a consultative meeting with Minister for Energy, Omar Ayub and SAPM on Petroleum, Nadeem Babar.

China-Pakistan using all tech tools against locusts

BEIJING: As all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan are using all the technology tools at their disposal to strengthen cooperation to win the war against desert locusts while dealing with challenges from the novel coronavirus.

Both the countries have made a lot of progress in agricultural cooperation, with bilateral work to control locusts one of the most notable examples, Gu Wenliang, agricultural commissioner said in an interview. He told Global Times that a virtual salon on joint efforts to control locusts, part of the hotline campaign for China-Pakistan Economic and Trade was facilitated on May 20, right before the 69th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The cloud salon attracted almost 170 delegates to discuss cooperation between China and Pakistan in locust control. The delegates work in embassies, locust control departments, agricultural universities, agricultural enterprises and innovative technology companies.

Through the cloud salon, experts in the locust control working group demonstrated the use of plant protection drones and high-efficiency remote sprayers, also known as cannons. They also shared insights on the application of pesticides for locust control to audiences from Pakistan, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Nigeria during a video conference.

The conference was live-streamed in Pakistan and a total of 191,000 people watched the 2-hour stream. Netizens from all over the

world followed and liked the content. Earlier in 2020, the outbreak of the desert locust disaster in Pakistan had a serious impact on agricultural production and food security in the country.

The Pakistani government is stepping up efforts to fighting the epidemic. As of the end of April, the Chinese govt had provided Pakistan with 300 tons of malathion pesticides and 50 vehicle mounted high-efficiency sprayers to help Pakistan fight the locust disaster.

The two countries' agricultural departments are actively implementing a Memorandum of Understanding on strengthening cooperation on plant pest and disease control, which aims to improve the ability and level of sustainable management of locusts. —APP