

SHC rejects plea for grounding all PIA planes

KARACHI: A federal law officer informed the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday that findings of an investigation into the air crash that claimed lives of 97 passengers and crewmembers in Karachi will be made public on the directive of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The two-judge bench headed by Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar was hearing a petition regarding various incidents of air crashes. The petitioner moved an application seeking urgent hearing of his petition filed in 2016. —Online

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Zardari decides not to appear before court

ISLAMABAD: Former president Asif Ali Zardari on Friday decided not to appear before accountability court in Toshakhana (national depository) case. The former and ex-prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Yousaf Raza Gillani were asked to appear before an accountability court on Friday in Toshakhana (national depository) reference. The counsel of former president, Asad Abbasi advocate said an exemption plea from the court appearance would be filed in the court. —Online

Sindh traders to open markets on weekends

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: In a bid to facilitate traders, Sindh government has allowed businesses and shopping malls to open on weekends, media has reported.

As per details, all shops, markets and shopping malls will open on Saturday and Sunday from 8am to 5pm. However, the provincial govt has asked all businesses to strictly follow SOPs and precautionary measures. Earlier, Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah announced to open all markets, except shopping malls for business activity. However, soon after trade activity resumed, the provincial government sealed major markets in different areas of Karachi as traders failed to follow SOPs.

Sindh reported on Friday its highest number of coronavirus deaths in a single day after 31 people lost their lives to the novel virus.

During the past 24 hours, 31 patients lost their battle to the virus. The death toll in Sindh has reached 427 while 308 patients are in critical condition. Besides, 52 are on ventilators. In the past 24 hours, 1,563 people have also recovered from the virus.

OGRA proposes Rs 7.06 cut in petrol prices

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has proposed new petroleum prices for June, media reported on Friday.

According to details, diesel price is likely to go up by 5 paise to 80.15 rupees per liter whereas petrol price is expected to go down by 7.06 to 74.52 rupees per liter.

Kerosene and light diesel rates will presumably lower by 11.88 to 35.56 rupees and 9.37 to 38.14 rupees per liter respectively. The new prices will be effective from June 1 following the approval. —Online

Oil prices fall as US fuel demand remains weak

SINGAPORE: Oil prices edged lower on Friday after U.S. inventory data showed lacklustre fuel demand in the world's largest oil consumer while worsening U.S.-China tensions weighed on global financial markets.

Brent crude slipped 25 cents, or 0.7%, to \$35.04 a barrel by 0334 GMT and US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$33.18 a barrel, down 53 cents, or 1.6%. Still, both contracts are set for a fifth weekly gain, helped by production cuts and optimism about demand recovery in other countries. "The rally needs a breather. It has been four weeks of gains and the market needs to buy time for downstream prices to catch up," OCBC economist Howie Lee said. —Reuters

FPCCI grieved over demise of Asif Arif

ISLAMABAD: Convener FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Insurance Dr. Murtaza Mughal has expressed his heartfelt condolence over the sudden and sad demise of Muhammad Asif Arif, former Commissioner SECP.

Asif Arif was a thorough gentleman, a known consultant and an insurance expert who was respected for his qualities in the community, he said. Murtaza Mughal said that the deceased served SECP with great zeal and dedication and also worked for reputable insurance companies during his bright career.

The untimely death has left many in shock and underlined the importance of measures to remain safe from the deadly coronavirus which has taken an incalculable death toll, he added. He said that he will be long remembered as a loving, deep caring and professional person who always kept interests of companies and unions above his own interests to become a role model for many.

He was a bright light in his community and he was a gifted person who would just draw others to himself never neglected to keep in touch with them. Dr. Mughal prayed that Almighty Allah may grant high place in Jannah to the deceased and give courage to the be-



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Hafeez Shaikh chairs the meeting of the economic coordination committee. —DNA

LCCI for urgent aerial spray to end locust attack

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) has urged the government to arrange immediate aerial spray to control locust and fully support the farmers in their struggle against locust as worst attacks in decades had devastated agriculture sector in various parts of the country.

LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar and Vice President Mian Zahid Jawaid Ahmad said that locust swarms have destroyed wheat, cotton, vegetables and other crops at vast scale in different parts of the country that should be a matter of great concern for all. The LCCI office-bearers said that crops, particularly cotton had already been badly affected by rains and now locusts attack is adding fire to the fuel. They said that our farmer brothers are too much worried and compelled to see their crops being destroyed in front of their eyes with tears.

They said that they are trying to run the millions of locusts away through self helps and with desi methods due to lack of support from the concerned authorities. Despite all efforts, farmers are unable to save their yields. They said that gangs of locust landing the cropped area and destroying everything in minutes. They said that the catastrophe has targeted some of the poorest rural parts of the country where poverty is already at its

peak and farmers are heavily in debt.

"Millions of locusts are present in Pakistan and a failure to control meant they would grow and would become more devastating", the LCCI office-bearers added.

They said that being an agrarian country, Pakistan cannot afford to lose its agriculture base. If it happens, country would be facing a severe threat of food security and unavailability of raw materials for the industry that would make national economy vulnerable. They demanded compensation for the affected farmers so that they can pay back their loans and can earn bread and butter for their families. He said that a special plan should be devised to kill locusts in all parts of the country.

WAPDA awards contract to NESPAK for Murunj Dam Project
In a major development for harnessing scarce water resources in Southern Punjab, the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) awarded the consultancy contract worth Rs. 156.226 million to a joint venture headed by NESPAK for feasibility study, detailed engineering design, preparation of tender documents and PC-I of Murunj Dam Project, it was officially stated. WAPDA General Manager (Hydro Planning) Muhammad Amin and NESPAK General Manager (Water and Agriculture) Javed Munir signed the agreement on behalf of WAPDA and the joint venture respectively in a ceremony held at WAPDA

House, a press release issued here Friday said.

Murunj Dam Project will be constructed across Kaha Nullah about 15 Kilometer (Km) from Mari village and 116 Km west of Rajanpur, Punjab. Kaha Nullah is one of the largest hill torrents of the Koh-e-Sulaiman Range located in the vicinity of Rajanpur with average annual inflows of 183,000 acre feet. The available water resources are very scarce in Rajanpur and adjoining areas facing acute shortage of fresh water for drinking and agriculture. Murunj Dam Project has three main objectives namely storage of water for irrigated agriculture and drinking purpose, flood mitigation and power generation.

The project will have gross water storage of 800,000 acre feet. Annual monsoon rains give rise to flashy hill torrents causing inundation of thousands of acres of land in the adjoining foothills and rendering damages to public property and cultivated land each year. The project will generate 12 MW cheap and environmental-friendly electricity. It is unique in nature for Southern Punjab and will help alleviate poverty from the remote and backward region. It will change existing economic indicators and uplift the living standard of the people. The project will have tangible benefits and bring about 120,000 acre barren land into irrigable, ground water recharging, and fisheries development. Implementation of project will have significant positive im-

ICCI urges govt to reduce power tariff

ISLAMABAD: President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Muhammad Ahmed Waheed on Friday urged the government to reduce power tariff in proportionate to the cut made oil prices that would bring down cost of doing business and help in reviving falling exports.

He said that the government had reduced prices of petroleum products in the wake of fall in oil prices in international market that was a laudable decision while there are indications that OGRA may propose further cut in the prices of petroleum products. However, he urged the government to make a proportionate cut in power tariffs that would reduce manufacturing cost and make our exports more competitive in regional/international market, said a press release.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented losses to business and industrial activities in the country due to which our

fragile economy is struggling hard. He said that the only best solution to overcome economic challenges is to give boost to industrial activities. Since the cost of production has a major component of electricity cost, lowering power tariff would bring down production cost leading to better revival of business activities.

ICCI President said that Coronavirus has badly hit the businesses across the world due to which major importers/customers of our products were demanding discounts. However, it was not viable for exporters to give them discount without reduction in production cost and this situation could lead to cancellation of many export orders.

To cope with such challenges, he said that Pakistan should adopt two-pronged strategy vis. reduce manufacturing cost

and increase volume of exports.

He said that the best way to enhance volume of exports is to make exportable products cheaper and more competitive which could be made possible by reducing power tariff. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed further said that share of hydropower increases during summer season due to increased inflow of water that also provides good opportunity to the policymakers to make a decision for cutting power tariff.

He said that reduced power tariff would bring multiple benefits to the economy as it would bring down production cost, make manufactured products cheaper, improve exports volume, reduce inflation and accelerate the pace of economic activities leading to early revival of overall economy. —APP



KARACHI: A large number of people attend the funeral for victims of the crash of a state-run Pakistan International Airlines plane.

Affordable, urgent justice

Continued from front page

The committee comprises Federal Minister of Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari (Chairperson), Secretary Ministry of Human Rights (Secretary), Secretary Ministry of Interior, Home Secretaries of four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan, Inspector General Prisons (provinces and GB), founder and executive director of Justice Project Pakistan Sarah Belal and lawyer Haya Zahid.

The Chairperson may co-opt any person as member of the Committee. The Committee will assess, if Prison Rules, Code of Criminal Procedure-1898 and international best practices, are being adhered to with respect to women prisoners, especially their protection, rights, health, security and well-being.

It will ensure availability of gender-specific services for women prisoners addressing their physical,

psychological, emotional, and sociological needs. It will review Prison Rules and other relevant laws with a view to suggest gender specific changes in order to bring improvements for women inmates. The Committee will also review the overall governance, legal aid and management systems/processes in prison administration, especially with regard to women prisoners and to suggest improvements.

It will review individual cases of Human Rights violations and victimization of women inmates and suggest measures for institutional accountability. Situation of children, accompanying women in jails and work to help mainstream such children, especially with regard to their education and social integration, will also be assessed.

The Committee will suggest comprehensive and workable system of governance of prisons in

Pakistan with a view to ameliorating the plight of women in prison.

It will review post-release programmes to ensure that women prisoners are able to adjust in society after they leave the prison.

The Committee shall submit its report in the matter for further orders of the Prime Minister within a period of four (04) months.

No recover from virus recession sans help of developing states

Prime Minister Imran Khan while stressing the need of dealing with the economic problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic holistically as a global issue has said the world would not recover from coronavirus recession without helping the developing countries.

According to media reports while addressing virtual 'United Nations high-level event on Financing for Development in era of COVID-19