



Sarwar informs Imran about rations to deserving families

# The Business

An English Daily published simultaneously from Lahore and Faisalabad



Italy's PM says COVID-19 crisis should be opportunity to reform country

## Punjab decides against increasing salaries, pensions

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: After the presentation of the federal budget 2020-21 by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, Punjab has also decided not to increase the salaries and pensions of government employees. It may be recalled that while presenting the federal budget yesterday, Federal Minister Hammad Azhar had announced that no new tax has been imposed in the budget but the salaries of government employees have not been increased either. Following this, the PTI government in Punjab has also decided to make no change to the current salaries and pensions of government employees. The Punjab Finance Department has said that in line with the vision of the federal government, the Punjab government has decided to neither cut nor raise salaries and pensions.

## Hashim to present Punjab budget tomorrow

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Finance Hashim Jawan Bakhat will present Punjab budget for fiscal year 2020-21 in assembly tomorrow (Monday). The forthcoming Punjab is evolved with the policy of inclusive budget in which budget proposals were also sought from the public by the Punjab finance department and included the suggestions in the provincial budget. A spokesperson of the Finance Department Saturday stated that the first time public was included in the budget making process and finance department advertise in the national dailies seeking public budget proposals which are included in the budget. The public opinion was kept in consideration so that 68 percent budgetary allocations are made to education, health and employment generation is focused. The special focused has been given to the corona pandemic and allocations were made accordingly to the departments. Further, finance assistance is being ensured to the SME sector through RISE Punjab strategy. The budget has focused towards the social protection, ensuring the work for daily wagers, and industrial revival. In order to keep the industry in the backdrop of the covid-19 pandemic no new tax was being introduced while relaxations were given on the existing taxes on the services sector. The ease of taxation payment is being ensured in excise and taxation and Board of revenue. Concrete steps are being taken for the agriculture growth. Further, for rural areas special focused is given to the people attached with agriculture economy through public private partnership projects. Special funds are allocated for covid-19 pandemic and locust attack besides allocation of resources to counter the pandemic and emergencies in the future.

## Despite pandemic, remittances rise by 4.6pc in May

The Business Report

KARACHI: Contrary to market expectations, remittances sent home by overseas Pakistanis rose 4.6% to \$1.87 billion in May 2020 despite the coronavirus pandemic coupled with global lockdowns. Pakistanis working in foreign countries had remitted \$1.79 billion in April 2020. The encouraging inflows may help the rupee to strengthen against the US dollar in the short run and also contribute positively to the external account. The growth in receipts is led by Middle Eastern countries where a majority of the Pakistani expatriates reside. "The data of remittances for May exceeded market expectations and the country should take it as a positive sign," he said. "The industry expected a drop in remittances on the back of global slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic." According to Hashmi, the encouraging inflows will bode well for the country's external account. He added that Eidul Fitr played a significant role in the increase in remittances. MAFA Capital CEO Muzammil Aslam said remittances came in contrary to expectations in May 2020 because of the month of Ramadan and Eidul Fitr. However, on a year-on-year basis, workers' remittances dropped 18.6 percent.

CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN	
Confirmed cases:	135,702
ICT:	7,163
Punjab:	50,087
Sindh:	51,518
KP:	17,450
Balochistan:	7,866
AJK:	574
GB:	1,044
Recovered:	50,056
Deaths:	2,593



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh along with Adviser to PM on Commerce, Abdul Razaq Dawood, Minister for Industries and Production, M Hammad Azhar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Syed Shibli Faraz and Finance Secretary, Naveed Kamran Baloch address Post Budget Press Conference.

■ FBR may hardly collect Rs 3,900b, foreign exchange reserves under pressure, condition of showing identity card for purchases revised to Rs100,000

# Maximum relief to masses despite Rs3,000b loss: Hafeez

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh on Saturday said the coronavirus pandemic was not an excuse as it had brought difficult times for the country by virtually inflicting a loss of around Rs3,000 billion to the national economy. Exact loss to the economy could not be estimated as it could not be predicted how long the pandemic would continue and what would be its intensity, the advisor said while addressing here the post-budget press conference. Hafeez Shaikh said the COVID-19 pandemic had hit the economy hard causing Rs 3,000 billion loss, with considerable reduction in the revenue collection against the actual target. He said the government had revised the tax collection target to Rs4,700 billion, however, it would hardly collect Rs 3,900 billion by the end of ongoing fiscal year, which meant that there would be a loss of over Rs 700 billion on that account. He said Pakistan was not the only country that was hit by the coronavirus, rather it had engulfed the whole world affecting the health and economic sectors. The advisor said the industry, markets, transport and other business institutions, that keep the economic cycle running, had been closed, causing another problem of unemployment.

Despite financial constraints, he said, the government tried its best to help the people in the trying times and announced a Stimulus Package of Rs 1,200 billion, besides procuring wheat of Rs 280 billion to provide liquidity to the farmers. The advisor said the economic stability was witnessed during the first nine months of current financial year, but the situation worsened in the post-COVID period when the pandemic badly inflicted losses to the economy. He said the most important responsibility for the government in the next fiscal year would be to fulfill its international commitments and pay back loans of Rs 2,900 billion. The loans of about Rs 5,000 had already been repaid during the last year, he added. He said the loan amount paid back was sufficient to launch more than 20 programmes like Ehsaas to help the poor. Hafeez Shaikh said the government was trying its best to reduce expenditures and it had to take tough decisions to achieve the objective. The advisor said despite limited resources and the COVID-19 pandemic, the govt had tried to provide maximum relief to the common man in the 2020-21 budget. Talking about the economic situation, he said the govt had inherited a deteriorated economy with increasing imports, decreasing exports, depleting foreign exchange reserves, and

widening current account and fiscal deficits. The foreign exchange reserves were under immense pressure due to increasing imports and decreasing exports while the current account deficit had swelled to \$20 billion, which was brought down to \$3 billion by the current government, he added. The advisor said the government took tough decisions and introduced fiscal and financial discipline, besides reducing all non-developmental expenditures to bring economic stability. Due to the continuous efforts, he said, the economic indicators had started showing growth and the revenue collection witnessed remarkable increase of 17% while non-tax income reached Rs 1,600 billion. He said the government's economic reforms programme was widely hailed by the international credit rating agencies like Moody's and development partners, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The recognition of international forums had restored the confidence of both local and foreign investors as foreign investment showed about 137% growth, he added. All the government efforts, he said, were dented with the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, which had also affected the global economy as well as millions of people. He said according to the IMF estimates, the overall global income was likely

# PM announces 'selective lockdowns' as virus surges

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced that safety measures against coronavirus will be tightened across the country. He said that from now on, coronavirus hotspots will be actively tracked and those areas will be put under selective lockdowns. Commenting on the situation of coronavirus with Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar and other cabinet members, the PM said that it would not be possible to put Punjab under complete lockdown. The country needs smart lockdown not complete lockdown, he said. He said that coronavirus cases are spreading rapidly in Lahore but locking down the whole city would be synonymous to choking the city's economy as a major portion of the population lives below the poverty line. Continuing, Imran Khan said that lockdown had been implemented on March 13, the same time that New York also enforced lockdown, and it faced mass bankruptcies and unemployment, while Pakistan also had added difficulties in formulating its

budget 2020-21. Imran Khan said that the public is not acting responsibly, the country can run only when people take responsibility for the greater good. He warned that if SOPs are not followed, the number of cases will spread even quicker. He has ordered the authorities concerned to take appropriate measures to ensure implementation of the SOPs in Punjab and take stern action against its violation. He also lauded the efforts of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Khan Buzdar and praised his performance for the development of the province. On the occasion, the PM was given detailed briefing about the measures taken for the check spread of Coronavirus in the province. The meeting decided to take special measures to contain the rapid spread of Coronavirus in the province in general and in Lahore in particular. Governor of the Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, Chairman NDMA Lt. General Muhammad Afzal, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Shahbaz Gil, Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and other authorities attended the meeting.

**Smart lockdown imposed in different parts of Islamabad including G-9/2**  
Smart lockdown has been imposed in G-9/2 & G-9/3 and Markaz Karachi Company areas of Islamabad. Lockdown in G-9/2 & G-9/3 and Markaz Karachi Company has been designed to prevent disease spread and induce due caution in other high spread areas. During last 24 hours more than 13116 violations of health guidelines/instructions observed across Pakistan. More than 1541 markets/shops, 33 industries and 1429 transports were cautioned/fined/sensitised/sealed. In Islamabad Capital Territory, 44 hotels, 120 shops and 7 industrial units were closed over 255 SOP violations. Federal and provincial authorities are ensuring compliance to health guidelines/ instructions particularly working places, industrial sector/ transport / markets & shops, based on TTQ strategy. Total 1292 Smart lockdowns enforced where 308600 population is in those smart lockdown throughout the country. Preventive measures special teams are operating all across the country to ensure that the SOPs are being implemented.

## Govt backing activities for more revenue: Omar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Omar Ayub Khan has said that the government is focusing on revenue generation by encouraging industrial activities and construction industry. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said that the government lowered the current account deficit to \$3 billion before Covid-19 outbreak in the country which was \$30 billion during the previous government. The minister said that the government, during its first two years, has paid interest of Rs5,000 billion on foreign loans taken by the previous govt. He said despite Covid-19 and meager financial resources of the country, Rs1,200 billion were spent on financial uplifting of people below poverty line. —TLTP

## Pro-export policies in budget: Razak

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Abdul Razak Dawood Saturday said the government had introduced pro-export policies and removed all the barriers imposed by the past regimes to discourage the export sector. In last decade until 2018, the past governments had introduced anti-export policies and imposed more duties on export goods and their raw materials, Razak Dawood said while addressing the Post Budget press briefing along with Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance Abdul Hafeez Shaikh. The advisor said the government would soon bring new e-commerce policy for modernizing the businesses to promote e-commerce in the country. He informed that exports in Information Technology (IT) during the COVID-19 were not affected as compared to other sectors but it witnessed further increase during the period. Razak Dawood said the COVID-19 has brought a change in the world and has badly affected the economy. He underscored that the situation was also an opportunity to reshape the business models. —APP

## APTMA seeks five-year export policy

By Our Special Correspondent  
LAHORE: The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Punjab Chairman Adil Bashir has urged the government to announce a five-year export policy immediately in order to end the uncertainty. Commenting on the Federal Budget 2020-21, Chairman APTMA Punjab said the APTMA was expecting a reduction in Sales Tax to five percent if the government was not extending zero-rated status to the export-oriented industry to resolve the liquidity crunch due to stuck up refunds. Only this one step would also bring the unorganized sector into the tax net, he added. Furthermore, he said, the textile industry was demanding a reduction in the turnover tax by half to the existing level of 1.5 percent and enable the industry to compete with regional competitors. He said All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) had also asked for the continuation of energy package for export industry to ensure the provision of electricity at 7.5 cents per kWh and RLNG at \$6.5 per MMBTU in next budgetary year. In the outgoing year, he said, the energy package has directly resulted in a volumetric increase of 32 percent of textiles over the last 18 months. This significant increase in volumes has come in a highly competitive international market where unit prices of products have fallen by as much as 26 percent, he added. According to him, a lot of the major retail chains in the US and EU are filing for bankruptcy as a result of COVID-19 and the remaining ones are forcing up to 30 percent discounts and delayed shipping on orders already placed and in some cases shipped. By all accounts demand for textiles has crashed and is unlikely to attain the previous levels for the foreseeable future. Competition for the remaining market where price levels will be substantially low is likely to be intense. Under the emerging circumstances, he said, continued provision of regionally competitive energy is absolutely essential if Pakistan is to continue to rely on reasonable export earnings to support its Balance of Payments.

# Record 6,472 coronavirus cases in one day, 88 die

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan has confirmed 88 deaths by novel coronavirus in one day as the number of positive cases has surged to 132,702. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 2,551, on Saturday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), record 6,472 persons have been tested positive for COVID-19 in 24 hours. Punjab remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic followed by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Till now 50,087 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Punjab, 51,518 in Sindh,

17,450 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 7,866 in Balochistan, 7,163 in Islamabad, 1,044 in Gilgit-Baltistan and 574 in Azad Kashmir. **Afridi tested positive for COVID-19**  
Former Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi has tested positive for the coronavirus. "I've been feeling unwell since Thursday; my body had been aching badly. I've been tested and unfortunately I'm COVID-19 positive. Need prayers for a speedy recovery, InshaAllah," the 40-year-old tweeted. Teammates Mohammad Hafeez, Sohail Tanveer and Kamran Akmal sent best wishes and prayers for Afridi for a speedy recovery.

**COVID-19 claims 48 more lives in Punjab**  
The number of COVID-19 cases reached to 50,087 in the province after registration of 2705 new cases during the last 24 hours. Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department spokesperson said on Saturday noon the death toll due to coronavirus reached to 938, after 48 more deaths in the province. While 17,560 patients recovered in the province. The health department confirmed that 1342 new cases of COVID-19 were registered in Lahore, 20 in Nankana Sahib, 2 in Kasur, 14 in Sheikhupura, 260 in Rawalpindi, 3 in Attock, 3 in Chakwal, 54 in Gujranwala, 37 in Sialkot, 9 in Narowal, 82

in Gujrat, 2 in Hafizabad, 1 in Mandi Bahaudin, 196 in Multan, 8 in Khanewal, 9 in Vehari, 237 in Faisalabad, 4 in Chinoet, 47 in Toba Tek Singh, 21 in Jhang, 57 in Rahimyar Khan, 14 in Sargodha, 5 in Mianwali, 17 in Layyah, 3 in Bhakkar, 8 in Bahawalnagar, 83 in Bahawalpur, 6 in Lodhran, 68 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 17 in Rajanpur, 25 in Okara and 46 in Sahiwal districts. Five new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Pakpattan district during the last 24 hours. The Punjab health department conducted 338,714 corona tests. People have been appealed to wash their hands with soap several times in a day to protect themselves from COVID-19.