

Bank Alfalah joins PM's Ehsaas Ration Distribution Programme

LAHORE: Continuing its efforts to support the most affected communities across Pakistan, Bank Alfalah has joined hands with the Government of Pakistan's Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PASS) Division to become a donor with the Ehsaas Ration Portal.

Under the initiative, Bank Alfalah will be donating PKR 10 million for the provision of much-needed food supplies in areas of Pakistan which have been most affected by the pandemic. This collaboration follows the Bank's efforts to support communities in Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Disbursement Programme 2020. Bank Alfalah is an exclusive partner of the Cash Disbursement initiative, and has effected payment of over PKR 28.3 billion since its launch. Speaking about the partnership, CEO Bank Alfalah Mr. Atif Bajwa said, "In these unprecedented times, we are happy to be supporting this effort to uplift our most vulnerable communities. The provision of critical food supplies ensures greater security for our citizens, many of whom are daily-wage workers whose livelihood has been drastically impacted by the spread of the virus. Bank Alfalah takes pride in leading the way forward with empathy and compassion. This partnership represents our commitment to Pakistan and our faith in the Government's mission to keep its citizens protected."

The Ehsaas Ration Portal aims to link donors and beneficiaries using the existing database of Ehsaas beneficiaries. Donor organizations undergo rigorous background checks before being admitted into the program, and beneficiaries are also screened before being allowed access to the support. A unique feature of the portal is that it allows donors and beneficiaries to be linked on a geographic basis, enabling organizations to conduct targeted distribution efforts. —PR

LDA demolishes illegal structure

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Town Planning Wing squad demolished illegal addition in an existing building at Muslim Town here on Wednesday.

According to the spokesperson, LDA demolished illegal addition/alteration in an existing building for construction of a commercial hall at plot No. 19-B at Muslim Town. Police and other enforcement officials were also present during the operation.

Public's non-seriousness to be disastrous for health system: Governor

Says unfortunately some people in smart lockdown areas not ready to understand danger of coronavirus



By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said that a blunt policy must be adopted to prevent further spread of the corona epidemic on Eid-ul-Adha. Public non-seriousness like Eid-ul-Fitr on Eid-ul-Adha will be disastrous for the health system.

Unfortunately, some people in the smart lockdown area are not ready to understand the dangers of Corona.

In view of the serious threat of an outbreak of Corona in July, the failure of a single individual on SOPs could endanger the lives of many.

The government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan also stands by the families affected by the Corona crisis. He was talking to party delegations and Vice Chancellor University of Gujrat Professor Dr Shabir Atiq at Governor House Lahore. VC Dr Shabbir Atiq also handed over a check of Rs 3.3 million to the Governor Punjab for the Prime Minister's Corona Relief Fund.

Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said that universities have made a historic contribution to the Prime Minister's Corona Relief Funds. Medical universities are also playing their part on the front line against Corona, which deserves praise.

He said that it is also the responsibility of the universities to provide relief to the students in other areas including fees.

Talking to party delegations, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said that due to the Corona crisis, Pakistan was facing many problems in the health sector as well as on the economic front. The federal and provincial governments are taking all necessary steps to provide relief and health care to the people. In order to succeed in the war against Corona, it is necessary for the people to follow the SOPs, otherwise victory in this war will not be possible. Now that the situation has arisen in Pakistan due to Corona, we have no option but to take precautionary measures. Governor

Punjab said that due to the irresponsibility of the people on Eid-ul-Fitr, the number of patients in Corona had reached alarming levels and the death toll had also risen. Now Pakistan cannot afford such irresponsibility of the people on Eid-ul-Adha.

Therefore, it has become necessary to adopt a two-pronged policy to prevent the spread of corona on Eid-ul-Adha, because without it, there are dangerous fears of the spread of corona. And if that happens, it could be catastrophic for Pakistan's health system.

Governor bars varsities from expelling students on non-payment of fee

Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar Wednesday barred public and private sector universities from expelling students on non-payment of fee owing to financial challenges during the lockdown in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. In a letter to the Vice-Chancellors, Rectors of public and private sector universities across the province, he also directed to facilitate students in depositing their semester and other fee in installments and stopped from any adverse action which may affect their future. The letter further read: 'COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected social and economic life of all segments of society wherein the middle and poor classes are bearing the brunt of financial crisis. In such testing times, they might be facing difficulty in payment of academic fee of their children'.

Earlier on June 22, the university students had given a call to protest outside Governor's House to press for relief in fee payment and other matters. The Governor, in his capacity as Chancellor of private and public sector universities, held a meeting with the protesting students from 'Universities Student Action Committee' and asked them to call off their strike on the promise of looking into their demands compassionately. The students committee had called off the strike on assurance by the Governor Punjab/Chancellor.

Folk singer Sain Zahoor visits Lahore Art Council



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By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Famous Pakistani folk singer Sain Zahoor visited Lahore Arts Council the other day and met with its Executive Director Alhamra Saman Rai for discussing mutual issues related to art and artists community.

On this occasion, Sain Zahoor said Alhamra is the best platform for the promotion of art and music; lots of great and beautiful memories are associated with Alhamra.

He said that the people of Lahore love folk music. The audience of Alhamra is very lively whenever I perform in; people gave a lot of love said Zahoor. He also expressed his best wishes for the newly appointed Executive Director, Saman Rai.

Saman Rai said that there is no doubt that the singer Sain Zahoor is a noteworthy reference and valuable asset of the Pakistani folk music industry. Rai said that Sain Zahoor was one of the very few singers who had dedicated their entire lives for the promotion of high-quality music.

Sain Zahoor's through his music and songs had highlighted country values in the world. His services in the field of music are truly commendable, Alhamra would continue to organize such events to invite him to perform in future, she said. In the meanwhile, Ms Rai chaired a meeting was also held to form the selection for the 16th Young Artists Exhibition.

No truth to open schools in Punjab: Murad

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Minister for School Education Dr Murad Raas said that no deadline has been decided for opening the schools in Punjab. In his tweet message, the minister clarified that no decision was made for opening the school in Punjab. , adding that only work has been started to prepare the SOPs for that purpose. In his tweet, the minister said that "There is NO definite date for the opening of Schools in Punjab. Fake news is being spread around." Right now, "we are working

A question of gross national happiness

Parvez Jamil



As the United Nations and the development experts and gurus of our world churn out ideas and insights on measuring the happiness levels of the earth's teeming billions in macro-economic terms and with a mini example of the tiny Bhutan exploring happiness for its people at the micro-economic level, can the very mindset of our statesmanship, leadership, academicians, professionals and man in the street be tested with this idealistic yet potentially value-adding deviation to Gross National Happiness!

Daring from the set, standard and stereotype talk of per capita income and Gross National Product (GNP) to an idealistic yet ground-breaking view of poverty alleviation through Gross National Happiness (GNH) is a very tough and tedious task. When man in the street, men of letters and, more importantly, men at the helm of affairs, are in a lurch on the discarded and dissipating ways and means in socio-economic uplift, why not dare for the novel in Gross National Happiness (GNH).

Gross National Happiness (GNH) is a measurement of the collective happiness of a nation.

GNH is a holistic and sustainable approach to development, which balances material and non-material resources. GNH, very basically and most vitally, needs to drastically shift from what it shuns as the null

and void notion of mass production to what it upholds as production by the masses as the key to socio-economic development towards what is generally: commonly and conceptually, termed as a welfare society.

The importance of Gross National Happiness applies to the world at large irrespective of the least-developed, underdeveloped, developing or the developed societies and from Africa, the Dark Continent to Europe, North America, South America, Australia, Asia, and indeed, tapping the human resource of our own very Pakistan.

How is truly measuring GNH, mass scale happiness, vying to overshadow erroneous GNP, is logical and pragmatic if well-examined in letter and in spirit. It works with out-of-the-ordinary sincerity, seriousness and innovation indeed. The real essence of Gross National Happiness (GNH) actually revolves around self-help or autarky when and where masses are exposed to and trained in or attuned to and acclimatized with self-confidence and self-reliance through aptitude-oriented vocational skills and trades by concerned and illustrious counselors and professionals to stand on their own feet and to earn living with grace, dignity and honour in the comity of self-reliant and civilized societies of our world.

It is a question of willingness and transformation of the mindsets and policies of those at the helm of pri-

vate and public sectors or of Government and NGO affairs to take on the national challenge of inculcating such self-confidence and self-reliance whereby masses are trained in livelihood skills and trades replacing the concept of the sole bread-earner or one hand feeding ten mouths and enabling all family members to contribute to the family budget towards a happy family and Gross National Happiness, GNH.

Even purdah-clad females with sewing, stitching and embroidery skills, elderly grand parents' craftsmanship, uniquely skilled kids at home can combine acumen and income towards a better and brighter family life and national happiness at large. That means inculcating in them through illustrious educators and trainers in the private and public sectors with an enlightened and volunteering print and electronic media.

Given the fact that there is no dearth of experts in our think tank with their practical acumen to create a culture of self-reliance at the grassroots level from family to national well-being so that we stand tall in the world, not as seekers of aid and grants in the garb of so-called development cooperation but as a respectable model of autarky, grace and dignity in the comity of nations. May we sink our differences, shun ego, and rise above self towards Gross National Happiness. If there is a will there is a way!

The writer is a free-lance contributor to media on national and international affairs.

Another 7 areas sealed in City: Dr Yasmin

By Our staff reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government is going to seal seven more areas in the provincial capital from midnight between Wednesday and Thursday for a week as a preventive measures against coronavirus.

Addressing a news conference, Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said that Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Gulberg, Gulshan Ravi, Garden Town, Faisal Town, Model Town and Walled City would be sealed.

She said that strategies had been evolved to force the residents to follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) devised by the government against coronavirus.

Dr Yasmin appreciated doctors, nurses and paramedical staff for serving on the front-line against the deadly virus. She said the government had taken several steps to overcome the pandemic, adding that all kinds of necessary medicines had been provided to the hospitals. She urged the shopkeepers to ensure the implementation of coronavirus SOPs, otherwise, the government would have to shutdown those markets where violations were observed.

"It is a collective responsibility of every individual to support the government which is struggling to overcome the virus," she added. She said that market committees should ensure following the SOPs.

She said the opposition criticised the smart lockdown but it was clear that its results were positive and on-ground situation of coronavirus was under control. "There is no shortage of medicines and beds in the hospitals," she added. The minister said that on the directions of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, the PPSH & PSH department had made a comprehensive plan to increase the capacity of hospitals across the province. She said the government had increased the number of High Dependency Beds (HDB) from 661 to 1228 and Intensive Care Units (ICU) from 187 to 205 in Lahore hospitals.

In Nishter Hospital Multan, she said the number of Corona Dedicated beds were enhanced from 144 to 202, HDBs from 16 to 32 and ventilators from 16 to 26. Dr Yasmin said that at Tayyib Erdogan Hospital Multan, 10 more ventilators were provided while 32 ventilators were already in the use there. She informed that number of Oxygen beds in Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) Rawalpindi had been increased from 147 to 347 as this city was the second hotspot of COVID-19 after Lahore. She said the number of Oxygen beds in Rawalpindi Institute of Urology had been increased from 80 to 260. She said the overall number of ventilators working in the province other than Lahore were 268 while HDBs were 760.

TCF Endowment Fund set up in memory of Zain Polani family



By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A memorial fund has been established by the family of the deceased Zain Polani and his wife Sarah Polani, who along with their three children, lost their life in the tragic plane crash of the PIA flight PK 8303 on 22nd May, 2020 in Karachi.

The endowment fund for Sadqa-e-Jariahas set up in collaboration with The Citizens Foundation (TCF) on its website with the goal of providing quality education to the less privileged children of Pakistan.

The Citizens Foundation is a

professionally managed, non-profit organization set up in 1995 by a group of citizens, educating 266,000 students from urban slums and rural areas in 1,652 purpose-built schools across Pakistan.

"Zain had many causes dear to his heart and one of them was to support underprivileged kids in Pakistan. TCF offers a great opportunity for us to create a Sadqa-e-Jariya in Zain and Sarah's name," shares Zain's brother, Faizan Polani.

The family aims to raise Rs 15 million for the cause. Any contributions towards the fund can be made by visiting www.tcf.org.pk

'PHA to beautify provincial capital'

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Director General Tariq Ali Basra said that steps were being taken for the beautification of green belts and planters on the main highways of the provincial capital.

He expressed these views during his visit at The Mall, Punjab Assembly Hall, Abdul Sattar Edhi road, Khayaban-e-Jinnah road, Raiwind road and Southern bypass, here on Wednesday. DG asked the concerned officials that for the beautification of green belts and planters, flowers of 'Zenia'

and 'Patonia' should be added. He said that the work of planting flowers, plants and trees for monsoon tree planting was going on in the nurseries of PHA. He further said that PHA employees and gardeners were working day and night while implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for 'Clean and Green Lahore'.

During visit the PHA DG also reviewed in detail the cultivation of new flowers, plants and trees to be planted in monsoon tree planting at Khayaban Jinnah Nursery, cleanliness, security in parks and the implementation of SOPs.



LAHORE: A young girl stands at the side of vehicle as asking for begging in Shimla Phari Chowk.