

Minimum 28:°C
Maximum 36:°C
Sunset 07:11pm
Sunrise 05:04am
(Today)



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|-------------|----------|
| FAJAR..... | 03:40 AM |
| ZOHR..... | 12:07 PM |
| ASR..... | 5:03 PM |
| MAGRIB..... | 07:11 PM |
| ISHA..... | 09:00 PM |

Quick Read

Justice will prevail in Local Body elections: Seemi

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Dr Seemi Bukhari, MNA of Tehreek e Insaf, has said that the corruption of PML-N and PPP will end, not NAB. Imran Khan will remain the Prime Minister and he will not make any compromise on his principles. Inshallah, only justice will prevail in the local body elections and the opposition will have to face defeat.

Talking on Sunday, Dr Seemi Bukhari said that whenever there is talk of transparent accountability in the country, his followers including PML-N and PPP start making noise but all their efforts and intentions will fail.

The government of PTI will not only fulfill the constitutional term but also those who looted the national treasury will have to come to justice. He said that the people of Pakistan are fortunate to have an honest leader like Imran Khan who is fighting for the development and prosperity of 220 million people of Pakistan and not for personal interests and Pakistan is developing rapidly. All the promises made by the Prime Minister will be fulfilled.

PR announces to run special trains on Eidul Azha

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan Railways has announced to run four special trains on the occasion of Eidul Azha to facilitate the passengers. According to a press release of Pakistan Railways, first Eid special train from Karachi to Rawalpindi will operate on Tuesday at 11:45 am. The second special train will leave Karachi for Rawalpindi on Wednesday 11:45 am, while another Eid special train from Karachi to Lahore will start its journey on Thursday at 7:30 pm. The fourth Eid special train will be run between Rawalpindi and Multan. It will leave Rawalpindi on Thursday at 4:00 pm.

234 shops sealed in province

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: As many as 3,647 shops were inspected across the province and 234 shops were sealed on violation of the SOPs for protection from coronavirus on July 24.

Likewise, 6,848 motorcycles, 1,889 vehicles and 1,151 public transport vehicles were checked and the civil administration imposed fines on 1,485 vehicles, motorcycles and public transport vehicles. Collectively, 4,871 citizens were checked and 5,153 were fined by civil administration on violation of the SOPs. Punjab police have checked around 242,391 shops since June 6 across the province and sealed 24,088 shops till now. As many as 368,914 motorcycles, 111,304 vehicles and 69,335 public transport vehicles were checked. Around 234,418 vehicles, motorcycles and public transport vehicles were imposed fines by civil administration on violation of instructions with regard to

CM pledges relief to masses through uplift projects across province

Says govt to construct a state-of-the-art hospital near Punjab University

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that work on various mega projects was underway to provide relief to citizens of Lahore and the Punjab province at large.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had started projects which would provide them relief in a real sense.

He said that the government did not believe in verbosity or exhibitory projects.

Usman Buzdar said that the government would construct a state-of-the-art hospital near the Punjab University and added that the latest treatment facilities would be provided to Lahorites there.

He said that a 600-bed state-of-the-art mother & child healthcare centre was under completion at Ganga Ram Hospital.

He said that the government would complete Firdous Market underpass project in a record period of time to reduce load of traf-

fic in that area. He said that in order to conserve rainwater, an underground water storage reservoir was being constructed in Lahore. He said that the stored rainwater could be utilised for irrigation and other purposes. The CM highlighted that water drainage problems would be resolved with the construction of a drain from Haji Camp to River Ravi.

He said that he himself was monitoring progress on the ongoing development projects in various cities including Lahore. He regretted that development in the past was done on papers only and added that the PTI government, on the contrary, believed in undertaking practical steps. He said that no development was also seen on the ground and vowed that the PTI government was pursuing its vision to ensure progress of people. The CM said that development projects had been initiated in the backward areas and in the big cities at the same time after ascertaining the public needs. He stressed that backward districts of south Punjab were

being given equal importance in the journey of progress. He said that the Punjab government had started work on various special economic zones in the last two years. He said that the provincial government was going to initiate work on special economic zone in Bahawalpur. Usman Buzdar said that a mother & child cardiology hospital and general hospital was being constructed in south Punjab also. The CM pledged that no city, area or village of Punjab would remain deprived of the fruits of progress.

CM orders crackdown on profiteers, hoarders: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that every administrative step must be taken to bring stability in the prices of essential items including flour and sugar.

In a statement, issued here on Sunday, he said that stern legal action should be initiated against those involved in hiking the prices of essential commodities on their own. Usman Buzdar said that indiscriminate action should be launched against the profi-

teers and hoarders. He emphasised that instead of doing merely paperwork, practical steps should be taken and a report be submitted to the CM Office. The CM said that the administrative officers and price control magistrates should visit field to monitor the prices and ensure selling of essential edibles according to the fixed rates, issued by the government. He said that the government would not leave people to the mercy of hoarders and profiteers. He said that cases should be registered against hoarders according to the law and their stocks should be confiscated. The CM said that profiteers and hoarders did not deserve any mercy. He said that the government would have to work in a proactive and effective manner in order to provide relief to masses. He stressed that positive results should be produced by showing performance and said that safeguarding interests of people was most dear to him. The CM warned that no negligence would be tolerated in implementation of the price control mechanism.



LAHORE: Bikers from all over the Pakistan hold a protest rally against the Federal Government and Chairman of National Tourism Coordination Board, Chairman PTDC Zulfi Bukhari as banning on motorcyclists tourists in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. —Online

335 petrol stations sealed in Punjab

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has sealed 335 petrol stations over giving consumers short measure, in a crackdown across Punjab.

It imposed a fine of Rs 3787,000 on them. ACE officials visited at least 1,632 petrol stations. The sealed stations included Lahore A 23, Lahore B 73, Gujranwala 84, Faisalabad 46, Sargodha 7, Sahiwal 24, Multan 57, Bahawalpur 3, Rawalpindi 1 and DG Khan 18. DG, ACE, Gohar Nafees appealed to the common people to identify the corrupt elements through report corruption App. ACE will take strict action against the corrupt elements without any discrimination, he said.

Food officers arrested: Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has arrested 10 food officers and officials on charges of corruption in mega wheat scandal 2018. According to ACE, it was revealed in an inquiry that flour mill owners committed big corruption during Ramadan 2018 by selling wheat which was given to them for providing flour to common man on subsidised rates, but they sold all the wheat in open market and got millions of rupees. The ACE inquiry fixed responsibility of the corruption on 155 officials of the Food Department. FIRs against them have been registered and the process of their arrest has started in Punjab. Ten officials of the department including an assistant food controller and inspectors have been arrested so far. Director General, ACE Punjab, Muhammad Gohar Nafees has directed all regional officers to adopt zero tolerance policy against the corrupt elements and arrest them at any cost.

India's UNSC election flayed

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: India's election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council is a weakness of the government of Pakistan, said Babar Sulehri, central president of the Youth Assembly for Human Rights. Speaking to the media, he said that the holocaust of minorities in India was continuing.

Smart lockdown enforced in Punjab ahead of Eid: CS

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to enforce smart lockdown on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha in the light of the federal government directives, to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Punjab Chief Secretary Jawwad Rafique Malik presided over a meeting on Sunday to review the arrangements for the enforcement of the smart lockdown and implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in cattle markets, in his office at 9-Aikman Road.

Additional Chief Secretary Home Momin Agha, IG Police Shoab Dastgir, Secretary Primary Healthcare Capt (ret) Muhammad Usman, Commissioner Lahore Division Danish Afzal and

DIG Operations Lahore Ashfaq Ahmad Khan attended the meeting. Secretary Local Government Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi, all divisional commissioners and regional police officers (RPOs) participated through video link.

The chief secretary told the meeting that the protection of human lives was of utmost importance for the government and all possible steps, including strict implementation of the SOPs in cattle markets, would be taken to curb the spread of COVID-19.

He said that the smart lockdown in Lahore and other cities of the province had yielded positive results and the number of new coronavirus cases are fast decreasing now. He said that shopping activities in the markets before Eid-ul-Azha could cause the spread of

COVID-19, adding that keeping in view the experience of Eid-ul-Fitr, it has been decided in the larger public interest to enforce smart lockdown on the upcoming religious festival.

The CS asked all the divisional commissioners to strictly enforce the SOPs including wearing of masks and ban on entry of elderly persons and children in the cattle markets. He said that officials of the Health Department, Local Government, and Livestock must be deployed in the cattle markets and joint teams of administration, and law enforcement agencies should be formed for carrying out inspections. He ordered that to ensure social distancing, only a specific number of people should be allowed to enter the cattle markets as per the capacity, besides setting

up special counters at the entry points for screening. The chief secretary also issued instructions to continue anti-dengue activities and prepare a solid waste management plan during the Eid. IGP Punjab Shoab Dastgir directed RPOs to ensure foolproof security, social distancing and other precautionary measures for Eid prayers congregations. The meeting decided to empower the deputy commissioners to extend the working hours of cattle markets in the districts as and when required. The Local Government secretary informed the meeting that apart from temporary sale points, there are 300 cattle markets in the province. He said that the officers of district administration and the local government department are regularly monitoring

Ahmad Rafay Alam

Marked by folly —Part I

The Ravi River front Urban Development Project raises serious questions of urban planning, environmental regulation and governance

The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) recently invited international firms to submit expressions of interest (EOIs) in Punjab government's Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project (RRUDP) which entails developing "high quality residential, institutional, commercial and recreational zones" along the Ravi, covering 102,000 acres of land and stretching over 46 kilometres.

The government has announced its intention to promulgate an ordinance establishing the Ravi Riverfront Development Authority (RRDA). So far, no details of the Authority and its powers/functions have been made public, and no draft of the proposed ordinance shared. Judging from newspaper reports, however, the authority will work to develop a new city with an investment of Rs 5 trillion made by the private sector.

Both the EOIs and the RRDA raise serious questions of urban planning, environmental regulation and governance. If these questions are not answered well, the fate of the project and all involved will be marked by folly. First, consider the urban planning dimension. In 2012, an amendment in the LDA Act gave the Authority control over

the entire Lahore Division. Now overseeing five districts, the LDA became Pakistan's first regional planning authority.

One would have thought that, given its expanded role, it would move towards a regional master plan. Instead, the authority, in 2014, adopted an Integrated Master Plan for Lahore prepared by NESPAK and approved by the Lahore District Council circa 2004 as Master Plan 2021.

Chapter 18.2.5 of Volume II of the document underlines the "need to ensure compact and consolidated form of urban expansion instead of piecemeal development which rapidly consumes rich agricultural land." Volume II also notes that due to "physical constraints" such as the Ravi in the north and border in the east, "growth strategies for Lahore will be constrained... and the existing growth trend towards the south has to be accepted until a positive change in relationship with the neighbour-

ing India becomes a political reality to justify expansion to the east." Given the explosive urban growth in the Punjab over the last two decades, one would imagine that the LDA would attempt to survey its expanded jurisdiction and prepare a new plan for the Lahore Division. This has happened, but in a rather convoluted and problematic way. Instead of carrying out studies or surveys, the LDA passed amendments to the Master Plan 2021 — in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

The 2013 amendment identified certain areas in the LMA as agricultural, residential and institutional/educational while following the south-west growth corridor for the city identified in the Master Plan. The 2015 amendment, reclassified some 17,000 acres of peri-urban farm land in eastern Lahore for residential purposes. In 2016, the LDA prescribed different land uses for Lahore as well as the secondary cities and

areas in Lahore Division. Finally, in June this year, it published a notice inviting EOIs for a study for a 2050 Master Plan for Lahore Division with the scope of work including a profile of the Lahore region and the formulation of a strategic development plan for urban settlements. Nowhere in all this is there a mention of the RRUDP. Bids submitted for Lahore Division Master Plan 2050 are to be opened on August 4. Only after they are evaluated, finalised and the contracts are signed, will work on the study actually begin. It will take some years.

Seen in this light, the decision of the LDA to request EOIs for updating the RRUDP appears arbitrary in the extreme.

The RRUDP isn't a new idea. It's the third iteration of a pipe-dream first conjured up by the PML-Q government in the Punjab trying to capitalise on the property boom of the early 2000s and later modified and somewhat pursued during the PML-N

government of 2008-2018. I first became acquainted with the project in my role as secretary of the River Ravi Commission (RRC), constituted by the Lahore High Court (LHC) in 2013 with the objective to "restore the natural ecology of the Ravi..." In 2014, after the recommendations of the Commission to pilot a bioremediation site along the Ravi to treat wastewater had been approved by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Punjab, and received the blessings of the LHC, the government announced it was pursuing the RRUDP. The Ravi is the smallest and most polluted of the Indus tributaries.

Part of the untreated effluent from Sialkot and Faisalabad and all of the untreated effluent of Lahore and Gujranwala drain into it. And since the waters of the Ravi were allocated to India by the Indus Waters Treaty, there is hardly any flow, except during monsoon, that can be used to dilute the pollutants. The liquid poison injected into the river has devastated its ecosystem. The RRUDP documents filed by the LDA during proceedings of the RRC case stated that "attaining environmental sustainability of the Ravi as a major feature in Lahore's landscape is a key challenge to the project." The Punjab government engaged the international consulting firm Meinhardt to study the feasibility of the project.