

Rain-thundershowers forecast in KP, Islamabad, Punjab, Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast rain/wind-thundershowers in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, upper/central Punjab, east Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Dust-storm/isolated rain-thundershower is also expected in south Punjab and upper Sindh. During past 24 hour, Rain/wind-thunderstorm occurred in Islamabad, upper/central Punjab, upper Sindh, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. —APP

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Massive decline reported in country's polio cases: UNICEF

ISLAMABAD: A massive decline has been reported in polio cases in Pakistan during the over last two decades, says a report of UNICEF. According to the report the decline started since the launch of the Pakistan's 'Polio Eradication Programme in 1994' UNICEF report said. The cases have dropped to only eight in 2018 from over 20,000 cases every year during early in 1990s. UNICEF report also mentioned that polio vaccination campaigns have been temporarily suspended to contain the spread of COVID-19. —APP

Demand to shift FPCCI Head Office to Capital opposed

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The United Business Group (UBG) the largest alliance of chambers and trade bodies Sunday unanimously opposed the demand for shifting of Head Office of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry from Karachi to Islamabad and termed it a well conceived conspiracy against pandemic severely hit businesses community.

Chairing a high level 20 member core committee meeting drawn across the country here on Sunday, UBG Chief Ifikhar Ali Malik said that the demand for shifting FPCCI HO is absolutely ill conceived, illogic and don't reflect the aspirations of the major chunk of business community.

Ifikhar Ali Malik said that head offices of all major banks, state bank of Pakistan, shipping corporation, sea port, largest dry ports, trade development authority Pakistan, DG Customs Transit trade and other important commercial offices are located in Karachi, an economic hub of the country.

SM Muneer briefly speaking on this occasion said sea port is playing key role in import and export and entire business community is fully facilitated under one window and categorically set aside the demand of shifting FPCCI.

He said business community will frustrate the evil designs of disgruntled elements who are out to achieve their ulterior motives for their vested interests. He said that business community is on one page on this issue.

Vice President FPCCI Zahid Iqbal said that FPCCI HO was established in 1958 with only two rooms which is now a beautiful multi storey building built by the UBG ruling group.

He said UBG ruling group also constructed capital office building in Islamabad where Federation President holds meetings besides two VPs from federal capital also perform their obligations.

SSGC to gasify areas within 5-KM radius of gas fields

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) would gasify the localities and villages falling within five-kilometre radius of gas producing fields, being operated by Exploration and Production (E&P) companies in different parts of Sindh and Balochistan, under a multi-billion rupees project.

"Accordingly, the company is in the process of preparing PC-I to undertake the first phase of the project which will be submitted to DDWP (Departmental Development Working Party) for its approval," a senior official privy to petroleum sector developments told APP.

He said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet in its recent meeting had allowed the Finance Division, on a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division, to release Rs1 billion to the company for undertaking the gas supply project in the localities situated within 5-KM radius of gas fields. "It is in compliance with the Supreme Court and High Court decisions."

The total estimated cost of the project is Rs4.912, out of which SSGC would get Rs1 billion during the year 2020-21, while the remaining amount in subsequent fiscal years.

Meanwhile, according to an official document available with APP, the company would provide around 144,371 new gas connections including 143,023 domestic, 1,164 commercial and 184 industrial during the current fiscal year as per its annual network expansion plan. The SSGC has also planned to lay 1,418 KMs additional distribution and transmission lines in the year 2020-21. During the last fiscal year, the SSGC had issued as many as 123,900 domestic gas connections, 700 commercial and 95 industrial, besides laying 850 kilometre additional distribution and supply lines on its network.

The company would lay a nine-KM pipeline for supply of 13.5 Million Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) gas to Dhabeji SEZ at Town Border Station (TBS), Sindh, besides laying a 3.5-KM supply line to supply 13 MMCFD gas to Bin Qasim Industrial Park at TBS, Sindh.



LAHORE: Motorists on their way during the heavy rain in Provincial Capital.

ECNEC accords approval to two mega projects: Mahmood

From Our Staff Correspondent

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan has said that the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has accorded approval to two mega developmental projects including Khyber Pass Economic Corridor and Swat Motorway Phase-2 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement issued to this effect here on Sunday, Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has termed the approval of these mega projects as an important achievement of the provincial government and good news for the people of the province.

He said that the projects, on completion would give boost to international trade, tourism, industries and other economic activities in the province, provide employment opportunities to the people and thus usher in a new era of development and prosperity in the province. He termed the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor Project as true reflection of the incumbent government's vision to boost international trade and said that the project was not only limited to the construction of road rather it was complete package under which a 4-lanes highway of 48-kilometre length would be constructed from Peshawar to Khyber Pass and a marble industrial state would be established to develop the local marble industry on modern lines. Similarly, other initiatives would also be launched to uplift various small scale local industries. Mahmood Khan said that the project would be completed with an estimated cost of 460 million dollars, and on completion, it would generate more than 10,000 employment opportunities adding that the project will be a milestone for easy access to Central Asian markets.



The Chief Minister termed the Swat Motorway Phase-2 Project as of highly importance not only for the Malakand Division but for the entire province, and remarked that the project would boost tourism, trade and other economic activities and thus generate employment opportunities for the people. He stated that under the project a 4-lanes Motorway of around 80 kilometers would be constructed from Chakdara to Fatehpur area of district Swat further stating that in the first stage of the project acquisition of the required land will be made for the Motorway.

Mahmood Khan expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister Imran Khan and the entire federal government for the approval of these important projects, and reiterated his resolve not compromise on developmental projects of public importance despite the financial crunches due the prevailing Corona pandemic.

Japan wants economically strong Pakistan: Yusuke — Japan is world's third biggest economy in world with \$5.15tr GDP

ISLAMABAD: Japan has desired a modernised, economically developed and strong Pakistan saying that in order to achieve this, the country must have to follow policy of export led growth through industrial and technological growth.

"Japan has set an example for the rest of the world to emerge as a top world economy by modernizing its education system, hard work and commitment," Minister and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Pakistan Yusuke Shindo said.

He said this while addressing a five-day Webinar series titled "Knowing Japan" jointly organized by the Embassy of Japan in collaboration with the Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) here Sunday.

Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, SHINDO Yusuke presented his lectures during this first-ever webinar series that included the topics, "Japan—its people, society and tradition, education in Japan—key to Japan's development", "secrets of Japan's economic development", and "Japanese culture and

Japan-Pakistan relationship". While expressing his views on secrets beyond economic development of Japan, he said that harmony in Japanese society was a key factor and working group culture, education and commitment are also hallmarks of Japanese society.

The senior diplomat said that Japan has transformed its society through modern education to acquire the level of modern technology and innovation and "We established education institutions to equip our youth with modern innovative education."

He said that "these are the reasons beyond the modernization and development of Japan, we achieved through a strong education base, harmony and peace in our society." Shindo Yusuke said that Japanese have a high rate of saving culture and the government also provides long term credit to support the people for different small and medium businesses.

The Japanese government, he said has maintained fiscal discipline in the country and the county also positively retained its

exchange rate to strengthen local currency for timely return of credit provided by the international financial institutions including the World Bank. Replying to a question, he said that Japan is now the world's third biggest economy in the world with \$5.15 trillion Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and in spite of all the challenges has achieved the agenda of economic growth through technology and innovation.

While updating the Japanese Socio-Economic Cooperation with Pakistan, he said that Japan has always extended economic cooperation including the areas of health, education and infrastructure in its 70 year history of diplomatic and economic ties. Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan said that Japan has supported Pakistan and established Children hospital in Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in 1984 which was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of Japan, Yasuhiro Nakasona.

Japan also financed the different infrastructural projects in Pakistan in all four provinces for development and prosperity

CJP forms five benches, larger bench for next week

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed has constituted a five member larger bench and three benches at the principal seat Islamabad and one bench each at Lahore and Karachi Registries to hear a number of important cases during the next week, starting from today (Monday).

A special bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Mushir Alam and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan would hear on Wednesday Suo Moto Contempt Proceedings against Matiullah Jan Journalist/Columnist regarding disrespecting the Court under Article 204 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 read with Section 3/4 of the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003 and matter regarding the open auction of lease of petrol pumps established on Public Lands.

On Tuesday, a five-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Mushir Alam, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel would hear suo moto action regarding combating the pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19). On Monday, another special bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel and Justice Yahya Afridi would hear suo moto review petition on court decision passed in civil petition no. 314/2019 regarding grant of bail to co-accused in civil petition no. 258, 260, 268 and 457 of 2017 and delay in trial of cases by the Accountability Courts in the light of Section 16 of the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 requiring decision of NAB cases within 30 days.

The first bench comprised of Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel. The second bench comprised of Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan. During the week the court would hear many important cases including different appeals filed by government employees regarding appointment, dismissal, regularization and promotion, pension matters of retired employees, Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation thr. its Project Director, Hyderabad v. Province of Sindh thr. Secretary Energy Department, Govt. of Sindh, Karachi & others regarding renewal of Mining lease, writ petition seeking information regarding Two Missing Persons having sentenced by Military Courts, appeals against National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Firm handling of virus despite meager resources: Shibli

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Sunday said that resolute handling of coronavirus despite meager resources has proved leadership's competence.

He added that PM Imran has steered the country balancing lives and livelihoods in an amazing display of competence and the leadership despite outdated health infrastructure. In a tweet on Sunday, he said National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and Ehsaas program are the two main tools of success against the pandemic.

KP to start work on 300mw Hydro Power project

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will start construction work on 300 megawatts Balakot Hydro Power Project this year, with assistance of Asian Development Bank.

The Provincial Energy Development Organization accorded approval to appointment of consultant for initiating practical work on this mega power project at a meeting in Peshawar.

The meeting was told that this gigantic project would be completed within seven years with an estimated cost of 87 billion rupees. Eighty percent of the total amount will be provided by Asian Development Bank while the provincial government will provide rest of expenditures



KARACHI: Women activists of Pakistan People Party shout slogans during their protest against load shedding and over billing outside Press Club. —Online

Virus: 25 countries to face devastating levels of hunger: UN

The Business Report

UNITED NATIONS: About 25 countries are set to face devastating levels of hunger in coming months, along with the low and middle income countries because of the fallout from the Coronavirus pandemic, according to a joint report compiled by two Rome-based UN agencies -- the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The report was published as the WFP announced that it is scaling up food assistance to an unprecedented 138 million people who face desperate levels of hunger as COVID-19 tightens its grip on some of the world's most fragile countries.

The cost of the WFP's response is estimated at \$4.9 billion -- representing nearly half the updated COVID-19

Global Humanitarian Response Plan, launched this week -- with an additional \$500 million special provision to prevent famine in countries most at risk.

"Three months ago at the UN Security Council, I told world leaders that we ran the risk of a famine of biblical proportions", WFP Executive Director David Beasley said.

"Today, our latest data tell us that, since then, millions of the world's very poorest families have been forced even closer to the abyss", Mr. Beasley said. "Livelihoods are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate and now their lives are in imminent danger from starvation", he said.

"Make no mistake -- if we do not act now to end this pandemic of human suffering, many people will die."

Most of the 25 "hotspots" named in the report stretch from West Africa and

across the Sahel to East Africa, including the Sahel, as well Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

It also identifies, in the Middle East, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen; in Asia, Bangladesh; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Citing some examples, it says that COVID-19 is compounding a raft of existing problems in South Sudan, making the prospect of famine loom ever larger in areas where inter-communal fighting makes humanitarian access tough or impossible.

In the Middle East, the pandemic is exacerbating Lebanon's worst-ever economic crisis, where food insecurity is growing fast not only among citizens, but also 1.5 million Syrians and other refugees.