

## Over 27,000 govt employees bearing brunt of rented residences

From Our Staff Correspondent

**ISLAMABAD:** More than 27,000 government employees of the federal capital are waiting for their turn to get official residences, as per their entitlement, for the past several years and compelled to pay extra charges on rented accommodation.

They have submitted their applications for allotment of official residences, through proper channel, with the Estate Office of the Ministry of Housing and Works, but facing inordinate delay.

The government officials, residing in the rented apartments, have been bearing the brunt of the chronic shortage of official accommodations, faced by the Ministry of Housing and Works (MoHW) at the moment. "At present, 29,000 federal government employees have been residing in the government residences," an official source said, confirming the shortage of facility.

The waiting list has been growing gradually due to increase in number of new applicants, he added.

He informed APP that concerted efforts were being made at the government level since the country had been facing a shortfall of approximately 9-10 million housing units.

The official pointed out that no government houses had been built since 1995 as a ban was imposed on the construction of new facility by the then federal cabinet.

Sharing the ministry's endeavours for streamlining the allotment process, he said the MoHW had completed the data entry of all allotments of government accommodations (category wise) at the website of Estate Office to ensure transparency in the allotment process.

The status of allotment as well as name of allottees and their departments had now been available on the site and could be checked anytime, he added. The official said the personal data including Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC)

and date of birth have been excluded from the data entered on the website in order to ensure security of personal data. Regarding the repair and maintenance of the houses and flats in federal capital, he said the federal government had allocated funds amounting to Rs2.5 million for repair maintenance of 2,163 houses and flats (Cat-I to VI) for the current financial year.

Out of which, he said Rs 0.94 million had been released by the end of 2019. The funds to the tune of Rs 0.750 million of 3rd quarter were expected to release for coming two months.

He said the ministry was entrusted to carryout repair and maintenance of houses and flats located in various sectors of the federal capital.

The official said the minor works were being carried out through inquiry office, where as the work would be completed within 15-days through contract, in the anticipation of arrangement of funds.



SARGODHA: Train passing through the rain water accumulated on the track due to heavy rain.

## Efforts afoot to ensure improved aviation services in Pakistan

From Our Staff Correspondent

**ISLAMABAD:** The government is following a prudent strategy to ensure improved aviation services at par with best international practices and revive the past glory of national flag-carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), by strengthening its fleet gradually.

Accordingly, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) is currently executing around nine different projects and has planned seven more development schemes aims at improving its operations.

"The authority has been spending a substantial amount on various projects, which generated economic activities and employment opportunities across the country. It also contributes around Rs15 to Rs20 billion per annum to the national exchequer in the form of direct and indirect taxes," according to official data available with APP about the government performance in aviation sector.

As per the documents, the PCAA's ongoing projects included construction of new green field Gwadar International Airport, reconstruction of main runway and re-carpeting of parallel taxiway track at Quetta Airport, rehabilitation of main runway at Faisalabad Airport, provision of night landing facility at Gwadar International Airport, socioeconomic development of airports to promote tourism in line with National Aviation Policy (NAP) 2019, improvement of airports and their infra-

structure for better passenger experience, introduction of energy-efficient equipment at all airports to conserve energy, water conservation measures and up-gradation of primary and secondary surveillance radars.

While, the projects that are in pipeline include expansion of Lahore, Faisalabad and Quetta airports, replacement of passenger boarding bridges and up-gradation of other facilities at Karachi airport, new radar and establishment of Air Traffic Management System at Islamabad Airport besides acquiring land for Mansehra Airport in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the last fiscal year, the government had released funds amounting to Rs505.925 million to execute 14 Aviation division projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2019-20) against the total allocation of Rs940.425 million.

For the current fiscal, funds amounting to Rs1,320.879 million have been allocated to execute 15 aviation sector projects under the PSDP. Out of which, an amount of Rs61.923 million would be utilized for construction of double-storey ladies hostel/barrack with provision of third storey along with mess, recreation hall and allied facilities at Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore.

Similarly, Rs90 million would be spent for construction of double-storey barrack with provision of third storey for corporal to inspectors and assistant director along with separate mess, and allied facilities recreation

## Govt attaching top priority for timely completion of CPEC related road construction projects

From Our Staff Correspondent

**ISLAMABAD:** The government has been attaching topmost priority to early completion of National Highway Authority's road infrastructure projects related of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2020-2021, Rs10,000 million have been allocated for the new scheme for dualization of Zhob-Kuchlak (Quetta) Road which would form an important part of Western Corridor of the CPEC.

The project has been completed in

five packages including 65 km Zhob-Tangi package, 65 km Tangi-Qila Saifullah package, 50 km Qila Saifullah-Nasai package, 65 km Nasai-Khanozai package and 53 km Khanozai-Kuchlak (Quetta) package. An amount of Rs20,000 million have been earmarked for construction of Motorway from Burhan-Hakla on M-I to Dera Ismail Khan, which would form part of CPEC. The project has been divided into five packages and expected to be accomplished by year end.

A total of Rs2500 million have been earmarked for construction of KKH Phase-II, 118 km Havelian-Thakot section of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which

included Rs2000 million foreign aid whereas Rs500 million would be local component. For land acquisition and resettlement for KKH (Phase-I), Havelian-Thakot section, Rs250 million have been earmarked. For land acquisition of CPEC projects, Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway, Multan-Sukkur, Motorway and Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway, Rs1500 million have been allocated for the upcoming fiscal year 2020-21.

Rs350 million have been specified for improvement and widening of Chitral-Booni-Mastuj-Shandur Road, also part of CPEC and for Nokundi-Mashkel road deposit work, Rs1000 million have been al-

## Australia borders to stay shut as COVID-19 daily deaths reach record

**SYDNEY:** Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said internal border closures were unlikely to lift before Christmas, as the country reported a record single-day rise in COVID-19 deaths.

There was, however, some evidence that drastic lockdown measures in the city of Melbourne were having an effect, with daily new infections in the state of Victoria slowing to a near two-week low.

"I am more hopeful of that today than I was in the course of the past week," Morrison told reporters in Canberra, as he called on state leaders to cooperate to allow stranded residents to return home.

Australia's federal political system has led to its eight states and territories taking different measures in response to the crisis, resulting in several internal border closures.

Victoria state, which is home to Melbourne, the country's second biggest city and the epicentre of its second coronavirus wave, reported 19 people had died from the virus over the past 24 hours. With some other states still to report daily new case and death numbers, that already marks the country's biggest single day rise in fatalities. However, Victoria officials also reported 322 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, the lowest single-day rise in new infections since July 29. Melbourne, home



to nearly 5 million people, has been in lockdown since early July, with people largely confined to their homes and business shuttered.

State Premier Daniel Andrews said on Monday he understood frustrations but declined to put an end date on the lockdown.

"If I could paint you a picture that had any kind of reliability for next week, let alone five weeks away, then, of course, I would," Andrews said during a televised media conference. With around 21,000 COVID-19 cases and 314 deaths, Australia has still recorded fewer infections and fatalities than many other developed nations. It was considered a global leader early in the pandemic, when it

was swift to close its international border, impose social distancing restrictions and implement mass virus testing. But as the country began to reopen, community transmissions rose significantly in Victoria, where triple digit daily new cases have now been recorded for weeks.

Authorities worry the spike in cases in Victoria has already spread to other states despite borders border closures. Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, reported 14 new cases, and no deaths, on Monday. Twelve cases were linked to known clusters while another was a person in hotel quarantine after returning from overseas, leaving one case with no known links. —AFP

## 'Vast global gap' in funds to fight coronavirus, WHO says

**GENEVA:** There is a "vast global gap" between funds needed to fight the coronavirus pandemic and funds committed, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, and the WHO was only "10 per cent of the way" there.

More than 19.92 million people have been reported to be infected by the coronavirus globally and 729,883 have died, according to a Reuters tally.

Infections have been reported in more than 210 countries and territories since the first cases were identified in China in December 2019.

"The coming three months present a crucial window of opportunity to scale out the impact of the ACT accelerator for global impact," Tedros told a briefing in Geneva, referring to the "Access to COVID-19 Tools".

"However to exploit this window, we have to fundamentally scale up the way we are funding the ACT Accelerator and prioritise the use of new tools. There is a vast global gap between our ambition for the ACT accelerator, and the amount of funds that have been committed."



He said the WHO was only "10 per cent of the way" to funding the billions of dollars required.

"For the vaccines alone, over US\$100 billion will be needed," Tedros said.

However he said he saw "green shoots of hope".

"It is never too late to turn the pandemic around," Tedros said. The message is to "suppress, suppress, suppress".

Our comprehensive coverage of the coronavirus outbreak and its developments. —AFP

## Mauritius races to clean up oil as ship leaking fuel breaks up

**PORT LOUIS, Mauritius:** Salvage crews raced against time to prevent a second disastrous oil spill off the picture-perfect coastline of Mauritius, with a damaged tanker carrying thousands of tonnes of fuel at risk of splitting apart.

The bulk carrier MV Wakashio ran aground on Jul 25 with 4,000 tonnes of fuel aboard and began seeping oil last week, staining coral reefs, mangrove forests and tranquil lagoons in an unprecedented environmental catastrophe for the archipelago nation.

More than 1,000 tonnes has already oozed from the ship, its Japanese operator says, causing untold ecological damage to protected marine parks and fishing grounds that form the backbone of Mauritius' economy. Fuel was being airlifted Monday by helicopter to the shore. —AFP

## Belarusian president Lukashenko re-elected by landslide



**MINSK:** Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko won a landslide re-election victory, the central election commission said after late night clashes between police and thousands of protesters who said the vote was rigged.

Figures released by the election commission on Monday gave Lukashenko 80 per cent of the vote.

Svetlana Tikhonouskaya, a former English teacher who emerged from obscurity a few weeks ago to become Lukashenko's main rival, won 9.9 per cent of the vote, the data showed.

At least one person was killed after being knocked over by a police van and dozens were injured in the clashes that began after polling stations closed on Sun-

day, a representative of the rights group Spring 96 told Reuters.

A former Soviet collective farm manager, Lukashenko has ruled the country since 1994, but faces the biggest challenge in years to keep his grip on power with some voters believing strongly that it's time he stood down.

He has cast himself as a guarantor of stability but has battled a wave of anger over his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy and his human rights record. Tikhonouskaya entered the race after her husband, an anti-government blogger who intended to run, was jailed.

Her rallies have drawn some of the biggest crowds since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. —AFP

## China imposes sanctions against US lawmakers over Hong Kong

**BEIJING:** China said it would apply sanctions against 11 US citizens including officials in response to Washington's move on Friday to impose sanctions on 11 Hong Kong and Chinese officials whom it accused of curtailing political freedoms in the city.

Among those targeted were Senators Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Josh Hawley and Pat Toomey and Representative Chris Smith, as well as individuals at non-profits and rights groups.

"In response to those wrong US behaviours, China has decided to impose sanctions on individuals who have behaved egregiously on Hong Kong-related issues," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular press briefing on Monday. He did not specify what the sanctions entail.

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated over issues ranging from trade to Hong Kong and China's handling of COVID-19.

Beijing's move is the latest in a tit-for-tat round of sanctions between China and the United States over allegations of rights abuses and interference. —AFP

## Taliban pledge Afghan peace talks after prisoner release completed



**KABUL:** The Taliban said they were ready for peace talks with the Afghan government, as authorities announced that the release of hundreds of militants accused of serious offences would begin in the next few days.

The fate of some 400 Taliban prisoners has been a crucial hurdle in launching peace talks between the two warring sides, which had committed to completing a prisoner exchange before negotiations could start.

On Sunday, thousands of prominent Afghans approved their release at the end of a three-day "loya jirga" - a traditional Afghan gathering of tribal elders and other stakeholders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues.

"Our stance is clear, if the prisoner release is completed, then we are ready for the intra-Afghan talks within a week," Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told AFP.

Shaheen said the first round of talks would be held in Doha, Qatar.

"The Afghan government will start releasing the 400 Taliban prisoners within two days," National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal told AFP.

The prisoner exchange was a key part of a deal signed by the Taliban and the United States in February, which saw Washington agree to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in return for a pledge from the insurgents to hold peace talks with the Kabul government.

The much-delayed talks are aimed at ending the almost two decades old conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people. —AFP

## Hong Kong police could face torture case in UK court

**LONDON:** Senior British officers in the Hong Kong police force could face legal action in the UK on torture charges after activists said they planned to proceed with a private prosecution.

The expatriate officers are accused of directly engaging in torture against demonstrators. Torture allegedly been carried out in police stations and on the streets, with a specific incident at HK's Citic Tower during protests in June 2019. —AFP

### COURT NOTICE

**In the court of Muzaffar Hussain Mughal, Civil Judge Gujranwala**

Khurshed Bibi vs public at large

Succession certificate.

Notice to Khurshed Bibi, widow Zulfikar Ali R/o Gulshan Colony Bazar No.6, near Samanabadi Chongi, Gujranwala. You are directed through this court notices/advertisement to personally appear before 13-08-2020 (8:00 AM), otherwise your failure to appear an expert proceedings will be processed against you as per rules and no objection will be entertained after this proceedings.