



BACK P8

Pakistan Citizen Portal, a gift for from PM: Shibli

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LAHORE P3

Govt will not obstruct PDM rally on 13th, says Governor



PAGES 08 | Rs 20

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## UN counter-terrorism chief asks India, Pakistan to reduce tension Munir hands over terror dossier to Vladimir

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Under-Secretary General for Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov has called upon India and Pakistan to reduce tensions, and engage in a dialogue and pursue solutions in accordance with the United Nations Charter and UN Security Council resolutions.

The UN under-secretary general for counter-terrorism said this while talking to Pakistan Permanent Representative to United Nations Ambassador Munir Akram in New York, according to a statement issued by the Pakistani Mission here on Saturday.

Munir Akram has handed over a dossier on

Indian terrorism to Vladimir Voronkov.

The UN counter-terrorism chief promised to study the dossier, which has been prepared by Pakistani agencies after full investigation of India's systematic campaign to promote terrorism and subversion in Pakistan, the statement said.

On November 24, Ambassador Akram handed over the same dossier to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres when he met him. The Pakistani envoy also held a productive meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Michele Coninx, on Friday last. —TLTP



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar meets with Usman Dar, Special Assistant for Youth Affairs.

## Pak-Afghan border fencing to be ready in 2 months: ISPR

By Our Staff Correspondent

RAWALPINDI: The fencing of the 2,611 km boundary along the border separating Pakistan and Afghanistan will be completed within the next two months.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) told Voice of America that the barrier has already been installed along about 83 percent of the western Pakistani frontier. In 2017, the Pakistan Army had begun fencing with the end of 2020 set as its deadline.

The fencing had been started to block militant infiltration, smuggling, and other illegal crossings on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

According to ISPR, the border fencing is expected to benefit the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan while restricting the movement of terrorists.

The pair of three-meter-high mesh fences are filled and topped with coils of razor wire, running through rugged terrain and snow-covered, treacherous mountains which are as high as 4,000 meters. The fence is also strengthened with surveillance and intrusion detection systems.

Under the \$550 million project, hundreds of new outposts and forts have also been built. Pakistan's military is also working on the fencing of the Iran border and around 30% of the work has been completed. The entire project is likely to complete by the end of 2021.

## EC removes PIA from banned airlines list

KARACHI: In what is dubbed a positive development for Pakistani aviation industry, the European Commission has removed PIA name from list of banned and restricted airlines.

According to the reports, the EU Commission website for mobility and transportation has removed from its index of restricted, embargoed, or banned airlines the name of Pakistan national flag carrier.

A PIA spokesperson said on Saturday this means PIA has marked a positive development, hoping that soon the issue with licensing of pilots will, too, be resolved and the flag carrier will be allowed to restore operation across Europe. It

is our priority, PIA spox added, to ensure best travel facilities to all tourists including the facility to fly them across Europe. The PIA human resources department has issued a notification which stated the increase in salaries and special allowances for all aircraft engineers, engineering instructors including DCEs, CEs and chiefs.

Virgin Atlantic granted permission to operate from Pakistan

Virgin Atlantic Airways, a British airline, has been granted permission to operate to and from Pakistan.

It will be operating four direct flights a week from London to Lahore and three a week from London to Islamabad. —Agencies

## FO rejects India's blame of sending foreign fighters

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected concoctions based on "fake news", in a section of Indian media, alleging transfer of foreign fighters to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez said that such fabrications are part of the Indian propaganda against indigenous freedom movement of the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination enshrined in international law and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

He said that such Indian ploys are doomed to fail again. The spokesperson said by spreading such falsehoods, India can neither cast a shadow on the

gitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for freedom from illegal and inhuman Indian occupation nor can it escape censure by the international community for the gross and systematic violations of human rights being perpetrated by the Indian occupation forces in IIOJK.

He said the completely baseless allegations of so-called "foreign fighters from Syria" serve only to further illustrate the virulent anti-Pakistan tirade that is the hallmark of the RSS-BJP dispensation.

The spokesperson said that instead of wasting more time in peddling falsehoods and fake news, India would be well-advised to comply with its international legal and moral obligations and let the Kashmiris exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

## Pak among top five countries with high investment: WB

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has emerged as one of the top five countries with the most investment commitments in H1 2020, as per the World Bank's IBRD IDA latest report titled Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) 2020 Half Year Report.

As per the report, Pakistan had the fourth-highest investment commitments—a new entrant to the top five countries this year—with \$1.9 billion of investment commitments, accounting for 0.69 percent of its GDP. This can be attributed to the financial closure of the Thar Block-I Coal-Fired Power Plant, which was the only project to reach financial closure in the country during this time period.

"The coal power project was developed under the umbrella of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is part of an effort by the Government of Pakistan to improve energy security and reduce the average cost of power generation by transitioning from oil to coal," stated the report.

SAR was the region that saw the second-highest H1 2020 investment level

(\$4.9 billion), driven by Pakistan (US\$1.9 billion), India (\$1.8 billion), and Bangladesh (US\$1.2 billion). As per the report, in the past few years, China has been an active infrastructure sponsor, speeding up slow progress on major infrastructure projects in South Asia, especially in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, investment levels saw a 33 percent dip from the first half-year of 2019 levels.

However, as per the report the SAR showed low rate of investment in renewable sector, which was mainly due to the sizable coal project in Pakistan.

"This trend is expected to continue because the Government of Pakistan is trying to improve energy security and reduce the average cost of power generation by switching from oil to coal," the report stated. At a country level, with the exceptions of Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Pakistan, and Thailand, most of the private investments in energy were in renewable energy projects.

The report further highlighted that the South Asia region's commercial debt financing (\$1.4 billion) was the highest, accounting for half of the total commercial debt raised globally. Most of this

commercial debt came from the Thar Block-I Coal-Fired Power Plant in Pakistan and the Dhaka Elevated Expressway in Bangladesh—a combined commercial investment of \$1.1 billion.

PM's move to normalise relations with BD lauded

Former President ICCI Shahid Rasheed Butt on Saturday lauded the move of the Prime Minister Imran Khan to normalise bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

The move can revive dormant SAARC to bring a meaningful change in the lives of two billion people living in South Asia, he said.

Rasheed Butt said that the majority of the world's poor are living in the SAARC region, one of the least integrated areas, who deserve a better life for which the countries must bury their past like the EU, ASEAN and other countries. He said that masses living in the region could have a break if the regional countries initiate trade which is at the lowest ebb for which cordial relations are imperative. SAARC countries ignore trade with neighbours and prefer it with countries located thousands of miles away.

## Pakistan economy to bounce back, PSX to hit 52,000 points

Exit from FATF grey list in Feb has become quite likely

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: After sluggish growth, Pakistan's economy is poised to bounce back in 2021, reports Pakistan Strategy Report 2021 by the Arif Habib Limited (AHL) Research.

As per the report, the surge in economic activity plus attractive valuations could bring 20 percent growth sending the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) index to 52,000 by December next year.

"Led by strong earnings growth, economic growth, broadly stable external position, and cheap valuations, we expect the KSE-100 Index to generate a lucrative total return of 28pc (USD-based: 23pc) during CY21 taking index level to 52,000 by Dec'21," the report said.

The report was of the view that it expects the economic activity in Pakistan to continue the robust pace it has shown

over the last couple of months.

The GDP growth is expected at 1.8 percent during FY21. Whereas, The Current Account, while swinging into a deficit, is expected to be manageable (-0.9pc of GDP), attributable to consumption-driven, import-dependent GDP, the report stated.

The report expects no significant depreciation of the currency with PKR/USD 168 expected by Dec'21, owing to orderly market conditions, continued robust inflows from remittances and improved exports.

Housing finance, construction package and TERF (subsidized investment scheme for industries which expires on December 2020) are some of the government's efforts to fuel investment activities in the country, it said.

The G20 debt relief and low-interest rates would allay the stress off debt servicing expenditure, the report pointed

out.

Talking about the Sectoral Outlook, the report stated that in the cement sector, aggregate demand revival and government incentives for the construction industry should help propel dispatches growth. Whereas, in the auto sector, the stability in the PKR/USD parity, and strong volumes growth amid demand revival and low-interest rates should stimulate bottom-line of companies.

Talking about Oil Marketing Companies, the report was of the view that the recovery in global oil prices will result in inventory gains. Whereas, volumetric growth and margins revision are likely to boost earnings further.

The report highlighted that the country's textile sector will benefit from the re-opening of the global economy, export orders are likely to continue piling up, while government subsidies on utilities should keep margins upbeat.

## First aircraft of AirSial lands at Sialkot Airport

SIALKOT: The first aircraft of AirSial landed at Sialkot International Airport on Saturday.

A warm welcome was accorded to the AirSial aircraft by Sialkot exporters with a salute of water cannon in a ceremony at the airport.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Usman Dar, Provincial Minister for Special Education Punjab Ch. Muhammad Ikhlaq, Chairman Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) Mian Naeem Javaid, Vice Chairman Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, CEO Babur Iqbal, Chairman AirSial Fazal Jilani, President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Qaisar Iqbal Baryar, Leader of Sialkot Business Community Sheikh Rizazud Din and leading people from travel trade attended the ceremony.

SIAL Chairman Mian Naeem Javaid while addressing the participants said that Prime Minister Imran Khan would formally launch AirSial airline on December 9, 2020 in a special inaugural ceremony to be held at Sialkot International Airport. —APP

## Sarwar, wife administered trial vaccine

LAHORE: A trial vaccine of Covid-19 was administered to Governor Punjab Chaudhry Sarwar and his wife at the University of Health Sciences (UHS) Lahore on Saturday.

Chaudhry Sarwar visited the UHS accompanied by his wife. He was received by the UHS Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Javed Akram.

The University's Vice Chancellor gave a briefing to the Governor about the trials of the coronavirus vaccine. Sarwar and his wife received shots of the Covid-19 trial vaccine at the university, Prof Javed Akram said. All staff members of Governor were also administered shots of the trial vaccine of coronavirus. Governor Sarwar is the first prominent public figure in Pakistan who has received a shot of trial vaccine of the novel coronavirus. The university has been conducting tests of the vaccine since October 02, Akram said. "The university has administered the vaccine to 7000 people till now

## Pakistan to seek \$153m from WB to buy Covid-19 vaccine

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to contact the World Bank (WB) for Covid-19 vaccine funding.

According to the people familiar with the matter, Pakistan will seek \$153 million from the WB for advance purchases of the Covid-19 vaccines. The request will be formally made by the Economic Coordination Division, said the sources.

In this context, the health ministry has penned a letter to the Economic Coordination Division advising it to seek funds from the WB for advance purchases of the coronavirus vaccines.

The funds will be requested under Credit Funding Act 6590. The letter further said that initial talks have been done with the World Bank for the funds via

video link. After the approval of the grant from the WB, Pakistan will purchase the Covid-19 vaccines in advance for its citizens, said the sources.

Pakistan is also in direct contact with the Covid-19 vaccine producer firms and also using GAVI platform for the anti-covid vaccines. It is to be noted that the ECC has already approved a supplementary grant for the advance purchases of the vaccines. Pakistan has planned to vaccinate health workers and senior citizens in the first phase in a bid to save them from the deadly pandemic. Earlier on Friday, Prime Minister Imran Khan proposed a ten point agenda to the world community to avert economic collapse in the developing countries due to Covid-19.

Addressing a special session of the UN General Assembly, he called for debt suspension till the end of the pandemic for low income and most stressed countries; cancellation of debt of least developed countries; restructuring of the public sector debt of developing countries and a general allocation of special drawing rights of \$500 billion.

The PM also proposed concessional financing to lower income countries through multilateral development banks; provision of loans at lower costs; fulfilment of the 0.7pc official development assistance commitments; mobilising the required 1.5 trillion dollars annual investment in sustainable infrastructure; mobilising \$100b per year. —TLTP



SIALKOT: Staffers spray anti-COVID-19 fumigation during Air Sial arrival flight from USA at the Sialkot International Airport.