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Incentives for construction sector to speedup activities

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Babar Azam to miss Christchurch Test



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FBR meets H1 revenue target; collects Rs2,204b

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has almost achieved its six-month (July-December) revenue collection target for the current fiscal year as it collected Rs2,204 billion, which is 99.7 percent of the set target of Rs2,210 billion.

The FBR released the provisional revenue collection figures for the first six months of the current fiscal year. According to the provisional information, the FBR collected a net revenue of Rs2,204b, which is 99.7 percent of the target. It also showed a growth of 5 percent over Rs2,101 billion which were collected during the same period of the last financial year.

Income Tax collection for July to December stood at Rs816b. Similarly, collection of Sales Tax, Federal Excise Duty, Customs Duty remained Rs915b, Rs127b and Rs336 billion respectively. Moreover, an additional Rs10b have

been collected from book adjustment. It is expected that revenue to be collected from book adjustment will increase in coming days.

FBR launches system for e-filing of appeals
FBR on Saturday launched Electronic Filing of Appeals system to facilitate aggrieved taxpayers.

According to press statement issued by the board, providing facility of filing of appeals electronically by the taxpayer is another step toward automation of FBR. The Commissioner Inland Revenue (Appeals) was the first tier of appellate hierarchy provided in the Inland Revenue laws, adding, taxpayers aggrieved with the orders of Inland Revenue tax authorities would file first appeal before the Commissioner (Appeals). The FBR has collaborated with Pakistan Revenue Automation Limited for development of software for e-filing of appeals. —Online

Trade with CARs, Kabul to make Pak economic hub

ISLAMABAD: Adviser on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood has said government's vision for trade and economic relations with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) is to make Pakistan a hub for trade, transit and transshipment.

In a series of tweets on Saturday, he said our trade must be based on secure, open, consistent, reliable and legal movement of goods at the Afghan border along with enhanced connectivity with Afghanistan Central Asian Republics.

The Adviser said this is a long-term vision and, through our current engagement with Afghanistan

and Uzbekistan, we are laying down the foundation for its implementation.

He said this will ensure that Pakistan leverages its geo-economic location in the region to enhance its international trade.

Razak Dawood said our discussions with Afghanistan over the past few days are a step in that direction. Our Vision for trade & economic relations with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) is that we want to make Pakistan a hub for trade, transit & transshipment. Our trade must be based on secure, open, consistent, reliable & legal movement of goods. —Online

Punjab Rozgar Scheme Youth to get Rs25b: Hashim

LAHORE: Punjab Finance Minister Hashim Jawan Bakht has said that Rs25 billion will be disbursed among youth as soft loans under Punjab Rozgar Scheme.

Addressing a news conference in Lahore on Saturday, Hashim Jawan Bakht said that Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) has registered an increase of 42 percent in revenue growth in the first six months of the financial year 2020-21 as compared to the last fiscal year. He said that the provincial government is starting a universal health coverage programme which will cost Rs50b.

He said the year 2020 has been painful due to the spread of the coronavirus;

however, financial difficulties have provided opportunities for new experiments and reforms. He said a tax relief package of Rs56b has been given for economic security during the pandemic. He said that by the end of the financial year, more than 90 percent of the development budget would have been utilised.

The provincial minister said that the financial reforms being introduced to improve the administrative affairs of the province would lead to an increase in the growth rate. The plan with the World Bank to reform the public finance management system will ensure improved service delivery in the province. The provincial minister



RAWALPINDI: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed inquiring NADRA staff about process of registration at the NADRA office.

■ 791 MPs submit assets' statements so far: ECP

PM for steps against those involved in smuggling

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday said that stricter measures should be taken against the elements involved in smuggling.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, a high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Imran Khan on measures for anti-trafficking.

Federal Minister for Finance Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Information Minister Senator Shibli Faraz, Trade Adviser Abdul Razzaq Dawood, Special Assistant Shahzad Akbar, Special Assistant for Revenue Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, Secretaries of Commerce, Petroleum, Maritime Affairs and Home Affairs Division, Chairman FBR and senior Civil and military officials also attended the meeting.

Provincial Chief Secretaries and IGS of Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan also attended the meeting through video link. The meeting was informed that the sale of smuggled oil was causing an annual loss of Rs 100-150 billion to the economy. Currently, 2,094 petrol pumps in the country are involved in the sale of smuggled oil.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister said that the country's economy was suffering irreparable damage due to smuggling. Anti-trafficking measures will increase revenues which would then be spent on the welfare of the poor.

The Prime Minister directed that strict measures be taken against the elements involved in smuggling.

Another report adds: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has said that so far 791 parliamentarians have submitted their yearly statements of assets and liabilities for financial year 2019-20.

According to an official of ECP, as many as 394 parliamentarians could not submit their assets details out of total 1195 parliamentarians while 10 seats are still vacant. He said that those who submitted their assets details included 89 senators, 228 members National Assembly, 225 members Punjab Assembly, 117 members Sindh Assembly, 94 members Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and 38 members Balochistan Assembly.

He added that those who failed to submit their assets details within due date included 14 senators, 112 members NA, 144 members Punjab Assembly, 48 members Sindh Assembly, 50 members

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and 26 members Balochistan Assembly.

Under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017 every member of an assembly and Senate have to submit to the Commission, on or before December 31 each year, a copy of statement of assets and liabilities including assets and liabilities of his spouse and dependent children as on the preceding of June 30 on Form B.

The commission, on the first day of January each year through a press release, publishes the names of members who failed to submit the requisite statement of assets and liabilities within the period specified under sub-section (1).

He said that the Commission will, on the January 16, by an order suspend the membership of a member of an assembly and Senate who failed to submit the statement of assets and liabilities by the January 15, and such member would cease to function till he or she would file the statement of assets and liabilities.

He said if any member submitted the statement of assets and liabilities under this section which was found to be false in material particulars, he or she may within 120 days from the date of submission of the statement, be proceeded

Badmouthing against Army Rashid warns of serious action within 72 hours

By Our Staff Correspondent

RAWALPINDI: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid says action will be taken within 72 hours against anyone using derogatory language against the Pakistan Army or other state institutions.

He was speaking to the media in Rawalpindi on Saturday. The interior minister criticised the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and its chief Fazl and spoke about PPP chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's passport issue and the facility of online visas in Pakistan, among other topics.

PPP has won and the PDM has lost, Rashid said, adding that the PPP has forced PDM to get on its knees.

In response to a question about the PPP chairperson, Rashid said Bilawal is sensible and has played his cards well.

He said Bilawal will find a good path for himself. He said that a politician who does not keep the door of dialogue open is not intelligent. Referring to PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the federal minister said that the Maulana's stars are in circulation and his politics has turned upside down.

Rashid's comments come a day after PDM announced that member parties of the alliance will take part in by-polls and decide about Senate elections later.

Fazl had said the alliance is "is stronger than before" and rubbished rumours of any internal conflict.

Rashid took a jibe at Fazl and said that he is a scholar and respected but he should also keep in mind the respect of Islam and Islamabad. "He [Fazl] should talk about Islam and stop dreaming of Islamabad," Rashid said in a reference to the long march PDM is planning.

PM can quit govt but will not give NRO: Rashid

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad has said Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan can quit the government but will not surrender before NRO.

"PM Imran Khan will not resign. He can quit the government but will not surrender before NRO", he said this while talking to media men during his visit to NADRA office here Saturday.

He went on to say PDM was hoodwinking people. Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has accepted their defeat. PDM has decided it will take part in election. PPP won and PDM suffered defeat. PPP forced them to surrender. They will not give resignations but will stage long march. The day opposition will announce date for holding long march, we will assert our legal and constitutional option on the said date.

LHC makes Ravi project conditional

The Business Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has on Saturday made the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project conditional to the Environment Protection Department's inspection and approval.

According to details, Justice Shahid Karim issued a three-page written order in which the government has been barred to start the project without environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Advocate Sheraz Zaka had filed a complaint in which it was maintained that the environmental laws were not followed in construction of the mega project which would increase pollution in future. The Punjab government's counsel told the court the opinion of the Environment Protection Department has been sought over the matter. The LHC summoned answer from the Punjab government and the Environment Protection Department within a week.

Gold price remain unchanged at Rs114,300

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold on Saturday remained unchanged at Rs114,300, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. Providing market details, it said the price of 10 gram 24 karat gold and ten gram 22 karat gold also witnessed no change in prices and was sold at Rs.97,994 and Rs. 89,828 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.1320 and Rs.1131.68 respectively. The gold price in the international market also remained stagnant at \$1899, the association added. —APP

CTD arrests Lakhvi from Lahore

LAHORE: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has arrested an alleged member of a banned outfit Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi during a raid conducted in Lahore.

The CTD spokesperson said in a statement that Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi has been arrested during a raid over allegedly financing terrorists. A case was registered against Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi at CTD Lahore Station. The suspect was running a dispensary by the funds collected for carrying out terrorist attacks, whereas, the investigators found traces against him for also using the money for personal expenditures by Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, said CTD.

The suspected terror financier was also nominated by the United Nations in its list of suspected terrorists for being associated with an outlawed outfit, said CTD, adding that the suspect will face trial in an anti-terrorism court in Lahore. Earlier on Dec 25, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) had foiled a major terror bid in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur by arresting four suspects and seizing a huge quantity of explosive material and two vehicles. —DNA

Punjab to build 35,000 apartments

LAHORE: The Punjab government has planned to build 35,000 apartments on 8,000 kanals of land. It will construct 4,000 apartments in LDA City at a cost of Rs 40b.

Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar has directed officials to complete preliminary work on the project as soon as possible.

Usman Buzdar said the PTI government has a clear vision to solve the public's housing problems. He assured that his government will not deceive the public by making superficial and exhibitionist projects.

He said that work is being done rapidly on the vision of equal progress in all cities of the province including Lahore. The CM said in his statement that the PTI govt wants to bring the areas — which were ignored in the past — on equal level to other cities. —DNA



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to PM on Interior and Accountability Mirza Shahzad Akbar and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs address a press conference.

Punjab wheat sowing gets over 101.90pc of set targets

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Wheat sowing during current cultivation drive had witnessed significant momentum as crop cultivation targets in Punjab was surpassed by 101.90 percent as compared to the sowing of same period of last year.

Meanwhile, 94 percent area in Singh which was the second largest grain producing province was achieved during Rabi 2020-21. The crop sowing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were achieved 80 percent and 84.55 percent respectively. Overall, wheat sowing during current Rabi Season has completed over 9 million hectares as against the set tar-

gets of 9.210 million hectares to tackle with the domestic staple food requirements as well as for exporting.

Crop cultivation during current season witnessed encouraging trend as crop sowing completed over 97.72 percent of the fixed area during Rabi 2020-21, Food Security Commissioner in Ministry of National Food Security and Research Dr Imtiaz Ahmed Gopang said.

Talking to media, he said that momentum in wheat cultivation was attributed with favorable weather conditions, availability of inputs including seeds, fertilizers and agriculture credit.

He further informed that timely interventions by the government like increase

in minimum support price for growers and different incentives under Rabi Package were the other factor that resulted in growth in crop cultivation.

Food Security Commissioner further informed that according to the estimation of Provincial Crop Reporting Services, wheat cultivation had been completed over 9.00 million hectares across crop producing areas in the country as against the set targets of 9.210 million hectares.

He said it was expected that sowing targets of grains for current crop season would be achieved, which help in getting maximum output to fulfill the domestic requirements as well as for producing exportable surplus during the season.