

Minimum 14°C
Maximum 24°C
Sunset 06:15pm
Sunrise 06:03am
(Today)

LAHORE

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Thursday, March 25, 2021



FAJAR.....	04:45 AM
ZOHAR.....	12:13 PM
ASR.....	5:00 PM
MAGRIB.....	06:15 PM
ISHA.....	07:45 PM

Quick Read



Punjab approves 23 schemes for PSDP in its PDWP Forum

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approved twenty three development schemes of Roads Sector with an estimated cost of Rs. 1,72,514.599 million and proposed to Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for inclusion in up-coming budget.

These schemes were approved in the 30th meeting of Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) of current fiscal year 2020-21 presided over the Chairman Planning & Development Board Abdullah Khan Sumbal. All Members of the Planning & Development Board, Provincial Secretaries of concerned departments, Senior Chief (Coord), Assistant Chief Coordination and other senior representatives of the relevant Provincial Departments also attended the meeting. The approved development schemes included as Dualization of Vehari - Abdul Hakim Road District Vehari / Khanewal (Length 72.58 km) at the cost of Rs. 10,634.461 million, Dualization of Road from Karam Dad Qureshi (N-70) to Layyah District Muzaffargarh / Layyah (Length 147.00 km) at the cost of Rs. 28,576.490 million, Dualization of Road from Lahore Sargodha Khushab Mianwali Road (Reach km no. 206.94 to 267.37) - District Khushab at the cost of Rs. 10,863.294 million, Dualization of Road from Sial Murr Interchange (M-2) to District boundary Sargodha - District Sargodha (Length 89.79 km) at the cost of Rs. 19,984.143 million and other nineteen roads schemes are approved in PDWP forum for Punjab Province and proposed to PSDP.

Bank Alfalah, GoldFin to introduce Gold Financing for SME

LAHORE: In an industry first, Bank Alfalah has partnered with Goldfin - a leading gold financing company - to introduce a new financing option for its Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector consumers.

Bank Alfalah recognized the growing demand for financing opportunities in the market in the post-covid environment, especially within the SME space. This partnership establishes a channel for SMEs to avail market-competitive rates and secure their liquidity. It also aligns with the Bank's vision to be a market leader and introduce innovative and efficient services for the benefit of its customers. The agreement was signed at Bank Alfalah's Head Office between Mr. Atif Bajwa, President and CEO of Bank Alfalah, and Mr. Nadeem Hussain, CEO and Founder of Goldfin. This partnership will allow the Bank to support its customers in raising finances and growing their business. Goldfin has extensive expertise in originating loans backed by gold collateral, as well as in front-end and doorstep sales. Their available tech-

India should immediately stop atrocities against Kashmiris

Sarwar welcomes Modi's statement on cordial ties with Pak

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has welcomed Narendra Modi's statement on cordial relations with Pakistan and said that until the Kashmir issue is resolved, Pak-India cordial relations and peace in the region cannot be established. He said that India should immediately stop atrocities against Kashmiris and Indian Muslims and resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with UN resolutions.

He was addressing the symposium of Saylani Trust Punjab at Governor's House Lahore and talking to the media, on Wednesday.

PTI Senator Dr Zarka Taimoor, Selani Trust officials Bashir Farooqi, Yousaf Lakhani, Afzal Chandio, Political Secretary to Governor Punjab Mian Kashif Iqbal, Chairperson of Chief Minister Task Force Tanzeela Imran were present on the occasion.

Punjab Governor, Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, while talking to media said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has always advocated peace with India but News Delhi has furthered the warmongering which has jeopardized the peace of the region. Peace in the region and bilateral ties with India cannot be established unless the Kashmir issue is resolved as per the UN res-

olutions, he added. Replying to a question, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, said that Narendra Modi's desire to establish cordial relations with Pakistan is a victory of the stance of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. But it remains to be seen how long Narendra Modi will stick to his word and if Modi is in favour of cordial relations with Pakistan, then the ongoing atrocities on Kashmiris and Indian Muslims must be stopped immediately.

Governor Punjab said that Pakistan's desire of peace should not be considered a weakness, adding that Pakistan will always give a befit-

ting reply to any belligerence from India. Pakistan has also made many sacrifices for regional peace but now India should stop sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan.

Addressing the event, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar commended Saylani Trust for its welfare activities and provision of free meals to the poor in Lahore and other cities of Pakistan. There is no greater service than the service of humanity and philanthropists must come forward to support the downtrodden sections of population. Punjab Governor while lauding role of NGOs during COVID 19 pandemic said that the role NGOs played during Coronavirus to sup-

port the deserving families was commendable.

Bashir Farooqi of Saylani Trust said that he had worked with Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar during the rains and floods in Sindh and Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and Sarwar Foundation always have stood with the unprivileged during any crisis, adding he said that he looks forward to working with them to serve the poor in the future as well. He said that the Saylani Trust is extending its services to Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and he and his team are making all out efforts to support those in dire need of assistance.



LAHORE: Private teachers, parents and students hold placards during protest against the decision of closure of schools.

Medical experts for remaining ready for dengue challenge

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Post Graduate Medical Institute Principal Prof. Dr. Sardar Muhammad Al-freed Zafar has urged doctors, nurses and paramedics not to forget the challenge of dengue during the Corona pandemic and to be fully prepared in this regard.

He further said that now the dengue season has started so all the health professionals must attend the training workshops to enhance their professional skills and keep their knowledge related to dengue updated. These views were expressed by Principal PGMI while addressing the participants of Dengue Case Management organized by Medical Unit 3, LGH where other medical experts also participated.

Prof. Dr. Tahir Siddique while briefing the young doctors on the symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and precautions of dengue fever told that all the arrangements regarding dengue have been completed in Hospital. Addressing the workshop, Assistant Prof. Dr. Muhammad Maqsood elaborated

on dengue management while MS Dr. Abdul Razzaq, Dr. Jaffar Shah and other doctors were also present in large numbers who were given medical lectures on dengue fever keeping in view the past experiences.

Prof. Al-freed Zafar further said that in some cases dengue also takes the form of a deadly epidemic for the prevention of which it is necessary to make proper arrangements for the treatment of dengue patients in hospitals.

He said that along with the Government, media, civil society and social organizations also have to play their part in preventing diseases and raising public awareness and creating sensitivity on diseases like dengue.

Principal PGMI further said that advances in medicine and science have provided various platforms to educate doctors on modern therapies. Physicians now have a duty to keep their medical knowledge up-to-date to meet the challenges of the day, especially young doctors, he added.

Prof. Dr. Tahir Siddique and Dr. Muham-

mad Maqsood said that relatives should not hide the patient's medical history from the doctor so that his treatment is not delayed. Prof. Al-freed especially urged the female doctors to conduct hygiene and counseling of the people around them as dengue cannot be eradicated without sanitation and in this regard we all have to fulfill our individual and collective responsibilities.

Two dacoits killed in encounter: Two dacoits were killed while three police officials, including SHO and a passerby, sustained injuries in an encounter at Chungi Main Bazaar, here on Wednesday. According to the police, the robbers opened firing on policemen, in retaliation, the officials killed the accused on spot while SHO Sarwar Road Farooq Azam and two constables of Chowki Guldasth were also injured while 10-year-old passerby, Ahmad, received injuries who were shifted to the Services Hospital. On information, the police concerned reached the spot and started investigation. The bodies were sent to the dead house for autopsy. —APP

Nine dead, 934 hurt in 856 road traffic mishaps

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) responded to 856 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 36 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs 09 people died, whereas 934 were injured. Out of this, 515 people were seriously injured who were shifted to different hospitals. Whereas, 419 minor injured victims were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. The majority (61%) involved Motorbikes, therefore effective enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce this an increasing number of Road Traffic Crashes. Further, the analysis showed that 378 drivers, 27 under-derage drivers, 156 pedestrians, and 409 passengers were among the victims of these road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 228 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 248 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by 69 in Faisalabad with 77 victims and at third Multan with 46 RTCs and 48 victims.

1,774 new cases of corona reported

LAHORE: As many as 1,774 cases of coronavirus were reported in Punjab on Wednesday while the pandemic claimed nine precious lives which turned the death toll to 6,046.

According to the data shared by the spokesperson for Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (PP&SHD), the number of coronavirus cases in the province reached 202,743. The PP&SHD confirmed that 1184 new cases were reported in Lahore, one in Kasur, 22 in Sheikhpura, two in Nankana Sahib, 78 in Rawalpindi, 21 in Jehlum, one in Chakwal, 34 in Gujranwala, 15 in Mandi Bahaudin, eight in Narowal, two in Hafizabad, 67 in Sialkot, 35 in Gujrat, 97 in Faisalabad, 15 in Toba Tek Singh, 11 in Chinoet, four in Jhang, 11 in Sargodha, one in Mianwali, one in Bhakkar, 46 in Multan, seven in Vehari, 15 in Khanewal, two in Lodharan, one in Layyah, one Rajanpur, 11 in Rahimyar Khan, 28 in Bahawalpur, 10 in Bahawalnagar, 14 in Okara, nine in Pakpatan and 15 new cases were reported in Sahiwal district. —APP

Trade opportunities for Pakistani SMEs in COVID-19 pandemic

BY MARYAM ANAS GANAIE

Slowdown in economic activity, due to COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of trade has affected businesses especially SMEs worldwide. Sealed borders, trade interdependencies, export restrictions for maintaining stock of critical products to deal with pandemic have changed global trade practices.

Around 94 countries adopted export restriction measures and 104 countries adopted import liberalization strategy to survive during COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, global trade decreased by 4.5 percent in the third quarters of 2020 as compared to the same period of preceding year. Overall export of Pakistan declined by 7.2 percent during July 2019- June 2020 and remained at \$21.29 billion as compared to \$22.95 billion during the corresponding period

last year. However, Pakistan's exports have shown some positive sign of recovery as exports increased by 2.2 percent during July-November 2020 as compared with the export growth of the same period of preceding year.

Nevertheless, every challenging situation also brings opportunities. The current pandemic has opened new avenues of investment, change in business operations, product transformation and adoption of new business models to address the changing demands of consumer market.

A country like Pakistan that has abundance of natural and human resources should take steps to exploit these opportunities in order to become self-reliant.

Naturally, SMEs have an important role to play in this regard. Currently, there is a huge market demand for medical and related products, so countries around the world are assessing the possibility

to divert production towards producing certain health-related goods in close proximity of their own market competencies. The strategic importance given to the medical supply sector will likely remain in the near future.

Pakistan needs to exploit the huge opportunities of increasing exports in the health and safety products like personal protective equipment (PPE), including protective masks, gloves, sanitizers, clothing, helmets, goggles and other garments or equipment designed for protection from COVID-19

To support trade flow critical products to deal with pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified and published list of critical products for exports, out of which 57 tariff lines at 6-digit HS are close to Pakistan's competency. These products mainly include Anti-Epidemic Goods (Disinfectants, toilet

papers, cleaning products etc.), Raw Material for Masks (Fabric, aluminum and steel rods), Medical Equipment's (Instruments, appliances, machines, articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of plastics (excluding boxes, cases, crates etc.), Medical Supplies (protective kits, suits, masks, Hats and other headgear, Surgical gloves, of vulcanized rubber, Wadding, gauze, bandages, other garments) and food products (meat, rice, flour, nuts, fruits and vegetables etc.).

Currently, Pakistan's export identified 57 tariff lines stands at US\$ 4 billion. Pakistani exporters must exploit trade opportunities emerging from the crisis by targeting a range of products that are close to their production line.

Furthermore, almost half of Pakistan's exports are directed to the countries most affected by Coronavirus. Approximately 40% of exports from Pakistan are des-

tinued for affected western countries UK, US, France, Italy, Spain and Germany. These countries have opened up their borders for masks, protective kits, sanitizers and other products that offer an opportunity for Pakistan to enhance its exports in order to compensate low exports of traditional products to these destinations. In this regard, Government may need to support local SMEs to exploit this opportunity through providing facilitative business environment, fiscal support, provision of raw material etc. In addition, support may also be provided to meet quality and standardization requirements.

Similarly, measures may also be taken to enhance export of food products to traditional and non-traditional markets. Now, the economies of the western world, that are important destination for finished products belonging to the textile and leather industries, are

in revival phase. Their economic revival will be crucial for Pakistan's exports and will offer greater market opportunities for local manufacturers and traders. It is essential that the government may adopt sector specific strategy to facilitate potential sectors for export promotion purposes. Pakistan may also need to adopt long term industrial and trade strategy to provide essential economic support to businesses in post COVID-19 period.

There is a need to focus on strengthening local industry to cater consumer market demand, capturing new markets and creating job opportunities for those who lost their jobs during COVID-19 pandemic. The philosophy of "Make in Pakistan" should be promoted by adopting import substitution strategy.

The writer is Assistant Manager in Policy &