

## Hybrid wheat, modern technology vital to address food challenges

MULTAN: To address negative impacts of climate changes on soil health, use of modern technology and promotion of hybrid wheat is of vital importance. This was stated by speakers in Kissan Convention, held at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture (MNSUA), here on Sunday. The basic aim of holding the seminar is to create awareness among peasants about maximum cultivation wheat. Federal Minister for National Food Security Fakhar Imam. —APP

# The Business

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## Online dry fruits business gaining momentum in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: An online business of dry fruits items was gaining momentum in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi due to its low prices comparatively to various other markets and shops selling on high rates. Talking to APP, an online business man Umer Khan said, "I have started online business due to less resources to set up a shop for selling such items." He said people were also getting benefits on these items with free home deliveries as during the pandemic situation. —Online

## Proposals invited to develop new technologies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has invited innovative proposals from researchers from academia or industry for developing economically viable new technology, product and system of processes under the National Technology Innovation Fund (NTIF).

NTIF is an initiative of PSF to bring together Academia, Research Centre and Industry for economic growth through innovations, applications of emerging technologies and subsequent commercialisation of value-added products, an official from PSF told APP on Sunday. Pakistan Science Foundation under NTIF intends to provide funding upto 25 millions to individual researcher or group of researchers from academia and/or industry with innovative proposals in 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies.

The applicant proposal may result in developing economically viable new technology, product and system of processes. Through this initiative, the academia, research centre and industry are twining for successful commercialisation through innovation.

The proposal related to product development and their commercialisation, utilizing one or more of the thematic areas to solve local community problems and targets to reach global standards of innovation will be preferred. Proposals focusing on basic research will not be entertained, the official informed. Principal Investigator must be a researcher from Public Sector institution. Project team may include researcher from industry or private sector. However funds will be released to public sector organizations by PSF.

Application proforma must clearly mention name of the product or technology or process to be developed. Industry/private sector partner share should be highlighted in application. They should also provide letter of intent along with business plan on separate proforma specified by Pakistan Science Foundation, the official said. —APP

## National positive virus ratio reports slight uptick

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of Covid-19 pandemic on Sunday was recorded declining with one of the lowest positivity ratio during past 24 hours amid reduced per day positive cases, disease trend and death rate.

The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOCC) in a tweet on its official handle shared the latest disease statistics.

The nerve centre of the country in its fight against the pandemic wrote that some 48,192 tests were conducted across the country with 733 more people tested positive for the contagious disease. There were 1,402 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition in various Covid dedicated health-care facilities of the country. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 1.52%. The Covid positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals.

During the past 24 hours, some 11 infected patients died due to the deadly virus including those under treatment in the hospitals and in their respective quarantines or homes. —APP

## Call to defer digital mode for business related payments

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) demanded the FBR extend corporate taxpayers' grace period for over Rs 250,000 business-related payments. In a statement Sunday, President RCCI Nadeem Rauf said that the November 1 deadline for digital payment mode should be extended, adding that banks could not adopt digital payment methods while the corporate sector also does not have the required information and preparation.

He said that the business community was not against documenting the economy, but the ground reality also needed to be examined. "The new procedure should be implemented in stages," he suggested. Nadeem Rauf said the procedure was being implemented through a presidential ordinance. However, the assembly had not yet extended the ordinance, leaving the business community facing a precarious situation. It may be recalled that according to a



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Khalid Khursheed Khan administers 26th oath to the new office bearer of Gilgit-Baltistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

# Afghanistan facing world's worst humanitarian crisis

— SAARC Chamber calls for immediate humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan to avert famine

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sunday called for urgent action to protect millions of Afghans from starvation and warned that over 22.8 millions Afghans, who constitute nearly half of the total population, are facing food insecurity while 3.2 million children under the age of five year can suffer from acute malnutrition.

SAARC Chamber Chief Iftikhar Ali Malik while talking to a high level delegation led by Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood, Dean faculty of information and media studies Punjab University said the international community especially West and US must realize that this indifference may result in chaos, leading to internal strike and civil war, the consequences of which would be disastrous for the whole world beyond Afghanistan. He said it's race against time and countries must step in to shoulder their responsibility and to address Afghanistan's latest disaster.

He said this is a country where only 5 percent of the people have access to enough food to survive and Afghanistan is

now among the world's worst humanitarian crisis as this country is on a countdown to catastrophe. Iftikhar Ali Malik who is also founder chairman Pak-US Business Council and Chairman United Business Council also asked for taking measures to ensure availability of food commodities.

Dr Khalid Mahmood said at a donors' conference in September last, the world community pledged \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance, a third of which was to go to the WFP but the sum of money pledged to provide food to hungry, amounted to a "a drop in the ocean". He said WFP needed as much as \$22 millions per month to help stave off death due to hunger.

He said tragically however, the world seems largely indifferent and aid is too little and too slow as the world powers continue to debate whether or not to recognise the Afghan Taliban. He observed the response from the international community had thus been lukewarm, even downright cold, despite the unfolding human tragedy in a country that has known nothing but wars for the last four decades.

Dr Khalid is an author of several books

and contributor of research articles in important international magazines and journals called for devising a long term road map for Afghanistan in order to advance the agenda of political engagement, economic integration and regional connectivity. He said "our collective efforts can halt economic meltdown. An economic collapse will yield instability, conflict and a refugee influx into neighbouring countries and onward to other regions, he added.

Another visiting faculty member of school of Communication Studies Punjab University and senior member of think tank Dr Waqar briefly talking on the occasion pointed out the following the Taliban takeover of Kabul, major donors had stopped funding the Afghan government, stressing that earlier the donors used to cater for roughly 70 percent of Afghanistan's budget. He said sudden withdrawal of foreign assistance had created a huge gap and warned that 90 percent of the Afghan population could fall below the abject poverty line next year. He appreciated the Pakistan for trying its best to help stem the down slide and continued to provide urgently needed food stuff and

# 'Pak to get benefits from \$3tr ASEAN's economy'

ISLAMABAD: Vietnam Ambassador to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong on Sunday said that Pakistan has huge trade and investment opportunities in Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN's) US\$ 3 trillion economy for increasing the bilateral trade and economic ties.

With ASEAN's US\$ 3 trillion economic power and a large market of 650 million people in the region, the mutual US\$7 billion trade between ASEAN and Pakistan is far below its potential, the Ambassador said this while addressing to the Pakistan ASEAN Business Forum, organized by United Business Group (UBG) of Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here. Ambassador said that Pakistan is a huge market with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$300 billion and a population of 230 million, where there are huge opportunities for ASEAN countries as well.

He said China has US\$600 billion in trade with ASEAN countries. Similarly, China and ASEAN countries have a free

trade agreement with Pakistan from which both sides can benefit.

Regarding multilateral trade in Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) and Pakistan's trade interests with this trading bloc, the Vietnam Ambassador said that Vietnam, being an important member of ASEAN, would play its full role in paving the way for trade for Pakistan.

He added that ASEAN is a very effective trading bloc of the world have signed the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand from which all the regional countries are benefiting. Ambassador of Vietnam said that the way Pakistan has Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP)-Plus agreement with Europe countries and FTA with other countries, now both sides can promote bilateral trade under one agreement.

Vietnam Ambassador to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong said that talks on further progress on Proposed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan

and Vietnam are likely to take place in mid-November this year 2021.

In the fifth meeting of the 'Vietnam-Pakistan Trade Committee Plan' both sides will discuss the two top agendas of bilateral trade and investment, the PTA and the agreement on mutual investment and its protection. Ambassador said that the in the fifth round of talks under the Trade Sub-Committee will also discuss on the other issues of bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

He said that after the signing of the PTA between the two countries, there would be talks on the FTA so as to increase the trade volume between the two countries.

He said that at present there is a bilateral trade of about \$700m between the two countries, which is far below its potential and in order to increase it the trade volume between the two countries needs to be increased. Responding to a question, he said that the main reason for the decline in bilateral trade volume between the two

## Railways revenue registers increase in 2020-2021

ISLAMABAD: The revenue of Pakistan Railway has increased from Rs 47,587.9 million in 2019-20 to Rs 48,651.7 million in 2020-21, registering an increase of around Rs 1,063.8 million.

"Pakistan Railways has earned Rs 48,651.7 million during 2020-21 as compared to Rs 47,587.9 million during 2019-20," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

The official said the working expenses of Pakistan Railways has also decreased to Rs 95,883.8 million in 2020-21 as compared to Rs 97,740.4 million in 2019-20.

He said that accounts of Pakistan Railways for the financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20 had been audited by the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP). Similarly, accounts of the financial year 2020-21 would also be audited by the same authority, he added.

He said the AGP was responsible to express an opinion on these financial statements based on audit in accordance with the requirements of Article 169 & 170 (2) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The official said the reports were regularly submitted to the Public Accounts Committee.

Regarding the up-gradation of Main Line-I, he said it was a flagship railway infrastructure project under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which ECNEC approved on August 2020 at a rationalized cost of \$6.806.

He said the project had been planned to be executed in three packages while preliminary design of the project had been completed and a formal request for the loan for package-I had been conveyed to the Chinese side through Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

### Railways retrieve 478 acres land from occupants

Pakistan Railways has retrieved around 478 acres precious land worth billion of rupees from illegal occupants under its anti-encroachment operation across the country during the present government tenure.

"The encroachment operation has been launched with the assistance of railway police and district administrations," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

Giving details, he said the department retrieved 245 acres land in Punjab, 123 acres from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 94 acres from Sindh and 16 acres from Balochistan.

The official said that out of the total land, 83 acres were commercial, 298 acres were residential and 97 acres were the agricultural land of the Pakistan Railways. He said the government was taking several steps to retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including detailed survey was being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation of various government departments.

The official said the campaign was being monitored by the Divisional Superintendents, Headquarters office and Ministry of Railways. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and joint procedure order have been issued since for strict implementation of this policy, the official added. —APP

## AJK PM praises diaspora for raising Kashmir issue

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that peace between India and Pakistan could not be established unless and until the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiris.

He pointed out that Kashmir dispute had jeopardized the peace of the entire region adding the dream of peace in the region cannot be fulfilled until the permanent settlement of lingering Kashmir dispute. He expressed these views during a meeting with Kashmir Council EU Chairman Ali Raza Syed at Kashmir House on Sunday. PM Qayyum Niazi said that Kashmiris have been offering unprecedented sacrifices for the last seven decades which has no example in history of the world.

He urged upon the international community to exert pressure over India for the settlement of longstanding Kashmir dispute for establishing durable and lasting peace in the region. PM also urged the overseas Kashmiris to expose the ongoing Indian atrocities on Kashmiri people to crush the freedom movement in occupied Kashmir. He said the PM of Pakistan Imran Khan had effectively projected the Kashmir issue in its true perspective at international level with courage and determination. He commended the services of Ali Raza Syed

## Saudi Vision 2030

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trade relations by exploring areas of investment and opportunities available under Vision 2030 and Pakistan's development priorities emanating from a shift from geopolitics to geo-economics.

Regarding the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) Summit on Climate Change, he said it clearly demonstrated the commitment of the Saudi leadership to take tangible steps for effectively tackling the challenge of Climate Change.

"Green Saudi Initiative" and "Green Middle East Initiative" are remarkable initiatives for the preservation of nature and climate not only in Saudi Arabia but in the entire region. The threat that climate change poses to this planet is real and it is high time for concerted actions in the right direction, he added He said Pakistan had also

been working on similar projects including Clean and Green Pakistan and 10 Billion Tree Tsunami.

"We believe that our priorities and goals converge in this regard and we can therefore learn from each other and extend our mutual support to mitigate the impacts of climate change," he commented.

About the role Pakistan and Saudi Arabia could play for unity of Muslim Ummah, the prime minister said as an important member state of the OIC, Saudi Arabia had always played a major role in uniting Muslim countries and highlighting the issues plaguing the Muslim world. In the 47th Session of OIC CFM held in 2020, in Niamey, the OIC unanimously adopted Pakistan's initiated resolution on Islamophobia.

"The rising threat in the West towards Islam is a universal point of concern. We believe in harmony and peaceful coexistence as terror-

ism has never been and shall never be the true face of Islam," he stated.

He said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was home to the Two Holy Mosques therefore it has a natural leadership role to play for the Muslim Ummah and Pakistan shall be at the fore front to collaborate in the endeavour. About the financial support by Saudi Arabia, Imran Khan said, "I am extremely grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the recent announcement to deposit US dollars 3 billion and financing US dollars 1.2 billion refined petroleum products during the year.

This generous budgetary support will help the balance of payment of Pakistan in the backdrop of rising commodity prices globally."

He said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had long-standing and historic fraternal relations, rooted deep in common faith, shared history and mutual support. —Online



LAHORE: Passengers return back due to closed railway trains.