

IG orders to arrest reporter's killers

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Rao Sardar Ali Khan has taken notice of the killing of private TV channel journalist (Crime Beat Reporter) Hasnain Shah by firing on his car outside Shimla Pahari Lahore Press Club and sought a report from CCPO Lahore. The IG Punjab directed to ensure arrest of accused with the help of Safe City cameras as soon as possible. Rao Sardar Ali Khan directed DIG Investigation, Lahore to investigate the incident and ensure justice for the family of the slain journalist. IG Punjab expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Hasnain Shah. —BOSR

The Business

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PPP, farmers hold Karachi, Hyderabad tractor rally

KARACHI: The PPP staged a protest in Hyderabad Monday against the government amid a urea or fertilizer shortage. "Agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan. Our incompetent govt has fractured it," said PPP's Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto. "Fertilizer shortage has not just impacted the agricultural industry but will soon compromise the national food security." Today Pakistani farmers have gathered in Sukkur, Multan, Karachi, and Rawalpindi forcing the government to see that these farmers want you to resolve the issues, he added. —APP

Smart lockdowns imposed on Peshawar areas

PESHAWAR: The District administration, Peshawar has imposed smart lockdown in various localities to control the spread of Covid-19, said an official notification issued here on Monday. The localities where the restrictions have been imposed on the entry and exits were included Street No: 1 to 8, Sector F-V, Phase-VI, Hayatabad, the area bound by Ring Road, Phandu Road and GHSS Hazar Khwani Road, the area bound by Ishrat Cinema Road, Sir Syed Public School Road, Ijza Abad Road and Madina Street Gulbahar No. 4. Street No: 1 to 4, Phase-III, Habib Jalib Road, Hayatabad Street No. 1 to 5 & 11 to 14, Sector, F-7, Phase-VI, Hayatabad. Area Bound by Afghan Colony Road, GGPS Road Dalzak Road and Masjid-e-Toheed Road, Zaryab Colony, Street No: 1, 7 & 8, Sardar Ahmad Jan Colony, Babar Street, Street D, Street J, Street H and Street L Ali Town, Warsak Road.

This notification shall stand effective from 16:00 Hrs on 24.01.2022 and shall remain in force till further orders. Under the restrictions, no general entry or exit to this localities by any person shall be allowed, except those supplying essential commodities.

AGP directs Shahbaz to submit Nawaz reports

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The attorney-general for Pakistan (AGP) has written a letter to the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif to bring back PML-N Supremo Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan, on Monday.

The AGP has instructed Shahbaz to submit Nawaz's medical reports within the next 10 days; in case he fails to do so, contempt of court petition will be filed against Shahbaz.

On November 16, 2019, the Lahore High Court (LHC) allowed Nawaz Sharif to go abroad for medical treatment, the letter read, mentioning that according to the doctors' instructions, Nawaz was allowed to leave for four weeks. The AGP also mentioned that according to media reports, Nawaz is in good health, while when he was leaving the country, his condition was described as critical. The letter further said that as soon as Nawaz reached London, "his condition improved."

Punjab proposes holding LB polls in four divisions

LAHORE: Punjab government has proposed to hold Local Bodies (LB) elections of four divisions in first phase.

According to media reports Punjab government will propose to the Punjab Election Commission to hold LB polls on February 01 in DG Khan, Multan, Bahawalpur and Gujranwala divisions. PTI leadership and chief minister Punjab Usman Buzdar has accorded approval to this proposal. The election commission will take final decision on the proposal of Punjab govt. On the other hand, the Punjab government has announced the first phase of LB polls on May 15. —Online

Livestream selling empowers Pak goods in China

BEIJING: Livestream selling boosted the selling of Pakistani goods in the Chinese market, and Pakistan could learn from the successful model of e-commerce in China, noted Badar uz Zaman, Commercial Counselor, Pakistan Embassy in China.

According to Chin's leading short-form video platform Kuaishou, a livestream selling of Pakistani products featured by Badar uz Zaman during the 2022 Online Lunar Year's Shopping Festival received more than 53m exposures, more than 2.33m views and more than 12,000 orders. In the livestream selling studio, Badar uz Zaman introduced Pakistani culture and food to the audience online. He also spoke highly of the important role of livestreaming e-commerce in boosting consumption and promoting consumption upgrading in China. "The smartphone penetration is increasing in Pakistan; there are many users that are getting the 4G connections," he told China Economic Net. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin chairs a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

Sri Lanka keen to further strengthen trade with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Bandula Gunawardhane, Trade Minister of Sri Lanka said that Pakistan was a longstanding friend and key trading partner of Sri Lanka in South Asia and his country was keen to further strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties with it to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for both countries. He said this while addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). He visited ICCI leading a Sri Lankan trade delegation to hold B2B meetings with the local business community. Tharaka Balasuriya State Minister of Regional Cooperation, Prof. Dr. Saj Mendis Director General of the Economic Affairs Division, Ms. Asma Kamal, Trade Secretary Pak High Commission to Sri Lanka, U.L.Niyas Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan also accompanied the Sri Lankan delegation.

Dr. Bandula Gunawardhane said that Pak-Sri Lanka FTA has contributed to expanding bilateral trade but more efforts from both sides were needed to maximize its benefits. He said that top Sri Lankan exports to Pakistan included betel leaves, women fabrics, coconut products, MDF & fibre boards, textiles articles, electrical & electronic products whereas major Pakistani exports to Sri Lanka included woven fabrics, mineral products, cereals, pharma products and potatoes. He stressed that both sides should focus on diversification of products to improve bilateral trade.

Tharaka Balasuriya State Minister of Regional Cooperation, said that Pakistan was a time-tested friend of Sri Lanka and both countries have good potential to enhance cooperation in pharmaceuticals, IT, tourism, minerals and electrical vehicles. He said that Pakistani investors should take advantage of investment in SEZs in Sri Lanka.

Asma Kamal, Trade Secretary, Pakistan High Commission to Sri Lanka said that Pakistan wanted to increase bilateral trade with Sri Lanka as the current level of trade was not reflective of their actual potential. She said that both sides should address tariff and non-tariff barriers to take maximum benefit from FTA for trade promotion.

Welcoming the delegation, Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Sri Lanka was the first country with whom Pakistan had signed FTA in 2005, but both countries have not taken full benefit of it for trade expansion. He stressed for removing trade barriers and hurdles to the implementation of FTA that would enable Pakistan and Sri Lanka to improve bilateral trade to USD 3 billion from the current level of USD 440 to 450 million. He said that many Pakistani products including marble & granite, Basmati rice, textiles, cement, fruits & vegetables and others could find a good market in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka should import these products from Pakistan.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Zubair A. Malik former President ICCI and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed for frequent exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation. Both sides held B2B meetings to discuss business collaborations in areas of mutual interest.

Trade deficit growing alarmingly
Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday said with a declining economy, rising unemployment and rising trade deficit, the gap between government revenue and expenditure is now alarmingly high.

The budget deficit from July to December has reached Rs1.8 trillion, which is 29 percent more than last year, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the people are starving but the government is claiming the growth rate of 5.37 percent which is nothing more than misplaced optimism.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that if the economy had been growing, the number of unemployed would not have increased by 20 million during the pandemic.

He said that despite the increase in remittances and exports during the first six

APBF, STZA join hands for investment opportunities

LAHORE: A delegation of the All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF), in a meeting held with Chairman of Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) Amer Hashmi and his team, identified and discussed investment opportunities that may foster innovation and promote a technology-driven knowledge ecosystem. The delegation consisted of APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood and general secretary Khurram Niaz Khan.

Amer Hashmi informed the delegation about the government's commitment to facilitating global venture investment in Special Technology Zones in the country.

The STZA team briefed the APBF office-bearers about the Special Technology Zones created by the government of Pakistan to attract foreign direct investment, allow technology transfer, boost technology exports, prioritize research and development, and foster job creation for Pakistani youth. Amer Hashmi observed

that the Prime Minister Imran Khan has issued a mandate to establish the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), which will provide legislative and institutional support for the development of the national technology sector. This body will work to encourage modern innovative solutions and futuristic entrepreneurship.

He said that the authority would develop STZs across Pakistan, provide special incentives to attract investors, builders, and technology companies to partner with the government, and also provide one-window facilitation to local and international companies in the STZs. He also briefed the APBF delegation on the investment pipeline developed through Expo 2020 Dubai as well as during the Pakistan Tech Summit held in Istanbul. As a result of the efforts of STZA, several SMEs and startups, as well as universities and venture capital fund managers have planned to enter into the zones.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood,

on this occasion, appreciated STZA Chairman on the progress of the Special Technology Zones and expressed the hope that the plan of rollout of technology zones in all major cities of Pakistan will be successful very soon. He also briefed Amer Hashmi about the initiatives taken by APBF to support business community of Pakistan through B2B meetings, Joint Ventures, Technology Transfers and right match making with the foreign companies.

He pledged that the APBF and STZA would join hands to take solid measures to strengthen the industry, especially the SMEs, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with the small industries. He said that the small and medium enterprises are backbone of the economy and their role was crucial for economic development. He said that major issue of the SMEs is limited access to the financing, as just 5-7 percent of the total lending to the private sector. —Online

Provision of subsidy is govt mandate: NEPRA

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Monday said that provision of subsidy was the mandate of the government.

The Ministry of Energy (Power Division) had devised Subsidy reform program, approved by the ECC of the Cabinet, to be applied in three phases, after approval of NEPRA, said a press release issued here.

The power regulatory had approved first phase approved and notified on October 1, 2021. Now the Ministry of Energy in Phase-II requested for reduction in total net subsidy and removal of previous slab benefit, it was further said. The proposed increase would result in reduction in subsidy by Rs 20 billion.

In second phase no increase has been proposed for the protected consumers. Ministry of Energy (Power Division) will bring Phase-II later for NEPRA approval.

Sania launches 'Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif' app

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar Monday launched the Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif App through enrolling a girl student at Government Girls College Kot Hathiail, commemorating International Day of Education.

The International Day of Education is observed globally on January 24 every year. "Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif" android application has specifically been developed to enable enrolment of children from Ehsaas eligible households at their doorstep. During the event, Dr. Sania herself enrolled a girl in the school stipends program. She sat with children, mothers, and teachers and guided them about the end-to-end digital enrollment process through the newly launched android app.

Balochistan distts suitable for olive cultivation

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Syed Zahoore Ahmad Agha on Monday said that it was positive step for five different public sector universities in Balochistan to plant olive groves on 500 acres. He expressed these views while inaugurating latest olive fruit and oil processing center at Balochistan Agricultural Research and Development Centre.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, he said numerous districts of Balochistan are suitable for olive cultivation and it is gratifying that 70 percent of olive production will be from here. Thirty percent olive oil is being extracted in Balochistan during present era and olive oil is currently sold at three thousand per liter. My services are always available for the completion of any project which is for the benefit of the people, he added. —APP

Justice Ayesha takes oath as first SC woman judge

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Justice Ayesha Malik on Monday has taken oath as the first woman judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP).

According to details, Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed administered the oath to her at a ceremony held in Islamabad. Justice Ayesha A. Malik was born in 1966 and received her early education in Paris, New York and Karachi. She did her B.Com from Karachi and obtained her LLB degree from Lahore. Malik completed her LLM from Harvard Law School, USA. The 55-year-old justice sworn in as a judge of Lahore High Court (LHC) on March 27, 2012.

PM greets Justice Ayesha Malik
Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday felicitated Justice Ayesha A Malik on becoming the first female judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) in country's history. "I want to congratulate Justice Ayesha Malik on becoming the first woman judge of the Supreme Court" Premier wrote on twitter.

CDNS vows to promote digital investments through projects

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has started working to increase new investment opportunities and promote digital investment through many new projects.

The CDNS in collaboration with State Bank of Pakistan is developing digital Prize Bonds, which will be available through online electronic channels, a senior official of CDNS told APP here Monday.

He said the CDNS is in process of launching its first Mobile App for online purchase and encashment of National Savings Schemes.

The official said that for better and efficient transfer of funds electronically, the CDNS is going to adopt RAAST in the current month of January for speedy flow of funds through its financial tributaries, he

said. Initially, the CDNS has opened three separate accounts in SBP to avoid/stop direct access to the Non-Food Account-1 for its ADC operations, 1Link Payment, UPI Payment and RAAST payment. The Finance Division will allocate budgetary ceiling on a daily basis and the CDNS will operate within the allocated funds limit.

Accordingly, the PFM Act, 2019 is adopted in its true spirit for the Alternative Delivery Channels of CDNS. Replying to another question, he said that CDNS obtained Rs 550 billion fresh deposits in half yearly of current fiscal year 2021-22 from the month (July 1 to January 20). He said the CDNS has set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous fiscal year 2020-21

to promote savings in the country.

The senior official said the CDNS had set Rs 250b annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-21 as compared to Rs 352b for the previous year (2019-20) same time span to enhance savings in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352b annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350b for the previous year (2018-19), he said. He informed that the CDNS interest rates were linked with the PIB policy set by the SBP.

He said the CDNS had opened new avenues for public and private investment to document the country's economy and ensure transparency in the financial system. Replying to another question on the current revision of CDNS certificates' profit rates. —APP



LAHORE: Security officials inspect the car and surroundings of murdered spot of Crime Reporter Hasnain Shah, as he was killed by unknown persons outside the Lahore Press Club.