

**Minister inaugurates water boat service at Raghagan dam**

**PESHAWAR:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Zakat, Social Welfare and Women Development, Anwar Zeb Khan on Sunday inaugurated water boat service for tourists at Raghagan Small Dam in Bajaur District. Addressing the ceremony, the minister said that strict security measures had been taken to allow water boats in Raghagan Dam however, no one would be allowed to ride a water-boat without a life-saving jacket. He said that rescue teams along with police personnel have been deployed to deal with any untoward. —APP

# The Business

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**873 files papers for Tehsil Mayor, Chairman Office in 65 Tehsils**

**PESHAWAR:** As many as 873 candidates filed nomination papers for the offices of Tehsil Mayor and Chairmen in 65 Tehsil Councils in the second phase of the local bodies' elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a press release issued by the PEC here Sunday. Similarly, in 1830 village and neighbourhood Councils, 15366 candidates have filed their nomination papers for the general seats while 3488 have filed nomination papers for women seats, 7016 for Labourer/Peasant seats, 6006 for Youth and 120 for Minorities' seats. —

**Fruits valuing \$320.288m exported in seven months**

**ISLAMABAD:** Fruits and vegetables exports from the country during first 7 months of current financial year witnessed about 11.60% and 11.36% increase as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-January, 2021-22, about 377,677 metric tons of fruits valuing \$320.288 million exported as against the exports of 599,629 metric tons worth \$287.001 million of same period last year.

According to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, during the period under review, country fetched \$168.151 million by exporting about 443,512 metric tons of vegetables, which was recorded at \$150.992 million and 373,502 metric tons in same period of last year. Meanwhile, 43,764 metric tons of meat and meat preparations worth \$191.597 million were also exported as against the exports of 55,207 metric tons valuing \$188.788 million of same period last year, it added.

In last 07 month current financial year, about 85,826 metric tons of fish and fish products valuing \$231.584 million were exported as compared to the exports of 98,297 metric tons worth \$220.369 million of same period last year.

It is worth mentioning here that food group exports from the country during first 07 months of current financial year increased by 20.87% as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year as different food commodities worth \$2.952 billion exported as against the exports of \$2.444 billion of same period last year.

The exports of food group from the country witnessed about 14.31% growth on year on year basis in January, 2022 as compared to same month of last year.

During the period under review, the exports of all major food items recorded positive growth as exports of rice grew by 11.16%, fish and fish preparation 5.08%, fruits 11.60%, vegetables 11.36% spices 22.94%, meat and meat preparation 1.68% respectively.

Meanwhile, food group imports into the country also recorded increase of about 21.32% during July-January, 2021-22 as food commodities costing \$5.629 billion imported as against the import of \$4.639 billion of same period last year.

The food group imports into the country on year on year basis also recorded about 13.05% growth in January, 2022 as against the imports of January, 2021.

During month of January, 2022, different food commodities valuing \$830.844 million imported as compared to the import of \$734.953 million of same month last year.

In last 07 months imports of soyabean oil increased by 34.70%, palm oil 55.75%, sugar 49.84%, pulses 14.94%, tea imports into the country grew by 5.48% as corresponding period of last year. —Online

**SC forms six regular benches for next week**

**ISLAMABAD:** Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial has constituted six regular benches at the principal seat Islamabad to hear a number of important cases during the next week, starting from Monday.

The first bench is comprised of Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Ayesha A Malik while the second bench is comprised of Justice Qazi Faiz Isa and Justice Yahya Afridi.

The third bench is comprised of Justice Maqbool Baqar, Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal will form the fourth bench while fifth bench will consist of Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi. The sixth bench will comprise of Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar.

From Thursday the third bench will consist of Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed. From Wednesday the fourth bench will comprise of Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi while the fifth bench will consist of Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed. From Thursday the fifth bench will comprise of Justice Sajjad Ali Shah. —APP



**LAHORE:** Punjab CM Sardar Usman Buzdar witnesses an MoU signing ceremony between Punjab Govt and the Dhabi Group.

## Vast scope of investment opportunities in Iran

LCCI delegation leaves for Iran to explore business opportunities

By Our staff Reporter

**LAHORE:** A 13-member trade delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), headed by its president Mian Nauman Kabir, Sunday left for a seven-day visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran to explore trade and investment opportunities as well as possibilities of joint ventures between the private sectors of the two countries.

The chamber's spokesman told the media that other members of the delegation were Khwaja Shahzad Nasir, Mubashar Naseer Butt, Aqib Asif, Muhammad Arshad, Muhammad Furqan Sarwar, Rana Ali Ahmad Khan, Khwaja Noman Ahmed, Muhammad Amin Atif, Shahram Chaudhry, Atif Amin, Mian Farooq Kabir and Mohammad Moazzam Razi.

The delegation would have meetings and visit Mashhad, Tehran, Isfhan Chambers of Commerce & Industry and the offices of trade organisations.

The LCCI president hoped that the visit would not only bring Pakistani and Iranian businessmen closer but also open doors to joint ventures.

He said that it was a proven fact that the economic prosperity lies in integration with neighbouring countries. Pakistan is eagerly looking forward to expanding trade relations with Iran as there is a vast scope for trade boosting between the two countries. He said that Iranian business-

## Furniture Industry needs to be transformed from cottage to innovative Industry

**ISLAMABAD:** The furniture industry must vigorously be transformed from cottage or small scale industry to innovative industry through training, upgrading supplies and imports, establishing a wood work institute and testing laboratories of international standards.

It was stated by Mian Kashif Ashfaq Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council here Sunday while talking to a delegation of hardware traders led by Ibrahim Kaleem. He said hectic efforts must be made by promoting furniture exports by more regular participation in international shows. All this can happen if there is government will and a vision amongst furniture traders. So far, this remains to be seen he added. He said total world trade in furniture is estimated to be in the tune of \$23.2 billion, of which the share of wooden furniture is 77 percent, followed by metal furniture at 17 percent and plastic furniture at 6 percent. He said Italy is the world's biggest exporter of furniture followed by Germany and Canada. United States is the biggest importer of wooden furniture followed by Germany and France. Mian Kashif said Pakistan's share in the international wooden furniture market is insignificant, despite the fact that the country has a history of craftsmanship and innovation in the field of wooden furniture. The wooden furniture industry represent 95 percent of the total market in the country. The leading furniture making areas of Pakistan are Chinioot, Gujrat, Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi. In terms of exports, Karachi comes first, followed by Lahore and Peshawar.

He said exporters are suffering manifold problems while local manufacturers are facing challenges due to heavy imports of furniture. Chinese furniture has also hit the local industry by 70 percent and the sales of locally manufactured household furniture have gone down significantly. —APP

men were keen to work hand in hand with their Pakistani counterparts; therefore, Pakistani businessmen should avail the opportunity to the maximum. Joint ventures between Pakistani and Iranian businesspeople are the only way to explore the huge opportunities generated after lifting of sanctions on Iran.

## 'Pakistan needs 7pc economic growth to ease debt burden'

**KARACHI:** The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), on Sunday expressing serious concern over the slowdown in growth of big industries in the first half of the current fiscal year, has emphasized the need for reforms agenda to achieve seven percent economic growth rate annually to create two million jobs per annum and reduce the public debt, which has already become unsustainable.

BMP Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar said that the de-industrialization in the country began in 1988 due to the policies implemented under various programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The signing of the Free Trade Agreement with China in 2005 has also badly damaged Pakistan's industrial base since local industrialists failed to compete with the second largest economy of the world.

It is unfortunate that the share of industrial sector shrank from nearly 21% to

19.5%, which suggested that people were moving away from the manufacturing activities. The share of LSM sector, which stood at 11.7% under the old base year, has now shrunk to a mere 9.3%.

He said that the low GDP growth in Pakistan may result in pushing 20 million people below the poverty line as with such a growth rate job opportunities are not creating. He added that Pakistan's economy needs up to seven percent growth rate to avoid falling of more people below the poverty line. FPCCI former president said that the LSM has remained an important source of economic growth in Pakistan. Owing to the encouraging results of this sector in the previous fiscal year coupled with a low base effect, the government managed to show an overall 5.4% economic growth in 2020-21.

However, a constant decline in the share and growth of LSM may cause a lot of problems for the government that is struggling to create new jobs.

The government has targeted 4.8% eco-

nomical growth in the current fiscal year. But the International Monetary Fund has projected that Pakistan's economic growth would stand at 4%, which is a decent rate but nearly half of what is required to create jobs for all new entrants into the market.

He said that the low base effect has so far been driving the growth of large industries as the index had dropped to the low of 86.2 in April 2020 from the peak of 160 before Covid-19 struck Pakistan. The index remained below pre-Covid levels.

The data showed that the final Gross Value Added (GVA) of the LSM sector had been estimated at Rs2.84 trillion in new base estimates compared to Rs2.8 trillion in old base estimates at current prices for 2015-16, showing a modest increase of 1.4%. Mian Anjum Nisar said that LSM has remained an important source of economic growth in Pakistan. Owing to the encouraging results of this sector in the previous fiscal year coupled with a low base effect, the government managed to

**Dr Yasmin distributes Naya Pakistan Qaumi Sehat Cards**

By Our Staff Reporter

**LAHORE:** Punjab Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid distributed Naya Pakistan Qaumi Sehat cards among residents of UC-59 and UC-60 of NA-125 here on Sunday.

The ceremony was organized by Haji Matin-ur-Rehman, Haji Allah Dutta and Mehr Nadim. The event was attended by Zubair Khan Niazi, Javed Ikram Tony, Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor Pappu, Ran Naseem, Malik Kamran, Sheikh Zulfiqar Ali and a large number of locals. The people of the area chanted slogans for Prime Minister Imran Khan and Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and greeted her with flower petals.

Zubair Khan Niazi, Javed Ikram Tony and others paid tributes to Dr. Yasmin Rashid for her services in the health sector.

Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid addressed the residents and said, "I congratulate Haji Matin-ur-Rehman and Haji Allah Dutta for organizing distribution ceremony of Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Cards. Prime Minister Imran Khan in his first speech after taking oath had said that providing better health facilities to the people will be his first priority.

The insurance limit of Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Card has been increased from Rs. 720,000 to Rs. One million. By 31st March, free healthcare facility will be provided to all 30 million people of Punjab. All family heads with valid CNICs will be given Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Cards.

It is very important for all to register family details with NADRA. Complete details of free health facilities and other information can be obtained through Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Card App. For further queries people may contact helpline number 0800-09009. So far, more than 763,000 people have availed free health insurance facility. Over 14,000 people have availed free cardiac treatment facility through Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Card and 98% card users have expressed satisfaction with the services. People of Punjab are very appreciative of this program."

The Health Minister further said, "No past government ever thought of the free treatment of people. Past government focused on roads and bridges and never paid attention to free health facilities. Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Card is big step towards Riyasat-i-Madina as promised by Prime Minister Imran Khan where free healthcare facilities will be available to people of Punjab. People can get information on their eligibility of Naya Pakistan Qomi Sehat Card by texting CNIC to 8500. Prime Minister Imran Khan will fulfill all the promises made to people. We will end corruption and taxpayers money will be spent on people alone."

**Capital reports lowest Covid daily cases count since Jan 20**

**ISLAMABAD:** Health officials on Sunday reported only 62 new Coronavirus cases in the federal capital, making it the lowest single-day tally in the last 30 days.

According to an official of the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), as many as 1,359 cases were reported on the same date in the last month of January while the figure remained high during the whole month.

He said that as many as 89 cases were reported on Saturday while 84 cases were reported on Friday. He added so far 133,764 cases were reported from the federal capital and 1,002 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 131,617 patients had been recovered completely.

Meanwhile, on the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different areas of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors.

They also started taking action on a violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration had been asked to take action on the violation of SOPs at shops, workshops, and restaurants.

The inspection teams had been directed to issue notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops in case of violation of SOPs. —APP

**BRT bringing Pakistani urban dwellers into modern life**

**BEIJING:** In recent years, with China's technical and financial co-operation, the Pakistani government has been committed to the development of the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train and Bus Rapid Transit Systems (BRT) in Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Multan, Peshawar and Faisalabad by leaps and bounds.

Now the urban transportation has taken on a whole new look and the urban dwellers have entered a modern life, according to an article published by China Economic Net (CEN). From a technical point of view, these urban transportation facilities jointly constructed by China and Pakistan are at the world leading level. Lately, the BRT system of Peshawar with its unprecedented services to the citizens has been

ranked as Gold Standard Service - the highest internationally recognized standard that any BRT system can achieve - by the Technical Committee of BRT Standard. It is a great honor for Peshawar, capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan to have achieved the world highest possible BRT ranking and Peshawar is the first city in South Asian Subcontinent, third in Asia and seventh worldwide to have received the Gold Standard Service Ranking Award.

Peshawar BRT constructed by China Hualu Group Co. LTD. is recipient of this award due to its passenger-oriented services, bus routes based on passenger needs, adopting clean technology for buses, improving safety, promoting non-mo-

torized traffic and utilization of all possible resources to facilitate the public. Chinese Jinlv Bus has won the bid in the international open bidding, becoming the only vehicle supplier of BRT project in Peshawar. These buses are specially customized according to the local needs of Peshawar, and the highest international standards are adopted in the process and reliability design of the whole vehicle. The vehicle is equipped with air conditioning, Wi-Fi, USB interface, barrier free access facilities, etc., providing the local citizens of Peshawar with a comfortable travel experience unimaginable in the past. The completion and operation of the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train and BRT systems in major cities in Pakistan have greatly alleviated. —Online



**ISLAMABAD:** Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Khan Afridi calls on Chief Minister GB Muhammad Khalid Khurshid Khan at the GB House.