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Pending uplift projects being revived: Dastgir

FAISALABAD: Minister for Power Engineer Khuram Dastgir Khan has said that all development projects, put in cold store during the last 4 years, are being revived. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of 220-KV Lalian grid station, completed with Rs 4 billion, he said on Monday when Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) came to power in 2013, the country was facing the worst-ever load-shedding of 18 to 20 hours per day. Similarly, the country was also experiencing terrorism and killings were continuing in Karachi and other parts of the country.

This situated had discouraged foreign investors, he said, adding that Nawaz Sharif, however, made concerted efforts and he not only overcame shortage of electricity but also

restored peace in the country. He also initiated a new chapter in the progress of Pakistan by introducing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He lamented that an anti-development group succeeded in grabbing power and the development process was stopped, which remained suspended for the last four years.

"We will once again restore the same momentum of progress and prosperity which the country experienced during 2013-2018," he said, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would also proceed to China on Nov 1 and the government would restart work on different projects under CPEC with a renewed commitment and zeal. He said that Nawaz had a vision for progress of Pakistan. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif announces Kissan Package in a Press Conference.

■ 'Kissan Package' aims to uplift small farmers

Shehbaz unveils Rs 1800b package for agri sector

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday announced a fresh relief package for the agriculture sector in a bid to strengthen the country's economy. Addressing a press conference, he said that through the 'Kissan Package', the government has devised measures that are in the best interest of Pakistan.

"Pakistan's economic progress is 100 percent linked with agriculture growth," he stressed. "We have decided to offer a package to farmers with a focus on small scale cultivators." He announced that loans worth Rs1.8 trillion will be given to farmers. Moreover, PM Shehbaz said that markup of small farmers in flood-affected areas of Pakistan will be waived and the government has earmarked Rs10.6 billion for it.

According to him, Rs50b have been set aside to provide loans to youngsters who seek employment in agriculture sector in rural areas of Pakistan. In addition, subsidy to the tune of Rs6.4b will be given to reduce interest on loans. An additional Rs10b have been allocated for modernisation of the agriculture sector.

He also added that 1.2 million bags of certified wheat seeds will be given to farmers to ensure food security in the country. Pakistan will import 2.6 million tons of wheat in the ongoing fiscal year.

He lamented that banks in Pakistan looked for secure investment and demanded high collateral from farmers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). "SMEs are backbone of every progressive economy and I have asked finance minister to penalize the financial institutions that do not facilitate small businesses," he said. He underlined that the agriculture sector had the potential to boost the economy within six months.

PM Shehbaz lamented that tractor manufacturing was a monopoly in Pakistan and added that the government held discussions with tractor makers to reduce prices but they proved to be unfruitful. He expressed concern that tractor prices were out of reach for a common farmer. "Till today, tractors could not be imported but now, we permit the import of second-hand tractors up to five years old," he said. "Moreover

50% rebate on import duty will be allowed on tractors that are exactly 5 years old and 36% on 3-year old tractors."

He also announced that if a new entrepreneur entered tractor manufacturing segment, the duty on import of completely-knocked down (CKD) units will be reduced from 35% to 15%.

The PM further said that 500,000 tons of urea has to be imported and the govt has already received 200,000 tons. "The suppliers asked for \$600 per ton but after negotiations, they reduced it to \$500 per ton," he said. In addition, Rs30b subsidy will be allocated for urea as well, he said. The PM stated that farmers in Pakistan had 300,000 electricity-run tubewells. "We will give such farmers interest free loans to install solar system for their tubewells which will reduce prices," he said.

PM to pay two-day visit to China today

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will pay a two-day official visit to China today (Tuesday) at the invitation of Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council

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Karachi-Hyderabad motorway, ML-1 to be inked in China

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Monday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China would take the bilateral trade relations to new heights as both the countries would sign multiple projects worth billions of dollars.

The PM's visit to China will help preparing a roadmap to take the country's annual exports to \$100b and beyond, the minister said while addressing a press conference here. He said during the visit, Pakistan would sign an agreement with China to seek first hand technical experience from the all weather friendly country. He said China, on many occasions have expressed its desire to help Pakistan making industrial economy but unfortunately previous govt of PTI wasted four precious years by suspending the most important mega project of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

On October 27, meeting of the JCC was held virtually in which the CPEC

projects were reviewed, and both sides agreed to expand the scope of the project and to expedite work of ongoing projects under CPEC. It was also agreed that the final agreement would be signed during visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted that Pakistan's most important project was the railway's ML-1 as the existing system had become outdated therefore this project would have to be initiated on emergency basis.

Unfortunately, he pointed out that due to the criminal negligence of the previous government, this project witnessed zero progress during last several years which also caused increase in cost by \$3 billion from earlier approved cost of \$6.8 billion to \$9.8 billion. Further, he informed that a new road project of Karachi-Hyderabad motorway would also be signed during the visit and the work on new motorway between Karachi and Hyderabad would start after the visit.

Similarly Karachi's KCR project would also be signed during the visit to provide the citizens state of the art transportation facility in line with the Orange Train in Lahore. Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob Road project and Mirpur-Muzafarabad-Manshehra Road project are also likely to be signed under CPEC, he said, adding that Babusar tunnel project has also been included in the CPEC.

He said the both countries would also sign a project to establish national forensic laboratory in Islamabad to help the security institutions to cope with the extremism and terrorism by using the modern technology. Agreement for exporting agriculture products from Pakistan to China would also be signed besides inking a project to enhance the capacity of Met Department. This visit of PM is of utmost importance as it would not only bring the country out of isolation but would also boost economic ties with the world's strong economy, he added. —APP

Asif Bilal Lodhi given charge of Information Secy

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Mansoor Ahmad, (PAS/BS-190 Additional Secretary Information and Culture Department, Government of the Punjab, Has been transferred with immediate effect and posted as Punjab Cooperative Board for Liquidation (PCBL) in his pay and scale, on deputation against a vacant post. He is also relieved of the additional charge of the post of Secretary to Government of the Punjab, Information and Culture Department.

Muhammad Asif Bilal Lodhi, (PAS/BS-20), Secretary to Government of the Punjab, Excise, Taxation Department & Narcotics Control Department, has also been entrusted the charge of the post of Secretary to Government of the Punjab, Information and Culture Department, in addition to its own duties, till further orders.

Ayaz Sadiq appointed federal law minister

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The government has appointed PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq as the country's new law minister, nearly a week after Azam Nazeer Tarar tendered his resignation from the post. A notification has been issued for the appointment of Sadiq to the post. He has been handed the portfolio of law and justice in addition to his duties as minister for economic affairs.

Tarar had tendered his resignation from his position a week back, citing personal reasons. In his resignation, Tarar stated that personal reasons are behind his decision to quit the office. "I have the great honour and privilege to serve my country as the federal minister for law and justice under the able leadership of Mian Mohammed Shehbaz Shareef," he had said in his resignation letter. "However, due to personal reasons, I am unable to discharge my duties as the federal minister."

Decision taken to form commission in Arshid case

ISLAMABAD: Decision has been taken to constitute a three-member inquiry commission in connection with murder case of senior journalist Arshid Sharif.

According to sources, a three-member inquiry commission will be headed by Justice (Retd) Abdul Shakoor Paracha. The Commission is being formed under Pakistan commission of inquiry act-2017. Interior Ministry has sent summary to cabinet for its approval regarding commission. Sources said the approval to summary of commission will be obtained from cabinet through circulation.

Earlier a two-member high-level investigation committee is there in Kenya to ascertain the causes leading to murder of senior journalist Arshid Sharif. —Online

Rupee settles with 0.72pc gain

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Pakistan's rupee ended its three-session depreciation run against the US dollar, and settled with a significant gain of 0.72 percent in the inter-bank on Monday, even as the greenback strengthened against other currencies.

As per the SBP, the rupee closed at 220.89 after an appreciation of Rs1.58. During the previous week, the rupee fell 0.73 percent against the US dollar. Its reported shortage in the open market and the long-march announcement by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan caused a bit of a stir among official circles.

In a key development on Saturday, however, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar said the government has initiated efforts to control volatility and

PSX gains 0.3 percent amid thin volumes

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) recorded a positive session on Monday as the KSE-100 Index inched up 0.3% amid low investor participation. Looming political uncertainty kept market participants at bay and they waited for clarity. By the end of the session, the KSE-100 Index rose 124.32 points or 0.3% to close at 41,264.66.

Trading began with a spike and the index maintained the rising momentum throughout the session. A selling spree was witnessed in the final hour that erased few of the gains but still the market ended the session in the green. Index heavy automobile, cement, chemical, banking and oil

sectors closed with gains while fertiliser segment took a hammering and recorded losses.

A report from Arif Habib Limited stated that despite the lack of investor participation, a positive session was witnessed at the PSX. "Prevailing political clatter kept the volumes dry in the main board as third tier stocks continued to be the volumes leaders," it said. A report from Capital Stake stated that bulls made a comeback at the PSX on first trading session of the week.

"Indices traded in green all day long whereas volumes shrunk from last close," it said.

On the economic front, rupee gained Rs1.5 or 0.71% against the US dollar ending the session at Rs220.89.

Caravan will reach Islamabad within 9 days: IK

From Our Staff Correspondent

GUJRANWALA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Monday said that his party's caravan will reach Islamabad within nine days.

Addressing the PTI's participants in the Mor Aimanabad area of Gujranwala, the former prime minister expressed his gratitude to his supporters, saying that in his way towards the city, people showered their love for him. Reiterating that his movement is not about doing politics, but 'jihad' to bring actual change in the country, the PTI chief said that his motive to

gather his supporters to Islamabad is to bring real freedom to the country.

Slamming PM Shehbaz, Imran said, the one who plunder Rs24b has been allowed to come into power. He went on to say that the nation will get freedom, where the prevailing law will be same for both the privilege and underprivileged segments of society.

Imran Khan will serve Rs 10b notice on CEC

Former PM Imran announced on Monday he would serve a Rs 10b notice to Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja for "damaging" his reputation. Imran made the announcement while resuming his long march from Kamoke in Punjab.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Ch Parvez Elahi gives away Rs 50 Lac cheque to daughter of Sadaf Naem of Channel 5 Nimra Naem, son Azan Naem and uncle Naveed Bhatti.

CM approves to upgrade Data Ganj Bakhsh shrine

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A meeting held under the chair of Punjab CM Ch Parvez Elahi at his office, in principle approved to upgrade the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hujwiri Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA).

Addressing the meeting, the chief minister said that automatic umbrellas will be installed so that thousands of pilgrims could be able to sit in the courtyard during the summer season. While approving the plan to expand the verandah around the shrine, the CM said that the expansion of the shrine will provide convenience to the visitors. Explosive detectives will

be installed to make the underground parking safe, he noted. Elahi ordered action to end encroachments and illegal occupation around the complex.

In the meeting, the proposals to build a vertical parking plaza near the shrine and to build an underground or an overhead bridge for visitors crossing the road in front of the Mazar complex were reviewed.

Parvez gives Rs 5m cheque to daughter of Sadaf Naem

The daughter of senior journalist Sadaf Naem of Channel 5 Nimra Naem, son Azan Naem, uncle Naveed Bhatti and a close friend Marwa Ansar called on Chief Minister

Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.

The CM expressed heartfelt sympathies with them and offered fatha for the departed soul. He presented a cheque worth five million rupees to Nimra Naem as financial assistance.

The CM has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of police driver Constable Liaquat Ali due to a heart attack while on duty and announced financial assistance of Rs two million for the heirs.

The Parvez Elahi has sought a report from IG police about violence against journalists in Kamoke.

On the notice of the CM, SHO Kamoke City Police Station Manzar Saeed and the responsible officials