

PAK LAW PUBLICATION

NEWS

UPDATES

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Top Stories

\$34 billion investment to constitute no liability to government: Asif

September 10, 2014

WASIM IQBAL

Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif on Tuesday said that \$34 billion Chinese investment was a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and not a loan as claimed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in one of his recent addresses to his sit-in. According to him, this amount will constitute no liability on the part of government of Pakistan. The Minister for Water and Power was responding to the accusations levelled by Imran Khan against the government.

Speaking at a press conference he said that probably Imran Khan had no clue to the Chinese investment. He (Imran) should consult his colleagues before issues of any statement on Chinese investment. Asif further said that a \$34 billion Chinese investment has been approved by the Chinese government after it assessed the future needs of electricity in Pakistan.

He said that the Chinese government had made financial arrangements with three Chinese banks, including Exim, which would provide loans to Chinese companies for investment in Pakistan's power sector, railways and transport sector, adding that this loan would not reflect on Pakistan's balance sheet.

The Minister further said that the coal-based power projects would not use Chinese coal. He said that investment in Thar Coal project was also included in the \$34 billion investment and the rate of return of coal based plants was 17 to 27 per cent. Responding to Imran Khan's allegations that the cost of coal-based power was \$1.45 million per megawatt whereas in India it was 55,000 dollars per megawatt, Asif said that India produced 60 to 70 percent material whereas Pakistan had to import all material for power plants. Coal-based power plants would be on imported coal, he added.

About the delay in the appointment of Chairman NEPRA, he said that "NEPRA is most independent body of all the regulatory bodies. It represents all provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhawa (KPK) and decisions are taken in consultation." He further said that if there were some proposals that Chinese companies would be exempted from NEPRA rules, however, no amendments were made in the NEPRA laws.

He maintained that the government was ready for any scrutiny/accountability in the parliament and ruled out any possibility of bypassing any bidding rule in the award of contracts to Chinese firms. He recalled that the government had published an advertisement for Gaddani Power Projects and bids would also be invited through international competitive bidding for upcoming power plants.

Responding to a question, the minister said that it was mandatory for successful bidders for power projects to produce reports feasibility to Chinese banks with a view to getting loans. "The Government of Pakistan will not give any sovereign guarantees to Chinese investors who will install power plants on the existing PPI mode," he emphasised.

Khawja Asif further revealed that the Government of Pakistan obtained concessional loans from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank at 2-4 per cent mark up. Chinese banks will release commercial loans to private companies on a mark-up of 7 percent, in Pakistan, according to him.

Responding to another question, he said that Chinese companies would set up power plants to generate 10,400 MW power to meet the domestic and industrial needs of future. He further announced that soon a policy would envisage the setting up of transmission lines by private sector to expand the capacity of the existing transmission system which could presently carry up to only 16000 MW of power.

He also claimed that PTI leader had paid his utility bills and electricity would be disconnected in case of non-payment of bills. Asif said that Islamabad Electric Supply Company confirmed that Khan had paid two electricity bills of his Bani Gala residence. He also ruled out that the Mian Mansha group was part of U\$34 billion investment. "He [Mian Mansha] will also be required to go through the bidding process if he wants to set up a power plant," he said adding that two coal-based power plants were being set up in Thar. He also ruled out any role of Saifur Rehman, former chief of NAB, in power plants deal.

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Sit-ins have caused Rs one trillion loss: Ahsan

September 10, 2014

The government has claimed that anti-government sit-ins of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) have so far caused a Rs 1,000 billion loss to the country's economy. Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, who was flanked by Minister of State Anusha Rehman, blamed the PTI chairman Imran Khan for 'sabotaging' the Chinese President's visit to Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal said that there was a 4.3% depreciation in the value of rupee since the start of sit-ins which resulted in a Rs 250 billion increase in the foreign debt of the country. He added the national economy had suffered a loss of one thousand billion rupees due to politics of sit-ins. The consumers were also deprived of a Rs 150 billion benefit due to falling prices of oil in the international market in the face rupee depreciation, he added.

He said the Karachi Stock Exchange index also plummeted and as a result the stock market suffered losses worth about Rs 350 billion. He regretted that Imran made false statements over GDP growth rate. Iqbal said on insistence of Imran, the IMF scrutinised the data and finally came out with a statement saying that GDP growth rate was now expected to rise to 4.3% in 2014-15 as compared to provisional estimates of 4.1% for the last financial year.

Urging the PTI chairman to end his sit-in, Iqbal invited him to return to the National Assembly and play his role of an opposition leader. "On the one hand talks are going on between PTI and government and on the other hand Imran is busy victimising others; such attitude of Khan can derail the talks process," Iqbal said.

Replying to Imran's allegations about vote rigging, particularly in 35 constituencies, Minister of State Anusha Rehman said that 35 constituencies were not from Punjab but from across the country. "Najam Sethi who is the centre of debate for 35 punctures in some constituencies was not selected by the PML-N as a caretaker CM Punjab and he had jurisdiction only in Punjab not across the country, so it is completely wrong to say that he was involved in rigging in these constituencies," she added.

It was ridiculous to say that the caretakers appointed by the PPP-led government had paved the way for a PML-N victory. According to her, it was for the first time in the history of the country that a chief election commissioner was appointed through national consensus, she added. She said that the fairness of May 2013 elections was acknowledged by neutral observers. The PML-N won elections in 12 constituencies out of the so-called "35 constituencies" where according to the PTI elections were rigged, which proved that the allegations were baseless, she maintained.

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Sit-ins in 'Red Zone': Supreme Court urged to exercise principle of political justice

September 10, 2014

KHUDAYAR MOHLA

Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian and Jamaat-i-Islami on Tuesday urged Supreme Court to exercise the principle of political justice to deal with sit-ins in the Red Zone of Islamabad. Both the political parties urged the apex court to pass a just and fair order over the ongoing sit-ins of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The Supreme Court had asked all the parliamentary parties to file comprehensive replies in response to identical petitions against anti-government protests of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) by September 10. Filing their replies through Aitzaz Ahsan, both the political parties supported contentions of identical pleas, terming them competent and maintainable under Article 184 (3) on the principle of political justice.

Ahsan substantiated his arguments by citing a number of precedents of the apex court from 1988 to 2012 through which the court had held on various occasions that loyalty to the state is the basic duty of every citizen and obedience to the constitution and law is the inviolable obligation of every citizen wherever he may be and of every other person for the time being in Pakistan. Meanwhile, the PTI also filed a reply through counsel Barrister Yousaf Khosa requesting the Supreme Court to determine as many as 16 questions in the matter.

The text of the questions the PTI asked is as under: Whether the Supreme Court has got the

jurisdiction to grant the Constitutional Petition 74 of 2014 in terms of Article 184(3) read with Article 199 of the Constitution? Does the definition of 'person' provided in Article 199(5) read with Article 184(3) of the Constitution include a political party duly registered under laws of Pakistan and, particularly, in terms of a direction by the Supreme Court to such a political party for its compliance?

Whether any judgement can be passed by the apex court to direct or regulate a political gathering, in the form of a Dharna, already in place with retrospective effect? What does the word "Dharna" mean in the context of the existing Constitutional Petition 74 of 2014? How should a political Dharna be regulated in the future ie by way of the judgement of this Court or enactment of legislation pertaining to the same balancing the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution, State's role in the regulation of Dharna, and use of force by the police or any other law enforcement agencies of the State?

Is there at present any pertinent legislation which regulates "Dharnas" in Pakistan? What is the scope of the Article 16 of Constitution in respect of such Dharnas? What amounts to a reasonable restriction imposed by the law? What would fall under the remit of 'interest of public order'? Where does the test lie for determining the extent of the reasonableness of the restrictions and what actions would be in the interest of public order? What is the redressal mechanism for citizens of Pakistan who are of the view that they have been deprived of their right to assembly as provided under the Constitution and deprived unlawfully by the State?

What is the scope of Article 19 of the Constitution? What is the redressal mechanism available against those who have breached the Constitutional Right guaranteed under Article 19? What are the responsibilities and obligations of the government against whom such a political Dharna is being exercised? Who and how, will regulate the actions of the government against whom such a political Dharna is to be or being exercised?

What is the balance among various fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 9, 12,15,16,17,18 and 19 of the Constitution read with Article 4 and 5 of the Constitution and whether the State machinery can curb one right on the pretext of protecting the other? A larger bench of Chief Justice Nasirul Mulk is scheduled to hear petitions on Wednesday (today).

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Government-PAT talks: Minister anticipates breakthrough

September 10, 2014

Another round of talks between the government and Pakistan Awami Teh-reek (PAT) teams Tuesday failed to secure any breakthrough. Talking to media persons after holding a meeting with the PAT, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal expressed the hope that both sides would arrive at an acceptable solution anytime soon. He added the government wanted to resolve all the issues amicably at the earliest, adding that the government had responded to the demands of PAT and talks were progressing positively.

According to him, an understanding would be achieved in the next round of dialogue scheduled for today (Wednesday), "which may turn out to be final." He said the government was trying to take the dialogue process to its logical end so that sit-ins could end as these were causing a huge damage to the national economy. On this occasion, members of the Political Jirga were also present. Leader of the Jirga Sirajul Haq hoped the crisis would be resolved in a peaceful manner. Rehman Malik said he had proposed a solution that provided a way forward for all. He said the Prime Minister was co-operating out of the way in facilitating the work of Jirga.

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Flooding tests Trimmu's resilience; Panjnad to be next big challenge

September 10, 2014

Heavy thunderstorm and subsequent flash floods have caused 231 deaths and inundated 1457 villages in Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well as in Gilgit-Baltistan, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Tuesday. The high levels of flood with a combined thrust of Chenab, Jhelum and Ravi has reached the Trimmu Headwork where the discharge of flood water is being monitored view a view to reducing the impact of floods on population at risk.

Crops on an estimated 0.43 acres of land were destroyed and 581,193 people were affected in Punjab and AJK. According to flood warnings, River Chenab at Panjnad is likely to attain 600,000 cusecs to 700,000 cusecs exceptionally high flood from September 12- 15. Under this condition, districts of Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal, Layyah, Muzaffargarh and Multan are likely to be inundated.

Due to a second wave in River Chenab peak, exceptionally high flood (above 600,000 cusecs) at Trimmu will persist for next 24 to 48 hours with a likely peak discharge of 800,000 cusecs, till September 12. Under this condition, districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh are likely to be inundated. The monsoon weather situation report suggested the concerned authorities to take all necessary measures to avoid any loss of life and property.

The data further reveals that a medium amount of flood water has accumulated in the Qadirabad head-works on River Chenab (807,000 cusecs) whereas the Trimmu Barrage is receiving 645,000 cusecs of water on River Chenab. According to details, the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels and the barrages Tuesday is: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 117,000 cusecs and outflows 76,400 cusecs; Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 19,500 cusecs and outflows 19,500 cusecs; Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 80,000 cusecs and outflows 54,900 cusecs; Chenab at Marala: Inflows 85,400 cusecs and outflows 82,400 cusecs. River Ravi at Balloki: Inflow 131,800 cusecs and outflows 110,500.

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KP chief minister presents Rs 100 million cheque to CoAS

September 10, 2014

KP Chief Minister Pervez Khattak called on Army Chief Raheel Sharif at GHQ Rawalpindi and presented him a cheque of 100 million rupees for relief activities for flood affectees and IDPs on behalf of KP government and people of province. Meanwhile, the KP chief minister also visited Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar and inquired after the health of Mian Jamsheduddin Kakakhel, Minister for Excise and Taxation, who is admitted there for treatment.

Provincial Minister Shahram Khan Tarakai and Muhammad Atif Khan were also present on this occasion. CM remains there for some time and prayed for early recovery of Mian Jamsheduddin KakaKhel.

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At least 22 killed as mosque roof caves in

September 10, 2014

At least 22 people lost their lives and nine received serious injuries when the roof of a mosque caved in on Tuesday in the vicinity of Daroghawala, here. Meanwhile, another thirty people were reportedly trapped under debris. The rescue operation was underway till the filing of this report. DG Rescue Dr Rizwan said the rescue teams were facing problem in taking the people out of debris.

Over twenty people were still stuck beneath the rubble, he added. It may be noted that the people were offering Zuhr prayers when the roof caved in. Local residents are helping out the rescue operation in pulling out people from under the rubble. According to some eyewitnesses, the roof of the mosque caved in after the tomb at the rooftop collapsed and hit the roof.

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30 percent less rains: Sindh faces no major flood threat: official

September 10, 2014

Additional Secretary Irrigation Aslam Ansari on Tuesday said that there is no danger of massive destruction from floods in Sindh as the flood surge coming from Punjab will lose its steam and only 650,000 cusecs of water will enter Sindh on 15th September which would be only 2-3 feet above embankments.

Speaking along with other Secretary Rehabilitation Roshan Shaikh at a press conference at Sindh Secretariat, Ansari said that 1.14 million cusecs of water passed through Jehlum and Chenab but before entering Sindh at least 150,000 cusecs of water would be left behind after embankments would be demolished in Punjab while 350,000 cusecs water would be lost between Kot Mithan and Guddu.

He said that 45 sensitive positions were identified at different embankments, where machinery had been sent for their strengthening. "We have cancelled holidays of all irrigation officers and they would work round the clock to monitor the situation," he said adding that flood water would benefit fields in the Katcha areas. Speaking on the occasion, Director General PDMA Salman Shah said that there was no need to panic as deputy commissioners of Larkana and Sukkur were alerted to monitor the situation. He said that the Katcha areas along the River Indus would be vacated and instructions in this regard had been conveyed to the concerned authorities.

"We have shifted boats, tents, medicines and other relief goods to the would-be affected areas and armed forces are requested to remain standby for relief activities," he said. The DG PDMA said that special arrangements based on modern technology were devised to avert destruction while Rs 20 million were given to each deputy commissioner for relief activities. He said the district disaster management authority would have representation from civil society and media to make rehabilitation process transparent.

Shah further said that the Chief Minister Sindh would visit Larkana and Sukkur to oversee the flood-avoiding and rehabilitation arrangements. He said that there were suitable rains in Tharparkar that had lessened the drought chances in the region. "A meeting of Tharparkar stakeholders was held in Nagarparker where committees regarding installation of bio-plants, agriculture, livestock, forests and craftsmen were formed which submitted their initial findings while complete reports would be made public soon," he added.

"The stakeholders will devise a strategy for Tharparkar after considering different reports and plan for the districts development would be formed and implemented in this regard," he said. Shah said that there were less rains in Thana Bola Khan, Thatta and other districts of the province and the provincial authorities were monitoring the situation and would declare these areas drought-hit if needed.

Director Meteorological Department Tauseef Ahmed said that there would be 30 percent less rains in the province this year; however, there were rains in Tharparkar and a rain-system was present in Rajasthan which would cause rainfall in Tharparkar after five days.

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Circular debt brought down to Rs 238 billion, Dar informed

September 10, 2014

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Tuesday chaired a meeting of the committee constituted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on energy resource rationalisation for power sector here. Secretary Water & Power Nargis Sethi briefed the Finance Minister on the overall recovery position and collection of the amount due. She said circular debt has further been reduced to the level of Rs 238 billion which was stuck at Rs 295 billion a few weeks back.

She told the minister that she is planning to hold a meeting shortly with DISCOs to discuss improvements in the billing cycle. She assured the minister that all available resources will be utilised to make a comprehensive collection model. The finance minister directed the secretary water and power to take further steps to reduce the amount of circular debt of DISCOs and make people aware how they could reduce their bills substantially by conserving electricity during peak hours.

He further directed the secretary water & power to direct DISCOs to reduce their line losses from the figure approved by Nepra. Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Mussadiq Malik briefed the Finance Minister that he and his team have been working hard on their strategy to reduce line losses.

According to the model they have been following, Lesco will be able to reduce 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent losses for non-industrial connections and 1.5 percent for industrial connections by mid-October. This exercise is expected to save Rs 180 million monthly on sub division level. From January onwards when this plan will be implemented on feeder level, the monthly saving will reach to Rs 1 billion. The Finance Minister directed Mussadiq Malik to make more teams for the implementation of this plan and replicate this model in one of the DISCOs in Sindh.-PR

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'Alarm bells' as greenhouse gases hit new high: UN

September 10, 2014

Surging carbon dioxide levels boosted greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to a new high in 2013, amid worrying signs that absorption by land and sea is waning, the UN warned Tuesday. "An alarm bell is ringing," Michel Jarraud, head of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), told reporters in Geneva. In its annual report on Earth-warming greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the UN agency said concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide all broke records in 2013.

"We know without any doubt that our climate is changing and our weather is becoming more extreme due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels," Jarraud said. "We must reverse this trend by cutting emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases across the board," he said in a statement, and warned: "we are running out of time." Especially worrying, Jarraud said, was the sharp rise in CO₂, by far the main culprit in global warming, to 396 parts per million in the atmosphere last year.

That was 142 percent of levels prior to the year 1750, and marked a hike of 2.9 parts per million between 2012 and 2013 - the largest annual increase in 30 years. It was not clear why concentrations rose so sharply, but Jarraud suggested it could be due to a shift in the ability of oceans and the biosphere to absorb emissions.

Oceans swallow about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, while the biosphere sucks up another quarter, so any change "could potentially have big consequences," he warned. "Clearly now we have a signal, ... a worrying signal," said Jarraud. University of Reading meteorology professor William Collins said the WMO's suggestion that the biosphere may be removing less CO₂ as the climate warms was credible, and implied a "future amplification of climate change".

"We can't expect to benefit from this natural removal for ever," he warned. Tuesday's report came ahead of a September 23 summit called by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to try and build momentum ahead of the 2015 deadline for a historic climate deal to be signed in Paris, to take effect from 2020. The UN is seeking to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, but scientists say that on current emission trends, temperatures could be double that by century's end.

"We have the knowledge and we have the tools for action to try to keep temperature increases within two degrees Celsius to give our planet a chance and to give our children and grandchildren a future," Jarraud said, insisting that "pleading ignorance can no longer be an excuse for not acting". Professor Dave Reay, chair in carbon management at the University of Edinburgh, reacted to the report with dismay. "This is the litmus test when it comes to our efforts to reduce emissions and on this evidence we are failing," he said.

The findings are especially worrying since CO₂ remains in the atmosphere for hundreds of years and in the oceans for even longer. While the ocean's absorption of CO₂ helps limit global warming, "the bad news is that it contributes to the acidification of the ocean," Jarraud said. Increased acidity not only alters the ocean's ecosystem, but can also reduce its ability to absorb more CO₂, he said.

Every day the world's oceans absorb some four kg (8.8 pounds) of CO₂ per person, the WMO said, adding that ocean acidification levels were "unprecedented at least over the last 300 million years". And things will only get worse, said Jarraud. "Past, present and future CO₂ emissions will have a cumulative impact on both global warming and ocean acidification," he said, adding that "the laws of physics are non-negotiable".

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British party leaders head to Scotland as vote tightens

September 10, 2014

The leaders of Britain's three main political parties announced a last-minute trip to Scotland on Tuesday to boost the campaign against independence after a surge in separatist support ahead of next week's referendum. Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and opposition Labour leader Ed Miliband agreed to skip their weekly debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday and instead head north, reflecting a new sense of urgency in the unionist camp.

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg, the deputy prime minister in the coalition government, will also hit the campaign trail after opinion polls suggest the break-up of the 300-year-old union is now a real possibility. "There's a lot that the political leaders disagree about but there's one thing that we all agree about passionately and that is that our United Kingdom is better off if we stay together," Cameron told reporters. "So tomorrow the right place to be isn't in Westminster at prime minister's questions, it's being in Scotland listening to people, talking to people."

With just nine days to go until the referendum on September 18, the campaign to keep the UK together is scrambling to adapt to a narrowing of the polls, which had indicated an easy victory for their side as recently as last month. A YouGov poll at the weekend put the pro-independence "Yes" camp ahead for the first time, while another on Tuesday put the two parties neck and neck. In response, the three unionist parties unveiled a timetable for the transfer of new powers over income tax and welfare spending to the devolved Scottish government, and said work would begin immediately after a "No" vote.

But First Minister Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), dismissed the initiative as a "back-of-an-envelope non-plan". And he said the "extraordinary, last-minute" trip by Cameron, Miliband and Clegg would not help their cause. "The 'No' campaign think that they are losing this campaign - and these hugely distrusted Westminster leaders trooping up to Scotland is only going to boost that process," he said.

Cameron's Conservatives are not popular in Scotland - they have just one Scottish member of parliament out of 59 and he is trusted by just 23 percent of Scots, according to a recent YouGov poll. Miliband's Labour party has a stronger presence Scotland, but he has the same dismal personal rating. "The message of this extraordinary, last minute reaction is that the Westminster elite are in a state of absolute panic as the ground in Scotland shifts under their feet," Salmond said.

The YouGov poll on Sunday put the "Yes" camp ahead by two points, a major development given that the same polling company put them 22 points behind one month earlier. Another poll on Tuesday by TNS Scotland confirmed the two sides were neck and neck, putting the "Yes" camp on 38 percent and the "No" side on 39 percent. "This poll reveals a remarkable shift in voting intentions. It's too close to call," said TNS Scotland head Tom Costley. The polls show Labour voters in particular are shifting towards independence, prompting former Labour prime minister Gordon Brown to launch a six-day tour of campaign events.

Cameron had been taking a back seat but the polls have changed the political landscape, prompting a rare show of unity with his rivals - although they are not expected to share a platform when they are in Scotland. The blue and white Scottish saltire flag was hoisted over Cameron's Downing Street office on Tuesday, as Miliband urged public buildings across Britain to fly the standard to send a message to Scots to "stay with us". The latest polls sent the pound tumbling to a 10-month low against the dollar, amid continued uncertainty about the effect that independence would have on the British economy.

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Queen Elizabeth will not speak on referendum

September 10, 2014

Queen Elizabeth will not enter the debate on next week's Scottish independence referendum, Buckingham Palace said on Tuesday, as polls showed the campaign on a knife edge. The clarification came after reports in the British media that the queen was concerned about a possible break-up of the United Kingdom, and that Prime Minister David Cameron was under pressure to ask the monarch to intervene.

"The sovereign's constitutional impartiality is an established principle of our democracy and one which the Queen has demonstrated throughout her reign. As such the monarch is above politics and those in political office have a duty to ensure this remains the case," a spokesman for Buckingham Palace said. "Any suggestion that the Queen would wish to influence the outcome of the current referendum campaign is categorically wrong. Her Majesty is simply of the view this is a matter for the people of Scotland."

Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond, the leader of the pro-independence Yes Scotland campaign, said on Tuesday that he had met the queen at her Scottish home Balmoral Castle two weeks ago. "I think Her Majesty the Queen, who has seen so many events in the course of her long reign, will be proud to be Queen of Scots, and indeed we would be proud to have her as monarch of this land," Salmond said.

Queen Elizabeth did speak out on a similar issue in 1977, when there was growing calls for more powers to be devolved to Scotland and Wales, in her "Silver Jubilee" marking her 25th year as monarch. "I number kings and queens of England, and of Scotland, and princes of Wales among my ancestors. And so I can readily understand these aspirations. But I cannot forget that I was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland," the queen told parliament then.

"Perhaps this Jubilee is a time to remind ourselves of the benefits which union has conferred, at home and in our international dealings, on the inhabitants of all parts of this United Kingdom." The Scottish government says that Queen Elizabeth would remain head of state in an independent Scotland, as she is in nations such as Australia and Canada. The queen has a close personal relationship with Scotland, traditionally spending her summer break in Balmoral Castle, a vast estate of forests and farmland that has been property of her family for generations.

Prime Minister visits flood-hit Hafizabad

September 10, 2014

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday assured the flood affected people that the government was fully determined to rehabilitate them and would not leave them in this hour of trial. Talking to flood-affected people during his visit to the district, the Prime Minister said that the government would construct their damaged homes and compensate for the livestock losses. "It is our duty and we are not doing any favour, despite shortage of resources, the government is doing its level best to reach out to the affected people," he added.

The Prime Minister said Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif was personally supervising the rescue and relief activities in all the flood hit areas. Shahbaz was working day and night and shuffling between the areas daily, he added. The Prime Minister said for coping with such catastrophic situation, there should be ample availability of resources. There should be availability of resources; there should be progress, besides a boost in the agriculture and industrial activities so that people could reap financial benefits, he said, adding that such economic uplift and availability of resources would make their homes and dykes more secure.

There should be progress in the country so that people get job opportunities; Pakistan should increase its export, he opined. He assured the people that the government would spend maximum on the rehabilitation and relief efforts. He also thanked Minister of State for Health Saira Tarar Afzal, provincial and district administration, rescue, relief teams and workers for alleviating the sufferings of the flood affected people.

He said such a situation grieved him greatly and for showing solidarity with the affected people in this hour of trial, he himself had arrived there. The Prime Minister said that nobody was expecting such high flood, still the local administration was endeavouring to overcome the challenge. He said that survey was being conducted to evaluate the property damages and loss to livestock and crops.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Pervaiz Rashid and DCO Hafizabad also accompanied the Prime Minister. On the occasion, the Prime Minister was briefed about the relief and rescue operations. He was apprised by the officials that so far 11,000 stranded people had been evacuated from the flood hit areas of Hafizabad. A total of 10 medical centers were set up, besides distribution of food items and water was also made. The Prime Minister directed the officials concerned to speed up their relief and rescue activities with all the available resources. He also directed evacuation of livestock to safer places.

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Imran flays government for lack of preparedness

September 10, 2014

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan on Tues-day reached the flood-hit areas of Sialkot. "Had the government taken adequate precautionary measures, this much loss could have been avoided," Khan claimed. The PTI chief expressed determination to support the flood affectees in every possible way. Imran Khan is due to visit several adjacent areas including Sambryal, Majran Kalan, Mota Kalan, Mahiwal, Kothiyala, Kolo, Dobarjee, Chanda Singh, Habibpur, Randhir, Bagharrian, Chak Ikhtiar, Bikhray Wali, Kapurwali and Godhpur Chowk.

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Imposition of emergency: Musharraf's counsel presents copy of summary

September 10, 2014

A Special Court trying former army chief and Pre-sident Pervez Musharraf for treason on Tuesday turned down the defence plea to make the consultative summary that was sent to Musharraf for the imposition of emergency on November 3 a part of the record of proceedings. A three-member bench of Justice Faisal Arab resumed the hearing of this case and refused to make the summary a part of the record of proceedings at this point in time.

At the outset of hearing, Barrister Farooq Nasim, the counsel for Musharraf, submitted a copy of a consultative summary purportedly sent by the then Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, to the then President Pervez Musharraf, asking the latter to impose emergency in the country.

Prosecutor Mohammad Akram Sheikh questioned the authenticity of the summary maintaining that no document was prepared by anyone on the matter; however, defence counsel claimed that facts relating to the summary were concealed. Nasim contended that a copy of the summary was uploaded on the internet and urged the court to issue a notice to Aziz for verification of that document. He further requested that a commission could be formed to seek relevant information from Aziz in London in the current matter.

During proceedings, the defence counsel cross-examined prosecution witness Maqsoodul Hasan, Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), who apprised the court that no evidence was collected on the involvement of any institution in the emergency imposed on November 3, 2007.

He further submitted that the FIA investigation team had inspected all the relevant people including two governors but no evidence could be found against anybody except Musharraf. The defence counsel queried as to why the prosecution proposed investigation in the first place if there was no evidence against others in the current matter. Maqsoodul Hasan said that FIA could

not have access to the available records despite it the fact made contacts with the Ministry of Defence; therefore the FIA had sought to investigate the involvement of others. The bench adjourned the hearing of case for Wednesday (today).

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UN ready to help Pakistan, India

September 10, 2014

The United Nations stands ready to help Pakistan and India as the two South Asian countries struggle to provide relief to people affected by floods, a world body spokesman said. But Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said neither Pakistan nor India made any appeal for international help. The floods, resulting from the late-monsoon rains, have left more than 300 people dead in India and Pakistan.

With hundreds of villages submerged, thousands of people have been displaced in Pakistan where the Pakistani Army is leading the effort to rescue people and provide them relief materials. "Our colleagues at OCHA [Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs] are working closely with the Pakistani Government," the spokesman said on Monday, while responding to a question. "And I'm sure, as we speak, my OCHA colleagues are watching (the situation)", he said. "But, obviously, we stand by UN stands by to help Pakistan and impacted people." Likewise, the spokesman said UN officials in New Delhi are in touch with Indian authorities "to see how best we can help."

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MoF to release over Rs one billion for IDPs

September 10, 2014

The Finance Ministry has decided to release Rs 1.059 billion for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of North Waziristan Agency. An official said the amount approved by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar would be both for cash grants to IDPs and logistic operations. The entire amount would be released by the end of September 2014 and it is in addition to Rs 2.8 billion already released for this purpose. Dar stated that rehabilitation of the displaced people on account of Zarb-e-Azb operation is top priority of the government.

The government has so far released a total of Rs 2.8 billion to Fata Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) in four tranches." Dar said our government is taking all precautionary measures for disbursement of money to the FDMA and complete the details of all expenditures incurred from June till the end of August has been obtained from the authority before the release of the amount. As many as 60,000 families are receiving Rs 12,000 per month to fulfil their needs.

"We have also been working with international agencies for providing wheat to these internally

displaced persons. Ministry of National Food Security and Research has released 25,000 tons of wheat to the World Food Programme and Passco for displaced population of Fata and KP from the government of Pakistan, which speaks volumes about our priorities." "We believe in service and our actions speak louder than words," the minister said, adding that this amount of Rs 1.059 million will cater for IDPs up to the end of September 2014.

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THE RUPEE: modest gains

September 10, 2014

The rupee extended its rise versus the dollar and euro on the currency market on Tuesday, dealers said. The rupee inched up against the dollar, rising three-paisa for buying at Rs 102.12 and it also rose by four-paisa for selling at Rs 102.14, they said.

INTERBANK MARKET RATES: OPEN MARKET RATES: The rupee appreciated by 20-paisa in terms of the dollar for buying and selling at Rs 101.60 and Rs 101.80 respectively. It did not show any change in relation to the euro for buying and selling at Rs 131.25 and Rs 131.50, they said.

In the second Asian trade, the dollar scaled a 6-year high against the yen and hit a 14-month peak against a basket of currencies on Tuesday, tracking rising US yields after a Federal Reserve study led investors to reassess prospects for higher interest rates.

The dollar was at Rs 60.50 in terms of the Indian rupee, the greenback was available at 3.1875 the Malaysian ringgit and the US currency was at 6.1358 versus the Chinese yuan. Interbank buy/sell rates for the taka against the dollar on Tuesday.:77.40-77.40 (previous 77.40-77.40). Call Money Rates: 05.50-06.75 percent (Previous 05.25-06.75 percent).

=====
 Open Bid Rs.101.60
 Open Offer Rs.101.80
 =====

Interbank Closing Rates: Interbank Closing Rates For Dollar on Tuesday.

=====
 Bid Rate Rs.102.12
 Offer Rate Rs.102.14
 =====

RUPEE IN LAHORE: The Pak rupee staged recovery and was appreciated by 15-paisa against the US dollar on the local currency market on Tuesday.

According to the currency dealers, the dollar was opened on a depressed note and remained under selling pressure. As a result, the dollar was ended lower at Rs 101.85 and Rs 102.10 as its buying and selling rates against Rs 102.00 and Rs 102.25 of Monday, respectively, the dealers said.

However, the Pak rupee-pound sterling parity remained unchanged amid sluggish trading trend. The

pound was traded at its overnight closing of Rs 164.75 and Rs 165.00 on buying and selling counters, respectively, they added.

RUPEE IN ISLAMABAD AND RAWALPINDI: The rupee remained firm against the dollar on the open currency markets of Islamabad and Rawalpindi here on Tuesday.

The dollar opened at Rs 101 (buying) and Rs 101.10 (selling) against same overnight rate. It did not observe further change in the second session and closed at Rs 101 (buying) and Rs 101.10 (selling) against.

Pound Sterling opened at Rs 168 (buying) and Rs 168.10 (selling) against same overnight value. It did not observe further change in the evening session and closed at Rs 168 (buying) and Rs 168.10 (selling).

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Banks, DFIs: only independent director to head audit committee: SBP

September 10, 2014

RIZWAN BHATTI

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Tuesday amended the Prudential Regulations setting condition of independent director as head of the audit committee of the banks/DFIs. Previously, there was no condition of independent director and all board member/directors were allowed to chair the audit committee without any regulatory restrictions.

However, in order to implement the best international practices in Pakistan's banking industry, the SBP has decided to amend the Prudential Regulation for appointment of an independent director as head the audit committee. In this regard, the State Bank Tuesday also issued a BPRD Circular No 08 of 2014 to the Presidents/Chief Executives of all banks/DFIs for compliance of these new directives.

The SBP, in the circular, has referred to Section-B of the Prudential Regulation G-1 regarding "responsibilities of the board of directors." According to the circular, in terms of Para 10 of the Regulation G-1 (B), the Board of Directors may form a specialised committees to oversee the areas such as audit, risk management, credit, recruitment, compensation, etc, preferably comprising of 'non executive' board members.

However, as per the best international practices, the audit committee should exercise independent oversight of financial reporting, audit, internal controls, etc, of the institution. Therefore, to ensure the independence of audit function, it has been decided that from now on, the audit committee of a bank/DFI shall be chaired by an independent director, the circular said.

Accordingly, Para 10 of the Regulation G-1(B) has been amended by the SBP with immediate

effect: "The Board of Directors (BoDs) may form specialised committees with well-defined objectives, authorities and tenure to share the workload and ensure effective oversight. These committees, preferably comprising of Non-Executive Board members, shall oversee areas like audit, risk management, credit, recruitment, compensation etc. Nevertheless, the Audit Committee of the Board shall be chaired by an Independent Director. These committees of the Board should neither indulge in day-to-day affairs/operations of the bank nor enjoy any credit approval authority for transaction/limits. These committees should apprise the board of their activities and achievements on a regular basis." Now, all banks and DFIs will be required to appoint independent director as head of the audit committee to comply with this amended regulation. According to the SBP, all other instructions on the subject shall remain the same.

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Fishermen underscore need for stepped up security

September 10, 2014

ANWAR KHAN

Fishermen, who now seek the government's attention to scale up the maritime security inside the port's navigational channel, on Tuesday said the terror attack on the naval dockyard had confirmed their security fears. The Pakistan Navy repelled a terrorist attack on its Karachi dockyard on Saturday night.

"We have been telling the government to beef up security on the port's navigational channel as there are bigger chances of terrorist attacks," President Native Islanders Fishermen Association (Nifa), Asif Bhatti told *Business Recorder* on Tuesday. Officials of Karachi Fish Harbour Authority (KFHA) showed their ignorance on terrorist attack on one of navy's key installations. "We just came to know through media that terrorism hit the navy's dockyard last weekend," they said.

Karachi Fish Harbour is the last establishment on the navigational channel; and it is next to navy's dockyard. "Being the neighbouring facility, none at the fish harbours has observed that the terrorists attacked the naval facility which navy guards foiled at the end". *Business Recorder* reported the fishermen's concerns on terror attack at the country's key maritime commercial and defence installation, besides the tiny islets and coastal colonies on December 11, 2009 and April 28, 2011.

"The attack came through an inland route to the dockyard and not from sea channel," said Bhatti, adding that if the attack was launched through sea it would have caused grave consequence for the fishermen community using the channel on a daily basis. "Concerned authorities of Karachi Fish Harbour including Karachi Fish Harbour Authority [KFHA] and Fishermen Co-operative Society [FCS] failed to check incoming human and transportation traffic into the harbour which is still a big cause behind terror fears among fishermen," he said.

He said fish and shrimp loaded trucks from different coastal parts of the province enter the fish

harbour without any security checks, besides hundreds of people visit this place on a regular basis. He held the growing human population around the main navigational channel and the surge in outlaw group. "The administration of KFHA has failed to curb the unwanted human influx into the harbour vicinity," he said, adding that the issue of unregistered boats has also created terror fears.

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TTP claims attack on Dockyard

September 10, 2014

The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on Tuesday claimed responsibility for the attack on a naval dockyard at the weekend, claiming they had inside help. Taliban militants attacked the Karachi naval dockyard in a raid which left an officer and two insurgents dead, officials said on Monday. "We claim responsibility for the attack on the navy in Karachi," spokesman Shahidullah Shahid told media.

"We had support from inside the naval force for this attack. This operation was successful because of this support. We will continue targeting security forces like this in future also," he claimed. The Navy said in a statement late on Monday night that "on Saturday a group of miscreants tried to penetrate Pakistan Navy Dockyard area defences at Karachi. Pakistan Navy security personnel responded valiantly and in the ensuing encounter killed two while apprehending four miscreants alive". After interrogating the suspects, the navy said in a statement that intelligence agencies had carried out raids to arrest suspected collaborators and accomplices and had recovered "a large quantity of arms and ammunition".

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Neelum-Jhelum project: LHC seeks details from federal government

September 10, 2014

The Lahore High Court (LHC) here on Tuesday directed the federal government to submit details about the project of Neelum-Jhelum Project (NJP) by November 07 in a set of petitions against surcharge being deducted in electricity bills in the name of NJP. The petitioners through their counsel pleaded that more than Rs 26 billion had been collected from public through NJP surcharge in electricity bills but the project was yet to be completed.

The counsel said the money collected in the name of surcharge was far beyond the cost of the project. However, he said, the government was not disclosing the cost of the project and its time period for the completion. He, therefore, prayed to the court to stop recovery of the NJP surcharge in the electricity bills and directed the government to public facts about the project.

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Eight infants die in ICU for no oxygen?

September 10, 2014

Eight infants admitted in intensive care Unit (ICU) at District Headquarters Hospital reportedly died due to non-availability of oxygen cylinders early Tuesday. According to district administration sources, four new-born babies died as the oxygen cylinders were not replaced on time in ICU at DHQ. Sources said that as many as 13 under-weight infants were admitted in ICU at DHQ.

Out of these three male and one female newborn babies died due to lack of oxygen, said a family member of a deceased claimed. Medical Superintendent of DHQ, Dr Muhammad Ashraf confirmed the death of eight infants due to premature birth. He said that probe into the incident was also started. The relatives claim that it is the negligence of the staff that caused deaths and staged a protest against the hospital administration in front of the hospital building.

When contacted, noted child specialist Dr Khalid Mehmood said that apparently it did not seem negligence as other nine kids were in better condition. He added that the under-weight kids are more vulnerable as compared to normal new-born babies. District Co-ordination Officer (DCO) Jawad Akram has suspended a doctor and three nurses who were on duty.

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Ajmal suspended over bowling action

September 10, 2014

Top-ranked Pakistani off-spinner Saeed Ajmal was Tuesday suspended indefinitely from international cricket for an illegal bowling action but vowed to return in time for next year's World Cup. The world's leading one-day international bowler blamed the International Cricket Council (ICC) ruling on his "not usual" right elbow and said he would appeal.

Ajmal, speaking to reporters in his home city of Faisalabad shortly after the announcement, shrugged off the ICC announcement as "not an issue." But the ban could cause serious problems for Pakistan, firstly in their upcoming series with Australia and also in the World Cup, which they won in 1992. It comes as part of an ICC crackdown on illegal bowling actions - where the arm is bent more than 15 degrees - in international cricket. "My elbow is not usual, so that's why it seems that I bend it more than normal 15 degree allowed," said Ajmal, who was cleared on medical grounds when his action was first reported in 2009.

"We will go into appeal soon... I will be in action in the World Cup next year, that's my resolve," he added. The ICC earlier said Ajmal, 36, had been suspended with immediate effect following tests by specialists at Australia's National Cricket Centre in Brisbane. Ajmal was reported for a suspect action after last month's first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle. He can apply for a reassessment once he has modified his action.

"The analysis revealed that all his deliveries exceeded the 15 degrees level of tolerance permitted under the regulations," the ICC said in a statement. Ajmal is Pakistan's key bowler, with 178 wickets in 35 Tests and 183 in 111 ODIs. He is also the leading wicket-taker in all Twenty20 matches with 85 in 63 matches. He is ranked number one in ODIs. He will now undergo remedial work on his bowling action at Perth's University of Western Australia, where human movement expert Daryl Foster will work on his action. The ICC said Ajmal can be tested again once the remedial work report is satisfactory. Even if he is cleared, he faces a ban of 12 months if he is reported again within two years.

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Reference against Sharif family: LHC seeks replies from government, NAB

September 10, 2014

Acting as a referee judge, Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan of the Lahore High Court on Tuesday sought replies from federal government and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) by September 11 in response to an appeal of Sharif family challenging the reopening of Ittefaq Foundry reference.

The NAB had reopened three references including Hudebiya Papers Mills, Jati Umra land purchase and Ittefaq Foundry against the Sharif family. An appeal against the reopening of two first references was already allowed by the referee judge. The judge had been hearing these appeals as referee judge after Justice Sheikh Najamul Hassan refused to further proceed with the matter. The then Chief Justice, Umar Ata Bandial, had appointed Justice Hassan as a "referee judge" after a division bench dealing with the matter of the Sharif family at Rawalpindi bench arrived at a dissenting observation on a law point.

The division bench differed on a point whether there was no need or requirement to give observations that NAB authorities were competent to proceed against the petitioners if investigation was again initiated. The Sharif family's counsel Ashtar Ausaf argued that the NAB had made the references on the directions of the then military ruler, Pervez Musharraf, to politically victimise his clients. He said references could not be reopened.

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UI-F MNA disqualified in fake degree case

September 10, 2014

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl Member of National Assembly from Balochistan Maulvi Agha Muhammad was disqualified on Tuesday by Balochistan Election Tribunal after the charges of holding a fake degree were proved. The Balochistan Election Tribunal while hearing the case ordered to conduct re-election in the NA-261 constituency. Essa Roshan, runner-up candidate of

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) had challenged the degree of the JUI MNA. MNA Maulvi Agha Muhammad of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) was elected from NA-261 Pishin-Ziarat in May 2013 general elections.

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'Anti-judiciary' programme: Supreme Court issues contempt notices to TV, its anchor

September 10, 2014

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued contempt notices to *ARY* chief executive Salman Iqbal and an anchor Mubashir Luqman for allegedly airing a defamatory programme against judiciary on May 29. Resuming the hearing of an anti-judiciary programme case, a three-member bench led by Justice Ejaz Chaudhry observed that after going through the contents of an *ARY programme* 'Khara Sach' it was presumed that defamatory language had been used against judiciary.

Appearing before the bench, Deputy Attorney General for Pakistan said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had formed a committee to review a code of conduct for print and electronic media, adding that the formation of the committee was decided in the wake of broadcast of some programmes to malign judiciary.

The bench inquired from the Deputy Attorney General why Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) was still being run on ad hoc basis as no permanent chairman of the Authority had been appointed so far. Justice Chaudhry hinted at asking the Prime Minister to appear in the matter if required and expressed displeasure over a headless Pemra. According to him, committees are usually formed to linger on any issue. The hearing of case was adjourned till September 15.

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Gulf urged to fund 'Arab Marshall Plan' to contain unrest

September 10, 2014

Experts have urged wealthy Gulf states to pump billions of dollars into their Arab neighbours to fend off the kind of unrest that has engulfed Syria and Iraq. Meeting at a conference in Bahrain, bankers, regional analysts and economists said massive development was needed to fight the poverty and lack of opportunities that are fuelling unrest.

"We need a pan-Arab Marshall development plan financed by rich Arab countries" in the Gulf, Ibrahim Dabdoub, deputy chairman of the International Bank of Qatar, told a conference in

Manama organised by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) that ended on Monday.

"At least a \$100 billion (77 billion euros) is needed immediately to finance well-monitored development programmes over the next five years in a bid to contain Arab unrest," Dabdoub, a long-serving top banker, later told AFP. A post-World War II US initiative, the Marshall plan helped revive Europe's shattered economy and bring long-term stability to the continent.

Fighting across the region, mainly in Syria and Iraq, has left thousands dead in the years since the mass demonstrations of the Arab Spring led to violent uprisings. Following the outbreak of sweeping unrest in late 2010 in Tunisia and later in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states announced \$10 billion aid packages to fellow members Oman and Bahrain to help them face increasing popular demands.

They also pledged several billion dollars of aid to Jordan and Morocco, the only Arab monarchies outside the GCC, and made pledges to impoverished neighbouring Yemen. More recently, leading Gulf monarchies rushed around \$20 billion in aid to Egypt after the military overthrew Muslim Brotherhood president Mohamed Morsi a year ago.

The six-nation alliance - grouping Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates - can afford to be generous with its neighbours. Its members have amassed surpluses of around \$2 trillion due to high oil prices in the past decade and most of the funds are invested in the West. These funds have allowed them to become more involved in the region, with Saudi Arabia and the Emirates taking the lead, said Emile Hokayem, senior fellow for regional security at IISS. "But being more active means taking more risks... Gulf states are engaged in other Arab countries thus attracting more risks," Hokayem said.

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UN, Palestinians call for \$550 million in Gaza aid

September 10, 2014

The United Nations and the Palestinian government called Tuesday for international donors to provide \$550 million in aid to help hundreds of thousands of Gazans affected by a devastating war with Israel. The appeal comes two weeks after Israel and Hamas ended 50 days of bloodshed that killed more than 2,100 people, mostly civilians, and ahead of an October 12 donors' conference in Cairo.

"The scope of damage and devastation is unprecedented in the Gaza Strip," James Rawley, the UN's humanitarian co-ordinator for the Palestinian territories, said in a statement. "The crisis is far from over." Rawley and Palestinian deputy prime minister Mohammed Mustafa outlined the humanitarian needs for post-war Gaza, calling for \$551 million (427 million euros) for food aid, access to clean water, healthcare and education.

"We challenge the world to be ambitious and daring in helping us realise recovery,

reconstruction and a better future for Gaza," Mustafa said. "An immediate measure is to end the blockade on Gaza and ensure our people never again experience the horrors of this summer."

Rawley echoed calls for a "full lifting of the blockade". Later Tuesday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukri confirmed his country would host a donors' conference in Cairo on October 12. He spoke after a meeting with his Norwegian counterpart, Boerge Brende, whose country chairs the international committee on co-ordinating aid to the Palestinians. In August, Brende said that money collected under the aegis of Egypt and Norway would be given to Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, ruling out that Hamas could benefit from it. Israel agreed to ease restrictions on goods entering Gaza under a truce deal reached with Hamas on August 26. But restrictions remain on building materials, which are crucial for reconstructing the Strip, large residential parts of which were flattened by Israeli artillery and aerial bombardment during the conflict.

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Xi to visit India next week

September 10, 2014

China's President Xi Jinping will make his first state visit to rival Asian giant India next week, officials said Tuesday, as Beijing sought to allay fears it is encircling its neighbour. The announcement came just a week after India's recently elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to take ties to a "new level" with Japan, a move seen as an attempt to shore up regional alliances to counter China's increasing might.

Xi's four-nation trip begins this Thursday in the central Asian state of Tajikistan, before going on to the South Asian island states of the Maldives and Sri Lanka, culminating in India, the Chinese foreign ministry said on its website. It did not give specific dates but said the tour would finish on September 19. Ties between India and China have long been clouded by suspicion over disputed territory in the Himalayas, which saw a brief border war in 1962.

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Two US novelists on Booker Prize shortlist

September 10, 2014

Two US authors made the shortlist Tuesday for the 2014 Booker Prize for Fiction, which has opened up the field for the first time to novelists from outside the Commonwealth. The six-strong list for the prize, one of the highest-profile awards in English-language literature, also includes three authors from Britain and one from Australia.

Despite the widened field, British writer Howard Jacobson, the 2010 winner, is the bookmakers' joint favourite with "J", alongside compatriot Ali Smith, who makes the shortlist for the third time with "How to be Both". The US authors nominated are Joshua Ferris with "To Rise Again at a Decent Hour" and Karen Joy Fowler for "We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves". They are joined by Australia's Richard Flanagan with "The Narrow Road to the Deep North" and Britain's Neel Mukherjee for "The Lives of Others".

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KSE maintains uptrend

September 10, 2014

Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) Tuesday closed higher on strong valuations and the benchmark KSE-100 index rose by 143 points to close at 29,729 points compared to 29,586 points Monday. Commenting on the market situation, Ahsan Mehanti, Director Arif Habib Securities, said stocks posted a positive trend on the second consecutive day led by second and third-tier stocks on strong valuations.

He said although the overall trading activity was higher than previous day, but the trade remained thin amid cautious activity as investors assessed likely impact on flood affected sectors. "Strong cement sales data for August 2014, strong earnings outlook in auto and pharma sectors due to ongoing flood relief efforts and expected change in the SBP policy rate decisions this month played a catalytic role in the bullish activity," he added.

During the intraday trading, the market fluctuated in green zone and the KSE-100 index touched 29,869 points highest level. Following a positive trend, volume at the ready counter also surged to 133 million shares compared to 90 million shares on Monday. With an increase of Rs 24 billion, market capitalisation reached Rs 6.975 trillion against Rs 6.952 trillion on Monday. Trading took place in 403 companies, of which 235 closed in green zone, 147 in red, while 21 remained unchanged.

"Continuous foreign buying and further ease in political tension helped equities to inch up further," said Samar Iqbal, analyst at Topline Securities. The KSE-100 index gained 0.48 percent to close at 29,729 points level, while the value increased to \$70 million or Rs 7 billion. Speculation that government is planning to make a policy of drug prices helped pharmaceutical companies to close higher, she said. Similarly, car assembler stocks also rallied due to

weakening Japanese yen against the US dollar.

Among top 10 volume leaders, eight companies recorded a positive trend. TRG Pak (R) emerged the volume leader as its 11 million shares were traded, gaining Rs 0.21 to close at Rs 2.72. TRG Pak Ltd stood second and inched up by Re 0.15 to close at Rs 12.16 on 7.9 million shares. PICIC Inv Fund ranked third with 6.9 million shares, gaining Re 0.07 to Rs 14.69. With a trading volume of 5.9 million shares, Maple Leaf Cement lost Re 0.14 to Rs 28.79. Fauji Cement increased by Re 0.16 to close at Rs 19.93 on 5.2 million shares. Some 5 million shares of Pak Elektron Ltd were traded and the scrip closed at Rs 33.06, up by Re 0.03. K-Electric decreased by Re 0.03 to Rs 8.18 on 4.1 million shares. Engro Fertilizer increased by Re 0.16 to Rs 53.76 on 3.6 million shares.

With a trading volume of 3.5 million shares, Pak Petroleum gained Re 0.36 to close at Rs 225.67. Lafarge Pak closed at Rs 15.50, up Re 0.09 on 3.2 million shares. Wyeth Pak Ltd and Services Ind Ltd were the top gainers with Rs 201.60 and Rs 35.72 to close at Rs 4,400.00 and Rs 820.02, respectively. Bata (Pak) and Pak Tobacco were the top losers with Rs 53.28 and Rs 50.00 to close at Rs 3,175.00 and Rs 1,100.00, respectively.

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BRIndex30 gains 19.33 points

September 10, 2014

On Tuesday, BRIndex30 opened at 16,252.84 points and remained positive throughout the trading session. It touched an intraday high of 16,443.26 points and an intraday low of 16,262.99 points and closed at 16,272.17 points which was 19.33 points or 0.12 percent higher than previous close. Total volume was 56,503,000, which was 42.43 percent of KSE All share volume and 79.05 percent of KSE 100 volume. The KSE All Share volume was 133,181,690 and KSE 100 volume was 71,477,110.

BR Commercial Banks Index closed at 6,914.61 points with a net positive change of 13.16 points or a percentage change of 0.19 and a total turnover of 14,668,300 shares. BR Cement Index closed at 3,185.33 points with a net positive change of 11.87 points or a percentage change of 0.37 and a total turnover of 18,624,600 shares.

BR Oil and Gas Index closed at 4,181.99 points with a net positive change of 15.67 points or a percentage change of 0.38 and a total turnover of 7,117,350 shares. BR Tech & Comm Index closed at 928.14 points with a net positive change of 13.2 points or a percentage change of 1.44 and a total turnover of 11,012,500 shares. BR Power Generation and Distribution Index closed at 4,750.94 points with a net positive change of 24.48 points or a percentage change of 0.52 and a total turnover of 8,952,000 shares.

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Business and Economy: *Pakistan*

Circular debt brought down to Rs 238 billion, Dar informed

September 10, 2014

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Tuesday chaired a meeting of the committee constituted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on energy resource rationalisation for power sector here. Secretary Water & Power Nargis Sethi briefed the Finance Minister on the overall recovery position and collection of the amount due. She said circular debt has further been reduced to the level of Rs 238 billion which was stuck at Rs 295 billion a few weeks back.

She told the minister that she is planning to hold a meeting shortly with DISCOs to discuss improvements in the billing cycle. She assured the minister that all available resources will be utilised to make a comprehensive collection model. The finance minister directed the secretary water and power to take further steps to reduce the amount of circular debt of DISCOs and make people aware how they could reduce their bills substantially by conserving electricity during peak hours.

He further directed the secretary water & power to direct DISCOs to reduce their line losses from the figure approved by Nepra. Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Mussadiq Malik briefed the Finance Minister that he and his team have been working hard on their strategy to reduce line losses.

According to the model they have been following, Lesco will be able to reduce 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent losses for non-industrial connections and 1.5 percent for industrial connections by mid-October. This exercise is expected to save Rs 180 million monthly on sub division level. From January onwards when this plan will be implemented on feeder level, the monthly saving will reach to Rs 1 billion. The Finance Minister directed Mussadiq Malik to make more teams for the implementation of this plan and replicate this model in one of the DISCOs in Sindh.-PR

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China to replicate model of Shanghai Free Trade Zone in Gwadar

September 10, 2014

Pak-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Shah Faisal Afridi has disclosed that China has planned to replicate the model of Shanghai Free Trade Zone (SHFTZ) in Gwadar. "Under the Early Harvest Programme, China had planned to pump 50 billion dollars till 2017 into a host of projects in Gwadar including coal, solar and wind energy units enabling

Gwadar to create a nexus between Pakistan, Iran, China and Central Asian States that would ultimately generate billions of dollars in revenues along with enduring job opportunities," Afridi said here on Tuesday.

He explicated that SHFTZ is a perfect model to be implemented in Gwadar at the sideways of economic corridor. He said that the zone that was first used as a testing ground for a number of economic and social reforms in China showed marvellous success regarding economic growth.

He added that SHFTZ incorporated numerous relaxations in different sectors, under the FTZ's new capital registration system; foreign investors are no longer required to contribute 15 percent capital within three months and full capital within two years of the establishment of a Foreign Invested Enterprise (FIE). Furthermore, the "one-stop application processing platform" was introduced at the zone, aimed at that applicants may obtain all the necessary documents for company establishment in one place, in contrast with outside the Zone where applicants must run around between different authorities for the issuance of various certificates, he added.

The FTZ permitted yuan convertibility and unrestricted foreign currency exchange, and a tax-free period of 10 years for the businesses in the area as a means to simplify the process of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and facilitate the management of capital accounts.

Afridi said that Pakistani and Chinese governments are considering a Free Trade Zone in Gwadar similar to Shanghai Free Trade Zone in terms of special business incentives; the vision aims at to turn tides on the region's economic horizon. He said that the establishment of the special economic zone, free trade zone, and export processing zone in the port city would attract foreign investment which would in turn create innumerable job opportunities for locals and consequently raise their standards of living. This will in turn increase the port traffic and resultantly spur industrial development.

Afridi asserted that natural endowments including oil, gas, copper, gemstones, marble and gold reserves at Balochistan should be exploited by motivating local community by imparting them professional training regarding their specific field and by providing them soft loans in order to bring them into mainstream of economy.

According to Chinese investment plans, Balochistan has a share of 38 percent at generating economic activities including infrastructure development, creating jobs for the locals and bringing an end to anti-state activities, he added. He further stated that the Chinese delegates had also shown interest in acquiring land in the vicinity of Gwadar Port Free Zone for developing the "Industrial Park" that would boost the present crippled economy of the country in a short span of time and at the same time taking the country's economy to greater heights by bringing it in line with the developed countries.

It is anticipated that around 2.5 million people will get jobs with start of this project that is why the government is setting technical training centres in the surrounding area to train people, he mentioned.

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Sit-ins have caused Rs one trillion loss: Ahsan

September 10, 2014

The government has claimed that anti-government sit-ins of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) have so far caused a Rs 1,000 billion loss to the country's economy. Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, who was flanked by Minister of State Anusha Rehman, blamed the PTI chairman Imran Khan for "sabotaging" the Chinese President's visit to Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal said that there was a 4.3% depreciation in the value of rupee since the start of sit-ins which resulted in a Rs 250 billion increase in the foreign debt of the country. He added the national economy had suffered a loss of one thousand billion rupees due to politics of sit-ins. The consumers were also deprived of a Rs 150 billion benefit due to falling prices of oil in the international market in the face rupee depreciation, he added.

He said the Karachi Stock Exchange index also plummeted and as a result the stock market suffered losses worth about Rs 350 billion. He regretted that Imran made false statements over GDP growth rate. Iqbal said on insistence of Imran, the IMF scrutinised the data and finally came out with a statement saying that GDP growth rate was now expected to rise to 4.3% in 2014-15 as compared to provisional estimates of 4.1% for the last financial year.

Urging the PTI chairman to end his sit-in, Iqbal invited him to return to the National Assembly and play his role of an opposition leader. "On the one hand talks are going on between PTI and government and on the other hand Imran is busy victimising others; such attitude of Khan can derail the talks process," Iqbal said.

Replying to Imran's allegations about vote rigging, particularly in 35 constituencies, Minister of State Anusha Rehman said that 35 constituencies were not from Punjab but from across the country. "Najam Sethi who is the centre of debate for 35 punctures in some constituencies was not selected by the PML-N as a caretaker CM Punjab and he had jurisdiction only in Punjab not across the country, so it is completely wrong to say that he was involved in rigging in these constituencies," she added.

It was ridiculous to say that the caretakers appointed by the PPP-led government had paved the way for a PML-N victory. According to her, it was for the first time in the history of the country that a chief election commissioner was appointed through national consensus, she added. She said that the fairness of May 2013 elections was acknowledged by neutral observers. The PML-N won elections in 12 constituencies out of the so-called "35 constituencies" where according to the PTI elections were rigged, which proved that the allegations were baseless, she maintained.

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MoF to release over Rs one billion for IDPs

September 10, 2014

The Finance Ministry has decided to release Rs 1.059 billion for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of North Waziristan Agency. An official said the amount approved by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar would be both for cash grants to IDPs and logistic operations. The entire amount would be released by the end of September 2014 and it is in addition to Rs 2.8 billion already released for this purpose. Dar stated that rehabilitation of the displaced people on account of Zarb-e-Azb operation is top priority of the government.

The government has so far released a total of Rs 2.8 billion to Fata Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) in four tranches." Dar said our government is taking all precautionary measures for disbursement of money to the FDMA and complete the details of all expenditures incurred from June till the end of August has been obtained from the authority before the release of the amount. As many as 60,000 families are receiving Rs 12,000 per month to fulfil their needs.

"We have also been working with international agencies for providing wheat to these internally displaced persons. Ministry of National Food Security and Research has released 25,000 tons of wheat to the World Food Programme and Passco for displaced population of Fata and KP from the government of Pakistan, which speaks volumes about our priorities." "We believe in service and our actions speak louder than words," the minister said, adding that this amount of Rs 1.059 million will cater for IDPs up to the end of September 2014.

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Five-year SME development: Rs one billion allocated for Smeda initiatives

September 10, 2014

The Federal Government allocated over Rs 1 billion to execute the initiatives proposed by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) in its five-year SME development. SMEDA Acting Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry revealed this at a meeting with the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Vice President Kashif Anwar who visited SMEDA on Tuesday along with a seven-member delegation of his Chamber.

He briefed the LCCI delegation that SMEDA has to conduct 870 meetings with SME sector's stakeholders to compile the SME Development Plan. The meetings undertook value chain analysis of 13 sectors, which include Food and Agriculture, Logistic, Gems and Jewellery, Information Technology and Allied Services, Construction, Light Engineering, Energy, Leather, Mineral, Tourism and Textile, he said adding that the analysis helped develop a plan comprising 76 interventions for rapid growth of the SME sector.

SMEDA Acting Chief said that a presentation on SMEDA's five-year SME Development Plan was also given to the Planning Commission, who has not only allocated a fund of over Rs 1 billion for implementation of the proposed initiatives, but also incorporated the plan in the Prime Minister's Vision-2020.

A presentation regarding creation of a cyber-based SME Club was also given to the LCCI delegation to which LCCI VP assured to extend the fullest co-operation of his Chamber to make the SME Club a success. He hoped that the initiative would provide the SMEs with a swift and effective solution to their marketing problem at national as well as international level.

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Trade activity promotion: PIAF-Founders Alliance evolves strategy

September 10, 2014

PIAF-Founders Alliance has evolved a well-thought and well-planned strategy to promote the trade and economic activities in the country that are stagnant because of some anti-state elements. Alliance would leave no stone unturned to achieve its new-set targets.

These views were expressed by PIAF-Founders Alliance leaders Mian Anjum Nisar, Mian Muhammad Ashraf, Mian Misbah ur Rehman, Sheikh Muhammad Arshad and Sheikh Muhammad Asif while addressing an impressive gathering of traders here at Alliance Office on Tuesday. Alliance candidates for Corporate Class and Associate Class were also present on the occasion.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that PIAF-Founders Alliance would work to promote economic activities in the country. He said that Alliance would pave way for foreign investment in the country through highlighting the soft image of the country. Mian Muhammad Ashraf said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) is the premier chamber of the country and its reins should be in the hands of true representatives of business community therefore, business community should vote to the PIAF-Founders Alliance candidates in the LCCI elections scheduled for September 22 and 23.

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Ikhtiar Baig inaugurates 'IEEEEP Fair 2014'

September 10, 2014

Former Advisor to Prime Minister on Textile Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig on Tuesday inaugurated 'Industrial Electrical and Electronics Exhibition of Pakistan' (IEEEEP Fair 2014) here at the Expo Centre. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the country had developed its industry of electrical and electronic appliances and equipments and its projection through the exhibition would bode well for the emerging industry, expanding its volume locally and internationally and creating business and job opportunities in future.

He said that such type of fairs would not only reflect vast trade opportunities that existed in the field of electrical and electronics but also created awareness regarding the use of electronic and electric goods and its various solutions. While responding to the media persons he said that political harmony was vital for bringing any investment in the country and the current showdown had proven an impediment towards these important objectives. He further commented that some of the neighbouring countries were performing better in exports than Pakistan due to political stability and effective economic policies.

Dr Baig congratulated the IEEEEP's Karachi Centre and Badar Expo Solutions for organising this

mega event. He also visited different stalls along with Engr Asif Siddiqui, Chairman IEEEEP; Zohair Naseer, Chief Operating Officer, Badar Expo Solutions; Syed Faisal Ali, Project Head (IEEEEP,) Badar Expo Solutions; Naveed Ansari and Engr Ahmed Zubair of IEEEEP.

The Chief Operating Officer of Badar Expo Solutions presented a memento to the honourable Chief Guest. Earlier, the IEEEEP Chairman said that the fair had been the country's premier electrical and electronics industry exhibition, which would cover latest technology of electrical, electronics, lighting, telecommunication, instrumentation and control, allied services and other related industries. Speaking on the occasion, the event manager said that the fair had grown from its past events and this year more than 70 exhibitors both from Pakistan and abroad were participating in the exhibition.-PR

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KPCCI elections: Businessman Forum candidates elected unopposed on four vacant seats

September 10, 2014

The candidates of Businessman Forum on four vacant seats of (corporate group) for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KPCCI) elections for 2014-15, elected unopposed. For corporate group in executive body of KPCCI, the four contesting candidates, elected unopposed following the withdrawal of nomination papers by S Minhajuddin Shah.

An election commission has been constituted for this purpose, was notified the name of those candidates elected unopposed on four seats, during its meeting on Tuesday, chaired by Sufi Bashir Ahmad Durrani. During the meeting the election commission members, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, and Mohammad Ishaq also present.

The election commission has declared during its meeting that Shehryar Lodhi, Shuja Mohammad, Syed Mohammad Tariq, and Ishtiaq Mohammad, elected unopposed as member of executive body for the session 2014-15. It was pertinent to mentioning here that four candidates of Businessman Forum, have earlier elected unopposed, while contesting executive body election on four vacant seats of associate group, those elected include Fawad Ishaq, Abdul Hakim Shinwari, Saad Khan and Sadiq Amin as executive body members of the chamber. Besides, on reserved seat of women, no other candidate was submitted nomination papers against the Shabnam Munir, therefore, she has been declared as member of executive body of KPCCI.

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Bashir Ali takes over as new chairman PBC

September 10, 2014

A founding director of the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) Bashir Ali Muhammad took over as the new Chairman of the PBC. He was previously the vice chairman of the PBC and replaced Sikander Mustafa Khan on completion of the latter's term. The PBC Board appreciated the services of the outgoing chairman Sikander Mustafa Khan especially citing his personal contribution in projecting the views of the PBC at various forums.

The new PBC Chairman thanked the outgoing Chairman for his contribution in the institutional strengthening of the PBC and expressed his desire that the PBC would continue to benefit from Sikander Mustafa Khan's knowledge and experience. Bashir Ali Mohammad who is the Chairman of Gul Ahmed Group also serves as a director on the boards of Gul Ahmed Energy Ltd, Habib Metropolitan Bank Ltd. He is a member of Economic Advisory Council of the Ministry of Finance and also served as the President of the International Textile Manufacturers Federation. Previously, he has served as Chairman APTMA besides having been part of a number of committees, set-up by the Government of Pakistan from time to time for improving among other things Pakistan's global trade competitiveness.-PR

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Second Achievements ceremony: Mamnoon awards FPCCI gold medal to NBP

September 10, 2014

National Bank of Pakistan has been awarded gold medal for its "Banking and Financial Services" by The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) during the second Achievements Awards ceremony at a local hotel. President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain gave this award to NBP which was received by Khalid Bin Shaheen, Senior Executive Vice President and Group Chief, NBP.

This award is a top slot award and is given on the basis of NBP's banking and financial services for the economy. This is consecutively second year that NBP is honoured with this award.

Applauding the services and contributions of different sectors of Pakistan economy, FPCCI organised second Achievement Award Ceremony. The event was graced by people from all walks of life including top bureaucrats, foreign diplomats, members of FPCCI, NBP Corporate Communication and other social elite.

NBP is an internationally acclaimed and awarded institution, apart from the domestic awards; the Bank has earned number of international awards as the bank received accolades from "The Banker" magazine terming NBP as the top bank of Pakistan in its 'Top 1000 World Banks' ranking for 2013. The bank also received "Retail Banking Awards 2013" and "Domestic Retail

Bank of the Year - Pakistan" from "Asian Banking & Finance" magazine during the year. The Global Finance awarded NBP as "The Best Emerging Markets Bank" and "Best Foreign Exchange Bank in Pakistan".-PR

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Control of PTDC rest houses: Tourism industry welcomes KP decision

September 10, 2014

Veteran Tour Operator, Vice Chairman of the Tour Operators' Association of Pakistan (PATO), promoter of celebrated Khyber Steam Safari and Youth Tourism development Programme, Zahoor Durrani Monday welcomed the assuming of administrative control of PTDC Rest Houses and Motels by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

In a press statement issued here, Zahoor Durrani congratulated Chief Minister, Pervez Khattak over taking the landmark decision which will open new vistas for the promotion of Tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "PTDC has over the years earn billions from these properties but did little to build a proper Base for developing the skilled labour to support the hotel and tourism hospitality industry in KP which houses more than 75 per cent of Pakistan touristy destination", observed Durrani.

It is high time for the government to revitalise the PAIHTM which was based at Guli Bagh -Swat with prime task to produce young talent fully educated and trained staff in the 20th century Art of Hospitality and Hotel Management, Durrani added. Majority of PTDC staff were employed in the mid of seventies who are now at the verge of retirement. They may be experienced but lack training, education in the field of hotel management and there were very possibilities for the qualified and talented youth to be absorbed in the hotel industry which is to become a part of KP. Zahoor Durrani urges upon the government to re-organise PAITHM (Pakistan- Austrian Institute for Tourism and Hotel Management) at Peshawar where there is a dire need of such an institution.

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KHDWU wins KDLB CBA polls

September 10, 2014

The Karachi Harbour and Dock Workers Union (KHDWU) on Tuesday won the CBA election of Karachi Dock Labour Board (KDLB) by bagging 1,515 votes, according to independent sources. Gul Muhammad Afridi of Karachi Harbour and Dock Workers Union bagged 1,515 votes defeating Abdul Razzaq Memon of Democratic Workers' Union who got 977.

Total 2,492 votes were cast during the daylong polls, which took place at different polling

stations at East and West Wharfs of the Karachi Port. With winning the election, Gul Muhammad Afridi will retain his CBA presidential office for the next two-year term. "It is the third term for Gul Muhammad in office to remain CBA president," sources said.

The contest was on a one-on-one basis mainly between the incumbent CBA - Karachi Harbour and Dock Workers Union and Democratic Workers Union. Abdul Razzaq Memon, who was leading the Democratic Workers Union, received bigger votes unexpectedly, sources said. The number of total dockers stands at 2,900 as majority voted to retain the incumbent CBA for next term.

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Activity at Karachi and Qasim ports

September 10, 2014

The Karachi Port handled 130,309 tonnes of cargo comprising 124,174 tonnes of import cargo and 6,135 tonnes of export cargo including 3,218 loaded and empty containers during the last 24 hours ending at 0700 hours on Tuesday. The total import cargo of 124,174 tonnes comprised of 25,199 tonnes of containerised cargo; 43,009 tonnes of bulk cargo: 27,080 tonnes of coal; 3,233 tonnes of canola; 6,932 tonnes of DAP; 1,439 tonnes of rape seed and 55,966 tonnes of oil/liquid cargo.

The total export cargo of 6,135 tonnes comprised of 5,402 tonnes of containerised cargo; 133 tonnes of general cargo and 600 tonnes of oil/liquid cargo. As many as 3,218 containers comprising 1,969 containers import and 1,249 containers export were handled during the last 24 hours on Tuesday. The break-up of imported containers shows 399 of 20's and 776 of 40's loaded while nil of 20's and 9 of 40's empty containers, whereas that of exported containers shows 119 of 20's and 106 of 40's loaded containers while 220 of 20's and 349 of 40's empty containers were handled during the business hours.

There were two ships namely Santa Rosa and Dong Hai Jun 7001 carrying containers and dredger respectively sailed out to sea during the reported period. There were three vessels viz. Philadelphia, DL Clover and Baltic Cougar carrying containers, oil tankers and coal currently at the berths. There were two ships namely El Gurdabia and Star Mistral carrying oil tanker and coal respectively sailed out to sea on Tuesday.

There were five vessels viz. Hanjin Indigo, MOL Direction, Pona, Neelambari and Ikan Siakap carrying containers, chemical and coal respectively due to arrive on Tuesday, while two vessels viz. Kota Karim and Promise-1 carrying containers and general cargo respectively are due to arrive on Wednesday.

PORT QASIM

A cargo volume of 80,912 tonnes comprising 64,902 tonnes of import cargo and 16,010 tonnes of export cargo inclusive 1,055 loaded and empty containers (TEUs) was handled at Port Qasim during the last 24 hours on Tuesday. The total import cargo of 64,902 tonnes includes 33,524 tonnes of rape seed; 7,230 tonnes of coal; 4,450 tonnes of chemical and 19,698 tonnes of containerised cargo.

The total export cargo of 16,010 tonnes includes 13,553 tonnes of cement and 2,457 tonnes of containerised cargo. There were two ships namely MV Massallia and MV Neelambari with cement and chemical sailed out sea on Tuesday morning, while two more ships namely CV Alliance Norfolk and MV Ince II Gaz with containers and rape seed are expected to sail on the same day afternoon.

A total number of eight vessels viz. CV Alliance Norfolk, CV Safmarine Ngami, MV Massallia, MV Georglanna Bo, MV Industrial Sailor, MV Ince II Gaz, MV Neelambari and MV DL Dahlia currently occupied berths to load/offload containers, cement, general cargo, rape seed, chemical and coal respectively during the last 24 hours. As many as five ships namely UASC Deira, Mega Lohari, Atlantic Glory MT Lito and Ever Mighty with containers, rape seed, wheat, chemical and coal are currently at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim.

There were four vessels viz. CV Safmarine Ngami and CV Fawairet carrying containers, general cargo and chemical took berths at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Multi Purpose Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Monday. There are two ships namely CV UASC Deira and Atlantic Glory with containers and chemical due to arrive on Tuesday.

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Full scale emergency exercise held at Jinnah airport

September 10, 2014

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has conducted a Full Scale Airport Emergency Exercise-2014 at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi on Tuesday. The purpose of this exercise was to test the response of all the concerned agencies working at the airport in case of any accident / incident as per Crisis & Emergency Response Plan (CERP).

A PIA Boeing 737 jet aircraft was available for demonstration of emergency evacuation of passengers. Besides concerned branches of CAA and PIA, Edhi and Chipa Ambulances have also actively participated in the exercise. Before taking the journalists and reporters to the exercise area, a briefing in the IMS Resource Centre, JIAP Karachi was arranged.

During the briefing, Airport Manager CAA, Asghar Fahim Khattak briefed that the exercise was conducted as per International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards after every two years that helped in ascertaining the capabilities and check response time of Fire & Rescue personnel and threw light on the other benefits of this Exercise. The Full Scale Exercise-2014 was started at 1100 hours. Fire vehicles of CAA reached at the fire site within the two minutes response time to extinguish the fire. Rescue workers, CAA, Edhi and Chipa ambulances, doctors & paramedics reached at the aircraft quickly and demonstrated evacuation of passengers from the aircraft in a professional way.-PR

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Company News: *Pakistan*

Resham Textile Mills Limited

September 10, 2014

Resham Textile Mills Limited (KSE: REST) is a public limited company incorporated in Pakistan in June 1990. Its shares are quoted on Karachi and Lahore stock exchanges. The company is engaged in the manufacture of cotton yarn and has a capability of supplying 18 million kilograms of spun yarn.

Resham textile mills limited, headed by Muhammad Khurshid as CEO, manufacturing facilities are located in Habibabad in thr Kasur district, Punjab. It has spinning facility of 38,448 spindles with annual production of 12,437,813 kilograms. The firm has a capitive power unit that meets its all energy requirements. Moreover:

PERFORMANCE FOR 9M FY14

Current performance of REST on the average has been unwaveringly on an ascending curve with outstanding top line growth. Sales in the spinning sector, though, continued lower principally due to lesser textile exports to China and influx of cheaper yarn supply from India, during the period under review as compared to the last year. However, REST generated sales revenue of about 18.1 percent year on year with net sales for the 9M FY14 clocking in at Rs 3.07 billion against net sales of Rs 3.05 billion.

The firm invested around Rs 210 million for a main BMR (Balancing Modernising and Replacement) effort which increased production by about 30 percent. Hence, sales revenues in local and export markets were promising during 9M FY14. In spite of increase in REST's revenues, the gross profit fell by 31.2 percent year on year in 9M FY14 attributing to more than proportionate swell in cost of goods sold which grew by 28 percent year on year. That mainly attributes to electricity and gas expenses that increased by 60 percent, rise in minimum wages; and cotton prices were also high.

However, REST has shown net profit after tax decline of 36.4 percent year on year attributing to increase in administrative expenses. The growth in administrative expenses was mostly due to increase in charitable contributions which amount to Rs 5.650 million during the period.

Additional support to bottom line is provided by decline in other expenses and provision for taxation of 41 percent year on year and 49.7 percent year on year, respectively. On the other hand, pressures have been observed with finance costs increasing by 26 percent year on year adding stress to bottom line expansion.

The company's fixed asset turnover in 9M FY14 was 3.04 as in comparative corresponding period as REST invested heavily in replacing older machinery. The capital expenditure of REST was Rs 51.2 million due to the latest machinery including Reiter Draw Frames and an energy synchronisation system which reduced the down-time during energy load shifting.

Moreover, the current ratio of 1.25 when contrasted to the last year of 1.11 shows the company's

growing inability to sell its unsold stock. Robust performance in 9M FY14 granted the firm to reward its investors by earnings per share of Rs 3.68 for the vis-à-vis previous financial year.

FUTURE OUTLOOK During the past nine months, the textile industry has witnessed significant rise in cost of utilities, though the rupee has appreciated against the dollar but the government should seriously consider revising these costs downwards.

In consideration of these factors, the remaining period of the year remains rather positive and the management does not expect any main losses. Fortuitously, the firm has performed much better than other similar sized firms, mostly because of the premium attached by the administration for first-rate machinery, alongside the cost-cutting culture. The new financial year will commence with new crescendos for profitability contingent largely on costs of gas and electricity and price of cotton in the country.

	9MFY13	9MFY14
Profitability		
Gross profit margin	16.6%	9.7%
Operating profit margin	15.4%	8.3%
Net profit margin	7.9%	4.2%
ROE	23.8%	13.1%
ROA	8.8%	5.9%
Liquidity		
Current ratio	1.11	1.25
Quick ratio	0.13	0.19
Turnover		
Total asset turnover	1.13	1.39
Fixed asset turnover	26.19	3.04
Market		
EPS - Rs	5.68	3.62

Taxation: *Pakistan*

Administrative powers to collectors: FBR Board-in-Council to take policy decision today

September 10, 2014

The Board-in-Council of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) would take a policy decision Wednesday (September 10) on delegation of administrative powers to Collectors of Customs for taking disciplinary action against the customs officers up to Deputy Superintendents of Customs.

Sources told *Business Recorder* here on Tuesday that the Board-in-Council headed by FBR Chairman Tariq Bajwa would decide about the delegation of administrative powers regarding disciplinary proceeding - to the heads of FBR's field formations. At present the Collectors of Customs are not legally empowered to take disciplinary action like charge sheets, inquiry against Principal Appraisers or Superintendents of Customs and Deputy Superintendents of Customs, etc, collectors cannot exercise administrative powers to suspend any corrupt Principal Appraisers or Superintendents of Customs etc. They are not under the administrative control of Collectors of Customs for initiation of disciplinary action in the field formations.

It would be more appropriate if FBR Chairman Tariq Bajwa empowers the collectors of Customs for initiation of disciplinary action up to the level of Principal Appraisers or Superintendents of Customs. In case of higher rank officials of the customs, the FBR can keep its powers for initiation of such actions. Board-in-Council would take the policy decision in this regard and such decision can be taken up to the level of Principal Appraisers or Superintendents of Customs to have a check and balance on any corrupt practices by such officers in the field formations.

Board-in-Council will also take a final decision to finalise date for computer balloting to select cases for audit for Tax Year 2013. The Board-in-Council headed by FBR Chairman Tariq Bajwa would take decisions on several tax policy issues including Audit Policy 2014 for Tax Year 2013/Tax Period 2013; work plan under DFID's programme titled, "stabilising economic and accelerating growth"; instructions for allotment of FBR accommodation; amendments in the performance allowance guidelines; renaming of the post of Chief Co-ordinator of Data Processing Centre as Director General; renaming of post to director general (broadening of tax base) and delegation of administrative powers regarding disciplinary proceeding to heads of field formations.

Board-in-Council is expected to approve procedure for carrying out computerised random balloting for selection of audit cases for Tax Year 2013. FBR Member (Taxpayers Audit) will give a presentation on the "Audit Policy 2014 for Tax Year 2013/Tax Period 2013". The Board wanted to select around 15 percent of the total tax returns for audit filed for the Tax Year/Tax Period 2013. The FBR has finalised the "Audit Policy 2014 for Tax Year 2013/Tax Period 2013." Under the new policy, the cases for audit shall be selected through random computer balloting up to the extent of 15 percent of total returns of taxpayers filed for the Tax Year/Tax

Period 2013.

The random computer balloting for selection of cases for audit would be carried out separately under the Sales Tax Act 1990, Income Tax Ordinance 2001 and Federal Excise Act, 2005 and the whole process to be based on the laid down guidelines, sources added.

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Registered persons directed to furnish audited accounts in a month

September 10, 2014

ZAHID BAIG

The Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) directed all corporate sector registered persons liable to Punjab Sales Tax to furnish audited accounts for financial year 2012-13 within one month as it is compulsory on all corporate sector registered to furnish their annual audited accounts to the Authority electronically under Section 31 (5) of the Punjab Sales Tax on Services Act 2012.

Submission of audited accounts electronically are compulsory regardless whether or not hard copy thereof has been or is furnished with the Authority, said a circular No 03 of 2014 of the Authority issued on Tuesday. The circular added that accounts for financial year 2012-13 shall be furnished within one month of its issuance and the accounts for the financial year 2013-14 and onwards shall be submitted within one month of their finalisation.

Sources in the PRA told *Business Recorder*, the Authority desire that soft version may be furnished in downloadable scanned form or in any other suitable manner. Authority assured the businesses that it has made necessary arrangements for electronic submission of audited accounts through existing authorised access through their respective user ID and password to the PRA portal available to registered persons.

Quoting the necessity for this circular, PRA said that a question has been raised as to whether or not such persons can be called for to furnish to PRA soft copies (computerised version or computer-generated version) of their annual audited accounts. 'PRA has examined the question and is of the view that under the Punjab Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012, and rules made thereunder, there is no restriction on the persons liable to Punjab sales tax to maintain their records in electronic form provided such records enable ready ascertainment of tax liabilities during the relevant tax periods. Companies usually maintain computerised records enabling themselves to handle their financial and accounting matters more conveniently and efficiently,' the Circular added.

The circular maintained that in view of the above, all corporate sector registered persons liable to Punjab sales tax are hereby required to invariably furnish to PRA their annual audited accounts in terms of the section 31 (5) electronically regardless whether or not hard copy thereof has been or is furnished. Soft version may be furnished in downloadable scanned form or in any other suitable manner. In this regard, PRA has made necessary arrangements for electronic submission

of audited accounts through existing authorised access through their respective user ID and password to the PRA portal available to registered persons. However, the audited accounts shall not be considered complete if they are filed without "notes to the accounts" and are not accompanied by a certificate by the auditors confirming the payment of the sales tax due and any deficiency in the sales tax paid by the registered person. However, the deficiencies, if any, can be made good by a registered person voluntarily as per law.

'As for the time of submission of annual audited accounts, section 31(5) does not specify any time for this purpose. It is, however, ordained that accounts for financial year 2012-13 shall be furnished within one month of the issuance of this circular and the accounts for the financial year 2013-14 and onwards shall be submitted within one month of their finalisation. Time for submission of such accounts for special years, if any, shall be construed accordingly. Where accounts for the year 2012-13 are not complete/finalised for any bona fide reason(s), the concerned registered person will apprise PRA explaining the reasons of non-completion/non-finalisation spelling out the tentative period or date during or on which the accounts will be furnished,' the Circular concluded.

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Millions of Pakistanis out of tax net: FBR chief

September 10, 2014

Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis are out of tax net at the moment who would be brought into it through awareness. Federal Board of Revenue Chairman and Secretary Revenue Division, Tariq Bajwa expressed the views while addressing representatives of the local business community at Shamim Committee Room at Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), here on Tuesday.

"Every individual who pays tax is just like a client for us and we are supposed to take care of his due facilitation," he said, adding that it did not mean he would be given undue favours. He added that economic growth of the country depends on the collection of taxes that would result in less borrowing.

The FBR chairman said they were introducing taxpayer cards by the end of the current month resembling national identity cards and added that fiscal incentives for cardholders were under consideration. "We have for the first time distinguished between filers and non-filers. Filers will get fiscal incentives over non-filers so that their contribution could be recognised," Bajwa said.

About the provinces share in revenues, he said that about fifty and a half percent of revenue went to provinces. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif distributed certificates and cards among 100 big taxpayers of the country and they were given incentives too," he added. He, however, said that every individual who paid tax deserved such incentives. Regarding awareness of tax payment among people, he stated that chambers should also play its role and added that its role was very critical in it as they were representatives of trade bodies.

Bajwa said that the Tax Reforms Commission would be announced soon after the ongoing flood and political crisis in the country and added that the commission would have a big agenda. From July 1 to date, up to 35,000 people have registered with the FBR, he said. He appreciated the address of welcome by MCCI President Khawaja Muhammad Usman as professionally presented papers and urged the chamber to give its recommendations for fiscal benefits of tax payers.

Earlier, Khawaja Usman in his address of welcome raised several issues faced by the business community regarding taxes and gave recommendations to FBR for improvement of the overall tax system, to most of which the FBR chairman agreed. He appreciated steps taken by the government especially the Prime Minister Tax Incentive Package, reductions in the number of SROs, retail market and distinction between filers and non-filers. Vice President MCCI, Syed Iftikhar Shah extended the vote of thanks to the visiting dignitary in the end.

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Dir Qaumi Jirga threatens sit-in against sand, gravel tax

September 10, 2014

The Dir Qaumi Jirga has warned to stage a sit-in against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government if it did not withdraw its decision to collect tax on sale of sand and gravel from the bank of rivers. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club, elders of the Jirga including former provincial minister Mehmood Zeb Khan of PPP, Muhammad Rasool Khan of JI, Malik Farooq Iqbal of PML-N, Malik Rahatullah of PTI, Abdul Hakim Khan of ANP, Dr Sardar Hamid, retired principal Khizar Hayat and others said that Dir Lower was one of the tax free district of Malakand division.

They said the district had been affected by militancy and flash floods in recent past. They said the floods in 2010 had washed away valuable agricultural lands on the bank of the river Panjkora while the farmers had not been compensated so far. The Jirga elders complained that the government had levied tax on sale of sand and gravel for which September, 17 had been fixed for tenders. They said the Jirga would bring people on the road against the government decision. They demanded of the government to withdraw its decision of levying tax on sand and gravel.

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Declaration module: FBR holds workshop for OICCI employees

September 10, 2014

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) organized an exclusive workshop for training employees of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) member companies on Monday, September 8, 2014 and to explain the salient features of the newly launched "declaration module" for filing of income tax returns 2014-15.

The workshop was conducted by Raana Ahmed Member, Information Technology, FBR along with FBR Member Facilitation Riffat Shaheen Qazi and Rehmatullah Wazeer, DG Broadening Tax Base, FBR. The over two-hour interactive workshop highlighted the salient features of the new online income tax return forms, including the forms relating to statement of wealth, annual expenses and wealth and income reconciliation.

Many new features being added from this year and a few user-friendly initiatives in the new forms were fully explained to an interesting audience of salaried class professionals from various corporate sectors and tax consulting firms. The FBR team highlighted the benefits accruing to tax return filers vs non filers from the current fiscal year. It was also emphasised that paying full tax on salary, dividend and interest and other income does not absolve a person from filing a tax return which is mandatory requirement for all NTN holders.

Concluding the workshop, M Abdul Aleem, Secretary General, OICCI lauded the initiative of the FBR to simplify tax reporting requirements. He also urged the authorities to closely work with the private sector to further simplify the reporting requirements, facilitate prompt settlement of issues of the business community whether it is pending tax refunds or any procedural issues so that Pakistan is able to regain its lost position on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rating and seen as a attractive destination for FDI.

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Cotton and Textiles: *Pakistan*

Cotton market: prices firm on active buying by mills

September 10, 2014

Prices maintained firmness on the cotton market on Tuesday in the process of trading, dealers said. The official spot rate managed to hold overnight level at Rs 5,600, they added. In the session, approximately 20,000 bales of cotton changed hands between Rs 5600 and Rs 5750, they said. In Sindh, rates of seed cotton at Rs 2500 and Rs 2600, in Punjab prices were at Rs 2300 and Rs 2600, they said.

Market sources said that mills were busy in making forward deals to keep themselves safe from future losses. After rains in cotton belt, reports of damages are limited or it before time to guess about losses to crop, they said. Cotton analyst, Naseem Usman said that slow arrivals may cause slight rise in the rates of cotton, but it looks that spinners will try to lay hand over the fine type.

Reuters adds: cotton futures notched their biggest one-day rally in 2-1/2 weeks on Monday, lifted by tight nearby supplies. The most-active December cotton contract on ICE Futures US closed up 0.74 cent, or 1.2 percent, at 65.05 cents a lb. The concern over near-term supplies was seen in spread-related gyrations that have lifted the second-month ICE contract to a premium above third-month March futures in the last week. That premium edged up to 0.32 cent a lb on Monday from 0.17 cent a lb on Friday.

The following deals reported: 1000 bales from Hyderabad at Rs 5625, 400 bales from Shahpur Chakar at Rs 5625, 1000 bales from Kotri at Rs 5625, 400 bales from Jhole at Rs 5625, 400 bales from Hala at Rs 5625, 2000 bales from Mirpurkhas at Rs 5600-5625, 2200 bales from Sanghar at Rs 5625-5640, 1600 bales from Tando Adam at Rs 5625-5650, 2500 bales from Shahdadpur at Rs 5625-5650, 400 bales from Nawabshah at Rs 5650, 400 bales from Sarhari at Rs 5650, 600 bales from Vindar at Rs 5625-5650, 200 bales from Hasilpur at Rs 5700, 200 bales from Tandliawala at Rs 5700, 200 bales from Mailsi at Rs 5700, 800 bales from Burewala at Rs 5700-5750, 400 bales from Arifwala at Rs 5725, 200 bales from Fort Abbas at Rs 5725, 400 bales from Sahiwal at Rs 5725, 600 bales from Vehari at Rs 5725, 200 bales from Kabirwala at Rs 5750, 200 bales from Bakhar at Rs 5750, 400 bales from Khanewal at Rs 5750, 200 bales from Bahawana at Rs 5750, 200 bales from Pir Mehal at Rs 5750, 200 bales from Khidarwala at Rs 5750, 400 bales from Mongi Bangla at Rs 5750, 200 bales from Mamo Kanjan at Rs 5750, 700 bales from Haroonabad at Rs 5750, 400 bales from Multan at Rs 5750, 400 bales from Shujabad at Rs 5750 and 400 bales from Rahim Yar Khan at Rs 5750, they said.

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The KCA Official Spot Rate for Local Dealings in Pak Rupees

FOR BASE GRADE 3 STAPLE LENGTH 1-1/32"

-----MICRONAIRE VALUE BETWEEN 3.8 TO 4.9 NCL

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Rate	Ex-Gin	Upcountry	Spot Rate	Spot Rate	DifferenceFor	Price	Ex-Karachi	Ex. KHI. As
Ex-Karachion 08.09.2014								

37.324 Kgs	5,600	150	5,750	5,750	Nil			
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Equivalent

40 Kgs	6,002	160	6,162	6,162	Nil			
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Government will extend support to textile sector: Punjab Governor

September 10, 2014

Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said the government would left no stone unturned to put precious forex earning textile sector on the track. GSP Plus status would make a huge difference to the quality of life of textile workers in Pakistan as it would create, at least, one million jobs in addition to boost country's exports.

Addressing the members of Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA), he said the government would extend full support and assistance for strengthening industrial sector as its top priority. Industrial sector is facing multiple problems as a result of which the productivity is decreasing day-by-day. We are working on war footing to bridge the huge gap between demand and supply and comprehensive strategy to overcome energy challenges has been chalked out. With support of the masses we will overcome the challenges being faced by the country, he said and added that future of Pakistan is very bright and all resources would be mobilised for converting Pakistan according to wishes and dreams. We are serving the masses with a zeal and moral obligation and will continue the same spirit, he added.

Federal Minister for Textile Industry Abbas Khan Afrid, speaking on the occasion, said the government is fully aware of the problems being faced by the textile sector. Energy crisis is the major hurdle in the path of progress and without tackling this; textile industry could not get momentum. The government is devising a comprehensive strategy to counter this issue not only to resume the industrial pace but also to save livelihood of millions of workers. He assured that textile ministry will make all out efforts for immediate payment of pending refund claims of textile exporters to ease their financial stress. All stakeholders will be taken on board while making policies directly or indirectly influencing textile industry, especially its value addition sector.

Earlier newly elected Chairman PTEA Sohail Pasha, addressing the members, said that Pakistani exports are under pressure due to prevailing economic financial, industrial crisis in the country as well as persistently worsening law and order situation, high bank mark-up rate and the energy crisis are badly affecting the industrial and trade activities. He emphasised the unity of textile sector to enforce the government to focus on consolidation and strengthening of economy and uplifting the industrial productivity in the country.

He assured that PTEA would continue the momentum of efforts for uninterrupted supply of gas and electricity for textile industry. Sheikh Ilyas Mahmood, chairman PTEA, presenting annual report of the Association, said that textile exports and industry remained under continuous stress due to severe energy crisis and uncertain economic conditions during the year. Economic meltdown and financial crisis cast its long shadows on Pakistan economy. He congratulated the newly elected office-bearers and wished them success for their tenure. Later on Governor Punjab presented PTEA export excellence awards to leading top ten textiles in recognition of their outstanding export performance.

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Lesco failed to reduce additional hours' loadshedding: Punjab textile industry suffers from power supply shortage

September 10, 2014

Punjab based textile industry remained short of electricity supply for second consecutive day, as the Lesco failed to reduce loadshedding for additional two hours from September 8. According to the sources, the Lesco authorities had assured of resuming withdrawn electricity supply from September 9 onwards but it failed. The Lesco sources told *Business Recorder* that quota of electricity supply for Lesco has been reduced by the NTDC, resulting into a drop in supplies to the industry.

It may be noted that the Lesco was observing eight hours a day electricity load shedding for Punjab based textile industry, which has been increased to 10 hours a day with the start of this week. Initially, it was presumed that the Lesco has made this arrangement for a single day. However, disruption for second consecutive day has raised alarm bells and frequent queries have started from the industry regarding the status of electricity supply ahead.

It is also worth noting that the government had assured the Punjab based textile industry to reduce electricity load shedding to the minimum after the Ramazan. However, this commitment has not been fulfilled despite passage of another month after Ramazan. Chairman APTMA Punjab S M Tanveer has already expressed concerns over the situation, saying that depriving the industry from electricity supply against the domestic sector where demand has reduced substantially has no justification.

Because of continuous load shedding, he said, the Punjab based textile industry has been forced to curtail production, lay off workers and incur losses on commitments with foreign buyers due to non-availability of energy, ie electricity and gas in the province.

Resultantly, he said, this situation is causing disruption of textile value supply chain, delays in cotton procurement and a dire impact on the overall economic growth in the country. The textile industry circles have criticised the Ministry for Water and Power for its poor management and putting the industrial growth at stake, especially in Punjab.

PTA elects new office-bearers

September 10, 2014

Hamid A Zahoor and Aamir Majeed have been elected unopposed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of Pakistan Tanners Association (PTA) (South Zone) for the year 2014-15. Those who have been elected as members of the executive committee are Abrar Ahmed, Jawed Tarique, Shaikh Yousuf Shafiq, Tahir Mushtaq and Abdus Salam.

The annual election results of PTA were announced on the occasion of the association's general body meeting. The meeting paid glowing tributes to the outgoing chairman, Fawad Jawed, and welcomed the new office-bearers. Speaking on the occasion, the newly-elected Chairman assured the PTA members that he would leave no stone unturned to highlight the issues facing the business community and to get them resolved.

He also assured that the matter related to tannery zone would be given high priority. Former chairman PTA and Advisor to the Chief Minister on Industry, Gulzar Firoz, expressed the hope that the newly-elected body would make all-out efforts to serve the leather industry. He demanded of the federal government to ban the export of livestock in order to save the country's leather and several allied industries.

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Agriculture and Allied: *Pakistan*

Flooding tests Trimmu's resilience; Panjnad to be next big challenge

September 10, 2014

Heavy thunderstorm and subsequent flash floods have caused 231 deaths and inundated 1457 villages in Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well as in Gilgit-Baltistan, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Tuesday. The high levels of flood with a combined thrust of Chenab, Jhelum and Ravi has reached the Trimmu Headwork where the discharge of flood water is being monitored view a view to reducing the impact of floods on population at risk.

Crops on an estimated 0.43 acres of land were destroyed and 581,193 people were affected in Punjab and AJK. According to flood warnings, River Chenab at Panjnad is likely to attain 600,000 cusecs to 700,000 cusecs exceptionally high flood from September 12- 15. Under this condition, districts of Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal, Layyah, Muzaffargarh and Multan are likely to be inundated.

Due to a second wave in River Chenab peak, exceptionally high flood (above 600,000 cusecs) at Trimmu will persist for next 24 to 48 hours with a likely peak discharge of 800,000 cusecs, till September 12. Under this condition, districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh are likely to be inundated. The monsoon weather situation report suggested the concerned authorities to take all necessary measures to avoid any loss of life and property.

The data further reveals that a medium amount of flood water has accumulated in the Qadirabad head-works on River Chenab (807,000 cusecs) whereas the Trimmu Barrage is receiving 645,000 cusecs of water on River Chenab. According to details, the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels and the barrages Tuesday is: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 117,000 cusecs and outflows 76,400 cusecs; Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 19,500 cusecs and outflows 19,500 cusecs; Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 80,000 cusecs and outflows 54,900 cusecs; Chenab at Marala: Inflows 85,400 cusecs and outflows 82,400 cusecs. River Ravi at Balloki: Inflow 131,800 cusecs and outflows 110,500.

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Steps taken to protect strategic Trimmu Barrage: Multan, Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Jhang face risk of inundation

September 10, 2014

M RAFIQUE GORAYA

As the combined peak of flash floods in the Chenab and Jhelum rivers is entering the Trimmu Barrage today (Wednesday), the Punjab government has taken all necessary steps to save the strategic barrage. The Punjab Irrigation Department has decided to breach the Athara Hazari barrier to save the barrage whereas the nearby villages have been evacuated. The high flood is to stay at the Head Trimmu till September 12.

Chief Meteorologist of Flood Forecasting Division Muhammad Riaz told *Business Recorder* here on Tuesday that peak discharge of 8,00,000 cusecs will pass through the barrage that has the designed capacity of 6,45,000 cusecs of water. The water flow is rising to high level above 6,00,000 cusecs at Trimmu may persist for next 24 hours. Under this condition, districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh are likely to be inundated, he added.

A spokesman for the Punjab government said that the administration of Jhang has filled breaches in two protective dykes whereas steps were being taken to fill the breach in another dyke and the Commissioner was personally supervising the work. The spokesman said the breach was not made in the dyke for saving any person or land of a particular man.

The spokesman said, in view of the threat of flood, residents of villages near the river have been directed to remain alert. He said the protection of life and property of the people was responsibility of the government and it will discharge it efficiently.

According to reports from the flood-hit areas, the gushing floods were leaving a trail of devastation and destroying everything that comes in its way towards south Punjab. Thousands of villages in Chiniot, Jhang, Khushab, Kabirwala, Old Chichawatni and Sargodha have submerged due to the floods whereas the flood water has made its way into the Bhawana city. Vast stretches of land in Chiniot, Kot Momin, Kot Amir Shah, Sargodha Road, Bhawana, Hafizabad, Sukheki, Bhalwal, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal and Mandi Bahauddin are all under flood water.

The River Ravi witnessed high tides after heavy downpours and many settlements in Mari Pattan came under water. High floods in the River Sutlej engulfed Ganda Singh and dozens of nearby villages. As the water flow in rivers Chenab and Jhelum has become normal at Marala, Khanki, Mangla, Rasulpur, Qadirabad barrages, the life is returning to normal. Director General Agriculture Extension services Dr Anjum Ali said the government has started estimation of crop losses and economic impact of the floods on Punjab's agriculture economy once the flood situation returns to normal in the province.

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Palm oil import: focus gradually shifting from Malaysia to Indonesia

September 10, 2014

The import of palm oil is gradually shifting from Malaysia to Indonesia where import of the said product has surged to 68 per cent of the total imports during last six months under Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (IPPTA). Industry sources told *Business Recorder* here on Tuesday that keeping in view the import potential of Palm Oil, Malaysia signed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Pakistan namely Malaysia Pakistan Closer Economic Partnership (MPCEPA) with 15% Margin of Preference (MoP) in customs duty.

Resultantly, the Malaysian Palm Oil import to Pakistan has touched 1.9 Million Metric Tons ie 95% of total imports. The imports from Malaysia remained persistent till end of 2012, when an Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (IPPTA) with similar Margin of Preference was also inked. Consequently, the major shift in favour of Indonesia was observed and as of now the imports of palm oil products from Indonesia surged to 68 percent whereas share of Malaysia stood at 32 percent.

Experts also said that although ghee and cooking oil industry import palm oil to the tune of US \$1.6-1.8 billion per annum, but the exports from Pakistan could not increase significantly despite the fact that 15% Margin of Preference (MOP) was granted by both countries to Pakistani exporters of Rice, Sea-food, made up textile articles, cotton yarn, man-made filament and yarn in addition to many other tariff lines and even on trade in services and Economic Co-operation. Despite the fact that Malaysia and Indonesia has offered MoP wide range of items to Pakistan but still cumulative exports are struggling around US \$430 per annum. The huge trade gap is indeed cause of great concern for the Ministry of Commerce in general and Pakistani industry in particular. The FPCCI and Pakistan-Malaysia and Pakistan-Indonesia Joint Business Councils can play effective role in reducing the trade imbalance.

The importers of palm oil has provided an exceptional opportunity for Pakistani export-oriented industry by arranging 15% MoP, if still exports do not grow with this incentive then re-visiting the National Industrial Policy is recommended. Recently, Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers Association (PVMA) delegation visited Malaysia to discuss the price & trade barriers and allied issues causing declining trend of palm oil imports to Pakistan on the side-lines of international price out-look conference held in Kuala Lumpur.

The PVMA delegation led by Sheikh Abdul Razzak arranged a meeting with representatives of Palm Oil Refiners Association of Malaysia (PORAM), Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) and Government of Malaysia subsidiaries such as Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) and Ministry of Plantation, Industries and Commodities (MPIC). For the duration of talks, it was resolved to address key issues in sequence to promote bilateral trade specially export of Palm Oil to Pakistan. The important issues are system abuse by local legal firm with respect to out-turn weight discrepancy, frequency of shipping service between Pakistan and Malaysia, revival of Palm Oil Credit Payment Arrangement (POCPA) and export duty imposed by Malaysia on crude palm oil.

They added that the ghee/cooking oil industry of Pakistan is performing extra-ordinarily by fulfilling 100% national requirement of around 3.2 Million Metric Tons, besides contributing Rs 100 Billion to national exchequer directly and indirectly in the shape of duty, taxes and other levies. The existing 4.5 Million Metric Tons of installed production capacity can be utilised by enhancing exports to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics provided the government should remove restrictive measures on export of products.

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Daily trading report of PMEX

September 10, 2014

On Tuesday at Pakistan Mercantile Exchange (PMEX) value traded was recorded at PKR 3.221 billion. The number of lots traded was 13,202 and PMEX Commodity Index closed at 2,981. Major business was contributed by crude oil amounting to PKR 2.159 billion, followed by gold amounting to PKR 944 million - up by 17 percent and silver at PKR 118 million - up by 53 percent.

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Increased surveillance of dengue larva-breeding urged

September 10, 2014

Advisor to Chief Minister on Health Kh Salman Rafique said dengue larvae are being found at most of the places in Ravi Town; therefore, dengue surveillance of larva-breeding activities should be increased and town officers should personally check surveillance teams.

He directed concerned authorities to take immediate steps for drainage of rainwater from vacant plots and where it was not possible, fish of eating dengue larva should be released or chemicals should be used to stop breeding of dengue larvae. He said this while presiding over a meeting of Town Emergency Response Committee Ravi Town in Lahore.

Kh Salman Rafique terming the performance of response committee of Ravi Town regarding eradication of dengue as unsatisfactory directed the town officers of all concerned departments to improve their performance. He said rainwater has been accumulated in Shahdra area which can become the source of breeding of dengue. Kh Salman Rafique expressing his strong indignation over non-participation of officers of some departments said strict action will be taken against the officers and officials who remained absent.

Kh Salman Rafique directed officers of Sports Board to immediately drain out the rainwater of the grounds around Minar-e-Pakistan. Additional Director General Health (Vector Borne Diseases), Dr Zafar Islam, Dr Tayyeb Butt, Director Surveillance Dr Yadullah, Director

Operation, Deputy District Officer Health Dr Shahbaz besides officers of Social Welfare, Fisheries, Institute of Public Health, Environment Departments, Entomologists and officers of TMA and other officials were present on the occasion.

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Fishermen underscore need for stepped up security

September 10, 2014

ANWAR KHAN

Fishermen, who now seek the government's attention to scale up the maritime security inside the port's navigational channel, on Tuesday said the terror attack on the naval dockyard had confirmed their security fears. The Pakistan Navy repelled a terrorist attack on its Karachi dockyard on Saturday night.

"We have been telling the government to beef up security on the port's navigational channel as there are bigger chances of terrorist attacks," President Native Islanders Fishermen Association (Nifa), Asif Bhatti told *Business Recorder* on Tuesday. Officials of Karachi Fish Harbour Authority (KFHA) showed their ignorance on terrorist attack on one of navy's key installations. "We just came to know through media that terrorism hit the navy's dockyard last weekend," they said.

Karachi Fish Harbour is the last establishment on the navigational channel; and it is next to navy's dockyard. "Being the neighbouring facility, none at the fish harbours has observed that the terrorists attacked the naval facility which navy guards foiled at the end". *Business Recorder* reported the fishermen's concerns on terror attack at the country's key maritime commercial and defence installation, besides the tiny islets and coastal colonies on December 11, 2009 and April 28, 2011.

"The attack came through an inland route to the dockyard and not from sea channel," said Bhatti, adding that if the attack was launched through sea it would have caused grave consequence for the fishermen community using the channel on a daily basis. "Concerned authorities of Karachi Fish Harbour including Karachi Fish Harbour Authority [KFHA] and Fishermen Co-operative Society [FCS] failed to check incoming human and transportation traffic into the harbour which is still a big cause behind terror fears among fishermen," he said.

He said fish and shrimp loaded trucks from different coastal parts of the province enter the fish harbour without any security checks, besides hundreds of people visit this place on a regular basis. He held the growing human population around the main navigational channel and the surge in outlaw group. "The administration of KFHA has failed to curb the unwanted human influx into the harbour vicinity," he said, adding that the issue of unregistered boats has also created terror fears.

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Fuel and Energy: *Pakistan*

Circular debt brought down to Rs 238 billion, Dar informed

September 10, 2014

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Tuesday chaired a meeting of the committee constituted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on energy resource rationalisation for power sector here. Secretary Water & Power Nargis Sethi briefed the Finance Minister on the overall recovery position and collection of the amount due. She said circular debt has further been reduced to the level of Rs 238 billion which was stuck at Rs 295 billion a few weeks back.

She told the minister that she is planning to hold a meeting shortly with DISCOs to discuss improvements in the billing cycle. She assured the minister that all available resources will be utilised to make a comprehensive collection model. The finance minister directed the secretary water and power to take further steps to reduce the amount of circular debt of DISCOs and make people aware how they could reduce their bills substantially by conserving electricity during peak hours.

He further directed the secretary water & power to direct DISCOs to reduce their line losses from the figure approved by Nepra. Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Mussadiq Malik briefed the Finance Minister that he and his team have been working hard on their strategy to reduce line losses.

According to the model they have been following, Lesco will be able to reduce 5.5 percent to 6.5 percent losses for non-industrial connections and 1.5 percent for industrial connections by mid-October. This exercise is expected to save Rs 180 million monthly on sub division level. From January onwards when this plan will be implemented on feeder level, the monthly saving will reach to Rs 1 billion. The Finance Minister directed Mussadiq Malik to make more teams for the implementation of this plan and replicate this model in one of the DISCOs in Sindh.-PR

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\$34 billion investment to constitute no liability to government: Asif

September 10, 2014

WASIM IQBAL

Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif on Tuesday said that \$34 billion Chinese investment was a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and not a loan as claimed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in one of his recent addresses to his sit-in.

According to him, this amount will constitute no liability on the part of government of Pakistan. The Minister for Water and Power was responding to the accusations levelled by Imran Khan against the government.

Speaking at a press conference he said that probably Imran Khan had no clue to the Chinese investment. He (Imran) should consult his colleagues before issues of any statement on Chinese investment. Asif further said that a \$34 billion Chinese investment has been approved by the Chinese government after it assessed the future needs of electricity in Pakistan.

He said that the Chinese government had made financial arrangements with three Chinese banks, including Exim, which would provide loans to Chinese companies for investment in Pakistan's power sector, railways and transport sector, adding that this loan would not reflect on Pakistan's balance sheet.

The Minister further said that the coal-based power projects would not use Chinese coal. He said that investment in Thar Coal project was also included in the \$34 billion investment and the rate of return of coal based plants was 17 to 27 per cent. Responding to Imran Khan's allegations that the cost of coal-based power was \$1.45 million per megawatt whereas in India it was 55,000 dollars per megawatt, Asif said that India produced 60 to 70 percent material whereas Pakistan had to import all material for power plants. Coal-based power plants would be on imported coal, he added.

About the delay in the appointment of Chairman NEPRA, he said that "NEPRA is most independent body of all the regulatory bodies. It represents all provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and decisions are taken in consultation." He further said that if there were some proposals that Chinese companies would be exempted from NEPRA rules, however, no amendments were made in the NEPRA laws.

He maintained that the government was ready for any scrutiny/accountability in the parliament and ruled out any possibility of bypassing any bidding rule in the award of contracts to Chinese firms. He recalled that the government had published an advertisement for Gaddani Power Projects and bids would also be invited through international competitive bidding for upcoming power plants.

Responding to a question, the minister said that it was mandatory for successful bidders for power projects to produce reports feasibility to Chinese banks with a view to getting loans. "The Government of Pakistan will not give any sovereign guarantees to Chinese investors who will install power plants on the existing PPI mode," he emphasised.

Khawja Asif further revealed that the Government of Pakistan obtained concessional loans from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank at 2-4 per cent mark up. Chinese banks will release commercial loans to private companies on a mark-up of 7 percent, in Pakistan, according to him.

Responding to another question, he said that Chinese companies would set up power plants to generate 10,400 MW power to meet the domestic and industrial needs of future. He further announced that soon a policy would envisage the setting up of transmission lines by private sector to expand the capacity of the existing transmission system which could presently carry up to only 16000 MW of power.

He also claimed that PTI leader had paid his utility bills and electricity would be disconnected in case of non-payment of bills. Asif said that Islamabad Electric Supply Company confirmed that Khan had paid two electricity bills of his Bani Gala residence. He also ruled out that the Mian Mansha group was part of U\$34 billion investment. "He [Mian Mansha] will also be required to go through the bidding process if he wants to set up a power plant," he said adding that two coal-based power plants were being set up in Thar. He also ruled out any role of Saifur Rehman, former chief of NAB, in power plants deal.

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Neelum-Jhelum project: LHC seeks details from federal government

September 10, 2014

The Lahore High Court (LHC) here on Tuesday directed the federal government to submit details about the project of Neelum-Jhelum Project (NJP) by November 07 in a set of petitions against surcharge being deducted in electricity bills in the name of NJP. The petitioners through their counsel pleaded that more than Rs 26 billion had been collected from public through NJP surcharge in electricity bills but the project was yet to be completed.

The counsel said the money collected in the name of surcharge was far beyond the cost of the project. However, he said, the government was not disclosing the cost of the project and its time period for the completion. He, therefore, prayed to the court to stop recovery of the NJP surcharge in the electricity bills and directed the government to public facts about the project.

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Deaths of line staff: Discos management takes preventive steps to curb accidents

September 10, 2014

The management of all distribution companies (Discos) should take emergent measures to check menace of fatal and non-fatal accidents causing tragic deaths of Line Staff. As many as 26 members of line staff had died within two months due to electrocution at work place on account of unsafe working condition. These demands were raised by General Secretary of the union Khurshid Ahmed at a meeting of Wapda workers held at Bakhtiar Labour Hall, on Tuesday.

He said that one of the reasons that the existing line staff had to work extra on account of a ban of recruitment for many years while the new lines and new electricity connections were being installed every day. It was also urged to up-grade the remaining staff as per settlement with the union. Trade union representatives and workers Muhammad Younus, Sardar Fasih, Sajid Kazmi,

Rana Muhammad Akram, Rana Abdul Shakoor and others also spoke on the occasion.

They emphasised the government and all sections of society should come forward to rescue the victims of rampage of floods to ease their suffering over this calamity. By a resolution the house urged all the political parties to hold mutual dialogue for amicable solution for the economic and social problems such as price hike and aggravating unemployment and evil of feudalism and illiteracy irrational widening gap between the rich and the poor in the society.

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Fuel and Energy: *World*

Brent oil falls below \$100 as supply weighs; US oil up

September 10, 2014

Brent crude oil prices fell below \$100 per barrel in volatile trade on Tuesday, a fourth straight daily decline as ample supplies weighed, while US crude rose on the expectation of dwindling fuel stockpiles. Prices were not far above Monday's 16-month low as feared cuts to supply due to violence in the Middle East have failed to materialise, and production resumed at Britain's North Sea Buzzard oilfield after a series of shutdowns and failed restarts.

In the United States, expectations of another fall in crude inventories supported prices, as did news of a delayed start up of the Pony Express pipeline that will carry crude from Wyoming to Oklahoma. Brent fell 75 cents to \$99.45 by 1:59 pm EDT (1759 GMT). On Monday, prices slid below \$100 for the first time in more than 14 months, hitting a low of \$99.36, the weakest since May 1, 2013.

Brent is down 11 percent so far this quarter, the biggest such drop since the second quarter of 2012. US crude rose 33 cents to \$92.99, snapping a three-day losing streak. "To see lower levels in US crude, we would have to see more signs of weakness in the US economy and that is not in the cards at the moment," said Gene McGillian, analyst at Tradition Energy in Stamford, Connecticut. He added that strong supply, including increased output from Libya, are pressuring Brent crude prices. Libya's oil output has risen to 740,000 barrels per day, the National Oil Corp said on Monday, a rise from 725,000 bpd fuelled by several oil export ports reopening.

The possibility of a cut in output by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has kept a floor under oil prices. Gulf Arab oil ministers hold their annual meeting on Thursday in Kuwait that could include discussions about price levels. Top OPEC exporter Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members can accept oil at \$100 per barrel although some delegates see lower prices as short-lived.

The market is now waiting for US crude inventory data for clues on the outlook for demand in the world's top oil consumer. US crude oil stocks likely fell 1.5 million barrels in the week to September 5, according to a preliminary Reuters analysts' survey on Monday. Distillate stockpiles likely rose 1 million barrels, while gasoline inventories fell 100,000 barrels, the poll said. The poll was released ahead of weekly inventory reports from industry group the American Petroleum Institute (API) on Tuesday and from the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) on Wednesday.

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Qatar's GIS lifts market to new record, others consolidate

September 10, 2014

Qatar's Gulf International Services (GIS) lifted the Doha bourse to a record high on Tuesday after its unit signed contracts worth 5.2 billion riyals (\$1.4 billion) to supply drilling rig services to state energy giant Qatar Petroleum. The stock jumped 4.7 percent to an all-time closing high of 128.30 riyals and was the main support for Qatar's benchmark , which added 0.6 percent and closed above 14,000 points for the first time.

Gulf Drilling International, a subsidiary of GIS, will provide two new offshore rigs and two new land rigs, and extend four other contracts, Qatar Petroleum said in a statement after trading closed on Monday. The stock had already doubled in price this year, making it one of the best performers in Qatar, and GIS said in April it expected its net profit to jump at least 33 percent to above 900 million riyals this year. Qatar Petroleum said the rig contracts had been previously announced, but local retail investors were still energised by the announcement.

One risk factor for Qatar is FIFA's investigation into its earlier decision to award the 2022 soccer World Cup to Qatar following allegations of graft, which Doha denies. Fund managers think Qatar remains very unlikely to lose the hosting rights, but the issue could cause concern in the market. FIFA ethics committee investigator Michael Garcia has completed his probe into the bidding process and handed in a 350-page report which the ethics committee's adjudicatory chamber, headed by German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert, will now use to decide whether any wrongdoing was committed, soccer's governing body said last Friday. FIFA said it could not comment on when Eckert might reach his decision.

Dubai's bourse slipped 0.2 percent as top developer Emaar Properties fell 1.8 percent. But Drake and Scull rose 1.5 percent after announcing it had won a 110 million dirham (\$30 million) deal to build a district cooling plant in Qatar. Another Dubai firm, property developer Deyaar, added 0.8 percent after saying on Tuesday it had sold out residential units in the first tower of its new Montrose project and would start sales for the second one later this month.

Abu Dhabi's index edged down 0.4 percent after failing to break through the 5,200 point mark. Bluechips First Gulf Bank and Etisalat fell 1.1 and 0.4 percent respectively. Egypt's benchmark continued to retreat from the six-year closing high it hit on Sunday and slid 1.1 percent. The Cairo index had risen 2.9 percent in the first week of September.

"Its a normal pull-back after decent gains that the market has seen earlier this month, a minor correction that everybody was waiting for," said Mohamed Radwan, director of international sales at Pharos Securities in Cairo. Saudi Arabia's bourse was nearly flat as key petrochemical and banking stocks showed a mixed performance.

DUBAI: The index slipped 0.2 percent to 5,083 points.

ABU DHABI: The index edged down 0.4 percent to 5,168 points.

EGYPT: The index fell 1.1 percent to 9,600 points.

SAUDI ARABIA: The index edged up 0.05 percent to 11,149 points.

KUWAIT: The index added 0.1 percent to 7,474 points.

OMAN: The index rose 0.3 percent to 7,515 points.

BAHRAIN: The index slipped 0.2 percent to 1,465 points.

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Kenya plans oil jetty to cut import costs, handle crude exports

September 10, 2014

State-run National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) is revamping plans for a new oil jetty in the port city of Mombasa so it can both cut the cost of imports and handle crude exports from east Africa. Initial plans unveiled in 2012 for the oil jetty, or single buoy mooring, and storage facilities were pushed back to change the scope and design after oil was found in Kenya.

"We originally envisaged to work with a specific jetty design as a net importer of oil but that changed because of the discovery of oil deposits in Kenya in 2012," NOCK spokesman Temesi Mukani said. Crude has also been found in next door Uganda, part of a string of hydrocarbons finds along Africa's east coast and the Rift Valley that passes through Kenya and neighbouring states.

In a tender published on Monday, NOCK invited firms to submit expressions of interest by September 29 to act as adviser for the project, which the government plans as a Public Private Partnership (PPP). "The successful transaction adviser will now have to review the original feasibility study to cater for the oil discoveries which have made Kenya a potential oil exporter," Mukani said, adding the original cost estimate of \$500 million could change.

The tender document said the project aimed to ensure the port was more efficient, cut delays and made Kenya's coast a competitive choice for oil tankers. Another objective was to "provide the infrastructure that will support east African states to export their discoveries to global markets".

The main export route discussed up until now for Kenyan and Ugandan oil, both still a few years from major production, would be via a planned pipeline in north Kenya to a new port at Lamu. Kenya is under pressure to boost storage facilities and develop a strategic reserve to stabilise petroleum supplies. The country has no strategic reserves and relies on oil marketers' 21-day reserves required under industry regulations. Fuel prices have a big impact on inflation in the east African nation, which relies heavily on diesel for transport, power generation and agriculture, while kerosene is used in many households for cooking and lighting. The government started monthly reviews of retail fuel prices after they shot higher in 2010, driving up the cost of living.

French competition watchdog to investigate GDF Suez

September 10, 2014

France's antitrust watchdog has ordered GDF Suez to give competitors access to part of its customer database and said the utility company might have abused its dominant position in the gas market. GDF Suez denies the allegation. Following a complaint by rival energy group Direct Energie, GDF Suez will have to open up its corporate customer database by November 3 and to its household database by December 15, France's competition authority said on Tuesday.

The watchdog will also begin an in-depth investigation into GDF Suez's market practices that will run until late 2015 or early 2016. If this finds that GDF Suez has abused its dominant position, the watchdog could fine the company as much as 10 percent of its world-wide sales. GDF Suez's 2013 sales were 81.3 billion euros (\$104.7 billion).

GDF Suez said it was considering its options, including a possible appeal against the watchdog's decision. "GDF Suez firmly denies having made any use of a dominant position," the company said. France's energy market was liberalised in 2007, giving consumers the option of switching from the former monopoly operator GDF Suez to alternative suppliers. But the competition watchdog said that seven years after liberalisation, the development of alternative gas suppliers was extremely limited.

At the end of 2013, alternative suppliers - not including EDF - had only 5 percent of the household market and 13 percent of the industrial market, despite offering market prices that are up to 15 percent below GDF Suez's regulated tariffs, the competition authority said. This is hampering the competitiveness of French companies and the purchasing power of French households.

Direct Energy's complaint, filed in April, said GDF Suez was using its database of customers on regulated gas tariffs to offer them both gas and electricity at market prices, allowing it to maintain its position in the gas market and win new customers. GDF Suez offers government-regulated gas tariffs, but also offers market prices like its newer competitors. The watchdog said Direct Energy had accused GDF Suez of confusing regulated and competitive tariffs.

The competition body said GDF Suez was suspected of having "abused its dominant position on the gas market by using infrastructure dedicated to the regulated market to commercialise competitive offers." GDF Suez said the French gas market had become very competitive since its opening to industrial customers in 2000 and 2004 and to residential customers in 2007.

The company said that according to energy regulator CRE, alternative suppliers have a 14.7 percent share of all consumption sites and 14.9 percent of annualised consumption volumes. It also said in the non-residential market, alternative suppliers have a 26.2 percent share of all sites and 49.6 percent of volumes. CRE figures include EDF's market share.

Besides Direct Energie, GDF Suez's main competitors are power utility EDF, Italy's Eni and Belgian independent energy retailer Lampiris. Last year, the competition authority recommended France gradually phase out regulated gas tariffs because they hinder competition and keep prices artificially high. But the government rejected this.

Regulated tariffs for small commercial and industrial firms will be phased out in two stages between January 2015 and January 2016, but France has no plans to do away with regulated tariffs for households. GDF Suez shares, which are up 13.4 percent year to date, were down 0.9 percent at midday, underperforming the broader market which was down 0.3 percent.

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UAE's Dana Gas gets \$100 million financing

September 10, 2014

Dana Gas, the United Arab Emirates energy firm, secured \$100 million of financing to develop an offshore gas field in the north of the country, with the first gas production expected early next year, it said on Tuesday. The four-year credit facility from banks comprises the debt component of the financing for the Zora gas field development, Dana said in a statement.

The company has spent about \$49 million so far as part of the project's equity financing. The Zora field will provide gas for local power generation in the northern UAE with expected production capacity of 40 million standard cubic feet per day, Dana said. Mandated lead arrangers and joint bookrunners for the credit facility, which includes a sharia-compliant tranche, are Emirates NBD, Commercial Bank International, Commercial Bank of Dubai and Barwa Bank.

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Markets

ISE-10 index stays bullish

Tuesday, 09 September 2014 20:38

Posted by Imaduddin

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE) on Tuesday witnessed bullish trend as the ISE-10 index was up by 16.06 points to close at 4641.82 points.

A total of 9,500 shares were traded, which showed a positive growth of 3,500 shares, when compared with previous day's trading of 6,000 shares.

Out of 151 companies, share prices of 95 companies recorded increase while those of 56 companies decreased and 2 companies remained stable in today's trading.

The share price of Sanofi-Aventis Pakistan increased by Rs 31.75 while that of Pakistan Tobacco decreased by Rs 50.00 per share.

Engro Corporation, Fauji Fertilizer Company and PSO remained the top trading companies with 5,000, 1,000 and 1,000 shares respectively.

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LSE gains 9.50 points

Tuesday, 09 September 2014 20:27

Posted by Imaduddin

LAHORE: Lahore Stock Exchange here Tuesday witnessed bullish trend by gaining 9.50 points as the LSE Index-25 opened with 5393.12 points and closed at 5402.62 points.

The market's overall situation also correspond to an upward trend as it remained at 1.436 million shares to close against previous turnover of 373,000 shares, showing an upward move of 1.063 million shares. While, out of the total 107 active scrips 34 moved up, 10 shed values and 63 remained equal.

The top three Major Gainers of the day were Abbott Laboratories (Pakistan) Limited, General Tyre and Rubber Company and Pakistan Petroleum Limited by recording increase in their per share value by Rs 27.53, Rs 4.59 and Rs 2.30 respectively.

Muslim Commercail Bank, Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) and Pakistan Oil Fields Limited were among top three, which lost their per share value by Rs 1.67, Re 0.65 and Re 0.27 respectively.

Top three Volume Leaders of the day included Fauji Cement Company Limited with 829,500 shares, NIB Bank Limited with 96,000 shares and Silk Bank Limited (Saudi) with 82,000 shares.

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BR Research: *All*

Floods: a fateful, familiar story

September 10, 2014

BR Research

Pakistan has suffered through around two dozen floods since its inception. The frequency of floods has increased lately as the country has constantly faced natural calamity in the form of riverine floods or flash floods every year for last five years. Climate change is no myth and Pakistan is amongst the top-ranked countries in the world affected by climate-related disasters.

Pakistan was ranked on 1, 3 and 5 in 2010, 2011 and 2012's Global Climate Risk index, respectively. The Indus Water basin is deemed to be amongst the globe's most climate change-vulnerable reservoir. There have been reports published before 2010 which explained that water melting from Himalayan glaciers would be higher in 2010-2025, resulting in water reserves' depletion and ensuing shortages in subsequent years.

The warning has been there: the region is prone to chunks of high floods followed by years of drought-like situation until and unless water storage capacity is enhanced considerably.

Pakistan's annual water inflows are around 150-165 million acre feet (maf) while the country has storage capacity of mere 11.55 maf. This implies a storage capacity of less than 30 days of flows while in case of India it is much higher (over 120 days). Pakistan stores around seven percent of its available water while the global average is at 40 percent. That is why the per capita water availability in Pakistan is said to be among the lowest in the world at 73 cubic meters as against 6,150 cubic meters in the United States. The result is that water's contribution to Pakistan's GDP is \$0.34 per cubic meter, compared to global average of \$8.6 per cubic meter.

The situation suggests that there would be chronic water shortage in the country in years to come and the stress is already visible. The potential economic loss due to wastage of water is mind-blowing. Pakistan, on an average, loses 15 percent (30-35 maf) of its fresh water per annum in the sea. Experts have calculated the global average of economic gain from one maf of water at \$2 billion.

Given Pakistan's inefficiencies, one maf of water is priced at about \$1 billion. So, the economic loss every year comes at \$30-35 billion (12-14% of GDP). The loss to production and exports is humongous due to inefficient water management. The losses could be magnified by incorporating the severity of power shortage in the country and had the water been properly managed, power production could have been a by-product.

Rao Arshad Ali Khan, ex-chairman IRSA had previously told BR Research in an interview that "the total investment required for the three dams at Kalabagh, Bhasha and Akhori comes to around \$25 billion, and the timeline for completion is up to eight years. The proceeds from hydro generation, which is actually a by-product of dams, can, alone, recover investment in five years. Additionally, new dams would help in irrigating currently-ignored arable lands. And in days of

high rains, dams serve well in contingencies and mitigate riverine floods.”

The 2010 super floods in Pakistan should have been reason enough for authorities to jolt and initiate effective disaster management system and expedite the process of building adequate reservoirs and dams. The loss from the calamity was huge as the human demise toll was around 2,000 while 1.2 million livestock had perished. The devastation made 1.1 million people homeless while 18 million (10% of population) was affected.

There was a generous response from the global community as many countries, bilateral and multilateral agencies and INGOs pledged hundreds of millions of dollars for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. However, upon seeing the government’s lack of interest in adapting to climate change and instilling measures to prevent disasters, only a fraction was materialized out of the pledges. That has resulted in donor fatigue as relatively lower support was seemingly offered in subsequent floods.

The loss from series of floods could have been much less had the government installed early warning systems in every district. Alas, the authorities could not get their act together after the catastrophic loss from 2010 floods. No wonder, even the flash floods in 2012 and 2013 were enough to take the lives of 900 people.

Keep on counting the loss in 2014. The country is facing another round of floods this year. To date, floods have around 200 lives in the country. The loss is primarily in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and upper Punjab. The water levels have been rising and there are threats of floods to reach areas in Southern Punjab and Sindh.

If there is going to be a second round of floods, the loss could be much higher than what it is today. Already, floodwaters have reached the industrial belt of Punjab, so the losses would also mount from the manufacturing sector.

Apart from direct human loss, the well-being of many is affected by the series of floods in Pakistan. According to a survey, due to climate change, 54 percent of country’s inhabitants are worse off than before. Most of rural people are dependent upon crops and livestock for their living and floods affect these two badly. In the past five years, millions of acres of crops were destroyed, and livestock losses are no different.

According to NDMA reports, economic loss was \$10.1 billion (6.5% of GDP) while two million acres of crops were damaged in the 2010 super floods. The cumulative loss of floods in 2011-13 was \$8.3 billion spanning over three years. The reports suggest that loss to date in 2014 floods is \$0.5 billion (0.2% of GDP) but that number will inflate as the floods reach Southern Punjab and Sindh as it can severely damage cotton crop there.

A recent research report by brokerage Top line Securities suggested that the magnitude of loss this year would be similar to that in the preceding two years and the damage would be less than floods of 2010 and 2011. It has revised its forecast on GDP, by incorporating the economic loss due to political chaos and floods, to 4.2 percent from earlier 4.5 percent in FY15. The loss could be much higher as second round of rains can worsen the impact of floods while the political protests continue in Islamabad.

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) was approved by the PPP government in February

2013 which recommended an improved flood forecasting system across the country and increased capacity of storm drainage system in urban areas. However, in the PML-N government, it was perhaps not among Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's priorities and he slashed its budget due to fiscal constraints.

We need to learn lessons from Bangladesh, which was historically more prone to floods and nowadays it's nowhere in headlines on the issue. International donors responded to the Bengalis on their commitment to improving environment as lately the country got a funding of \$500 million to improve the land affected by water salinity apart from tapping global green fund.

But, there is a tendency among Pakistanis to remain in their comfort zone until the calamity hits. As a result, the country is too late and ill-prepared to respond. That needs to change.

Cement sales: a short-lived recovery?

September 10, 2014

BR Research

Having witnessed a rather modest beginning of the year, cement sales in the country picked up during the second month of FY15. The recently-released numbers from APCMA show a year-on-year increase of 25 percent for August, driven largely by sales in the North region.

An increase is expected this time of the year, given a lull in construction activities during the month of fasting (which was in July this year). Ali Amin, Research Analyst at KASB Securities, notes that sales have been driven mostly by private-sector led activity, as release of funds for government development projects has been going slow.

While the recent flooding in the provinces of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab (both of which constitute the North region) will put a drag on sales over the coming month, one notes that the hyped 'loss in economic activity' has not been as much as it was touted to be, as speculations of a 'revolution-in-the-offing' subsided. Remarkably, export sales, where the sector has been struggling, also picked up, registering growth of 64 percent month on month and 22 percent year on year.

Compared with the North, the South region seems to have made up for lower local sales with higher exports, where proximity to the port may have kicked exports via sea to markets in Africa. At the same time, declining demand from Afghanistan seems to be creating a challenging position for players up North.

This North-South difference in local versus export sales may help explain why capacity expansions are largely taking place in the former region, while dominant players in the South seek greener pastures abroad, reflected by Lucky Cement's expansion plans in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

But, more importantly, this divide is also instructive in terms of regional differences in infrastructure development across the country. Indeed, this is an area that requires further inquiry, based on latest population metrics, increasing levels of urbanisation and political factors.

Sit-ins clip real estate prospects

September 10, 2014

BR Research

The ongoing political deadlock in Islamabad may or may not have cost the economy Rs1,000-1,300 billion. But one thing is more certain: housing and real estate business has been knocked really hard. And while the real estate market has weakened across major cities of the country, the capital territory has been hit the hardest by the ongoing sit-ins and protests.

This is reflected in the data from Zameen.com, one of Pakistan's premier property websites. Its search trends show that while home seekers in the market have continued with their dynamism, investors remained inactive during August 2014. It must be noted here that Islamabad is a hub for real estate investment unlike other cities where genuine buyers capture most of the market. Also, the top investment spot in Islamabad rests with plots. The latest city wise data from Zameen.com shows that the web portal witnessed around 9.7 percent drop browsing for plots in Islamabad by investors, while in Lahore this fall was around 2.9 percent.

Talking to BR Research, Zeeshan Ali Khan—Co-founder and CEO at Zameen.com—drew attention to the fact that the website's traffic is largely fuelled by the overseas Pakistanis who account for around 40 percent of the sector's transaction.

Khan further emphasised on the polarisation in Islamabad's real estate market where investment not only pours in the high-end localities like F-10, F-11, E-11 and mid-range DHA and Bahria Town, but also the more affordable areas in the vicinity of the airport. Where most investment in the high and mid-range residential plots come from expatriates and investors in USA, investment in areas like B-17, PECHS and other localities come from the huge population living in UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Within locality searches, as a percentage of Islamabad's total searches, DHA and Bahria Town lead with 9.36 percent and 8.03 percent average share, respectively, in the first eight months of 2014. In terms of worth of these areas, the prices of one-kanal residential plots generally fell or remained stagnant in August except for a few areas.

So, while demonstrations and protests have affected the capital's real estate market, there is no reason to lose hope; unlike developed countries where the property market is mostly rental and mortgage-based, Khan points out that real estate market in Pakistan is a strong cash-based investment avenue and thus more buoyant to such vulnerabilities.

Crime News

165kg of heroin seized in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: Personnel of the **Tehkal Police Station** on Monday **recovered 165 kilograms heroin** in the provincial capital. The **police** said the **cops** intercepted a truck in the limits of **Tehkal Police Station** Monday afternoon.

“During search, the **police recovered 165 kilograms heroin** from the vehicle,” **Superintendent of Police (SP) Cantonment Faisal Shehzad** told **The News**. **One accused** identified as **Abdul Raziq** was **arrested**. The **heroin** was suspected to be smuggled abroad **once** it reached the down country. The seizure of **165 kilogram heroin** is considered to be one of the biggest in the contemporary history.

Police capture 76 criminals in Karachi

KARACHI: **Karachi police** on Sunday claimed to have **arrested 76 criminals** in **different raids** and **killed one criminal** in an **encounter** with them in the city during the last **24 hours**.

According to **Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi report**, **police** conducted **110 raids** in different areas of the city in the consequence of these **raids** they **arrested 14 criminals** under **Arms Act**, **eight under Narcotics Act**, **18 proclaimed offenders**, **absconders** and **robbers**. The report stated that **one alleged criminal** was also **killed** in an **encounter** in the city. The **police** also claimed recovering **22 handguns**, **one hand grenade**, **drugs** and **liquor** from the possession of **arrested accused**.

Islamabad: 2 dacoits arrested after police encounter

ISLAMABAD: **Sabzi Mandi police** **arrested two dacoits** after **police encounter** through prompt action and **foiled** their attempt to **loot** the citizens, a **police spokesman** said on Monday.

He said that **constables Abdul Aziz** and **Noor Muhammad** from **Sabzi Mandi police station** were performing duty in **Eagle Squad** at bike last night, when they observed some **suspects** near boundary wall of **Sabzi Mandi green area** in **Sector- I/10**. They wanted to check **three suspects** who were sitting there to **loot** passersby.

On seeing the **policemen**, these **suspects** opened firing on both of **cops** which fortunately hit their **motorcycle**. In retaliatory **firing**, the **cops** succeeded to overpower **two dacoits** while one of them managed to escape taking the advantage of **darkness**. One of the **nabbed dacoit Umar** residents of **Peshawar** got **injured** in retaliatory fire while other has been identified as **Naik Mali** resident of **Kohat**. Later, the wounded **dacoit** succumbed to his injuries at **hospital**. **Sabzi Mandi Police** has **registered** the case (**FIR No. 516**) under sections **324/186/ 353/34 PPC**, **A-O-13/20/65** while a **30 bore pistol** was **recovered** from **dacoits**.

AIG (Operations) Sultan Azam Temuri has appreciated the performance of **police officials** who nabbed these dacoits and gave **cash prize Rs. 10,000** and **commendation certificates** to the **policemen** who showed gallant attitude in **police encounter** and **nabbed criminal elements**.

3 arrested for profiteering in Karachi

KARACHI: The city administration arrested three shopkeepers and fined another 72 for violating the official price list for essential edible items. In a statement issued on Monday, **Karachi Commissioner Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui** said that during the **crackdown 17 chicken sellers, seven grocers, 10 green grocers, 31 milk sellers and seven fruit sellers** were fined **Rs78,700** while **three profiteers** were arrested.

The **raids** were carried out in **Saddar, Civil Lines, SITE, Garden, Baldia Town, Bin Qasim Town, Ibrahim Hyderi, Ferozabad, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulzar-e-Hijri, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, North Nazimabad, New Karachi, Landhi, Korangi and Model Colony**. The **commissioner** said those **arrested** were sent to **jail** after **legal formalities**.

Accused held for fraud in Chakwal

CHAKWAL: Chakwal police arrested an accused who gave a **fake cheque** to a **man**. **Muhammad Ashraf Khan**, of village **Mangwal** gave **loan** of **Rs 1.5 million** to **Sajid Aashiq**, of village **Sarkal**.

When he asked him to return the **amount**, he was given a **cheque**. The **cheque** was bounced when it was taken to **bank**. The **police arrested** the **accused**.

Miscellaneous News

Ministry of Water and Power: Aware of lower circular debt but unaware of how much

By Shahbaz Rana

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

While it failed to give updated and firm figures to substantiate the claim, nevertheless the Ministry of Water and Power said that circular debt has shrunk significantly due to improvement in the collection of electricity bills.

During a meeting of the Energy Resource Rationalisation Committee, Secretary Water and Power Nargis Sethi reported improvement in recoveries but could not share a firm figure with the committee's chairman, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. She reportedly told the committee that provisional collection suggested significant improvement.

The committee has been constituted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

According to an official handout of the finance ministry, Sethi told Dar that circular debt has further been reduced to a level of Rs238 billion which was stuck at Rs295 billion a few weeks ago.

According to officials who attended the meeting, the Rs238 billion was an old figure which the government released a few weeks ago. Sethi said that she was planning to hold a meeting with the power distribution companies (DISCOs) shortly to discuss improvements in the billing cycle. She assured that all available resources will be utilised to make a comprehensive collection model.

The finance ministry has already refused to pick the power sector losses on account of less recovery of bills, which is one of the reasons behind the vicious cycle of the circular debt. It has been paying dues only to the extent of cost difference between the price of generation and end-consumer.

While the ministry of water and power claimed improvement in collection, the overall gross receivables of the power sector have grown to Rs530 billion as against the previous position of Rs508 billion, according to officials who attended the meeting.

Dar directed the secretary water and power to take further steps to reduce the amount of circular debt of DISCOs and make people aware how they could reduce their bills substantially by conserving electricity during peak hours, said the official handout.

The federal minister further directed the secretary to reduce line losses from the figure approved by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority. Currently, the power distribution companies are incurring losses more than the threshold allowed by the power sector regulator, which is yet another reason behind the circular debt.

The meeting also discussed the proposal of feeder-to-feeder implementation to reduce line losses. The proposal has been given by Special Assistant to Prime Minister Musadik Malik.

According to the model they have been following, the Lahore Electricity Supply Company will be able to reduce line losses in the range of 5.5% to 6.5% for non-industrial connections and 1.5% for industrial connections by mid-October, according to the finance ministry handout. This exercise is expected to save Rs180 million monthly on a sub-division level and, if extended to the feeder level, the reduction in losses has been estimated at Rs1 billion per month.

The committee has asked the ministry to implement feeder-to-feeder model in areas where the line losses are high such as in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. The line losses in the jurisdiction of power distribution companies like Faisalabad, Lahore, Islamabad and Gujranwala are far better than other power distribution companies.

The finance minister directed Malik to put together teams for the implementation of this plan and replicate the model in one of the DISCOs in Sindh, stated the handout.

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China coming up with investment, not loans: Asif

By Zafar Bhutta

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Mohammad Asif has lashed out at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman for repeatedly criticising upcoming Chinese investment, saying the money is coming in the form of foreign direct investment and not as a loan that will increase the country's debt burden.

Speaking at a press conference here on Tuesday to respond to allegations levelled by PTI chief Imran Khan, Asif said Chinese government had approved \$34 billion worth of investment after assessing Pakistan's electricity needs.

“Beijing has designated three banks including Exim bank that will provide loans to Chinese companies for investment in power, railway and transport sectors in Pakistan,” he said. “These loans will not be a liability on the government of Pakistan.”

He advised the PTI chairman to consult his aides before issuing statements. “We are ready for scrutiny and accountability,” he said and ruled out the possibility of overlooking bidding rules in the award of contracts to Chinese firms.

“We have given advertisements for investment in Gadani power projects and a competitive bidding process will be initiated for upcoming power plants.” Successful bidders would have to show project feasibility reports to Chinese banks to qualify for the loans, he pointed out.

He categorically stated that Pakistan government would not give any sovereign guarantees to Chinese investors, who would install power plants in public-private partnership mode.

He revealed that Chinese banks would extend commercial loans to private enterprises at 7% mark-up. On the other hand, Pakistan has got concessionary loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank at 2% to 4% mark-up.

“The ADB and World Bank have loan deals with Pakistan, therefore, these are concessionary loans whereas Chinese investment is in the form of commercial loans at 7% mark-up,” he said, adding Chinese companies would set up power plants to generate 10,400 megawatts to bridge the shortfall.

He also claimed that PTI leader Imran Khan had deposited utility bills and electricity supply would be cut off in case of unpaid bills.

Acknowledging that the existing transmission system could carry load of only 16,000MW, Asif announced that the government was going to unveil a policy to pave the way for the private sector to lay transmission lines.

He expressed the hope that industrial units, which were shut down due to power shortages, would be revived after an increase in electricity generation. “We face a shortfall of 4,000 to 5,000MW and the Chinese investment will not only help fill this gap, but will also revive the closed industrial concerns.”

Speaking about the Thar coal project, Asif said capital injection into the scheme was part of the \$34-billion investment programme. The rate of return on coal-based power plants will be 17% to 27%.

He admitted that the cost of coal-fired power projects was \$1.45 million per megawatt whereas in India it was \$550,000. “India produces 60% to 70% of material whereas we would have to import all material for power plants.”

The minister rejected the perception that the giant Mansha group would benefit from the investment programme, saying the group would have to go through the bidding process if it wanted to set up a power plant.

He also ruled out any role of Saifur Rehman, former NAB chief, in the deal for power plants.

“Nepra is the most independent body and defends its independence. It has members from all provinces including Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and decisions are taken with consultation,” he said.

He also said no changes were made in Nepra laws and the regulator's chairman was not his brother as he was from Sindh.

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Floods swamp rice and cotton fields, could spark price hike

By Imran Rana

Published: September 10, 2014

FAISALABAD:

The torrential rains and ensuing floods that have swamped vast swathes of central Punjab are feared to bring down production of key crops, leading to shortage of food and other commodities besides increase in their prices.

Cotton and rice plantations, among other crops, have been damaged by the heavy showers and many farmers have suffered hefty losses, discussions with government officials and agriculture sector players reveal.

Most of the farmers solely bank on farming to feed their families and have no other source of income. Initially, they were excited when rains arrived as the showers would have left a good impact on their crops.

The farmers usually have no savings to cultivate their crops again and look after their families as 80% of landowners are small farmers having less than 12.5 acres of land, agricultural experts say.

Most of the peasants own less than five acres of land and they cannot bear heavy losses. Assistance from the government is the only way that could revive their livelihood, experts added.

Controlling floodwaters, ravaging through Punjab and threatening Sindh as well, has emerged as a new challenge for the government, which already faces issues such as a weakening economy, political uncertainty and power shortages.

“Floods have wreaked havoc in several areas of Punjab, destroying standing crops over thousands of acres, killing livestock and washing away hundreds of villages,” said an official of the Punjab Agriculture Department while talking to *The Express Tribune*.

The scale of devastation suggested that the farmers had suffered millions of rupees worth of losses, he added.

Agricultural experts fear widespread damage to the rice and cotton belt as well as to other plantations. Many rice fields have been submerged and the overflowing Chenab and Jhelum rivers could sweep away the cotton crop in the southern belt of Punjab.

Consumers have already started complaining about shortage of commodities in the grain and weekly markets. Vegetable fields have also been swamped on a large scale.

Gujranwala district has so far been the worst hit area in Punjab. “Here, the raging floodwaters have destroyed paddy fields over 50,000 acres and affected 10,000 acres sown with other crops,” said Hameed Chaudhry, District Officer of the Punjab Agriculture Department Gujranwala.

Agriculture land in nearby areas of Sialkot, Narowal, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad and Sheikhupura had also been adversely affected, he added.

Chaudhry, however, said it was difficult to come up with a loss estimate at this stage and it could only be made once the water receded.

In Faisalabad and adjoining areas, rains and floods had hit crops of corn, rice and vegetables, said Basheer Afzal Warraich, District Officer of the Punjab Agriculture Department Faisalabad.

Floods in Ravi River destroyed 1,033 acres of rice field, sugarcane cultivated over 542 acres, corn on 1,095 acres and cotton on 85 acres in Tandlianwala tehsil of Faisalabad, he added.

Besides the crops, infrastructure has also been torn apart in over 100 villages in Chiniot and Jhang districts because of floods in Chenab River.

“A large number of cattle also perished in the deluge, which may lead to increase in their prices before Eidul Azha, which is less than a month away,” an expert pointed out.

The government did not learn any lesson from the destruction caused by the previous floods in the country, say some angry farmers. The devastation caused to the agriculture sector could have been averted had the government built water reservoirs and an effective drainage system, they say.

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Helping hand: Indian businessmen call for visa relaxation

By Shahram Haq

Published: September 10, 2014

LAHORE:

Indian businessmen have labelled Pakistan a lucrative market for their companies and expressed eagerness to transfer their state of the art technology in energy solutions.

They requested relaxation on the visa issuance process by Pakistan High Commission as delays were stalling prospective joint ventures.

Since the current government clearly articulated their interest in expanding bilateral trade relations with its neighbour, some Indian companies have shown interest to working with Pakistani counterparts to produce and install advanced turbines and boilers in sugar and allied industries.

“We are working with our Pakistani counterparts to provide local industries – especially sugar mills – with technology transfer in shape of power packs, but visa delays often hinder the timely completion of projects”, said Triveni Turbines India Deputy General Manager Sales and Marketing Sanjay Dewan.

Triveni Turbines is providing energy solutions with its Indian counterpart, Cheema Boilers Limited, and a Pakistani firm SK Alliance International. These three companies have installed three power packs and eight turbines in different sugar and paper mills in one year and plan to install another six soon.

These steam turbines are energy efficient and produce 150% more electricity than the turbines already installed in many industries. They generate electricity via bagasse and other biomass fuels like rice husk, barn, corn cobs and coal.

“Since we all are well aware of the relations between both countries, we are training local engineers in Pakistan to take care of technical issues after installations. We step in for the faults only if they are beyond the expertise of local engineers. This way, we are shifting technology and providing employment opportunities to Pakistani engineers,” Dewan added.

“Such power packs or turbines are 30-40% cheaper than European products and the quality of Indian turbines is far better. However, Chinese manufacturers are our biggest competitors,” said SK International Chief Executive Officer Khawaja Khurram Iftikhar.

“For instance, an Indian turbine of 8MW capacity costs \$1.2 million whereas the same from Europe would cost \$2 million. For a complete power pack, consisting of a turbine and high pressure boiler, the price is 30% less than the power packs manufactured in Pakistan,” said Iftikhar.

“A power pack normally takes 18 months to install. A few Pakistani companies are producing these power packs but their production capacity is one or two a year, whereas our joint venture can produce around 4 packs annually,” he added.

An exhibition organised by Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologies was held in Lahore, where local firms along with foreign companies from India, Europe, US and China displayed their energy efficient and technology-related products.

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Sino-Pak projects: From Shanghai to Gwadar

By APP

Published: September 10, 2014

LAHORE:

China is planning to replicate the model of Shanghai Free Trade Zone (SFTZ) in Gwadar, said Pak-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Shah Faisal Afridi as he highlighted various investment projects on Tuesday.

The official said that China is also planning to invest \$50 billion into a number of projects including coal, solar and wind energy till 2017 under the Early Harvest Programme.

He added that these would enable Gwadar to create a nexus among Pakistan, Iran, China and Central Asian States that would ultimately generate billions of dollars in revenues along with several job opportunities.

“The SFTZ is a perfect model to be implemented at Gwadar. It was first used as a testing ground for a number of economic and social reforms in China and it proved very helpful in scaling up the country’s economic growth,” said Afridi.

The zone, he said, incorporated numerous relaxations in different sectors, under the FTZ’s new capital registration system — foreign investors were no longer required to contribute 15% capital within three months and full capital within two years of the establishment of a foreign invested enterprise (FIE).

The ‘one-stop application processing platform’ was introduced at the zone, he said, which meant that applicants may obtain all the necessary documents for the company establishment under one roof.

The Chinese assistance in the development of this port is essential in positively impacting the country’s economy.

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UBL Fund Managers set for another launch

By Our Correspondent

Published: September 10, 2014

KARACHI:

Asset management firm UBL Fund Managers is launching its fourth Islamic principal preservation fund under the name of Al-Ameen Islamic Principal Preservation Fund IV (AIPPF-IV), a statement said on Tuesday.

AIPPF-IV is a Shariah-compliant mutual fund, which falls into the category of the ‘fund of funds’ that provides Islamic returns while promising principal’s preservation along with an exposure to equities.

Capital preservation schemes aim to have optimal returns while ensuring that the principal invested remains intact even in the worst-case scenario. Any investment in the fund also entails a tax rebate provided the holding period is of two years.

Earlier, UBL Funds has launched three AIPPFs. Subscription for the fourth fund will remain open for a limited time and the fund will mature in two years.

According to UBL Fund Managers CEO Mir Mohammad Ali, each tranche of AIPPF has seen an increase in the invested volume. The first, second and third tranches of AIPPF attracted Rs733 million, Rs983 million and Rs2.2 billion, respectively. The first three AIPPFs will mature on April 2015, November 2015 and June 2016.

AIPPF-IV will invest in the Al-Ameen Shariah Stock Fund to take exposure to equities while investments in Al-Ameen Islamic Sovereign Fund and Al-Ameen Islamic Cash Fund will provide AIPPF-IV with exposure to fixed income and money market instruments.

According to data compiled by the Mutual Fund Association of Pakistan (MUFAP), the assets under management of the first three AIPPFs at the end of August amounted to Rs897.2 million, Rs1 billion and Rs2.1 billion.

However, the returns posted by the AIPPFs in recent months have been dismal mainly because of the uncertainty in Pakistan’s equity market.

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Looking to stitch the sector's growth

By Our Correspondent

Published: September 10, 2014

FAISALABAD:

Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said that the government would extend its full support and assistance to the textile sector, leaving no stone unturned to put it back on track.

Addressing members of the Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA), he said that the GSP Plus status, which the country acquired at the start of the year, would create at least 1 million jobs, boosting the country's economy and improving the quality of workers' life.

"The industrial sector is facing multiple problems as a result of which productivity is decreasing day by day," said Sarwar. "We are not only working diligently to bridge the gap between demand and supply but have chalked out a comprehensive strategy to overcome energy challenges. With the support of the masses, we will overcome every obstacle faced by the industry," he said, adding that the government is committed to serving the masses.

Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Textile Industry Abbas Khan Afridi said that the government is fully aware of the problems hindering the textile sector, stressing that industrial pace would be given a boost. He added that the textile ministry will make immediate payments of pending refund claims of exporters. Stakeholders will be taken onboard while formulating policies affecting the textile industry, especially the value addition sector, said the minister.

Newly-elected PTEA Chairman Sohail Pasha presented the annual report of the association and said that the power crisis was the biggest hindrance in the growth of the textile sector. "Pakistani exports are under pressure due to multiple factors," said Pasha. "Billions of rupees worth of refunds are stuck with the authorities. With the rising cost of production, the energy shortage is adding fuel to the fire."

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FCCI pleased with chambers' conference

By Our Correspondent

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FAISALABAD:

Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Engineer Suhail Bin Rashid has said that the fifth All Pakistan Chambers' President Conference, which was

held in Gujranwala, will be a major step towards the promotion of unity among the business community of Pakistan.

He said that arranging five successive conferences in a year is reflective of the unanimity among the business community on important economic issues confronted by Pakistan.

“It would not only help the government in policy making but also reduce genuine reservations of the business community with enhanced interaction.”

He further said that representatives of 16 leading chambers participated in the conference. He showed his support for the view that the ministry and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan are being restructured to achieve the economic targets set by the government.

Rashid requested the Federal Board of Revenue to take necessary measures to remove budget anomalies, adding that the tax collection machinery should also take action against lethargic officers. The conference also addressed the issue of 50% increase in property tax.

It was also decided that the sales tax registration of small traders should be linked to an annual turnover of Rs20 million. He was also critical of the discrimination between commercial and industrial importers and said that a uniform tax rate should be applied to both categories.

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FBR chief lists down tax collection woes

By Owais Jafri

Published: September 10, 2014

MULTAN:

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Tariq Bajwa has said that the government is facing a lack of funds for its tasks because of the limited number of taxpayers and the financial crunch faced by the country.

Ha said this while addressing a ceremony of tax members association in Multan. Bajwa added that only war-torn countries like Rwanda, Afghanistan and Congo have fewer taxpayers than Pakistan.

“The only possible solution is that people realise and understand the need to pay tax responsibly for the progress of the country.”

He said that it was for this reason that the FBR has started a self-assessment scheme to analyse tax payments itself.

“If people are eager to earn profit, then they must understand the essential role of paying taxes.”

He requested all tax bar associations in the country to convince people that they pay tax for the progress of the country.

“We have tried to mitigate the obstacles of collecting taxes and have made this process easy for people.”

He said that the government will give back extra sales taxes of the textile sector before September 30, which is more than Rs14 billion.

“There was no sales tax refund two years ago but now we have not only introduced it but made it effective on a fast-track basis.”

Bajwa lamented that the reason for taking dictations from the International Monetary Fund is that the country collects the least amount of tax.

He said that there are minimum five million taxpayers in the country and we are increasing efforts to increase our tax net to minimum three million taxpayers.

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Rehab programmes: Minister lauds NIRM's performance

By Our Correspondent

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

Minister of State for Capital Administration and Development Division Barrister Usman Ibrahim on Tuesday visited the National Institute of Rehabilitation and Medicine (NIRM) and appreciated the working of NIRM for providing healthcare facilities to patients, said a press release.

NIRM is a public-sector welfare organisation funded mostly by the Baitul Mal and Zakat funds. Apart from healthcare, it also provides technical and vocational training. Courses include skill development programmes, computer training, stitching and sewing, and cooking competitions.

Ibrahim said the government is in contact with international donor agencies, including UNICEF and Japan International Cooperation Agency, for technical assistance in education and rehabilitation facilities for patients.

NIRM receives about 400 outpatients daily, apart from more than 100 inpatients. “Instead of importing limbs and other equipment, NIRM should set up own assembly plant,” said Ibrahim.

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Opinion poll: Over 60% people favour local government system

By Our Correspondent / Creative: Jamal Khurshid

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

A countrywide poll has claimed that around 65 per cent of Pakistanis believe a local government (LG) system is the only solution to extricate the country from the current myriad of issues.

According to the opinion poll conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (Pildat) that gauged citizens' views on the quality of democracy upon completion of the first year of national and provincial assemblies, 71 per cent respondents said LG elections were important. Around 65 per cent said holding of LG polls was the only solution to solve peoples' problems locally while only 27 per cent were of the opinion that LG elections were not important.

The survey was conducted between July 16 and August 6 across the country.

According to the survey, a majority of the population was optimistic about the democratic system with 33 per cent reposed confidence in political parties, 26 per cent in the independence of media and 13 per cent in the quality of democracy.

The survey says that the holistic indicators measured the public's level of satisfaction as well as their assessment of how well democracy was functioning in the country.

“This positive attitude is reflective of the growing and deep thinking people have begun to attach with the democratic system,” it stated.

The survey puts the effectiveness of bureaucracy at 21 per cent, respect for human rights at 16 per cent, sovereignty 13 per cent, effectiveness of the federal cabinet at eight per cent, delegation of powers to provinces at eight per cent, constitutional supremacy and civil-military relations at three per cent.

A total of 3,065 citizens in rural and urban areas of the four provinces were surveyed through face-to-face interactions at their homes.

The survey states that 67 per cent of the population believed that democratically elected governments were good for Pakistan, while only 19 per cent favoured army rule. Around 63 per cent of them believe the 2013 elections were transparent and fair, while 37 per cent opined that the elections were rigged.

Around 85 per cent favoured to reform the Election Commission of Pakistan and 67 per cent favoured electoral reforms.

The survey says that while the majority the people favoured democracy, they still wish to see improvement on the operational aspect of governance.

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Social event: For women, sit-ins offer break from rural conservatism

By Sehrish Wasif

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

For some, the PAT sit-in is a wonderland. A group of ‘Inqilabi’ supporters are living a life they only dreamt of back in their village near Sargodha and feel like this sit-in has brought a ‘revolution’ in their life by providing them with an opportunity to enjoy ‘real’ freedom.

The young girls, aged between 15 and 22 years, have come from a village where they cannot even dare to go to school because of the conservative environment.

Among them is Nida*, 22, from a village near Sargodha. She was forced to quit school when she was in seventh grade because her family had to put up with a lot of criticism from other villagers for sending her to school.

“I wanted to become a teacher, but the people in my village did not let me to go to school,” she told *The Express Tribune*.

She and her siblings have come to Islamabad for the very first time and are finding the city more comfortable than her home town.

“I always wanted to live a life of my own, to move freely, to talk with people my own age without any fear...and here at the sit-in, my wishes have been fulfilled,” she said.

Farwa*, 18, another young PAT worker from the same village, said, “ Though we do not have proper shelter, I find this place much better than my hometown as here is have a right to live my life according to my will.”

She completed her matriculation in Faisalabad, but, when she went home on vacations, her family told her she was not allowed to study any longer.

“In my village, we cannot even think of going out without a veil and headscarf, but here we can move around while just covering our head with a dupatta,” she said.

She said it is not easy to live in a conservative environment where girls are being confined to the four walls of their homes.

“My brother said he wants to go home for a few days to rest but I refused...I cannot even think of leaving here for one second,” she said.

Rashida*, 20 another young PAT worker said, “This sit-in has add colors to my dull life. Here, I get to spend time with girls of my own age.”

Moreover, she is happy with the food that is being provided at the sit-ins, explaining that she gets to eat till she is full, something she could never do at home.

“At home we usually find it difficult to have three meals a day due to poverty, but here, we get ample amounts every day. I have gain two to three kilos in less than a month,” she said.

She said that every morning they get bread, eggs, butter, milk, juice, parathas and biscuits, while at home she has to make do with last night’s leftovers.

She said life here is much easier than in her home town.

“I was not even allowed to even attend family events or visit my close relatives, but here I can visit all the camps,” she said.

*Names changed at interviewees’ request

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Metro Bus: People urged to use alternative routes

By APP

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RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Shoaib Khurram Janbaz on Tuesday urged the public to use Airport Road and Peshawar Road to reach Islamabad during the construction of metro bus on Benazir Bhutto Road. He asked the public to cooperate with the traffic police in managing traffic flow on the former Murree road. The CTO said the number of traffic wardens deployed on Murree Road has been increased, adding that a comprehensive traffic plan has been devised but cooperation of road users was necessary to avoid traffic congestion on the bustling route. He advised motorists to use Airport Road through Koral Chowk and Peshawar Road through IJP Road and Golra Mor to reach Islamabad. The motorists travelling to Rawalpindi city should use Rawal Road, Saidpur Road and IJP Road, he added.

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Expanding Horizons: AIOU introduces new programmes

By APP

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ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has introduced five new degree programmes for the Autumn 2014 academic session. The programmes include MPhil in Mass Communication, PhD in Mass Communication, LLM Shari'ah, MS Shari'ah and PhD Shari'ah. Admissions are open from matric to PhD programmes for the Autumn Semester and the last date to submit application forms is September 19. Admission forms and prospectuses are available at the university's main campus at Sector H-8, Islamabad, and its countrywide campuses and coordinating offices. GAT test conducted by the National Testing Service (NTS) is not mandatory for the admission as the university will hold its own entrance test for all degree programmes. In addition, AIOU will launch a two-year face-to-face Master's in TV Production from Spring 2015. The programme is designed for working TV journalists. The university will engage electronic media professionals to teach the programme.

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En Route: Expat family looted

By Our Correspondent

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD: An expat family was deprived of foreign currency and jewellery on their way back to America on Monday night, police said. Muhammad Naseem Tahir lodged a complaint with the local police that he along with his brother, Ahmed Habib, and his family, was travelling to Benazir Bhutto International Airport when four people stopped them. Having official cards, they introduced themselves as police officials and asked for checking their bags. The men then stole foreign currency worth Rs800,000, jewellery and documents and drove away. The unidentified robbers were also carrying wireless sets with them. The police registered a case against the robbers but no arrests or recoveries have been made yet.

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Compensation: Cheques distributed among flood victims

By News Desk

Published: September 10, 2014

RAWALPINDI:

The Punjab government on Tuesday distributed cheques among flood victims in the Soan and Chontra areas of Rawalpindi.

Provincial Minister for Labour and Manpower Raja Ashfaq Sarwar handed over the cheques to the heirs of the victims, said a press release.

Sarwar handed over a cheque of Rs1.6 million to the father of Muhammad Bilal, who died when a house on the bank of the Soan River near Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench collapsed.

Later, Sarwar visited flood-affected villages in Chontra and handed over a cheque worth Rs1.6 million to the family of Muhammad Tanveer, who was swept away by the flooded river. He also visited the family of another house collapse victim, Gul Khan, and presented a cheque of Rs1.6 million.

The minister conveyed condolences to the bereaved families on behalf of the prime minister, Punjab chief minister and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan.

He said the government is committed to helping flood victims. He said the chief minister is monitoring rescue and relief activities and has asked all MPs to visit flood-hit areas in their constituencies.

Parliamentary Secretary Chaudhry Sarfraz Afzal, Member Punjab Assembly Qamarul Islam and Rawalpindi DCO Sajid Zafar Dal accompanied Sarwar on the visit.

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Teachers' woes: Stopgap solutions hurting permanent staff

By Muzaffar Mukhtar

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RAWALPINDI:

Though education is often called a top state priority, teachers' salaries have never been treated as part of the equation.

From recruitment and training to promotion policies and practices, the existing system seems designed to be incapable of attracting the cream-of-the-crop or even to hone the skills of those who are hired through skill development opportunities.

The situation is so bad that the principal of a government college in Rawalpindi told *The Express Tribune* on the condition of anonymity that except for a handful of exceptions, most of the candidates join education department due to lack of better job opportunities rather than as a first choice.

He added that this is also a reason for why many teachers are unmotivated — they were never interested in doing the job in the first place.

Other problem areas are the promotion structure and procedure. One hard but largely unacknowledged fact is that a teacher will usually have to wait for anywhere between 18 and 20 years of service to get their first promotion. The principal offered himself as an example. He got his first promotion after 23 years of service and had to wait another 10 months for his posting orders to be issued.

“Such a dismal promotion structure even discourages those who join the department purely out of love for teaching,” he said.

“I love teaching, but one can lose the drive in such a stagnant environment. I know many colleagues who have served for over ten years but have not even been allotted their seniority numbers because the department has not updated the seniority lists, he said.

Regarding promotions, he said the main reason for extraordinary delays is irregular recruitment.

He said almost half of the posts for teachers in Rawalpindi division are vacant. He added that the situation is worst in schools located in the peripheries. The government has decided to hire intern teachers to fill vacant posts in boys and girls colleges across the province as a stopgap arrangement instead of appointing permanent staff, which is a need of the hour, he added.

He said ad hoc arrangements are also creating hurdles in career progression for permanent employees.

What is the purpose of the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) if they are not able to appoint permanent staff through proper procedures, he said.

He revealed that there is another interesting element concealed in the ad hoc arrangements. “Money is doled out by the education department against permanent seats including vacant ones, but the interns are paid less than permanent staff and the rest of the money is silently diverted by the government to other projects,” he said.

The education department should abandon all such ad hoc appointments as these have serious implications for promotions of teachers and quality of education, he said.

College teachers should be given a similar time scale and seniority list needs to be made and updated regularly, he said. Moreover, certain unfair practices need to be abandoned, he said, explaining that officially, the presentation and preparation of promotion cases is the duty of administrative offices, but in practice, the whole burden is shifted to other persons who end up getting blamed for what are really the administrative offices’ failures.

He said, for instance, that according to Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) rules, recommendations for promotion remain valid for one year, which implies that if the department fails to issue posting orders within this time frame, the recommended teacher will suffer.

An education department official, who requested not to be named, told *The Express Tribune* that there is a need to reform the entire system including college administration but regretted that education is still not treated as a top priority. “There is a need to update seniority lists in time but it is never done. Stop gap arrangements will not help improve the system,” he remarked.

He added that PPSC is actually responsible for the situation because it is the responsibility of the department to recruit permanent staff.

Rawalpindi Division Colleges Director Professor Humayun Iqbal told *The Express Tribune* that the appointment of CTIs would not impact the promotion of permanent staff because it was a temporary arrangement. He said that the department has decided to induct these interns in order to facilitate students because there was shortage of lecturers.

He added that PPSC is not only supervising education but many other departments, hence it needs time to address the issues such as better service structure and appointment of permanent staff. He added, however, that efforts are being made to recruit permanent staff in place of interns and during recruitment, the interns would be given preference.

Almost 2,000 promotions are being processed, he added.

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Ailment update: Pindi's dengue count stands at eight, for now

By Our Correspondent

Published: September 10, 2014

RAWALPINDI:

The garrison city has recorded eight cases of dengue fever during August.

Five of the patients that tested positive belong to the Cantonment area and were admitted at Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), while three other positive cases were admitted at Holy Family Hospital (HFH).

HFH Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr Javed Hayat told *The Express Tribune* there are three patients in the hospital who have been confirmed positive. He said suspected patients continue to visit the hospital because the dengue season has started and the situation is especially critical after the recent heavy downpours, but only three patients have been confirmed yet. Two of them are from Haripur in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and one is from Gawalmandi.

On the other hand, no positive cases have emerged at BBH after September 3 but the hospital is checking several suspected patients daily.

An on duty nurse at the District Headquarters Hospital said nine suspected patients have been admitted in the dengue ward of the hospital in the last 24 hours.

District Coordination Officer Sajid Zafar Dal said the anti-dengue drive in the city has been expedited after the record rains as the danger of dengue larvae has increased due to the suitable temperatures. He said during indoor surveillances, dengue larvae have been detected mostly in water tanks on rooftops and water coolers. He said the complete elimination of the threat is not possible without the participation of the community.

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Budding orators: Three sisters steal the show at PAT sit-in

By Rizwan Shehzad / Photo: Huma Choudhary

Published: September 10, 2014

ISLAMABAD:

The sit-ins at Constitution Avenue continue to face controversy but the gatherings have proved to be a perfect ground for children who wish to become eminent speakers in future as there are countless possibilities for them to enhance their oratory skills by practicing in public.

In the absence of the ‘big ‘boys’, children take the stage and move the crowds with a firm grip over their speeches, equipped with couplets of the poet of the east—Allama Iqbal.

When eight-year-old Urooj Fatima took the stage on Tuesday, people started gathering around the young girl with perplexed expressions.

Fatima started her speech with the couplet: “Nahin Hai Na-Umeed Iqbal Apni Kisht-e-Weeran Se, Zara Nam Ho To Ye Mitti Bohat Zarkhaiz Hai Saqi”

This led listeners to stand on their toes to have a glance at the young speaker who was urging people to stay united for the revolution. “I’m speechless,” said a young girl who stopped by the stage after hearing Fatima’s speech through loudspeakers. “Look at her age and her confidence,” she said.

Wearing a headband and an armband of the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), Fatima highlighted issues being discussed and debated for over three weeks: crime, corruption, mismanagement and revolution. “Just look at the transparency of the system,” she said, “not a single murderer has been punished so far. We have been enduring everything since June 17.”

While declaring the sit-in as a new chapter in the history of Pakistan, she stirred emotions of audiences when she referred to the Punjab chief minister and Prime Minister as “Takht-e-Lahore Kay Badshah”, and asked them to quit their offices.

The force behind Fatima’s words and sentences was her parents. They write, she along with her two other sisters, Areej Ayesha, 7, and Ehraj Amna, 6, learn it by heart and they listen it before it is delivered in public. “She took only two days to deliver the speech,” said her father, Ameer Awan, who came from Hasanabdal and is a principal at the Minhaj Model School in his area.

Commenting on their names — Urooj, Areej and Ehraj —Awan said he along with his wife has planned everything for the girls ranging from their names to their profession. Fatima wishes to be a doctor, Areej a pilot and Ehraj a lawyer, the girls revealed. Awan claimed the girls were pretty clear about the concept of the speeches they make in public and everyone was free to discuss the content with them to verify the claims.

As Fatima left the stage, it was her sisters' turn to master their skills as they started addressing people outside their tent-turned home. It took only a couple of minutes before people stopped by to listen to the three sisters.

Awan said delivering a speech on stage with confidence was possible because of 'the organisational atmosphere' of the sit-in which provides ample opportunities for grooming.

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OPEN MARKET FOREX RATES

Updated at: 10/9/2014 6:41 AM (PST)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	93.75	94
Bahrain Dinar	269.25	269.5
Canadian Dollar	92.15	92.4
China Yuan	16.15	16.4
Danish Krone	17.6	17.75
Euro	131	131.25
Hong Kong Dollar	13	13.1
Indian Rupee	1.67	1.69
Japanese Yen	0.96	1.06
Kuwaiti Dinar	355.75	356
Malaysian Ringgit	31.75	32
NewZealand \$	84.25	84.4
Norwegians Krone	16.1	16.35
Omani Riyal	264	264.25
Qatari Riyal	27.9	28.15
Saudi Riyal	27.15	27.4
Singapore Dollar	80.75	81
Swedish Korona	14.25	14.4
Swiss Franc	110	110.25
Thai Bhat	3.17	3.19
U.A.E Dirham	27.75	28
UK Pound Sterling	164.75	165
US Dollar	101.85	102.1





INTER BANK RATES

Updated at: 10/9/2014 7:42 AM (PST)

Currency	Bank Buying TT Clean	Bank Selling TT & OD
Australian Dollar	94.12	94.31
Canadian Dollar	92.41	92.59
Danish Krone	17.57	17.61
Euro	130.8	131.06
Hong Kong Dollar	13.11	13.13
Japanese Yen	0.9564	0.9583
Saudi Riyal	27.09	27.14
Singapore Dollar	80.57	80.73
Swedish Korona	14.27	14.3
Swiss Franc	108.41	108.63
U.A.E Dirham	27.66	27.72
UK Pound Sterling	163.32	163.64
US Dollar	101.6	101.8

Bullion Rates (Gold Prices) in Pakistan Rupee (PKR)

As on Wed, Sep 10 2014, 04:00 GMT

Metal	Symbol	PKR for 10 Gm	PKR for 1 Tola	PKR for 1 Ounce	
Gold 24K	XAU	41,158	47,955	128,017	
Palladium	XPD	28,290	32,963	87,994	
Platinum	XPT	45,520	53,039	141,587	
Silver	XAG	625	728	1,943	

Gold Rates in other Major Currencies

Currency	Symbol	10 Gm	1 Tola	1 Ounce	
 Australian Dollar	AUD	440	513	1,370	
 Canadian Dollar	CAD	443	516	1,378	
 Euro	EUR	312	364	971	
 Japanese Yen	JPY	42,918	50,006	133,492	
 U.A.E Dirham	AED	1,483	1,728	4,612	
 UK Pound Sterling	GBP	250	292	779	
 US Dollar	USD	404	470	1,256	

* These rates are taken from International Market so there may be some fluctuation from Local Market.