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No new taxes for the upcoming year Govt presents Rs14.46 trillion relief, growth-oriented budget

Announces ad hoc relief allowance of 35% for grade 1-16 officers and 30% for grade 17-22; Okayed an increase in pensions by 17.5%; Increases the minimum wage to Rs. 32,000; Proposes an allocation of Rs950 billion for development; Country's defence and civil administration, Rs 1.8 trillion and Rs 714 billion would be provided respectively; No increase in duties on import of essential items;

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 15-month-old coalition government on Friday presented its second business-friendly, relief and development-oriented Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, with a total outlay of Rs14.46 trillion, aimed at coping with the inherited economic challenges and laying the foundation for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy.

The annual fiscal plan, put before the National Assembly by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, contained radical and rigorous measures to reduce the

sufferings of the inflation-hit common man, transform the agriculture sector, promote Information Technology, increase exports and boost business activities.

Unveiling the budgetary measures, the minister announced the government's major relief to increase the salaries of government employees from 30 to 35 percent on ad-hoc basis and 17.5 percent enhancement in the pensions of the retired persons realizing their financial hardships due to the increased inflation.

There would be a raise of 35 percent [ad-hoc relief] in the salaries of employ-

ees from Grade1-16 and 30 percent to Grade 17-22 employees aimed at increasing their purchase power.

Besides, the government fixed the minimum pension at Rs 12,000 and increased minimum monthly wage from Rs 25,000 to Rs 32,000 within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

The minister said there was a proposal to enhance the pension of Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) from Rs 8,500 to Rs 10,000.

Ishaq Dar said the government was going to introduce a scheme under which

it would itself pay up to Rs 1 million loans of the Housing Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) owed by the widows of government employees.

The minister said the deposit limit of CDNS (Central Directorate of National Savings) Shuhada Account and Behood Saving Certificates would be increased from Rs 5 million to Rs 7.5 million.

To achieve the sustained path of progress and prosperity, he said a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth target of 3.5 percent had been fixed for the next fiscal year against the existing GDP rate of 0.29 percent after the government put the national economy in the right direction with tough and timely corrective decisions.

"Keeping in view the economic scenario, the government has set the modest growth target and despite being the election year, it presented a responsible and balanced budget and not a popular one," he said.

The total expenses estimate, the minister said, was set at Rs14.46 trillion, out of which Rs7.3 trillion would be spent on interest payment. The budget deficit was expected to remain 6.54 percent and the primary balance would be a surplus of 0.4 percent to the GDP.

Ishaq Dar said the tax collection target of the Federal Board of Revenue

(FBR) for the next fiscal year had been fixed at Rs 9.2 trillion, including provincial share of Rs 5.276 trillion.

The federal non-tax revenues, he added, would be Rs 2.963 trillion while total income of the Federal Government would be Rs 6.887 billion.

He said an amount of Rs 950 billion was being allocated for the development projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2023-24). Moreover, an additional amount of Rs 200 billion would also be part of the development budget to be managed through public-private partnership, he added.

He said for the country's defence and civil administration, Rs 1.8 trillion and Rs 714 billion would be provided respectively; whereas Rs 761 billion had been allocated for the payment of employees' pensions.

Ishaq Dar said the government had estimated an expenditure of Rs 1.074 trillion for the provision of subsidies in electricity, gas and other sectors.

The finance minister said a grant of Rs 1.464 trillion had been earmarked for Azad Jammu & Kashmir, merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Higher Education Commission, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Railways and other sectors.



Highlights of PSDP 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following are the highlights of allocations under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for various ministries and divisions for the fiscal year 2023-24 announced by the federal government here on Friday:

- Total outlay of the PSDP for the fiscal year 2022-23 is Rs 2.709 trillion.
- The share of the federal PSDP is Rs 1,150 billion while that of the provincial PSDP is Rs 1,559 trillion.
- Rs 5,450 million has been earmarked for Aviation Division.
- Board of Investment will get Rs 1114.760 million.
- Rs 90,120 million has been earmarked for Cabinet Division.
- The Climate Change Division will get Rs 4,050 million.
- Rs 1,100 million has been earmarked for Commerce Division.
- Rs 360,390 million are allocated for Communication Division (other than NHA).
- Rs 3,400 million has been earmarked for Defence Division.
- Rs 2,000 million has been allocated for Defence Production Division.
- Rs 840 million are allocated for Establishment Division.
- The Federal Education and Professional Training Division will get Rs 8,500 million.
- Rs 3,220 million has been allocated for Finance Division.
- Rs 167,900 million has been earmarked for Provinces and Special Areas.
- The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will get Rs 59,700 million.
- Rs 40,680 million has been earmarked for Housing and Working Division.
- Rs 814 million will be provided to Human Rights Division.
- Rs 3,000 million has been earmarked for Industries and Production Division.
- Rs 2,000 million are allocated for Information and Broadcasting Division.
- Rs 6,000 million will be provided to Information Technology and Telecom Division.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif signing Budget 2023-24 documents after its approved by the Cabinet to be laid before the National Assembly.

Directs to release arrears of PPL immediately:

PM constitutes high powered committee for solution of financial issues of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has constituted a high-power committee for resolving the financial issues of Balochistan.

The committee comprising the members of provincial and national assemblies would meet on upcoming Monday to discuss the financial situation of the province besides other related matters.

The recommendations of the parliamentary committee would be included in

the federal budget.

The development came during the important meeting of the Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and parliamentarians of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), MNA Nawabzada Khalid Khan Magsi and Senator Naseebullah Bazai with the Prime Minister in Islamabad on Friday.

The meeting was held ahead of the federal budget session. Needless to mention here that the Chief Minister and BAP President, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo had

announced boycott of the federal budget session because of the province's reservations and apprehensions over the federal government's response towards the financial issues.

During the course of meeting, the financial matters facing Balochistan were discussed threadbare. The reservations raised by the Chief Minister Bizenjo also came up for discussion during the meeting.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister directed to release the arrears of PPL to

Balochistan immediately.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister said that BAP is our strong ally in the federation, and as such all reservations of the province would be removed.

He said that the development of Balochistan is our top priority.

The members of delegation told that the BAP is working for protection of the public interests and prosperity of the province under leadership of its President and Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister Bizenjo has expressed contentment over the progress made for solution of the issues being faced by the province.

He expressed the hope that the Prime Minister would honour his commitment and practical steps would be taken contrary to the past.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo also said that the detailed official letter regarding the province's stance and issues would be sent to the Prime Minister soon.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, MNA Muhammad Khalid Magsi and Senator Naseebullah Bazai called on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar was also present in the meeting.



Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over a ceremony in Gwadar. Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Izzat Nazir Baloch is also present

Kakar visits Gwadar Varsity & Pak-China Institute: Governor calls for preparing comprehensive strategy to cope with challenges

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underscored the need to prepare a comprehensive strategy to tackle the present challenges being faced by the province.

He said that the policy of taking all on board can put the country and province on path of sustainable development.

This was stated by the Governor while speaking on occasion of the visit of University of Gwadar in Gwadar on Friday. Iso present on the occasion were the Vice Chancellor, University of Gwadar, Professor Dr. Abdul Razaq Sabir, senior faculty members, administrative officers and other concerned.

The Governor went round of different sections of the University and inspected them. He inaugurated the new academic block of the University and directed to complete the work on different buildings in the University.

The Governor expressed satisfaction over the performance of University of Gwadar. He said that we

are succeeding in our goals of spreading and promoting higher education all over the province especially in Makran division.

He said that the day is not far away when the students belonging to Turbat, Gwadar and Panjgur would succeed in making difference in education at the national level. He on the occasion stressed the need to strive for fulfilling the future requirements in the ever-changing world.

Meanwhile, the Governor visited the Pak-China Vocational Training Institute in Gwadar the same day. He also inspected different parts of the Institute and had interaction over the available facilities with the students there.

He said that the world has turned into global village thanks to the information technology. He said that our competition is with the youth and people of the modern world, as such we have to impart quality education and training to our youth in view of the future day needs.

Marriyum says: Health insurance for journalist earmarked

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Federal Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb has said on Friday that first time in the budget health insurance for journalist has been allocated.

"I am very happy to announce that for the first time in the budget, health insurance for journalists has been allocated" said Federal Minister for Information.

She further said that one billion rupees has been earmarked for this purpose in the budget of the financial year 2023-24.

"I thank Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for providing money for this important step, as the Minister of Information, it was one of my prime objectives to provide this facility to working journalists, especially in their time of need," said Maryam Aurangzeb on social media website.

Hearing JI plea on Panama Papers Establishing offshore firms 'no crime' says SC judge

ISLAMABAD (Online):

The Supreme Court's Justice Sardar Tariq Masood observed on Friday that establishing offshore companies is "no crime", while hearing a Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) plea seeking action against all 436 Pakistanis named in the 2016 Panama Papers.

On Nov 3, 2017, the JI had, through an application, reminded the court of its pending petition filed by party emir Sirajul Haq in August 2016.

The hearing today was presided over by a two-member bench comprising Justice Masood with Justice Aminuddin Khan. Advocate Ishtiaq was representing the JI in court.

During the proceedings, the JI counsel requested the court to form a judicial commission to investigate those named in the Panama Papers. However, Justice Masood raised the question of how it could be done when other institutions existed to be approached for the matter.

Subsequently, the apex court adjourned the hearing

for a month. At the outset of the hearing, the JI counsel requested the apex court to constitute a judicial commission to further probe the Panama Papers case.

Justice Masood, while addressing the JI counsel, noted that the matter had been pending in the Supreme Court for the past seven years. "Did you have to run a case against just one family? You had no interest in this case for the past seven years," he said.

The justice further asked the lawyer why he had "delinked his petition" and why he had "not taken such a big relief from the five-member bench" that was previously hearing the case in 2017. Upon this, Ishtiaq replied, "We want that the 436 people named in the Panama [Papers] are also investigated."

To this, Justice Masood asked, "Why do you want to bypass the law? Should we close down all other institutions? Do you want all decisions to be made by the Supreme Court?"

BA approves draft law of Holy Qura'an as compulsory education

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly has approved the draft law regarding compulsory education of the Holy Qura'an and a resolution for making legislation about National Commission on Non-Muslims.

In addition to this, the draft law (amended) of the Balochistan Public Finance Management was also approved in the session. The draft law was tabled by the Provincial Minister for Finance, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai. Earlier, Deputy Speaker Sardar Babar Musakhail summoned the secretaries of Finance and Education on the issue of protest and hunger strike of the government teachers outside the assembly building.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister Home, Mir Ziaullah Langave said that ours' most of the issues are related to the federal government.

Global terrorist 'mysteriously' dies in Afghanistan

KABUL (INP): Sanaullah

Ghafari, commonly referred to as Shahab al-Muhajir, specially designated global terrorist, has met his demise in Afghanistan's Kunar, said authorities on Friday.

The death of this high-profile figure marks a major victory in the fight against terrorism, as Ghafari was not only wanted in Pakistan but also internationally. Sanaullah Ghafari's family had migrated from India to Afghanistan, where he received his religious education at the renowned Ghaffari Madrasa.

Although specific details about his early life remain scarce, it is believed that his radicalization took place during his formative years in the madrasa.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers, Advisors and MPs presenting their proposals on budget 2023-24 during Balochistan Assembly session

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Stuck in the past

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar could have kept the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23 unveiling ceremony quite short. 'We blame everyone and everything but ourselves', would have neatly summarised the gist of most of what he had to say about his government's report card for the outgoing fiscal year.

It wasn't difficult to see why he felt a need to be so defensive. The numbers he had to share told a harrowing tale: most key targets were missed, the economy barely kept afloat, inflation had wrecked citizens' purchasing power, and everything pointed to the prospect of a continuing slowdown in the absence of any unforeseen stimuli.

Perhaps it would have been easier to sympathise had some self-appraisal and reflexivity been on display. After all, even in periods of severe crisis, one can find hope in knowing their future is in the hands of someone who is honest and forthright about the challenges that are being faced.

Instead, Mr Dar's speech remained politically angled. He mostly kept referring to the good days of his last stint in government, apparently seeking to persuade critics that his ability to manage the economy ought not to be judged on his recent performance but from his 'achievements' in his 2013-2017 tenure.

It was a rather facile line of argument, considering he had pushed out Miftah Ismail in the middle of the fiscal year knowing full well that the economy faced conditions vastly different from the last time he was in power.

Interestingly, Mr Dar refused to acknowledge Mr Ismail at all. When he referred to the stalled IMF programme — which, incidentally, he described as the "IMF drama" — Mr Dar conveniently 'forgot' that it had been successfully revived by his predecessor. Instead, he blamed his failure to negotiate with the IMF on the PTT's decision last year to freeze fuel prices, which he claimed had 'irrevocably' damaged the lender's trust. By failing to take any responsibility for the economy's sorry state, Mr Dar insulted the intelligence of those who were anticipating an appraisal of the government's economic performance in a crisis period.

There is no denying that this was a terrible year, with global crises triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the catastrophic floods that followed last year's monsoon ravaging our economy in unforeseen ways.

Mr Dar should have at least detailed the finance ministry's efforts to address the many challenges faced by the country in this period.

By avoiding that discussion, he only reinforced the perception that he has simply been bumbling from one crisis to another. His enduring fixation with the exchange rate — which made a cameo in his speech yesterday — also suggested that he has learned nothing from past mistakes. Is he the right man for the job? Today's budget may hold a definitive answer.

Elderly challenges



Jan-e-Alam Khaki

The significance of older people has been recognised by the UN, which has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing, seeking to lessen health inequities and "improve the lives of older people, their families and communities". In 2020, the number of people aged 60 and older outnumbered children younger than five. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 will nearly double from 12 per cent to 22pc.

According to UN estimates, by 2050, one out of six people in the world will be above the age of 65, up from one out of 11 in 2019. This indicates that, for the first time in history, older people will outnumber children below 14, says a British Council study. In 2050, two out of every three older persons will be residing in developing countries (UN, 2019). According to the British Council study, 7pc of the population (about 14 million) is over 60 in Pakistan, which is expected to reach 8.5pc and 12.9pc in 2030 and 2050 respectively.

What are the implications of these scenarios? The first is that more (older) people will need additional support, increasing dependency on younger ones, while they (the young) themselves are struggling to support their own families. Second, governments — already starved for resources — will face additional challenges to support this segment of their populations.

While the elderly's challenges may be numer-

ous, let us focus on three:

a) physical health; b) mental and emotional health; and c) generation gap. Incremental health deterioration in old age is fairly common. Various health issues, such as blood pressure, diabetes, dementia, eyesight weakness, hearing loss, arthritis and urological complications trouble many elders. Besides, mental and emotional issues, such as dementia, tension, even depression, may affect their life quality.

The second area seniors suffer has to do with emotional health. Emotional health issues, often less attended than physical, are triggered by many factors such as loss of dear ones (for example, spouses), jobs or positions. Moreover, they generally lose their celebrated life engagements, particularly when they have enjoyed good jobs and meaningful careers.

The gap between the past and present becomes increasingly large, leading to loss of status. This experience then becomes almost incurable unless the seniors find alternative occupations. For example, I have been a university professor in a prestigious institute, worked in a senior position, and enjoyed a productive life. Now 72 and out of university, although I am living in a comfortable environment with relative ease, the loss of attention and affection I enjoyed is considerable.

The third area of seniors' challenges has to do with the generation gap. As we grow older, our ideas are often less respected, or not even listened to, as they (ideas) are seen as 'old-fashioned'. This inevitably leads to self-censorship, and culminates in reticence. The issue has been exacerbated particularly in the last 50 years due largely to fast-changing lifestyles, dominated by the technological, digital and knowledge revolu-

tion.

This (generation) gap is particularly pronounced with regard to bringing up grandchildren. Grandchildren develop highly emotional relations with their dada, dadi, nana and nani. When people ask me what I do nowadays, I jokingly say "Dada geeri", because I am the dada of twin grandkids (a boy and a girl). I also say I do "Nana geeri" as well, as my daughter is blessed with a baby girl. Interacting with grandkids is sheer joy.

Still another fault line between the older and newer generation is the way both think of bringing up children. Grandparents' way of bringing up kids in many areas tends to be different than their adult children's. This often leads to tensions and conflict where grandparents feel devalued and defeated. These areas of conflict, however, can be lessened, if not done away with, simply by talking, exchanging ideas, and agreeing to disagree with mutual respect and empathy. In sum, let us do everything possible to look after the elders at the individual, community and state level, ensuring their physical, emotional and social well-being. Indeed, the young ones are also going to join the elders; it is only a matter of time!

Finally, it is good to remind ourselves of Quranic advice to adult children of (older) parents. The Holy Quran says, "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt (uffin), nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood'" (17:23-24). — Courtesy Dawn

Dead end budget



Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Does anyone even take the finance ministry seriously anymore? With each passing year, this question becomes less and less rhetorical, as our notionally sovereign economy turns into a plaything of a militarised state apparatus, with far-away creditors and investors unanswerable to the 240 million people in whose name this country is run. There is arguably no bigger illustration of the sovereignty pantomime than the announcement of the federal budget. The man who will present it, Ishaq Dar, has been clear only about one thing since he took over the finance ministry hot seat: he is not able, let alone willing, to do very much. But it is lazy to argue that putting 'competent' men in charge would change the game. Pakistan's political economy — militarised, financialised, ecologically destructive and anti-worker — is not propped up by one man and will not be undone by one man either. The story is old but we should never tire of repeating it, especially given how the military establishment is menacingly winding down Project Imran and reminding us that 'national interest' trumps all.

Within a few years of its formation, Pakistan became a Cold War outpost whose national security apparatus, like brethren front-line states Iran and Turkey, was funded and trained to defend Western interests in south-west Asia. Formal military aid from Washington started rolling in under the Mutual Assistance Programme in 1954, and the state subsequently

pleased its imperial patrons and indoctrinated the people that this aid would give us an edge in military competition vis-à-vis India. Military dictatorships in Pakistan have been propped up by geostrategic rents which have reinforced the India obsession. Meanwhile, our society and that of Afghanistan have been devastated by religiously inspired militancy, and what economist Kaiser Bengali calls non-combat defence expenditures have shot through the roof.

For the first three decades, there was some semblance of concern about the needs of the working masses, at least in part because all newly independent countries experienced some version of Third World economic nationalism which mandated the dismantling of neo-colonial economic structures.

There was some import-substitution industrialisation, some land reform, even some nationalisation. These policies reflected some degree of economic sovereignty. Since the 1980s, the IMF has told us what to buy and sell, when and where to cut public spending. It pulls the plug when it doesn't get what it wants. Similarly, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank tell us how to define and execute 'development' and happily pile on the debt for 'reforms' of their own choosing, including disasters like IPPs, which, since the mid-1990s, have become godfathers of the dysfunctional electricity/power sector.

In this period, Pakistan and many other postcolonial economies in Latin America, Asia and Africa have undergone a shift away from the production of real goods and services towards financialisation; private banking, real estate, insurance, alongside mining, agribusiness and other extractive corporate lob-

bies that have become the biggest fishes in an increasingly small pond. Traders and merchants have retained some share of the economic pie, especially in the informal sector, such that trade remains the primary livelihood option for the millions who exit agriculture yearly. Job-creating manufacturing continues to wilt rapidly. To take one example, almost 150,000 workers have lost their jobs over the past year in Faisalabad's textile sector alone.

Bear in mind that millions of young people join the job market every year. Many commentators have called attention to the alarmingly large numbers of highly skilled young people with relatively good prospects who now want to leave the country. And what of the vast majority of workers whose social mobility is limited and who now even face a struggle to get a low-paid job as a migrant worker in the Gulf?

I do not know if the PDM/PPP government is even bothered with such structural truths, because most of its outspoken representatives are absurdly cheering on state repression against the PTI. In any case, the budget announcement will not include mention of the real reasons we remain a virtual client state to global finance, or that the government seems helpless in the face of geostrategic rents drying up. We already know there is no will to shift away from sectors like real estate, invest in job-creating production or undertake redistribution of wealth.

So what we are left with is a boring regurgitation of the 'reform' rhetoric to please the IMF with a handful of 'pro-people' announcements. These will not fix hunger in bellies and brutalisation of bodies. In fact, the poverty of imagination is leading to a disastrous dead end. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

President directs LESCO to pay marriage grant to retired employee

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to pay Rs 200,000 as a "marriage grant" to a retired employee for the marriage of his son who had been denied payment by LESCO.

The LESCO had denied the payment on the ground that he had applied for the grant after the expiry of the prescribed time limit of six months.

"We should take care of such people, who due to ignorance of the law or being unaware of the

benefits for which they might be eligible due to their service, are unable to benefit from them in time", the president said.

He regretted that the employee was not aware of his entitlement and found out from others that a marriage grant for his son was possible. He further held that it was the responsibility of government agencies to inform people about such benefits. President Alvi gave these remarks while accepting a representation filed by Muhammad Asif (the complainant) against the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib.

As per the details,

Muhammad Asif was an employee of LESCO and, after his retirement, he applied for the "marriage grant" in respect of his son. He was denied payment on the ground that his son's marriage was held on 02.12.2018 whereas the complainant applied for the grant on 08.12.2020 i.e., after the expiry of about 2 years. As per SOP regarding marriage grants, all applications should reach the office of the Chief Executive of LESCO within a period of six months from the date of marriage and a maximum of one year in special cases.

Govt endeavors to invest in road, rail connectivity to promote transit trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government along with the provincial stakeholders has been making efforts to invest in road and rail connectivity across the country, shaping various policies and plans to facilitate the transit trade thus boosting the country's economy.

Given its advantageous geographic location, Pakistan has the potential to grow its economy through transit trade and as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and Khyber Pass Economic

Corridor (KPEC) has tremendous potential of revenue generation through road and rail connectivity, said a performance review of 2022-23 budget issued here Friday.

The Pakistani transportation system needs modernization and the National Transport Master Plan is in the final stages of approval many actions under the policy and the plan are being already adopted and implemented. In recent years the work in the transport infrastructure projects was carried out in the districts of southern Punjab, southern KP.



LAHORE: An electrician busy to repairing room-coolers at his workplace in the Provincial Capital.

HCCI terms federal budget 2023-24 people's, business friendly

HYDERABAD (APP): The business community has termed the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 as people-friendly and said the federal government provided relief to all sectors including agriculture. Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (HCCI) president Adeel Siddiqui while talking to APP said despite financial constraints the federal government presented a business-friendly budget in which the agriculture sector, traders, large-scale manufacturers, investors, youth as well as social sector were given unprecedented relief.

"Though next year's budget has a historical deficit of over 7000 billion rupees the government will try its best to cover it through drastic measures," the HCCI president hoped. Adeel Siddiqui said, "In the budget, along with the agriculture sector, a significant amount is being allocated to the energy sector and water reservoirs in the country." HCCI President said, "Bridging the budget deficit as per the budget estimates will be a challenge.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal visiting stalls during the Inauguration session of International EdTech Conference.

Azhar Kiyani says; Macroeconomic stability, protection of vulnerable segments top priorities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani

Friday said that macroeconomic stability to ensure financial discipline through effective policies and protection of vulnerable segments of the society was the topmost priorities in fiscal year budget 2023-24.

Talking to a private news channel, he said the budget would prove helpful to make the

country's economy strong by increasing exports.

Azhar Kayani said the government was making all out efforts to bring the country out of economic crises and all institutions were striving to give the Prime Minister's road map a reality.

He said several mega government schemes and packages dedicated to welfare of women and youth were initiated by Pakistan Muslim League-N.

ESP 2022-23 reveals govt's success, predicts economic betterment: Experts

PESHAWAR (INP): The Economic Survey of Pakistan (ESP) 2022-23 has revealed the success of the government in various sectors during current fiscal year, the economic and financial experts said on Friday adding that it laid strong foundation to bring betterment in the national economy and increase exports in days to come.

According to Swabi University's Professor Dr Muhammad Naem, the ESP has signified that the present elected government despite

inherited economic and financial challenges, achieved significant progress and growth in various sectors including Information Technology, Tax, Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture sectors during fiscal year 2022-23.

He was of the view that it means that the national economy has started moving towards the right direction and continuity of economic and fiscal policies of the present government was imperative for repayment of all foreign loans.

SBP to announce monetary policy on June 12

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce monetary policy on Monday, June 12, 2023.

According to a statement issued here Friday, the central bank has announced to convene meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on June 12 that would review the overall financial position of the country, economic indicators as well as performance of different internal and external sectors and decide about the Monetary Policy.

The central bank would issue the Monetary Policy Statement on the same day following the MPC meeting.

PSX turns bullish trend, gains 217 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to a bullish trend on Friday, gaining 217.75 points, a positive change of 0.52 per cent, closing at 41,904.21 points against 41,686.46 points the previous day. A total of 164,835,239 shares were traded during the day as compared to 203,789,233 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 5.195 billion.

Industrial sector projected to grow by 5.9% bases on LSM envisage growth of 7.4%

ISLAMABAD (APP): Industrial sector was projected to grow by 5.9% based on large scale manufacturing (LSM) envisaged growth of 7.4%.

According to the Annual Plan, Small and household Manufacturing grow by (8.3%), slaughtering (3%), mining & quarrying (3%), construction (4%) and electricity & gas distribution (3.5%). During 2022-23, the flood-induced supply shock severely affected industry and services sectors besides damaging critical transportation infrastructure.

Industrial sector also faced pressures as import

restrictions made it difficult to import essential raw materials, intermediate goods and machinery.

As a result, many factories either closed temporarily or operated below capacity. Moreover, increase in energy prices, higher cost of imported input due to currency depreciation, increased cost of working capital due to substantial increase in interest rates and political/policy uncertainties adversely affected the industrial sector.

Energy prices were increased due to reversal of unsustainable subsidies as part of the stabilization programme.



SIALKOT: Vice President Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot, Sheikh Amir Majeed Sheikh addressing a press conference.

Agriculture sector to grow by 3.5% in FY24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Agriculture Sector is expected to grow by 3.5% during the fiscal year 2023-24, according to Annual Plan released by the government here on Friday.

According to the plan, the growth would be achieved with expected contributions of important crops (3%), other crops (3.5%), cotton ginning (7.2%), livestock (3.6%), forestry (3%) and fishing (3%). However, it says, agricultural growth will be contingent upon expected favourable weather conditions, ample availability of water, certified seeds,

fertilizers, pesticides and agriculture credit facilities at affordable costs for revival of the crops. Moreover, increased productivity of livestock subsector is imperative for the revival of the sector. The revival of cotton and sufficient production of wheat will not only support growth momentum but will also ease out balance of payments pressures through lesser import requirements. During the outgoing fiscal year (2022-23), the agriculture sector was envisaged to grow by 3.9% in the Annual Plan 2022-23 given a strong crop sector performance of previous year.

KP CM chairs meeting on budget preparation

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting regarding the preparation of the budget for the new fiscal year was held here on Friday with the caretaker Chief Minister (CM) of KP Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair.

Besides provincial cabinet members Hamid Shah, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel and Himayatullah, Chief Secretary (CS) Nadim Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary (CS) Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Secretary Finance Muhammad Ayaz and other relevant higher authorities attended the

meeting. The forum discussed and reviewed the preliminary outlines of the financial budget and annual development program for the fiscal year 2023-24.

The participants were briefed in detail about the budget estimates, annual development program and other important aspects of the proposed fiscal budget.

It was decided in the meeting that authorization for the budget of only the first four months of the new financial year would be obtained from the provincial cabinet. The forum also

discussed matters regarding the possible increase in the salaries and pensions of government employees.

It was decided in the meeting that the budget session of the caretaker provincial cabinet would be called after the presentation of new fiscal budgets by the federal and Punjab governments.

The forum decided to allocate the required funds for Sehat Card Scheme. It was agreed in the meeting that priority would be given to the ongoing development projects in the annual development program of the new fiscal year.

Govt to award Rs.50k loan each to top 250 group projects: Wani

GILGIT (APP): Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Muihudeen Wani has said that the top 250 group projects (5 to 8 students) from various government schools across the region would be awarded loans of Rs. 50,000 each. In an official statement to the media, he said the loans would be distributed in collaboration with Karakoram Cooperative Bank Limited.

The purpose of the provision of loans was so that students could

further improve their initial work and come up with projects that could be scaled and were market-ready. Wani highlighted. The scalability and saleability must therefore be the essence of these projects, he stressed.

The chief secretary said, "The students have till the end of June to improve their projects and come up with innovative yet market-acceptable projects."

Promotion given to 1,022 cops in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The promotion board of the Lahore police net under the chair of Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana at his office on Friday and approved promotion cases of 1,022 police officials. A total of 169 assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs) have been promoted to the rank of sub-inspectors, 453 head constables to the rank of ASIs, and 400 constables to the rank of head constables. Notably, 25 female police officers.



FAISALABAD: Workers of Jamat-e-Islami (Youth Wing) are shouting slogans holding banner and flags during protest to show solidarity with Aafia Siddiqui, at District Council Chowk in City.

ANF seizes 6.2 MT narcotics in five months

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while carrying out a comprehensive counter-narcotics campaign with the resolve to make Pakistan a drug-free country managed to recover nearly 6.2 MT of narcotics from urban areas during the last five months.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, counter-narcotics operations were conducted in different parts of the country with a special focus on urban centre sanitization.

Special combing and intelligence-based operations resulted in substantial seizures in

Chief Ombudsman AJK calls on AJK President

MIRPUR (AJK APP): Chief Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem on Friday called on AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry and presented to him the annual report carrying the performance of his institution. The Chief Ombudsman briefed the President, in detail the working conditions of his organization. On this occasion, President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry directed the chief ombudsman to take effective measures to solve the problems being faced by the people.

This effort is bearing fruits, wherein an estimated 7.26 MT of narcotics have been seized along motorways and highways, which was destined for major metropolitan areas of the country for local consumption.

LDA demolishes illegal constructions

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) launched a grand operation against encroachment and illegal constructions on parking areas in the vicinity of Faisal Town (Akbar Chowk to Kotha Pind) Abu-ul-Hasan Isfahani Road, here on Friday.

On the directions of Commissioner Lahore and LDA Director General Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the

department's teams conducted the comprehensive anti-encroachment operation in the area. During the operation, encroachments constructed on tire shops, pharmacy, restaurants, bakeries and other shops were demolished.

LDA teams demolished sheds, boards and encroached area on illegal constructions from more than 20 shops and sealed more than 25 shops.

GB's budget has increased to 51bln in federal budget 2023-24: CS GB

GILGIT (APP): Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Muihudeen Wani on Friday said that the regular budget of Gilgit Baltistan has increased to Rs. 51 billion in the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, which was a significant rise from last year's Rs. 47 billion, representing an increase of approximately 8.5 percent.

Governor KP meets leading politicians

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Haji Ghulam Ali Friday inaugurated a luxury home interior showroom based on modern furniture at Manshera Road Abbottabad besides meeting leading politicians and former members of the provincial as well as national assembly from Hazara Region.

The Governor was given a warm welcome by Faisal Habib, owner of Lux Home Interior Showroom and renowned businessman, Syed Safdar Zaman Shah and the business community of Abbottabad, Manshera, Bitgram. Former Member

of National Assembly Babar Nawaz Awan, Fayyaz Tanuli, Haji Tariq Sultan, Qaiser Khan Daudzai, Munir Shinwari, Safdar Zaman Shah and other business community, chamber presidents and media representatives were present in the opening ceremony.

The Governor inspected the furniture and other interior items made according to modern Turkish designs, local and international designs. Establishing the best of its kind home decor showroom is a great convenience for the local population.



MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir school teachers are holding a banner shouting slogan during protest due to up gradation of teachers at Azadi Chowk.

Court issues warning to NAB for submission of reference against accused in M6 land acquisition case

HYDERABAD (APP): The Accountability Court here on Friday issued a last warning to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for submission of reference against the accused charged in the multi billion M6 Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway land acquisition scam.

The court's Judge Mehboob Ali Dayo warned that the Director General NAB Karachi would be summoned if the bureau failed to submit report by next date of hearing on June 22.

The NAB's prosecutor brought in the knowl-

edge of the court that the reference in question had been drafted and, subsequently, submitted for review to the DG.

He gave his assurance to the judge that the reference would be submitted at the next hearing.

Meanwhile, the lawyer representing the accused argued that more than 6 months had passed but the bureau had still not submitted the reference.

During the hearing, the arrested ex-Deputy Commissioner Matiari Adnan Adnan Rashid, Aashiq Kaleri and others were produced before the court.



HYDERABAD: Members of Christian Community are holding demonstration in support of Pakistan Armed Forces, at Hyderabad press club.

International News

Putin says Russian tactical nuclear weapons to be deployed to Belarus next month

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow will deploy some of its tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus next month, a move that the Belarusian opposition described as an attempt to blackmail the West.

Putin said during a meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko that work on building facilities for the nuclear weapons will be completed by July 7-8, and they will be moved to the territory of Russia's neighbor and ally quickly after that. The move comes as

Ukraine has stepped up attacks in several sectors of the front line in what some observers see as the start of its long-expected counter-offensive.

Russia used Belarus' territory to send its troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, and has kept forces and weapons on the territory of its ally.

"Everything is proceeding as planned," Putin said in televised remarks as he hosted Lukashenko at his residence in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. "On July 7-8 the preparations of the relevant facilities will be completed and we will immediately

start the activities linked to the deployment of those weapons on your territory."

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended to destroy enemy troops and weapons on the battlefield. They have a relatively short range and a much lower yield than nuclear warheads fitted to long-range strategic missiles that are capable of obliterating whole cities.

Putin announced the planned deployment of the short-range nuclear weapons in Belarus earlier this year in a move widely seen as a warning to the West as it stepped up military support for Ukraine.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko talk during their meeting at the Bocharov Ruchei residence in the resort city of Sochi, Russia.

US, UK forge 'Atlantic Declaration' to counter new threats

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain on Thursday announced a new strategic pact as their leaders rededicated the "special relationship" to counter Russia, China and economic instability.

In a White House summit, US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the lightning-fast evolution of artificial intelligence.

But Sunak came away empty-handed on Britain's ambitions for a post-Brexit free-trade agreement with

Washington, settling instead to tack along with Biden's plan to craft a new green economy through vast industrial subsidies.

An "Atlantic Declaration" adopted by the leaders aims to boost industry ties on defence and renewable energy, in the face of growing competition from China.

"We face new challenges to international stability — from authoritarian states such as Russia and the People's Republic of China; disruptive technologies; non-state actors; and transnational challenges like climate change," the

declaration read. As he welcomed Sunak to the Oval Office, Biden was asked by reporters if the "special" transatlantic relationship was in good shape. He gave a thumbs-up and replied: "In real good shape."

Both leaders concurred that the world economy was undergoing the biggest changes since the Industrial Revolution, in part driven by AI, which is bringing doomsday warnings that sentient machines could wipe out humanity unless governments coordinate a response.

Honduran president begins first visit to China since breaking off ties with Taiwan

Monitoring Desk TAIPEI: Honduran President Xiomara Castro arrived in Shanghai on Friday on her first visit since China established ties with her nation, pulling it away from former diplomatic ally Taiwan.

Castro will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping "to jointly plan for the future development" of ties, China's official Xinhua News Agency said. She will also attend the inauguration of Honduras' embassy in Beijing, according to state media.

Honduras established formal relations with China in March, becoming the lat-

est in a string of countries to break diplomatic ties with Taiwan. China sees self-governed Taiwan as a breakaway province, to be retaken by force if necessary, and prohibits its own diplomatic partners from having formal ties with Taipei.

Beijing has intensified its battle to win away Taiwan's diplomatic allies since independence-leaning Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016. Since then, China has managed to lure away nine of Taiwan's former partners with a campaign involving billions of dollars of investments.

One U.N. peacekeeper killed and four injured in north Mali attack

Monitoring Desk DAKAR: At least one United Nations peacekeeper was killed and four others seriously injured when their patrol was attacked in northern Mali on Friday, the peacekeeping mission MINUSMA said.

The incident took place near the town of Ber, in the region of Tombouctou - an area that has become a hotbed of jihadist activity over the past decade.

MINUSMA said on Twitter the patrol first encountered an improvised explosive device and was then hit with a direct fire attack.

It did not name perpetrators but said it was a "complex attack" and that updates on casualties would follow.

Islamist militants, some with links to al Qaeda and Islamic State, have been waging an insurgency in northern Mali since they hijacked a Tuareg rebellion in 2012.

Ex-US president Donald Trump indicted in classified documents probe

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said on Thursday he has been indicted over his handling of classified documents after leaving office, the US ex-president's most serious legal threat yet as a firestorm of criminal investigations imperils his bid for a second White House term.

"The corrupt Biden administration has informed my attorneys that I have been indicted, seemingly over the boxes hoax," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform as he broke

the bombshell news of a historic moment for the United States: the first time a sitting or former commander-in-chief has ever faced federal charges.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Justice Department regarding Trump's assertion.

A Trump attorney, Jim Trusty, told CNN his client has been indicted on seven charges including the willful retention of documents in violation of the Espionage Act, making false statements.

Russia reports heavy fighting in Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia reported heavy fighting in the Zaporizhzhia region of southern Ukraine on Friday after saying it had repelled repeated attempts by the Ukrainian army this week to smash through the front line and drive a wedge through Russian forces. Russia's top military brass briefed President Vladimir Putin on Thursday that Russia had successfully repelled the attacks which Moscow says are part of an attempted major counter-offensive by Ukraine.

China warns Europe against official ties with Taiwan ahead of minister's visit

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China urged Europe on Friday not to have any official exchanges with Taiwan or support "independence forces" ahead of a planned trip to the continent next week by Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu.

Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky confirmed Wu was due to visit Prague next week, saying on Friday state officials were not expected to shift from their existing policy towards Taiwan.

Taiwan, which is claimed by China, has no formal diplomatic ties with any European country except

the Vatican. Beijing regularly denounces any form of contact between Taiwanese and foreign officials, viewing it as encouraging global recognition of Taiwan's separate status from China.

On Wu's Europe trip, which Taiwan's government has not officially confirmed, he is expected to speak at a think-tank event in Prague immediately after Czech President Petr Pavel, Reuters reported on Thursday. Asked about the visit on Friday, Czech Minister Lipavsky said he had "been informed" about Wu coming to Prague.



Honduras' President Xiomara Castro waves as she arrives in Shanghai, China.

UN agency says Myanmar has suspended int'l aid deliveries to cyclone-hit areas

Monitoring Desk BANGKOK: Myanmar's military government has rescinded its approval for international organizations to distribute food, shelter and medicines to thousands of residents of cyclone-hit areas in the country's west, a U.N. agency said Friday.

Cyclone Mocha hit the coastline of Bangladesh and Myanmar in mid-May with winds of up to 209 kilometers (130 miles) per hour. The damage was worst around the coastal city of Sitwe, the capital of Myanmar's Rakhine state, but was also severe as the storm moved inland into Chin state.

The military authorities also suspended travel authori-

zations for international humanitarian organizations, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a situation report. It said the suspension of aid activities "could not have come at a worse time" because of the arrival of the annual monsoon season. The report did not say why the military government's Disaster Management Committee suspended the travel authorizations. Myanmar's military has long kept access to many parts of the country under tight restrictions, especially areas seen as sensitive because of tensions with ethnic minorities, as is the case with Rakhine, where a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in 2017.



People wear masks during the morning rush hour as smoke from wildfires in Canada affected New York.



GWADAR: Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar different sections of Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute

5E to be game changer in Pakistan's economic development: Maryam

ISLAMABAD (Online): Information minister Maryam Aurangzeb said 5E will prove game-changer in Pakistan's economic development.

Exports, Water and food security, climate, energy, are pillars of equity turn around Pakistan. She said this new frame work will increase imports, and appreciate business and employment.

In statement on Friday information minister said Pakistan's development path will pave by promoting education, health and control over population. Cheap and uninterrupted provision of energy will speed up economy and business. Climates will improve through water reserves and food security, she added.

Information minister said youth will be developed through E-Pakistan. They will be empowered.

She said GDP deficit decreased from 4.9% to 4.6% which proves government right policy. 76% decrease in current account deficit is the sign of right economic policy. 40.4% decrease in trade deficit expressed right economic steps. Trade deficit which was \$43.4 billion is now \$25.8 billion.

This is the beginning of improvement, she added. Import decreased by 29.2% which influenced the economic improvement. Imports decreased from \$72.3 billion to \$51.2 billion, which she called a step to betterment.

Further Maryam maintained that Rs.6210 billion tax collected which was 348.2 billion Pkr last year. Current fiscal year despite the target of 7 lacs.

Zardari says: People repose trust in PPP in A.JK by-polls

LAHORE (APP): Former president Asif Ali Zardari has said the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is a reality, which is a symbol of federation.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he said victory of the PPP candidate, Ziaul Qamar, in by-elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir was a great news for all those who believe in federalism and federation of Pakistan. He said the people of Azad Kashmir have reposed their trust and confidence in not only in Ziaul Qamar and the PPP but also federation of Pakistan. He congratulated the newly elected Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and urged him to expedite the PPP mission of serving people.

Parliamentarians say Govt increases salaries despite financial constraints

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a surprising and generous move, the government has announced a significant increase in the salaries of the employees, despite facing financial constraints.

The decision has been hailed by all sections of society, as it demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting the middle class and alleviating their financial burdens, said parliamentarians in the National Assembly on Friday.

According to the official announcement, the government has increased salaries by 35 percent for employees in Grade-1 to 16, and by 30 percent for those in grade-17 and above. Additionally, the pension has been raised by 17.5 percent, benefiting retired government personnel. Furthermore, employees with wages would receive Rs.30,000.

The decision to increase salaries and pensions comes at a time when many countries including Pakistan are grappling with economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

The parliamentarians said the increase in salaries and pensions is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of the government employees and their families.

With the rising cost of living, this move will provide much-needed relief and help mitigate the financial woes faced by the middle class and downtrodden segment of society, they added.

PM links economy with political stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said a country's sound economic growth was linked with its political stability.

"Without political stability, even billions of budget could not make a difference in improving the economic situation," he said at the cabinet meeting, which approved the budgetary proposals of the fiscal year 2023-24.

The prime minister said the common man was bearing the brunt of inflation, however, the government was taking steps to provide them relief in the budget.

The government, he said, accepted all the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hoped that a staff-level agreement would be reached in near future.

Since assumption of power 14 months ago, he added, it had to deal with the challenge of IMF, post-flood situation and global inflation, he added.

He expressed satisfaction that the current deficit in 10 months was reduced to \$3.3 billion and hoped that the agriculture sector would boost.

The prime minister appointed Rohail Sheikh as his adviser and expressed the hope that he would fulfill his responsibilities with diligence.

The cabinet also accorded approval to the Finance Bill 2023.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar will present the budgetary proposals with an estimated outlay of Rs 14 trillion in the National Assembly in the evening.

This is the second budget in 14 months being presented by the coalition government under the banner of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The government in its Economic Survey unveiled on Thursday highlighted its significant economic gains in terms of improved external and fiscal indicators.

Even with a significant increase in debt servicing, the fiscal deficit reduced to 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in July-April FY 2022-23 against 4.9 percent for the same period last year, while the primary balance reverted from deficit to surplus. During the first 11 months of the outgoing fiscal year, the trade deficit was narrowed down by 40 percent and the current account deficit by 76 percent during July 2022-April 2023.

PTI's Ali Muhammad arrested once again

MARDAN (Online): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Muhammad Khan was arrested once again on Friday right after being released on the orders of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) from a day earlier.

The PTI leader's lawyer told reporters that the current arrest was made on corruption charges; he was subsequently transferred to the Toru police station.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Syed Ehsan Shah offering Dua after inaugurating ENT Department in Civil Hospital

Senator Qadir terms budget for FY2023-24 people-friendly

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee Petroleum, Senator Abdul Qadir on Friday hailed the balanced development approach of the federal government and termed the budget for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 as balanced and people-friendly.

Talking to APP, the senator said that, though it was hard to prepare a balanced budget, in view of the prevailing economic crisis, but the sincere and concerted efforts of the incumbent government made it possible to live up to the expectations of the people.

Highlighting the salient feature of the FY budget 2023, he hailed the decision of a 30 to 35 percent increase in the salaries of government employees.

"Due to the skyrocketing prices of the daily commodities, government employees were living hand to mouth," he said, adding that an increase of a sizeable amount in the salaries of the government employees will provide utmost relief to them.

The senator also welcomed the cut in the import of raw materials of different commercial products as saying the effect of the cut in such products will trickle down to the ordinary and low-income class of the country.

The chairman standing committee on petroleum also hailed the federal government's approach of balanced development across the country.

The balanced approach pursued by the federal government will remove the sense of deprivation among its federating units, including Balochistan, which always remained on least priority of the previous regimes.



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Information Mitha Khan Kakar, Deputy Consul General of Iran Faridon Peer Lorin, President Chamber of Commerce Wali Muhammad Noorzai inaugurating International Property Expo.

Kanrani demands Judicial Commission on murder of Abdul Razzaq Shar

QUETTA: The senior lawyer and former President Supreme Court Bar Association, Amanullah Kanrani Advocate has demanded of the authorities to form a judicial commission to probe into the brutal killing of senior lawyer Abdul Razzaq Shar. This demand was made by Amanullah Kanrani while addressing a press conference at the High Court Bar Room on Friday.

It may be mentioned here that Amanullah Kanrani was the lawyer in the constitutional petition filed by Abdul Razzaq Shar in the treason case against former Prime Minister and PTI chief, Imran Khan.

He told that Abdul Razzaq Shar was brutally murdered a day before the hearing of his petition in the High Court. He said that the Judicial Commission should be formed to ascertain the motives behind the brutal assassination of Shar.

He said that it must be ascertained that who benefited from the murder. It may also be mentioned here that Abdul Razzaq Shar was gunned down by unknown armed men on June 6 while he was on his way to the courts from his residence. His son had registered murder case against Imran Khan and others.



COLOMBO: Pakistan Navy Ship Shahjahan visits Colombo.

Information Secretary vows to resolve media workers' issues on priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan on Friday vowed to resolve the issues faced by the media workers on priority.

Addressing a dinner reception held in honour of the newly elected office-bearers of the All Pakistan Newspaper Employees Confederation (APNEC) and senior officers of the ministry, he said minimum wage for a worker was being increased in the budget for the next financial year.

Terming the media a strong pillar of state, he said its independence in Pakistan was being acknowledged at international level.

He said the government had allocated Rs one billion for the health insurance of media workers and journalists in the budget for fiscal year 2023-24.

Internal Publicity Wing Director General Manzoor Ali Memon, Associated Press of Pakistan Managing Director Muhammad Asim Khichi, Principal Information Officer Mobashir Hassan, Joint Secretary Arshad Munir, Deputy Director General Ms. Tahira Saeda, Director Media Shahab Khan and Director Press Malik Muqarab attended the reception.

Newly commissioned PNS Shahjahan arrives Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Shahjahan has arrived in Karachi that was commissioned on May 10, 2023 in a graceful ceremony held in Shanghai, China and attended by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi as chief guest.

During her maiden voyage to Pakistan, PNS Shahjahan visited Malaysia and participated in Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) along with other 30 participating countries, said a Pakistan Navy news release on Friday.

During the stay at Langkawi, the ship was visited by various dignitaries, delegates and locals. Later, PNS Shahjahan visited Colombo, Sri Lanka. The visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing interoperability and exploring new vistas of cooperation between the two navies.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Malik Naeem Khan Bazai meeting with Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babar Khan Musakhail

IGP directs to take action against illegal petrol pumps all over Balochistan

QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh has directed the concerned police officials to take action against the illegal petrol pumps operating in the province.

According to an official communique issued here on the directives of Inspector General of Police, it was mentioned that several illegal petrol pumps are operating in the province.

As these petrol pumps are operating illegally and without valid licenses, these are posing threat to the public and environment.

In this regard, the Deputy Inspector General of Police of all ranges and senior Superintendents of Police have been directed to take action against all such illegal petrol pumps, as mentioned in the official letter.

Moreover, the IGP also asked the concerned police high ups to submit the report of compliance of crackdown against the illegal petrol pumps within three days.



QUETTA: Senior Vice President Chamber of Commerce and Industries Quetta Agha Gul Khilji addressing a press conference at CCCI.

Ahsan Iqbal for excelling in digital technology for national development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday highlighted the importance of getting expertise in the field of digital advancements to match the development pace taking place in the modern world. "In today's world, the digital revolution is redefining all aspects of life whether it is the living style, way of getting education, doing jobs, governance system. So there is the need of producing such a human resource that fully exploits its potential and attains the second-to-none capabilities in the field of digital technology," he said while addressing an EDTECH conference here.

The minister said the nations that adopted the digital revolution achieved success and development, but those who did not embrace faced failure.

Ahsan Iqbal said there was a need to align the country's education system with fast-changing trends in technology so that educated and skilled manpower is produced to meet the international standards and get due share in the world markets. He was of the view that creativity and innovation was the key to achieving the required goals of development, and human resource with 'critical thinking' was a must to match the pace of digital technology.

IHC issues contempt of court notice for not presenting Afridi

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while issuing notice in contempt of court case for not producing Shehryar Afridi in the respective court despite court's orders has sought reply from the respondents till June 15.

IHC summoned police investigation officer on June 15.

The case came up for hearing before a single bench of IHC led by Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir Friday.

The court inquired why the court's orders weren't complied with. As to why contempt of court proceedings be not initiated.

It was requested in the petition that police did not present Sheh Yr Afridi in any court till June 07 despite court's orders. The court should initiate contempt of court proceedings against the police. The court had ordered to present Shehryar Afridi in the respective court till June 07.

PDM govt failed in achieving economic targets: Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed on Friday said the government utterly failed in achieving economic targets set for FY2022-23.

Sheikh Rasheed took to Twitter to react to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23 presented by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday.

Never seen such an economic survey before, Sheikh Rasheed said in his tweet and added even Dar is unable to understand what is happening to the national exchequer.

Court summons Imran Khan in person on July 6

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Friday summoned Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan in personal capacity on July 6, in a case pertaining his threatening remarks about a female judge.

The court also served a show-cause notice to the person who submitted surety bonds for the bail of PTI's chief and said that neither PTI's chief nor his guarantor had appeared before this court during hearing.

The court sought report from SSP security regarding the security situation in F-8 Kachehri.

Judicial Magistrate Malik Amanullah issued a four-page order regarding hearing of the case.

PBF endorses NEC's decision to close markets, commercial centers by 8pm

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan Business Forum has supported the decision of the National Economic Council to close the markets and commercial centers till 8 pm from July 1, saying that this will be the first step towards a civilized society.

Vice Chairperson PBF Balochistan Sana Khan Durrani while talking to the media, said that the measures proposed under the plan to conserve energy, such as closing shops and commercial centers by 8 pm, switching to LED lights to save more energy, could help the country save up to \$1 billion a year.

"Even wealthy countries like Europe and the US cannot afford the luxury of keeping commercial areas open until 12 midnight. 'No country has an irresponsible lifestyle like ours,' she further said.

Lauding the province's stance on the issue, the PBF welcomed that the provinces have also agreed to implement the decision from July. "Circular debt is a huge challenge for the government," she said, adding that this move will save electricity and help reduce circular debt to a great extent.

PBF also suggests that the district administration should ensure that shops are opened by 10.00 am.



TURBAT: Member Chief Minister Inspector Team Shah Irfan Gharshheen inspecting process of test conducted for appointment of teachers

PTA conducts successful raids against illegal internet service providers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), carried out two successful raids in Etihad Park Chungi Amer Sidhu, Lahore, and Tehsil Chowk Sarwar Shaheed, District Kot Addu, against illegal internet service providers, operating without a valid license from PTA. During the raids, operational internet setups and allied equipment were confiscated, said a news release.

Three persons were arrested by FIA (one in Lahore and two in Kot Addu). The culprits have been taken into custody for further investigation.

The successful efforts against illegal internet service providers can be attributed to PTA's unwavering commitment, continuous monitoring, and persistent efforts to curb illegal internet services. These actions are crucial in preventing tax evasion and revenue misreporting, thus curtailing the loss to the national exchequer. PTA urged the public to only avail telecom services from PTA licensed operators to avoid sudden discontinuation.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili being briefed about development projects under Quetta Dev. Package