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PM Shahbaz directs for preparing export-oriented dev. budget 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday issued clear directions to include on priority, such projects in the upcoming development budget that help in ensuring import substitutions, expanding export volume, and bringing innovation in various sectors.

The prime minister also directed to allocate special funds in the development programme for the welfare and development of the country's youth.

Chairing a meeting to review the budget proposals with respect to the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2023-24, Shehbaz Sharif said that in the upcoming budget, projects relating to higher education, professional training and job creation for the youth must be included in the programme.

He also asked for the establishment of Pakistan Endowment Fund to provide higher education to the youth.

The laptop programme should also be included in the upcoming PSDP to distribute free laptops among the top performing students to equip them with modern technology skills, he added.

He said through the endowment fund, the youth should be given professional and higher education besides skill-based training in IT sector.

The prime minister also stressed the need to give special importance to merit and transparency while providing scholarships and education to the youth.

PM Shehbaz directed to continue the projects initiated under the Kissan Package while renewable energy projects should also be made part of the development budget.

The prime minister also directed to allocate special funds in the upcoming budget for projects to bring innovation in the energy sector.

He said all the slow ongoing projects under the PSDP that had lost their importance, should be removed from the development budget.

All stakeholders of the relevant sectors and the allied parties should be consulted before including any development project in the budget and their proposals should also be considered, the prime minister directed.

Earlier, the meeting was briefed in detail about the proposals for adding new projects in the upcoming fiscal year and progress on the ongoing projects.

It was informed that as per the direction of the prime minister, projects related to the agriculture sector, renewable energy, higher education for youth, professional training and job-raising schemes would be important part of the development budget.

The meeting was further told that the IT sector development and export boosting projects would also be part of the development budget.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on PSDP proposals for 2023-24.

PML-N decides to file appeal in SC to get undo life time disqualification of Nawaz

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N has decided to file review petition in Supreme Court (SC) under new law to get undo the life time disqualification of Nawaz Sharif.

This appeal will be filed under article 62-1/F of the constitution against the decision of life time disqualification of Nawaz Sharif.

According to PML-N sources an important meeting of PML-N was held here. The meeting was presided over by Nawaz Sharif through video link.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif, federal ministers, Rana Sana Ullah, Ishaq Dar, Maryam Nawaz, Khawaja Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Marriyum Aurangzeb, law minister Azam Nazir Tarar, Malik Ahmad Khan and Attorney General.

A big decision was taken to file petition to get undo the life time disqualification of Nawaz Sharif.

The PML-N senior leadership agreed on it that review appeal plea will be filed against Supreme Court (SC) decision pertaining to 62-1/F instead of filing review appeal in Panama case.

Sources said that PML-N will go to seek review against decision of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial under 62-1/F. The PML-N will request the court to change life time disqualification of Nawaz Sharif to one time disqualification for five years. This benefit will be taken under new law.

if the decision on appeal comes favorable then both Nawaz Sharif and Jahangir Tareen will stand abolished. In the event of disqualification for five years, they both have spent this period.

Sources told Online that both law minister and Attorney General have been directed already to file review appeal in supreme court.

The political, economic and law and order situation of the country also came under discussion in the meeting of senior leadership of PML-N.

If PTI wants serious talks, these can be held only with PM: Rana Sana

ISLAMABAD (Online): Interior minister Rana Sana Ullah has said if PTI wants serious talks then these can be held only with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said this in a tweet here Friday.

Talking to a private TV channel here he said Perviz Elahi case is not separation from PTI press conference case.

He held Perviz Elahi committed enormous corruption as chief minister Punjab. Farah Goggi job was done with impunity.

He claimed 10 percent commission was taken in contracts and billion of rupees were minted by converting green land to brown land.

Moonis Elahi sent dollars abroad through plane.

Justice Isa refutes reports of grouping in SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the senior justice of the Supreme Court (SC), Friday issued a clarification to reject "erroneous interpretations" in the media that he did not greet Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial or shake hands with him at the oath taking ceremony of Justice Iqbal Hameedur Rahman as the Federal Shariat Court Chief Justice in the SC building on Thursday.

Justice Isa firmly rebutted the notion that the captured moment in the video was awkward, asserting that he had already exchanged greetings with Chief Justice Bandial before the camera captured the scene.

"Justice Iqbal Hameedur Rahman took oath as the chief justice of the Federal Shariat Court yesterday (June 1, 2023). Immediately after the ceremony's conclusion, I went first to greet and congratulate his wife, where I met Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and greeted him. Then I proceeded to greet Justice Rahman," a clarification note issued by Justice Isa said.

The note added that after greeting Rahman, the senior justice judge went to talk to Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer, a former Aalim judge of the FSC when Justice Bandial came to greet him too.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci bidding farewell to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his departure for Turkey on his two day official visit.

Mariyum says: Pakistan seeks support from Germany for technical training in Film

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryam Aurangzeb has said that we want to show the beauty of Pakistan culture and civilization to the entire world through Screen tourism.

Foreign Film makers should take advantage from special concessions given for filmmaking in Pakistan.

We sought support from German Institutions for technical training in film, art and culture.

She expressed her views during meeting with German Ambassador Alfred Grannas.

Pakistan and Germany have agreed on bilateral cooperation in the field of film, art and culture in the meeting.

A discussion was held on the proposal of cooperation with the University of Babelsberg and the university of Television and film Munich.

Maryam Aurangzeb has apprised German Ambassador about the film and culture policy of the government of Pakistan and the incentives given under the policy. She has said, Film, art and culture can be promoted by cooperation between German and Pakistani educational institutions.

The Federal Minister has appreciated the services of German NGOs GIZ and Hans Seidel foundation in Pakistan.

She has also expressed his gratitude for the German assistance of 18.4 million Euros to the flood victims in Pakistan.

She has said that promise of Germany to provide 84 million Euros in aid to the international Conference in Climate change was another proof Germany Friendship with Pakistan.

She has said that the volume of bilateral trade needs to be increased from 4 billion dollars.

SC fixes JP's plea for Panama Papers hearing

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Friday fixed the petition related to Panama Papers for hearing.

Justice Sardar Tariq Masood would preside over the nine-member bench which would hear the plea on June 9, with the court also issuing notices to attorney general in this regard.

Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq filed a petition for a detailed investigation of 436 Pakistanis named in the Panama list. It should be noted that a large number of secret documents - Panama papers - were revealed in 2016, disclosing how the world's top rich and powerful people hide their wealth.

Security forces kill two active terrorists in Dossali fire exchange

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces killed two active terrorists involved in inimical activities against the forces and killing of innocent civilians during an exchange of fire in general area Dossali of North Waziristan District on Thursday.

According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Friday, the army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and sealed all possible escape routes.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens, it said.

Four students of seminary drowned at Kambar

LOWER DIR (APP): Four students of a seminary drowned in a stream in Kambar area here on Friday.

According to details, four students of a seminary went to a local stream for bathing but they were swept away by water and drowned.

Their bodies were retrieved by the hectic efforts of locals and rescue workers. The ill-fated boys were identified as Fayaz, Zaid, Abubakkar and Abdur Rehman.



LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi leaving court after court case hearing, at District Court in Lahore

Parvez re-arrested after being discharged in corruption case

LAHORE (APP): Former chief minister Punjab and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi was re-arrested on Friday in another case after being discharged by a local court in Gujrat development projects corruption case.

As per Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Punjab spokesman, the PTI president was arrested in a corruption case, registered by the ACE Gujranwala. The spokesman said that the ACE Punjab would file an appeal against the local court verdict, as many important points were ignored in the matter.

Earlier, on Friday, a local court discharged Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in the Gujrat development projects corruption case and ordered for his release.

Judicial Magistrate Ghulam Murtaza Virk announced the reserved verdict, which had been reserved after hearing detailed arguments of parties on the 14-day remand plea, earlier in the day.

The ACE Punjab officials produced Chaudhry Parvez Elahi before the court and sought his 14-day physical remand for investigation. The court was appraised that Chaudhry Parvez Elahi misused his powers as the chief minister Punjab and caused loss to the exchequer.

Well incident; 4 family members suffocated to death

QUETTA (APP): Four people of the same family suffocated to death here on Friday while saving a teenager from a well near Qambrani Road in Quetta.

The deceased identified as Yusuf (18), Ali (50), Khameesa (25) and Naeema (30).

They died due to the accumulation of gas in the well, the rescue sources said.

Rescue sources said an 18-year-old boy became unconscious after he went into the well to fix an electric motor.

His father, brother and sister-in-law (brother's wife) who went into the well for his rescue also died.

The deceased identified as Yusuf (18), Ali (50), Khameesa (25) and Naeema (30).

They died due to the accumulation of gas in the well, the rescue sources said.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Sardar Shahid Ahmad Laghari meet Chairman NDMA Lt General Inam Haider Malik at his office.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest of the event Minister of Defence of Pakistan Khawaja Muhammad Asif cuts the cake along with Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese and others during the celebrations of the National Day of Italian Republic, at Serena Hotel in Federal Capital

Federal govt department urged to facilitate business community of Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi on Friday urged the federal government departments to facilitate the legitimate trade of the business community instead of hindering it.

"The government's support to the business community will help flourish businesses in Balochistan, reduce poverty and increase the country's foreign exchange," Federal Ombudsman said this while talking to the representatives of small industries during his visit to Quetta Small Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

While talking to the business community, he said that the tax matters are under the authority of the Tax Ombudsman, who can deal with the tax matters in a good manner.

"The Federal Ombudsman is striving hard to resolve public complaints related to federal institutions in Pakistan through its 18 offices in Pakistan," he said adding that in this regard, the Federal Ombudsman has dealt with one hundred and sixty-four thousand cases in a year.

He said that the federal ombudsman's office, by providing free-of-charge services without any lawyer, disposes off the case within sixty days so that the time of the parties is not wasted.

Former CM Punjab slams 9th May violence: Usman Buzdar parts ways with PTI, quits politics forever

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Chief Minister Punjab, Sardar Usman Buzdar has announced to part ways with his party and quit the politics forever.

He said that he has always did the "gentleman politics", but the political situation going on currently in the country, it doesn't allow him to do such kind of politics.

Therefore, he has decided to take a break from the politics, and thus is quitting the party (PTI) and the politics even.

This assertion was made by the former Chief Minister Punjab while addressing a hurriedly called press conference at the Quetta Press Club on Friday afternoon.

Sardar Usman Buzdar came to the Press Club alone and surprised all those present to attend the press conference unknowingly as who is going to address the presser.

The former Punjab Chief Minister said that the 9th May 2023 incidents of violence and attacks on important installations were condemnable.

He said that we strongly condemn the violence happened on May 9, however, those arrested after the violence and found innocent should be released.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Punjab, Sardar Usman Buzdar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

CEC inaugurates new website of ECP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan (CJC) Sikandar Sultan Raja has inaugurated the new website of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for enhancing transparency, efficiency and public participation in the electoral process.

The friendly interface of the website aimed at providing citizens easy access to the important information, said a news release on Friday.

During the inauguration ceremony, the election commissioner expressed satisfaction over the efforts made by the IT team for the accomplishment of the task.

One of the key features of the new website is its integration with social media platforms which will enable citizens to stay informed and get in touch with ECP through social media platforms.

The ECP termed the initiative an "important milestone" and urged all citizens to use the innovative website of ECP, i.e. www.ecp.gov.pk.

PDM govt, not our govt: Safdar

LAHORE (Online): PML-N leader Capt (Retd) Safdar has said case should be registered against those who had instituted false case.

Talking to media men in district Kutchery Lahore here Friday he said tragedy is this I am appearing in the court in connection with case since last 6 years. I kept on appearing in accountability court for one year.

He held the practice of instituting false cases should come to end now. I am facing treason case as well. He went on to say "every time this question is asked from me Mian Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan when Mian Sahib believes in justice. This is but a PDM government and not our government.

He stated what India could not do, it got it done through its agents.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Balanced approach

Political equations are never easy to engineer, let alone solve. A political crisis should either be allowed to burn through or resolved via the electoral process — imposing any artificial solution on it will never address the social conflicts precipitating it.

Unfortunately, the many lessons from Pakistani history that substantiate this simple fact continue to be ignored. Instead of taking a laissez-faire approach to democratic processes, past practice has been to introduce new variables into the political equation to counteract a popular political force whenever it begins posing a threat to the status quo.

There are several extant by-products of this strategy. The Q-League, MQM-Haqiqi and Pak Sarzameen Party were carved out from the PML-N and MQM after the parent parties began asserting themselves in ways that were not approved of by the status quo elite.

Likewise, the National Awami Party, banned from Pakistani politics in 1975 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto because of its dogged opposition to his politics and policies, has survived through its avatar, the ANP.

Based on recent news reports, it appears that several PTI leaders who recently deserted their party and said they were disavowing politics might have already been roped in for a fresh experiment.

Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, former Sindh governor Imran Ismail and erstwhile PTI stalwarts Amir Kiani and Mehmoood Moulvi on Wednesday made an attempt to convince PTI vice-chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi to ditch the party.

Mr Chaudhry also revealed that he had reached out to other key leaders from the PTI for their support for the new venture. For now, his efforts have borne no fruit. It may be noted, however, that Mr Qureshi was recently named heir apparent to the PTI by the party's chairman himself. This could make his departure, if it happens, rather devastating to the beleaguered party's morale.

What is most intriguing, however, is that this new grouping has made it quite clear that it will be acting in opposition to the PDM parties. In other words, it will be seeking to prevent the PPP and PML-N from taking advantage of the PTI's fall.

It is unclear how this wheeling and dealing will benefit the country, considering how polarised public opinion has become due to the PDM government's economic mismanagement amidst worsening sociopolitical crises.

Only a legitimate government — elected through a fair electoral contest and backed by a strong public mandate — may be able to take the country out of its present crisis. Unfortunately, it appears that we may be heading in a completely different direction. The parties in power must ask themselves if another hung parliament serves their political interests. They entered a marriage of convenience over their opposition to the PTI, but will this marriage last another five years amidst wide-ranging crises?



Zubeida Mustafa

Man is by nature a collector. What he collects and how he manages his collection depends on his personal commitment and style of working as well as the resources available to him. If well planned and made accessible, collections can become a valuable source of knowledge for mankind.

After all, what are museums and libraries but institutionally managed collections which tell the story of civilisations and cultures or just a branch of knowledge. What is important is that the collections' permanence, continuity, security and accessibility are ensured.

All this cannot be done single-handedly, and governments and public institutions have to be involved in this mammoth process. Unfortunately, such commitment has been missing from the agenda of successive Pakistani governments. However, Lutfullah Khan (1916-2012) made the impossible possible when he recorded, relying on his own efforts, the voices and works of persons of great eminence in literature, music and other fields, and preserved them for posterity.

In fact, to make his collection accessible, he devised his own cataloguing system that he kept revising from time to time. The collection comprises tapes, CDs and digitised recordings that are unparalleled in magnitude and versatility.

A musician, and in his early years a radio presenter, Lutfullah collected whatever he could lay his hands on. He developed an interest in archiving

Sound treasures

human voices and musical sounds when he acquired a tape recorder for which he paid Rs1,148 in July 1951. Fascinated, he recorded his mother's voice, saying a time would come when she would be no more. It is such a thought that drives a collector's passion. But it also makes him possessive.

In that respect, Lutfullah Sahib was lucky. Five years after his death, a chance meeting between Mrs Zahida Lutfullah and Dr Khurshid Abdullah (an adviser at Aga Khan University), who had never met the man whose lifetime's labour he is now trying to preserve, led to the present arrangement. The credit for retrieving this treasure from the brink of oblivion goes to Dr Abdullah. With a similar passion, but also a full-time job, he has managed to digitise in six years nearly 25 to 30 per cent of the collection. But nothing has been added since Lutfullah Sahib recorded the last word.

When I asked Dr Khurshid Abdullah to give me an idea of the size of the collection in terms of the duration of the recording, he simply gave me some statistics. The presence of poets in the recording is enormous: there are nearly 800 of them. There are 7,261 poems with a duration of 278 hours, 39 minutes and nine seconds. In other words, you will have to listen round the clock for 11 days to go through the poetry section. Faiz and Akhtarul Iman top the list with their entire work recorded in their own voice.

The cataloguing leaves you marvelling. The catalogue for the music section, the largest, consists of 42 volumes with 200 pages each. The entries are classified as 'artistic', 'classical', 'semi-classical', 'instrumental', 'vocal', melody-wise, etc. Similarly, there are catalogues for poetry, prose,

talks, radio dramas and so on.

What is the significance of this collection? It is oral literature/history in a pure form. A poet who recites his own poetry — stressing a syllable at the right place to convey the meaning and nuances of the words as only the creator of these can do, communicates more effectively with his audience.

The Lutfullah collection contains a number of interviews, readings and conversations by eminent authors that are exclusive and give an insight into society and history. They are all there: be it Qur-atalain Hyder talking about her father, or Hajra Masroor in conversation with Ismat Chughtai. Pir Hisamuddin Rashdi figures in there with many others. Dr Khurshid Abdullah has wisely had transcribed in books exclusive talks and interviews.

Exploring at random, I found so many pearls of wisdom from these greatest of the greats. In the present distressing times, Faiz reassures us "Lambi hai gham ki shaam magar shaam hee to hai" (The night of sorrow is long, but it is only a night). Or when he promises us a better future reciting "Hum dekhenge gair..." (we shall see).

Then there are Noon Meem Raashid warning us against Nimrod's sham philosophy in the land of his divinity and Habib Jalib defiantly proclaiming "Mein naheem manta" (I don't accept). History is the best teacher and this collection is full of history. The voices in the recordings can be the mentors students need and which Dr Khurshid Abdullah believes are missing today. According to him, people look for 'sanads' (degrees) or 'tarbiat' (training) but what is really needed to make a youth accomplished is 'subhat' (mentorship). Lutfullah has provided them in plenty. -- Courtesy Dawn

Near collapse



Nazir A. Jogezaei

It is said that contrary to its intended purpose of driving social growth and producing well-informed human capital, higher education in the country has fallen prey to a level of mediocrity that has stymied societal advancement and economic development.

Take the example of Balochistan. Along with all its other issues, including a poor security situation, political instability, economic challenges and natural disasters, the province faces a severe crisis in higher education. Of late, this has been most apparent in the state of its faculty at higher education institutions, who, deprived of their salaries — with some forced to sell their personal belongings — have taken to the streets to protest.

This state of affairs is a sorry comment on the history of higher education institutes in the province, which have been poorly planned and managed. It is a mere illusion that physically expanding existing campuses and hiring more staff will keep pace with greater enrolment numbers. It is unfair to burden the public sector with the task of generating job-creation opportunities in a province where there has been little industrial development.

Universities in the province spend more on building and maintenance, thus shifting the emphasis from teaching and learning to administration and control. The majority exist as corporate entities, employing administrative and support personnel. One professor said that university offi-

cials spend more on fuel while there was no budget for chemicals for the laboratories. Another believed that the clerk had more authority than him; even his request for paper to write on was sometimes denied.

The majority of sub-campuses promote social sciences programmes, including degrees in education and management, because they have comparatively lower administrative costs — there is little understanding of the importance of scientific subjects for future generations. Interestingly, some of the sub-campuses comprise just a few borrowed rooms with no labs or other prerequisites.

All this is in contrast to globally established norms in higher education institutes. Universities abroad invest billions in making themselves a hub of cutting-edge research and diversity by attracting talent from around the world and providing a learning platform offering students different skills. Here, we believe in rigid ideas, and old skills, and provide students with a static education experience from primary to the doctorate level in the same sociopolitical and sociocultural context, with minds closed to learning from multiple sources.

Political elites have brought sub-campuses to the doorsteps of their voters in remote areas, despite criticism that this can diminish students' exposure to diversity and limit their critical thinking skills. Faculty members with poor skills and inadequate qualifications have been employed for the purpose, thanks to the paucity of genuine professionals.

Our financial crisis continues to worsen, with adverse implications for teaching and learning at higher education institutes. Solutions so far have proved to be superficial and ineffective. Perhaps a more concrete

remedy lies in restructuring Balochistan's higher education institutes. The establishment of a provincial higher education commission is the starting point in the aim to incorporate strong human capital that can lay the ground for workable ideas, which meet the demands of academic needs, the sociocultural and sociopolitical environment of the province, and global trends. The currently centralised higher education mechanism, in the aftermath of the 18th Amendment, is in-effective and a great mismatch with ground realities and global academic trends.

It is essential that the tendency to set up satellite or sub-campuses be curbed and that universities receive additional funding instead. Higher education cannot be regarded as a fundamental right like school education by simply expanding access through sub-campuses; rather, there must be sophisticated admission standards so that meritorious students have the opportunity to avail themselves of academic programmes taught by highly qualified professors in well-equipped universities. Additionally, ad hoc appointments on the back of loose selection criteria must be discouraged. Nepotism is a national trait and relatives and non-professionals are often accommodated, resulting in education of an inferior quality. Rather than behaving as corporate entities, higher education institutions must act as the hubs of learning and research that they were meant to be, and give academicians more leadership roles and a larger say when it comes to decision-making. Learning, research and development must be the core business, and available material and human capital must be utilised towards this end. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

FAO joins hands with MNFS&R to unlock potential of Pak livestock sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) together with Ministry of National Food Security & Research (MNFS&R) concluded a national workshop in Islamabad to share the findings of the assessment of Pakistan's existing animal disease surveillance system and provide valuable recommendations.

The Workshop was organized under the Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) which aims to improve the animal disease surveillance system and establish a real-time animal disease reporting

system in the Pakistan. The workshop brought together leading experts, officials from federal and provincial livestock departments, and other key stakeholders committed to safeguarding animal health and welfare. The workshop provided a platform to unlock the potential of the livestock industry and promote its development.

Highlighting the importance of a comprehensive regulatory framework alongside the disease surveillance system, Dr Khalid Ashfaq, Animal Husbandry Commissioner said that the

Ministry has developed a draft National Animal Health Act aligned with World Organization for Animal Health guidelines, which will be presented to workshop participants for review and recommendations. Once approved, this will be the first national-level document related to animal health legislation in Pakistan, he added.

FAO Deputy Representative in Pakistan, Farrukh Toirov, during his inaugural remarks, said that there is a huge disparity between livestock sector's potential and the resources allocated

to this sector in Pakistan. To unlock the potential of the sector we need to improve the animal disease surveillance system and establish a real-time animal disease reporting system. Together with MNFS&R and other stakeholders, we aim to address this issue through this TCP.

Emphasizing the importance of the feasibility study which is expected to be completed within the project tenure, Muhammad Afzal, Project Coordinator said that establishing a robust animal disease surveillance system in Pakistan is crucial.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with a delegation of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran headed by Mr Mohammad Naem Mir at FBR (Hqrs) in Federal Capital.



LAHORE: A delegation of LESCO board members led by Chairman Board of Directors LESCO, Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman, in a group photo with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore.

Ambassador-designate stresses steps to enhance trade with Denmark

FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Denmark Shoaib Sarwar said on Friday that extraordinary steps would have to be taken in consultation with the business community to attract maximum foreign direct investment (FDI) and enhance trade with the country of this appointment.

Addressing the business community at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he acknowledged the economic strength of Faisalabad, particularly in the field of textile, and said it was strange

that only one firm was included among the top 50 exporting companies to Denmark. He said probably the FCCI members had not focused on this small country, which was included among the most developed and economically strong countries with maximum purchasing power. He motivated the exporters to exploit the Danish potential in addition to re-exporting their products to the EU countries. He proposed that an FCCI trade delegation should visit Denmark so that tangible steps could be taken to deepen the footprints of Pakistani textile there.

96.6pc wheat procurement target achieved in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): The Food Department has procured 542,000 metric tonnes of wheat against the total target of 560,938 metric tonnes, showing 96.6 per cent achievement. The wheat procurement targets of 277,000 metric tonnes in two districts Jhang and Chiniot have been achieved while procurement in Faisalabad and Toba Tek Singh is continuing. The details were shared at the deputy commissioner's monthly conference, held in connection with good governance with the divisional commissioner in the chair.

Agriculture revolution imperative to tackle future challenges: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday stressed the need for adopting the latest techniques and technology in the agriculture sector to boost the economy.

Chairing a meeting on the government's key initiative "Agricultural Revolution 2.0," the minister highlighted the importance of increased production of crops, saying

a revolution in the sector was needed to meet future challenges, said a press release issued here.

He said, "Agriculture is the backbone of the national economy."

He said prompt measures were being taken to prevent the agriculture sector affected from the negative impacts of climate change, besides promoting research and introducing modern technology for getting better production.

Weekly inflation increases nominally by 0.03 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a nominal increase of 0.03 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on June 1st, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 254.13 points as compared to 254.05 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last

year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 42.67 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732, however decreased by 0.06 per cent and went down to 260.57 points from last week's 260.77 points whereas it decreased by 0.10 per cent for consumption group.

PSX gains 63 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 86.22 points on Friday, a change of 0.21 per cent, closing at 41,352.99 points against 41,266.77 points the previous day.

A total of 99,545,856 shares were traded during the day as compared to 99,950,613 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 3,336 billion against Rs. 2,867 billion on the last trading day. As many as 296 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 146 of them recorded gains and 120 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

Gold prices up by Rs.4,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs4,000 and was sold at Rs233,000 on Friday against its sale at Rs229,000 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold also increased by Rs3,429 to Rs199,760 from Rs196,331 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs.183,113 from Rs179,970, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Governor directs LESCO to resolve problems related to supply of power to consumers

Independent Report

LAHORE: A delegation of LESCO board members led by Chairman Board of Directors LESCO, Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman, called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the overall performance of LESCO Lahore and the steps taken to provide uninterrupted electricity to the people. Speaking on the

occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that serving the people and providing them with basic facilities are among the top priorities of the government. He said that the government is making great efforts to provide relief to the salaried class, and the common people in the budget. He directed the board members to resolve the problems related to the supply of electricity to the consumers.

Pakistan has great potential to develop its economy: Zhao Lijian

BEIJING (INP): Former Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Friday that Pakistan as a resilient country has great potential to develop its economy.

Being a time-tested and iron-clad friend, China is always holding the hand of Pakistan firmly.

Given the regional and international challenges, Pakistan is not alone because China is standing by Pakistan to

grow and progress together. Zhao Lijian made these remarks in a meeting with Foreign Affairs Expert Muhammad Mehdi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

During the meeting, Mehdi categorically supported the one-China policy.

Mehdi said Pakistan believes that it is the rightful and constitutional principle of the People's Republic of China.

Punjab Cabinet meeting approves measures for employees' public welfare

Cabinet decides to introduce an axle load management regime to prevent overloading and accidents on roads in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: The 16th cabinet meeting, held under the chair of the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Friday, approved measures for welfare of employees and general public in the province.

It approved an amendment to the Punjab Civil Service Pension Rules, ensuring the immediate payment of 65 per cent pension to employees after retirement as it will continue to be paid until the complete pension documents are not prepared.

The cabinet decided to introduce an axle load

management regime to prevent overloading and accidents on roads in Punjab. Heavy trailers exiting factories will be subject to regular weight checks, and those exceeding the prescribed limits will not be allowed on the roads. The Motor Vehicle Rules of 1969 were also amended by the cabinet to ensure the effective implementation of the decision.

The responsibility for its execution was entrusted to the Minister for Industries SM Tanveer by the CM who also instructed all departments to expedite the resolution of promotion cases for

government employees, emphasizing that no deserving government employee should be deprived of career advancement. "I am personally monitoring promotion cases of government employees," he stated.

The establishment of Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centers was approved in the meeting, special centers will be established in Multan, Taunsa, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Wah, to provide rehabilitation services for paralysed patients. Necessary medical equipment will also be provided to paraplegic patients.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates Umar Diabetes Foundation for free treatment of sugar patients.

PFA stops production of illegal pickle factory

Independent Report
LAHORE: An enforcement team of the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) stopped the production of pickle and candied fruit (murabba) factory over multiple violations of the PFA Act besides discarding 1,000kg fungus-infested murabba.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that on the tipoff, the team raided a production unit in Ahmed Park and caught them red-handed producing inferior quality food items with rotten vegetables and fruits. Moreover, artificial flavours and hazardous chemicals were being used for this purpose, he said.

fungus-infested pickles and candied fruits were preserved in non-food grade drums while the use of non-food drums is strictly prohibited. Apart from that, the food business operator failed to present a food license and medical certificates to the raiding team. Raja Jahangir Anwar further said that the substandard and adulterated pickle was to be supplied to different hotels and local shops after packing, however, PFA ruined their unholy ambitions by taking timely action. He said that the use of fungus-infested pickles is injurious to human health.

Next PM, CM Punjab to be from PPP, claims Faisal

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party Central Punjab leader Faisal Mir called on PPP Parliamentarians President Asif Ali Zardari at Bilawal House on Friday.

After the meeting, he expressed his optimism that the next chief minister Punjab would be from the PPP after 1977. He claimed that PPP Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would be the next prime minister.

Police net nine drug peddlers, bootleggers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi police, in an action against suspected drug peddlers and bootleggers, conducted raids in different areas and rounded up nine accused on recovery of over two kg charras, 43 liters liquor and other items, said a police spokesman on Friday.

He informed that Bani police recovered 1210 grams of charras from the possession of Kamran while Sadiqabad police netted Ehtesham with 300 grams of charras. Wah Cantt police held Mansoor for having 110 grams of charras while Dharmial police netted Usman for carrying 540 grams of charras.

Women's role in water conservation highlighted

PESHAWAR (INP): Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) on Friday organized a Clean Campus Drive in collaboration with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University to highlight women's role in sanitation and water conservation.

According to a press release issued here, teachers and students from various departments of the university attended the seminar.

Stalls displaying awareness materials on water and sanitation were set up. Students staged tableaux and played videos they produced on the environmental hazards of non-biodegradable plastic waste with a message to replace it with biodegradable bags.

The hall was adorned

with banners inscribed with slogans on the importance of cleanliness, sanitation, and water conservation.

An awareness walk was organized at the end of the seminar, encouraging students to play their part in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).

Addressing the participants, chief executive officer Dr. Nasir highlighted women's role in water and sanitation and how a clean environment could transform their lives.

He also shed light on the importance of proper water usage, conservation, recycling of recyclable waste, and instilling cleanliness habits in their children from an early age.

They were made aware of WSSP operations, achievements so far.



HYDERABAD: Youngsters sliding down into a swimming pool to get relief from hot weather at Khisana Morji

Consumers face uphill battle against skyrocketing milk prices

KARACHI (INP): The dairy farmers in Karachi have recently announced an arbitrary increase in the price of milk, causing concern among the residents of the city. The price hike, set at Rs.10 rupees per liter, has been implemented by the dairy mafia without any official approval. This sudden increase in milk prices has left many citizens frustrated and struggling to cope with the rising cost of living.

In various areas of Karachi, milk is now being sold at a staggering Rs.220

per liter, which is forty rupees higher than the officially fixed price of Rs.180 per liter. Retailers, caught in the middle of this price surge, have shifted the blame onto the wholesalers, claiming that they are merely passing on the increased costs.

However, the citizens argue that with inflation already on the rise, this additional burden will make it even more challenging for them to make ends meet. The responsibility for enforcing the official price of milk lies with the Commissioner Karachi and his team.

Rescue 1122 rescued 139,574 victims in May

LAHORE (APP): Secretary Emergency Services Department Dr Rizwan Naseer said on Friday 139,574 victims were rescued while responding to 146,492 emergencies with an average response time of seven minutes across Punjab during the month of May 2023.

He said that out of 146,492 emergencies, Rescue responded 34,216 were road

traffic accidents, 91,358 medical emergencies, 2,588 fire incidents, 4,035 crime incidents, 103 drowning incidents, 97 structural collapses, 1,256 animal rescue and 12,839 miscellaneous operations in Punjab.

He expressed these views while presiding over monthly review meeting of all District Emergency Officers (DEOs) on zoom held at Emergency Services Department here.



LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

CM seeks plan for improving healthcare facilities

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has sought a plan from the health secretary within seven days for improving the healthcare facilities in major hospitals.

The plan will encompass measures for providing essential facilities as well as addressing repair and maintenance requirements to improve services.

The meeting, held under the chair of CM Mohsin Naqvi, was attended by the chairman P&D, secretary finance, health secretary, secretary C&W, chairman PITB, chief executive officer (CEO) Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab and others.

Minister for Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Dr Javed Akram participated through video-link.

UK Health Security Agency team visits Institute of Public Health

LAHORE (Online): The UK Health Security Agency mission, during its Pakistan tour, paid a visit to the Institute of Public Health (IPH), here on Friday.

According to sources, the mission members had a detailed discussion with Dean Professor Dr Zarfishan Tahir and her technical team about creating a robust system using modern information technology in terms of disease prevention, detection and response.

Dr. Zarfishan said Pakistan is a signatory to the International Health

Regulations (IHR) 2005 under which it is prime responsibility of the country to strengthen various technical areas of the health sector. She said capacity building of the staff should be done on modern lines while a comprehensive strategy to prevent, detect and respond should be adopted with reference to diseases and prevention of spread of epidemics in a timely manner. She said that the Health Security Agency of the UK was providing technical assistance to Pakistani institutions to strengthen the public health.

International News

China Ukraine envoy urges govt to 'stop sending weapons to the battlefield,' negotiate peace

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's Ukraine envoy called on other governments Friday to "stop sending weapons to the battlefield" and appealed for peace talks at a time when Washington and its European allies are ramping up supplies of missiles and tanks to Ukrainian forces trying to recapture Russian-occupied territory.

Li Hui said Russian and Ukrainian officials were open to peace negotiations, but he gave no indication they were any closer to happening.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government says it is neutral and wants to

serve as a mediator but has supported Moscow politically. Foreign analysts saw little chance of progress from Li's visits to the countries because neither side is ready to stop fighting, but sending an envoy gave Beijing an opportunity to expand its global diplomatic role. "China believes that if we really want to put an end to war, to save lives and realize peace, it is important for us to stop sending weapons to the battlefield, or else the tensions will only spiral up," Li told reporters.

China is the only major government that has good relations with both Russia and Ukraine and has

leverage as one of the biggest export markets for both. Xi's decision to send an envoy was welcomed by the Ukrainian government but prompted questions about China's motives after Beijing declared it had a "no limits" friendship with the Kremlin ahead of the February 2022 invasion. Beijing released a proposed peace plan in February, but Ukraine's allies insisted President Vladimir Putin must first withdraw Russian forces.

"China's goal is promoting peace talks and a cessation of hostilities," said Li, a former ambassador to Moscow.



US calls for UN meeting on North Korea's attempted satellite launch.

BRICS meet with 'friends' seeking closer ties amid push to expand bloc

Monitoring Desk
CAPE TOWN: Senior officials from more than a dozen countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, were in talks on forging closer links with the BRICS bloc of major emerging economies on Friday as it met to deepen ties and position itself as a counterweight to the West.

BRICS, which now consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is considering expanding its membership, and a growing number of countries have expressed interest in joining.

Once viewed as a loose association of disparate emerging economies,

BRICS has in recent years taken more concrete shape, driven initially by China and, since the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022, with added impetus from Russia.

In remarks opening Friday's discussions, host South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor spoke of the bloc as a champion of the developing world,

which she said was abandoned by wealthy states and global institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The world has faltered in cooperation. Developed countries have never met their commitments to the developing world and are trying to shift all respon-

sibility to the global South," Pandor said. Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros, Gabon, and Kazakhstan all sent representatives to Cape Town for so-called "Friends of BRICS" talks, an official programme showed.

Egypt, Argentina, Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau and Indonesia were participating virtually. Other countries echoed Pandor's condemnation of wealthy states. Democratic Republic of Congo's foreign minister said developed countries lacked the political will to promote collective peace and prosperity.

Taliban say foreign forces committed 'uncountable crimes' in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: The Taliban on Thursday said foreign forces had committed "uncountable crimes" during the 20-year war in Afghanistan after a former Australian soldier lost a defamation case over reports of executing Afghan civilians.

Taliban administration spokesperson Bilal Karimi said the incidents involved in the Australian court case were a "small part" of the many alleged crimes that took place and that they did not trust any court globally to follow them up.

Ben Roberts-Smith, a former member of Australia's elite Special Air Service Regiment, sued

three newspapers for 2018 reports that alleged he was involved in the murders of unarmed prisoners in Afghanistan.

Roberts-Smith denied the allegations and launched a multi-million-dollar defamation case in response.

But after two years of proceedings, Justice Anthony Beskano ruled that the papers had proven the bulk of their allegations to be "substantially true" and dismissed the case against them.

The defendants hailed the verdict as a major victory for media freedom in Australia, where defamation laws are often used to muzzle the press.



Macron and Scholz urged Kosovo to allow new elections in four northern municipalities.

US sanctions Iranian firm for helping government censor internet

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The U.S. imposed sanctions on an Iran-based technology firm on Friday for its role in facilitating the Iranian government's censorship of the internet as anti-government protests have swept the country since September.

A firm known as Arvan Cloud, its co-founders Pouya Pirhosseini and Farhad Fatemi, and a United Arab Emirates-based firm were all sanctioned for helping to facilitate the Iranian government's attempts to control and censor internet traffic. Internet disruptions were instituted after home-grown anger over the September death of Masha Amini, an Iranian-Kurdish

woman detained by the country's morality police, escalated into large-scale protests. U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control says Arvan Cloud provided interception services for the government, allowing Iranian authorities to control and censor incoming and outgoing traffic and surveil data on the servers. The firm also blocked websites at the request of Iran's Committee to Determine Instances of Criminal Content.

"Free and unrestricted access to information is a fundamental right of all peoples, including in Iran," said Brian E. Nelson, Treasury's under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.

Blinken says no Ukraine cease-fire without a peace deal that includes Russia's withdrawal

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that a cease-fire in the war in Ukraine could not be declared unless it was part of a "just and lasting" peace deal that included Russia's military withdrawal.

Blinken said that "a cease-fire that simply freezes current lines in place" and allowed Russian President Vladimir Putin "to consolidate control

over the territory he has seized, and rest, rearm, and reattack — that is not a just and lasting peace."

Russia must also pay a share of Ukraine's reconstruction and be held accountable for launching its full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022, Blinken said in a speech during a visit to Finland, which recently joined NATO and shares a long border with Russia.

Ukraine lifts air raid alerts, says downed more than 30 missiles and drones

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian authorities on Friday lifted air raid alerts across most of the nation, and officials in the capital Kyiv said defences appeared to have shot down more than 30 missiles and drones fired by Russia.

Moscow has launched around 20 separate missile and drone strikes against Ukrainian cities since the start of May.



Brics meet with 'friends' seeking closer ties amid push to expand bloc.

Monitoring Desk
BULBOACA: France's President Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Thursday urged Kosovo to allow new elections in four northern municipalities, amid renewed tensions with the area's Serbian population.

In response, Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani said she had told the European leaders that this would be possible under Kosovo law if the Serbian leadership in Belgrade did not encourage Serbs to boycott the poll.

The European leaders met Osmani and her Serbian

counterpart Aleksandar Vucic on the sidelines of the European Political Community summit in Moldova, hoping to head off further unrest in the region after recent clashes. "We have asked the two parties to organise new elections in these four municipalities as soon as possible, with an undertaking from Kosovo with participation in these elections in a clear manner on the part of the Serbian side," Macron said.

Kosovo is mainly populated by ethnic Albanians, but the Serbs who make up around six percent.

CIA head visited China in May, met counterparts - US official

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: CIA director William Burns visited China last month for talks with Chinese counterparts, a U.S. official said on Friday as the Biden administration seeks to boost communications with Beijing.

"Last month, Director Burns traveled to Beijing where he met with Chinese counterparts and emphasized the importance of maintaining open lines of communication in intelligence channels," the official told Reuters. The visit by the head of the U.S. intelligence agency, first reported by the Financial Times.

Govt approves Rs 1,100b development budget for next fiscal year: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said the government had approved Rs 1,100 billion development budget for the upcoming fiscal year aimed at achieving the required goals of economic growth.

Addressing a news conference here, he said out of the total budget, Rs 950 billion would be utilized under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2023-24) and Rs 150 billion under the public-private partnership to execute different development schemes.

Initially, he said, the Finance Ministry had proposed Rs 700 billion for the PSDP 2023-24 which were extremely insufficient. "So we made a written request to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to increase the amount of development budget to achieve the economic growth, and the PM has approved Rs 1,100 billion development budget."

In 2018, the minister said, he had presented a development budget of Rs 1,000 billion, and when the incumbent government came into power last year its size came down to Rs 550 billion. "Now after a period of five years there will be a development budget of Rs 1,100 billion, which reflects our priority for the national development."

Today, he said, the country was facing economic difficulties all because of the failed policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, which during its last year allowed \$ 84 billion import of luxury items and obliged friends for showing artificial growth, but the trade deficit mounted to \$ 50 billion.

"It was the turning point that pushed the country into the severe economic crisis that has eaten away all the foreign exchange reserves," he added.



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing a seminar on "The Role of Federal Insurance Ombudsman in the Development of Insurance Industry" at Governor House.

President urges insurance companies to expand services in health, agri sectors

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi, on Friday urged insurance companies to expand their services in health and agriculture sectors and utilise modern technologies for enhancing outreach to masses.

The quantum of insurance sector in national economy was much less than its potential and in comparison to other countries of the region, he noted and stressed upon all the stakeholders to work hard for creating their good will among the public besides

imparting awareness to masses for achieving exponential growth.

The president was addressing a seminar, titled "Role of ombudsman in development of insurance sector" organised by Federal Insurance Ombudsman secretariat here at Sindh Governor House.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that government was providing social safety and assistance through its social safety net, public health services and in shape of compensation in case of natural calamities

and accidents but more initiatives were required to cover the entire population of the country.

He said that health expenditure was a major concern for people particularly the lower income group and there was a vast potential of health insurance services in the country as those services could not only bridge the existing gaps but also be of great value in time of need.

Emphasizing the need of insurance services for agriculture sector, the presi-

dent observed that agriculture was another important sector of economy that was under served in lieu of insurance services and products while progress with regard to provision of agriculture insurance services was sluggish.

Rapidly developing information and communication technologies should be utilised to expand the outreach and ensuring the access of masses to the services while doors must be kept open for receiving the complaints and feed back of the public.

Resolution of business community's issues top budgetary priority: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Friday said the government attached a top priority to addressing the issues of business community for economic growth.

During a meeting with a delegation of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajirun headed by Mohammad Naeem Mir, the minister said the government would ensure all possible assistance to the business community through introducing a business and people friendly budget for the Fiscal Year 2023-24.

He appreciated the budgetary proposals given by the delegation.

On the occasion, the delegates apprised the min-

ister about the challenges confronting them, particularly with regard to taxation. They gave proposals to address those challenges in the upcoming budget.

They also assured the minister of the dedication and determination of the business community to support the government in bringing economic growth and stability.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, RRM (Reforms & Resource Mobilization Commission) Chairman Ashfaq Yousif Tola, and the Federal Board of Revenue chairman and senior officers.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Civil Society are shouting slogans during Takreem-e-Shuhada-e-Pakistan rally at Jinnah Avenue to show solidarity with Pak Army.

Pakistan, Georgia affirm desire to explore cooperation in multiple areas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and Georgia affirmed their desire to explore mutually beneficial areas of cooperation with a special focus on trade and investment, tourism, education and information technology. The bilateral relations were discussed in the inaugural session of Pakistan-Georgia Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) held in Tbilisi on Thursday.

Foreign Secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Alexander Khvtisashvili led the respective sides. Ambassador of Pakistan to Georgia and Azerbaijan and senior officials from both sides were also present.

The two sides exchanged views on the state of play of bilateral relations. Both sides termed the inaugural session a stepping stone for diversified cooperation.

Noting the investor-friendly policies of the two countries, the foreign secretary highlighted immense potential for bilateral trade and investment between Pakistan and Georgia.

The two sides also formalized the bilateral political consultation mechanism with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

It was agreed that the second session of the BPC would be held in Islamabad on mutually agreed dates.

The foreign secretary also called on Foreign Minister of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili.

Welcoming the inaugural round of consultations, the two sides expressed hope that it would lay the foundation of multifaceted cooperation between the two sides.

Separate meetings with the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia were also held.

The foreign secretary also attended an interactive event with prominent business representatives of Georgian companies where he underscored the need for rigorous B2B networking to unlock the potential for cooperation between the Pakistan and Georgia.



ISLAMABAD: Students of Islamabad College for Girls F6/2 poses for group photo with chief guest President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Principal Prof Sabah Faisal in launching ceremony of Entrepreneurs Program for Students.

NIH, Japan-FETP organize online session on disease surveillance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan-Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), National Institutes of Health (NIH) Islamabad in collaboration with Japan-FETP, organized a special online session on the "Role of FETPs in Disease Surveillance and Prevention / Control of Diseases".

This session was originally initiated with good communication and collaboration between the Pakistan Center for Disease Control (CDC) of NIH and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad during the challenging time of COVID-19.

The session aimed to highlight the crucial role of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs) in disease surveillance, prevention, and control. FETPs are basically designed to train public health professionals in the field of epidemiology and enable them to support the development and enhancement of surveillance systems for the timely detection and reporting of diseases, said a press release issued by the Japan Embassy in Islamabad.

Hiroshi Kikawada, a member of the House of Representatives of Japan Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and former State Minister of the Cabinet Office in charge of Policies against COVID-19 was the chief guest of the session. Fellows from the FETPs, health experts, and partners also attended. In his video message, Kikawada, stated "We have faced a pandemic of COVID-19 for more than three years and have understood that infectious diseases have changed our economics and societies dramatically and overcoming infectious diseases has become one of the most important issues of the human beings". He also said that Japan has dealt with COVID-19 successfully. Japan has contributed to universal healthcare with ODA for a long time and through these experiences, Japan can play a more active role in medical areas.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary delegation of Balochistan Awami Party meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja

Pirzada rejects Western media reports about HR abuses against May 9 miscreants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Friday took exception to the Western media reports about human rights violations with regard to the arrests of miscreants involved in the May 9 mayhem.

The minister, in a statement, said that like every civilized country in the world, action against the May 9 culprits was a legal requirement and also a matter of national security for Pakistan. He said that on May 9, the "PTI [Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf] goons attacked national and private properties, sensitive military installations and state symbols; set ambulances on fire after unloading patients, and burnt schools, hospitals and memorials of the martyrs".

"For the desecration of the monuments and burning of the Jinnah House, and Radio Pakistan and its rare historical heritage, these goons are under investigation and will be punished according to the law of land," he stated.

The minister said such a crime was unpardonable not only in Pakistan but across the globe, citing the attacks on Capitol Hill in the United States and the London riots were punished which was not termed human rights violations by the Western media.



LAHORE: Indian fishermen show their identity cards at Lahore Railway Station after Pakistan authorities released them, allegedly arrested for trespassing into its territorial waters.

IDA in support of stakeholders committed for Capital's development: Yasir Ilyas

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Developers Association (IDA) Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan has said that the IDA is a community led organization comprising of developers and stakeholders involved in the development of Islamabad.

He stated this while addressing a conference organized by IDA with the builders and developers of the capital to discuss proposals for the upcoming budget in addition to working on a policy framework with CDA with a primary focus on issues related to bylaws.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that IDA is dedicated to promote sustainable and efficient development practices that contribute to the growth and prosperity of the Federal Capital. It was highlighted that 236K related to withholding tax on sale and purchase of property has had a detrimental impact on property transactions due to the additional cost levied on non-filers.

For sellers it has doubled to 4% and for non-filer purchasers it has gone up to 7%. He said, "Capital gain tax period should also be reduced to 4 years from 6. Policy related to section 7E which applies taxes on deemed income on additional property has further led to a reduction in the purchase of properties due to the additional tax burden. This has deterred both investors and end users from acquiring additional properties and overseas remittances would also decline further since most of those funds were also being invested in property." The IDA President said that CVT on foreign assets would discourage people from declaring their assets or becoming tax residents in Pakistan. Super tax on large scale manufacturing has increased the cost of local materials in addition to the hefty custom duties and sales taxes plus GST levied by the government.

Domestic employees, tenants' registration in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The police campaign titled "Knock the Door" is in full swing to register the tenants as well as domestic servants.

According to the police spokesman on Friday, "The police teams are conducting door-to-door visits to ensure their registration."

The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) visited 286 houses in the Karachi company police area during the last 24 hours and registered 183 domestic servants.

"The purpose of the campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital," the spokesman added.

He said this exercise would help to keep a vigilant eye on miscreants and suspects.

Islamabad police recover 10kg heroin

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Tarnol police station has arrested a drug seller and recovered 10 kilogram heroin and 125 gram ice from his possession.

According to police, a massive crackdown against drug suppliers is underway and effective action is being ensured against such anti-social elements.

One of the team from Tarnol police station arrested an accused Imran and recovered 10 kilogram heroin and 125 gram ice from his possession.

Case has been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. Police team is also raiding different hideouts of the drug peddlers.

Islamabad police officials have appreciated the performance of Tarnol police team and announced commendation certificates and cash rewards.

They said that Islamabad Capital Police will not leave any stone unturned to curb the menace of drug.

19-member AJK ruling parliamentary group reposes full confidence in leadership of PM Anwaar

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): A meeting of AJK ruling parliamentary party's members of the like-minded group was held in the State Metropolis on Friday with Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq in chair.

The group, comprising 19 members, reposed full confidence in the leadership of the Prime Minister.

The participants of the meeting were unanimous on the issue of the expansion of the cabinet and the increasing number of ministers. Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq said that good governance was the hallmark of our government. He said that timely completion of the ongoing development projects and resolving the problems being faced by the ordinary citizens at their doorsteps were his government's top priorities.

He said that the production sector would be given

top priority in the upcoming budget. He said that the bureaucracy has also been asked to propose innovative ideas to make the next budget people-friendly. He said that the people have attached high hopes with the government.

"All possible efforts will be made to meet the people's expectations", he said. "The government is keen to improve education and health sectors", the PM said, adding that concrete steps would be taken to ensure quality education in schools, colleges and universities. "Funds will be allocated to ensure quality treatment facilities to people in all state-owned health care facilities at district and Tehsil level", he said. He said that the members of the assembly should also put forth their suggestions and mark the areas where they consider it necessary to allocate resources for public welfare.

Two environmental samples tested positive for poliovirus

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Polio Laboratory, National Institute of Health (NIH) has confirmed that two environmental samples collected from the Peshawar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have tested positive for wild poliovirus.

According to the lab, the wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been found in sewage samples collected from Naray Khwar and Larana collection sites on May 9 and 16 May 16, respectively.

It added the isolated viruses are genetically linked to the virus cluster circulating in the neighbouring province of Afghanistan. Federal Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel has said that the two endemic countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan are united in their fight against polio and both countries will not rest until they eradicate it.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Lawyers from Punjab Bar Council called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar.

Ministry reviews Hajj operations, pledges improved services for pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): An important meeting was convened at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, focusing on the evaluation of Hajj operations and addressing the challenges faced by pilgrims the other day.

Chaired by Federal Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani, the meeting saw the participation of key officials including the Director General Hajj, Director

Makkah, Director Madinah, Director MCO, Director of Moavineen, and Director Monitoring.

Despite being conducted remotely via Zoom, the meeting proved instrumental in fostering collaboration and devising strategies to enhance the Hajj experience for all.

Under scrutiny of Minister Senator Talha Mahmood, the performance of various departments involved in Hajj operations was meticulously reviewed.

Valuable insights were shared by the minister, who had gathered information from multiple sources. To address the raised concerns, Senator Talha penned a comprehensive letter to the Director General Hajj, emphasizing the need for immediate action.

During the meeting, a thorough discussion took place, delving into the intricacies of the issues at hand. The officers assigned to relevant fields were probed regarding their responsibilities.

Notably, the directors stationed in Saudi Arabia presented detailed briefings on the performance of their respective departments, shedding light on their ongoing efforts to assist and serve the pilgrims.

In a bid to provide better services and rectify any deficiencies, Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani issued instructions to all officials present. He emphasized the importance of fostering stronger mutual relations and leaving no stone unturned in resolving the challenges faced by pilgrims.

Police to deploy additional traffic staff at under construction roads

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer on Friday conducted a special inspection at under-construction Margalla Road and directed to deploy additional staff at construction sites as well as rush areas for smooth traffic flow.

Following directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer reviewed the traffic diversions imposed due to the ongoing construction work on Margalla Road.

On this occasion, he directed the removal of bottlenecks creating hindrances in the smooth flow of traffic and asked Zonal DSPs to ensure deployment of the additional traffic staff at rush areas and road construction points for the convenience of citizens. Dr Mustafa Tanveer said that traffic flow was affected during office hours especially and it should be maintained during these times. He said Islamabad Capital Police had prepared a modern scientific revolutionary plan to deal with traffic problems and the road users would benefit.



Senator Walid Iqbal, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House Islamabad.