

# Independent

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Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs meeting of the National Economic Council in Islamabad.

## Approves Rs 2.709 trillion ADP for FY 2023-24 NEC approves Rs 248 billion development budget for Balochistan

PM says govt to bring about Green Revolution to achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture: Decides to shut markets across country by 8pm to conserve energy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government was launching a Green Revolution 2.0 to make the country achieve self-sufficiency in the agriculture field. The prime minister, who chaired the meeting of the National Economic Council here, said the government was taking all-out

measures to innovate the agriculture sector to enhance the production and per acre yield. He said economic development topped the government's priorities for which it was investing in education, health, modern infrastructure, and technology sectors. The NEC approved a reviewed Public Sector De-

velopment Program 2022-23 and national development budget for fiscal 2023-24 with an outlay of Rs2709 billion. Under the development program, the center would spend Rs1150 billion including Rs200 through public-private partnership and Rs950 billion of PSDP. The total provincial development budget would

be Rs 1559 billion. This includes Rs 426 billion for Punjab and Rs 268 billion for KP, for a period of four months as both the provinces were awaiting general elections and being ruled by caretaker setups. The NEC approved Rs 617 billion development budget for Sindh and Rs 248 billion for Balochistan.

## CJP is constitutional post: No one else can use charge of chief justice on basis of presumptions: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked Chief Justice of Pakistan is a constitutional post and no one else can use the charge of chief justice on the basis of presumptions. He further observed chief justice was available in this case who was not informed about the constitution of commission. It was not in the knowledge of CJP and commission was formed. He further observed the Attorney General (AG) should first understand law before reading the references of courts decisions. AG should tell on what basis he presumed that there is conflict be-

tween three judges among us. The second important issue is independence of judiciary. Ascertain it if the twitter handle is operating from within or outside the country. Did the government ascertain by using its resources audio's recording is being made from where and how. Who is doing all this. The constitutional petitions against formation of audio leaks inquiry commission came up for hearing before a five members bench of SC presided over by CJP Umar Ata Bandial here Tuesday. It was told by AG that verification whether these audios are false or true has

yet to be made by federal government. The CJP remarked what a beautiful procedure it is and what justice has been done with the judiciary. First the judges were insulted on these audios and then said "we get do the verification of veracity of these videos now. He remarked question is this who planted these audios. Has government tried to know it who is doing this. AG told the court one among leaked audios relates to mother in law of CJP. Federal government has just constituted commission on it so far. Commission has been constituted only to ascertain facts.

## Pakistan, Iraq agree to strengthen ties in diverse fields

BAGHDAD (APP): Pakistan and Iraq have agreed to further strengthen their bilateral ties in diverse fields. The understanding was reached during meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and head of Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Sheikh Dr Hamoudi in Baghdad today. They discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in trade and investment and efforts for peace and stability of the region and beyond. Meanwhile Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Speaker of Iraq's Parliament Mohamed al-Halbousi on Tuesday discussed the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Iraq. During a meeting held in Baghdad, the two sides also noted that the cooperation between the parliaments would further

strengthen the brotherly relations between the two countries, said a press release issued here. The foreign minister said that the high level parliamentary exchanges between the two countries were significant which would be helpful in taking advantages of the each other's experiences. Separately, the foreign minister also held a meeting with Iraq's Hikmat Party President Ammar al-Hakeem. They discussed the political ties between the two countries and other issues of mutual interest. The foreign minister termed the high-level political linkages between the two countries as highly important. For the promotion of public to public relations, the political contacts between the two countries were vital, he added.



President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 3rd Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) IT Excellence Recognition ceremony, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

## Redefined priorities, swift decision-making inevitable for development: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has said that the redefined priorities and swift decision-making were inevitable to make Pakistan join the bandwagon of the fast-developing world. The president, addressing the 3rd LCCI IT Excellence Recognition Ceremony in Islamabad on Tuesday said that the creation of talent and investment in human capital was the fastest route to achieve progress. It was organised by the Lahore Chamber of

Commerce and Industries, which marked the distribution of awards among the excellent IT startups and companies. The president, impressed by the remarkable progress of artificial intelligence, also shared with the audience a comprehensive presentation on exponential growth in AI prepared by ChatGPT within just six minutes which otherwise could take days or even weeks. He said information technology was the only sector in which Pakistan

could achieve excellence by investing in human capital as in the modern era, the human intellect was far more important than natural resources. He said the establishment of IT industry took considerably lesser time than establishing a brick-and-mortar industrial unit. Exemplifying the process of genome sequencing, the president said IT sector provided exponential growth, thus creating numerous opportunities to excel.

## US engages with Pakistan on all issues, desires to see it prosper: State Dept.

WASHINGTON (APP): The United States gets in touch with Pakistan directly on the issues that are of importance to Washington and also to broader regional security and stability, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel has said. The spokesperson was responding to a question about the recent political developments in Pakistan at his regular press briefing on Monday. "We, of course, want to see a prosperous and stable Pakistan," Patel said, add-

ing that was in the interest of US-Pakistan relations. The U.S., he said, was engaged with Pakistan directly on several issues. The spokesperson was also asked about Dr Afia Siddiqui, the Pakistani neuroscientist who has been in US jail for over 20 years, and was recently allowed to meet her sister for the first time in over 20 years. He said he would refer the issue to relevant law enforcement authorities. "I don't have anything to offer from up here as it relates to that".



MOSCOW: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani held delegation level talks with Speaker of the Russian Federation Council I.V Matvienko.

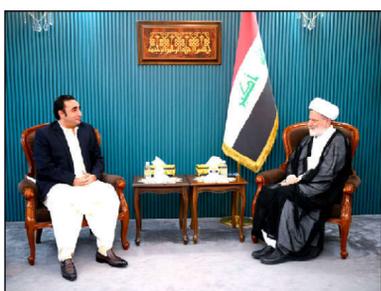
## Shah Mahmood Qureshi released from Adiala jail

RAWALPINDI (INP): Vice Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was released from Adiala Jail Rawalpindi on Tuesday. Earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench ordered the immediate release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairperson Shah Mahmood Qureshi. High court judge Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz heard the case and declared the detention of PTI Vice Chairperson Shah Mahmood Qureshi as 'illegal'.

## Pakistan, Russia resolved to further cement bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia on Tuesday reiterated the resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties between both countries by enhancing bilateral cooperation in various areas including economy, trade, finance and energy and education. The resolve was expressed during a high-level meeting between Chairman Senate of Pakistan Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and the Speaker of the Russian Federation Council I.V Matvienko, said a press release issued here. The Chairman Senate is on a four day visit to Russia on the invitation of

Speaker of the Russian Federation Council. The visit constitutes celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Russia. During the meeting, both sides emphasized the importance of parliamentary exchanges to further enhance bilateral relations between Pakistan and Russia. Chairman Senate briefed the Russian side on regional security situation and highlighted the Kashmir dispute and called for its resolution as per the relevant UNSC resolutions.



IRAQ: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a meeting with head of Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Dr Sheikh Humam Hamoudi during his visit to Iraq for bilateral relations in various fields of cooperation.

## CM, Home Minister slam killing, seek report: Senior lawyer gunned down by unknown armed men in Quetta city

Independent Report QUETTA: A senior lawyer of Supreme Court, Abdul Razzaq Shar was brutally shot dead by unknown armed men on the main Airport Road here on Tuesday morning. According to the police, Abdul Razzaq Shar was on his way by car to the courts from his residence located in Chiltan Scheme when he was approached by the armed men and opened indiscriminate fire on him. He sustained serious bullet wounds and died on the spot before he was taken to the hospital. However, his body was carried to the civil hospital for le-

gal formalities and post-mortem. Soon after the brutal killing, the area police and rescue teams reached the spot. While on the other hand, relatives and colleagues of the senior lawyer also reached the civil hospital, on hearing the tragic news of his murder. A senior police official informed that the cold-blooded murder of Abdul Razzaq Shar is being thoroughly investigated from different angles and aspects. Meanwhile, the body of Abdul Razzaq Shar was moved to his residence from the civil hospital mortuary.

## Earthquake of magnitude 4 jolts Swat, Malakand, surroundings

ISLAMABAD (INP): An earthquake mild intensity jolted Swat, Malakand and surrounding areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Tuesday. People of the areas where the quake was felt rushed out of their homes, shops and other buildings in panic reciting verses from Holy Quran. The National Seismic Monitoring Centre, Islamabad said that the magnitude of earthquake was four on Richter scale, its depth was 125 kilometres and epicentre was the border region of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

## Islamabad Capital Police pays tribute to Martyrs & Ghazis

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police organized a spectacular ceremony at the Jinnah Convention Center to pay tribute to the courageous martyrs and ghazis who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The event was attended by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Secretary Interior Ali Murtaza, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Noor ul Amin Mengal, law enforcement agencies officials, martyred families, civil society members, journalists and trainee recruits of Islamabad Capital Police. The ceremony commenced with an address by CPO Law and Order Shakir Dawar who expressed heartfelt gratitude to all attendees for honoring the event with their presence. He also highlighted the invaluable contributions made by the martyrs and ghazis who stressed the significance of their sacrifices in upholding

peace, safeguarding the economy, and maintaining social order. Speaking on behalf of the business community, the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce acknowledged the role of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and other officers and jawans in organizing the ceremony. He commended the Islamabad capital police for their unwavering dedication in ensuring the security and well-being of the citizens, particularly during times of heightened crime. The Chamber President urged the newly recruited police officers to follow the exemplary footsteps of their seniors, emphasizing the importance of serving the community and upholding the values for which the martyrs laid down their lives. Furthermore, Secretary Interior Ali Murtaza emphasized that such

events not only serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by the martyrs but also reaffirm the government's commitment to support and console their families. He highlighted that the government deeply appreciates the ultimate sacrifice made by these brave officers and remains united as one nation and one institution. In a touching gesture, honorary DSP of Islamabad capital police and renowned cricketer, Haris Rauf, expressed his gratitude to Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan for extending the invitation to the event. Rauf acknowledged the significant role played by the police in ensuring the safety and security of the players, especially during a time when international cricket was not taking place in Pakistan. He pledged his unwavering support to the children of the martyrs, promising to provide assistance on the cricket field whenever needed. During the ceremony the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir, expressed gratitude to the nation and paid tribute to the courageous martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Pakistan. Addressing a diverse gathering of citizens, Dr. Akbar Nasir emphasized the significance of maintaining and cherishing the hard-won freedom.

to vote for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the June 8 by-polls in LA-15, Bagh-II as "the future of Pakistan belongs to it". Speaking at an election gathering of PML-N candidate Mushtaq Minhas, he said the changing circumstances were favourable for PML-N, and it would resume the journey towards development - which was halted in July 2017 with the "unjustified" ousting of Nawaz Sharif - shortly after securing a two-thirds majority in the general elections. Sanaulah, who is also the president of PML-N's Punjab chapter, claimed that whenever the country was in deep waters, PML-N came forward to steer it out of crises.

Sanaulah urged the people of Azad Jammu & Kashmir to vote for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the June 8 by-polls in LA-15, Bagh-II as "the future of Pakistan belongs to it". Speaking at an election gathering of PML-N candidate Mushtaq Minhas, he said the changing circumstances were favourable for PML-N, and it would resume the journey towards development - which was halted in July 2017 with the "unjustified" ousting of Nawaz Sharif - shortly after securing a two-thirds majority in the general elections. Sanaulah, who is also the president of PML-N's Punjab chapter, claimed that whenever the country was in deep waters, PML-N came forward to steer it out of crises.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Populist budget?

There couldn't have been more challenging times than the present ones for preparing the national budget. The uncertainties related to elections and foreign funding required to cover the massive external account financing gap of about \$25bn during the next financial year, amid deepening domestic political crises and unfavourable global economic circumstances, mean that our fiscal authorities would be budgeting this year on hope rather than tangles.

Add to that the strong compulsion the PML-N-led government must be feeling to appease voters as the monthly price inflation hits another record high of 38pc days before Budget 2024, and it becomes obvious that the present rulers really have their work cut out for them before the next general polls.

It will not be surprising if the Shehbaz Sharif dispensation decides to give a 'populist' budget, including a large fiscal stimulus in the shape of development allocations to recoup some of its lost political capital. But this will be disastrous for an economy on the brink of default.

The government has already choked the economy to avoid a default as foreign funding dries up thanks to slumping relations with the IMF.

A populist — or what Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has described as a "welfare-oriented, pro-investment and business-friendly" — budget will be fraught with the risk of Pakistan being pushed deeper into economic depression and away from multilateral and bilateral lenders.

With the country confronting stagflation — marked by flattening economic growth, soaring unemployment and spiking inflation — there has never been a more compelling case for a budget that focuses on fiscal, governance and structural reforms for longer-term economic recovery and sustainability.

Pakistan needs foreign financing, including loan rollovers, of more than \$77bn to meet its external debt payments over the next three years. That will not be possible without the IMF on board. A fiscally irresponsible budget can make a new deal with the Fund even more difficult.

Domestic revenue resources also remain scarce — they are insufficient to cover debt-servicing costs, let alone finance development, defence, salaries, pensions, etc.

The upcoming budget will be more a test of the government's resolve to stay the course and restructure the economy to steer it through uncertain conditions rather than provide temporary relief to people and businesses for short-term political gains.

Sadly, the indications so far are that the government is more likely to follow the fiscally imprudent path rather than follow through with the reforms it has promised its lenders to ensure longer-term economic stability.

### The next monsoon



Naseer Memon

With the monsoons approaching, there is reason to feel concerned. Preoccupied with the political melodrama, few of us recall the plight of the millions of flood-affected. Their tribulations after last year's calamitous deluge, especially in Sindh, have not ended and the rainy season is once again looming. Although weather pundits expect a drier monsoon in southern Pakistan this year, climate change is all about extreme and unpredictable weather events.

Rescue and relief are the two most important pillars of any disaster-response strategy. Last year, both were lacklustre, and displayed four main gaps. There was no early warning and no transport arrangements to evacuate stranded families; pumping machines were mostly non-functional and unable to drain rainwater; and relief camps couldn't be mobilised fast enough to be able to provide for shelter, food, water and sanitation initially.

The number of displaced people mounted every day and the administration was unable to cope. Local philanthropists, relatives, friends and a few patches of dry elevated road and dykes were the last resort for the uprooted. It was only belatedly that government departments, international NGOs, religious charities and some compassionate elected representatives acted. The towns of Johi, Mehar, Dadu, Bhan Sye-da-bad, Jhudo, Digri and Umerkot in Sindh were saved through coordinated efforts led by local communities with the

assistance of elected representatives and the irrigation department. Still, over 10m end-usered a nightmarish situation. Sindh lost more than 1,000 people, around 2m houses, 450,000 cattle heads and 3.7m acres of crop land. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment report revealed that poverty in Sindh would increase by between 8.9 and 9.7 percentage points. Of the total loss and damage sustained, Sindh bore the brunt (72 per cent).

The Sindh government, with meagre federal support and international aid, is undertaking reconstruction and rehabilitation in the affected areas. Major breaches and relief cuts in the flood protection network and roads have been plugged and dykes improvised. However, communities in Mehar taluka (Dadu) are anxious about the unrepaired breaches of the Suprio bund. Parts of Thari Mirwah in Khairpur Nathan Shah, Odeero Lal in Matari and some other areas are suffering from protracted inundation.

Enhancing the drainage capacity of the Manchar lake from 10,000 to 52,000 cusecs through the under-construction Aral head regulator and the reinforcement of the Manchar Containing Bund are significant initiatives of the World Bank-financed Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project of the provincial government. The reconstruction of houses and livelihood restoration projects are at an early stage. But, if properly implemented, these projects can generate climate-resilient infrastructure in rural areas, where over half the katcha houses and a rickety community infrastructure are victims of climate shocks.

Before the onset of the next monsoon, district-level flood contingency plans must be developed and implemented through meaningful engagement

with local stakeholders. The plan should include preparedness for emergency evacuation, well-equipped relief camps, food and medicine stockpiles, unobstructed municipal and irrigation drains, functional pumping stations with power back-up, and arrangements for people needing special focus, such as pregnant and lactating women, newborns and toddlers, the elderly, the disabled and socially ostracised segments. These short-term measures can help if disaster returns, although sustainable solutions need long-term measures.

Sindh is a vast sink for upst-ream flows. Because of its flat topography, it needs a storm-water drain network on both sides of the Indus. This is a complex task, as major irrigation effluent drains like the LBOD and RBOD have not delivered. Torrential flows from the catchment area of the Kirthar hills in Sindh and Balochistan need a multi-dimensional flood management plan that includes small reservoirs, relief channels connected to the Indus and the safe diversion of floodwaters to the river via Manchar. As a first step, the capacity and geographic coverage of these drains should be increased.

Blocked natural waterways are another menace. Canals, roads, villages, cropland and encroachments have clogged natural flow paths. While everyone wants these cleared, the road to remove these obstructions is itself stymied. Strong political will is required to dilate the waterways. Most importantly, new public and private infrastructure should have resilience parameters. Settlements, houses, schools, dykes, roads, hospitals, etc, need climate-resilient engineering and sociology. Finally, local bodies have to be empowered to act as first responders to disaster. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Malnutrition woes



Navaira Ali Bangash

Malnutrition, or poor nutrition, emerges when one's diet does not contain the right amount of nutrients. Poor nutrition can be broadly categorised as 'undernutrition' and 'over-nutrition'. In most developing countries, like Pakistan, malnutrition usually exists as an inability to meet standard nutritional targets due to the scarcity of food generally available in the country.

Young children and pregnant or breastfeeding women are the main category of people prone to malnutrition in most of South Asia. The deficiency of micronutrients leads to complications during pregnancy, and later, malnourished newborns. Increased iron needs during these periods and decreased iron intake and absorption appear to be the most significant causes.

According to the National Nutrition Survey 2018 (NNS 2018), 40.2 per cent of children under five years of age in the country are stunted, while 17.7pc are wasted. Other effects of malnutrition are poor physical and cognitive development, impaired growth, frequent illnesses, fatigue, shortness of breath, poor school performance and reduced capacity to work even later in life. Malnutrition is thus one of our most pressing challenges. Disasters compound the problem of malnutrition, as seen in the aftermath of last year's floods.

Moreover, according to the Pakistan Nutrition Humanitarian Overview 2022, the country has a global acute malnutrition

rate of 17.7pc, exceeding the emergency threshold. Conditions such as drought and famine affect five million people in Sindh and Balochistan.

The most common deficiencies are those of iron, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, zinc and folic acid. Iron deficiency affects children the most in the first two years of life. Among its many consequences are anaemia, low birthweight and poor weight gain.

The NNS 2018 also confirms that micronutrient deficiencies are rampant in Pakistani children. Iron deficiency anaemia was, according to the survey, most common in children between six to 59 months. Overall, 49.1pc of children in the country are iron deficient.

Malnutrition and food insecurity have become a crippling challenge despite multiple national interventions over the years. What starts out as a seemingly less serious condition in children, turns out to be one of the most serious health conditions among adults in underdeveloped nations. No doubt iron deficiency in children deserves far more attention than it currently garners. One way to raise awareness of the consequences of malnutrition, including iron deficiency, is to highlight the economic losses incurred. The country pays heavily for a condition that, through active policymaking and changes to existing plans, can be tackled in the earlier stages of life, and at least stem the speed of a nosediving GDP.

In a report — a collaboration between the nutrition section of the Ministry of Planning and the UN's World Food Programme — WFP consultant Jack Bagriansky has shared some perturbing facts. The cost of the lost future workforce in Pakistan due to underweight children, wasting and micronutrient deficiency is

estimated at \$2.24 billion per year. Cognitive deficits derived from childhood stunting, anaemia and iodine deficiency disorders will also result in reduced future adult productivity, which is valued at a Net Present Value of \$3.7bn per year.

Pakistan's economy relies heavily on agriculture as well as manual labour. The report indicates that anaemia in men and women who are engaged in agriculture and manual labour will lower their economic output by \$657 million per year.

Pakistan is unfortunately going through extremely tough times, with a nightmarish scenario looming on the horizon. The economic repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, the destruction of the recent floods and an uncertain political climate make the situation worse. Tough decisions, farsighted policy-making and reforms in the existing strategies are the need of the hour.

Large-scale food fortification as well as fortification of widely consumed food is considered a medium- to long-term helpful strategy in increasing regular consumption of essential nutrients. Programmes like the Food Fortification Programme are playing a critical role in supporting industry to adequately fortify wheat flour and edible oil and ghee in Pakistan. We are fortunate enough to witness the breakthrough referred to as 'iron-plus', the improved iron source that enhances the absorption of iron thrice as compared to normal iron sources. It is a precious opportunity for underdeveloped countries like Pakistan to eradicate malnutrition in the country. This venture will require a joint effort by the government, the food industry and, last but not least, informed masses to cultivate hope for future generations. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### PM for inclusion of mega incentives for IT sector in fiscal budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed relevant authorities to include mega incentives for the Information Technology sector in the fiscal budget 2023-24 to boost country's IT export.

Chairing a high-level meeting on promotion of the IT sector, he directed to prepare a big package for the sector in the upcoming fiscal budget.

The prime minister decided to introduce fixed tax regime for the sector in

the budget and also constituted a committee on it, besides directing the body to submit its recommendations immediately, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting also accorded approval in principle for providing special incentives to new business start-ups in the sector.

Special concessions for promotion of business and trade through modern technology were also approved.

During the meeting, it was also decided to take the initiatives that were crucial to encourage youth for starting their own businesses.

The prime minister approved a major decision of creating special training IT zones for promoting entrepreneurship.

He said that the government would spend huge amount on the training of youth in the sector.

Currently, a total of 45,000 young people across the country were

being trained in the sector, he added.

The prime minister further said that in the upcoming fiscal budget, the government would distribute 1,00,000 laptops among the youth on merit basis.

During the previous tenure of the PML-N government, they had distributed laptops among the country's youth and by utilizing this facility, the young people brought foreign reserves during the Covid pandemic, he observed.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on budget proposals regarding IT and Telecom Sector.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali handing over cheque of Rs. 100 million to FPCCI Peshawar Branch. Caretaker Provincial Ministers and representatives of business community are also present

#### Khurram Dastagir says:

### Power sector being made consumer friendly through implementation of AMI

FAISALABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan on Tuesday inaugurated Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) cell at computer centre of the Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco) headquarters and termed it a revolutionary step to enable the company as well as consumers simultaneously for accessing to real-time monitoring of meter data.

According to a press release issued by the Fesco, the minister said that the power sector was being made consumer-friendly through implementation of the state-of-the-art technology of the AMI. He said the AMI

would not only help to control electricity theft and technical losses, but would also play a pivotal role in eliminating over-billing. The AMI would also be helpful in fault tracing and immediate restoration of power supply in case of power failure, he added.

During the briefing, Chief Executive Officer Fesco Engr Bashir Ahmed & DG (IT) Abdul Hayee said that due to real-time provision of complete information regarding the usage of electricity on smart mobiles and computers of the consumer, there would be an end to wastage of electricity due to effective control of the consumer's electricity usage times and bills. They said the Fesco was

replacing all industrial and agricultural electricity meters with its own resources under a phase manner to provide better service to its consumers and more than 6,000 consumers had been shifted to this technology so far.

The Fesco chief said that the establishment of AMI section would escalate and improve performance of the project and all functions related to the AMI would be possible under one roof.

Meanwhile, the CEO briefed the federal minister about performance of the company and said that there was no single power transformer overload of the Fesco jurisdiction.

### Naveed shares Pakistan's investment potential with leading firms

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Naveed Qamar held a meeting with the leading investment firms in London and shared with them the investment potential of Pakistan in various fields of the economy.

High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan and Commerce Additional Secretary, Ahsan Ali Mangi accompanied the minister in the meeting, according to a press statement issued by the commerce ministry here Tuesday.

The investment firms deal primarily in equity

financing, fintech, startup and venture capital funds, it added.

The Minister highlighted the significant economic reforms undertaken by the government to enhance the ease of doing business and ensure a secure and profitable environment for investors. Minister Qamar provided a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's key investment sectors, including energy, infrastructure development, manufacturing, agriculture, information technology, and financial services.

### NPO to assist industries' ministry to improve productivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Industries and Production has launched a development project to improve the productivity of the industrial, manufacturing, services and education sectors through the assistance of the National Productivity Organization (NPO), its Chief Executive Officer, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry said on

Tuesday. The NPO would train the stakeholders to increase productivity and make them productivity specialists in their sectors concerned as it had been accredited the status of certification body by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Japan first time for the period of four years, the NAP CEO told a press conference.

### China to work with Pakistan to boost bilateral trade through land transportation: Wenbin

BEIJING (APP): China on Tuesday welcomed quality agricultural products from Pakistan to enter its market and stands ready to

continue to work with Pakistan to boost bilateral trade through land transportation.

As all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan have engaged in close cooperation in trade and other fields, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang

Wenbin said in response to a question raised by APP about import of seafood through land route.

Last week, Pakistan first-ever seafood cargo container arrived in Kashgar city of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region through Karakoram Highway.

This is the first time that seafood containers from Pakistan have been transported by road from Karachi to Kashgar city along the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

"We welcome quality agricultural products from Pakistan to enter China's market and stand ready to continue to work with Pakistan to boost our trade through land transportation, achieve sustainable growth, bilateral trade and deliver more benefits to our two peoples," he added.

### Gold prices decline by Rs.2,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs2,300 and was sold at Rs228,100 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs230,400 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1,972 to Rs195,559 from Rs197,531 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs179,262 from Rs181,070. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs100 to close at Rs2,650 and ten gram silver also decreased by Rs85.74 to close at Rs2,271.94 respectively.

### PAJCCI terms

### Barter Trade approval b/w Pak, Afghanistan, Iran & Russia as dream come true

PESHAWAR (Online):

PAJCCI has started bearing fruits. PAJCCI had been recommending several measures to facilitate economic activity with Afghanistan including waiver of E-Form & EIF requirement for extended period till finalization of alternate mechanism, opening up of new border crossings, increase in timings at existing border crossings, reducing multiple and manual checks.

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## Governor says: Federal govt to present people friendly budget

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Tuesday hinted at more relief for the masses in the upcoming federal government budget saying it would meet the people's expectations.

Talking to media persons here at Governor House, the governor said that he has held important meetings with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and informed him about the financial issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The governor said that funds for BRT would be released soon. Due to the government's successful policies, he said the significant decrease in prices of daily commodities including ghee has been witnessed in the open market.

The governor said that the business community was supporting the government's austerity measures and economic policies and wanted to end unnecessary expenditures of government organizations for the stability of the economy. He said Pakistan has all resources and we need to work hard tirelessly in our respective professions to make it economically developed and prosperous. He said elections would be definitely held and people would know once its date was announced.

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## Health facilities under Sehat card to continue: Riaz Anwar

PESHAWAR (Online): Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister for Health Riaz Anwar on Tuesday said that despite financial crunch in the province the health facilities under Sehat Card would continue for the people of the province.

also in process. Earlier, a survey report on Sehat Card released by Agha Khan University revealed that 63 percent people of KP got treatment from private hospitals under the facility while only 37 percent patients went to the government hospitals. It said that 10 percent of the population of KP was still deprived of the facility due to domicile or other technical issues, adding that an average Rs 31,395 expenses incurred on a patient's treatment.

## Caretaker cabinet meeting on June 8

PESHAWAR (APP): The sixth meeting of the caretaker cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be held on June 8. Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan will preside over the meeting which would consider a 12-point agenda said an official letter from the Establishment Department here on Tuesday. The agenda items include framing of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Probation and Parole Rules 2022, appointment as administrative judges of anti-terrorism courts and regularization of contract employees of the Health Department.



LAHORE: Senior Lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan addresses to media persons during press conference held at his residency in Lahore.

## 50,000 more families in DI Khan registered with BISP during last year

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): As many as 50,000 more families from Dera Ismail Khan have been registered with the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) during the last year. According to a press release issued here, the number of beneficiary families in Dera Ismail Khan has increased from 135,000 to 185,000 due to the special efforts of the Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi.

Meanwhile, the number of beneficiary students under the Waseela-e-Taleem program, with an increase of 37,000, has reached to around 150,000 in the district. Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi, while talking to different public delegations, said that most of the BISP cards of deserving women have been restored which were blocked in past.

## 13 dead, 1,181 injured in 1,142 accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 13 people were killed and 1,181 injured in 1,142 accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. According to the Rescue 1122, 573 drivers, 52 underage drivers, 142 pedestrians, and 479 passengers were among the victims of the road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 271 accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 268 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 95 in Faisalabad with 94 victims and at third Multan 68 with 61 victims.

## KP govt to ensure people friendly reforms, good governance: Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Excise and Narcotics Control, Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has welcomed the reforms and modernization of his department and made it clear that apart from ensuring good governance. The provincial government was also trying its level best to align all its departments with contemporary requirements and make them more people-friendly, wherein the cooperation of the international community has also been commendable. He was talking to the Sub National Governance

(SNG) team of the foreign-funded reform organization from Islamabad that called on the provincial minister with the team leader and former Secretary Excise Raheel Siddiqui at his office, Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Tuesday. The team apprised him of the progress made so far in the reforms and legislation side. Haji Manzoor Afridi praised the performance of the team for supporting reforms and drafting valuable legislation in 2020 in four important KP departments including Excise, Local Government, Finance, Revenue and Planning & Development.



PESHAWAR: Residents of Upper Dir District are holding protest demonstration against missing of Raees Ahmed and demanding for his recovery, held at Peshawar Press Club.

## Climate change poses negative impacts on seasonal fruits

PESHAWAR (APP): Highly vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan witnessed excessive rainfalls last month, which caused negative impacts on the overall production of seasonal fruits orchards and vegetables besides adversely affecting farmers' income.

Breaking the past 63 years' rainfalls record, the May 2023 excessive torrential rains coupled with hailstorms have negatively impacted the production of summer fruits including watermelon, melon, banana and mangoes besides tomato and other seasonal vegetables in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The Met Office spokesman told APP on Tuesday that the national rainfall recorded last month was excessively high and above average i.e. plus 127pc and stands second wettest rainfall in May during the past 63 years as 34.30 mm of rainfall was recorded in 1987.

Agriculture Department official told APP on Tuesday that the record-breaking rainfall and hailstorms have badly affected the production of watermelon and melon in Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan and DI Khan districts. He said that the standing rains water in low lying areas has slowed down the pace of growth

of watermelon and melon in agriculture fields and started dying forcing affected farmers to premature cultivation to avoid huge financial losses. In the Chamkani fruit market, one kilogram of mango was being sold at Rs150 to Rs200, watermelon at Rs50-70 and melon at Rs80-100 per KG.

Malayar Khan, a progressive farmer of Mohib Banda Nowshera said that he had cultivated melon and watermelon on five acres of land that were badly affected by the last month's torrential rains. He said that farmers of watermelon and other seasonal vegetables and fruits received huge losses and demanded

compensation. Dr Muhammad Naeem, Assistant Professor of Economics and Agriculture, University of Swabi said that watermelon, mangoes, banana and melon orchards were highly vulnerable to climate change. He said that fluctuations in rainfalls, glacial retreats, floods, higher average temperature and frequency of droughts were causing negative effects on agriculture and fruit productivity in the country. He feared that crop yields were likely to decrease in the upcoming years not only because of flooding and torrential rainfalls but also due to a rise in temperatures and

deforestation that would cause rapid melting of glaciers in high altitude zones besides dropping off the water table. He said about 55.87% of watermelon was produced in Punjab, 21.29% in Baluchistan, 10.29% in Sindh and 11.84% in KP and its production was on the decline side due to climate change and fluctuation in weather patterns. He said fertile land was mostly required for watermelon and melons having 1200 variants growing in more than 96 countries including Pakistan and in case of excessive rainfalls and glacier outburst its production were affected.



KARACHI: Visitors showing their keen interest in handicrafts during 13th Sartayon Sang Crafts Exhibition organized by the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) in collaboration with the Sindh Government to facilitate better incomes for the women artisans of rural Sindh.

## International News

## Iran presents its first hypersonic ballistic missile: state media

Monitoring Desk TEHRAN: Iran presented what officials described as its first domestically-made hypersonic ballistic missile on Tuesday, the official IRNA news agency reported, an announcement likely to heighten Western concerns about Tehran's missile capabilities.

Iranian state media published pictures of the missile named Fatah at a ceremony attended by President Ebrahim Rahisi and commanders of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards Corps. "The precision-guided Fatah hypersonic missile has a range of 1,400

kilometres and it is capable of penetrating all defence shields," Amirali Hajizadeh, the head of the Guards' aerospace force, was quoted as saying by Iranian state media.

Hypersonic missiles can fly at least five times faster than the speed of sound and on a complex trajectory, which makes them difficult to intercept. Last year, the Islamic Republic said it had built a hypersonic ballistic missile which can manoeuvre in and out of the atmosphere.

State TV said Iran's Fatah missile can target "the enemy's advanced

anti-missile systems and is a big generational leap in the field of missiles."

"It can bypass the most advanced anti-ballistic missile systems of the United States and the Zionist regime, including Israel's Iron Dome," Iran's state TV said. Fatah's top speed reached mach 14 levels (15,000km/h), it added. Despite US and European opposition, the Islamic Republic has said it will further develop its defensive missile programme. However, Western military analysts say Iran sometimes exaggerates its missile capabilities.



A man casts his vote for National Assembly elections at a religious school in Sabahiya district, Kuwait.

## US slaps sanctions on Iranian, Chinese targets over Tehran's missile, military programs

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States on Tuesday imposed sanctions on over a dozen people and entities in Iran, China and Hong Kong, including Iran's defense attaché in Beijing, accusing them of running a procurement network for Iran's missile and military programs.

An U.S. Treasury Department statement said the network conducted transactions and enabled the procurement of sensitive and critical parts and technology for key actors in Iran's ballistic missile development, including Iran's defense ministry and Armed Forces

Logistics (MODAFL) agency, which is under U.S. sanctions.

Among those hit with sanctions in the action, which comes as Washington ramps up pressure on Tehran, was Iran's defense attaché in Beijing, Davoud Damghani, whom the Treasury accused of coordinating military-related procurements from China for Iranian end-users, including MODAFL subsidiaries. "The United States will continue to target illicit transnational procurement networks that covertly support Iran's ballistic missile production and other

military programs," Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson, said in the statement.

Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York and China's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

China and Iran in March 2021 signed a 25-year cooperation agreement to strengthen their long-standing economic and political alliance. China has been a major buyer of Iranian oil despite U.S. sanctions designed to choke off these exports.

## Situation at nuclear plant under control after dam blast: Ukraine atomic agency

Monitoring Desk KYIV: The destruction of the Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine poses a threat to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, but the situation at the facility is under control, Ukraine's state atomic power agency said on Tuesday.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Twitter it was closely monitoring the situation but that there

was "no immediate nuclear safety risk at (the) plant" which is also in southern Ukraine.

Explosions at the Soviet-era Kakhovka dam in Russian-occupied territory on Tuesday unleashed floodwater across an area that is now a war zone, according to both Ukrainian and Russian forces who blamed each other for the destruction.

Energoatom said the Russian invaders had blown up the dam.

## Sixty Afghan girls hospitalised after school poisoning

Monitoring Desk KABUL: Around 60 Afghan girls were hospitalised after being poisoned at their school in northern Afghanistan, police said on Monday.

The poisoning, which targeted a girls' school in the Afghan province of Sare Pol, comes after intense scrutiny of girls' education in the war-torn nation since the Taliban took over and barred most teenage female students.

## At least 42 dead in Haiti floods, landslides

Monitoring Desk PORT-AU-PRINCE: At least 42 people were dead and 11 missing in Haiti after heavy rains at the weekend triggered flooding and landslides, civil protection officials said on Monday.

The bad weather hit seven of the 10 departments in the country which is already plunged into a protracted humanitarian crisis fueled by gang violence, political collapse and economic stagnation. According to the UN, the severe rains affected

37,000 people and displaced 13,400.

The town of Leogane, located 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of the capital Port-au-Prince, was particularly badly hit, with damage caused by three flooded rivers. At least 20 people died there, according to Haitian officials. "The residents are desperate. They have lost everything. The waters have ravaged their fields, washed away their livestock," Leogane Mayor Ernsou Henry told AFP.

## Finland says to expel nine Russian diplomats

Monitoring Desk OSLO: Finland will expel nine diplomats working at the Russian embassy in Helsinki, accusing them of working on intelligence missions, the Finnish president's office said on Tuesday.

"Their actions are contrary to the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations," the president's office said in a statement, adding that it would inform the Russian ambassador of the expulsions.

## Philippines, Japan, US hold first trilateral coast guard manoeuvres

Monitoring Desk OFF BATAAN PROVINCE: Small boats of armed men in grey camouflage fatigues and balaclavas speed towards a Philippine ship before climbing aboard and scanning the deck with small rifles at the ready.

Moments later, its crew are marched away with their hands on their heads, concluding a simulation of a counter-terrorism operation in the South China Sea between the coast guards of the Philippines, and allies the United States and Japan. Tuesday's manoeuvre is part of an inaugural trilateral coast guard exercise between the three countries, coming at a time of growing unease over China's maritime conduct in the region.

The drill was a mock interception of a vessel carrying weapons of mass destruction, where Philippines coast guard personnel encounter armed resistance while boarding the vessel and are tasked with bringing the situation under control. "All the exercises we do, we help one another to prepare for anything that may possibly happen in the future," said John Ybanez, a spokesperson for the Philippine coast guard. "We do get our assets and training from these two countries, so what they want is, they want to see how much we've improved." The exercises in waters off Bataan province involve more than 500 coast guard personnel and also include search and rescue and counter-piracy scenarios.

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## OpenAI CEO suggests international agency like UN's nuclear watchdog could oversee AI

Monitoring Desk ABU DHABI: Artificial intelligence poses an "existential risk" to humanity, a key innovator warned during a visit to the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, suggesting an international agency like the International Atomic Energy Agency oversee the ground-breaking technology.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is on a global tour to discuss artificial intelligence. "The challenge that the world has is how we're going to manage those risks and make sure we still get to enjoy those tremendous benefits," said Altman, 38. "No one wants to destroy the world." OpenAI's ChatGPT, a popular chatbot, has grabbed the world's attention as it offers essay-like answers to prompts from users. Microsoft has invested some \$1 billion in OpenAI.

ChatGPT's success, offering a glimpse into the way that artificial intelligence could change the way that humans work and learn, has sparked concerns as well. Hundreds of industry leaders, including Altman, have signed a letter in May that warns "mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war." Altman made a point to reference the IAEA, the United Nations nuclear watchdog, as an example of how the world came together to oversee nuclear power. That agency was created in the years after the U.S. dropping atom bombs on Japan at the end of World War II. "Let's make sure we come together as a globe — and I hope this place can play a real role in this," Altman said. "We talk about the IAEA as a model where the world has said 'OK, very dangerous technology, let's all put some guard rails.'"



Philippines, Japan, US hold first trilateral coast guard manoeuvres.

## Safe food can help overcome malnutrition, stunting problems: Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has said that nutritional and safe food can help Pakistan overcome the problems of malnutrition and stunting, besides helping prevent various food-borne diseases.

“Safe food can also help promote long-term human developments as well as achieve several of Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, I would like to emphasise that we must ensure food safety in Pakistan by following food safety standards,” the president said in a message on ‘World Food Safety Day’ being observed on June 7.

The president further stressed that it was a shared responsibility of the government as well as all the

people involved in handling the daily food, including producers, transporters, cooks, and consumers to handle food with greater care.

President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

He said that they needed to educate the people to properly handle and prepare food, and ensure cleanliness and hygiene at home and outside.

“Our religion Islam also teaches us to maintain cleanliness in general, eat clean food and wash our hands before every meal,” he opined.

The president said that they must inculcate healthy habits among their people, especially the children, by teaching them

about food safety.

He said the World Food Safety day was being observed this year on June 7 to draw attention towards food safety standards.

It was alarming that on average 1.6 million people get sick daily due to unsafe food, whereas 340 children, under-5 years of age, die due to preventable food-borne diseases, on average, every day, he added.

The president noted that the situation was avertable and hundred of thousands of lives could be saved by ensuring food standards, eliminating unhygienic food, and preventing food-borne risks.

He said that the day was being commemorated to highlight the importance of food safety.



Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada addressing as Chief Guest the 20th meeting of Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group in Islamabad

## IPMG organizes meeting; importance of ‘Gender Data Portal’ discussed

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) on Tuesday organized the 20th meeting of the Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) here, jointly with the collaboration of UN Women.

Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada attended the meeting as the chief guest. Meanwhile, Chairperson NCSW Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Country Representative UN Women Sharmela Rasool, Ms. Andrea S. Hillyer Advisor Gender Security, representatives of Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Departments and Women Development Departments of all provinces and Provincial Commis-

sions on the Status of Women including Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan were also in the attendees.

The main agenda of the 20th meeting was to have an update on National Gender Data Portal (NGDP) and review the provincial coordination mechanism; strengthening the role of partners and identifying strategies to establish NGDP as a credible source for gender-related data and information.

While addressing the meeting, the minister lauded the efforts of NCSW and UN women in providing a crucial platform in the form of IPMG, where all the relevant stakeholders from the center and provinces would

join hands to tackle the issues and challenges to achieve the combined aim of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Pakistan.

He said that there was a stronger need to support the provincial governments; especially the provincial women machineries working for women’s development, to set strategic priorities and plans for women’s emancipation.

The minister expressed that women’s issues were similar in all parts of Pakistan with some cultural exceptions within the different localities. IPMG had provided the underpinning for creating such a well-coordinated apparatus.

## Ethiopia, Pakistan agree on bolstering parliamentary coop.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ethiopia and Pakistan on Tuesday agreed to enhance parliamentary cooperation through exchange of delegations between the two countries in future.

This was agreed during a meeting between Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia Jamal Beker Abdula and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, said a news release.

Both the dignitaries



discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries in various fields including economy, health, education and tourism.

Ambassador Jamal Beker Abdula informed the senator that the Ethiopian government had officially inaugurated both the Ethiopia’s Embassy and Ethiopian Airlines in Pakistan last month to further strengthen the already



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan-ur-Rehman Mazari posing for a group photograph with participants after event entitled ‘Early Drug Prevention Strategies, The Future of Pakistan’ as Organized by KKAWF Foundation at Serena hotel in Federal Capital.

## Govt to set up learning centres for transgenders

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain has directed Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) for setting up of learning centers for Transgender community by utilizing ICT Schools as 2nd shifts.

He directed FDE to also upgrade of Boys School (SSC) to Intermediate College and Girls Intermediate College to the level of Degree College at Shah Allah Ditta.

According to a notification, he made these directions during his visit at Union Council Shah Allah

Ditta few days back to monitor the campaign for bringing Out of School Children back to Schools.

The notification further said that the Minister also asked FDE for Installation of Water Filtration Plants in Schools (Rural areas).

However, the establishment of schools at designated / earmarked plots in Sector D-12 was also among his directions.

Above directives are conveyed to quarter(s) concerned for necessary action and be included in Secretary’s Task Management System for periodic review, it added.

## IHC allows girl to go with her husband

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday allowed a girl to go with her husband after she gave a statement of marrying at her own free will.

The court was hearing the case filed by the girl’s parents for her recovery. The Lodhran Police produced her before the court following its directives. Assistant Advocate General Punjab Imran Shaukat Rao informed the court that the girl, who was pregnant.

## MoS Khar, Norwegian FM agree to enhance bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and Norway’s Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt on Tuesday agreed to work towards the enhancement of bilateral cooperation in multiple spheres.

During a meeting in Oslo, they appreciated 75 years of Pak-Norway relations and agreed on the importance of multilateralism to address regional and global challenges. Foreign Office Spokesperson posted on her Twitter handle.

MoS Hina Rabbani Khar, separately, held bilateral talks with her Norwegian counterpart Erling Rimestad.

During a meeting, the global and regional issues including Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Afghanistan and Ukraine were discussed.

Hina Khar expressed gratitude for Norway’s support for the flood-affected people of Pakistan, the Spokesperson said in a related tweet.

The two sides also discussed investments in micro hydro-power plants in Pakistan. They agreed to increase cooperation in realms of green energy, shipping, blue economy and collaboration in higher education and research.

## Court extends interim bail of Raja Khurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of PTI’s former MNA Raja Khurram Nawaz till June 10, in the case regarding the violent protest and vandalizing at Judicial Complex, Islamabad.

ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas heard the case. Petitioner’s lawyer Sardar Masroof Khan requested the court to direct the investigation officer that if his client was required for the investigation or not.

The investigation officer informed the court that the prosecutor, in this case, was on leave due to the death of his mother.

## Govt to focus on people friendly budget with maximum relief: Bilal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister’s Coordinator on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani on Tuesday said the Federal Government led by PM Shehbaz Sharif would work out all options to ensure a people-friendly budget for the next fiscal year.

“The priority will be given to specific measures that are crucial to curb inflation and stabilize economy with maximum relief to the lower and middle,” he said in an exclusive interview with APP.

“Surely, we can opt for a popular budget, but it will adversely impact the economy and we will not go for it in the larger national interest,” he added.

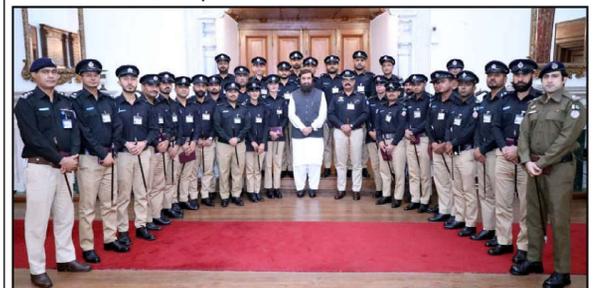
Bilal Kayani said the budget’s main focus would be on development projects as over Rs 1.1 trillion would be allocated on that count, including Rs 950 billion for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)

## KP’s merged districts get their first-ever Model Police Stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, the Government of Japan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police jointly inaugurated the Model Police Stations in Kalaya, Orakzai District, and Ghalanai, Mohmand District, in a ceremony held in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The Model Police Stations are unique police centers in merged districts, providing a range of new facilities to better serve the people of merged districts. Amongst others, these include a gender-responsive

desk to address gender-based crimes reported to the police stations, a hall to convene joint community and police meetings, an investigation room, an office for station house officers, security posts, lodging facilities to accommodate 55 police personnel and separate holding rooms for men and women, said a press release issued by the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad. Addressing the ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro, underlined, “Supporting security and justice sector institutions.



LAHORE: Adelegation comprising under training Deputy Superintendent of Sindh Police at the National Police Academy Islamabad, led by DIG Police National Police Training Academy, Nauman Siddiqui photographed with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House

## Governor Punjab hails LEAs for defense of country

Independent Report  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that role of officers and personnel of the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in the war against terrorism is commendable.

Talking to a delegation of under-training officers of Sindh police at the Governor’s House here on Tuesday, he said the nation salutes the LEAs who sacrificed their lives while defending the country and the nation on the front-line.

Commandant National Police Academy Islamabad DIG Nauman Siddiqui led the delegation comprising under-training

Deputy Superintendents (DSPs) of Sindh Police.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the joining of police service by the young officers is encouraging and the nation has high expectations them. He expressed the hope that the young officers would play their role in improving the police station culture and restore the confidence of people in the police.

He urged the police officers to make honesty and good conduct their motto and render their services to the fullest to ensure speedy justice to the people.

## ANF seize 2854 kg of drugs, arrest 18 peddlers

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized over 2854 kg of drugs and 112.7 litres of Hydrochloric Acid (HCL) Chemical worth US\$ 70.411 million internationally and arrested 18 persons including a foreigner and impounded 6 vehicles while conducting 26 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country.

According to a

spokesperson of ANF the seized drugs included 2300.1 Kg Opium, 28.312 Kg Heroin, 45 Kg Crystal, 446.713 Kg Hashish, 34.216 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice) and 0.057 Gram Ecstasy Tabs (100 x Tabs).

ANF Balochistan recovered 2506 Kg of drugs & 112.7 litres of Hydrochloric Acid (HCL) Chemicals in 7 operations while arresting 2 persons involved in drug smuggling and im-

pounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 2281 Kg of Opium, 20 Kg of Heroin, 160 Kg of Hashish and 45 Kg of Crystal. ANF Punjab recovered 8.032 Kg of drugs in 6 operations while arresting 6 persons involved in drug smuggling and impounded 2 vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 1.312 Kg of Heroin, 2.500 Kg of Hashish and 4.220 Kg of Methamphetamine (Ice).



ISLAMABAD: SAPM and Convener, Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs, Ms Romina Khurshid addressing during the High-Level Policy Dialogue on World Environment Day.

## Senate body directs to resolve long standing issues of MoST, CUI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology in a meeting held on Tuesday directed the officials concerned to resolve the longstanding issues pertaining to the Ministry of Science and Technology and COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI).

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Senator Muhammad Shafiq Tareen at the Ministry of Science and Technology.

While making a comparison between the salaries of the government basic pay scale (BPS) 2022 and CUI Pay scale 2021 is variant and inconsistent.

The administration of the university pledged that the salaries are being based and settled on the basis of available funds, however, a meeting would be conducted to resolve the matter.

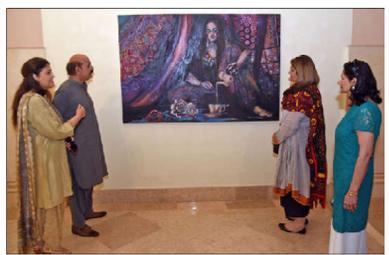
Similarly, on the matter of assigning interim charge as Acting Registrar and regaining Treasurer, after completion of his term, the Chairman committee said that the information provided by the ministry in this regard is incomplete and sought more detail on the subject matter.

## 440 persons hired in FESCO during 2018-21

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 440 persons have been recruited by Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) since 2018-2021.

Out of a total of 440, 409 persons were recruited on contract and 31 on a regular basis during the said period, official sources told APP here Tuesday.

The recruitment was



ISLAMABAD: People are taking interest in paintings during exhibition entitled ‘Adornment’ at local hotel in Federal Capital.

## Traffic Police Unit imposes fine to 10,000 vehicles during last two weeks

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: Traffic Inter-Section Unit has taken effective steps against those involved in violation of rules and issued more than 10,000 fine tickets to law breakers during last two weeks.

Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) has constituted Traffic Inter-Section Unit following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in order to improve the flow of traffic in the federal capital and provide best travelling facilities to road users.

The police spokesman said this unit consisting of 188 personnel in ten teams had been given motorcycles

and vehicles equipped with modern technology.

It has been authorized to take measures for road discipline in the city and ensure prompt action against those breaching traffic laws. During the last two weeks, this unit issued 10,000 fine tickets to those involved in violating traffic rules including use of mobile phone and not fastening seat belt during drive, one way violation, zebra crossing violation, red signal and lane violation.

Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that Traffic Wing was utilizing all resources to provide the best travelling facilities to the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Moulana Bux Chandio, Convener Sub-Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.