

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Islamabad

Vol. XIII No. 188 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Tuesday June 13, 2023, Zee'qad 23, 1444 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Despite constraints, budget 2023-24 promises to turn things around: PM

PM terms arrival of Russian oil cargo as beginning of new relationship with Moscow

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that despite the constraints imposed by domestic and global circumstances, the budget 2023-24 promised to turn things around and has outlined a clear path for the purpose.

The prime minister, in a tweet, said that achieving economic self-sufficiency, remained the overarching goal where the economy was insulated from external turbulence and shocks.

He said as the experts were analysing the various facets of budget 2023-24, he considered it important to highlight the special emphasis the government had placed on the growth-inducing sectors in the budget.

He said the measures for the uplifting of information technology, agriculture, solarisation, youth development and other sectors were proposed after thorough deliberations.

"They are aimed at incentivizing innovation and entrepreneurship of our talented youth and boosting the productivity of agriculture and attracting investment in the agro-industry."

At the same time, the prime minister said the govern-

ment was working on a solarisation initiative to replace the costlier sources of power generation by harnessing the vast solar power.

"Affordable energy is key to economic growth and the provision of relief to the people. The procurement of crude oil from Russia is also part of the energy security plan," the prime minister remarked.

Online adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has termed the arrival of first ever Russian oil cargo to Pakistan as the beginning of a new relationship between Islamabad and Moscow.

In a tweet, he said the first Russian discounted crude oil cargo has arrived in Karachi and will begin oil discharge on Monday.

The Prime Minister said it is a transformative day and he has fulfilled another promise to the nation.

He commended all those who remained part of this national endeavor and contributed to translating the promise of Russian oil import into reality.

The Prime Minister said we are moving one step at a time toward prosperity, economic growth, energy security and affordability.



KARACHI: People openly defy Section 144 imposed by the administration as a preventive measure in anticipation of tropical cyclone Biparjoy. Sindh government has decided to evacuate residential areas and other human settlements located near the coast areas of Sindh due to threat of cyclone Biparjoy



Advisor to PM Sheikh Rohale Asghar calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

Dar for further strengthening economic ties with China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Monday highlighted the need to deepen bilateral relations with China with a special focus on economy, trade and financial sectors.

He was talking to Charge d'Affairs, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Pang Chunxue, who called on the minister here.

According to a press statement issued by the finance ministry, Dar appreciated the deep-rooted historical bilateral rela-

tions between Pakistan and China, and much-admired Chinese support to Pakistan on multiple fronts.

The finance minister further updated the Charge de Affairs about the progress on talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the completion of the 9th review.

He further apprised her about the positive response of the various sectors of the economy on the Budget 2023-24, presented by the incumbent government despite difficult economic circumstances.



ISLAMABAD: H. E. Ms. Pang Chunxue Charge's Affairs, Embassy of the people's Republic of China, called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division

Biparjoy update: Sindh govt orders evacuation as cyclone threatens coastal areas

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has decided to evacuate residential areas and other human settlements located near the coast areas of Sindh, including Badin and Thatta. This decision comes as Cyclone Biparjoy, a powerful weather system looming over the Arabian Sea, poses threats.

The cyclone came within 690km of Karachi on Monday, with winds in the storm traveling between 180 to 200 km/h.

According to the latest update from the Pakistan Meteorological Department, Cyclone Biparjoy, also known as ESCS Biparjoy, has tracked further northward over the past 12 hours. It currently lies near Latitude 19.5N, longitude 67.6E, at a distance of about 600km south of Karachi and 580km south of Thatta.

The cyclone is likely to continue moving north until June 14, and then turn northeast, crossing between southeast Sindh and Indian

Gujarat on June 15 at noon. The Met Office has classified Biparjoy as a severe storm, showing no signs of weakening. Winds in the center of the storm are blowing at a speed of 180 to 200 kilometers per hour, while the sea surface temperature ranges from 30 to 32 degrees Celsius. However, waves have reached heights of 30 to 40 feet in the center of the storm.

Thatta, Sajawal, and Badin are currently facing the highest risk from the approaching storm. The residents of Thatta are experiencing severe fear and panic as they brace for the potential impact.

However, it is concerning to note that no steps have been taken to initiate the evacuation of residents living on offshore islands, leaving them vulnerable to impending danger.

Furthermore, the absence of established relief camps raises significant concerns about the readiness to rescue and provide support to affected citizens.

COAS Munir calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Monday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Prime Minister (PM) House.

Sources said that the meeting, held at Prime Minister House, underscored the exchange of thoughts on country's law and order situation, COAS briefed PM Shehbaz on professional matters of the army.

The meeting also deliberated the implementation of decisions taken at the National Security meeting, as well as brought intelligence-based operations against terrorism to light.

Courts approve Imran's bails in nine cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Local courts of Islamabad on Monday granted pre-arrest bail to PTI's chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan in nine cases registered by various police stations of the city.

Additional District and Session Judge Syed Mehmood Haroon accepted the bail of PTI's Chairman till July 4, in FIR registered in Khanna police station against surety bonds worth Rs30,000.

Similarly, Additional District and Session Judge Farrukh Faeed granted bail to Imran Khan in two cases of Shahzad Town Police Station against surety bonds worth Rs5,000 each.

9 killed, 14 injured as a bus plunged into ravine in AJK

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): At least nine people were killed and 14 others injured when a bus fell into a deep ravine in the Kotli area of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner Kotli Ch Haq Nawaz said that all the passengers were returning to Gujranwala after attending the Urs ceremony in the Nirian area near Kotli.

Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital, Mirpur. Rescue sources said that the death toll may increase due to the critical condition of some of the injured.

NA adopts resolution demanding speedy action against May 9 rioters under Army Act

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Monday passed a resolution to initiate proceedings against the elements involved in the vandalism of military installations and martyrs' memorials on May 9 under the Army Act 1952 without delay even for a single day.

Presenting a motion, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif said the House was of the view that a political party and its chairman while committing blatant violations of the law and the Constitution on May 9 attacked military installations, which caused irreparable loss to the state and

its institutions. "Of which, all evidence is available, so in line with the law and the Constitution, proceedings be completed against them without a single-day delay."

The minister said the people and leaders of that party were not ready to take the burden of the party and its chairman's anti-Pakistan activities and disassociate themselves from it. "It validates that this party and its head's agenda is based on enmity with Pakistan," he added.

He said the House declared that there were no human rights violations while taking action against miscreants and criminals

involved in the May 9 incidents.

In that regard, he said, allegations of a political party and propaganda had no reality.

As per the international practice, he said Pakistan too had the legal right to initiate proceedings against such elements under the relevant law. So, all the elements involved in the May 9 vandalism be prosecuted under the Pakistan Army Act-1952 without any delay and get them punished.

Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) agreed to give exemplary punishment to perpetrators of the May 9 incidents but opposed their

trial under the Army Act.

He viewed that the rioters of May 9 should be tried in the civil and anti-terrorism courts, and his party would accept their decisions.

The Defence Minister said all over the world, forces had to take action against those involved in incidents like attacking military installations and Pakistan also had the same legal and constitutional authority.

He said no patriot Pakistanis could dare to attack military installations and martyrs' memorials, but unfortunately, the workers of a political party crossed all the limits on May 9.

He said the armed forces were rendering great services and sacrifices to protect every inch of the motherland and purging the country of terrorist elements.

The minister said the nation would never accept insults to the sacrifices of the martyrs and vowed to give exemplary punishment to the anti-state elements.

He said it was unfortunate that the party tried to attack the integrity and sovereignty of the country just because of losing the government, which was not acceptable in any way. "You don't declare war on your country if the power is taken away from you."

To improve foreign exchange reserves Money lying outside country: : CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked the country is facing financial hardships, therefore, the money which is lying outside the country should be kept in the country to improve foreign exchange reserves.

He further remarked we can understand the compulsions of government. It is responsibility of every one to extend cooperation. He gave these remarks during the hearing of the petition against imposition of tax on foreign assets here Monday.

The court while giving stay order on the order for paying 100 percent tax on non transferable property adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial took up the case for hearing Monday.

The court while rejecting FBR plea for payment of 100 percent tax issued the order to respondents to pay 50 percent tax on non transferable property besides remarking the decision will not be applicable to transferable property.

The CJP remarked that flaws in taxation system will have to be seen. New taxation will have to be made to integrate more people into tax system. What court has to do is to do it as per law and constitution.

Member legal of FBR told this matter is of billion of rupees. If court issues stay order then it will be injustice with others, if we start giving such relief on tax policy then the difficulties will increase.

Fazal blames PTI for economic mess

PESHAWAR (TLTP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Monday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had destroyed the country's economy.

Addressing a press conference, Mr Rehman said there was a dire need to launch a campaign to make the country a fully Islamic state.

Admitting that the country was facing a severe economic crisis, Mr Rehman said the incumbent government had presented

a "balanced" budget for the financial year 2023-24.

Read also: JUI-F has taken down PTI chairman project: Fazl

He took a swipe at the PTI chief, saying: "Kashmir is under assault due to the nexus of the PTI chief and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I requested the government to take strict action against the PTI chief."

Speaking about the May 9 mayhem, Mr Rehman said the party's central executive committee had condemned the 9/5 attacks.



Ms. Marriyum Aurgangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting participating in a thanksgiving reception held in view of allocating funds for health insurance in the budget for the journalists & Media workers at National Press Club, Islamabad.

Free media plays crucial role in safeguarding democracy from attacks: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurgangzeb Monday lauded the journalist community for playing a critical role in protecting democracy from different kinds of threats in the country.

"Nobody can dare to attack democracy if the voice of journalists is powerful and their message is loud and clear," the minister said while addressing a reception organized by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) here at the National Press Club.

The reception was also attended by Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mobashir Hassan and a large number of jour-

nalists and media workers.

The minister said the health insurance scheme for journalists and media workers was introduced in the Federal Budget 2023-24 in line with the vision of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

"This step is continuity of the policies of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif who also has credit of the constitution of 8th Wage Board after a hiatus of 18 years," she added.

When PM Shehbaz Sharif was opposition leader in the National Assembly, many journalists visited his chamber complaining about their health problems, she recalled while highlighting directives of the prime minister who soon after coming into the

power ordered establishment of a fund for the medical treatment of deserving journalists and media workers.

"This is not a favour to anyone since this is your right and our responsibility," the minister remarked.

She said owners of media houses could not be absolved of their responsibilities regarding welfare of the journalists and media workers.

Marriyum said the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) had been given representation on the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's Council of Complaints and PEMRA Authority so that issues faced by the journalists and media workers were resolved in the earliest possible time.

Sustained supply of Russian oil to cut POL products prices: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik has said the prices of petroleum products would start decreasing once continuous supply of oil from Russia was ensured. Mr Malik told a private news channel that there was going to be a huge difference in prices with the benefit being transferred to the masses when Pakistan would start meeting one-third of the domestic needs through the imported Russian oil. "Our target is to get one-third of crude oil from Russia at a discounted rate. When we will achieve the objective then the oil [petroleum products] would be available at cheaper price."

The state minister, however, said, "I cannot share the actual price now. However, it would result in a massive difference."

He said the first oil container had reached Karachi and the government wanted to ensure a sustained supply of Russian oil.

The current deal involved 100,000 metric tonnes of oil and the second consignment would arrive at the port next week, the state minister added.

About the buying the Russian oil and its possible effects, Mr Malik said no issue would ever be generated at the world level if one adhered to the agreements while maintaining transparency.



PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief, Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, in Peshawar.

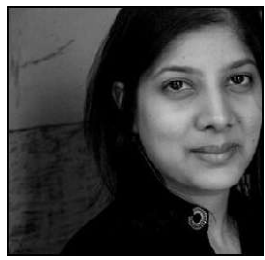
Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Agriculture woes

The government has proposed a raft of incentives in the FY2024 budget to boost the productivity of the agriculture sector and encourage investments in the agro industry. Among the steps announced by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday is a significantly large increase in loans for farmers — from Rs1.8tr Rs2.2tr — the allocation of Rs50bn to shift 50,000 tube wells to solar power, the withdrawal of duties on seed import, and duty exemption on the import of combine harvesters. The budget also proposes the removal of duties on rice planters, seeders and dryers, in addition to setting aside Rs16bn for concessional loans and tax relief for agro-based industry. On the face of it, all these measures appear to be populist, aimed at pleasing a large electorate associated with agriculture. However, it remains unclear — and doubtful — whether these actions will have a meaningful impact on the lives of farmers, especially the smallholders. Nor is it clear if they are effective enough to address long-standing issues such as the rising cost of inputs, climate change, water shortages, etc, that are pulling down the farm sector and hampering value addition in a part of the economy on which depend, directly or indirectly, two-thirds of the population, for their livelihoods.

Agriculture is a large and diverse segment of the economy which remains criminally neglected, poorly organised and highly inefficient. Its problems are too complex to be dealt with the incentives announced in the budget. With the country trying to cope with a level of hunger that is described as serious by the Global Hunger Index, and having suffered massive damage to its farmlands last year due to climate change-induced floods, a complete rethink of obsolete agricultural policies that focus on fixing the prices of crops and doling out subsidies is needed. Studies have shown that the current policies protect the interests of big landlords, speculators and middlemen. Policies and fiscal interventions on behalf of a small group of large growers are the main reasons for growing rural poverty, low crop value addition, and rising food insecurity. No policy initiative or incentive can turn the agriculture sector around if it doesn't put the smallholder farmers at its centre. This means that the government must invest heavily in agriculture research, set up initiatives to encourage the formation of cooperatives and adoption of technologies, and mitigate the impact of climate change. It should also design programmes to enhance the small growers' access to cheaper formal credit, give them crop insurance, and link them to the markets to eliminate the role of the middleman, thus raising their incomes. A well-developed agriculture sector can contribute a lot to economic development and alleviate poverty. For this to happen, the policymakers need to clean up the mess they have made in this important sector.

Critical challenge



Huma Yusuf

What we needed was a pro-people party. What we got was a "political party beyond politics!!!" The launch of the Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party last week is a clear message for Pakistanis that our politics has been reduced to an anti-democratic facade to ensure authoritarian control. Solutions to the country's myriad challenges and any form of service delivery increasingly seem like pipe dreams.

Pakistan's ongoing political crisis has critically delayed action on numerous fronts, one of the most urgent being a national strategy to tackle climate change. While monitoring the comings and goings at Zaman Park, many may have missed the World Meteorological Organisation's forecast that global temperatures will surge past the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark in at least one of the coming five years, triggering irreversible climate effects. As one of the world's top 10 climate-vulnerable countries, Pakistan can expect to be hit by climate shocks regularly.

Political hijinks may also have distracted from the Climate Change Conference underway in Bonn. These talks are a precursor to the UN COP28 climate summit at the end of the year. The conference is where — in the absence of politicians — the hard work on hammering out details on global climate policy takes place. This year's event in Bonn is particularly relevant for Pakistan because it will advance discussions on how to operationalise the loss

and damage fund — which envisions rich, high-emitting countries providing climate finance for poor, climate change-affected countries — agreed at COP27 last year.

Given Pakistan's climate change vulnerability, these topics should take centre stage. Unfortunately, the momentum to address climate issues generated after last year's devastating floods seems to have fizzled out with this year's political chaos. Now that the political puppet show is somewhat restored, our representatives must refocus on this critical challenge, particularly ahead of COP28.

The upcoming COP is already controversial because it will be hosted by the UAE under the presidency of the head of the Emirati oil company ADNOC, with grand plans to boost production. Climate activists are uncomfortable with a fossil fuels champion overseeing the "global stock-take", when countries have to review their progress against emissions-cutting commitments made in Paris in 2015. It is widely recognised that the stock-take will formally document dire progress, but will COP28 push for the phase-out of fossil fuels, which is urgently needed? The fear is that discussions will be steered towards fanciful plans for carbon capture and storage instead.

There are also concerns that fundamental decisions about the loss and damage fund — who pays, how, when and to whom? — will not be made at COP28. This is partly because of rich countries' disagreements about who should pay into the fund. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was agreed in 1992, and many of the countries classified then as developing — and therefore exempt from paying into the fund — are now booming economies (think China, India,

and the oil-rich Gulf countries). Climate activists are concerned that the UAE could remain ambivalent on this to avoid paying in, and few expect more than the fund's structure to be agreed this year.

Pakistan is well-situated to be a key voice at COP28. As a long-term ally of the UAE, it could smooth over concerns by emphasising the need for clean energy investments, another topic the ADNOC chief favours. And as a major proponent of the loss and damage fund, Pakistan could push its allies — particularly the UAE and China — to widen the net of donors into the fund. More importantly, given that we spend almost half our budget on servicing debt, Pakistan can present powerful arguments equating climate justice with economic justice, and calling for debt relief as a form of climate reparations. But we can only do all this if our politicians can transcend existential crises, and get on with their jobs. One silver lining in this regard is the expanded budget allocation of \$1.3 billion for the climate change ministry, recognising the need to invest in climate resilience and disaster preparedness. This is a good jump up from last year's \$61 million and the 2021-22 allocation of \$93m. But it is not nearly enough — the annual cost of environmental degradation alone in Pakistan is estimated at \$2.3bn. In the run-up to COP28, our leaders — whether puppets or technocrats — must clarify Pakistan's climate narratives (reparations or relief? Justice or investment?), and articulate clear demands. It must also detail how it spends its climate budget, sensibly prioritising between adaptation and mitigation. No matter how intense the power tussles, Pakistan's climate woes cannot be sidelined any longer. -- Courtesy Dawn

Reforms in service structure, agriculture is life line for the masses



By Iftikhar Ahmed

Balochistan Agriculture Officers are highly obliged to Minister Agriculture. Mir AsadUllah Baloch, Secretary Agriculture Mr. Umeed Ali kokar, Balochistan Agriculture Officers Association's president DrQasimKakar, General Secretary ShakeelZehriand all others that rendered efforts in the approval of the Four Tier system. Hopefully the said service structure may diminish the prevailing frustrations amongst the agriculture officers. This may increase the performance of the overall agriculture department.

Currently agriculture is the least privileged department of the province though major segment of the population is directly or indirectly dependent upon the agriculture.

Agriculture must be given due respect and importance for the survival of the masses.

The longtime lingering demand of Four Tier Service Structure is the most effective apparatus that would not only strengthen the Department but also would benefit the officers in order to maintain smooth, timely

and regular flow of promotions. Absence of Four Tier Service Structure is one of the main hindrances in the progress of the Agriculture Department because chances of promotions are limited and large number of officers presently retired in the same grade wherein they were appointed. However, through the implementation of the Four Tier Structure, officers might get equal promotional chances in a flow, as timely as officers in the other departments of the province. Fortunately, financial impacts of the four tiers upon the department are so meager.

Four tier service structure approved, appreciation for the efforts of minister, secretary agriculture

There is terrible discrimination with the agriculture professionals rather with agriculture altogether as in the entire service most of the officers hardly avail only one promotion which is totally against the equity, fundamental right and natural justice.

Pakistan is an agricultural country; presently it contributes 19.2 percent to the GDP and provides employment to around 38.5 percent of the labour force. More than 65-70 percent of the population depends on agriculture.

It is suffice to mention that from 1960 to 2018 agriculture was contributing 27.38% to GDP with a minimum of 20.22% at the lowest. These figure show diminishing trend for the

last few decades because agriculture and agriculture professionals/officers have not been given due respect.

The officers with inferior qualification and technical knowledge, as compared to agriculture professional, in other departments are bestowed with attractive service careers. They are given several promotions in the service moreover there is huge difference in the allowances, perks and privileges; agriculture department has kept deprived from all these allowances, perks and privileges which is badly affecting the overall agriculture in the province. These discriminations are potentially exponential which is intensifying the magnitude of the frustration amongst the agriculture professionals.

The progress of the agriculture in province, the same is highly dependent on the agro-professionals so it is obligatory that the agriculture professionals must be given due privileges.

The delightful agriculture officers mean advanced agriculture in the province. Hopefully this service structure would bring new wave of happiness and joy amongst the officer.

The perks and privileges would also be increased, ultimately they would multiply their efforts for the progress and prosperity of the agriculture in the province.

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the first meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT), in Islamabad.

Khurram Dastgir says: 5000MW additional electricity injected into system in one year

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Power Division Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan said on Monday that the coalition government managed to inject 5000 megawatts (MW) of additional electricity into the system within one year.

Addressing a press conference here at Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) headquarters, he explained that 1980MW had been added to the

national grid from Thar coal power plant, three power plants of accumulative generation of 1100MW had been inaugurated in Karachi, and other 720MW projects, which were neglected by previous government, had now started generation, while testing of 1200MW Punjab thermal would start soon. "In one year of Shehbaz Sharif government, we have worked a lot in the energy

sector. We have brought back electricity in the country, which faced scarcity from 2018 to 2022 due to negligence of the former government," he added.

Khurram Dastgir said that previous government, in its four years period, created economic turmoil and made no progress on energy projects under the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). However, the current

coalition government, he added, started various projects under CPEC especially in power sector at full speed and in the new fiscal year, Rs 900 billion relief in the electricity bills would continue to be given to targeted/ deserving consumers, while load-shedding duration would also be less than in the past years. The federal minister said the government would also give a tariff differential subsidy of Rs 150 billion.

Senate body on Finance

Country's Financial State, in dire need of Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue on Monday debated that the new budget starts with a "sorry" picture. Senator Mohsin Aziz said that the new budget doesn't bring any revival of the industries or the exporters and lack fundamental reforms, directing towards bolstering of the country's economy. He said that the

new budget seems to start with debits and forecasted a loan of 7 trillion at the beginning of the new budget.

The Minister for Finance and Revenue Aisha Gaus Pasha said that the new budget should not be outrightly discredited and maintained that country was saved from being default even after the disastrous floods and Global Climate crises. She

said that the new budget brings handsome agricultural packages which is the backbone of the economy resulting in increase and accelerated growth.

She also said that the Money Bill, 2023 brings no increase of duties on import of essential items and promotes energy efficiency and conservation. It also promotes the Information Technology.

Meeting discusses promotion of agriculture

Independent Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer chaired the third session of the task force for agriculture here at Civil Secretariat on Monday. The meeting approved various recommendations aimed at promoting modern agriculture, increasing per-acre yield, and enhancing land productivity.

According to the programme, approved certified seeds will be promoted to boost wheat

and cotton production. The Punjab Soil Fertility Revival Programme will be initiated to improve land fertility. Small farmers will be provided 60 kg sacks at a 50 percent subsidy per acre.

The meeting also approved a plan to bring 50,000 acres of barren land under cultivation. Pilot projects will be initiated in Mankera, Choubara, and Norpur Thal for land reclamation. Soil and water testing laboratories will be established at the tehsil level in Punjab.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir Khan presiding over the meeting of LESCO officials at LESCO Headquarter.

ICCI entrepreneurship program started for students of Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that women constitute 52 percent of Pakistan's population. Sustainable development is not possible without their full involvement, in the developed countries of the world, women are playing their role in every field of life alongside men, and this is the secret of the development of these countries. To deal with unemployment. There is a need to focus on entrepreneurship, it is not possible to accommodate millions of young people who

have graduated from universities in the public and private sector, instead of looking for employment, and the youth should become job sharers by promoting entrepreneurship. He expressed these views while addressing the launch ceremony of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's entrepreneurship program for all students. Chamber members, Director Federal Directorate of Education Prof. Aftab Tariq, principals and a large number of students of educational institutions of Islamabad participated in the ceremony.

Committee approves applications for petrol pumps

SARGODHA (APP): The divisional environmental committee has approved 26 applications for petrol pumps, poultry sheds and hospitals.

The committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti in his committee room here on Monday.

Assistant Director Environment Naveed Ahmed, ACG Hafiz Abdul Manan and Consultant Sargodha University Dr Ghulam Sarwar participated in the meeting.

Arrival of Russian oil to help reducing petroleum prices in country: Kayani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani Monday said that after continued efforts of one year, the first consignment of cost-effective Russian crude oil has reached Karachi Port, which would help in reducing petroleum prices in local markets.

In a statement, he congratulated the nation and said that the incumbent government has fulfilled its promise to import crude oil from Russia as the last selected and incapable

regime led by Imran Khan had not taken any such practical step for importing cheap oil to facilitate the people in the country.

The last government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) only inaugurated the projects which were initiated and completed during the time of Pakistan Muslim League-N, he said adding that now these habitual liars were claiming that the PTI government completed the oil import deal with Russia.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, America, Yun-Ding-19, Butinah and Isabella Kosan, carrying containers, palm oil, coal and chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively the other day. Meanwhile, two more ships, Calypso Gas and Scarabe with LPG and coal also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, chemicals carrier 'Isabella Kosan' left the port.

Amin urges Telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted connectivity during anticipated storm

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Information Technology, Syed Amin-ul-Haque, has called upon telecommunication companies to take immediate action to secure towers and optical fiber cables in order to maintain uninterrupted power supply and internet connectivity during an upcoming storm.

With the Meteorology Department

warning of potential disruptions to the power and internet systems, Amin-ul-Haque's instructions aim to mitigate any possible downtime.

Emphasizing the critical need for continuous communication during emergency situations, the minister stressed the importance of implementing alternative measures to ensure seamless internet and mobile services.

Murad for expediting contingency measures as 'Biparjoy' likely to hit coastal belts on June 15

KARACHI (APP): Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday said that around 32,466 people of district Sujawal, Badin, and Thatta, and residents of 70 dangerous buildings of Karachi are prone to the 'Very Severe Cyclonic Storm' (VSCS) 'BIPARJOY', which is likely to hit the coastal belt on June 15.

"We are taking all-out measures to shift the people to secure areas and removing loose installations like billboards, sign boards, and such other weak structures to avoid any untoward incident."

He said this while addressing a press conference at CM House regarding the Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) 'BIPARJOY' at CM House.

He was flanked by provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon and Nasir Shah. The CM said that a 'Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) 'BIPARJOY' over the East-Central Arabian Sea had further moved northward. He said that under the existing upper-level steering winds, it was most likely to track further in

the North-Northeast direction towards Southeast Sindh-Indian Gujarat coast.

He quoted the PDMA and Met Office reports saying, "Now cyclonic storm lies near Latitude 19.5°N & Longitude 67.7°E at about 600km South of Karachi, 580km South of Thatta, and 710 km southeast of Ormara.

He further said that maximum sustained surface winds were 160-180 Km/hour gusts, 180 Km/hour around the system center and maximum wave height was 35-40 feet.



LAHORE: A delegation of Overseas Muslim League worker in a group photo with Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Punjab Governor says: Overseas Pak play vital role in dev. of Pak economy by sending remittances

Independent Report
LAHORE: Former parliamentarians, Mian Marghub Ahmed, Zahid Akram, Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Overseas Muslim League worker Nasir Khan and senior workers met Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. The current political situation was discussed in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that overseas Pakistanis are our valuable asset who are playing an important role in the development of the country's economy by sending remittances. He said that stability, economic development and provision of basic facilities to the people are the priorities of Muslim League (N). Governor Punjab said that the federal government has presented a very good and people-friendly budget despite the difficult economic situation. He said that the significant increase in the salaries of government employees is in the budget is commendable.

Governor Punjab said that he congratulates Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for presenting public friendly budget.

LHEAP program launched to make city hepatitis-free

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Health Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir has said that a model vaccination centre was being set up with the help of the World Health Organisation to eliminate hepatitis in the Rawalpindi district.

He was addressing the launching of the Local Hepatitis Elimination & Prevention (LHEAP) programme, developed in collaboration with the US-based task force for Global Health, at the Rawalpindi

Police foiled smuggling bid of 6,050 liters Iranian oil

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police, foiling a smuggling attempt, seized over 6,050,000 liters of Iranian diesel here in the limits of Daraban Police Station on Monday. According to police spokesman, following the special directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, a police team led by SDPO Kulachi Circle Abdul Rasheed Khan along with Daraban Police Station SHO Abdul Ghaffar Khan foiled a smuggling bid of Iranian diesel.

CM reviews "Ab Gaon Chamkein Ge" program

Naqvi also visits Complaints Cell, inspects sections

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over a meeting at his office to review recommendations for the successful implementation of the "Ab Gaon Chamkein Ge" program.

The primary objective of this plan is to establish a comprehensive cleanliness system at the ward level within the union councils.

According to the proposed plan, dedicated sanitation workers will be assigned to improve the cleanliness standards at the village level. They will utilize rickshaws, tractors, and tractor-trolleys to effectively remove solid waste from the villages and dispose of it outside their premises. Additionally, a chowkidari system will be introduced, ensuring the presence of a vigilant 'chowkidar' in each ward of the union council.

During the meeting, the chief minister emphasized the importance of implementing a sustainable cleanliness system in villages, drawing inspiration from successful models in urban areas. He stressed the need to prioritize measures that guarantee the provision of clean water and other essential facilities to the rural population.

Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir, SMBR, secretary finance, secretary local government, and others attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid a visit to the Chief Minister's Complaint Cell and Special Monitoring Unit to inspect various sections of the cell and special monitoring unit, carefully reviewing their performance.

To his disappointment, some officers and staff were found absent from their offices. Expressing strong displeasure over the staff's absence, the Caretaker CM took immediate action and ordered removal of the head of the complaint cell from his position.

He emphasized that operating air conditioners in the absence of officers and staff amounted to a wasteful utilization of resources.

Additionally, the Caretaker CM engaged in telephonic conversations with the complainants present in the complaint cell, attentively listening to their issues. He assured the complainants that their concerns would be resolved promptly.

Emphasizing the significance of addressing citizens' problems within a specified time frame, he emphasized the need to keep the complainants informed about the progress made on each received complaint.

Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir, Secretary to CM, and the Secretary (Coordination) to CM were also present.



MUZAFFARABAD: Speaker Legislative Assembly of Azad Kashmir Ch. Latif Akbar taking oath from newly elected Sardar Zia - Ul-Qamar at the Capital of AJK.

Governor says: Federal govt provides relief to common man, business community in budget

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Monday said that despite the economic crisis, the federal government has provided relief to the common people including the business community in the budget. The current federal government has allocated 57 billion rupees for the merged districts in the budget, he said while talking to a representative delegation of Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry here at Governor House. Representatives of Kohat Press Club and Kohat Bar Council were also included in the delegation. The Governor said that the services of the business community in providing economic stability and employment in the province are commendable.



GILGIT: Secretary Finance Gilgit-Baltistan Faisal Peerzada giving away winner trophy to team Captain during the 1st final match between Gilgit01 and GB Nalter during Jashn-e-Baharan Freestyle Polo Tournament at Aga Khan Shahi Polo ground.

Two bodies found in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): Bodies of two persons were found from different parts of Faisalabad during the past 12 hours.

A police spokesman said here on Monday that some passersby spotted corpse of 55-year-old man lying at a deserted place near Darbar Qaim Sain and in formed Ghulam Muhammad Abad police.

International News

Turkey's president unwavering on two-state policy to resolve Cyprus' ethnic division

Monitoring Desk
NICOSIA: Turkey's president said Monday that any deal resolving Cyprus' nearly half-century ethnic division must be based on recognition of a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the island nation's northern third.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks in the north during his first overseas visit after his re-election last month aren't new, but suggest that Ankara's policy line on Cyprus remains unwavering, despite international condemnation of the two-state deal proposal that runs contrary to U.N. resolutions calling for a single, federated Cyprus.

"No one can bear to waste another 50 years of time," Erdogan said during a joint news conference with Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar. "If there is to be a return to the negotiating table, the only way to do this is to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

It also dashes hopes harbored by Cyprus' internationally-recognized government of a speedy return to negotiations, although a spokesman for President Nikos Anastasiades said Monday that Erdogan will be judged by his deeds rather than his words. Cyprus was split in 1974 when Turkey invaded in the wake of a coup by support-

ers of union with Greece. Turkish Cypriots declared independence nearly a decade later, but that's only recognized by Turkey, which maintains more than 35,000 troops and an array of armaments in the north.

U.N.-led peace talks haven't resolved the dispute. The most recent round in July 2017 broke down over a Turkish insistence on maintaining military intervention rights and a permanent troop presence under any new arrangement. Another stumbling block was a Greek Cypriot rejection of a Turkish Cypriot demand for the right to veto all government decisions on a federal level.



TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei views a model of a nuclear facility.

Putin uses public holiday to laud patriotic feelings as support for troops in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Monday marked the Day of Russia national holiday by lauding the country's patriotic tradition as a support for soldiers fighting in Ukraine.

"This public holiday marks the inseparability of centuries-old history, the greatness and glory of the Fatherland, affirms the unity of the multinational people, devotion to their country, a warm, sincere attitude towards their beloved Motherland," he said at a ceremony presenting state awards.

"Such keen feelings... in a difficult time for Russia, they unite our society even more strongly, serve as a reliable support for our heroes, the participants in the special military operation," Putin said, using the Russian official terminology for the Ukraine conflict.

The holiday comes amid intensifying counter-offensive operations by Ukraine against Russian forces that occupy about 20% of the country. Ukrainian officials in recent days claimed to have regained control of some villages and to have made advances at some points along the front line.

Although Russia has been widely criticized for strikes on civilian targets including apartment buildings, Putin told recipients of the state awards that he was shocked by Ukraine attacking civilian areas.



MARSAALAM: Plumes of smoke erupt from a yacht.

China's Xi says willing to begin free trade talks with Honduras

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China is willing to begin talks on a free trade agreement with Honduras "as soon as possible", Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Monday, during the first visit by the Central American country's president since forming diplomatic ties in March.

Honduras' President Xiomara Castro is on a six-day official visit to China. She launched diplomatic relations with Beijing after cutting ties with its rival, Taiwan, in a bid for more investment and jobs. The country is also seeking support from China to mitigate its debt burden.

China will actively promote Honduran products to enter the Chinese market, Xi was quoted as saying by state broadcaster CCTV. China's customs said on Monday it had approved the import of Whiteleg shrimp from Honduras.

Xi said China will unwaveringly develop the friendly relations between the two nations and firmly support Honduras' economic and social development.

China also encourages Chinese enterprises to participate in Honduras' projects in areas including energy, infrastructure and telecommunications, CCTV cited a joint declaration as saying.

The Honduran side is willing to provide policy support and facilitation, CCTV reported.

US decides to rejoin UNESCO and pay back dues, to counter Chinese influence

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: UNESCO announced Monday that the United States plans to rejoin the U.N. cultural and scientific agency — and pay more than \$600 million in back dues — after a decade-long dispute sparked by the organization's move to include Palestine as a member. U.S. officials say the decision to return was motivated by concern that China is filling the gap left by the U.S. in UNESCO policymaking, notably in setting standards for artificial intelligence and technology education around the world.

The move will face a vote by UNESCO's member states in the coming weeks. But approval seems a formality after the resounding applause that greeted the announcement in UNESCO's Paris headquarters Monday. Not a single country raised an objection to the return of a country that was once the agency's single biggest funder. The U.S. and Israel stopped financing UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member state in 2011. The Trump administration decided in 2017 to withdraw from the agency altogether the following year, citing long-running anti-Israel bias and management problems.

UNESCO's director general, Audrey Azoulay, has worked to address those concerns since her election in 2017, and that appears to have paid off.

"It's a historic moment for UNESCO," she said Monday. "It's also an important day for multilateralism." U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard Verma submitted a letter last week to Azoulay formalizing the plan to rejoin. He noted progress in depoliticizing debate about the Middle East and reforming the agency's management, according to the hand-delivered letter, obtained by AP.

The decision is a big boost to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, known for its World Heritage program as well as projects to fight climate change and teach girls to read.

Netherlands and Canada bring torture case against Syria at UN's top court

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The Netherlands and Canada jointly filed a complaint against Syria on Monday before the United Nations' highest judicial body, alleging the regime of Bashar Assad has tortured thousands of civilians, in violation of a U.N. convention.

The pair say Syria has "committed countless violations of international law" and want the International Court of Justice to issue provisional measures ordering Damascus to halt an alleged widespread torture program against anyone opposed to the government during the country's long-running civil war. The Dutch first announced three years ago a plan to hold Syria accountable for what it called "horrible crimes," asking Assad's government via diplomatic note to enter into negotiations under the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Canada joined the process in 2021. The 1984 treaty requires parties to enter into mediation before bringing the dispute to The Hague-based court. The complaint says that the process has failed. The Netherlands and Canada say there is ample evidence that the regime has engaged in systemic gross human rights violations against its own people since 2011. "Syrian civilians have been tortured, murdered, disappeared, attacked with poison gas or lost everything when they fled for their lives," Foreign Affairs Minister Wopke Hoekstra said in a statement.

Driver charged after Australia's worst bus accident in decades kills 10 wedding guests

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: A man was charged with dangerous driving on Monday after at least 10 wedding guests were killed when the bus they were travelling in crashed at a roundabout in Australia's worst bus accident in almost 30 years, police said.

Twenty-five people were injured in the accident around 11:30pm on Sunday near the town of Greta, about 180km northwest of Sydney, police said.

The bus carrying 35 passengers left the road and flipped onto its side at a roundabout after a wedding in the Hunter region, a rural area famous for its vineyards and wedding spots. Police said the driver, a 58-year-old man, had been taken to hospital for mandatory drug testing. He was refused bail and is scheduled to appear in court on Tuesday. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese expressed his "deepest sympathies" to the families of the people killed and injured.

Iran says prisoner exchange with U.S. could happen soon

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran and the United States could exchange prisoners soon if Washington shows goodwill, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday, a day after Iran's supreme leader signalled the possibility of reaching a nuclear agreement with the West.

"Regarding the issue of exchanging prisoners with America... negotiations are ongoing through mediators."

Alvi for enhancing scientific cooperation among COMSTECH member countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday underscored the need for enhancing educational and scientific cooperation among COMSTECH members to overcome the challenges, being faced by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries in different sectors.

He said that there existed an abundance of open-source knowledge that needed to be fully utilized by the Muslim countries to their benefit.

The president expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the

Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) Scientific Advisory Council (SAC), led by the Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary, that called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president said that the world was undergoing rapid changes due to advancements in the field of science and technology and Islamic countries were required to strengthen their capacities and make faster decisions to keep pace with

the fast-changing world.

He said that the availability and democratization of knowledge had brought greater opportunities that should be fully capitalized upon by the Muslim countries. The president also underlined the need of taking benefit from emerging technologies, like Artificial Intelligence, as well as find out-of-box solutions to the problems being confronted by Muslim countries in the fields of education, science and technology. He said that the scientific advisory mechanisms of COMSTECH would also help fulfill the national requirements of OIC member



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the standing committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) Scientific advisory Council (SAC) Led by the Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr

Shazia Marri says:

BISP budget enhanced up to Rs. 455bn for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS), Shazia Marri Monday said that the incumbent government has enhanced Benazir Income Support Programme's (BISP) budget from Rs. 404 billion to Rs. 455 billion for the Financial Year 2023-24.

She informed the journalists about the budget increase during a press conference held here.

She said that Benazir Nashonuma budget saw a leap up from Rs. 4.8 billion to Rs. 32.2 billion.

While talking about the Benazir Nashonuma Programme, the minister apprised the audience that BISP has registered 0.643 million children, pregnant

women, and lactating mothers up to date.

As part of its ongoing development program, BISP has distributed Rs. 24 billion, effectively supporting vulnerable communities across the country. She negated the fake news circulating in the media recently about boosting the population through Benazir Nashonuma.

She said it was extremely irresponsible to spread such news which are completely unfounded and have no true grounds.

Shazia Marri emphasized the importance of the role of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in uplifting the lives of the underprivileged and marginalized segment of the

society.

BISP, which commenced in 2008 and was the brainchild of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, has proven to be a highly successful programme.

The program functions on non-political grounds, providing financial assistance to approximately 9 million women across the country which is targeted to be expanded to 9.3 million households after the recent increase in budget, she added.

While talking about the budgetary allocations she said that over the years, the budget allocation for the BISP has witnessed significant growth, reflecting the government's commitment to social welfare of the poor.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik presiding over meeting for update on Cyclone BIPARJOY.

Gen Inam says PDMAs conduct local-level needs assessment, mock exercises in vulnerable areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Monday instructed the provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs) to conduct a local-level needs assessment and mock exercises, deploy manpower and machinery, and work closely with relevant departments in areas at risk of Tropical Cyclone BIPARJOY effects.

The NDMA convened National Coordination Conference on Tropical Cyclone BIPARJOY presided by Chairman

NDMA, Lt. General Inam Haider Malik to review the development of 'Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm' (ESCS) BIPARJOY over Arabian Sea in PDMA Sindh Headquarter, Karachi participated by representatives of relevant stakeholders including Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), PDMAs Sindh and Balochistan, K-electric, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) HQ, District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), Radio Pakistan and Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), a news release said.

Khar, Belgian minister discuss cooperation in labour mobility

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and Belgian Secretary of State for Migration and Asylum Nicole de Moor on Monday discussed enhancing cooperation in the field of labour mobility.

MoS Hina Rabbani Khar held constructive discussions with the Belgian minister in this regard.

Earlier, she had arrived in Brussels on an official visit to Belgium, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar also met Senator Alessia Cleas, the Chair of the Pakistan Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The discussions focused on fostering stronger ties between the two nations and exploring avenues for increasing trade and investment cooperation.

PML-N to support PPP candidates in Karachi mayoral poll

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has extended support to the People's Party candidates in Mayor and Deputy Mayor's election.

The PML-N central leadership has communicated the PPP, a coalition partner in the federal government, about its decision.

PML-N Sindh President Shah Muhammad Shah while informing the PPP leadership has directed the deputy mayor's party candidates to withdraw their nomination papers.

Fourteen PML-N members in the city council will vote for the PPP's mayor and deputy mayor's candidates.

The decision has been taken on the instructions of the PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif.

People's Party has welcomed the PML-N decision and vowed to work jointly with the allied party for development of the city.

Earlier, the PML-N's elected chairmen had decided to field their own candidate, while expressing their discontent with the decision of the party's committee headed by Muhammad Zubair to extend support to the PPP.

Chairman HEC urges for best education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has urged the universities that apart from teaching, as a beacon of knowledge and enlightenment, the universities had the responsibility to produce good human beings.

Dr Mukhtar while talking to mediapersons said that conflict permeated various sectors of society including families, and deserved a collaborative and coordinated response.

Sharing his thoughts on the issues within society, he highlighted the importance of youth in the society and the role of youth in policy-making.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar cuts the cake along with Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Pakistan Danila Ganich and others, on the Occasion of "National Day of Russia" at Serena Hotel in Federal Capital.

Start of freight shipping between Pak-Russia a welcome step: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said that the start of freight shipping between Russia and Pakistan and the arrival of Russian oil yesterday was a great step.

The minister expressed these views while addressing the National Day of Russia.

Tarar said that ways of cooperation between Pakistan and Russia in various fields had started to open. The arrival of Rus-

sian oil in Pakistan was the beginning of a new era of cooperation between the two countries, he added.

He said that Pakistan valued relations with Russia and Russian cooperation. There was great scope for mutual investment, economic development

and new employment opportunities between the two countries, he added.

He said that Pakistan was a very favorable and attractive country for Russian investors.

There was scope for

extensive cooperation with Russia in trade, economy, security, defense, counterterrorism, education, culture and other fields, he added.

The minister said that the relationship between the two countries span a long period of time. "Our mutual relations have matured over time to meet the demands of a changing world and these friendly relations between the two countries will set new paths for common goals," he added.

Sports play key role in holistic development of children: Shaza

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said sports play major role in ensuring holistic development of children.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, she said that from today, Prime Minister's Sports Talent Hunt for football was being started across the country. She said that the purpose of the initiative was to take the youth towards positivity and to eliminate toxicity spread among youngsters due to politics based on hatred and unrest.

She said the PM Youth Programme was launched in 2013 by the PML-N government, and Maryam Nawaz had presented its idea. She said that a number of programmes were

started under the Youth Programme like scholarships, laptops, 'Qarz-e-Hsna', business loans, internships, etc.

She said that during the last one year, thousands of children participated in hockey and volleyball trials. Shaza said that in the coming two weeks, trials would be conducted across the country and calendar in this regard would also be shared. She said that after Eidul Azha, provincial leagues would be started on completion of trials. She said that teams, which would come forward in provincial leagues, their national competition would be held by the end of July in Islamabad.

The SAPM said that economic well-being of sportsmen and sportswomen was important so

prizes would be given in provincial leagues as well. She said that it was unfortunate that in previous years, departmental sports were stopped by the previous government. Shaza Fatima said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had restored departmental sports. The provincial government had collaborated with the federal government in very good way and she hoped that collective efforts would definitely yield positive results for providing good opportunities to children in sports, she added. She said that Rs 2-3 million would be a prize money for provincial leagues. She urged the youth to actively take part in it and said that the first trial event was being started from Lahore College for Women University.

Senate passes resolution commemorating martyrs' sacrifices

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a unanimous decision, the Senate passed a resolution on Monday, expressing profound appreciation for the heroic sacrifices made by martyrs in the pursuit of peace, safety, security, and stability in Pakistan.

Presented by Minister of State for Law and Justice, Shahadat Awan, on the floor of the Upper House of Parliament, the resolution paid tribute to the unparalleled role played by the Armed Forces in safeguarding the nation against both external and internal threats.

Furthermore, the Senate resolution strongly condemned the shocking and distressing acts of vandalism and arson that occurred on May 9. These reprehensible actions targeted prominent landmarks such as Jinnah House Lahore, monuments dedicated to martyrs and national heroes, installations belonging to the Armed Forces, and the Radio Pakistan Peshawar building.

Expressing their deep sense of dismay and resentment, the House deplored these attacks and demanded that those responsible for planning, facilitating, and instigating them be brought to justice under the full extent of the law.



KARACHI: Labours unload the discounted Russian crude oil from the tanker of the cargo ship transporting the first shipment, at Karachi Port Trust.

Chairman NAB says: NAB used for political objectives in the past

Reforms underway to improve bureau performance

LAHORE (APP): National Accountability Bureau Chairman Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Nazir Ahmed has said efforts are being made to bring about more reforms and improvements in NAB system so that its mission to eliminate corruption and redress people's grievances can be carried out more effectively and efficiently.

Addressing a cheque distribution ceremony among affectees of four housing societies, he said that it was NAB's responsibility to hand over the recovered amount to the affectees in a transparent manner.

The chairman said that NAB's Lahore region had contributed significantly to the efforts against corruption, as it made possible recoveries of billions of rupees in various housing sector scams and returned the money to the affectees.

Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Nazir Ahmed said that direct recoveries of about Rs 100 billion were made possible by NAB during the last 15 to 20 years. He said that in the past, attempts were made to politicise NAB by using it as a tool for political engineering, due to which it had to face severe criticism by other institutions including judiciary, but now reforms were being introduced in the Bureau to overcome the anomalies or issues for reviving its reputation and taking elaborate actions against corruption.

He said that had NAB been working efficiently, country's corruption index should have been improved, but the international corruption indexes had shown a decline in Pakistan's position in efforts and parameters against corruption.



LAHORE: Chairman NAB Lt. Gen. Nazir Ahmed and DG NAB Amjad Majeed Otakh presenting cheque to Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman on behalf of Punjab Administration at NAB Office.

ITA impounds 70 vehicles, issues fine to 130 during last 18 days

ISLAMABAD: Inspectors from the Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA) checked a total of 245 vehicles out of which, 130 were found to be in violation of regulations and were issued challans while 70 were impounded during the last 18 days.

According to the ICT spokesperson, the authority conducted a thorough inspection of bus stands and wagon stands as per the directive of Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon. The aim of the inspection was to crack down on routes violation, overcharging, and illegal stopping in the city.

The inspections took place between May 20 and June 8 during which strict action was also taken against vehicles emitting excessive smoke, which poses a hazard to the environment and public health.

The violators were collectively fined Rs 89,200 and they were given a warning to adhere to the rules and regulations in the future. It is important to note that this operation against smoke-emitting vehicles and other violations will continue on a daily basis, as part of the authorities' ongoing efforts to ensure a safe and well-regulated public transportation system in Islamabad.

SC disposes of coronavirus suo moto notice case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Monday disposed of hearing of the suo moto action regarding combating the pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19). A four-member larger bench of the apex court headed by Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan heard the case.

During the course of proceedings, the bench remarked that the World Health Organization had ended the emergency related to declaring

Coronavirus as a global pandemic. The court stated that the federal and provincial governments submitted progress reports from time to time. Coronavirus was no longer considered a global epidemic, it added.

The court stated that the federal government had been issuing emergency notifications from time to time and preventive measures were taken to deal with the Coronavirus epidemic.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of student of University of Gwadar visiting Chinese Consulate

Police issue driving license suspension notices to 104 e-challan defaulters

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have taken a strong stance against traffic violators by issuing notices to suspend the driving licenses of 104 individuals who have failed to pay their e-challans. In a recent development, an additional 293 lawbreakers who had violated traffic rules promptly submitted e-challans and paid fines amounts. This move comes as part of the police's efforts to ensure road safety and enforce traffic regulations.

According to a police public relations officer, the authorities are actively working to locate and impound vehicles belonging to e-challan defaulters. They

are employing advanced technology such as the briefcam software and Safe City cameras, which have proven instrumental in identifying and tracking down these violators. Simultaneously, the remaining defaulters are being duly informed through messages, phone calls, and updates on the official website of the Islamabad Capital Police.

To facilitate citizens in checking their e-challan status, a convenient online system has been established. By entering their vehicle registration number on the provided link, citizens can easily access information regarding any pending e-challans.



LAHORE: Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, SAPM for Youth Affairs in a group photograph with students during inauguration ceremony of Sports Talent Hunt under Prime Minister's Youth Programme at Lahore College for Women University