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dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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PM calls on int'l community to ensure fair, judicious distribution of resources

It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is painful for the rest of the body as well

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday called on the international community to come up with a plan for fair, equitable and judicious distribution of resources to ensure sustainable peace and harmony in the world.

Speaking here at the summit for a "New Global Financing Pact", he said North had made progress

and they would look forward to implementing its experiences in Pakistan, for providing jobs and livelihoods and for promoting industry and agriculture by learning from its model of success. "It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is pain-

ful for the rest of the body as well." The prime minister said last year, Pakistan faced devastating floods due to climate change and in those floods 33 million people were affected, millions of acres of standing crops were washed away, 1700 people including children died and half a million animals were drowned. Two million houses

were either completely demolished or partially damaged, he said, adding the people of Pakistan bravely faced the devastating impacts of the floods.

He said his government had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars from its own scarce resources to give financial assistance to the flood affectees all over the country.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari's witnessing MoU Signing Ceremony between KPT & UAE during the inauguration ceremony of Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited.



FRANCE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the round table discussion "Innovating with instruments and financing to address new vulnerabilities" at Summit for New Global Financing Pact being held in France.

Murad orders preparation of PC-1 of Safe City project

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the Safe City Project would not only be the installation of sensitive close circuit cameras, but it would also be a complete IT package empowered with artificial intelligence.

This he said while presiding over a meeting of the Safe City Authority at CM House here Thursday. The meeting was attended by Minister IT Taimur Talpur, Special Assistant to CM Tanzeem, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary LG Najam Shah, DG Sindh Safe City Authority Aijaz Shaikh, MPA Nida khuro, MPA Mahmood Alam Jamote and other concerned officers.

The DG Sindh Safe City Authority (SSCA) briefed the chief minister

that the NRTC had done a good job for the development of the city project. Under the project, 10,000 cameras would be installed in the red zone area in the first phase with a modern Command and Control center, he added.

The CM was told that the CCTV system would have the latest cameras. The network would have a dual power system - which means solar and electricity. The Chief Minister said that the safe city system installed in other cities of the country has various maintenance and operational problems. "I want you (SSCA) to resolve all those issues at the designing stage," he said and added that the concerned firms supplying equipment for the system should be involved through a contract to maintain and operate the system.

Making Karachi clean among priorities: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that making the city clean was one of the provincial government's priorities, and has instructed the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board to work with all the energy and available resources to clean the city. He said this while making a surprise visit to different areas of the city on Thursday. PPP South District General Secretary Karamullah Waqas, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board officers were also present on the occasion.

Mayor Karachi inspected the cleanliness of the roads and talked to the staff engaged in cleaning work there, he said that we have to serve the city with hard work and dedication, he said that if the citizens are concerned about cleanliness and have any com-

plaints, they can register on 1128 so that action can be taken. He said the way the city clean was one of the provincial government's priorities, and has instructed the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board to work with all the energy and available resources to clean the city.

He said that arrangements are in progress for Eid-ul-Azha, trenches are being made at many places in connection with removal of offal operation. He said that it is a big operation and millions of citizens sacrifice animals on Eid-ul-Azha. Mayor Karachi said that complaint centers will be set up in every district so that citizens could register their complaints. He said that along with Eid-ul-Azha, the work of cleaning the drains is also going on because the monsoon season is about to start and the Meteorological Department.



LARKANA: Newly elected Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab along with Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad Baloch talking to media persons at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

Toshakhana case: NAB again summons PTI chairman

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman once again on June 22 for an inquiry into the Toshakhana case.

The anti-graft watchdog has summoned PTI chief again after the latter failed to appear the bureau on June 21.

The anti-graft watchdog has summoned him in connection with an ongoing inquiry regarding misuse of authority, criminal breach of trust, and illegal gain in selling gifted state assets.

The NAB has asked the former prime minister to appear before Combined Investigation Team (CIT) at 11:00 on June 21 for the recording of his statement.

KP Governor, CM call on President

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan called on President Dr Arif Alvi here at the Governor House on Thursday.

Overall law and order situation in the province, besides administrative, financial and development affairs, especially of the merged tribal districts came under discussion during the meeting.

Difficulties and problems confronted by tribal people after the merger and the measures taken for their resolution under the law and the Constitution were also discussed.

PM, IMF MD discuss ongoing programme, bilateral cooperation

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Managing Director International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva met Thursday on the sidelines of New Global Financial Pact Summit here and exchanged views on the ongoing programme and cooperation between Pakistan and the IMF.

Recalling their recent telephone conversation on May 27, Shehbaz Sharif apprised Georgieva of Pakistan's economic outlook.

The prime minister outlined the steps taken by the government for economic growth and stability.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to further bolster bilateral cooperation

PARIS (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have agreed to expedite the collaborative process in order to further bolster the bilateral cooperation. The understanding to this effect reached during an interaction between the two leaders on the sidelines of the New Global Financing Pact Summit being held

at Paris in France. The two leaders also exchanged views on matters of bilateral interest.

During the interaction, the Prime Minister expressed his best wishes for Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz whereas Prince Mohammed bin Salman also expressed the sentiments of goodwill towards the government and people of Pakistan.

SC seeks details of arrested accused of May 9 riots

Justices Isa, Tariq recuse themselves; seven-member bench hears petitions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday sought complete details of accused arrested in connection with the May 9 riots and instructed respondents to submit written comments in the petitions against trial of civilian offenders in military courts.

A seven-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhter, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Muzahir Naqvi and Justice Faysal Malik heard the case.

Earlier, a nine-member bench was dissolved after Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood recused to hear the case. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial asked Attorney General for Paki-

stan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan to produce the correct details of people who had been arrested as the bench wanted to conclude the case as soon as possible.

It should be told that how many people had been arrested and where the women prisoners were being kept, he added.

The CJP observed that every accused should be given an opportunity to defend himself through their counsel, but the lawyers were also being arrested and harassed, which was intolerable. AGP Mansoor Awan said harassing any lawyer was an illegal act. The chief justice remarked that the court wanted to remain limited to the facts, asking why the names of some police personnel were also included in the cases.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses during inauguration ceremony of the Peoples Bus Service Mobile Application, held at local hotel in Karachi.

Sindh govt launches mobile app for Peoples Bus Service

KARACHI (INP): In a significant move aimed at enhancing commuter convenience, Sindh Transport Minister, Sharjeel Memon, officially introduced a mobile application for the Peoples Bus Service on Thursday.

Addressing the launching ceremony held in Karachi, Sharjeel Memon stated that the primary objective behind the app's launch is to provide ease and comfort to the city's commuters. Improving the transportation system across Sindh, with a particular focus on Karachi, is of utmost importance to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

Minister Memon expressed, "The Sindh Government empathizes with the travel difficulties faced by the people and seeks to alleviate their suffering." The minister further re-

vealed that the bus service has been integrated into an online system, offering a range of features to benefit users. These include:

Direct complaint registration to the concerned authorities, facilitating prompt resolution of issues. Online booking services, route information, fare details, and other pertinent information accessible to users. Implementation of an Intelligent Transport System to monitor and manage bus operations effectively.

Minister Memon also announced that more green and red buses are scheduled to join the People's Bus service in July, further improving public transportation options. Additionally, he highlighted recent successful initiatives, such as the introduction of the first E-bus and Pink bus in Karachi.

Pak-UAE joint venture Karachi Gateway Terminal inaugurated

KARACHI (APP): Limited (KGTL), a joint venture of UAE's Abu Dhabi Port Group and Karachi Port Trust to improve infrastructure and facilities at one of the major ports of Pakistan was unveiled on Thursday.

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori inaugurated the Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited by unveiling the plaque in a ceremony held here at Karachi Port Trust.

An agreement and memorandum of understanding were also signed between Abu Dhabi Ports Group and Karachi Port Trust at the occasion. The 50-year concession agreement would attract a much-needed investment of over \$ 2 billion to expand and modernize ship-

ment facilities, and establish special economic zone and rail connectivity between KPT and Port Qasim.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ADPG Captain Juma Shamsi and Chairman KPT Syed Sayedain Raza signed the agreement in presence of Federal Minister of Maritime Affairs Faisal Sabzwari, Chief Minister (CM) of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s Minister for Energy and Infrastructure Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei, Investment and foreign trade Minister Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Ambassador Sheikh Ahmed Dalmoook al Maktoum, Consul General in Karachi Bakheet Ateeq

AlRemeithi, Diplomats, elected representatives, and higher officials were also present.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Sindh said, "Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited will help modernizing the terminal with the induction of state-of-the-art facilities. He lauded the UAE's investment in key port operations would also help in stabilizing Pakistan's economy." Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Faisal Sabzwari, addressing the signing ceremony informed that an upfront investment of Rs 50 million would be followed by further investment in PICT and Port Qasim and up-gradation will result in 12.5 % enhanced royalty.

Asif urges judiciary to work within its ambit

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday the judiciary had already interfered in the domain of parliament and must be stopped from doing so.

Addressing a session of the National Assembly chaired by Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, the minister said the matter of the trial of civilians in military courts had been taken to the Supreme Court and during the previous regime, 24 or 25 people were sentenced by military courts.

He said the SC bench had split and the result would come in a day or two. He said those who had raised the issue had political interests, adding that the petitioners had reservations with their respective parties.

He said the May 9 violence in which state institutions and memorials of martyrs were attacked was unprecedented. He said such a crime were unpardonable.

Electricity shortfall exceeds 6000MW across country

ISLAMABAD (Online): The electricity shortfall has exceeded 6000 megawatts across country.

The duration of electricity load shedding has reached to 10 hours.

According to sources of Power Division, the shortfall of electricity is 6160 megawatts.

The overall production of electricity is 20540 megawatts and 26700 megawatt is required.

According to sources of Power Division, government thermal power plants are producing 570 megawatt electricity and hydropower generates 8000 megawatt electricity.

The production of electricity of power houses of private sectors is 7300 megawatt.

The production of electricity by wind power plants is 1200 megawatt. The production of electricity by solar power plants is 120 megawatts. 150 MW of electricity is being generated from bagasse.



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of New Global Financial Pact Summit held in France.

City Police chief chairs meeting for security arrangements on Eid

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho on Wednesday presided over an important meeting, regarding the security of Eid-ul-Adha/cattle markets and anti-crime measures.

The meeting, which was held at the Karachi Police Office (KPO), was attended by all Zonal DIGPs, DIGP - CIA, DIGP - Admin, DIGP - Traffic, District SSPs, SPs Investigation and other senior police officers. City Police Chief said on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, foolproof security measures should be taken while patrolling, snap

checking at the entry and exit routes of the megalopolis should be made more effective and coordinated.

He ordered that the security of bazaars, shopping malls and cattle markets should be made very solid and coordinated at the police station level and security should be provided to the shopkeepers as well as the buyers, through coordination with the organizers of cattle markets. Sweeping and clearance of all mosques, Imam Bargahs and other open places including where Eid congregations are held should be ensured.

Pakistan rejects peace talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday rejected holding peace talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan due to its involvement in killing civilians and security personnel in the country.

"Pakistan will not negotiate with individuals who are responsible for the killing of Pakistani civilians and law enforcement officials," the Foreign Office spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing, referring to an earlier statement of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch was responding to queries regarding the statement of

the spokesman for Afghanistan's Taliban government, Zabihullah Mujahid who offered mediation between the Pakistan government and TTP.

On the life loss of Pakistanis in the capsized boat off the coast of Greece, she said 12 Pakistani nationals were among the 104 survivors, who were in good physical condition.

The spokesperson said the Greek authorities had recovered 84 bodies, however, the number and identification of Pakistani nationals among the deceased and missing was unconfirmed at the moment.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Pipe dreams

Our sinking economy has been assigned a new crew, but what does this new crew know about navigating a catastrophic storm? Clearly, very little. The plan it has come up with is little better than asking the ship's band to play a new tune while the storm outside rages on.

Though the new Special Investment Facilitation Council sounds great in theory, it cannot achieve its goals by simply offering a secure bubble for foreign investors to operate in. After all, any business that wishes to operate in the country needs to be organically embedded in its larger economy in order to thrive.

The SIFC has to promise a fundamental change in the way business is done in this country. Unfortunately, as the PDM government's unimaginative budget for the next fiscal year has signalled, there seems to be little appetite for actually setting our house in order before inviting foreign investors into it. This, primarily, is what makes its plan appear outlandish rather than revolutionary.

For perspective: Pakistan received foreign direct investment inflows of only about \$1.3bn in the 11-month period from July 2022 to May 2023. This represented an almost 21pc decline in FDI compared to the previous year.

In the same period, foreign investors were prevented from receiving the profits and dividends from their investments outside the country. At least \$1bn in profits were blocked by the government from being repatriated in this period.

This limitation had to be placed because the government was running out of foreign exchange due to a sustained drop in exports and remittances received from overseas Pakistanis.

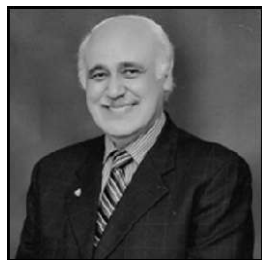
In other words, foreign investors were made to suffer over policy failures that were entirely the government's own. Now, the same decision-makers responsible for that fiasco would like to sell 'preferential access' to the Pakistani state to foreign investors. How many will take them seriously?

"The immediate task [for the SIFC] is to increase foreign direct investment to \$5bn," the prime minister said in a Tuesday tweet. That is well more than thrice the level of annual FDI expected to be recorded by the end of the outgoing fiscal year.

One would expect the country to become at least three times better for doing business if it wishes to attract three times more investment, yet Islamabad's priorities have lately seemed to be something else entirely.

Our senators this week moved legislation that will give current and former Senate chairpersons outlandish new perks in addition to the ones they already enjoy.

These perks will come at the expense of the nation's rapidly depleting resources. How safe would any foreign investor feel sinking their money into a country which doesn't seem to respect the limitations of its own reality? That is the key point to ponder.



F.S. Aijazuddin

Life is cyclical — what goes around, comes around. The ancients believed that in a full lifetime, if you are born rich, you will suffer poverty but die rich. If you are born poor, you may see riches but die poor.

Pakistan was born poor — Jinnah's "moth-eaten country" rescued at birth by the intervention of M.K. Gandhi who forced Nehru's government to release the Rs55 crores due to it. A lifetime later, Pakistan is still poor, with about \$4 billion to its name and external debt and liabilities of \$126bn. To whom does it owe all this money?

One US analyst has categorised its creditors into: multilateral debt, Paris Club debt, private and commercial loans, and Chinese debt.

Multilateral creditors include the World Bank (\$18bn), the Asian Development Bank (\$15bn) and the IMF (\$7.6bn). Smaller amounts are owed to the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Interest on these is concessional and the burden of repayment spread over 18 to 30 years, which explains why repayments of \$4.5bn for the year to multilateral creditors represented a fifth of the total debt repayment. A second category — Paris Club debt — is owed to 22 creditor countries — Japan, Germany, France and the US. It amounts to \$8.5bn, repayable over 40 years with 1pc interest rate.

To private debtors, we owe \$7.8bn in the form of Eurobonds and Sukuk bonds, and to commercial lenders — mostly Chinese financial institutions — an-

other \$7bn. Commercial loans are short-term and carry biting rates of interest.

Our obligations to the Chinese are high-er than the Himalayas. We owe China ab-out \$27bn. Of this, \$10bn is bilateral debt, \$6.2bn provided by the Chinese government to Pakistani public-sector enterprises, and \$7bn Chinese commercial loans.

In 2024-25, it is estimated that Pakistan's debt repayment and servicing alone will be about \$24.6bn. In 2025-26, the debt-servicing burden will be no easier to bear. It is predicted at approximately \$23bn.

"Where did all this money go?" is a question many Pakistanis who are still waiting to vote can ask, with justification. There is no new Mangla or a second Tarbela. No bullet trains hurtle across our dehydrated landscape. We are nuclear but remain starved of conventional power. We have insufficient schools, too few universities, inadequate hospitals and medical facilities, and stagnant job creation.

Some remember with nostalgia the days when saner governments used the Planning Commission as a tool to regulate equitable development across the country. Five-year plans were declarations of national priorities, and each annual development programme tried to balance federal and provincial demands with available resources, foreign and local.

These plans and programmes were like the Ten Commandments — only as good as those who abided by them. Some rulers were tempted to bypass such fiscal discipline. In 1969, soon after martial law had been declared, Air Marshal Nur Khan (then deputy chief martial law administrator) called on Mr Qamar-ul-Islam (then the powerful secretary, Planning Commission). Nur Khan asked him for an economic plan. "Do you want a short-term one or a long-term one?"

the sage bureaucrat replied. "What is the difference?" the DCMLA retorted testily. "Depends on how long you intend to stay in power."

Not surprisingly, later governments fo-u-nd the constraints of the Planning Commission irksome. In India, Prime Minister Modi (for different reasons but with the same intent) dissolved the Indian Planning Commission in 2015, replacing it with NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India).

In Islamabad, the Planning Commission exists as a ministry. It functions, but in name, miming fiscal control. The ministry crunches numbers but with all the bite of a toothless geriatric.

Where is the power of the PC-1 form without which no project could be considered for inclusion in the government's budgetary system? Where is the authority of the Central Development Working Party, a filter that preceded submission of justifiable projects to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council?

In 2006, a Charter of Democracy was si-g-ned by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. It envisaged political harmony and reconciliation, yielding a strong democratic system. That charter, though not dead, is buried. The latest mantra by their successors is a 'charter of economy'. Can a coalition of 13 disparate political parties be expected to agree on a common list of economic priorities? They cannot even agree on an election date that will decide their future. Meanwhile, a beleaguered Iman Khan is made to bide his time in forced isolation. He pines for more productive solace in the retort of the defeated royalist to Cromwell's supporters during the English Civil War: "Now that you have done with us, go fight amongst yourselves!"

Bonn climate talks



Aisha Khan

The 58th session of the Subsidiary for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SB58) of the United Nations Framework Convention held in Bonn concluded in mid-June. Every year the Bonn meetings represent the last big milestone culminating at the year-end annual Conference of Parties. These meetings are also used to focus diplomatic attention and build champions and alliances that can rally around a shared vision of an ambitious package of outcomes.

The end of the Bonn talks, with agenda agreement on SB58 in extremis on last day, mostly on procedural decisions, reflects more than just negotiators reaching the limits of political mandates. The lack of agreement on agenda set the tone of low trust and fragmented outcomes. The delay in agenda agreement also had a negative spill-over into other negotiations and created a disconnect between negotiations and the reality of the escalating climate crisis. The lack of good faith in engagement and vacuum created by the absence of strong leadership highlights challenges that could mar negotiations at COP28. Far from shifting to high-ambition territory, the meeting was not successful in producing a package of comprehensive outcomes that is balanced across thematic areas.

In the backdrop of this uncompromising mood and core political differences, it is very important that stalling areas such as adaptation, loss

and damage and finance are taken up by champion parties to help shift from current positions and find common ground for unlocking upward movement at COP28.

The UAE can play a role by providing greater clarity on its COP vision and how it plans to deliver. The state of play on the Global Stocktake (GST) will make it difficult to develop a coherent vision without political agreement on sticky issues. Bonn ended with a significant consensus gap that needs to narrow on vision and pathways for a satisfactory outcome in Dubai. Political-level diplomacy will be needed especially on fossil fuel transition language, finance outcomes, adaptation, loss and damage and the overall GST package to facilitate dialogue across the diplomatic corridors.

The next steps in adaptation finance will require greater clarity on the roadmap as well as on other components such as adaptation conversations in the New Collective Quantified Goal, finance targets and indicators in the Global Goal on Adaptation framework, and adaptation in the global finance reform agenda including Bridgetown Agenda. Finance remains central to the agenda. It was contentious in Bonn and is likely to emerge as a fault line across discussions on mitigation, GST, just transition as well as loss and damage. Pledges and signals sent through upcoming moments like the summit in Paris and UNSG the GCF Replenishment Conference in Bonn and annual meetings in Marrakech in October as well as in discussions taking place in Bangkok and Geneva can help in building trust and moving towards negotiated outcomes.

There was growing concern about the effectiveness of the Santiago Network on Loss and

Damage and its usefulness on feeding into the transitional committee to ensure an outcome at COP28. With little time remaining it will be crucial for TC members to build on progress and work towards potential landing zones for developing recommendations for COP28.

With so much at stake, forward movement on mitigation was slow and negotiators fell back on emphasising familiar political statements, instead of using the dialogue as a collaborative problem-solving space. In the coming months, it is important to undertake further political dialogue to enhance mutual understanding of the aims and outcomes of the Mitigation Work Programme and make concrete progress on finance to address the concerns of developing countries.

The present situation risks a lowest common denominator outcome across the COP28 package. Parties will need to work intensively to find an acceptable arrangement on the agenda and more work to articulate comprehensive and scientifically rigorous visions of outcomes. The core task of diplomacy in the lead-up to COP28 for the parties and the presidency will be to further flesh out a clear vision of a final package of outcomes. As the climate clock continues to tick, it is time to dial down differences and accelerate momentum on just agreements. The mood at every COP since Poland (2018) has been on a downward trajectory with visible signs of growing frustration at the slow pace of progress. COP28 provides a GST moment of hope where every effort should be made to capitalise on discussions organised under the UNFCCC umbrella, IFIs and other platforms to strengthen cooperation and build resilience for all. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Japan provides ¥ 315m for Human Resource Development Scholarship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Japan on Thursday announced grant aid worth 315 million Japanese Yen (around 2.25 million USD) for the Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) program in Pakistan.

ITO Takeshi, Charge'd Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan and Muhammad Humair Karim, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the Exchange of Notes on this program at the ceremony,

said a news release. The grant agreement for the aforementioned program was also signed between Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs and KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office.

JDS is designed to support the social and economic development of the country by providing government officials with the opportunity to obtain

Master's or Doctoral degree in Japan with aims to enhance their knowledge in public administration and to strengthen the relationship between Japan and Pakistan. The participants of JDS program engaging in the formulation and implementation of such policies will be enrolled at the partner universities in Japan and are expected to acquire further knowledge in their field while learning about Japanese culture and traditions.

Since 2018 when JDS

was launched in Pakistan, 31 government officials have successfully completed their degrees while 35 are currently pursuing their academic goals in Japan. Further, 18 officials will be dispatched to Japan in the middle of the year 2023.

This occasion celebrates the signing of the sixth batch of the program in Pakistan. For this batch, the maximum number of slots for JDS participants in Pakistan is 17 seats for the Master's degree.



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



ISLAMABAD: Joint Secretary (Japan), Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, EAD, and Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative JICA signs the Grant Agreement regarding the Human Resource Development Scholarship Program (JDS) for the year 2023 at Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Exports increase by 22.13pc to Rs.8.187trln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 22.13 percent during the past seven months of the current fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Thursday.

Exports from July 2022 to May 2023 were recorded at Rs. 6,187,511 million as against Rs. 5,066,143 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 22.13 percent according to provisional data released by PBS.

On year-on-year basis, exports from the country during January 2023 amounted to Rs. 628,037 million against Rs. 512,962 million during May 2022, showing growth of 22.43 percent. On month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 3.15 percent when compared to the exports of Rs. 608,863 million in April 2023. Main commodities of exports during May 2023 were knitwear (Rs. 94,969 million), ready made garments (Rs. 76,422 million), bed wear (Rs. 57,521 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 49,865 million), rice other than basmati (Rs. 32,197 million).

Dar chairs CCoIGCT meeting

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT), today, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of State for Petroleum Mr. Masudik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Attorney General of Pakistan, Secretary Finance, Secretary Maritime Affairs, Secretary Law & Justice, and other senior officers attended the meeting.

USF meeting discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Universal Service Fund (USF) Board of Directors meeting held here on Wednesday to discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan. The 85th meeting was chaired by Secretary Information Technology and Chairman USF Board, Navid A. Shaikh, said a press release. The board members were joined by the newly appointed members, who bring a wealth of expertise and diverse perspectives to the organization.

Among the newly appointed board members are Major General (H) Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunica-

tion Authority (PTA), Hatem Bamatraf, CEO of PTL (Nominee of Fixed line licensees), Wang Hua, CEO of Zong (Nominee of mobile cellular licensees), and Independent Members/Directors Sofia Saeed, Ayla Majid, and Muhammad Yusuf. Muhammad Omar Malik, Muammer-Telecom, MoITT, as well as other board members and USF management, were also in attendance. The USF, under the leadership and vision of the Minister of IT and Telecommunication, is proud to announce a significant achievement with the appointment of two distinguished female members.

Sustainable agri development is govt's top priority: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad (UAF) here on Thursday, he said that citrus exports have decreased from 210 million dollars to 100 million dollars.

Therefore, a citrus action plan committee is being constituted.

Vice Chancellor UAF Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan will lead the committee that would present recommendations in 20 days to address the citrus challenges, he added.

Murtaza assures ICCI for establishment of industrial park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood Thursday said that government would cooperate for the establishment of an industrial park in Islamabad.

He expressed these views while addressing the reception ceremony organized in his honour by the Islamabad Chamber, said a press release issued here.

Syed Murtaza said despite resources, the reason for Pakistan's problems is the lack of continuity in policies.

"We need to correct our direction, the government has taken many steps for industrial development

to bring economic stability through an increase in exports," he added.

The minister said that the government has presented a budget in difficult circumstances, which includes measures to facilitate the business environment and speed up the industry.

"The sustainable solution to Pakistan's economic problems is only in increasing exports, unless there is an increase in manufacturing at the local level, the dream of a large increase in exports cannot be fulfilled," he added.

Syed Murtaza said that "The situation we are facing today is the result of the wrong policies of the last 75 years. Countries

development by making their own policies, unfortunately, we adopted import policies and discouraged manufacturing. Our SME sector has not been able to develop as it should have. As a minister, I am trying my best to adopt policies that will benefit the economy. Our exports are 30 billion dollars while imports are 80 billion dollars annually, there is no shortage of anything in this country. Only vision is needed. The government and the opposition should leave their personal egos behind and come on the same page for the country. Economic policies should be formulated not for five years, but for 25 years.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach \$ 8.866bln

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 8,863.8 million while reserves held by the central bank reached US\$ 3,536.9 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank decreased by US\$ 482 million to US\$ 3,536.9 million due to external debt repayment in the week ended on June 16, 2023.

Shahzad highlights potential to achieve food autarky, save foreign exchange

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik emphasized that Pakistan has the potential to achieve food autarky by utilizing 18 million hectares of arable land and saving a significant amount of foreign exchange.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Momin Ali, he said last year \$14.5 billion were spent on agri-

culture-related imports to avert food insecurity, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

He welcomed the substantial allocation for the promotion of the agriculture sector in the federal and provincial budgets however expressed reservations over the lack of setting aside sufficient funds for conducting modern research by plant breeders of public and private sectors.

Punjab cabinet meeting rejects proposal to tax 5-acre farmers

Independent Report

LAHORE: The 18th provincial cabinet meeting, presided over by the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, was held in the walled city. During the session, the proposal to impose agricultural income tax on owners of 5-acre lands was rejected. Additionally, the cabinet decided to maintain the stamp duty rate at one percent and approved amendments to the First Schedule of the Stamp Act 1899. Amendments to the Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012 were also ap-

proved, abolishing all taxes and duties on IT business, education, and training in Punjab.

Furthermore, the cabinet approved the extension of contracts for employees of the hepatitis and infection control program, as well as the provincial TB control program. A significant decision was made to restore historical buildings and ancient gates across Punjab, including Lahore. The restoration of the 12 ancient gates of Lahore to their original grandeur was entrusted to the Director-

General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority, by the CM. DG WCLA provided a briefing on the restoration of historical buildings and expressed gratitude to the chief minister and the cabinet for their support, which was appreciated by the cabinet.

The cabinet also approved the renewal of the agreement regarding new issues and the scope of the Punjab Health Facilities Management Company. Various matters related to the Universal Health Insurance Program in Punjab

were also approved. Additionally, the extension of contracts for 605 employees of the Directorate General of Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education was approved. In terms of vehicle registration fees, a one percent reduction was approved for vehicles ranging from 1500cc to 2000cc in Punjab, aligning them with the fees in Islamabad.

Regarding mining, the cabinet approved the revision of royalty rates for limestone and argillaceous clay in large-scale mining operations.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the Higher Education Sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Governor House.



RAWALPINDI: Senator Walid Iqbal, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights and members of the committee are being briefed during their visit at Central Jail Adiala, Rawalpindi.

US Consul General visits flood hit area of Rajanpur

RAJANPUR (APP): US Consul General, Lahore Consulate, William K. Makaneole on Thursday visited a flood-hit village of Tahsil Rohjan Mazari, district Rajanpur, where he talked to the people for some time and witnessed how they were doing life in challenging circumstances.

The US Consul General met with all the flood-hit people of Balachani village and had a frank conversation with them on how they were doing life in odd circumstances. He also enquired about their socio-economic conditions and witnessed their mud brick houses, and took a keen interest in their cattle heads.

Upon arrival at Balachani village, the US Consul General was received by Sardar Dost Ali Khan Mazari who presented him traditional 'Ajrak' and Sindhi cap. District government officials gave him detailed briefing on the devastation caused by floods triggered by torrential rains in south Punjab. Earlier, William K. Makaneole met with Deputy Commissioner Rajanpur Dr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan Baloch at his office. The DC gave him a briefing on socio-economic aspects of life in Rajanpur, culture, heritage, law and order situation and the development projects under execution there.

Minister visits WASA disposal station

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir has visited Disposal Station of Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) in Dawood Nagar here on Thursday and reviewed arrangements to deal with flood emergency.

He said that Rs.600 million had been spent on Dawood Chowk Disposal Station to facilitate 200,000 people of this area with trouble free sewerage disposal facilities.

He directed the staff of disposal station to make generator sound proof in addition to shifting it near gate of the station.

PPP believes in practical steps rather than promises: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that his party believed in practical steps rather than just promises.

In a statement issued here, the state minister said another promise made with the people of Paroa has been fulfilled and a NADRA office in the Tehsil will start functioning from tomorrow.

He said the residents

of Tehsil Paroa will have the facility of NADRA at their doorstep for which they had to come to Dera Ismail Khan.

The establishment of the NADRA office in Paroa was a long-standing demand of the locals, which has been fulfilled, he said.

Faisal Kundi said this office was supposed to start working last month but due to some difficulties and hurdles, it was delayed. However, he said, with the efforts of the PPP, the problems have ended and the NADRA office is going to start working from Friday.

5 Patwaris dismissed, 11 suspended on various grounds

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar has sacked five patwaris and the services of eleven (11) others have been put under suspension for tampering with revenue records, non-depositing of taxes, corruption and causing suffering to the public and subverting official orders. According to a press release issued here on Thursday, a case against one Tehsildar, two Naib Tehsildars and a Gurdawar had been sent to the provincial government.

ATC rejects bail plea of PTI Khadija in Askari tower attack case

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has rejected bail plea of PTI member Khadija Shah in Askari Tower attack case.

The bail after arrest plea of Khadija Shah came up for hearing before Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar of ATC Thursday. The court rejected the bail plea after hearing the arguments.

Gulberg Police Lahore have registered case against Khadija Shah, daughter of former finance minister Suleman Shah.

Governor Baligh says: Islam is complete code of life which teaches us love, peace & tolerance

LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, today attended a seminar on promoting tolerance and harmony at Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore as a special guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Islam is a complete code of life which teaches us love, peace and

tolerance. He said that we should take guidance from principles of Islam. Governor Punjab said that all of us should strive to create a society that is free from intolerance and hatred.

He said that teachers can play an important role in promoting tolerance and harmony.

He added that the teachers should pay special attention to character building of the students.

Jinnah House attack: ATC dismisses bail petitions of 197 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday dismissed post-arrest bail petitions of 197 accused, including fashion designer Khadija Shah, a daughter of ex-advisor to chief minister Punjab Salman Shah, Sanam Javed, Aalia Hamza, Tayyaba Raja and others, in Jinnah House (corps commander's house in Lahore) attack case.

However, the court granted post-arrest bail to 33 accused, Maryam Mazari, Ayesha Masood, Huma Saeed, Maria Khan, Farhat Farooq and others,

and directed them to submit surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief.

ATC Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar announced the reserved verdict on bail petitions of 230 accused. A day earlier, the court had reserved the verdict after hearing detailed arguments of the parties.

In final arguments, the defence counsel argued before the court that their clients did not have any link with the case and they were implicated with mala fide intention.

International News

US to ease visas for skilled Indian workers as Modi visits

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration will make it easier for Indians to live and work in the United States, using this week's state visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help some skilled workers enter or remain in the country, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The State Department could announce as soon as Thursday that a small number of Indians and other foreign workers on H-1B visas will be able to renew those visas in the US, without having to travel abroad,

one of the sources said, part of a pilot program that could be expanded in coming years.

Indian citizens are by far the most active users of the US H-1B program and made up 73 per cent of the nearly 442,000 H-1B workers in fiscal year 2022.

"We all recognize that mobility of our people is a huge asset to us," said another US official.

"And so our goal is to approach that in a sort of multifaceted way. The State Department already has been working very hard to find creative ways to make changes to things."

A State Department spokesperson declined to comment on questions about which visa types would qualify or the timing of the pilot launch. Plans for a pilot program were first reported by Bloomberg Law in February.

"The pilot would begin with a small number of cases with the intention to scale the initiative over the following one to two years," the spokesperson said while declining to define small. The steps could change and are not finalised until they are announced. The White House declined to comment.



US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden welcome Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to the White House in Washington.

Restaurant explosion kills 31 in northwest China

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: At least 31 people were killed when an explosion caused by a gas leak ripped through a restaurant in the northwestern Chinese city of Yinchuan, state media said Thursday. The blast occurred on the eve of the three-day Dragon Boat Festival holiday, when many in China go out and socialise with friends.

Footage on state broadcaster CCTV showed more than a dozen firefighters working at the site as smoke poured out of a gaping hole in the restaurant's facade.

Shards of glass and other debris littered the darkened street, which is also home to a number of other eateries and entertainment

venues. Nine people including the restaurant's "owner, shareholders and staff" were held by police following the explosion, CCTV said, adding that "their assets have been frozen". "A leak of liquefied petroleum gas... caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant," state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist Party committee.

Seven more people were receiving medical treatment, the agency said, with one of them in a "critical condition".

Two others suffered severe burns, two had minor injuries and two had scratches caused by flying glass, Xinhua said.

High school students and retirees were among the casualties, many of whom died due to suffocation likely caused by smoke inhalation, state-backed media outlet The Paper said, citing anonymous officials involved in the rescue effort. The explosion at about 8:40pm (12:40pm GMT) on Wednesday took place at the Fuyang Barbecue Restaurant in a residential area of downtown Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia autonomous region.

Chinese President Xi Jinping "demanded all-out efforts in treating the wounded and the strengthening of safety supervision and management in key industries and fields to effectively protect people's lives and property".

Macron would be inappropriate guest at BRICS summit, says Russia

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: French President Emmanuel Macron would be an inappropriate guest at the BRICS summit, the RIA news agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Thursday, criticising countries whose policies Russia considers hostile.

The BRICS group of emerging economies, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is due to hold a summit in Johannesburg in August.

Asked about Macron's reported desire to attend the summit, Ryabkov said: "Clearly, leaders of states that pursue such a hostile and unacceptable policy towards us, discussing with

such emphasis and conviction that Russia should be isolated on the international stage, and share the common NATO line on inflicting a so-called strategic defeat on us - such a leader is an inappropriate BRICS guest. "And we are not hiding this approach of ours, we have told our colleagues from South Africa.

We expect that our point of view will be fully accepted," Ryabkov was quoted as saying. South Africa is currently mulling its legal options if Russian President Vladimir Putin decides to attend the BRICS summit because the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March issued an arrest warrant for Putin over the Ukraine conflict.

Yellen says it's critical to maintain U.S.-China ties after Biden's dictator remarks

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday that it's "critical" the U.S. and China maintain a relationship so they can "work together" on global challenges, coming just after President Joe Biden's remarks calling Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "dictator" drew condemnation from Beijing.

Speaking at a news conference in Paris, Yellen said that "with respect to the comments, I think President Biden and I both believe it's critical to maintain communication ... to clear up misperceptions, miscalculations.

"We need to work together where possible." "But we have disagreements, and we are also forthright in recognizing we do have disagreements," she added. Yellen has recently advocated for improving relations between the U.S. and China, arguing cooperation is needed for the sake of maintaining global stability.

Biden's remarks at a fundraiser Tuesday, when

he also said China had "real economic difficulties," opened a new rift just after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing. The trip sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low.

China delivered a formal protest of Biden's remarks on Thursday, with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng telling senior White House and State officials that Washington "should take earnest actions to undo the negative impact" of what Biden said or "bear all the consequences," a Chinese embassy spokesperson said in a statement.

"With the latest irresponsible remarks about China's political system and its top leader, people cannot help but question the sincerity of the U.S. side" in seeking to stabilize relations, the statement said. "The Chinese government and people do not accept any political provocation against China's top leader and will resolutely respond."

US Coast Guard ship sailed through Taiwan Strait a day after Blinken's China visit

Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: A U.S. Coast Guard ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken completed a trip to Beijing during which he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, in a move that Chinese authorities called "public hype."

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Stratton conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" on June 20 through wa-

ters where "high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said in a statement Thursday. "The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," it added. China often maintains that the strait, which separates Taiwan and mainland China, is part of its exclusive economic zone.

New Zealand PM disagrees with Biden, says Xi Jinping not a 'dictator'

Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, ahead of his official trip to China at end of this month, said on Thursday he did not agree with U.S. President Joe Biden's remark that Chinese leader Xi Jinping was a dictator. "No, and the form of government that China has is a matter for the Chinese people," Hipkins told reporters.

UAE leader welcomes Iranian foreign minister in latest softening of Persian Gulf tensions

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: The president of the United Arab Emirates met with Iran's visiting foreign minister on Thursday in the latest sign of improving relations between Arab Gulf countries and the Islamic Republic.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have long harbored suspicions about Iran because of its nuclear program and support for militant groups across the region,

and have cultivated close defense ties with the U.S. But in recent months they have charted a more independent path, reaching out to U.S. adversaries as Washington increasingly focuses on Russia and China.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "discussed the importance of building on positive developments to benefit the people of the region,

Fighting surges in Sudan's capital as three-day ceasefire expires

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Heavy clashes broke out between rival military factions in several parts of Sudan's capital on Wednesday as a 72-hour ceasefire that saw several reports of violations expired, witnesses said. Shortly before the truce ended at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) fighting was reported in all three of the cities that make up the wider capital around the confluence of the Nile.



Firefighters put out fire after an explosion at a restaurant in Yinchuan, China killed at least 31 people, officials said.

Master Plan for reconstruction, rehabilitation of flood-affected areas by July 15: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced finalizing a Master Plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas by July 15.

"It has been agreed [by the special committee formed by the PM] that the Ministry of Planning sit together after the budget [passage] and finalize the \$16.3 billion Master Plan of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas tentatively by July 15," he made this announcement on floor of the National Assembly.

He said the government had allocated sufficient funds in the budget to execute projects of urgent nature in flood-affected areas. The minister said immediate rescue and relief work had been done throughout the country with disbursement of Rs 80 billion through the BISP programme, adding almost Rs100 billion had already been spent in addition to the assistance extended by National Disaster Management Authority in kind.

On urgent basis, he said the relief goods had been taken from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) store, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet recently approved Rs12 billion to replenish its stock, keeping in view the predicted threats of the monsoon and the cyclone. He said a comprehensive report had been prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, following the widespread destruction caused by the heavy rains and floods in 2022.

The report calculated that Pakistan collectively suffered over \$30 billion in economic and physical loss. He said funds amounting to \$16.3 billion were required to execute the physical work like repair of damaged houses and infrastructure, under the '4RF' strategy i.e. resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The estimate was for the projects to be completed in 4 to 5 years, he added.

Ishaq Dar clarified that 50 per cent expenses of reconstruction and rehabilitation work would be borne by the federal government and 50 per cent by the respective province.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Chief Minister KP, Muhammad Azam Khan, and members of the provincial cabinet, at Governor House.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah attending a ceremony at US Consulate in connection with Independence Day of USA

IHC stops EC from giving final decision in contempt of EC case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has restrained Election Commission (EC) from giving final decision with regard to contempt of EC case. The court while issuing notices to the respondents has sought reply in the first week of July.

The court issued notice to secretary EC on the petition filed by Fawad Chaudhry against show cause notice of EC.

The plea seeking suspension of contempt of EC proceedings against Fawad Chaudhry was rejected.

The court remarked that EC should continue its proceedings but it should not take any final decision. A single bench of IHC led by Chief Justice (CJ)

Amir Farooq issued the written order.

According to counsel for Fawad Chaudhry Chief Election Commissioner and competent commissioner are empowered to initiate proceedings.

According to counsel the show cause notice issued by secretary election commission is illegal.

The counsel said chief election commissioner has not delegated powers to secretary election commission to initiate proceedings in regard to contempt of election commission.

The next hearing of the case will take place in the first week of July.

Fawad Chaudhry had not appeared in contempt of EC case.

SIU arrests two of robbers gang

KARACHI (APP): The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two of a robbers gang from Atram Bagh area and recovered illegal weapons from their possession.

Arrested were identified as Fazaluddin and Nizamuddin, according to SSP SIU.

The arrested accused and their other accomplices were involved in several street crimes. The gang was involved in snatching cash from citizens outside banks at gunpoint.

They revealed that they snatched more than Rs. 2.5 million in cash, several mobile phones and other valuable items at gunpoint in more than a dozen street crimes. They committed these crimes in Gulshan Iqbal, Ferozabad, Bahadurabad, New Town, Malir City, Darakhshan, Boat Basin, Clifton, Zamzama and other areas.

The gang of the accused committed the last robbery about few days ago in New Town in which they snatched Rs. 1 million from a car rider who was leaving the bank with cash.



KARACHI: Anti encroachment operation in progress removed illegal encroachment during anti encroachment drive under the supervision of Sindh Police Department located on Korangi Crossing road in Karachi.

Ex-administrator lauds role of Karachi Press Club in promotion of democratic values

KARACHI (APP): Former Administrator Karachi and principal secretary to Governor Sindh Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman has said that Karachi Press Club has always played a leading role in the support of right and justice, promotion of democratic values and positive and constructive journalism. He said this on the occasion of receiving honorary membership of the press club in a ceremony held at the Karachi Press Club on Thursday.

He expressed gratitude to the KPC's Governing Body for giving him Honorary Membership and said his association with the Press Club will be more stronger and he will play his part in positive and constructive works with the Press Club.

He said that the voice from the press club reaches every corner of the country and this tradition has strengthened further with the passage of time. On this occasion, Karachi Press Club President Saeed Sarbazi, Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, Vice President Mushtaq Sohail, former President Fazil Jamili, former Secretary Maqsood Ahmed Yousofi, A.H Khanzada, Hanif Akbar, Shazia Hasan, Nadira Mushtaq and other officials and members were also present. Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rahman said that this institution has become a ray of hope for the oppressed and helpless people.

According to Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), under Road to Makkah program, 26000 Hajj pilgrims travelled to Saudi Arabia by 79 flights operated by PIA, Saudi Airlines, Airblue and Serene Airline.

The Saudi authorities expressed special thanks for all the support/facilities extended to them by Pakistan to make this project successful.

Another 11000 pilgrims passed through the Islamabad Airport for the holy land aboard private flights.

From Multan's MIAF, a total of 7944 Hajj pilgrims departed on 28 scheduled flights. Of these, 6457 travelled on 20 scheduled flights under government Hajj scheme.

Govt earmarks Rs 25b to educate drop-out children: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the government had earmarked Rs 25 billion for imparting elementary education to drop-out children in the country.

Addressing the Pakistan Learning Conference 2023, he expressed confidence that investing in early childhood education would lead to a significant reduction in dropout rates and enable children to fully utilise their inherent potential.

Ahsan Iqbal underscored that intellectual growth in the early period of children was an essential requisite for their later success and for leveraging the impending available opportunities in their lives.

"The children who receive early childhood education experience lower failure rates, exhibit better academic performance, and are more likely to pursue higher education," he added.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that investing in early childhood education was an investment in the nation's development and future, as the growth and prosperity of a nation depended on the quality of education provided during the crucial phase.

The survival and progress of nations in the modern era were not determined solely by military might but by the quality of their education systems, he stressed. The minister said classrooms and laboratories, where knowledge was imparted and creativity was nurtured, held the key to a nation's success. He called for a shift in priorities, where the allocation of resources and attention to early childhood education should take precedence.

The minister stressed that reflection and innovation were the mainstay for progress that were to be quintessentially nurtured in society.

He added that the Muslim era in Spain was the golden era in Islamic History where the Muslim scientists upheld the injunctions of The Holy Quran to reflect and observe the universe.

Higher education imperative for country's sustainable development: President

PESHAWAR (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said the promotion of higher education was imperative for sustainable progress and development, and stressed on universities to use technology in order to increase the number of graduates for the ultimate benefit of the country.

The president expressed these views during a high-level meeting here at the Governor House, which discussed problems related to the higher education sector and universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and his cabinet members, chief secretary and inspector general of police attended the meeting.

President Alvi said higher education was a very important sector and the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should increase the number of graduates with the help of technology for the country's prosperity and development.

The universities should enhance the number of online courses, besides initiating more shifts for producing quality skilled vocational and technical manpower, which was imperative for sustainable economic and industrial growth and socioeconomic development.

He advised the universities to hire the services of grant specialists for addressing their financial issues.

CM Azam Khan underlined the need for early appointment of the vice chancellors in KP's universities.

DC visits BISP cash disbursement centres

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC), Khaipur, Dr Sharjeel Noor Channa on Thursday visited the cash disbursement centres of Benazir Income Support Programme set up in Nara and Gambat talukas. The Deputy Commissioner expressed his anger over the local administration of BISP.

LAHORE: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of War Gaming Simulator held at Pakistan Navy War College in Lahore.



LAHORE: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of War Gaming Simulator held at Pakistan Navy War College in Lahore.

Commissioner chairs meeting regarding restoration of railway track

HYDERABAD (APP): For the restoration of railway track in the division and resolution of other issues, Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Muhammad Abbas Baloch Thursday chaired a meeting at his office.

Addressing the meeting, the commissioner said that like other parts of the province, the division also sustained heavy loss while National Highway and railway were severely damaged. He directed to make efforts to clean nullahs at the earliest in the wake of expected rains, and LBOD, Public health department, Municipal Corporation and other concerned department must ensure the task.

The commissioner said that National Highway and Pakistan Railway was catering traveling facilities to public throughout the country and directed officials of concerned departments to prepare strategy to drain out rain water in the expected rains.

He instructed railway officials to indicate the areas and sites of railway track affected during last rains and submit a proposal reading drains and its width passing under the track so the funds could be released to Irrigation department disposal of water easily.

The officials of Municipal Corporation were directed for cleaning all drainage nullahs of city prior to expected rains and ensure the presence of required machinery in working condition.

Briefing the meeting, Divisional Superintendent Railway Mehmooodul Hassan Lakho informed that in last rains, the railway track from Nawabshah to Bucheri had come under water due to which, rail traffic remained suspended for four days.

FIA arrests passenger with fake Afghan passport at Karachi airport

KARACHI (INP): In a significant development, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration took swift action and apprehended a passenger at Jinnah International Airport Karachi who was attempting to travel to Karachi using a counterfeit Afghan passport.

According to FIA officials, the suspect identified as Mohammad Ishaq had intended to board a flight to Italy, but his fraudulent travel documents were promptly detected.

Investigations revealed that the accused had acquired a fake Afghan passport, complete with a forged immigration stamp, from an individual named Haji Gul, who operates as an agent. Moreover, Haji Gul also facilitated the provision of additional travel documents to Italy for the accused, further highlighting the extent of their illicit activities.

I am surprised over Senate salary bill, such perks, privileges not being enjoyed by President, PM: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (Online): SAPM Qamar Zaman Kaira has said he is surprised over Senate salary bill as such perks and privileges are not being enjoyed by president and prime minister. "differences are among the political parties. There was a problem in budget which was resolved, he said this in a statement issued here Thursday.

Our parties have not been merged. These are separate political parties. The parties which are grown in flower pots are not durable and beneficial, he added. He went on to say people have seen PPP, PML-N and PTI government and now the people have to decide to cast votes to what party. It is our stance election should be held on time, he said adding PML-N stance too is this the election will take place on time. The way for delaying the election has been laid down in the constitution in the case of extraordinary situation, he observed.

PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director International Monetary Fund.

UNFPA launches State of World Population Report 2023 in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Pakistan on Thursday launched the UNFPA's global flagship report, the 2023 State of World Population (SWOP), in Karachi.

The report, titled '8 Billion Lives. Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices', presenting the latest trends about population growth or decline, fertility rates, reproductive health, family planning, and migration around the globe was earlier launched globally.

The launch in Sindh was held at SZABIST, with Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Minister for Population and Health as the Chief Guest. The event was also attended by senior officials of the Government of Sindh, Consul Generals of different countries, the President for SZABIST Shahzad Wazir Ali, heads of national and international organisations, development experts, researchers, SZABIST faculties and students.

The SWOP urges controlling bodies to address demographic concerns and family planning must not be used as a means for achieving fertility targets but as a tool for empowering individuals particularly the women to enable them to choose if, when, and how many children they want to have.

Meeting of officers chaired by Transition Officer Naveed Khan Kolachi

Meeting attended by Town Municipal Commissioners of District East.

Meeting of officers chaired by Transition Officer Naveed Khan Kolachi

Independent Report

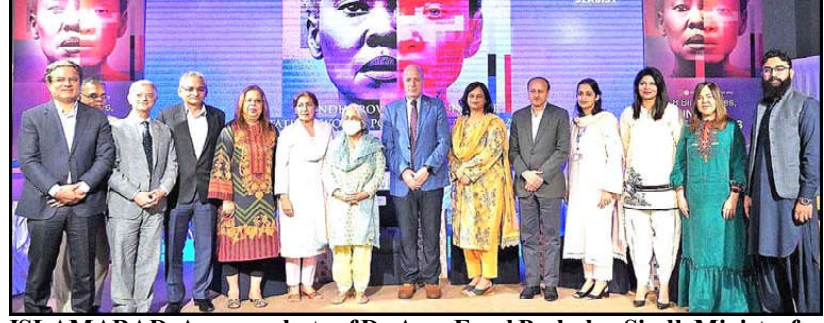
KARACHI: A meeting was held under the presidency of Transition Officer of DMC East Naveed Khan Kolachi which was attended by Town Municipal Commissioner Safoora Munawar Hussain Mallah, Town Municipal Commissioner Gulshan e Iqbal, Javed Kalwar, Town Municipal Commissioner Jinnah, Ejaz Ali Sheikh, Town Municipal Commissioner Sohrab Goth Intiaz Magi and officers of De-funct DMC East.

Addressing the meeting, Transition Officer Naveed Khan Kolachi said that he would play all possible role to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to him in the transition period, the officers should take immediate steps for the transfer of assets and other matters to the towns under the given instructions. The towns should be mobilized by ensuring the establishment of the towns as soon as possible so that the elected local representatives can render their services together with the officers to carry out public service.

On this occasion, the employees, preparations of lists should be kept complete in this regard, while in the case of transfer of assets, it should also be taken care that the towns can fully benefit from machinery and other items. The meeting was attended by departmental officers of the banned DMC East.



Town Municipal Commissioners discussed various issues with the officers and said that an immediate role should be played regarding the transfer of employees, preparations of lists should be kept complete in this regard, while in the case of transfer of assets, it should also be taken care that the towns can fully benefit from machinery and other items. The meeting was attended by departmental officers of the banned DMC East.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Minister for Population and Health, Consul Generals of different countries, President SZABIST Shahzad Wazir Ali heads of national and international organizations taken at the occasion of launching the UNFPA's global flagship report, the 2023 State of World Population (SWOP).