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PM, COAS, cabinet members, senior govt officials attend meeting

Govt unveils Economic Revival Plan to exploit Pakistan's potential, facilitate investment

Economy being steered towards growth with "bold decisions" says PM Shahbaz; COAS assures full support for govt's economic recovery plan; Emphasises crucial role of this plan in securing Pakistan's socio-economic prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government, in the wake of economic hardships confronting the country, Tuesday unveiled an elaborated 'Economic Revival Plan' with a view to capitalize Pakistan's untapped potential in key sectors, fast-track the development projects and facilitate investment.

The Plan was unveiled during a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and attended by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), chief ministers, federal and provincial ministers, and high-level government officials, a PM Office press release said. The Eco-

nomical Revival Plan envisages capitalizing Pakistan's untapped potential in key sectors of defence production, agriculture, livestock, minerals, mining, information technology and energy, through indigenous development as well as investments from friendly countries.

To fast-track the development of projects, the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been undertaken to act as a 'Single Window' interface for the potential investors as well as to adopt a unified approach.

The setup will shorten heretofore cumbersome and lengthy business processes

through a cooperative and collaborative 'whole of the government approach' with representation of all stakeholders. It is aimed at creating horizontal-vertical synergy between the federation and provinces; facilitating timely decision making; avoiding duplication of effort; and ensuring swift project implementation.

The high-ranking participation from federal and provincial governments, clearly manifests the national resolve to turn around the economy despite all odds.

The COAS, speaking on the occasion, assured the Pakistan Army's all-out

support to complement the government's efforts for Economic Revival Plan, considered fundamental to socio-economic prosperity of Pakistanis and reclaiming Pakistan's rightful stature among the comity of nations.

Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled that his government inherited an economy which was on the brink of collapse. With bold and difficult decisions, it was now being steered towards growth and development, however, there were massive challenges ahead, he added.

He said export-oriented foreign direct investments held the key to economic

revival and the government had, therefore, decided to adopt a holistic/whole-of-government approach which fostered partnerships within the federal and provincial governments for effective implementation and execution. The investors would be given primacy and fast-track approvals, through a well-coordinated approach, he added.

The prime minister observed that the expected investments would create jobs and livelihoods for the youth and women, and advised that the focus should be on empowering young and females to realise their full potential.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed regarding the upgradation and rehabilitation project of Sikandar-e-Azam Road.

Inaugurates Margalla Avenue, Sikandar-e-Azam road PM calls upon nation, political parties to get together for country's uplift

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called upon the nation and all political parties to work together for bringing the country out of crisis and taking it to new heights of development.

He said the dream of a prosperous and developed Pakistan could only be fulfilled by rising above mutual differences, burying the conspiracies, and maintaining rule of law in the country.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Margalla Avenue here, the prime minister said the country possessed huge natural resources as it had the best minds and manpower as well.

"The only thing that laps is the will to do," he said adding that although it was a difficult task but not impossible to bring the

country out of crisis.

He said all the initiatives were being taken for the development and prosperity of people of Islamabad and its attached areas.

However, he said due to the past government's criminal negligence, the citizens of the federal capital had to wait for years to enjoy their due facilities.

He said last year was devastating both in terms of natural calamities and on the political front as the country faced devastating floods and the political opponents hatched conspiracies against the country.

Their agenda surfaced on May 9, 2023 when everyone saw that what they did was never thought by the enemy of Pakistan," he added.

He said despite the challenges, the CDA Chairman, former MNA Hanif

Abbasi and his team who worked diligently to complete this project for which the people of Islamabad were waiting for years.

He said recently he visited Baku, where he saw smooth and clean roads and beautiful landscape and gardening along the roads.

He advised Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to take his team to Baku to get their first hand experience and apply in Pakistan as well.

PM Shehbaz said today he also witnessed the signing of a MoU for a \$3.48 billion Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (C-5) which reflected the Chinese resolve to support Pakistan in difficult times.

He said Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE were also Pakistan's unmatched friendly countries that were also supporting Pakistan at this difficult time.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Denmark, Shoaib Sarwar, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

World Hydrography Day: CNS seeks maritime stakeholders' role to stimulate economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Tuesday urged all maritime stakeholders to join Pakistan Navy in its efforts of raising awareness and advancing hydrographic activities viz-a-viz safety of navigation and stimulating national economy through enhanced maritime trade and exploration.

The Naval Chief, in his message on World Hydrography Day (WHD), said as per the United Nations Convention on Law

of the Sea (UNCLOS), Pakistan like other coastal states was responsible for hydrographic surveys and production of nautical charts/maps of its waters to provide accurate nautical information to the mariners.

He said in order to discharge national/international hydrographic obligations with appropriately vested authority, the Pakistan Navy approached the government for re-designating Pakistan Navy Hydrographic Department (PNHD) as National Hydrographic Office.

Contempt of EC case: ECP decides to indict Imran Khan others

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rejected PTI objections in contempt of Election Commission (EC) case.

A 4-member bench of ECP has decided to indict Imran Khan and other leaders.

A 4-member bench of ECP including member Nisar Durrani has announced reserved judgment of contempt of EC case.

The ECP while rejecting PTI objections has decided to indict PTI chairman Imran Khan and other leaders.

President stresses economic diplomacy to boost trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the need to focus on economic and trade diplomacy to enhance the country's exports. He added that increasing exports and foreign investment could help Pakistan overcome its economic challenges.

The President expressed these views while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Denmark and High-Commissioner-designate to Rwanda, who separately called on him, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to Ambassador-designate to Denmark, Shoaib Sarwar, the President urged him to especially focus on economic diplomacy initiatives to boost the country's exports.

He highlighted that the dairy and agriculture sector were important areas where Danish companies could be invited to invest in Pakistan.

He said that Information Technology was also another important area for enhanced cooperation where Pakistan's tech companies could offer services and solutions to Danish companies.

He also asked the newly-appointed envoy to work towards inviting more wind power companies from Denmark to invest in Pakistan's energy sector, besides further expanding collaborations in the renewable energy sector.

He expressed the hope that recent exchanges at the ministerial level would further strengthen the mutually beneficial ties between the two countries.

Talking to Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to Rwanda, Naeem Ullah Khan, the President highlighted that Pakistan attached great importance to its bilateral ties with Rwanda and both countries enjoyed cordial relations.

Appointment of 250 employees in PIA case: When there is no aeroplane how operation will run: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has summoned representatives of auditor companies of PIA in case pertaining to permission for appointment of 250 employees in PIA.

The matter came up for hearing before a two members bench of SC presided over by Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan Tuesday.

Counsel for PIA Suleman Akram Raja has sought permission from SC through the petition in respect of 250 cabin crew.

The court had asked questions about operations and finance in previous hearing. The replies to court's questions have been filed.

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan inquired on this occasion how much aircrafts and

crew PIA is having at present.

Additional Attorney General (AAG) told PIA has 31 aircrafts and 341 crew. Cabin crew is highly essential.

Finance head PIA told the court flights cannot be run on various routes due to non availability of crew. The total loss of PIA stands at 383 billion. In last financial year loss to the tune of Rs 88 billion had occurred. If previous year loss is separated from PIT then improvement can come.

Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan while expressing annoyance remarked what are you talking. When there are no aero-planes now then how will you fly. Is PIA earning profit. PIA acquires how much grant from government.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a virtual meeting with H.E. Andrew Mitchell, British Minister of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Peshawar mosque attack mastermind Sarbakaf dies mysteriously

ISLAMABAD (APP): The mastermind of a terrorist attack on the Peshawar Police Lines mosque and a commander of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan Sarbakaf Mohmand has died mysteriously. According to sources, the internal rift between the terrorist outfits has intensified which also resulted into the death of Sarbakaf Mohmand.

Some social media accounts claimed that Sarbakaf was poisoned by unidentified persons.

Dar holds virtual meeting with Britain's Minister of State for FCDOC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a virtual meeting with Andrew Mitchell, Britain's Minister of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) today.

Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State in the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), expressed deep sorrow and grief on the loss of lives of a huge number of Pakistani citizens in the recent boat capsizing incident in Greece. Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar expressed gratitude for receiving the condolences and voiced that illegal human trafficking has become a huge issue worldwide and needs to be curtailed at the earliest.

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar also apprised H.E. Andrew

Mitchell about the progress on IMF talks with Pakistan on the 9th review. He informed that Pakistan has completed all prior actions in time and is making continuous progress in terms of major economic indicators. He also informed H.E. Andrew Mitchell about the pragmatic economic decisions being taken by the incumbent government under difficult economic circumstances and measures the government has proposed to uplift the social and economic well being of the masses through the recent budget.

H.E. Andrew Mitchell acknowledged that the government of Pakistan has been vigilant in bringing economic stability through various policy reforms. He also assured of continuous support and assistance of the British Government to Pakistan.

Pakistan, Russia agree to further diversify bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russian sides on Tuesday reiterated their strong desire to deepen and diversify bilateral relations based on the principles of mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

The fifth round of Pakistan-Russia Bilateral Political Consultations was held here. Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko, led their respective sides, Foreign Spokesperson said in a press release.

Special Representative on Afghanistan, Ambassador Zamir Kabulov

was also part of the Russian delegation.

The two sides engaged in comprehensive and productive discussions to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and to deepen understanding on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

The talks encompassed a wide range of topics including political, economic, defence, energy and people-to-people contacts," the spokesperson said. The two sides also expressed satisfaction at the upward trajectory of cooperation in the field of energy and agreed to expand cooperation in higher education, culture and science and technology.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar addressing during World Refugee day organized by the office of the United Nations for Refugees at local hotel.

Congress of US writes an open letter to Biden ahead of Modi's visit

Points out towards issues of shrinking of political space, rise of religious intolerance, targeting of civil society organisations and journalists and growing restrictions on press freedoms and internet access

ISLAMABAD: The Congress of US writes an open letter to Biden ahead of Modi's visit to Washington.

Dear President Biden: We write in advance of your meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his upcoming visit to the United States. As the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy, the United States and India have forged a close relationship based on strategic interests and shared democratic values. India is an important member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the "Quad") and a crucial partner for stability in the Indo-Pacific. We support the trip Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin took to New Delhi earlier this month to finalize a "Roadmap for U.S.-India Defense Industrial Cooperation," deepening our strategic partnership.

Trade and investment between the United States and India continue to grow, and there is an opportunity to greatly expand our economic ties. We welcome India's potential increased role in secure supply chains for critical sectors such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals.

And robust cultural engagement lies at the heart of our friendship, underscored by the immense contributions of the Indian-American diaspora community in the United States, many of whom still have close and extended family living in India. We trust and expect that these important dimensions of the U.S.-India partnership - strategic, economic and cultural - will be part of your discussion when you meet directly with Prime Minister Modi.

As longtime supporters of a strong U.S.-India relationship, we also be-

lieve that friends can and should discuss their differences in an honest and forthright way.

That is why we respectfully request that - in addition to the many areas of shared interests between India and the U.S. - you also raise directly with Prime Minister Modi areas of concern.

You have rightly said that America must "lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example." You have once again made respect for human rights, press freedom, religious freedom, and pluralism core tenets of American foreign policy. Moreover, these tenets are necessary to the functioning of true democracy. In order to these values with credibility on the world stage, we must apply them equally to friend and foe alike, just as we work to apply these same principles here in the

United States.

A series of independent, credible reports reflect troubling signs in India toward the shrinking of political space, the rise of religious intolerance, the targeting of civil society organizations and journalists, and growing restrictions on press freedoms and internet access. Specifically, the State Department's 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in India documents the tightening of political rights and expression. Similarly, the State Department's 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom in India details the worrisome increase of religious intolerance toward minorities and religiously motivated violence by both private and state actors. Further, the annual assessments compiled by Reporters Without Borders show that India, a country that has been

known in the past for its vibrant and independent press, has fallen significantly in the rankings for press freedom. And according to Access Now, India ranks first in terms of the most internet shutdowns for the fifth year in a row.

Both the United States and India enshrined human rights—including free speech, freedom of the press, and religious freedom—in our constitutions. And we share a special bond through moral leaders who shaped our histories. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who gave his life in pursuit of building the beloved community here in the United States, was an ardent student of the teachings of the Mahatma Gandhi, known in India as the "Father of the Nation." Both King and Gandhi had the vision of building a more perfect union among people from different back-

grounds, races and faiths — Gandhi in India, and King in the United States. We share your vision.

We join you in welcoming Prime Minister Modi to the United States. We want a close and warm relationship between the people of the United States and the people of India. We want that friendship to be built not only on our many shared interests but also on shared values. We do not endorse any particular Indian leader or political party — that is the decision of the people of India—but we do stand in support of the important principles that should be a core part of American foreign policy. And we ask that, during your meeting with Prime Minister Modi, you discuss the full range of issues important to a successful, strong, and long-term relationship between our two great countries.

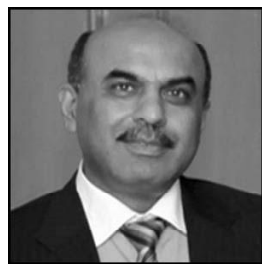
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Health for all

Though the situation may have improved since the time of independence, Pakistan's health indicators are hardly satisfactory. Far too many Pakistanis die preventable, early deaths, while debilitating diseases affect the quality of life and productivity of millions. This is mostly because despite the power wielders' stated commitments to improve the lot of the masses, human development is not a priority for our elite. When members of the elite fall sick, they can opt for the best healthcare money can buy at private medical facilities in the country, or better still, fly off to foreign locales where they are healed in well-equipped hospitals, staffed by competent medical professionals. For the middle and working classes in this country, the choices are far fewer. Should the common man get sick, he can either pay through the nose and be admitted to a private hospital, or opt for suboptimal public health facilities, or die a slow, painful death. To ameliorate this dismal state of affairs, the HRCP has rightly called for making health a fundamental part of the Constitution. This call needs to be heeded by local authorities as well as those in parliament.

Though many of the rights enshrined in the Constitution are denied to the people, incorporating health in the nation's basic law will at least correct the direction. As the WHO states, health is "a fundamental right of every human being", one that is unfortunately denied to millions of Pakistanis. Our high rates of neonatal mortality and child stunting, high burden of hepatitis C and tuberculosis, as well as the fact that this country is amongst the two remaining states in the world where polio has not been eradicated, point to only a few of our considerable health challenges. However, all these problems can be tackled, should the state prioritise people's health. Acknowledging health as a fundamental constitutional right, as was done with education in the 18th Amendment, is the first step. This needs to be followed up by strengthening primary healthcare across the nation, specifically in the less-developed parts of rural Sindh and Balochistan, where healthcare is available only in rudimentary form.

If all goes as planned a general election will be held in a few months. Therefore, as pointed out by experts, political parties should commit to making health a fundamental right in their manifestos. Moreover, a multisector approach is needed; better healthcare facilities and professionals will only make a difference when people have cleaner air to breathe and pure water to drink. Affordable healthcare at public facilities (and free for those who cannot pay) is an achievable goal should the elite set their minds to it. A secure and progressive Pakistan can only emerge when its people are healthy, educated and prosperous.



Naseer Memon

After keeping millions of people on tenterhooks for almost a week, Cyclone Biparjoy petered out without inflicting much damage. Sindh's coastal districts from Karachi to Badin narrowly survived a climatic catastrophe as the cyclone swerved in the nick of time, avoiding landfall on Sindh's coast.

Having the same trajectory and climatic features, Biparjoy brought to mind Cyclone 2A that battered Pakistan's coastal communities in 1999. The UN estimated that the cyclone killed 189 people while 150 were missing. More than 138,000 houses collapsed, and 675 boats disappeared. Some 15,000 cattle heads and sheep died. And 256,000 hectares (approximately 633,000 acres) of land was affected.

One conspicuous improvement this time was the early warning and continuous tracking of the cyclonic movement. The Met Office released regular updates detailing the cyclone's movement, intensity and potential impact on different areas till it barrelled away from the Sindh coast. Effective dissemination of information through electronic and social media helped the evacuation of over 70,000 people.

Had the cyclone struck, it would have erased much of the already rickety infrastructure, including the straw huts inhabited by the poor. The coastal villages of Thatta, Sujawal and Badin lack proper living facilities.

Footage aired on TV laid bare the abject deprivation of the coastal villages and islands. Small

A close call

fishing boats or small herds of cattle are their biggest assets, and these were exposed to danger. These areas present a distressing picture. Safe drinking water, sanitation, nutrition, electricity, roads, clinics and schools are conspicuous by their absence. Surviving on meagre incomes, the dwellers of these villages live a primitive life.

A poverty survey of Badin district revealed that the homes of 48 per cent of the respondents had wooden roofs; 46pc of the people were without electricity, 60pc had no sanitation facility, and 92pc were using farm crops and animal dung as cooking fuel.

No wonder 75pc of households suffer from multipronged poverty in these three coastal districts, according to the UNDP's Multidimensional Poverty Index. This socioeconomic profile makes coastal communities extremely vulnerable to any climate shock. Over the past two centuries, some two million people worldwide have died due to the effects of tropical storms. This region is among the areas vulnerable to tropical cyclones. The coastlines of Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Oman, Sri Lanka and the Philippines have experienced cyclones of varying intensities. The frequency of cyclones in the Arabian Sea has increased in recent decades.

According to a study published in the American Meteorological Society journal, 41 cyclonic storms formed in the Arabian Sea during 1979-2008, of which 23 made landfall, with tropical depression or stronger intensities. The average lifetime of these storms was 3.4 days on a scale of one to nine. During the period 1979-2008, the average number of cyclonic storm days per year over the Arabian Sea was 4.7. Data reveals that the average cyclone period increased from 2.3 in 1979-91 to 6.4 in 1992-2008. This indicates

the rising incidence of cyclones in the Arabian Sea. Nevertheless, the world has learnt to mitigate risk to life and property. Bangladesh is an inspiring example of how improved early warning systems and appropriate infrastructure can reduce the impact of cyclones.

The country lost 718,000 of its inhabitants to cyclones in the past 50 years. However, these figures have now been drastically reduced. The Category 3 Cyclone Bhola wreaked havoc in 1970, claiming 500,000 lives.

A cyclone of similar intensity, Amphan, caused only 26 deaths in 2020. In 1970, the country had only 42 cyclone shelters; today, it has 12,000 functional cyclone shelters serving 5m people. Bangladesh has remarkably improved its early warning and evacuation systems. A functional and effective governance system is better able to respond to disasters.

A contrasting example is that of Myanmar, where Cyclone Nargis caused 140,000 deaths and affected some 2.5m people in 2008. Although Nargis had been forecast a week before it struck, due to the government's slackness, the warning was not conveyed to the vulnerable communities in time.

This time, Pakistan performed better on early warning and rapid evacuation. However, more structural measures are needed to avoid damage if a cyclone strikes our coast. Increased socioeconomic resilience of coastal communities, cyclone-resilient housing, a sturdy network of roads and dykes, a dense shield of mangroves, improved cyclone shelters and better organised district disaster management authorities can provide relief if a sea-triggered disaster strikes. Preparedness is the key to avoiding death and destruction. - Courtesy Dawn

Education & EQ



Nazir A. Jogezaei

Emotional intelligence, or emotional quotient, is as significant as intelligence quotient. EQ, based on social intelligence, is the capacity to comprehend, utilise and regulate one's emotions in constructive ways to reduce stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome problems, and diffuse disputes. Research also tells us about the "curse of emotion", whereby individuals with a high EQ might arouse negative feelings. However, rational individuals with higher EQ fare better than those who are emotionally attached to an opinion or ideology.

Contemporary learning theories stress EQ-responsive curricula, instruction, assessment and learning environments to promote holistic development, including self-awareness, among the students. Self-awareness depends on the level of mental autonomy, objective self-analysis, and decision-making abilities, with teachers and parents as support. However, schools and homes tend to promote the memorisation of specific knowledge, without considering the students' interests or potential. What can only be called 'instructional policing' demands obedience from the students and often results in physical or emotional abuse, if the young learners take no interest or resist. Meanwhile, parents want to fulfil their own dreams through their children's education.

With such a narrow understanding of learning at home and in schools, students feel fear and anxiety, and are prone to negative emotions — in contrast to how it should be. Research tells us that a learner's multiple intelligences, while possessing their own strengths and weaknesses, seldom function independently of one another. Musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences are examples. A creative, imaginative youngster, though possessing poor memorisation powers, may do very well in some areas but may not get good grades in an exam. Notwithstanding their skills, such children are deemed failures.

Standardised tests also largely function as an evaluation model, measuring students, with varying abilities, against fixed knowledge standards. There is nothing holistic about the teaching approach that supports such tests. In fact, assessments must go beyond merely quantifying what has been learnt; it must also highlight areas for development for both students and teachers. Regrettably, teachers rely on syllabus completion and memorised material to set exam questions. As a student, I recall having to rote learn many 'answers'. So I had no idea what I was reciting in front of my teachers or why one student was praised while the other was punished. We must prioritise learning keeping our youngsters' EQ in mind. This could be done through an enabling atmosphere instead of being made to face pressure to deliver 'A' or 'A-plus' grades. Schools must be made aware of their students' talents and adapt their teaching methods accordingly, rather than subjecting them to homogenous teaching methodologies and rote learning-based assessments, which can never handle diverse intelligences and

modes of learning. Intelligence denotes acting purposefully, thinking rationally and applying information rather than merely storing it. It is more about how to learn than what to learn. Our curricula, textbooks, teachers, in fact the overall learning system, must consider diversity in terms of multiple intelligences as each child is different. The fear of failure must be reduced by sensitively addressing children's learning requirements.

More important is the skill and co-urage to ask questions. Learning relies on asking logical questions as opposed to just searching for accurate answers. The repression of inquiry in the name of obedience stifles the courage and curiosity of children and causes them emotional harm. The curricula, teachers and parents expect obedience, which essentially means executing an action on the orders of an authority to maintain a show of respect. Teachers and parents are the people closest to children, but they are also people from whom children hide a lot of things. Respect is a two-way street — between teachers and students, and between parents and children. Updated scientific research tells us that the students' reflective learning experiences indicate an increase in self-inspection, emotional regulation and understanding others. Moving from homogeneous expectations to multiple intelligences is the most effective approach. We can achieve this by allowing adequate space for new modes of learning that stimulate our children's intellectual capital rather than memory, therefore preparing pupils for life than just for exams. We need to raise our children with greater EQ, so that they remain productive for themselves and society. - Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque witnessing contract signing for TDM to IP and Copper wire to Optical Fiber Cable Migration of National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) Exchanges Phase 2.

IT Ministry showcases remarkable performance in past five years: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin-ul-Haque on Tuesday said that the Ministry of IT has showcased remarkable performance in the past five years, with the initiation of several projects and the continuous progress of the department, which has brought significant benefits to the nation. During this period, various institutions under the ministry successfully implemented ICT projects of vital importance to public welfare and the country's development, providing digital services to more than 50 million individuals nationwide he said while addressing a ceremony at the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC).

The minister also spoke about the migration of NTC's exchanges to IP (Internet Protocol) from TDM (Time Division Multiplexing) and copper wires to optical fiber cables.

The contract signing ceremony for this transition took place and was attended by NTC's Director Procurement Kashif Nawaz, and Redtone's Syed Ahsan Abbas, along with NTC's Managing Director, Muraq Gul.

Syed Aminul Haque said that the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication is now embarking on another revolutionary project under the NTC.

According to the project, the exchanges of NTC will be converted to IP (Internet Protocol) and optical fiber cables from TDM (Time Division Multiplexing) and copper wires, with a cost of Rs 1.65 billion from May 2018 to June 2020. The project has been successfully completed, and the related exchanges are functioning efficiently.

He expressed his satisfaction with the excellent performance of NTC over the past five years, which has resulted in continuous benefits.

He emphasized that while upgrading its infrastructure to meet modern demands, NTC is also working for the welfare and well-being of its employees.

The minister mentioned a few noteworthy projects, such as the establishment of Disaster Recovery Centers in Lahore and Islamabad with a cost of Rs. 600 million from June 2019 to September 2021, as well as the expansion of data centers in Islamabad and Lahore to meet growing demands with a cost of Rs. 647 million from March 2021 to June 2023.

Collector Customs says: Technical glitches in EFS to be removed

LAHORE (APP): Collector Customs Lahore Saira Agha on Tuesday assured All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) of removing the glitches in Export Finance Scheme (EFS) at the earliest to make it user friendly to enhance trading activities and improve the inflows of foreign exchange in the country.

She was chairing a workshop jointly organized by the APTMA and Collectorate of Customs here at APTMA North Zone office. Collector Customs Sambarial Nayar Shafiq and Additional Collector Farah Farooq also accompanied her on the occasion. Chairman APTMA North Zone Hamid Zaman, Senior Vice Chairman Kamran Arshad and Secretary General Raza Baqir welcomed the team.

OGRA takes swift action against violations in LPG industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a proactive move to ensure compliance with safety standards and regulations in the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) industry, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) Enforcement Department, under the instructions of Chairman Masroor Khan, conducted inspections on a number of LPG plants in collaboration with the local authority.

During the inspections, a concerning discovery was made at one particular LPG plant, which was found to be in violation of OGRA guidelines and compromising

Launching of DCTS will boost trade between UK, Pakistan, Syed Naveed

ISLAMABAD (Online): In an effort to strengthen economic ties with Pakistan, the United Kingdom has unveiled a new initiative called the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), said, Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar.

Qamar praised the DCTS, which aims to provide Pakistan and 64 other countries with improved trade opportunities through tariff reductions and simplified terms of trade.

While announcing the launch of the DCTS, Syed

Naveed Qamar said, "Pakistan will enjoy one of the most generous sets of trading preferences offered by any nation in the world."

The scheme officially replaced the UK's Generalised Scheme of Preference (GSP) on June 19, 2023.

The current bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK stands at a substantial \$4.4 billion, and with the implementation of the DCTS, both nations anticipate a significant boost in trade volume and economic cooperation, highlighted by

Minister Qamar.

It is projected that Pakistan will save approximately \$120 million in export tariffs under the DCTS, which will facilitate greater competitiveness for Pakistani exporters in the UK market.

This development is seen as a positive step towards strengthening the economic partnership between the two countries.

Syed Naveed Qamar said, under the DCTS, an impressive 94% of goods exported from Pakistan will

be eligible for duty-free access to the UK.

This measure is expected to encourage the expansion of various sectors within the Pakistani economy, including textiles, agriculture, and manufacturing, Minister Qamar's remarked.

Furthermore, Minister Qamar acknowledged that Pakistan's "Enhanced Preferences" status has been retained, providing the country with added advantages in terms of trade incentives and market access.



MULTAN: DG IPO Pakistan, Shazia Adnan addressing during a ceremony on Supporting Women Entrepreneurs in Embroidery and Related Crafts Business through IP, Branding, and Commercialization Strategies organized by the Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan.

Swedish Embassy launches report titled "Rebuild for a resilient Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Embassy of Sweden in Pakistan in partnership with Business Sweden - the Swedish Trade & Invest Council hosted a report launch event: "Rebuild for a resilient Pakistan".

The report discusses how Team Sweden can provide support in four main categories: capacity building; energy transition; community infrastructure, transport & housing; and lastly, areas around hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction

for a more proactive Pakistan.

Henrik Persson, Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, welcomed the guests and said "Sweden is committed to support the people and government of Pakistan as they continue to recover from the widespread devastation caused by the country's worst floods in recent history. Rebuilding basic infrastructure is of high priority where Sweden has the opportunity to contribute with significant sustainable solutions in a number of vital areas. The report paints a picture of a private sector that is eager to help and that sees opportunities coming out of a difficult situation, with a shared vision of cooperating to create the right conditions for growth and prosperity in Pakistan for the future." Speaking at the occasion, Emil Akander, Vice President South and Southeast Asia Business Sweden said "Sweden is a powerhouse of innovation.

21st June: 70th birth anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto was the first woman elected to lead a Muslim state and was also Pakistan's first, and so far only, female prime minister

Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's 70th birthday is being celebrated today. Benazir Bhutto was born on June 21, 1953, at Karachi's Pinto Hospital, Pakistan. She was the eldest child of former Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Begum Nusrat Bhutto. Benazir served as the 11th Prime Minister of Pakistan in two non-consecutive terms from 1988 until 1990 and 1993 until 1996. She was the first woman Prime Minister of the Muslim world.

She saw her country unravel when her father's life was taken by the cruel dictator. Then she witnessed her mother collect the remnants of a hurting nation, setting aside her tragedy for the greater good of the country.

Along with her mother, the young and resilient first daughter became a symbol

of resistance to the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto understood the hardship of a righteous life early on, as she was frequently put under house arrest with her mother and younger siblings.

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto understood the pain his family would have to suffer in the wake of his extrajudicial hanging. In his last letter to his daughter, Quaid-e-Awam writes, "How does a condemned prisoner write a letter of birthday greetings to a beautiful and brilliant daughter fighting for the life of her father, being in bondage herself, knowing that her Mother is suffering the same suffering as herself? It is more than a matter of communication. How would the message of affection and sympathy pass from one prison bar to the other, from one chain to the other?"

Her father, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's love for Mohtarma Benazir was overwhelming, comparable only to his love for his country and its people. He was well aware of the dark era that would ensue once he wasn't there anymore. He was confident that she had the talent, courage, and vision to continue the mission

ing the country so that it worked on laws, and not the principle of "Might Is Right." Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto fought and won general elections to become the first woman elected democratically to lead a Muslim country. The detractors of democracy weren't happy with her election. But she was just as unique as her name. She stood firm against all opposition and continued her journey on the path to democracy.

For the generation of Pakistanis born after General Zia-ul-Haq's military coup, Benazir was the epitome of democracy and diplomacy. Her political objective was evident in her slogan of 'Im, Roshni, Sab ko Kaam,' coined for the 2007 Manifesto. She wanted to establish a democratic and a peaceful Pakistan in which people can live in harmony with equal

people and her country.

The fabric of Pakistani democracy is inextricably woven with her name. A dictator like Pervez Musharraf couldn't keep her away from her people and her country for very long. He had threatened her "with dire consequences if she returned to Pakistan" in a phone call. He was responsible for providing her security as she came back to her people, yet he replied that provision of security depended on "their mutual understanding and relations." He not only failed to ensure her security but also played an active role in endangering her life, which led to her assassination.

When she returned from her exile in 2007 to a Pakistan bloodied in terrorism, the nation rejoiced and gave her a hero's welcome.

From Karachi to Kash-



Bilawal reiterates to follow philosophy of Shaheed BB

Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have reiterated to follow the philosophy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for the supremacy of the constitution and parliament.

According to a news statement issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP paid tribute to the first elected woman Prime Minister of the Islamic world, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, on her 70th birth anniversary and said that Dukhtar-e-Mashriq (Daughter of the East) was a ray of light throughout her life for the nation trapped in darkness, and even today her thoughts and philosophy are a beacon of light for the country in difficult situations.

He said due to the previous regime, inflation and unemployment have become uncontrollable in the country, but to control them and eradicate poverty, the people-friendly philosophy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto must be followed, adding that in the past too, Pakistan had to face difficult situations many times, but the people always believed that no matter how tough the situation, "Benazir Aaegi, Rozgar Laaegi"

(Benazir will come, bring employment). "I assure the nation that if the people gave the mandate to our party in the upcoming general elections, the PPP government will also create ample employment opportunities in the country, just like it was done during the governments of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto," he vowed.

Bilawal said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was, truly, a history-making personality and a movement, adding that if the plant of democracy is growing in the

country today, it is the fruit of the long and tireless struggle and sacrifices of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He pointed out that after the martyrdom of the Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto played a key role in strengthening democratic institutions in the country and the promotion of equality in society.

The Chairman PPP said that the best way to pay homage to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is to follow her vision and philosophy and associate oneself with the struggle to

complete her incomplete mission. He said that the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is to establish the supremacy of the constitution and law in Pakistan, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate poverty from the country and create a society where tolerance, equality and harmony prevail.

"The time has come for every one of us - the patriotic Pakistanis to put forward the 'Benazir Agenda' for the progress and development, prosperity, stability and upliftment of the country," he urged.



opportunities to all. She believed that Pakistan could play an essential role in bringing the world on one platform and bring about global peace.

It was during her governments, in 1988 and 1993 that for the first time in the history of Pakistan, the press and media were given due rights by the freedom of speech, and political opponents received due coverage. Political prisoners were released, and student unions were restored to ensure the full effect of democracy during the Prime Ministership of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Under her leadership, PPP strongly espoused women's rights and had pledged to continue her struggle. Shaheed Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto empowered women and improved the literacy rate. She worked tirelessly to eradicate poverty, unemployment, diseases and of course, remove the black stigma of terrorism from Pakistan's name. She was the first Prime Minister in the history of Pakistan to introduce Lady Health Workers (LHWs), women-only police stations, First Women's Bank, and appoint lady judges to the High Court.

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Meanwhile Central President of Pakistan Peoples Party's Women

Wing and Member of Sindh Assembly, Faryal Talpur has said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto won the hearts of the people due to her political wisdom, untiring struggle and unparalleled sacrifices, which will always be remembered in the history.

In her statement issued on the 70th birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Faryal Talpur said that a brave, humble and history-making leaders like her are born after the centuries.

She said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto tremendously loved party workers and the people of Pakistan. The way she played the role of a daughter, wife, mother and leader despite living a very hectic and difficult life, is the best example for all of us.

In fact, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto played the role of a teacher for us in every respect, and taught us to fight for the rights of the people, and not to hesitate any kind of sacrifice for their sake.

Faryal Talpur said that as the living nations never forget their leaders, therefore the Pakistani people also remember her every day. She congratulated the entire nation, including the people around the world, on the 70th birthday of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. She further said that it is a matter of satisfaction for the entire nation that today Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is actively and passionately working for the prosperity of the people and the glory of Pakistan by holding the flag of her mission to serve the people of Pakistan.

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Remembering Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's Legacy

By Bashir Riaz

Sixteen years after the martyrdom of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, "Zinda hai BB, zinda hai" still echoes in political rallies and every day, in the hearts of her party-workers. I often think that indeed, Shaheed BB still lives in our thoughts and memories. Every year, June 21 is marked as her birthday and cakes are cut to pay tribute to this phenomenal woman, who was the pride of Pakistan nationally and internationally. Despite a known threat to her life, she chose to return to her people for the sake of democracy and rule of law. Her sacrifice will be remembered in the history of Pakistan forever as part of Bhutto family's irrefutable contribution towards the restoration of democracy.

During her tenure as the Prime Minister, she created employment opportunities and helped numerous people who had nowhere else to turn to. She even financially supported needy people from personal charity, such as the caretaker of Pak Tea House, which was a space of freedom where political, intellectual and artistic culture flourished. Today, all those whose lives she touched remember her with deep respect. Shaheed BB is an example of a true leader who stays alive in the hearts of the people long after leaving this world. Her generosity is also evident in her ideology of reconciliation instead of revenge.

Today, this legacy of respect in politics should be a lesson for everyone about promoting a culture of tolerance in politics. There are countless instances from the life of Shaheed BB that are a testimony to her courage and

her eyes and she never wallowed in self-pity. When she would talk about her time in jail, she always remembered her party workers awaiting punishment in the Pakistani jails. She never forgot the need to fight for her people, staying true to the legacy of her father, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. She said that we have to end this autocracy and if this can be achieved by her going to jail then she would do it again and again. She raised her voice for a democratic Pakistan on multiple forums internationally and helped to establish a strong base for the Pakistan People's Party around the globe.

In 1986, she rendered everyone speechless when during a television interview she said that despite the oppressive tactics of General Zia, she would not resort to politics of revenge. The TV anchor repeated his question and asked that despite the fact that Zia hanged her father and kept her in jail, she will not take revenge? She replied she did not believe in revenge and this was the difference between Zia and her.

On 10 April 1986, when BB landed in Lahore, she asked me to exit first and see the situation regarding police behaviour. The area was surrounded by police and along with some other party leaders, I became a part of the historic welcome procession that reached Minar-e-Pakistan for a jalsa. In the general elections of 1988, the victory of the Pakistan People's Party was a watershed moment when democracy won against terror and oppression. Shaheed BB became the first woman Prime Minister in the Muslim World, a proud moment for everyone who supported a progressive and democratic Pakistan.

Shaheed BB had clearly decided that she would not resort to any vengeful acts against the widow of General Zia or his family. She instructed her party workers as well to maintain an attitude of respect towards their rivals. She set a unique example for the future political leaders of our country, staying true to her great political stature, by forgiving her rivals. Her legacy is a lesson that verbal or physical abuse, personally maligning opponents or other modes of vengeance should be discouraged by political leaders. They should remember the conduct of Shaheed BB and refrain from stooping low to the level of common ruffians.

As I look back, I recall aspects of BB's personality that I was fortunate to witness personally. Her generous and empathetic nature is evident from her behaviour with others. She regularly celebrated my birthday until December 2007, the year she passed away, and now only her memories are left behind. In an international conference in Portugal, she was paid tribute in these words, "Amongst all the stars in the sky, you alone are the shining star." Only if Shaheed BB were alive today, the radiance of her generous personality and political brilliance would have lit our country on the world map many years ago. On this occasion of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's birthday, let's remember this great political leader and her legacy of selflessness, respect, and steadfastness for her ideology for her land where the tree of democracy is flourishing today, nourished with the blood of Bhuttos.

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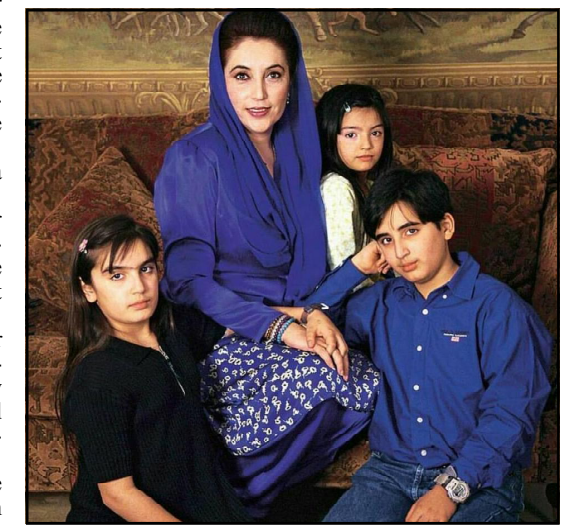
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which he had been prevented from completing.

As he paid the price for standing firm on his moral principles and democratic beliefs, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave the responsibility in his death cell letter to his "dearest daughter," and she was thrust into a leadership role, which she undoubtedly lived up to.

Despite these heart wrenching difficult conditions, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto rose to the occasion with grace, dignity, and strength, undertaking landmark steps for the peace and progress of the country.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto continued the legacy of her father as she endeavored wholeheartedly to make Pakistan a land of her father's dreams. A Pakistan, for which Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, her father had laid down his life. Benazir felt and saw the sorrows of her nation and struggled to ensure democracy and justice, providing equality to all, strengthen-

ing the country so that it worked on laws, and not the principle of "Might Is Right." Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto fought and won general elections to become the first woman elected democratically to lead a Muslim country. The detractors of democracy weren't happy with her election. But she was just as unique as her name. She stood firm against all opposition and continued her journey on the path to democracy.

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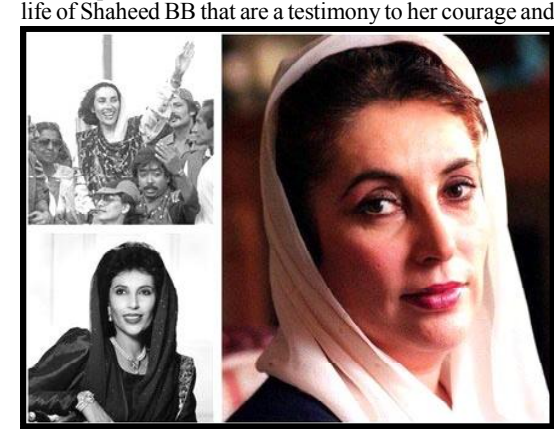
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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo along with several Federal Ministers, Senior Officials of Islamabad Police and District Administration after the ground-breaking ceremony of National Police Hospital in Islamabad.

Pakistan Hajj Mission's Aziziyah Hospital treating over 5,000 pilgrims daily

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Hajj Medical Mission's main hospital here at Aziziyah, in collaboration with Saudi authorities, has been providing medical facilities to over 5,000 pilgrims daily.

Besides the main hospital, nine dispensaries manned by some 521 doctors and paramedical staff were providing free of charge medical assistance to the Hajj pilgrims in the holy city, Brig Dr. Shahamad Ali, Director of Pakistan Hajj Medical Mission told APP on Tuesday.

He said the Pakistani pilgrims were residing in

nine sectors, each with its own dispensary which remained open round the clock to serve the pilgrims.

Dr Shamsad said a sizeable number of Pakistani pilgrims were elderly or those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension and heart ailments, necessitating frequent medical examination and care throughout their stay in Makkah and Madinah.

He said the 32-bed hospital was equipped with modern facilities such as a state-of-the-art laboratory, x-ray machine, pharmacy and dentistry services.

49 Corona cases reported in week: NIH

ISLAMABAD (INP): Health officials on Tuesday said that 49 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last week across the country.

As per the data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.40 percent while five patients were in critical condition. One death was reported from the Coronavirus last week while 12,232 Covid-19 tests were conducted.

Meanwhile, Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said the government has strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19.

The minister said there was a surveillance

system at all entry points of the country including airports. There will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports, he added. He added 90 percent of the country's population already got the Covid-19 vaccine. "An efficient system with a proper management team is fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and is ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19," the minister added. He said the Border and Health Services Pakistan was ensuring the implementation of international health regulations.

He said that in case of any untoward situation, the health system was fully prepared to deal with any sub-variant of the Omicron variant of Covid-19.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Emil Akander addressing during an event entitled "Rebuild for a Resilient Pakistan" under the slogan of Enabling a safe and sustainable Restoration of Pakistan in Alliance with Sweden, at Serena Hotel in Federal Capital.

PTA urges safe, responsible use of social media

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has released guidelines highlighting the significance of safe and responsible use of social media due to its increasing popularity and the potential risks it poses to public convenience.

In an article titled "Principles, Responsibilities, and Ethics of Social Media," Director Muhammad Farooq emphasizes the profound impact of social media on society, both positive and negative. While these platforms offer numerous benefits such as digital literacy, access to local content, business opportunities, and instant information, they also have the capacity to undermine our social and moral values. One of the primary concerns highlighted in the article is the challenge of addressing false, defamatory, misleading, inappropriate, and hate-inducing

content, as it threatens cultural and ethical values.

Moreover, the online platforms themselves are vulnerable to various risks. Users who are unaware of local laws and community guidelines often fall victim to financial fraud, encounter online predators, or engage in illegal activities that can lead to legal consequences.

To ensure public convenience and safety, the article stresses the importance of following the necessary guidelines for the responsible use of social media. Users are advised to exercise caution when sharing content and protect personal information. It emphasized that, while sharing information on social media may only take seconds, once uploaded, it becomes a permanent part of our digital footprint and can be exploited for negative purposes.

Yadgar, Bagh-e-Dastoor, a symbolic tribute to Pakistan's constitutional ideals: Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that Yadgar-e-Dastoor & Bagh-e-Dastoor were envisioned as symbolic initiatives intended to honor, and uphold the principles enshrined in Pakistan's constitution.

They would stand as a testament to the country's unwavering dedication to democracy, justice, and the rule of law, he said while presiding over the 8th meeting of the Advisory Committee constituted to oversee the preparations of the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution here in Parliament House.

During the meeting, the committee thoroughly examined and deliberated upon the proposed designs of Yadgar-e-Dastoor pre-

sent by the Capital Development Authority. After extensive consultation and voting among the Members, a final design was selected and approved.

The meeting also approved the basic design of Bagh-e-Dastoor but instructed CDA to present a comprehensive working design that encompassed all aspects.

Furthermore, the concerned body was directed to ensure that the design aligns fully with the fundamental structure of the Constitution.

During the discussion on the restoration of the Old National Assembly Hall, he emphasized necessity for collective efforts from all stakeholders and urged for the immediate

commencement of restoration process.

In response to the suggestion of the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Advisory Committee formed a two-member committee to oversee the aspects of awarding and technicalities involved in the restoration process. The Advisory Committee emphasized importance of strictly adhering to austerity measures during the execution of all commemoration-related activities, as was practiced in the past.

Besides Speaker, the meeting was attended by MNAs Engr. Sabir Hussain, Kaim Khani, Dr. Nafisa Shah, Mohsin Dawar, Asiya Azeem, Senior officers from NA, CDA, NADRA and NCA.

IHC extends stay order in toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday extended its stay order till tomorrow on the proceeding of trial court in the toshakhana criminal case against PTI's Chairman Imran Khan.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case wherein Imran Khan's Lawyer Khawaja Harris continued his arguments.

Petitioner's lawyer gave references of various court orders and said that it was essential to move a complaint within 120 days after such incident.

He said that only the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was authorized to file the complaint, adding that proper procedure had not been followed in this case.

The lawyer continued his arguments after which the court adjourned further hearing of the case till tomorrow.

IHC instructs ECP to hear objections of PTI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday set aside the show-cause notice of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the prohibited funding case and instructed the body to decide the matter again after hearing the objections of the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI).

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar announced the verdict after hearing arguments against the petition from both sides. The court said that all requirements for a fair trial should be completed.

At the outset of the hearing, the court asked the ECP's official why the commission continued proceeding as per the judgment of the larger bench.

ECP's lawyer said that no action had been initiated against the petitioner under the show-cause notice, adding that other witnesses had been summoned for testimony. The court remarked that why not the petitioner should be given an opportunity to be heard. The further hearing of the case was then adjourned.

ANF seize drugs worth over \$22m in nationwide operations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) has conducted a series of successful operations throughout the country, resulting in the seizure of a significant amount of drugs worth over \$22 million in the international market.

The operations led to the arrest of 38 individuals, including two women and two foreigners, while also impounding 14 vehicles, said a spokesperson of ANF.

In total, the seized drugs amounted to 731.615 kilograms and included various substances.

The breakdown of the seized drugs is as follows: 53 kilograms of opium, 136.72 kilograms of heroin, 521.413 kilograms of hashish, 15.650 kilograms of methamphetamine (also known as ice), 4.750 kilograms of weed, and 82 grams of ecstasy tabs (140 tablets).

ANF Balochistan conducted four operations, resulting in the recovery of 240.75 kilograms of drugs and 4 kilograms of sus-



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz laying the foundation stone of upgradation and rehabilitation of Sikander e Azam Road.

PTI should be awarded punishment on May 9 incident: Khurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir Khan on Tuesday said the punishment should be awarded to PTI workers and leaders for violating the law and order in the country on May 9.

Talking to a private news channel, he said the PTI chief has promoted the politics of agitation during the period of last four years, adding that May 9 incidents have eliminated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) from the country's politics as its leaders and party workers were found guilty of committing crimes by attacking state institutions.

Replying to a question, he said there is no rift among the coalition groups the PML-N despite political differences is running the affairs of the government in a befitting manner. Under the democratic system, he said difference of opinion is the beauty of politics and a routine matter.

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PM assures utilization of resources to strengthen, facilitate police force

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the incumbent government would utilize all possible resources to upgrade the capacity and performance of the Islamabad Capital Territory Police by extending different facilities.

Addressing a stone laying ceremony of the National Police Hospital at Police Lines, the prime minister appreciated the sacrifices and contributions of the police force.

He said the entire nation felt pride over the police force as they were the protectors of the nation and expressed the confidence that the police force would not tolerate any lapse in maintaining law and order.

The prime minister assured to strengthen the skills and capacity of the police force and all the recommendations in that regard would be fulfilled despite economic constraints.

On the occasion, the prime minister also unveiled plaques for Dolphin and SPU Headquarters and an educational institute for the families of the police force projects. Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Federal Education and Training Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah, parliamentarians, ambassadors and a large number of police officers and jawans were present.

Appreciating the efforts of interior minister, the prime minister said the plan for the establishment of Dolphin force in Islamabad should be immediately prepared on the pattern he had introduced in the Punjab province with the assistance of Turkiye.

Instructors from Turkiye should be brought to impart training and a comprehensive programme in that regard should be introduced, he added.

The prime minister further said that a hospital for the police force and their families in Islamabad should have been constructed in the past. Now, the police force and their families would be provided with the latest health and educational facilities.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurating the Ground-Breaking Ceremony of Bagh-e-Dastoor at D-Chowk.

Speakers for taking measures to legalize border trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a seminar titled 'Developments in Balochistan' Tuesday called for taking measures to legalize border trade in the province so that a major pie of economy would be made formal.

The seminar organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

Former Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal, Senator Anwarul-Haq Kakar, former federal minister Zubeida Jalal, MNA Danesh Kumar, MPA Sanaullah Baloch and Sarfaraz Bugti were the panelists of the seminar, said a news release.

President IPRI Amb. Raza Muhammad highlighted the need to shorten distance between the elite and the downtrodden in the province, which was ironically rich in natural resources and human dynamics, urging upon the need to sit together and resolve differences.

Jam Kamal said that the stakeholders and common strata links must be restored in order to restore the people's confidence in the province.

He said that poverty level in Balochistan was more in cost as compared to other areas of the country because there was negligible infrastructure in the province. "This leads to insurgency as deprivation is cashed by vested forces," he elucidated.

Sarfaraz Bugti said that small things could make a bigger difference, and it was time to start a new.

He said that unparalleled development was not specific to

Balochistan, but making it an excuse for violence was unacceptable.

He said that there were two paradigms, one security and other development in the province. MNA Danesh Kumar talked about the homogeneity of the society, adding there was no discrimination with the minorities, especially Hindu population of the province.

He demanded the government to allocate sufficient funds for Balochistan to develop the province at par with other areas of the country. Kumar proudly shared that minorities were free to practice their religion in the province. Sanaullah Baloch said that taking into account the mega development projects were need of the hour to uplift the lives of people in the province.

IHC summons chairman OGRA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday summoned Chairman OGRA Masroor Khan in a personal capacity in a matter pertaining to his letter to the IHC's Chief Justice for the meeting.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, hearing the matter, remarked that respect for the judiciary should be observed. Chairman OGRA's lawyer on the occasion also expressed regret in the matter. In matters pertaining to OGRA, the chief justice remarked that the standing committees shouldn't use the powers equal to the courts as their prime responsibility was to view the legislation process.

Court initiates procedure to declare Swati absconder

ISLAMABAD (APP): A lower court here on Tuesday initiated a procedure to declare PTI's Leader Azam Khan Swati as absconder due to his continuous disappearance in controversial tweet case. Special Judge Central Muhammad Azam Khan announced the verdict and ordered to issue an advertisement for summon of the accused. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) official submitted execution report to the court regarding the summon notices at the both residences of Azam Swati.

IIUI, YJA hold interactive dialogue on media, academia linkage

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and Young Journalist Association (YJA) Tuesday agreed to initiate mutual cooperation in the fields of professional training, media dialogues and academia and media linkages.

An interactive dialogue between IIUI and YJA was conducted here at the new campus of the university that was chaired by President IIUI Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi.

It was also attended by Vice President Female Campus, Dr. Samina Malik, Vice President Administration and Finance Dr. Nabi Bux Jumani, Head of the Department of Media and Communication Studies Dr. Inam ur Rehman, Officers of Protocol and Public Relations, senior journalist Zafar Sipra, office bearers of YJA including its President Yousaf Khan, Sr. Vice President, Hafiz Usman Mughal, Vice President, Adnan Arif, Secretary Information, Fasiha Satti, Members Governing Body, Zameer Asadi, Ms Shama Danish and Ch. Gulzar Naz.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi said that the university had been put on the track of academic excellence and infrastructural



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.