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Pays rich tribute to Shuhada, Ghazi for their sacrifices Strenuous efforts steer Pakistan out of most difficult times: PM

It's our earnest duty to realise martyrs' sacrifices, says on farewell visit of GHQ

RAWALPINDI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that owing to the relentless efforts of the incumbent government, Pakistan had been out of the most difficult times.

Addressing a ceremony at the Army Auditorium, General Headquarters (GHQ), to honour the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada and Ghazis, the prime minister stressed that they all had to strive to rebuild Pakistan collectively.

He said 75 years had passed since the creation of Pakistan which came into being due to hard work by the Great Quaid, the Founder of the Nation, whose vision still remained unfulfilled.

The ceremony was attended by Chief of Army Staff

General Syed Asim Munir, officers, ministers and families of Shuhada and Ghazis.

The prime minister said that the incumbent government would complete its term on Wednesday (tomorrow) and after which they would hand over the reign of the government to an interim set-up in accordance with the Constitution.

A comprehensive plan was put in place for the progress and prosperity of the country by the incumbent government, he said, adding the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had given that vision for the progress of Pakistan with the development of agriculture, minerals and IT sectors.

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RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends a ceremony to honor the Martyrs and Ghazis of Pakistan Army at General Headquarters.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar addressing participants of a condolence reference held in memory of lawyers martyred on 8th August, 2016 organized by Shaheed Baz Muhammad Kakar Foundation

CM approves reforms in Balochistan Civil Service

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has given approval to the Balochistan Civil Service Reforms here on Tuesday.

According to an official hand out issued here, the Chief Minister endorsed the decision of provincial cabinet and recommendations of the parliamentary committee in this regard.

It was mentioned that it is vision of the Chief Minister to enforce improvement in the service quality and good governance in the province.

According to the Chief Minister, the officers of Balochistan Civil Service (BCS) and Balochistan Secretariat Service (BSS) cadre

on the same pattern for ensuring good governance.

Moreover, the Chief Minister also approved to make salaries of the field operation officers equivalent to the civil secretariat.

Similarly, he approved the reforms in the revenue and administrative structure as well as increase in the salaries of revenue staff.

The approval was also given to appear in the departmental exam once instead of twice for the Tehsildar cadre, it was also mentioned in the official hand out. The Chief Minister said that all employees and officers are the machinery of state, as such those having the spirit of public service must get chance to come ahead.

NA to be dissolved today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly will be dissolved on August 09 Wednesday after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address to the farewell session.

The prime minister after addressing the lower house of the parliament will forward a summary to the President Dr Arif Alvi for dissolution of the 15th National Assembly of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while addressing public rally in Kasur on Sunday had announced that the NA would be dissolved on August 09, just three days before the lower house of the parliament completes its five-year constitutional term.

Incumbent National Assembly's full tenure will end on August 12 and if it completes its stipulated time then elections will be held within 60 days. However, the Constitution states that the polls must be held within 90 days if the assembly is dissolved before the completion of its tenure.

Azfar Mahesar transferred; Atezaz Goraya posted new DIG Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Deputy Inspector General of Police Quetta, Captain (Retd) Ghulam Azfar Mahesar has been transferred and closed to Central Police Office Quetta.

According to an official notification issued here by the CPO on Tuesday, DIG CTD, Atezaz Ahmed Goraya has been transferred and posted as the DIG Police Quetta. However, Mr. Goraya would also hold the additional charge of DIG CTD until further orders.

Meanwhile, SSP Sohbat pur, Sajjad Haider Tareen has also been transferred and posted as AIG Police Legal at CPO while Abdul Rauf Baraich, awaiting posting order, has been posted as the acting SP Sohbatpur.

ECP disqualifies PTI chief for five years after Toshakhana verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday disqualified former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief for five years following his conviction in Toshakhana case.

A notification of disqualification has been issued by the electoral watchdog. The ECP also de-notified the PTI chief from the NA-45 Kurram.

An Islamabad court handed a three-year prison sentence and a fine of Rs100,000 to the PTI chief in Toshakhana case. This decision came during the hearing of the criminal complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the PTI chairman.

The complaint accused the former prime minister of concealing

information regarding gifts received at Toshakhana.

Later, the PTI chairman was arrested by Punjab police from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore on Aug 5.

In a notification issued today, the ECP said, "A person shall be disqualified from being elected or chosen as, and from being, a member of the Parliament if he has been, on conviction for any offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release."

The electoral watchdog declared the PTI chairman disqualified under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution read with Section 232 of the Elections Act, 2017.

Addresses condolence reference High time for all of us to sit together and prepare joint course of action to protect our future, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the lawyers martyred on August 8, 2016 in civil hospital Quetta were our asset and their invaluable services and sacrifices would always be remembered.

The Governor was addressing a condolence reference organized by Shaheed Baz Muhammad Kakar Foundation at a local hotel here on Tuesday.

The senior lawyers and guests coming from all over the country including Haroon Rasheed, Ahmed Farooq Khatak, Naeem Qureshi, Bushra Qamar, Yasin Azad, former Senator, Mrs. Roshan Khursheed Bharucha besides the religious leaders, academicians, representatives of civil society and others.

The Governor said that condolence reference is itself a type of protest. He said that the basic objective behind observance of the 8th August tragedy is to pay homage to the lawyers who were martyred seven years ago.

He applauded the untiring efforts of Chairman Baz Muhammad Kakar Foundation, Dr. Lal Khan Kakar and his team for organizing the event.

Referring different incidents of terrorism and tragedies, the Governor said that we have to evolve a joint course of action so that no such incidents are occurred again in future.

He said that we had been deprived of several law

experts in the incident of terrorism occurred on August 8, 2016 in the civil hospital, which was surely an irreparable loss.

He said that it is high time for all of us to sit together and prepare joint course of action for protection of our future. He said that what he said about the condolence reference was according to his conscious.

Other speakers also addressed the condolence reference and paid homage to the martyr lawyers. They said that the vacuum caused due to martyrdom of lawyers cannot be filled.

In the end, special prayer was offered for the departed lawyers and their bereaved families.

Seventh census

BA adopts condemnation resolution against reducing population of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly adopted a resolution condemning reduction in population of the province in seventh population and housing census conducted in the country.

The condemnation resolution was tabled by the Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Asadullah Baloch while the session held with Speaker, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali in the chair here on Tuesday.

While tabling the resolution, the Provincial Minister Agriculture demanded that the federation should accept population of the province in census as 23.5 million. On the resolution, the member of Opposition belonging to PKMAP, Nasrullah Baloch objected that why his name was included in the resolution.

Later, the session of assembly was adjourned for an indefinite period.

His plea was that we have already rejected the new population census.

Afterwards, Nasrullah Zairay staged token walk out of the house.

Similarly, a condemnation resolution was also approved against the Bajor blast. Tabled by the leader of Opposition, Malik Sikandar Advocate, the resolution demanded exemplary punishment for those involved in the terrorism incident.

The resolution also demanded financial compensation for the heirs of martyrs and injured persons.

Meanwhile, while giving a ruling the speaker directed to take steps for promotion of development officers in the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department.

Later, the session of assembly was adjourned for an indefinite period.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Rana Sana Ullah Khan chairing a meeting at FIA Headquarters.

PM announces to set up special fund for journalists who lose lives in line of duty

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has announced establishment of special fund for journalists who lose their lives while performing their professional duties.

RS 4 million will be paid to family members of journalists who die in such an incident.

Prime Minister (PM) has also issued a health card for journalists in history of Pakistan.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of Health Insurance Card, Pa-

kistan code, Digital repository of Federal Essentials app and website for journalists and artists.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryam Aurangzeb also spoke on this occasion.

Law Minister Senator Azam Nazir Tarar, Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, journalists and leadership of media workers were also present.

PM said that diseases are part of life. I congratulate

Haroon Khan named ECP spokesperson

ISLAMABAD (APP): Haroon Khan Shinwari, the Additional Director General of Media Coordination and Outreach, of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has been appointed as the spokesperson of the ECP with immediate effect until further orders as per an official notification.

Shinwari, a BS20 officer, within the ECP, took over as the spokesperson after Ms. Qurat ul Ain Fatima from the information group was transferred back to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on July 24th.

Lawyers' condolence reference demands admittance of review petition on report of JC formed on 8th August tragedy

Independent Report

QUETTA: The lawyers' fraternity and their leaders have demanded that the review petition filed for implementation on the report of judicial commission on the 8th August 2016 tragedy should be admitted for hearing at the Supreme Court at the earliest.

They also demanded that all the courts including military ones should work remaining under the constitutional jurisdictions.

In addition to this, they pleaded to ensure recruitment of judges in the high courts in transparent and impartial manner.

These demands were

made by the lawyers' fraternity and their leaders through resolutions adopted at the condolence reference held in the courtyard of the Balochistan High Court on Tuesday.

The condolence reference marking the death an-

Continued on page 2

BBISE dispatches 72408 certificates pending for 33 years

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Quetta has delivered 72408 certificates to the successors, pending for 33 years due to incomplete address.

The dispatched certificates include matriculation pending from 1990 to 2014 and intermediate from 1990 to 2019 to the branches of the board, BBISE chairman Mir Ejaz Azeem Baloch told APP on Tuesday.

The students of the said period were informed to collect their certificates from the board branch located in their respective areas, he added.

Chairman BBISE has taken strict notice of the non-delivery of such a large number of credentials to the aspirants.

Chairman said negligence in duties would not be tolerated and action should be taken against the involved person.

He said that students should register their addresses correctly to avoid delays in getting credentials.



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali in a group photo with MPAs before start of farewell session of Assembly

Zia Langu takes notice Three of a family killed in firing incident

QUETTA (APP): Three persons of a family including a man his wife and a child were killed by unknown armed men in Quetta on Tuesday, police said.

They said that man was going home on his motor-bike when unknown armed men opened fire at them within the precincts of Manzoor Shaheed PS, killing all on the spot.

The dead bodies were shifted to the civil hospital, Quetta, for medico-legal formalities. The cause of killing is yet to be ascertained.

Further probe is under-

way. Meanwhile Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langu on Tuesday took notice of a firing incident that left three dead in Quetta.

He also expressed his sorrow for the death of a man along with his wife and his small girl.

The Minister ordered concerned officials to take measures to arrest attackers involved in the killing of the three members of a family to bring them to justice.

He also sought the report of the incident.

PM invites Saudi govt, firms to avail investment opportunities in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday invited the Saudi government and companies to avail the investment opportunities in agriculture, mining, IT, energy and other sectors of Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Engineer Waleed Abdulkarim El Khereji who called on him, said the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation

Council (SIFC) would facilitate and fast-track potential investments from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In this regard, he appreciated the Kingdom's serious interest in exploring investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The Saudi vice minister is leading a high-level delegation with members from the ministries of foreign affairs,

energy, health, environment and agriculture, industry and mineral resources, investment etc.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the delegation and expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of bilateral relations with the Kingdom. He also conveyed his greetings for the Saudi leadership and thanked Saudi Arabia for its timely financial support to Pakistan, especially during

the floods and appreciated its role in helping Pakistan in its efforts to achieve macroeconomic stability.

The visit of the Saudi delegation manifests the deep interest and willingness on both sides to transform the longstanding fraternal ties into concrete and mutually rewarding economic partnership. The visit will contribute to further enhancement of multi-faceted collaboration between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of Steering Committee to oversee and guide the progress of work related to outsourcing of airports operations at Finance Division.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan holding an important meeting with China Energy International Group Ltd.

SCCI, APMIA sign MoU for promotion of marble and mining sector on modern lines

PESHAWAR (Online): A memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and All Pakistan Marble Industries Association, aiming to promote the marble and mining sector on modern lines, carry out joint research and resolve people's issues associated with the sector.

Ijaz Khan Afridi, the acting president of SCCI and Muhammad Asghar Khan, Chairman of All Pakistan Marble Industries Association (APMIA)

signed the agreement during a ceremony held here at chamber's house on Tuesday.

Other members of the APMIA delegation include Shafiqullah, Ahmad Shah and Zafar Ali Khan Kundi, the SCCI's Secretary General Sajjad Aziz. Officials from the Research and Development Cell of the chamber were present during the agreement signing ceremony.

Muhammad Asghar apprised the chamber's acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi that the marble sector is playing a pivotal

role in economic development and earning hefty foreign exchange through exports.

He, however, said people attached to the marble sector were faced with financial hardships in carrying out mining through using modern techniques, machines and methods. On the occasion, the association chairman suggested various proposals for promotion of the marble sector.

Ijaz Afridi assured the APMIA delegation that issues associated with the marble sector.

SECP and FIA to collaborate for a secure digital financial system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Akif Saeed, and the Additional Director General, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Ahmed Ishaque Jehangir, held a meeting at SECP's head office to foster effective collaboration and identify areas of shared interest between the two entities.

Senior officials from both organizations were present, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. The SECP and the FIA have agreed to formalize their collaboration to protect Pakistan's digital financial system from cybercrime

and fraud threats through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The meeting witnessed constructive discussions and deliberations on several key areas of mutual interest. For illegal deposit-taking and illegal lending apps, it was agreed to appoint focal persons and establish a quick communication channel, as well as regular sharing of information on matters under investigation at respective institutions.

The Chairman SECP informed the FIA team of the SECP's regulatory framework for digital lending apps.

PAC directs to ensure countrywide PSO stations installation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure installation of the Pakistan State Oil Company Limited (PSO) gas stations across the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to facilitate the commuters travelling to far-flung areas.

Chairing the PAC meeting, Chairman Noor Alam Khan directed the

relevant authorities to act against those elements creating hurdles and inconveniences in this regard. The committee was informed that the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on PSO petrol stations in any part of the country, but only at certain locations the filling stations could not be installed due to technical reasons.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Moghaddam calls on Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

Meeting held to review progress relating to outsourcing of airports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee to oversee and guide the progress of work related to outsourcing of airports' operations.

Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Aviation, Chief Executive Officer Public Partnership Authority,

Director General Pakistan Civil Association International Finance Corporation team and other government officials attended the meeting, said a press release.

The committee was briefed about the latest status of outsourcing of Islamabad Airport transaction for advertisement has been published in all leading local and international newspapers.



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director, PTDC, Aftab ur Rehman Rana addressing a press conference on 1st Pakistan International Tourism Investment Expo-23.

PTCL changes its copper network to fiber for high speed internet

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has completed fiberization of the famous and picturesque tourist destination, Nathiagali to provide high-speed connectivity and quality user experience in the region.

The blazing fast internet will support social empowerment and growth of the local tourism industry, said a news release here on Tuesday.

The network overhaul is being carried out under PTCL's Copper Sunset project, which encompasses the replacement of copper wires with the cutting-edge PTCL Flash Fiber network, which will be the fastest internet in town giving customers blazing speeds of up to

1Gbps with unlimited downloads. A lively cake cutting ceremony was held in Nathiagali to mark the dawn of high-speed connectivity in the region. Vice President, Business Zone North, PTCL, Nauman Durrani participated in the ceremony, along with the company's top management, employees, and customers.

Commenting on the development, Vice President, Business Zone North, PTCL, Nauman Durrani said, "We are thrilled to inaugurate our fiberization project in Nathiagali. PTCL Flash Fiber 400K customer journey for 2023 aims to provide its valued customers with an exceptional high-speed internet experience through its Fiber-based network. As part of this commitment,



MULTAN: A vendor displaying tomatoes during an auction as shopkeepers participate in bidding at Vegetable Market.

CDNS set a target of Rs 75 billion in Islamic finance for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Saving (CDNS) has set a target of Rs 75 billion in Islamic fiscal year 2023-24 to promote the Islamic financial sector in the country.

The aim was to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector, a senior official of CDNS told APP here on Tuesday.

The official informed that CDNS had reviewed and set a target of Rs 60 billion in the fiscal year (2022-23) for Islamic investment to introduce the new products in the market.

"Islamic finance has a very important role in the

global financial sector at this time, and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," The senior official said, "Work on Islamic finance is still needed in Pakistan."

He said that at present, work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.

He said, "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users."

The official said, "CDNS will now provide facilities to its customers as a complete bank."

AJK Govt moves to gear up industrial progress in State

MIRPUR AJK (APP): Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) government has principally decided to devise an integrated phased industrial uplift plan with the coordination of the AJK Chamber of Commerce & Industry (AJK-CCI).

The Mirpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the concerned functionaries of the AJK have a plan to encourage and promote local and foreign investment in the trade, industrial and export sectors in the liberated territory.

"The plan also involves the attractive investment in the industrial sector by the UK-based Kashmiri expatriates in AJK besides reviving the sick industrial units in the existing industrial estates in Mirpur division", the official sources told APP here on Tuesday.

The sources continued that one of nine proposed Special Economic Zones, was very much believed to be established in Mirpur district of AJK under the gigantic CPEC (China Pakistan Economic

Corridor) as reportedly sanctioned by the authorities so far.

The sources said that the AJK government was taking all possible steps for the early revival of sick industrial units in Mirpur and Bhimber.

The government has focused to promote the industrial activities in Mirpur and Bhimber districts under the spirit to provide more job opportunities to the unemployed skilled and unskilled persons.

Besides other matters related to the industrial uplift in the region, a high level meeting here today reviewed and discussed in length, with the owners of the Mirpur and Bhimber districts, based sick industrial units, the ideas for quick revival of the units.

The owners of the sick units tabled various proposals in the meeting for the revival to the sick units and assured to resume their functioning soon after their revival in line with the determined policy of the government.

Speaking on this occasion, AJKCCI Mirpur

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Sabir Hussain Shah said that his chamber has already moved recommendations to the AJK government by devising a strategy for early revival of over 80 sick industrial units located in Mirpur and Bhimber districts and to promote the industrialization process in both the districts as well as in other parts of the liberated territory.

He said that in the light of various proposals the AJK government has assured to encourage and boost the foreign investment in the trade and industrial sector in AJK and colossal funds have already been placed in the ongoing financial year 2017-18 AJK budget. The AJKCCI President said that the AJKCCI MCCI has also moved to the AJK government to provide all possible required facilities and compensation to the intending foreign entrepreneurs including the UK-based Kashmiri expatriates for establishing the industrial concerns in the area.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque witnessing signing of MoU between National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) and Sunwalk.

2-day annual Livestock, Agriculture, Fisheries Expo in October

PESHAWAR (APP): Annual Livestock, Dairy, Agriculture and Fisheries Expo will be held on October 4-5 in Peshawar.

National and international companies will participate in it.

Expo 2023 is very important for livestock farmers and the Livestock Department as the Milk Fair and animal beauty exhibition will also be organized during the event.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali will inaugurate the expo while Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan will be the chief guest at concluding session. Preparations for the expo have been started. The Expo will be presided over by Provincial Minister for Agriculture Abdul Halim Kasuria while Secretary Livestock Amber Ali Khan.

Zong launches roaming offers for customers traveling to China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G Pakistan's leading 4G network, has launched six new roaming offers for customers travelling to China. With an unwavering commitment to customer centricity, Zong 4G continues to push the boundaries of innovation, delivering a remarkable proposition that promises unparalleled connectivity, utmost convenience, and remarkable cost-efficiency for those staying connected abroad said a news release issued here on Tuesday.

Subscribers travelling to China for business or for personal reasons can subscribe to a total of three hybrid bundles (Hybrid Bundles have both Voice, SMS, and Data options) and additionally, they have the option to choose from three data roaming buckets (Data Bundles).

"Recognizing the paramount importance of seamless connectivity for our valued customers during their travels, we have curated these exceptional International roaming offers to ensure a hassle-free and budget-friendly experience.

At Zong, 4G, pioneering innovation is at the centre of everything we do, and our latest international roaming packages, along with the newly introduced bundles for China, bear testimony to our relentless dedication to elevating the customer journey to new heights." Said the spokesperson.

With China being a popular destination for business and tourism, this package is set to be a game-changer for those seeking a reliable and affordable roaming solution with access to WhatsApp.

PBF demands textile focused policy for economic stability

FAISALABAD (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has demanded textile-focused policy on urgent basis for economic stability of Pakistan. Addressing a meeting of the forum in APBUMA (All Pakistan Bed-sheet & Upholstery Manufacturers Association) office here, PBF Punjab General Secretary Arif Ehsan Malik said the production cost had pushed the export

sector on the verge of collapse in addition to increasing the unemployment rate which might become a potential threat to overall law and order in the country. "Therefore, the government must encourage the export sector to drag the economy out of the crisis through phased policies including cutting down the cost of doing business and trimming the interest rate on a top

priority basis." He said the textile sector was the basis of economic stability. "If the government is really sincere about stabilizing the country economically, it should take urgent steps to increase national exports in addition to reducing the prices of oil, gas and electricity products besides ensuring immediate payment of pending refund claims as economic stability is directly linked with increase in exports.

Putin orders arms factories to produce more Lancet kamikaze drones

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, has ordered the head of a state-owned defence conglomerate to increase the production of attack drones, as the drone war in Ukraine ramps up.

In televised footage of the meeting on Monday night, the Russian president was told by the head of Rostec, which produces around 90 per cent of Russia's military equipment, to increase the number of kamikaze drones being churned out.

Putin said Russia needed more Kub and Lancet drones, which have become a thorn in the side of Ukraine's

advancing forces, saying they had proven "very effective".

"It is necessary to increase the percentage of the production of the latest types of weapons," T-90 'Proryv' tanks, and aircraft systems," the Russian president said.

Russian state media said, last month, the Lancet drone was going into mass-production, with Rossiya-1 television reporting that production would be tripled in the coming months.

Ukrainian military officers have described the drones as being among their biggest threats on the battlefield as Moscow's ka-

mikaze drones are difficult to defend against.

The drones fly low and slow to avoid traditional air defence systems and can be piloted directly by operators on the ground, unlike the Iranian-shahed drones which are pre-programmed to head to a target that cannot be changed once launched.

Analysts have suggested that Russia's defence ministry is keen to get hold of more of the Lancet drones, which reportedly cost around £28,000 each, as a low cost way of making up for losses of their more expensive and sophisticated equipment.



Members of a military council that staged a coup in Niger attend a rally at a stadium in Niamey, Niger.

China, Philippines' dispute over grounded warship heats up

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China again asked the Philippines to tow away a grounded warship - a World War Two-era vessel now used as a military outpost - from a disputed shoal on Tuesday, after Manila rejected Beijing's earlier demand.

Tensions have soared between the two neighbours over the South China Sea under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, with Manila pivoting back to the United States, which supports the Southeast Asian nation in its maritime disputes with China.

China's embassy in Manila criticised Washington for "gathering" its allies to continue "hyping up" the South China Sea issue and the boat incident.

"The South China Sea is not a 'safari park' for countries outside the region

to make mischief and sow discord," the embassy said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Second Thomas Shoal, which lies within the Philippine's exclusive economic zone, is home to a handful of troops living aboard the former warship Sierra Madre. Manila deliberately grounded the vessel in 1999 to reinforce its sovereignty claims.

Manila has repeatedly accused the Chinese coastguard of blocking resupply missions to its troops there, as it did on Aug. 5 when it sprayed a Philippine vessel with a water cannon. China maintains the Philippines' occupation of the shoal is illegal. The Philippine military described the Chinese coastguard's actions on Saturday as "excessive and offensive". China said the incident was a "warning" and that it has exercised "rational restraint" at all times.

Second son of Thailand's king makes surprise return after 27 years

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: The second-eldest son of Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn visited a child-care centre for underprivileged families on Tuesday during a surprise visit to the kingdom, the first time he has been back in his homeland in 27 years.

The trip by Vacharaesorn Vivacharawongse, 42, comes at a fraught time for the Thai royal family, with the monarch's eldest daughter in a coma since December.

Vacharaesorn, who works at a law firm in New York, visited the Foundation for Slum Child Care, which is supported by the royal family, and greeted well-wishers.

2 dead, thousands without power after severe storms batter eastern US

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Much of the eastern United States was lashed with intense storms on Monday, leaving at least two people dead, hundreds of thousands without power, and thousands of flights canceled or delayed. Millions of people were under severe weather alerts, including tornado watches, as rain, strong winds, and hail swept east along nearly the entire eastern seaboard from Alabama to New York.

The National Weather Service (NWS) had predicted a "moderate risk" of hazardous storms, with gusts up to 80 miles per hour (130 kilometers per hour). "Stay weather aware and make sure you have multiple ways to receive warnings," the NWS in Baltimore and Washington said on social media earlier in the day.



An abortion rights protester holds a sign to keep abortion safe in Ohio at a rally in Columbus, Ohio.



Vacharaesorn Vivacharawongse, 42, the second-eldest son of Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn speaks to well-wishers at the Foundation for Slum Child Care supported by the Royal Family, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Russian strikes on east Ukraine residential building kill at least 7

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Rescue workers combed through the rubble of damaged buildings in the city of Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine on Tuesday, the day after Russian strikes killed at least seven people.

Pokrovsk sits just 50 kilometres from the eastern frontline, where Moscow says it is gaining ground and repelling Ukrainian attacks.

Two missiles — launched 40 minutes apart — damaged residential buildings, a hotel, catering establishments, shops and administrative buildings on

Monday, Pavlo Kyrilenko, head of the Donetsk region's military administration said.

AFP correspondents on the ground saw rescuers evacuating survivors from the rubble of a five-storey building, and carrying the wounded into ambulances.

Seven people died and 67 were wounded, including two children, according to Igor Klymenko, Ukraine's minister of internal affairs.

Those killed included a high-ranking emergency

official of the Donetsk region, Klymenko said.

"We are resuming the demolition of rubble," he said on early Tuesday after the rescuers "were forced to suspend work for the night due to the high threat of repeated shelling".

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday that Moscow had struck a residential building, and shared a video on social media of civilians helping wounded people and rescuers clearing rubble from a building that had lost its top floor.

The monthlong conflict in Sudan has displaced over 4 million people, a UN official says

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Sudan's escalating conflict has driven more than 4 million people from their homes, including over 884,000 who have fled to neighboring countries, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

The fighting has also triggered outbreaks of disease and an increase in malnutrition, according to William Spindler, a spokesperson for the U.N. refugee agency. From mid-May to mid-July, the UNHCR recorded over 300 deaths from measles and malnutrition, mainly among children under 5, Spindler said, speaking to reporters in Geneva.

His remarks came as clashes between the

Sudanese army and its rival paramilitary force intensify in the eastern part of the capital, Khartoum, and the nearby city of Omdurman.

Sudan was plunged into chaos in April when simmering tensions between the military, led by Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, exploded into open fighting in Khartoum and elsewhere.

"Chronic shortages in health staff, as well as attacks on personnel as reported by the World Health Organization, have significantly compromised the quality of health care across the country," Spindler said.

Two more US warships enter Red Sea

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: More than 3,000 United States military personnel have arrived in the Red Sea aboard two warships as part of a 'beefed up response' from Washington after tanker seizures by Iran, the US Navy said on Monday.

The deployment adds to a growing US military build-up in tense Gulf waters vital to the global oil trade and led Tehran on Monday to accuse the US of 'inflammatory regional instability'.

The US sailors and Marines entered the Red Sea on Sunday after transiting through the Suez Canal in a pre-announced deployment, the US Navy's Fifth Fleet said.



Rescuers work at a site of a building destroyed during a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Pokrovsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine.

India bars makers of military drones from using Chinese parts

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India in recent months has barred domestic manufacturers of military drones from using components made in China over concerns about security vulnerabilities, according to four defence and industry officials and documents reviewed by Reuters.

The measure comes amid tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours and as New Delhi pursues a military modernisation that envisages greater use of unmanned quadcopters, long-endurance systems and other autonomous platforms.

But as the nascent Indian industry looks to meet the military's needs, the defence and industry figures said India's security leaders were worried that intelligence-gathering could be compromised by Chinese-made parts in drones' communication functions, cameras, radio transmission and operating software.

Three of these people and some of the six other government and industry figures interviewed by Reuters spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media or because of the topic's sensitivity.

Syria's pharmacies syndicate says drug prices to increase 50% as the country's pound hits a new low

Monitoring Desk
DAMASCUS: The Syrian government decided to increase prices of drugs by 50%, the head of the pharmacies syndicate in Damascus said Tuesday, as the Syrian pound hit new a low in recent days.

Hassan Derwan did not give a reason for the price hike in his interview with the pro-government daily Al-Watan. Earlier this year, prices were raised by between 50% and 80%.

Tropical storm hits Japan's Okinawa islands again, unleashing torrential rain

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A meandering storm was headed again to south-western Japan on Sunday, prompting fresh warnings about dangerously heavy rainfall after the same area was hit several days ago.

Tropical Storm Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, was returning to the southernmost group of islands of Okinawa moving slowly northward, packing winds of up to 30 metres per second (67 miles per hour) and hovering over Okinawa through Monday, according to the Japan Me-

teorological Agency.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki warned residents to brace for torrential rains and mudslides. "This could mean that the dangers about to hit the area where you are living are unusual and on a scale you have never experienced," he said of the storm. He asked people to prepare escape routes to safety in advance. "Do not let your guard down," he said. Large parts of Okinawa, including the main city of Naha, was being slammed by extremely heavy rainfall, according to weather reports.

Indian parliament debates no-confidence motion in Modi government

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's parliament debated a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on Tuesday, a day after opposition leader Rahul Gandhi returned to the house.

The opposition Congress party launched the debate in a bid to force comment from Modi on months of deadly ethnic conflict in northeastern Manipur state, with a vote potentially to be held on Thursday.

Government minister Kiren Rijiju said the motion had "been brought at an extremely bad time and Congress would regret it later".

Modi's Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 303 seats in the 543-member lower

house in the 2019 election and is expected to comfortably defeat the no-confidence vote, which it has dismissed as a headline-grabbing gimmick.

Gandhi, the scion of India's premier political dynasty, was restored to parliament on Monday after the Supreme Court last week suspended his defamation conviction over comments criticising Modi.

The 53-year-old Gandhi was sentenced to two years imprisonment in March in a case that critics flagged as an effort to stifle political opposition in the world's largest democracy.

"This no-confidence motion is our necessity," Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi told a rowdy session of parliament.

Britain imposes sanctions on Iranian drone maker accusing supporting Russia

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain on Tuesday imposed sanctions on an Iranian drone maker and a range of other foreign businesses, accusing them of supplying Russian forces with weapons and components for use against Ukraine.

Britain, the U.S. and the European Union have imposed a range of sanctions since last February to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a "special military operation". The British government set out 25 new sanctions on individuals and businesses in Iran, Turkey, Belarus, Slovakia, Switzerland and the UAE, as well as Russia. "Today's landmark sanctions will further diminish Russia's arsenal and close the net on supply chains propping up (President) Putin's now struggling defence industry," British foreign minister James Cleverly said.

Iranian drone maker Paravar Pars and seven of its executives, already subject to U.S. sanctions announced in February, and two Turkey-based exporters of microelectronics were among those targeted by Britain. The sanctions prohibit UK entities from providing trust services - the creation of a trust or similar arrangement - to those sanctioned and also impose asset freezes, which block their assets held in the UK. The government also imposed sanctions on several individuals, including Swiss national Anselm Oskar Schmuicki, who it says is the chief of the Moscow office of a Switzerland-based crypto asset manager, DuLac Capital Ltd. It alleged Schmuicki's involvement in "obtaining a benefit from, or supporting the Government of Russia, by carrying on business in a sector of strategic significance."

North Korean hackers breached top Russian missile maker

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: An elite group of North Korean hackers secretly breached computer networks at a major Russian missile developer for at least five months last year, according to technical evidence reviewed by Reuters and analysis by security researchers.

Reuters found cyberespionage teams linked to the North Korean government, which security researchers call ScarCruft and Lazarus, secretly installed stealthy digital backdoors into systems at NPO Mashinostroyeniya, a rocket design bureau based in Reutov, a small town on the outskirts of Moscow.

Reuters could not determine whether any data was taken during the intrusion or what information may have been viewed. In the months following the digital break-in in Pyongyang announced several developments in its banned ballistic missile programme but it is not clear if this was related to the breach.

Experts say the incident shows how the isolated country will ever target its allies, such as Russia, in a bid to acquire critical technologies.

N P O Mashinostroyeniya did not respond to requests from Reuters for comment. Russia's embassy in Washington did not respond to an emailed request for comment. North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York did not respond to a request for comment.

News of the hack comes shortly after a trip to Pyongyang last month by Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu for the 70th anniversary of the Korean War; the first visit by a Russian defence minister to North Korea since the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. The targeted company, commonly known as NPO Mash, has acted as a pioneer developer of hypersonic missiles, satellite technologies and newer generation ballistic armaments.

More than 1,000 evacuated as Portugal wildfire spreads

Monitoring Desk
ODEMIRA: Hundreds of firefighters scrambled on Tuesday to put out a blaze raging in southern Portugal that has scorched thousands of hectares of land and forced the evacuation of around 1,400 people.

The wildfire, currently being tackled by over 850 firefighters and six water-bombing planes, started on Saturday in the municipality of Odemira, in the Alentejo region, but has since spread south towards the Algarve, one of Portugal's top tourist destinations.

High temperatures and strong winds have complicated efforts to fight the flames, which have destroyed around 6,700 hectares of land. Jose Ribeiro, commander of the emergency and civil protection authority, said weather conditions were expected to remain a challenge.

Shortly before sunset on Monday, the sky in Odemira turned dark as a huge smoke cloud filled the air. Odemira's mayor,

Helder Guerreiro, called the situation "critical, difficult and complex" while Ribeiro said there was a "lot of work" ahead to bring the wildfire under control.

"It is a worrying situation," Ribeiro told reporters during a morning briefing, adding there were two active fronts, with one heading to Monchique, a lush green mountainous area in the Algarve's countryside.

Monchique, which last burned in 2018, is popular among locals and tourists due to its thermal springs and hotels.

A total of 19 tiny villages, one of them in Monchique, four tourist accommodations and a camping site have been evacuated out of precaution. Several roads have been blocked off, authorities said. Southern European countries such as Portugal have been grappling with record-breaking temperatures during the peak summer tourist season, prompting authorities to warn of health risks.

