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Caretaker PM vows to implement former gov't commitments; ensure rule of law, financial discipline

Addresses first interim cabinet meeting, calls on nation to start envisioning Pakistani dream; Says there will no compromise on rule of law in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar vowed on Friday to comply with the commitments made by the previous government on national and international levels with different forums, besides ensuring rule of law and financial discipline during the interim period.

"We do not have perpetual mandate to serve the nation but during the given allocated time we will try to lay foundation where we have sense of continuation of national and international commitments that the pre-

vious government has made with different forums," he said while talking to the cabinet members here during the first cabinet meeting of the caretaker government.

With respect to a new initiative-Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), launched by former government, the prime minister said the caretaker government would fully support it. He said SIFC was a dream comes true project as Pakistan was an agriculture country and rich with mineral resources.

He said in fact SIFC was not a new idea but it was an old national dream that was going to be materialized now.

"Day has arrived with the support of all institutions including Pakistan military leadership, we support, facilitate, encourage, and realize this old national dream."

He said this initiatives was not held by any institution but it was collectively owned by around 250 million people of the country.

"We all own it and we will contribute towards it."

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the first meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

Caretaker CM announces two months remission in sentence of prisoners

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Mardan Ali Domki has announced two months remission in the sentence of prisoners.

The announcement was made by Ali Mardan Domki soon after his assuming the office of caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan on Friday night.

Needless to mention

here is that it was the first initiative taken by the caretaker Chief Minister after he took oath of the office.

However, this relaxation would not be applied on the condemned criminals imprisoned in the cases of terrorism and other heinous crimes. Mir Mardan Domki took oath of the office of caretaker Chief Minister the same evening. The Governor Balochistan administered oath to him.

Shakeel Qadir posted as new CS Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili has been transferred with immediate effect on Friday.

According to an official notification issued here on Friday, the Grade-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Officer, serving as Additional Secretary Power Division, Shakeel Qadir Khan has been posted as the Chief Secretary Balochistan in place of Mr. Uqaili.

Jalil Abbas Jilani assumes charge as Caretaker Foreign Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jalil Abbas Jilani took the charge of his office on Friday.

Foreign Minister Jilani, who had taken oath along with other cabinet members on Thursday, has an extensive expertise of foreign affairs. He served as foreign secretary in 2012-13, besides Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg and Australia.

Meanwhile, talking to APP, the minister said the main objective of the foreign policy was to serve the national interests. He said the caretaker cabinet would strive to serve the country's interest through national consensus and improve cordial ties with countries like China the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and South Asian states, among others. He said Pakistan should further strengthen its relationship with China being a strategic partner with great economic cooperation.



QUETTA: Ali Mardan Domki is administered the oath of Caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister by Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Ali Mardan Domki takes oath as Balochistan's caretaker CM

Independent Report
QUETTA: The tribal and political personality and former District Nazim Sibi, Mir Ali Mardan Domki was sworn in as the caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan here on Friday night.

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administered oath to Mir Ali Mardan Domki at the simple but impressive oath taking ceremony held at the Governor House.

The oath taking ceremony was attended by the caretaker Federal Interior Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, former Chief Minister, Jam Kamal Khan, Chief Secretary, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, senior administrative high ups, dignitaries, former members of

provincial assembly and ministers.

Soon after the oath taking, Governor congratulated the caretaker Chief Minister. He also expressed best wishes for his new responsibilities.

Meanwhile, speaking to the media persons after his oath taking, the caretaker Chief Minister said that our first priority is to conduct free and fair elections in the province.

He said that effective steps would be taken for establishing law and order situation in the province.

About the Wadh issue, the caretaker Chief Minister said that he would speak to both groups to resolve the issue of Wadh amicably.

To a query about his cabinet, Ali Mardan Domki said that the cabinet would be formed in next two to three days.

Earlier, the Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali had sent recommendation summary to the Governor for formal approval of Ali Mardan Domki as the caretaker Chief Minister after the consensus developed by the parliamentary committee comprising members from government and Opposition sides.

The Governor approved the name of Ali Mardan Khan Domki as caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan. According to an official communique issued on Friday noon, the Governor gave the approval of name of Ali Mardan Domki as caretaker Chief Minister on the recommendation of parliamentary committee, which sent the name to Governor last night.

Caretaker govt to assist ECP in holding free & fair elections: Murtaza Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that holding general elections was the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Federal Government would fulfill its duty to assist the watchdog in that regard.

Addressing his maiden press conference as information minister, he said the entire caretaker cabinet would try hard to fulfill responsibilities under the oath and in accordance with the law and Constitution.

The minister spoke with the media to inform them about the first meeting of the Federal Cabinet chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Murtaza Solangi said he had held a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Raja Sikandar Sultan

and apprised him about the commitment of the Federal Cabinet regarding assistance in holding free elections in the country and implementing the ECP recommendations for necessary transfer and posting of officials in that regard.

He said the cabinet decided that on the election day, the first vote would be cast by the caretaker prime minister and then by the ministers.

The minister said the country would be ultimately run by the elected representatives of the people as was envisaged in the Constitution of Pakistan and the caretaker government would look after the affairs only till the elections.

He said that the cabinet decided to reduce the government's spending in view of the prevailing economic situation.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi addresses press conference at PID media centre.

Govt. to play wholehearted role for resolving Wadh dispute: Sarfraz Bugti

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Federal Interior Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has categorically stated that the government would play wholehearted role for resolving the dispute of Wadh.

He, however, said that both the groups should honour decision of the tribal Jirga.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti was speaking to the media persons on occasion of the oath taking of caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Domki here at the Governor House on Friday evening.

The caretaker Federal Minister said that he had come Quetta for participation in the oath taking of the caretaker Chief Minister.

To a query, he said that it is good if any dispute is resolved through negotiations. However, no one would be allowed to spread chaos at all, adding he asserted.

Regarding his meeting with PML-N leadership, Sarfraz Bugti said that we had met its leadership. He said that we have been working together before, so there is no issue in meeting.

The Federal Interior Minister on the occasion also strongly condemned the Jaranwala incident and said that strict action is being taken against the accused involved in the incident.

He said that the state of Pakistan is standing with the oppressed. He said that the attack on worship places of the minorities are not fair in Islam.



FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights / Women Empowerment Khalil George is visiting Christian Colony Jaranwala

Jaranwala culprits to be punished according to law: caretaker federal minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Khalil George said on Friday that all culprits involved in the Jaranwala incident would be punished according to the law, while Christians' residences and churches, ransacked by mob, would be rehabilitated soon.

Talking to the media during his visit to Christian Colony (Issa Nagri) Jaranwala on Friday, he said the Jaranwala tragedy was a calculated move. The anti-Pakistan elements hatched a deep-rooted conspiracy to spread anarchy and create rift in Christian-Muslim harmony. He advised the Christian community to show patience and forge unity among their ranks so that nefarious designs of the anti-state elements could be foiled.

If there will be housing society of IB then who competes it: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked if there will be housing society of IB then who competes it.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over a 3-member bench of SC during hearing of Housing societies forensic audit case here Friday.

He further observed "we have reviewed FIA report. As per report loss of Rs 175 billions occurred. An overall estimate was given in the report but no explanation was sought from the housing societies.

PM meets delegations from Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday held meetings with delegations from different parts of Balochistan.

The delegations felicitated him on assuming the office of prime minister and expressed their best wishes for him.

The notables of the delegations expressed the view that the appointment of caretaker prime minister from Balochistan strengthened the people's belief in the political system and democracy. The delegations presented bouquets to the prime minister and some of the guests gave the gift of books according to his literary taste.

Pakistan's HC to UK meets Nawaz in London

LONDON (INP): The newly appointed Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Dr Muhammad Faisal called on former prime minister and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, reported on Friday.

Pakistan's high commissioner met Nawaz Sharif at his son Hassan Nawaz's office in Central London. The meeting lasted for more than half an hour.

Nawaz Sharif and Dr Faisal discussed matters of mutual interest including Pakistan. Dr Faisal assumed the responsibility of Pakistan's High Commissioner in the United Kingdom this month.

Five people electrocuted in Nasirabad, SDO, Line Superintendent suspended

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) on Friday said that five people electrocuted in an incident which took place inside the house last in area of Nasirabad district.

According to spokesman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), QESCO, Engineer Abdul Karim Jamali took notice of the incident and ordered to start investigation into incident and immediately suspended the SDO and Line Superintendent of the area.

He also directed the Chief Engineer, Operation Director, along with the Safety Director, to reach at the scene soon and submit a report in that regard.

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QUETTA: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) holding protest demonstration against the price hike of petroleum products in front of Quetta press club

IHC restrains housing societies operating outside federal capital from using name of Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has restrained housing societies operating outside Islamabad from using name of Islamabad. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir of IHC has issued decision in the case against cancellation of registration of housing societies Friday. The court while declaring the revocation of registration of 18 housing societies outside limits of Islamabad null and void has restored their registration. The court has said in its decision registrar cooperative societies did not meet legal formalities while cancelling the registration of these societies. Registrar should satisfy himself did the societies give development schedule within one year of their registration. It has been ordered in the decision registrar should hold inquiry that was the land acquired for the project. If not then the registrar should hold inquiry regarding their financial affairs. The registrar should also hold this inquiry that 'have the housing societies potential to run housing scheme. It is written in the decision that the registrar societies will be able to initiate proceedings again as per law after different inquiries. Registrar will verify did the societies provide their data in respective province at stipulated time. If societies have not provided data on implementation of housing project then registrar can take action. Registrar will probe did the societies complete their projects in time. Registrar will be able to seek assistance from the respective department of Punjab in this regard. Registrar cooperative housing societies should give implementation report to registrar high court in two months.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Law and Justice Ahmad Irfan Aslam was given a presentation by the Secretary Law on his arrival at the Ministry.

Muslim Council of Elders denounces attacks on Churches in Jaranwala

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the guidance of the esteemed Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Muslim Council of Elders on Friday vehemently denounced the recent assault on religious harmony in the wake of the Jaranwala incident. According to a statement received here, extremists who defiled copies of the Holy Quran and initiated an unfortunate series of events have drawn sharp condemnation from the Council. The subsequent retaliatory strikes on multiple churches in Jaranwala, Pakistan, executed by yet another faction of extremists, have further intensified concerns. Muslim Council of Elders Secretary-General, Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, expressed strong dissent against such reprehensible actions. He affirmed that these criminal deeds stand in stark contradiction to the values upheld by divine religions, laws, and human ethics. "The core principles of mutual respect and refraining from targeting places of worship are shared across these teachings. The Holy Quran's teachings are unambiguous in their emphasis on safeguarding places of worship and abstaining from any form of aggression directed towards them," he added. In an urgent appeal, the Muslim Council of Elders called upon leaders on both sides to promptly address the discord that has arisen. "Countering hate speech with dialogue, promoting tolerance, nurturing coexistence, and fostering human fraternity are highlighted as the means to bridge the divide," he maintained.

Basic wireless communication equipment repair course conducted

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a collaboration between the Islamabad Capital Police and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) culminated in the successful completion of a three-week basic wireless communication equipment repair course, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the course was meticulously organized to elevate the skillset of the Islamabad Capital Police wireless personnel. The initiative aimed to enhance the proficiency of the Islamabad Capital Police wireless staff, bolstering departmental communication system capabilities.

Pakistan's national space policy should prioritize private sector participation in R&D: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a seminar on Friday demanded that the country's National Space Policy should prioritize private sector participation in research and development (R&D), and encourage commercial sector involvement. "At the international level, the space sector is growing exponentially, with public-private partnerships (PPP) in R&D aimed at acquiring next-generation capabilities. To ensure the success of Pakistan's space programme, it is crucial for the national leadership to set goals, allocate resources, and develop a credible infrastructure," these were some of the key takeaways from the seminar titled 'Emerging Trends in Aerospace Power: Options for Pakistan' organised by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. Director National Security, CASS, Lahore, Air Commodore @ Khalid Iqbal delivered the introductory remarks. His speech was followed by a keynote address by former Chairman Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Major General @ Ahmed Bilal, who highlighted the prevalent global aerospace trends. Associate Professor, Air University, Dr Ali Sarosh focused on the evolution of Space power in South Asia, including its military and civil applications while Professor Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas, DHA Sufia University elucidated on gaps in international Space law and viable developmental strategy for Pakistan's Space programme. Following the guest



ISLAMABAD: Young female mountaineer of Pakistan Samina Baig posing for a group photo along with her sponsors and others after event to acknowledge her efforts by the management of one of the high ranked hotels in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Care taker Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan chaired introductory meeting of the Senior Officers of Ministry and all head of attach departments.

NDMA advisory alerts depts concerned after Sutlej River attains high level flows

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday issued an advisory to alert the national and provincial departments concerned to ensure proper measures to cope with any emergent situation as Sutlej River attained high level flows that would persist for the next 24-48 hours. The NDMA advisory underlined that as per the water flows data received from Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW), the River Sutlej has attained high level of flows at Ganda Singh Wala, whereas the flows

would be reflected and passed on downstream to Sulamanki and Islam Headworks in next 48 to 76 hours. In the light of the high flows and probable dangers and vulnerability of areas astride the River Sutlej, the NDMA advised the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) to ensure implementation of elaborate coordination mechanism for preparedness and mitigation through management/regulation of water reservoirs, barrages, headworks and irrigation canals. "The measures must ensure desynchronized releases from all reservoirs, regulating structures to preclude cumulative flooding in any regions. Plan immediate discharges from regul-

ating structures to build capacity for likely heightened or increased flows," it said. The PCIW was also directed to ensure that flows and discharge data of eastern rivers was updated regularly for necessary planning and preparations. The Met Office and FFD were directed that during the forecasted period share 6-hourly weather forecasts to enable timely decision-making and coordinating response. Moreover, they would also share 3-hourly updates on river and nullah flows and reservoir levels to facilitate coordinated water management and regulation.

Babar Awan says: If ECP cannot do one thing then there is no justification to sit

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senior lawyer Babar Awan said that if the Election Commission cannot do one thing then there is no justification for them to sit. Babar Awan, in reaction to the Election Commission's decision to delimit constituencies said that the job of the ECP is to conduct elections in a fair and transparent manner. He said that due to this decision of ECP, there is a conspiracy being

hatched against the provinces and if this whole thing happens then the federation will break. Babar Awan said that the ECP had said in the Supreme Court to conduct delimitation of the constituencies in 4 months 16 months ago. It should be noted that ECP has decided to conduct new delimitation of constituencies according to the official results of Digital Census 2023 and for which the schedule has been released.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Fareena Mazhar, Director General Ayub Jamal briefed Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah during his visit to PNC A.

AIOU to disseminate video clips of Seerat books on social media

ISLAMABAD (APP): The annual meeting of the Board of Management and Review and Publishing Committee for Seerat-un-Nabi Chair was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The meeting was presided over by the Head Seerat chair, Prof Dr Sahibzada Sajid Ur Rahman. The meeting presented the review report of the activities organized last year, books and manuscripts for publication and monographs and projects regarding Seerat un-Nabi was also presented. The board also discussed the issues related to the holding of the National Seerat Conference for Rabi-ul-Awwal. Speaking as a chief guest, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that keeping in view the popularity of social media, there is a need to record short clips of Seerat books and disseminate them on social media to connect.

Madad Ali assumes charge as Caretaker Edu. Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned writer, poet and journalist, Madad Ali Sindhvi Friday assumed charge as the caretaker federal minister for the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. The officials of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training welcomed the newly appointed Federal Minister. The Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Madad Ali Sindhvi was formally introduced to the officials by the Secretary Education Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry. Madad Ali Sindhvi was given a comprehensive briefing about the important functions and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. He said that he wanted to understand the problems of the education sector and solve them accordingly. He continued that he intended to improve the education sector even in the short period of this interim setup. We should try our best to lay the foundation of development even in this short time, he said. Madad Ali Sindhvi highlighted the importance of working together for the prosperity of the nation. Secretary Education, Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry said that the entire ministry is committed to fulfilling the instructions.

Safe City conducts evaluation of 1600 private cameras

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Technical Team of the Safe City Islamabad Command and Control Center surveyed 1600 private security cameras installed in various areas of Islamabad. The technical team surveyed 1600 private security cameras installed at Koral Chowk, Khanna Pul, Express Highway, Aabpara, Melody, Poly Clinic, G-9 Center, F-10 Center, I-10 Green Belt near Sabzi Mandi, I-16 Center, and G-13 Road in Islamabad, a police source said. The survey aims to ensure access to Islamabad Police in urban as well as rural areas in order and enable effective handling and monitoring of incidents or events. Moreover, private security camera owners had been also asked to ensure the proper functioning of their cameras at all times and provide timely CCTV footage to the police when required in order to assist in crime prevention and investigation. Police have urged citizens to collaborate in eradicating criminal elements and provide strong support to the force. Police sources said that it has been also decided to enhance the effectiveness of drone cameras and refine their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Jamal Shah visits Lok Virsa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Friday visited Lok Virsa - National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage soon after assuming charge. He was warmly welcomed by the senior officials. Later, the minister also chaired a meeting which was attended by Secretary National Heritage and Culture Fareena Mazhar and other senior officials of the Division and Lok Virsa. Detailed briefing was given to the Minister regarding Lok Virsa and its cultural activities.

Sami Saeed assumes charge as caretaker Planning Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Muhammad Sami Saeed, a retired seasoned bureaucrat, has assumed charge as the caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, marking a significant development in the country's economic landscape. He has an extensive experience in Planning, Development & Economic affairs. On arrival at the ministry, he was welcomed by the Secretary of Planning Syed Zafar Ali Shah and senior officials. Later, the minister chaired a meeting in which he was given a detailed briefing by the secretary about the functioning and responsibilities of the ministry and ongoing development and strategic initiatives of the ministry particularly the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), Annual Development Plan, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Special Investment Facilitation Center (SIFC). While chairing the

meeting, Sami Saeed said that all officers of the ministry should work for the development of the country with full dedication and hard work. The minister said that the implementation of public welfare projects should be ensured while special attention should be paid to the quality of the projects. Highlighting the importance of education, he said that more attention should be given to increasing the quality of education in the country. As per the profile, Muhammad Sami Saeed joined the Civil Service of Pakistan (District Management Group/Pakistan Administrative Service) in 1980 and held important positions in government and international organizations. He remained Executive Director on the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Cabinet Secretary to the Government of Pakistan and Principal Staff Officer to the Prime Minister.

While chairing the



ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand guard outside Church at Sector G-7 to counter any unexpected situation in Federal Capital.

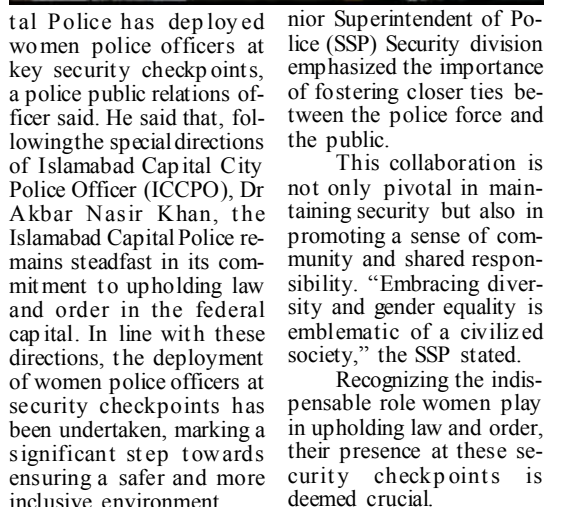
HEC trains 25 scholars to serve as faculty under IPFP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Higher Education Commission (HEC), has successfully completed pre-service training of 5th cohort of National Faculty Development Programme (NFDPP) for Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Programme. In this connection, a ceremony was held to recognise the achievements of 25 fresh PhDs who have now become certified IPFP Fellows, having successfully undergone the comprehensive pre-service certification programme. NFDPP equips participants with essential tools encompassing teaching and learning, applied research, and professional practices. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, who was chief guest of the ceremony, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the participants of the successful completion of the training programme. Addressing the participants, he drew attention to Pakistan's ongoing challenges and underscored the pivotal role educated professionals play in contributing to the nation's progress. He encouraged the certified candidates to extend their impact beyond teaching by engaging in impactful research, fostering innovation, and nurturing critical thinking. "In these testing times, the dedication to selflessly serve the nation holds immense significance. Your roles as researchers and educators play a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's future," Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed emphasized. During her keynote address, Managing Director NAHE, Ms. Noor Anna Malik highlighted the rigorous training process, which lays strong emphasis on bridging the gap between theory and practice. She underlined the integration of innovative methodologies, including micro-teaching which empowers candidates to refine their teaching techniques through constructive feedback from resource persons, peers, and self-assessment. She also stressed the programme's dedication to supporting both emerging and established educational institutions in their growth.

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Female police officers deployed at high security zone checkpoints

ISLAMABAD: In a strategic move aimed at bolstering security measures within the high-security zone, the Islamabad Capital Police has deployed women police officers at key security checkpoints, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding law and order in the federal capital. In line with these directions, the deployment of women police officers at security checkpoints has been undertaken, marking a significant step towards ensuring a safer and more inclusive environment. The women police officers will seamlessly collaborate with their male counterparts to conduct security duties with utmost professionalism. The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Security division emphasized the importance of fostering closer ties between the police force and the public. This collaboration is not only pivotal in maintaining security but also in promoting a sense of community and shared responsibility. "Embracing diversity and gender equality is emblematic of a civilized society," the SSP stated. Recognizing the indispensable role women play in upholding law and order, their presence at these security checkpoints is deemed crucial.



Justice Maqbool says: Caretaker cabinet to be selected soon

KARACHI (APP): Quaid-e-Azam governance and the government system. How it would be achieved is the question to which he replied 'by following the constitution'.

To a question about delaying the general election, Justice Baqar said that we should avoid being sceptical. "It is premature to develop such an argument let the process start," he said and added it was the responsibility of the election commission to determine to hold the general election, and the caretaker government was bound to facilitate them, but he assured that he would not be a part of any unconstitutional arrangement.

Replied to a question, Justice Baqar said that rule of law, conviction, and commitment were prerequisites for the improvement of the

KARACHI (APP): Quaid-e-Azam Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar on Friday said that he would select a small cabinet for which he has started meetings and consultation, but the effort is to induct the cabinet at the earliest.

This he said while talking to the media at Mazar-e-Quaid where he laid a wreath and offered Fateha.

Caretaker CM said that he was grateful to Almighty Allah who gave him an opportunity to serve the people of the province for a short time. "I am keen to play my part to contribute to the realization of the dream of



LAHORE: A delegation led by Ms. Jingmin Huang, Director of Water and Urban Development Sector Office of Asian Development Bank in a group photo with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

'If any police officer found involved in water theft, he will face action'; Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that he is in touch with the higher authorities of the police and if any police officer is found involved in water theft and action will be taken against him.

He expressed these views while addressing the event organized under the auspices of Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation. Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, People's Party Parliamentary Leader in the City Council Najmi Alam, Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, District Central General Secretary Dil Muhammad, Chairman of various UCs, CEO, MD Water Board Syed Salahuddin, Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan and other officers were also present on the occasion.

The water board has come up with a solution that they will produce

manhole covers, manhole rings and slabs. A manhole cover which weighs 10 to 12 kilograms was available for Rs 3500 in the market, the same cover will be ready in the factory for Rs 2700 and its weight will be 35 kg. He said that 150 manhole covers will be given to every UC without discrimination and this process will be started from Monday. He said that all parties should work together to make this city better and everyone should work together, he said that the people of Karachi do not want their water to be stolen, so tough decisions have to be made. In response to a question, Mayor Karachi said that the black sheep in the water board will not be able to work with him. He said that we will take action again in Janjal Goth, and he will stand with the officials, so far more than 30 FIRs have been registered against the water thieves and we are working and fighting with the mafia.

Speakers stress for long term strategies, projects to counter extremism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The speakers at an international conference here Friday called for chalking out and implementing long term strategies and projects to counter extremism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The day-long conference was organized by the KP Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism.

Secretary Higher Education Anila Mahfouz Durrani, former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi, former DIG CTD and Executive Director of Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund from Geneva Khalid Kausar attended the conference as key speakers. On this occasion, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Geneva-based Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and the Centre.

The agreement was aimed to increase the efficiency of the Center and prevention of extremism in the light of international experiences.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Higher Education Anila Durrani said that the KP Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism is the first center of excellence of its kind in South Asia and would act as a think tank in the fight against extremism.

PPP leader and former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi said that KP was currently facing critical issues including extremism and climate change.

He said Pakistan has to reconsider its foreign policy towards Afghanistan for peace in the region, adding that such interactions should be held regularly to combat extremism and promote tolerance in society.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Hajji Ghulam Ali presides over the Pakistan Red Crescent society merged District (PRCS MDs) performance review meeting in Governor House.

Governor KP chairs Pakistan Red Crescent Merged area meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The meeting of Pakistan Red Crescent merged districts under the Chairmanship of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hajji Ghulam Ali were held here at Governor House on Friday.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Red Crescent for the erstwhile tribal districts, Imran Khan, members of the managing committee, Principal Secretary to the Governor, Mazhar Irshad and others.

In the meeting, a detailed briefing was presented regarding the overall performance, aims and objectives, community services of Red Crescent District Branch.

The meeting also approved the nomination of 11 members for the managing committee of Pakistan Red Crescent.

Pakistan Red Crescent is a great name and position in humanitarian services, Hajji Ghulam Ali said.

He said the services of the Red Crescent for suffering humanity were commendable.

The Red Crescent should involve the local community in humanitarian services, Hajji Ghulam Ali said.

The Red Crescent should establish strong links with benefactors at the local level, Hajji Ghulam Ali further added.

At the local level, philanthropists and local communities are helpful for services and cooperation in natural disasters, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hajji Ghulam Ali said.

The governor urged the Red Crescent to prepare a list of volunteers at the Tehsil and District level in all the merged districts so that each and every work.

Punjab Governor says: Govt values cooperation of Asian Development Bank Punjab in dev. projects

LAHORE (Online): A delegation led by Ms. Jingmin Huang, Director of Water and Urban Development Sector Office of Asian Development Bank met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, ongoing projects in Punjab with the support of Asian Development Bank were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the government values the cooperation of Asian Development Bank Punjab in various development projects.

He said that the cooperation of Asian

Development Bank in various projects of urban facilities is commendable. Governor Punjab said that the Asian Development Bank's support in upgrading the Bahawalpur Solid Waste Management Company and the project to generate electricity from solid waste is a good project. He further said that Punjab government is willing to initiate sustainable infrastructure development program through structural reforms to achieve economic growth and social prosperity in the country with the support of Asian Development Bank.

He emphasized that the Asian Development Bank should assist the local government institutions in the form of grants for capacity building so that the projects can be successfully implemented.

Governor Punjab said that he wants cooperation and collaboration from Asian Development Bank for development projects in flood affected areas, health, water management and urban development sectors.

On this occasion, Director of Water and Urban Development Sector Office of Asian Development Bank Jingmin Huang (Ms. Jingmin Huang) said that Asian Development Bank (ADB) is committed to continue supporting Pakistan's economic recovery and development projects.

Two terrorists arrested from Gadap Town

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Police in a joint intelligence based operation have arrested two allegedly most wanted terrorists affiliated with a proscribed organization Daesh from Gadap Town area of the megalopolis.

According to spokesman for Rangers on Friday, the arrested were identified as Farmanullah alias Ehtsham and Dawood alias Ameer Sahib. The agencies recovered hand grenades, arms and ammunition from the possession of the accused. Accused Farmanullah was a very active member of ISIS who was wanted for his involvement in several terrorist activities in KP.

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Ex -Service Persons Society Lieutenant General (R) Abdul Qayyum addressing press conference along with others at Press Club in Provincial Capital.

Free-of-cost treatment for dengue patients being ensured: Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr Jamal Nasir Friday said that special counters were being established at all the district and tehsil headquarter hospitals for providing free of cost treatment facilities to dengue patients.

Chairing a meeting to review the dengue situation here, he said that people can get a slip for a free checkup by showing their national identity card.

The minister said that after checking the patient's pulse, fever and blood pressure at such counter, a blood sample will be taken and a CBC blood test would be done.

In case of a positive blood test report and the presence of symptoms, the dengue patient would be admitted to the hospital for further treatment.

Dr Jamal said that qualified and trained doctor presence was also being ensured for dengue patients at the health facilities.

He said that preventive measures were being taken to control the spread of dengue in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan, adding the surveillance for tracing larvae had been intensified across Punjab and the relevant deputy commissioners had been assigned the responsibility of monitoring the anti-dengue activities.



KARACHI: Members of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) are holding protest demonstration against killing of Senior Journalist Jan Muhammad Mehar in Sukkur, at Karachi press club.

Police submits a report regarding Hassan in LHC

LAHORE (Online): On the petition filed in the Lahore High Court for the recovery of Hassan Niazi, the nephew of the former prime minister, the police has submitted a report related to Hassan Niazi on the court's order.

The court disposed of the recovery application filed in the light of the police report Justice Sultan Tanveer of Lahore High Court heard the application filed by Hassan Niazi's father Hafeezullah Niazi for the recovery of his son.

Additional Advocate General Punjab Ghulam Sarwar on Friday.

Additional Advocate General Punjab Ghulam Sarwar Nihang has submitted a one-page written report on behalf of the Punjab Police.

In the report, it is said that Hassan Niazi has been named in the Jinnah House attack case. Hassan Niazi is among the main accused in the Jinnah House attack case. The accused was handed over to the military for trial. Hassan Niazi's trial will be held in military courts. Petitioner was of the view that Hassan Niazi is being held at an unknown location in illegal confinement 'Habs Beja.

RPSC seeks inquiry report over refusing of FIR registration by female

PESHAWAR (APP): The Right to Public Services Commission (RPSC) here on Friday ordered the Bajaur Police to submit an inquiry report within 14 days for refusing registration of an FIR by a female.

"Timely access to all basic services is the constitutional right of every citizen in the province and negligence of the government officials will not be tolerated in that regard," said Judge Muhammad Asim Imam.

The Right to Public Services Commission heard the complaint of two citizens. Commissioner RPSC Judge Muhammad Asim Imam heard the

complaints of two citizens. A female citizen from Bajaur had applied to the commission that the police were not registering her FIR.

The woman was heard online through a video call. Judge Muhammad Asim Imam issued orders to the police to complete the inquiry within 14 days and a report of the matter should be submitted to the commission. Similarly, a citizen from Swabi had applied to the commission against the police regarding the property, on which Judge Muhammad Asim Imam advised the citizen to approach the civil court while hearing the case.



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar talking to media persons at Mazar-e-Quaid in Provincial Capital.

Bid to smuggle four leopard skins foiled, four poachers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The Wildlife Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has foiled a bid to smuggle four skins of rare snow leopard and arrested four poachers on Hazara Express way on Friday.

"The seizure and arrest came in the wake of prior information about smuggling of skins to Islamabad from Hazara," informs Sardar Nawaz SDFO Wildlife Department Abbotabad.

On receiving information, checking was started on Hazara Havelian road during which the four smugglers were arrested along with preserved skins of snow leopards.

The recovered skins included one large and three small, apparently of a mother and three of her cubs, adds Sardar Nawaz.

Chairman ATP urges Interim govt to take pragmatic measures for removing public miseries

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP), Muhammad Faiq Shah has urged the caretaker government to take pragmatic measures to remove the public's miseries and to refrain from endorsing policies of the previous governments.

Apart from conducting elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, Shah said the interim government should focus on the people's issues.

He stressed that timely elections are vital to flourish democracy in the country and delay in this regard will be proved detrimental.

He said all resources should be utilized to make the next general elections fair so that no one will raise questions on the impartiality of the electoral exercise.

Faiq held the previous coalition government responsible for elevating the public's problems.

The party chief while chairing a meeting here on Friday said the

caretaker government should also focus on maintenance of peace and stability in the country.

He said peace is vital for economic prosperity and development. He said all requirements of justice and law should be fulfilled to make the society a cradle of peace and eliminate grouping on regional, ethnic and linguistic grounds.

Chairman ATP said special incentives should be announced for traders and industries to improve the country's ailing economy, trade and export.

Shah said economic policies should be framed with consultation with the business community.

He reminded that his party was carrying out a vigorous campaign for public rights and justice, vowing that the struggle will be contained till provision of unprecedented authorities and powers to people.

The party leader said political, social and economic justice and public authority is our manifesto and agenda.



KARACHI: Pakistani Christians hold a demonstration condemning the recent attack on a Christian area by an angry Muslim mob in Provincial Capital.

Effective policies key to achieve \$100bn export targets: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Gohar Ijaz said on Friday that the government will work hard to increase Pakistan's exports to more than \$100 billion for sustainable economic growth and development.

Talking to PTV news, he stressed that the country needs to work hard to catch up with the emerging economies in the world, adding the country is presently facing big economic challenges, but they are not bigger than our capabilities and resolve to overcome them.

He further said that the agricultural, industrial and textile sectors can play an important role in increasing exports, reducing imports and achieving sustainable economic growth in the country.

Replying to a question, the minister said the Prime Minister has chosen a well-versed team that will succeed in the mission of holding free and fair general elections in the country.

In a comprehensive briefing, Mr. Ejaz was provided with a thorough understanding of the crucial functions and responsibilities entrusted to the Commerce Division and Industry.

With a visionary approach, Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz has set forth ambitious goals for his tenure.

His resolute determination is aimed at propelling domestic exports to an impressive 80 billion dollars, reflecting his commitment to fortifying the nation's economic prowess. "I am steadfast in my resolve to

breathe new life into our commercial and industrial sectors," Minister Ejaz affirmed.

Addressing the challenges that loom in the commercial sector, Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz expressed his dedication to tackling complexities head-on.

He aimed to swiftly steer state enterprises towards profitability, demonstrating his adeptness at strategic decision-making in the pursuit of economic prosperity.

In a bid to foster innovation and industry growth, Gohar Ejaz revealed his plans to launch flagship projects within the Special Economic Zone, with a specific focus on the garments sector.

These initiatives are poised to stimulate economic activity.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of Petroleum division giving an overview of sector to Caretaker Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali on his first day in Office.

Nuclear power plants may help overcome energy crisis: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pak-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki said on Friday that electricity generation through nuclear power plants could help overcome energy crisis.

Talking to the media here, he said that global warming was causing gradual depletion of non-renewable sources of energy such as oil, gas and coal. This situation was compelling various countries including most of the European states to reconsider their energy policies.

Ghurki said that many of them were opting for energy production through nuclear power plants, which was not only safer, cheaper and effective but also supports self-reliance. He said that Pakistan too turned its focus on producing energy through its nuclear power

plants (NPPs) - such as Karachi Nuclear Power Plants (having the capacity of 1100MW each), the Chasma-1 (325MW), the Chasma-2 (325MW), the Chasma-3 (350MW), and the Chasma-4 (350MW) - under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

"Recently our government has signed an MoU for a 1200-MW unit 5 of the Chashma nuclear power plant, which is being built by China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). These NPPs would not only increase the country's electricity production but also help save billions of US dollars that Pakistan was currently spending for running other sources of energy. There is a need for both educating the government on such feasible, reliable and cheaper options, and also increasing awareness amongst the common masses."

Railways Minister vows to ensure passengers' safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Captain @ Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Friday vowed to ensure the safety of the passengers and the best facilities during train travels.

The Minister shared the remarks after taking charge of his office said. Officials of the Ministry of Railways were present on the occasion.

Federal Secretary Railways Syed Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the Minister on the administrative and operational functions of the Railways.

He directed the Ministry staff to take all possible measures for the convenience of the passengers.

Shahid Tarar instructed the department concerned to conduct an audit and assessment regarding the safety of passengers and submit a report within seven days.

The federal minister stated that Main Line-I is an important and strategic project for Pakistan that will revamp the railway sector and generate more revenue for the department.

Rupee sheds 86 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday witnessed an 86-paisa devaluation against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 295.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs 294.91.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 301.5 and Rs 303.8 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 85 paisa to close at Rs 321.60 against the last day's closing of Rs 320.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 02 paisa and closed at Rs 2.03.



ISLAMABAD: A plant full of Dates at melody area in the federal capital.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry, Gohar Ejaz is being briefed at the Ministry of Industries and Production.

Dr Umar Saif takes charge as IT Minister, commits to propel ICT exports beyond \$10 bln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology, Telecommunication, Science & Technology Dr Umar Saif on Friday expressed his commitment to propel the IT exports beyond \$10 billion and lead a nationwide digitalization effort.

Addressing the ministry officers after assuming the charge, he said, "My priorities are to fully implement the Digital Pakistan Vision and further promoting the of IT (information technology) & telecommunication sectors. We will take all the stakeholders on board in this regard."

The minister said increase in the ICT exports could help stabilise the economy and in the provision of decent employment to skilled people, as well as the desire to fully digitize all the government and semi-government departments, and organizations of the country.

Earlier on his arrival at the ministry, Dr Umar Saif, who took oath as minister on Thursday, was received by Secretary IT Navid Ahmed Shaikh along with other senior officers. He was introduced to all the officers and staff of the ministry. Later he was given a detailed briefing about the completed,

ongoing, and future projects of the IT Ministry.

Dr Umar Saif said as per the Constitution of Pakistan, the responsibilities and powers of the caretaker government were limited, as its main objective was to conduct free, fair and impartial general elections.

However, monitoring and taking care of the important ministerial affairs were also necessary during the period, he added. Dr Umar Saif is a very well-reputed and known figure in the world of ICT. He is the first Pakistani to receive a PhD in Computer Science from Cambridge University at the age of 23.

Weekly inflation up by 0.78 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.78 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on August 17, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 275.57 points

as compared to 273.43 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 27.57 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

PSX loses 107 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday shed 107.34 points, a negative change of 0.22 per cent, closing at 48,218.50 points against 48,325.84 points the previous trading day.

A total of 254,814,045 shares were traded during the day as compared to 48,146.44 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10,414 billion against Rs 10,021 billion on the last trading day.



KARACHI: Traders hold protest against increasing petrol price.

PTA, PITB inaugurate Lahore IXP to boost digital connectivity

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Friday marked a historic milestone with the inauguration of the Lahore Internet Exchange Point (IXP).

The inauguration ceremony was held at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) with esteemed industry leaders, government officials, and prominent Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in attendance. International stakeholders namely Internet Society (ISOC), Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) and Japan Registry Services (JPRS) attended the event remotely.

The launch event featured presentations and insightful speeches from key industry figures, emphasizing the IXP's potential to enhance digital infrastructure and support the growth of Pakistan's internet economy.

Ministry of Finance released Fiscal Operation report 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Ministry of Finance has released Fiscal Operation report 2022-23.

According to report, the Pakistan's budget deficit reached 7.7% of GDP in 2022-23.

Total revenue collection from July 2022 to June 2023 remained RS 9633 billion.

According to Ministry of Finance, 16154 billion rupees were spent in the last financial year and there was difference of 6521 billion rupees between expenditure and income. It has been told in report that the total tax revenue in the last financial year was 7818 billion rupees.

Efforts underway to implement Digital Pakistan Vision: Chairman PEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon has said that the government was working on 'Digital Pakistan Vision' to enhance the digital economy footprint to spur economic prosperity and public empowerment.

He was speaking at the first session of Joint Leadership Forum of Telecom and Pakistan Engineering Council held at PEC under his convenorship.

The participants briefly discussed the importance of Telecom Sector in Pakistan and said

that telecommunication was playing a vital role in the development of a country. It provides the prime services that the economy needs for rapid growth, development and modernization. As the economy grows, the demand for telecom services increases to conduct the increased number of economic transactions in the expanded economy, they said.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman PEC said that the government recognized the growth of IT and telecommunication.

Shamshad chairs meeting to review revenue collection performance of FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shamshad Akhtar on Friday visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters and held a meeting with Chairman FBR Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana. Members of the Board to review the revenue collection performance of FBR.

Secretary Finance Imdad Ullah Bosal and senior officers from FBR and the finance ministry also attended the meeting, said a news release issued here.

During the meeting, Chairman FBR gave a detailed presentation to the minister about the revenue collection performance of FBR including the assigned targets for the current financial year 2023-24 and the strategy to achieve them. He informed that FBR has collected Rs 7169 billion against a target of Rs 7200 billion in the previous financial year.

The chairman further apprised that all efforts will be made to meet this year's collection target of Rs 9415 billion.

Chairman FBR also informed the minister about the procedural improvements being made to simplify the process of paying taxes in order to facilitate the taxpayers.

He also gave an update on important initiatives of FBR including the Broadening of Tax Base, Track and Trace System, and Point of Sale System whereby efforts are afoot to further enhance revenue generation.

The finance minister emphasized devising strategies to further enhance the tax-to-GDP ratio and broaden the tax base to maximize revenue collection.

She also called for finding innovative ways to tax the untaxed sectors. The minister stressed on making all-out efforts to achieve the ongoing year's revenue collection target.

The minister said increase in the ICT exports could help stabilise the economy and in the provision of decent employment to skilled people, as well as the desire to fully digitize all the government and semi-government departments, and organizations of the country.

Earlier on his arrival at the ministry, Dr Umar Saif, who took oath as minister on Thursday, was received by Secretary IT Navid Ahmed Shaikh along with other senior officers. He was introduced to all the officers and staff of the ministry. Later he was given a detailed briefing about the completed,



ISLAMABAD: Secretary/ Chairman Railways is welcoming the Caretaker Federal Minister for Railways, Captain (R) Shahid Ashraf Tarar at Ministry of Railways.

Sensitization program on remittances for workers going abroad launched

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) jointly launched on Friday the Pre-Departure Briefing Program to sensitize workers going abroad about the process of sending remittances to home and relevant schemes by the government and banks.

The program will be organized in all Protectorate of Emigrants (PE) Offices across Pakistan to educate intending overseas workers about formal channels for sending remittances, assist them in opening bank accounts, especially joint accounts, highlight the risks involved in using informal channels and update outgoing workers about government's programs and schemes as well as banks' products related to home remittances.

Executive Director SBP Akhtar Javed and Director General, BE&OE Akram Ali Khawaja

launched the program in a ceremony that was attended by the senior officials of SBP, PRI, BE&OE and representatives of the large remittance mobilizing banks, said a statement issued here.

The Pre-Departure Briefing Program, developed by Pakistan Remittance Initiative (PRI) in collaboration with Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) and banks, is considered the key initiative for domestic outreach for educating outgoing workers to use formal channels for sending home remittances.

As the outgoing workers are required to register with PE Offices across Pakistan; therefore, the program presents an excellent opportunity, on ongoing basis, to educate outgoing workers for using formal channels for sending remittances back home and opening their own and their beneficiary's bank accounts, it claimed.



RAWALPINDI: A blacksmith preparing iron tools at his workplace.

Pakistan-Italy trade witnesses over 97% surplus during FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's goods and services trade with Italy witnessed a surplus of 97.11 percent during the fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$624.518 million against \$316.995 million last year, showing 97.11 percent growth.

The overall exports to Italy were recorded at US \$151.448 million during July-June (2022-23) against exports of US \$1087.434 million during July-June (2021-22), showing growth of 5.88 percent, SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Italy witnessed a decrease of 18.57 percent from \$121.101 million in June 2022, against the exports

of \$98.601 million in June 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Italy also dipped by 2.76 percent during June 2023 as compared to the exports of \$101.400 million in May 2023.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed a decline of 14.09 percent during the fiscal year under review, from US \$ 32.492 billion to US \$ 27.911 billion.

On the other hand, the imports from Italy into the country during the period under review was recorded at US \$ 526.930 million against US \$ 770.439 million last year, showing a decline of 31.60 percent in July-June (2022-23).

On a year-on-year basis, the import for Italy witnessed also decreased by 44.56 percent.

China's Xi calls for measures to mitigate disastrous flooding amid economic slowdown

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping has called for measures to mitigate the effects of this year's disastrous flooding which has left scores dead and inflicted massive damage on crops, homes and infrastructure, including in and around Beijing.

At least 90 rivers have risen above warning levels and 24 have already overflowed their banks, according to state media, threatening a vast area in northeastern China with flooding including the Songjiao Basin north of the capital, which encompasses more than 1.2 million square kilometers (482,200 square miles) with a population of almost 100 million. "As China is still in the main flood season, rainstorms, floods, typhoons and other disasters still occur frequently in many places across the country," the Xinhua News Agency said, summarizing conclusions of Thursday's meeting of the party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee presided over by Xi.

China's Xi to attend BRICS leaders' meeting, visit South Africa

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping will attend the BRICS leaders' meeting and visit South Africa on Aug. 21-24, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement on Friday. Leaders from the five BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa meet in Johannesburg next week from Aug. 22 to discuss how to turn a loose club of nations accounting for a quarter of the global economy into a geopolitical force that can challenge the West's dominance in world affairs.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who faces an international arrest warrant over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, will dial in by video call instead of attending in person. Expansion is expected to be high on the agenda, as some 40 nations have shown interest in joining, either formally or informally, according to South Africa. They include Saudi Arabia, Argentina and Egypt.



Military personnel arrive at the headquarters of the Ghana Armed Forces as the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defense staff meet on the deployment of its standby force in the Republic of Niger, in Accra, Ghana.

Ukrainian drone damages building in Moscow disrupting air traffic, Russia says

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Ukrainian drone smashed into a building in central Moscow on Friday after Russian air defenses shot it down, disrupting air traffic at all the civilian airports of the Russian capital, Russian officials said.

A Reuters witness who was in the area described hearing "a powerful explosion". Reuters images showed workers and emergency workers inspecting a damaged roof of a non-residential building which the drone hit.

The Russian defence ministry and Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyannin said there were no casualties after air defenses destroyed a drone which then fell on a non-residential building of Moscow's Expo Center complex in the early hours of Friday.

The Expo Center is a

UN suspends services in Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon over gunmen inside its facilities

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees says it has decided to suspend all of its services in Lebanon's largest refugee camp on Friday in protest against the presence of gunmen in its facilities.

UNRWA's decision went into effect shortly before noon Friday at the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp near the southern port city of Sidon. Services will resume Saturday, UNRWA said. Days of street battles took place in the camp between the Fatah group of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and two Islamic militant groups, Jund al-Sham and Shabab al-Muslim. The clashes broke out on July 30, after Fatah accused its rivals of shooting dead a senior Fatah military official.

The fighting killed at least 13 people, injured dozens and caused millions of

dollars' of damage in the camp, according to UNRWA officials. Lebanese security forces don't operate inside the refugee camps, where security is in the hands of Palestinian factions who often compete for clout.

UNRWA said in its statement Friday that armed fighters are still present in its facilities, including schools. It added that UNRWA reiterates its call on armed actors to immediately vacate its facilities, "to ensure unimpeded delivery of much-needed assistance to refugees."

UNRWA said it "does not tolerate actions that breach the inviolability and neutrality of its installations." It added that schools are unlikely to be available for 3,200 children at the start of the new school year given repeated violations and significant damage reported.



People gather outside a building after a strong earthquake shook Colombian capital Bogota, prompting evacuations of offices and restaurants, in Bogota, Colombia.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un tours typhoon-affected farms in Anbyon County, North Korea, in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

US slams North Korea for using repression to build nuclear weapons

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The United States slammed North Korea leader Kim Jong Un at the United Nations on Thursday for using "repression and cruelty" and totalitarian rule to unlawfully develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

"We cannot have peace without human rights," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told the Security Council, which met to publicly for the first time since 2017 to discuss human rights abuses in North Korea.

"Kim Jong Un's repressive, totalitarian control of society — and the systemic, widespread denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms — ensures the regime can expend inordinate public resources developing its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs, without public objection," she said.

North Korea (DPRK) has repeatedly rejected accusations of abuses and blames sanctions for a dire humanitarian situation. Since 2006 it has been under U.N. sanctions over its ballistic

missiles and nuclear programs, but there are aid exemptions.

China said it opposed the public meeting of the 15-member council on abuses in North Korea, but it did not attempt to block it on Thursday. China failed four times between 2014 and 2017 to stop public meetings on the issue. "The council should play a constructive role in resuming talk and easing tensions," China's Deputy U.N. Ambassador Geng Shuang told the meeting which was requested by the United States, Albania and Japan.

Red Cross set to end funding at 25 hospitals across Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: THE International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is likely to end the financial running of 25 Afghan hospitals by the end of August due to funding constraints, a spokesperson said, amid growing concerns over a plunge in aid to Afghanistan.

"Although we continue to engage with government ministries, donors, and organisations to find alternative sustainable support mechanisms for the hospital sector, the phase-out of the Hospital Programme is expected to

happen tentatively at the end of August," Diogo Alcantara, ICRC's spokesperson for Afghanistan, said. "The ICRC does not have the mandate nor the resources to maintain a fully functioning public health-care sector in the longer term," Alcantara said.

In April, ICRC said its governing board approved 430 million Swiss francs (\$475.30m) in cost reductions over 2023 and early 2024 and a rolling back of operations in some locations as budgets for humanitarian aid were expected to decrease.

UN rights chief says Niger president treason case has 'no legal basis'

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The United Nations human rights chief on Friday said there was no legal basis for Niger's military junta to prosecute deposed president Mohamed Bazoum for high treason, saying the "very notion of freedoms" in the country was at stake.

The military junta, which seized power in a coup last month, said it would prosecute Bazoum for high treason over his exchanges with foreign heads of state and international organisations.



People line up outside of a local school to register to be evacuated, as wildfires threatened the Northwest Territories town of Yellowknife, Canada.

Bungalows, cars seized in Singapore's billion-dollar swoop on money laundering

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: Singapore's police said they have seized \$1 billion (\$734.32 million) in assets from a gang of foreigners laundering proceeds from organised crime, including plush bungalows in the most sought-after addresses, bundles of cash, luxury cars, jewellery, handbags and gold bars.

In one of its biggest money-laundering cases, police said 400 officers fanned out across Singapore on Tuesday and launched simultaneous raids on residences across the city-state, from the Orchard Road shopping belt to the resort

island of Sentosa.

The raids on at least nine locations netted assets totalling a staggering \$1bn, police said. These included 94 properties, bank accounts with \$510m, 50 vehicles, stacks of cash amounting to more than \$523m, hundreds of luxury handbags and watches, fistfuls of jewellery and two gold bars.

At least 10 foreigners aged between 31 and 44 were arrested, including one man who jumped out of the second-floor balcony of his bungalow in a tony neighbourhood and was found hiding in a drain.

Woman held for threatening judge presiding Trump case

Monitoring Desk
HOUSTON: A Texas woman was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly making racially charged death threats against the Black federal judge presiding over former US president Donald Trump's conspiracy case for trying to overturn the 2020 election, court documents showed.

On August 5, Abigail Jo Shry left a phone message at the Washington offices of US Judge Tanya Chutkan that included threats on her life, according to a complaint filed by an agent of the Department

of Homeland Security. The 43-year-old woman from Alvin, Texas called Chutkan a "stupid black slave" and said "You are in our sights, we want to kill you," according to the document filed with a federal court in the southern district of Texas. "If Trump is not elected in 2024, we are going to kill you, so be careful," said the defendant, adding that Chutkan's family was also a target. Shry also threatened to kill anyone who persecuted Trump, naming Black lawmaker Sheila Jackson Lee from Texas, the documents show.

US approves sending F-16s to Ukraine from Denmark and Netherlands

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States has approved sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine from Denmark and the Netherlands to defend against Russian invaders as soon as pilot training is completed, a US official said on Thursday.

Ukraine has actively sought the US-made F-16 fighter jets to help it counter Russian air superiority. Washington gave Denmark and the Netherlands official assurances that the United States will expedite approval of transfer requests for F-16s to go to Ukraine when the pilots are trained, the official said. "We welcome Washington's decision to pave the way for sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine," Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra said on messaging platform

X, formerly known as Twitter. "Now, we will further discuss the subject with our European partners."

Denmark and the Netherlands had recently asked for those assurances. The US must approve the transfer of military jets from its allies to Ukraine.

A coalition of 11 countries was due to start training Ukrainian pilots to fly the F-16 fighter jets this month in Denmark. Denmark's acting Defence Minister Troels Poulsen said in July that the country hoped to see "results" from the training in early 2024. Nato members Denmark and the Netherlands have been leading international efforts to train pilots as well as support staff, maintain aircraft and ultimately enable Ukraine to obtain F-16s for use in its war with Russia.

Taipei mayor to visit China as tensions simmer with Taiwan

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: The mayor of Taipei will visit Shanghai at the end of this month for an annual city forum, his office said on Friday, a trip that will take place against the backdrop of frozen ties between the Taiwanese and Chinese governments.

While China has refused to speak to Taiwan's government since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, believing she is a separatist, city-to-city exchanges had continued until interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, Tsai's administration has cautiously been trying to reopen less sensitive people-to-people links since it lifted pandemic-related border controls late last year, aiming to engender goodwill with China, and a group of Shanghai officials made a low-key visit to Taipei in February.

Taipei Mayor Chiang Wan-an, from the main opposition party the Kuomintang, which tradi-

tionally favours close relations with China, will go to Shanghai on Aug. 29-31 for the Taipei-Shanghai City Forum, which was first held in 2010.

The Taipei city government said Chiang, a rising Kuomintang star, would lead the delegation to the forum, the theme of which this year is "new trends, new development".

The Kuomintang has pushed to resume contacts with China since pandemic controls were lifted, saying that dialogue was needed now more than ever given the tensions over Taiwan.

China, which claims the island as its territory, has been carrying out military activities near Taiwan, including regularly sending fighter jets into the airspace around it. "When the situation across the Taiwan Strait is tense, we have a need even more for communication and exchanges, and the two cities forum can be that kind of platform," Chiang told reporters in Taipei.

UN says it will block road construction that would encroach on a buffer zone in divided Cyprus

Monitoring Desk
NICOSIA: The U.N. mission in ethnically divided Cyprus said Thursday it will block construction by breakthrough Turkish Cypriots of a road that would encroach on a U.N.-controlled buffer zone and likely raise tensions on the Mediterranean island nation.

The world body plans to "block or frustrate construction of the road by non-violent means," said Aleem Siddique, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping force, known as UNFICYP. The road would violate the forces' mandate of maintaining the status quo inside the buffer zone, he added.

Work began earlier in the day on the road to connect the village of Arsons in the Turkish Cypriot north with the mixed Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot village of Pyla, just south of the buffer zone and inside the Greek Cypriot south, where the island's internationally recognized government is seated.

The road would give

Turkish Cypriots direct access to Pyla by circumventing a checkpoint on the fringes of a British military base, one of two bases that the U.K. retained after Cyprus gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960.

Greek Cypriots perceive the road construction as a move with a military purpose at a sensitive spot along the buffer zone spanning 180 kilometers (120 miles).

Maintaining the status quo of the buffer zone is enshrined in the U.N. mission's mandate since 1974, when Turkey invaded in the wake of a coup mounted by Greek junta-backed supporters of union with Greece.

The U.N. says there have been numerous infringements of the buffer zone by both sides over the years. But this road construction is seen as "an attempt at a very serious violation of the status quo," according to Cyprus government spokesman Constantinos Letymbiotis.

Rights group and UN experts single out Sudanese paramilitary with accusations of sexual violence

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: A leading rights group and U.N. experts accused Sudan's powerful paramilitary of sexual violence and attacks on women in the restive western Darfur region as the African country entered its fifth month of conflict.

Sudan plunged into chaos in mid-April, when months of simmering tensions between the military and its rival, the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, exploded into open fighting.

Human Rights Watch said the paramilitary group apparently targeted women and girls in the western Darfur region of non-Arab ethnicity, as well as activists recording human rights abuses during the conflict.

The New York-based watchdog said it had documented 78 victims of rape between April 24 and June 26. U.N. officials warned in June that the fighting in Darfur has taken an ethnic dimension, with the RSF and allied militias targeting

African communities. Darfur was the scene of genocidal war in the early 2000s, when state-backed Arab militias known as the Janjaweed were accused of widespread killings, rapes and other atrocities. The Janjaweed later evolved into the RSF.

Several victims, who had fled Darfur for neighboring Chad, told HRW they were targeted because they were from the African Massalit community or because they were activists reporting on the conflict. At least one victim said she was pregnant after being raped by a paramilitary member. In the report, the rights group stated it spoke with nine women and one girl who said they had all been victims of rape, four by multiple men. HRW also spoke with four women who witnessed sexual assaults as well as five service providers, including medical workers, who assisted victims in the West Darfur capital of Geneina.

