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PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a report regarding quick and transparent provision of relief to the people affected by recent torrential rains across the country.

He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to accomplish a joint survey report in collaboration with the provinces, besides enhancement of cooperation with the provinces to face the future calamities.

The PM also sought an implementation report over his directive in the previous tenure regarding technical improvement of NDMA, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was given a detailed briefing by the NDMA about the relief and rehabilitation activities in wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Ahmad Khan Cheema, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen. Inam Haider Malik and relevant senior officials. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the meeting

through video link.

The meeting was apprised of the recent damages, rescue efforts and distribution of assistance amount. The NDMA with assistance of provinces; specially Balochistan would soon complete a collective verification survey over number of complete and partially damaged houses.

Under the PM's directive, a total of 766,000 kg dry ration would be distributed in Gwadar till March 24, out of which about 388,000 kg ration had been distributed so far till March 16. Moreover, 97,000 kg ration had been distributed in Quetta and Dalbadin, it was further informed.

The PM directed that the relief process should be completed immediately, besides ensuring transparency in its distribution. With earlier completion of joint survey, the aid should be provided to the affected people only, he stressed, adding that affected people from the recent rains could not be left in despair and it was among government's top priority to support them.

The meeting was further informed about the weather forecast during April to June and July to September in the current season and the preparedness of NDMA.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

Zardari felicitates Putin in Presidential elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has felicitated Russian President Vladimir Putin on his victory in Presidential elections.

In a post on his X handle, he expressed the confidence that relations between Pakistan and Russia will grow further under the dynamic leadership of Vladimir Putin

Terrorists to be given befitting reply: Naqvi

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has said that terrorists who attack on Pakistan will be given a befitting reply.

Talking to the media after appearing for scrutiny of his nomination papers for Senate elections at the Provincial Election Commission Punjab Office on Tuesday, he emphasized that there would be no compromise on terrorism and no one would be allowed to infringe upon the country's sovereignty. He added that no leniency would be shown in this regard.

In response to a question, he stated that illegally residing foreign nationals would be repatriated, and the Federal Investigation Agency would be revamped and strengthened.

To another question about the current wave of terrorism in the country, he affirmed that it would be countered and eliminated at any cost. Responding to inquiries about social media, he clarified that there are no restrictions on freedom of expression, but it should not be misused.

PTI moves IHC for rally permission in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has approached the Islamabad High Court seeking permission to hold a rally in the federal capital on March 30th. A petition filed by PTI leader Aamir Mughal, represented by lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat, requests the court's authorization for the gathering.

The petition names the Interior Secretary, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and Inspector General Islamabad as respondents.

PTI seeks court orders allowing the rally to proceed at 10 pm on March 30th, with Parade Ground F9 Park or D Chowk as their preferred venues.

Pakistan denounces fresh round of curbs on Kashmiri political parties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Tuesday denounced the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and four factions of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League as "unlawful associations".

It also denounced the decision to extend the ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd Yasin Malik faction) for five more years, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

India's ongoing campaign to crush dissent in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) contravened the international human rights and humanitarian law as well as democratic norms, the spokesperson further said.

"The Government of India is urged to lift the curbs on the banned

Kashmiri parties; release all the political prisoners, including Yasin Malik; and implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," it was reiterated.

With the fresh notifications, a total of 14 Kashmiri political parties have become outlawed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The affiliates of these parties are also facing persecution. Most notably, a death penalty has been sought for Yasin Malik, who was awarded life sentence in 2022.

"However, such oppressive tactics cannot suppress the Kashmiri people's aspirations for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions," it was stressed.

US asks Taliban to stop terrorist attacks against Pakistan from Afghan soil

WASHINGTON (APP): The United States has called on the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks against Pakistan are not launched from Afghan soil.

Asked to comment on Pakistan's "intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations" inside the border regions of Afghanistan, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said that the US "deeply" regrets the loss of life and "injustices" sustained during an attack in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Seven Pakistani troops were killed in the terrorist attack at a security post in North Waziristan's Mir Ali area on Saturday.

"We urge the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Af-

ghan soil and we urge Pakistan to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counter-terrorism efforts," Patel told his daily news briefing on Monday.

"And we urge both sides to address any differences. We remain committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States and our partners and allies," he added.

Last month, the U.N. Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said in a report that al-Qaida operatives were increasingly assisting TTP militants to launch cross-border attacks. And some ruling Taliban members joined TTP, the report noted.

CM Punjab visits residence of Lt. Col Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed at Chaklala

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz visited the residence of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed at Chaklala in Rawalpindi and paid homage for his supreme sacrifice for the motherland.



He was martyred in the terrorist attack in Mir Ali Tehsil of North Waziristan. Talking to the Shaheed's Mother on this occasion, she said that your brave son made not only you but the entire nation proud.

Terming the brave sons of soil as the iron wall of safety, peace and security of country, the Chief Minister said that the entire nation will remain indebted and grateful for the sacrifices of the martyrs and their families.

Maryam Nawaz also offered feteiha for the Shaheed and commiserated with the bereaved family of the martyr.

The Punjab Chief Minister also visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed and met with parents and family members of the Shaheed.

Pakistan greatly values its ties with Bahrain: Zardari

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan attaches great value to its fraternal ties with Bahrain which are based on shared religion, culture and history.

He highlighted the need to translate the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bahrain into a mutually rewarding economic partnership. The President expressed these views while talking to the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain, General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday.

The Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan, Mr Mohamed Ibrahim Mohamed Abdul Qader, was also present during the meeting. Welcoming the visiting Commander, the President said that Pakistan and Bahrain enjoyed excellent relations, which needed to be further strengthened in the areas of mutual interest.

He stated that it was his firm belief that Pakistan would grow stronger as it had immense potential to become a prosperous country. During the meeting, the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain felicitated the President on

assuming the office for the second time and expressed the hope that Pakistan would move forward under his leadership. He said that both countries enjoyed excellent defence cooperation and expressed his gratitude for the supportive role of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. He also reiterated Bahrain's continued support to Pakistan. General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa extended an invitation to the President to visit Bahrain. The President thanked the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain for his visit and felicitations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif being briefed during his visit to Naval Headquarters.

Court acquits Hassan, Hussain Nawaz in three references

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Accountability Court (AC) on Tuesday acquitted Hassan and Hussain Nawaz from three references including Flagship, Avenfield Property and Al-Azizia Steel Mills. The court announced the verdict which was earlier reserved after hearing arguments from respondents.

During the course of proceeding, the defence lawyer argued that Islamabad High Court (IHC) had already acquitted former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz in same reference.

Kh Asif, Naval Chief discuss Regional Maritime Security, operational preparedness

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and discussed with him matters pertaining to Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of Pakistan Navy.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters Islamabad, the Defence Minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff and was presented guard of honour. The Defence Minister was also introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters.

Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf apprised the Defence Minister on roles, capabilities and future modernization plans of Pakistan Navy.

He briefed the minister on recent acquisitions of state-of-the-art platforms and equipment to ensure an invin-

cible seaward defence of the country.

Later on a detailed briefing was presented by Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) on the prevailing maritime environment, challenges being faced by Pakistan Navy and response by Pakistan Navy to meet the challenges. At the end of the briefing recommendations were given to the Defence Minister for capability enhancement of PN and promotion of maritime sector (Blue Economy) for revival of the national economy.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif appreciated the importance of Pakistan Navy to safeguard maritime interest of the country. The Defence Minister assured that his Ministry will make all efforts to meet the requirements of Pakistan Navy despite the prevailing economic constraints.

May 9 case

ATC issues arrest warrants for CM Gandapur, 12 other PTI leaders

RAWALPINDI (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and 11 other PTI leaders in cases relating May 9 mayhem. According to details, the ATC Judge Malik Ijaz Asif directed to produce the accused before the court on April 2.

The accused have been named in the light of 164 statements of Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi,

Sadaqat Abbasi, and Umar Tanveer Butt.

The ATC has issued the warrants of KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur, Shabbir Awan, Shehbaz Gill, Musrrat Jamshed Cheema, Murad Saeed, Dr Shireen Mazari, and Shibli Faraz.

It is worth to mention here that the PTI leaders were accused of damaging 15 offices, metro bus station, and government property during the May 9 protests.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming the Commander of the Bahrain National Guard, General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PM calls for ensuring early implementation of Pak-Kuwait agreements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for concerted efforts from both sides to ensure the early implementation of seven agreements worth US\$ 10 billion signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in November last year.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi who called on him here.

The prime minister noted with satisfaction that both countries had signed seven agreements for cooperation in diverse areas including food security, technology, hydel power, mining and minerals, water supply and mangrove rehabilitation, a PM Office press release said.

In this context, he emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which provided a robust

and efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its historic and deep-rooted ties with Kuwait.

He thanked the Kuwaiti leadership, including Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, for the warm wishes and felicitations on his reelection.

The PM expressed the desire to work closely with them to further strengthen the bilateral relationship with a focus on trade and investment. He also extended an invitation to Amir of Kuwait to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The Kuwaiti ambassador thanked Pakistan for its support to Kuwait in difficult times.

He thanked former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his strong public support to Kuwait's independence and sovereignty during the 1990-91 crisis.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by H.E. Mr. Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America & discussed matters of mutual interest, economic & financial relations between the two countries.

Pakistan, US discuss bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan, Donald Blome, paid a courtesy visit to Minister for Finance & Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb here Tuesday to discuss important matters related to bilateral cooperation and mutual interests between Pakistan and the United States.

The ambassador extended felicitations to Muhammad Aurangzeb upon his appointment as Minister for Finance and Revenue and conveyed confidence towards further strengthening of economic ties between the two countries, according to press

statement issued by finance ministry.

He congratulated government on positive step taken so far that resulted in visibly positive signs in the economy and hoped that it will help further stabilize the economy. The minister warmly welcomed the ambassador and underscored the significance of Pakistan-US bilateral relations, highlighting their importance at political, economic, and security levels. He shared that the new government was fully prepared to tackle the economic challenges and is determined to bring about macroeconomic stability in the country.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Afghan turbulence

Relations between the newly formed government and Afghanistan's de facto Taliban rulers have begun on an inauspicious note. After seven security personnel were martyred in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan on Saturday, Pakistan hit targets in Paktika and Khost provinces early on Monday targeting "terrorists belonging to [the] Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group", according to an FO statement released yesterday.

Afghan officials, on the other hand, claimed "civilian homes" had been struck. Moreover, there were reports of cross-border exchanges of fire in Kurram district on Monday. Militants had also staged attacks in Mohmand, Nowshera and Bannu over the weekend.

What is important at this juncture is that matters do not escalate with Kabul. While terrorist attacks targeting civilians as well as security personnel are a red line and cannot go unanswered, and the frontiers must be defended, unilateral action should not become the norm. This will only cause further deterioration of ties with the Afghan Taliban, and Pakistan may lose whatever leverage it has with Kabul, adding to our security concerns. Soon after the new government took over, there was a routine exchange of pleasantries between the foreign minister and his Afghan counterpart, as both vowed to expand cooperation in various sectors, including security. The North Waziristan attack and its fallout, however, have come as a painful reality check, and are the government's first test on the Afghan front of its management of relations with Kabul.

Both sides must verify where the attacks targeting Pakistan originated from. While Afghan Taliban officials insist their territory is not being used by terrorists, there is a lot of evidence suggesting otherwise. Pakistan has raised the issue of militant sanctuaries in Afghanistan at the UN whose officials have similarly highlighted the presence of numerous militant groups in Afghanistan. Instead of feigning ignorance, the Afghan Taliban should take action to stop anti-Pakistan fighters from launching attacks inside this country, especially if they are serious in their quest to be accepted as Afghanistan's legitimate government. While clear threats to national security must be immediately neutralised, Pakistan has to use carrots and sticks with the Taliban to permanently solve the militancy problem. The FO has hinted at a similar line of action and of working "towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism". Communication channels should remain open, and Pakistan should ask Afghanistan to take action against verified terrorist sanctuaries across the border. Moreover, China, which offers a financial lifeline to the Kabul regime, can also be asked to take punitive measures if the Taliban refuse to crack down on militants on their soil. The terrorist threat from Afghanistan-based groups can destabilise the entire region, which is why all regional states should work on a common counterterrorism agenda with Kabul, along with using bilateral channels.

Blood carbon

Masood Lohar

Amid the pressing need to confront climate change, the emergence of carbon markets has gained prominence. In these markets, industries acquire the privilege of emitting carbon dioxide by committing to safeguarding forests or implementing other offsets. Although widely seen as a potent tool for conservation, apprehensions persist regarding its potential adverse effects on local communities, particularly in developing nations where mangroves face clearance for profitable endeavours such as fish and shrimp aquaculture or real estate development. The term "blood carbon" describes the dark side of these carbon trading schemes. The aggressive land acquisition strategies employed by certain entities have raised concerns about the unjust eviction of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. The Ogiek people's plight in Kenya serves as a stark reminder of the human cost associated with these carbon credit initiatives.

For example, in the pursuit of carbon credits, a UAE-based firm has been criticised for embarking on an extensive land acquisition initiative for mangrove plantation and conservation. This programme spans multiple African nations, including Kenya, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Zambia, and Tanzania, and has drawn the attention of environmentalists and human rights activists, raising concerns about potential displacement of indigenous people.

The characterisation of current events as a contemporary form of colonialism has stimulated ethical deliberations on the prioritisation of carbon sequestration initiatives over the well-being of vulnerable communities. A striking illustration of this concern unfolds with the ongoing predicament of the Ogiek people in Kenya's Mau Forest. Kenyan President William Ruto, justifying their coerced displacement, presents it as a climate-driven measure to safeguard the forests from what he deems "illegal settlers". This justification has triggered profound ethical debates regarding the potential adverse impact of carbon sequestration efforts on marginalised communities, with some activists drawing parallels with a modern form of colonial exploitation.

The Ogiek, acknowledged as the traditional custodians of the Mau Forest, have endured violent evictions and land seizures spanning decades. Despite legal triumphs, including a 2017 ruling by the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights affirming their land rights, the Kenyan government has drawn criticism for persistently flouting these judgements.

The situation faced by the Ogiek is not isolated; it mirrors the struggles of numerous first nation communities globally. These communities find themselves fighting not only for their lands but also against the exploitative mechanisms of carbon credit trading. The term "blood carbon" aptly captures the injustice and human rights violations associated with these schemes.

In Pakistan, for the first time Sindh Forest Department has entered into a carbon credit agreement, selling 3.1 million credits valued at \$40m to the Delta Blue Carbon company. The 60:40 partnership prompts questions about transparency and inclusiveness, especially considering that a significant portion of the population in the mangrove districts lives below the poverty line. The fate of these communities remains uncertain, echoing the concerns raised by the Ogiek people in Kenya. Similarly, questions arise as to whether there was a proper tendering process, encouraging competition and giving enough leverage to local stakeholders.

Recent research underscores the critical role that mangroves play in sequestering carbon dioxide. Daniel Donato from the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service reveals that mangroves store around three to four times more carbon per hectare than rainforests in temperate or tropical zones. However, the rapid loss of these ecosystems, estimated at a third to half globally in the last 50 years, releases substantial quantities of greenhouse gases, equivalent to up to 10 per cent of the global toll from deforestation.

In light of these challenges, there is a call for a paradigm shift in carbon credit systems. Rather than trading carbon as a financial commodity on global markets, the focus should be on rewarding indigenous communities and land managers for their ecosystem services.

The story of "blood carbon" highlights the need for a more equitable and just approach to climate change mitigation.

Instead of evicting traditional landowners like the Ogiek, the world should recognise and compensate them for the invaluable services they provide in combating climate change.

It's time to move away from the exploitative carbon credit system and embrace a model that prioritises environmental justice and community well-being. -- Courtesy Dawn

Kafkaesque set-up

Dr Niaz Murtaza

The emerging contours of our new set-up depict a murky labyrinth hiding the conflicting pulls of the elite interests of multiple power centres, none of them aligned with the public interest. Given these deep cracks, can the byzantine set-up last and deliver?

A structure's strength reflects that of its base. This set-up's weak base is rigged polls. Over it, a huge ivory tower has been built by the actual powers to house willing elites to project a strength they lack. Each faction has conflicting interests that increase the set-up's instability. The interests of the establishment — the proverbial elephant in the room — include pulling us back from doom's edge, where its past actions got us, while retaining its political and economic sway, with other elites footing the costs of reform.

Then there is the PML-N, the 'lion' and main ruler, which is actually a façade for the new hybrid dispensation and its weakest cog, given its dubious mandate, infighting and 20th-century mindset. Its aims are to protect its empire and that of allied Punjab elites. But it sees the wrath of the masses and wants to drop them enough crumbs to win next time.

By foxily avoiding the cabinet, the PPP wants to hunt with the hounds and run with the hares. It will hug the set-up when it does well, but oppose it when it doesn't. Its aims are to protect its own empire and allied Sindh and Balochistan elites and seeing Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the crown prince, enthroned soon.

The fox alone can topple the lion at the centre but only if the es-

tablishment agrees. The smaller parties need crumbs too.

There are groups outside the Leaning Tower of Pisa pushing to join the party inside or topple it. The PTI, the main one, represents populist middle-class fantasies and assorted elite interests. The cornered tigers want to rejoin the real powers while evicting the lion, or topple the tower if rebuffed. There are religious lobbies (the Jamaat-i-Islami, the JUI and TLP) with nuisance street power. The banned TTP and Baloch militants aim to topple it outright. Many global actors and events can harm it too, for example, India, Afghanistan, Middle East wars and Sino-US tiffs.

The set-up can defeat all these threats only if it performs very well. Unfortunately, internal conflicts and poor capacities can stymie this task. The prime minister is better at supervising local projects than leading federal policy work. He may not have control over the three key posts: finance, interior and foreign. The interior ironman is a newbie, said to have been picked by the establishment — apparently, to clamp down on the PTI, militants and progressives. Dar lacks the experience or finesse for his job and will toe Nawaz Sharif's line, not the prime minister's, but will be checkmated by picks like Gilani. The finance guru has no loyalty to PML-N and his selection, too, is supposed to have been influenced by non-political elements. For many, Muhammad Aurangzeb is the new saviour we want to transform our economy. Economic progress needs macroeconomic stability, productivity/growth, equity and sustainability. The last two will barely

hit the agenda. But can he even deliver stability and growth? Ensuring stability requires solid macroeconomic credentials and public and IMF experience (like Shamshad Akhtar's), which he lacks. He may outshine Dar, but experimenting with inexperience with a very shaky economy is risky.

We only chase macroeconomic stability once we are in the midst of a full-blown crisis via IMF's austerity policy. But durable stability comes by creatively ex-panding exports, industry and in-v-estments. This requires able persons in commerce, industry, investment, IT, etc., with dynamic glo-bal experience that the incumbents badly lack. Aurangzeb has good credentials in these business areas. Can he alone transform our non-dynamic economy? One can answer this hard query about the future via a simpler one about the past. Like Pakistan, its banks non-dynamically make money by investing in safe public debt. Did he put his bank on a new, dynamic investment path? No. Can he do that then for a much bigger, complex and politicised economy? With productivity and growth ruled out by poor cabinet appointments, we will again chase stability via IMF's menu. This will harm elite interests and more so the masses. Each faction will try to avoid the cost of inevitable reform as per its power and guide, possibly leading to conflict. So, this tower may implode in a few years. The PML-N can avoid all that by having able hands in a dozen key economic and social ministries to ensure productivity and equity before it's too late. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Awais directs PPMC to prepare proposals for technological interventions in power sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, directed the Power Planning and Monitoring Company (PPMC) on Tuesday to prepare proposals for technological interventions in the power sector.

"This step aims to improve the efficiency of the power sector by utilizing modern technology and to provide maximum benefit to consumers," the minister said while chairing a meeting, according to a news release.

During the meeting,

the Power Planning and Monitoring Company (PPMC) gave a comprehensive briefing regarding the performance of DISCOs.

The minister issued a directive for an immediate assessment of the senior executive management of DISCOs. The minister has tasked PPMC with comprehensively evaluating DISCO's Board of Directors.

The move signals a potential shake-up in leadership, demonstrating the government's proactive approach to driving positive change within the sector.

While chairing the meeting on the development projects of NTDC, the minister expressed dissatisfaction with NTDC's performance and instructed the timely completion of transmission lines, which would affect the evacuation of cheap energy from hydel and other sources. The minister warned that no lapse would be tolerated at any cost.

Meanwhile, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, who has been assigned the portfolio of the Ministry of Power by the Prime Minister, is the architect of transformative sectoral reforms in Pakistan.



Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, chairing a meeting with Power Planning and Monitoring Company in Islamabad.

Commerce Minister briefs on tariff reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan chaired a meeting on Tuesday at the Ministry of Commerce during which he was briefed on tariff reforms and rationalization.

The meeting was also attended by the Secretary, Mr. Khuram Agha and key officials from the Ministry.

The Minister was briefed on the tariff reforms and tariff rationalisation undertaken by the Ministry since the formation of the Tariff Policy Board (TPB) and explored the role of tariffs in boosting exports

by ensuring the availability of raw material at competitive prices.

He was also briefed on working of the TPB. The meeting highlighted the strategic importance of the TPB in shaping Pakistan's tariff policy. Discussions centered on the role of Tariffs in Industrial, especially export growth.

He was informed that there was no Customs duty on about one third of the raw materials required by the industry.

He was also informed import of the machinery and capital goods was also facilitated via the Tariff Policy.

He was also briefed on the progress on various tariff rationalisation measures which were in pipeline.

The Minister stressed on strategic use of tariffs to promote industrialization in conjunction with other policies, like targeting tariffs towards protecting export oriented industries for a limited period, allowing them to gain a foothold without permanent dependence on protection.

He directed the Ministry to work on a plan for tariff rationalisation along these lines.

Shaza Fatima, PTCL President discuss roll out of 5G technology

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and President and Group CEO of PTCL, Hatem Bamatraf, discussed the rollout of 5G technology, right-of-way issues, and the crucial aspect of fiberization within the telecommunications sector. The minister, during a meeting, emphasized the significant role of the telecommunications sector in the national economy.

Shaza Fatima stated that efforts are underway to expedite matters such as 5G, right-of-way, and other issues related to the telecom sector. The PTCL President expressed a desire to further strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE. Shaza Fatima Khawaja also met with the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, and discussed in detail the issues of IT graduate training programs.

S. Korea's corporate bond sale rises in February

SEOUL (Xinhua/APP): South Korea's corporate bond sale rose in single digits last month due to solid funding demand from financial companies, financial watchdog data showed Tuesday.

The issuance of corporate bonds amounted to 26.24 trillion won (19.7 billion U.S. dollars) in February, up 4.5 percent compared to the previous month, according to the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS).

Minister reviews development projects

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Agriculture Minister, Muhammad Sajjad on Tuesday visited the Directorate General Agricultural Engineering Office to oversee ongoing projects.

During his inspection, the minister emphasized the timely completion of all projects.

He personally examined the agricultural machinery workshop and urged for its effective utilization to enhance agricultural productivity.

The minister underscored the importance of maximizing benefits for farmers and boosting agricultural output to address food scarcity.



Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with President and Group CEO PTCL Hatem Bamatraf in Islamabad.

PML-N to provide relief to farmers: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Musadik Malik on Tuesday said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led government would deliver all benefits directly to the farmers to promote agriculture sector.

Talking to a private news channel, he said the government had extended subsidies to fertilizer firms in order to boost agricultural production but the fertilizer companies could not

projects were discussed, including the installation of solar pumping systems, establishment of tube wells, and the promotion of mechanized agriculture. These initiatives, part of different development programs, aim to increase agricultural productivity and meet the rising demand for food.

The Minister was accompanied by officials, including Director-General of Agricultural Engineering Nasim Javid, DG Agriculture Extension Jan Muhammad, and DG Soil Conservation Muhammad Yaseen Wazir.

The visit provided an opportunity to assess progress and ensure the effective implementation of development initiatives.

Various ongoing



Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain in a meeting with the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari in Islamabad.

Sri Lankan envoy for increasing bilateral trade up to \$800mln with Pak

ISLAMABAD (INP): High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Ravindra Chandrasiri Wijegunaratne has said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka intend to double the bilateral trade between the two countries to \$800 million, for which the potential in various sectors in both countries should be exploited.

At present, the bilateral trade potential between the two countries is \$1 billion, which is

achievable, but it will take the bilateral trade to the target of 800 million dollars, the Ambassador said.

The Sri Lankan Ambassador in Pakistan said here while talking to the delegation led by President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said a press release issued by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here on Tuesday.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Fiveships namely, MSC Precision-V, Xpress Salween, Kotka, Crater and Umm Bab, carrying Container, Wheat and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Nimble Nicky and MSC Shy scheduled to load/offload Iron Ore and Container also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Kotka, Xpress Salween and Hafnia Shanghai left the Port on today morning, while three more ships, MSC Precision-V, Elephanta and Melody are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 191,327 tonnes, comprising 117,963 tonnes imports cargo and 73,364 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,520 Containers (2,194 TEUs Imports and 3,326 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. Eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MSC Shy.

WHO refurbishes 63 health facilities damaged by devastating climate induced disasters in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): World Health Organization (WHO), in its strive for ensuring health service, has refurbished around 63 health facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that had become almost non-functional after being badly impacted by climate induced disasters especially the devastating floods of 2022.

The initiative of refurbishment of health facilities was taken in response to the disastrous floods in Pakistan during year 2022 and other climate change related incidents including erratic rains, hailstorms, windstorms

etc. said Dr. Babar Alam, WHO head in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Talking to APP after inauguration of a flood affected Basic Health Unit (BHU) at Kotkay village in Charsadda district, Dr. Babar said the rehabilitation process is in progress in the whole country.

The refurbished health facilities in KP are in districts including Charsadda, Chitral, D.I.Khan, Kohistan Upper, Nowshera, Swat, Tank, Hangu, Dir Lower, Haripur, Manshera and Abbottabad.

The rehabilitated health facilities included Basic Health Units



GILGIT: Member Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Anjad Hussain advocate chairing a meeting GB Assembly Committee on Telecommunication issue in Gilgit-Baltistan at Assembly Secretariat.

Minister directs HERA to take steps for quality education in KP

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi on Tuesday issued directives to the concerned officers of KP Higher Education Regulatory Authority (HERA) to take steps for promotion of quality education in the province.

He also issued directives that the authority must take action against those private educational institutions which do not fulfill the criteria of standard institution.

"Provision of quality education in the entire province is the top most priority of the government," he said while chairing meeting of HERA at Civil Secretariat here.

Sajid Inam, Secretary HERA, Chairman Sharif Hussain and other officers attended the meeting.

A detailed briefing was given to the provincial minister about the work and performance of the authority.

CM approves Rs 100mln compensation package for SW roof collapse victims

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has approved Rs 100 million compensation package for the victim family of roof collapse incident in Ragzai area of south Waziristan in which six members of a family had lost lives.

On the directives of the CM, the provincial disaster management authority has released the cheque to Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan for payment to the affected family.

AJK PM pays tribute to col Kashif and Captain Ahmed Badar shaheed

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Tuesday visited the residence of Shaheed Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali to offer his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Prime Minister Haq was accompanied by senior Minister Col. (Retd) Waqar Noor, Government Ministers Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq and Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim.

Extending his heartfelt sympathies to bereaved family the AJK premier prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant the martyred highest place in JanatulFirdous.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed in Talagang to offer his condolences to the bereaved family.

He prayed to Allah the almighty to elevate the ranks of the martyred Captain and grant patience to the bereaved to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Speaking briefly on the occasion, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq said that the entire nation was proud of its Pakistan Army, which has rendered unprecedented sacrifices while fighting against terrorism and terrorists.



LAHORE: Visitors look at paintings in an exhibition at Al Hamra Art Council in the Provincial Capital.

No negligence to be tolerated in Ramadan Dastar Khawan: Advisor

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Zakat and Ushar, Social Welfare and Women Development Mashal Azam Yousafzai on Tuesday urged the concerned officers to inform her about statistics of Ramadan Dastar Khawan on daily basis and no negligence will be tolerated in Ramadan Dastar Khawan.

She directed District directors to take proactive measures to include poor widows in the Ramadan relief package so that no poor widow is deprived of this package and the facilities in Darulaman should be improved.

"Wherever there is a need for the Zamong Kor project, mark it so that steps can be taken in this regard.

Welfare and Women development Department.

She said that every officer and official will not be posted in one place for more than three years.

She directed District directors to take proactive measures to include poor widows in the Ramadan relief package so that no poor widow is deprived of this package and the facilities in Darulaman should be improved.

"Wherever there is a need for the Zamong Kor project, mark it so that steps can be taken in this regard.



RAWALPINDI: Volunteers distribute food among the people in fast during the Holy Month of Ramadan at Satellite Town.

Minister for completing ongoing development projects in education dept

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Education Faisal Khan Tarakai on Tuesday said that all ongoing projects of the education department should be completed in time so that problems of male and female students could be resolved in a proper manner. While issuing instructions to the planning authorities for completing PC-I and other requirement of the projects, he said the projects which are in the pipeline could also be approved by the relevant forums after completion of the ongoing projects. He

May 9 violence cases RWP police obtain arrest warrants of Murad, Pervaiz Elahi

RAWALPINDI (Online): Rawalpindi Police have obtained arrest warrants of PTI leader Murad Saeed and former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in 9 May violence related cases registered against them under terrorism and others clauses in different police stations.

Civil Lines and Cantt circles of Pothohar division have filed their report.

According to this report, former federal minister Murad Saeed is nominated in the case registered against him against number 836/23 in police station cantt under terrorism and other clauses and case No 708/23 registered against him in RA Bazar police station under these clauses. Arrest warrants have been obtained in this regard.

No case is registered against Senator Faisal Javed Khan, Azam Swati, Azhar Mashwani and Khurram Zeeshan in five police stations of Cantt circle.

PDMA DG reviews procurement plan 2024-25

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Director General Irfan Ali Kathia, during a meeting here on Tuesday, reviewed the Procurement Plan 2024-25.

The meeting saw participation from officers representing the Pakistan Army, Rescue teams, and various other departments.

Key focus of the meeting was the assessment of required equipment for potential rescue operations, particularly in flood-prone scenarios. Detailed deliberations unfolded regarding the machinery and apparatus essential for effective rescue operations during such exigencies.

Attendees extensively discussed the specifics and cost aspects of the procurement. During the proceedings, both Rescue and Pakistan Army officers put forth their requisitions for the supply of requisite rescue equipment.

ANF recovers 52 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 52 kg of drugs and arrested four suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation, 440 grams of Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. In another operation at Islamabad Airport, 54 heroin-filled capsules.

International News

Gaza faces famine, unprecedented crisis, warns UN

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Half of Gazans are experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, with famine projected to hit the north of the territory by May without urgent intervention, a United Nations-backed food security assessment warned on Monday.

"People in Gaza are starving to death right now. The speed at which this man-made hunger and malnutrition crisis has ripped through Gaza is terrifying," the head of the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) Cindy McCain said.

"To have 50 per cent of an entire population in catastrophic, near-famine levels, is unprecedented," Beth Bechdol, the deputy director general of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), said.

This amounts to around 1.1 million people "struggling with catastrophic hunger and starvation", according to the WFP.

It added: "This is the highest number of people ever recorded as facing catastrophic hunger" under the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership, which published its latest report on Monday.

The situation is particularly dire in the north of the besieged Palestinian territory, where there are about 300,000 people, the UN says — and where aid agencies have reported huge difficulty distributing food and other aid.

Aid charity Oxfam on Monday accused Israel of continuing to "systematically and deliberately block and undermine" the delivery of aid into Gaza, in violation of international humanitarian law.

The IPC system, conducted by the UN and aid agencies, is used by the UN or governments in deciding whether or not to officially declare a famine.

"Famine is imminent in the northern governorates and projected to occur anytime between mid-March and May 2024," the IPC report said of Gaza.

"All evidence points towards a major acceleration of deaths and malnutrition. Waiting for a retrospective famine classification before acting is indefensible," it said.



A Palestinian woman and children rush to safety after Israeli air strikes in Gaza City.

Netanyahu's claims about UNRWA 'flat-out lies', says US senator

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US Senator Chris Van Hollen has refuted Israel's allegation that the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA is a proxy for Hamas, arguing that the accusations by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are "flat-out lies."

The Maryland Democrat is among a group of senators who

IAEA to help Iraq develop peaceful nuclear plan

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi met Iraq's prime minister Naim al-Aboudi on Monday as part of a visit to help the country develop a peaceful nuclear programme.

"We have discussed several projects in Iraq, including building a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes," Iraqi Education Minister Naim al-Aboudi told reporters following a meeting between Grossi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

Grossi said that a team of Iraqi experts would visit the agency's headquarters in Vienna in a few days to hold meetings to "set out a road map for the Iraqi peaceful nuclear programme" amid growing interest in nuclear energy in the region, including among Arab Gulf countries.



head of Israeli intelligence is expected to lead ceasefire talks in Qatar in response to a new proposal from Hamas.

West decries Putin's landslide election victory

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Western governments lined up on Monday to condemn Vladimir Putin's landslide election victory as unfair and undemocratic, but China, India and North Korea and some other countries congratulated the veteran Russian leader on extending his rule by a further six years.

The contrasting reactions underscored the geopolitical fault lines that have gaped wider since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago, triggering the deepest crisis in relations with the West since the end of the Cold War.

Arriving in Brussels on Monday, EU foreign ministers roundly dismissed the election result as a sham ahead of agreeing sanctions on individuals linked to the mistreatment and death of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. "Russia's election was an election without choice," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said at the start of the meeting. Playing on Moscow's reference to its war in Ukraine as a "special military operation", French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said Paris had taken note of the "special election operation".

Taiwan's vice president-elect makes Czech visit after US trip

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's vice president-elect and former de facto ambassador to Washington, Hsiao Bi-khim, is on a visit to the Czech Republic following a low-key trip to the United States, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Hsiao, who takes office with president-elect Lai Ching-te in May, is detested by China which calls her a "diehard Taiwan independence separatist" and has placed sanctions on her.

Blinken to push for Gaza ceasefire on Middle East trip

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit the Middle East this week, aiming to reach a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, and secure the release of hostages held by the Palestinian militant group.

During a visit to the Philippines, Blinken said his trip to meet senior leaders in Saudi Arabia and Egypt would aim to "discuss the right architecture for lasting regional peace".

Providing more humanitarian aid into Gaza as well as discussing post-war planning for the enclave are among the topics he will discuss with Saudi and Egyptian officials.

"One hundred percent of the Gaza population is in need of humanitarian assistance," Blinken said, adding that it was "absolutely incumbent" upon Israel to prioritise assistance for those in desperate need.

Afghan refugee convicted in New Mexico Muslim killings case

Monitoring Desk
NEW MEXICO: A New Mexico jury found an Afghan asylum seeker guilty of murdering a Pakistani immigrant in one of three ambush-style shootings of Muslim men that terrified the Islamic community in the state's largest city during the summer of 2022. Muhammad Syed, 53, faces life imprisonment for the first-degree murder of 41-year-old Aftab Hussein who was found dead in southeast Albuquerque on July 26, 2022.

US warned Niger about ties to Russia, Iran before junta revoked accord, Pentagon says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US officials traveled to Niger last week to express concerns about the country's potential development of ties to Russia and Iran before the ruling junta on Saturday revoked an accord governing the roughly 1,000 US military personnel there, the Pentagon said on Monday.

The Pentagon added it was seeking clarification about the way ahead Niger said on Saturday it had revoked "with immediate effect" its military accord with the United States that had allowed Pentagon personnel to operation on its soil.

Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said the US government had "direct and frank" conversations in Niger ahead of the junta's announcement, and was continuing to communicate with Niger's ruling military council known as the CNSP.

"The US delegation was there to raise a number of concerns. ... We were troubled (about) the path that Niger is on. And so these were direct and frank conversations, to have those in person, to talk about our concerns and to also hear theirs," Singh said. "US officials expressed concern over Niger's potential relationships with Russia and Iran."

Since its July 2023 coup, the military junta that seized power in Niamey has kicked out French and European forces, and quit the Economic Community of West African States regional bloc. Like juntas in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso, it has also strengthened military ties with Russia.

North Korea's Kim oversees firing drills with 'super-large' rocket launchers, state media says

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen firing drills by artillery units in the western region involving "newly-equipped super-large" multiple rocket launchers, state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

The drills came a day after South Korea and Japan reported North Korea's launch of several short-range ballistic missiles into the sea, its first such missile test in about two months.

Kim guided the drills on Monday that were aimed at testing the "real war capabilities" of 600 millimetre multiple rocket launchers and improving the operators' combat morale and readiness posture, KCNA said.

The drills also included simulating an air explosion of a shell of the super-large multiple rocket launcher at a pre-set altitude above the target, it said.

The unit displayed "high mobility and accurate and strong striking power" in carrying out a sudden combat mission, eliciting the young leader's praise, it said. "They fully demonstrated their excellent crack-shot artillery marksmanship and prompt and thorough combat readiness," KCNA said.

Kim called for modernising and scaling up artillery forces, highlighting the 600 mm rocket launchers' "strategic duties as the core central striking means" in war preparations.

"The destructive offensive means possessed by our army should more thoroughly fulfil their missions to block and suppress the possibility of war with the constant perfect preparedness to collapse the capital of the enemy and the structure of its military forces," Kim told the troops, according to KCNA.

Pirzada directs to maintain highest standards of construction in all projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Main Riaz Hussain Pirzada Tuesday directed the concerned to maintain the highest standards of construction across all projects, and provision of all basic amenities to the residents.

Chairing a meeting of the Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA), he stressed on timely completion of all ongoing projects to provide modern residential facilities to the employees and general public.

During the meeting the minister review the progress of ongoing projects and strategize for future endeavors.

Managing Director PHA Shahid Hussain apprised the minister about the management and working of the department.

Shahid Hussain informed the minister that to date, a total of 24 projects comprising 6,362 apartments/units have been successfully handed over to the allottees.

He informed about the development of the I-16/3 project, which includes 3,200 apartments of D&E type category.

Shahid Hussain informed that approximately 90% of the infrastructure development work for the project has been completed and physical possession has already been handed over to 356 allottees, with 35 families already residing in the buildings.

Additionally, MD PHA provided an update on the I-12/1 project, which comprises approximately 2,400 apartments out of which possession of 500

units has already been handed over to beneficiaries, with the remaining units set to be offered soon.

The minister was also informed about the PHA Residencia, Kuchlak Road Project, Quetta.

During the meeting, Riaz Pirzada directed the MD PHA for the implementation of robust tree plantation programs across all the PHA projects.

He emphasized the importance of planting trees not only for environmental conservation but also for improving air quality, enhancing aesthetics, and promoting a healthier lifestyle for residents. Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash and other senior officers of the ministry and PHA were also present during the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait, Nassar Abdul Rehman Almutari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Speakers call for addressing women's plight in occupied territories like Palestine, Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Prominent speakers at a panel discussion, hosted by Pakistan's Mission to the UN, Monday called for greater global efforts, including uniform implementation of the UN resolutions, treaties and conventions, to end the situations of foreign occupation and conflicts facing women around the world, especially in Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.

The discussion, a side event, was part of the ongoing 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). It took place at UN Headquarters in New York.

Panelists, representing UN-based diplomatic corps, academia, women rights organizations and civil society underlined the challenges and hardships facing the women, girls and children under occupation.

Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram opened the discussion in which taking part were Algerian Ambassador Amar Bendjama, OIC Ambassador to the UN Hameed Ajjibaiye Opeloyeru, Dr. Dalal Kanaan, Professor at Fordham University, New York, and Dr. Ameena Zia, Professor at CUNY Lehman College & Founder of Blue Ridge Impact Con-

sulting. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, former Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, sent a special video message on the occasion. The panelists demanded that all future UN reports and resolutions of the Security Council on the women, peace and security agenda should include provisions and information relating to the situation of women and girls under foreign occupation. They proposed the creation of a UN monitoring mechanism to register all crimes and violations committed against women and girls under foreign occupation.

Lahore to have first IT city of Pakistan, says CM Maryam Nawaz

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said the government would establish first IT city of the country in Lahore.

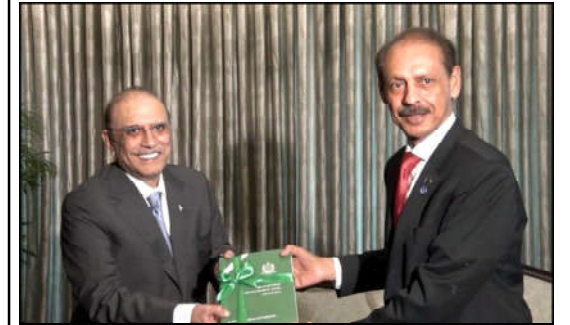
She made the announcement while chairing third cabinet meeting on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by provincial ministers, chief secretary and IGP.

The chief minister also approved annual and supplementary budget grants for 2023-24.

She further instructed to hand over the Lahore Knowledge Park to the Punjab Central Business

District Authority. Speaking on the occasion, she said the IT city would be completed within a year. All the major universities of the world would be invited to establish their campuses, she added. The chief minister also approved the project of giving 20,000 electric bikes to students on soft installments. The distribution of bikes would be started from May this year.

She also highlighted the need for starting the air ambulance project on a trial basis in order to assist patients who reside in remote parts of the province.



ISLAMABAD: The Auditor General of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, presenting the Audit Report of the Federal Government for the Audit Year 2023-24 to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

PM meets javelin athlete Arshad; praises his achievements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday praised Pakistan's ace javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem for achieving a historic feat of winning a silver medal in the World Athletics Championship 2023.

Romeena Khurshid Alam MNA and Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, a member of Punjab Assembly.

The prime minister said that there was immense talent in the country in sports which required to be groomed. He also underlined the need of focusing on promotion of sports in the rural areas.

During a meeting with Arshad Nadeem, the world famed javelin throwing athlete, the prime minister praised his efforts to clinch the silver medal despite scant resources. His achievement made the nation proud, he added. The prime minister announced an award worth Rs2.5 million for Arshad Nadeem.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja,

he said that he started his career during 2012 and participated in the Youth festival afterwards, he participated in different world events in various categories and represented Pakistan. He termed his meeting with the prime minister as very constructive and highlighted various measures to promote sports in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Athlete Arshad Nadeem calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

3.8m ration bags delivered to deserving families

CS orders expediting delivery of ration bags in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Sargodha, Mianwali

Independent Report LAHORE: On the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the authorities have intensified the ongoing crackdown on profiteers across the province, arresting 3,288 persons and lodging 1,181 FIRs during the first week of Ramzan. The price control magistrates conducted inspections of four lac 35 thousands spots and imposed fines of more than Rs. 40 million.

while the additional chief secretary, all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

The Chief Secretary ordered that the ongoing crackdown against profiteers be expedited. He asked the administrative officers to ensure the implementation of the price lists as the sale of essential commodities at more than the fixed prices is not acceptable in any case. He said that special inspections should be carried out on the identification of special branches. He also asked the price magistrates to remain fully active in the field and take stern action against overcharging. The Chief Secretary also issued instructions to speed up the supply of ration bags to the deserving people in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Sargodha, Mianwali, and said that the deserving people should get their right at their doorsteps as soon as possible.

The report on the actions against the profiteers was presented in the meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting reviewed the price control measures and provision of ration bags under the Ramzan package. The secretaries of the relevant departments including industries, agriculture, additional IG Special Branch, chairman PITB and officers concerned attended the meeting.

Muhammad Asim Javaid said PFA is ensuring the checking of all meat shops, Shawarma, Burger and Saji points across the province.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of women standing in a queue to draw money from Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiaries outside Benazir One Window Center at G-7.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar convened and chaired a meeting of Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue at Law Ministry.

IG Punjab determined for best possible health welfare of police force

Independent Report

LAHORE: Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar is committed and actively busy for the health welfare of police employees and their families and in this regard, an MOU has been concluded between the Punjab Police and a well-known private health welfare organization (Lahore Lines Welfare Organization).

organization Muhammad Danish Siddique signed the MOU. Under the MOU, special concessions will be provided to police employees in the treatment of eye, dental and other diseases.

Spokesperson of Punjab Police said that under the MOU, the families of police martyrs will be given cornea transplant and phaco cataract surgery free of charge in hospitals of private organizations. While the cornea donation will be provided on priority basis by private organization for the treatment of the serving employees,

the surgical expenses will be borne by the police department.

The spokesperson of Punjab Police further said that 50% discount will be provided to the families of police martyrs in any surgical procedure of eyes and Dental treatment, similarly, 25% discount will be provided to in-service employees on eye and dental surgical procedures. Both the organizations will take joint measures in connection with the special awareness campaign and community education regarding the treatment of eye diseases.

In a ceremony at the Central Police Office, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and Chairman of the private

Chairman HEC meets Minister of State for IT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has met with Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja here on Tuesday.

In the meeting, both the dignitaries discussed the issues in detail on IT graduates training program, start-ups, to make the youth talented and skilled, said a press release.

The demand and supply gap in the IT field should be minimised by bridging gap between indus-

try and academia, said Shaza Fatima during the meeting.

Such steps are necessary to provide required talent to IT companies around the world, including Pakistan, the minister added.

She went in saying that Pakistan is rich in talented youth, brand it better.

We will not waste time in talks, every obstacle in the way of the country's development will be removed, Shaza Fatima said.



Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in Islamabad

HBL PSL Season 9 Jubilee Life Insurance presents Wicketkeeper of the Tournament Award to Azam Khan

KARACHI (PR): Javed Ahmed, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jubilee Life Insurance presented the Wicketkeeper of the Tournament Award to Azam Khan after the HBL PSL 2024 final match between Islamabad United and Multan Sultans.



Throughout the tournament, Jubilee Life Insurance, the Official Insurance Partner for the HBL PSL Season 9 awarded the "Safe Hands of the Match" Awards for the most catches taken during the match. During the presentation ceremony of the final, the organization presented the "Wicketkeeper of the Tournament" Award for the most exceptional performance behind the stumps.

In Karachi, during PSL 9, Islamabad United triumphantly raised the trophy amidst a whirl of ticker tape and the brilliance of fireworks. Shadab Khan, leading his team, proudly hoisted the PSL trophy,

marking Islamabad's historic third championship win. This achievement came after a remarkable five-match winning streak to conclude PSL 9.

Having restricted Multan to a modest 159-9, the match continued until the final ball which Hunain Shah hit across the boundary for a four. Imad Wasim's five wickets, a first in a PSL final, was decisive for Islamabad with the ball. That and Martin Guppitt's strike rate for his half-century must be the two performances that en-

At least two killed, one injured in road mishap

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two persons lost their lives due to a car collision, while one sustained injuries in a road accident near Taranda Muhammad Panah interchange at Liaquat Pur on Tuesday, according to rescue officials, the body and injured persons were removed to nearby hospital, a private news channel reported.

abled Islamabad United to lift the trophy after a five-match winning streak in the HBL PSL Season 9.

The final showdown between Islamabad United and Multan Sultans had been a spectacle to behold. Islamabad United emerged victorious, lifting the coveted trophy for the third time in PSL history. Under the leadership of captain Shadab Khan, Islamabad's triumph was a testament to their resilience and skill, culminating in a five-match winning streak that culminated in glory.

Islamabad Police unveils patriotic anthem "Jannat Se Bulawa" ahead of Pak Day

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: As the nation prepares to celebrate Pakistan Day on March 23, the Islamabad Police has stirred the patriotic fervor with the unveiling of a captivating anthem titled "Jannat Se Bulawa" (Called from Heaven).

This anthem, serving as a poignant tribute to the unwavering dedication of Islamabad Police personnel in safeguarding the nation. Its beautiful lyrics, echoing sacrifice and love for the homeland, resonate deeply with the sacrifices

made by the brave sons of Pakistan, according to police spokesman.

More than just a song, "Jannat Se Bulawa" stands as a powerful testament to the resilience and commitment of the Islamabad Police in ensuring the safety and security of Pakistan.

In commemorating March 23, the anthem embodies the essence of unity and strength, rallying all citizens to stand together in the face of challenges and uphold the values of peace, progress, and prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui chairing a meeting.

IG Punjab greets Shadab, IU for winning the PSL final

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Police brand ambassador Shadab Khan's team has become the champion of PSL season 09. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar congratulated Shadab Khan and Islamabad United Cricket Team for winning the PSL Final.



IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that Shadab Khan led the Islamabad United cricket team as the exemplary leader, star all-rounder crowned PSL season 09 on the head of Islamabad United.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police Ambassador Shadab Khan's team winning the PSL final is a

matter of honor for the police department. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar recently appointed Shadab Khan as Sports Ambassador of Punjab Police. Islamabad United captain Shadab Khan has also been given the honorary post of DSP in Punjab Police.

CDA Introduces Islamabad Mascot MarGo CDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has unveiled MarGo, the official mascot of Islamabad, in a move aimed at enhancing the city's identity and promoting its cultural significance. The name MarGo is derived from "Mar" representing Margalla and "Go" signifying prosperity or flourishing.

Resembling a cheetah, MarGo symbolizes vitality and embodies the swift progress and dynamism of Islamabad. Adorned with stylish sunglasses and a muffler, MarGo exudes sophistication and modernity, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of the capital.

This decision aligns with a global trend observed in major cities worldwide, where iconic mascots such as New York's Statue of Lib-

erty or London's red double-decker buses have become synonymous with their respective landscapes and cultures.

CDA officials have outlined plans to strategically place MarGo at key landmarks and significant locations across the city, making it a recognizable symbol of Islamabad's identity. From bustling marketplaces to serene parks and government buildings, MarGo will welcome visitors and residents alike. Beyond its symbolic value, MarGo is expected to play a crucial role in promoting tourism and fostering civic pride. By uniting Islamabad's diverse populace under a common symbol, MarGo aims to become a beloved icon, representing the collective aspirations and achievements of the capital.