

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 58 Ramazan 09, 1445 AH Wednesday March 20, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

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



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.

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 Afghan 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. "Besides supplying weapons and equipment, Taliban rank and file, al-Qaida core... assisted TTP forces in cross-border attacks... Some Taliban members also joined TTP, perceiving a religious obligation to provide support," the U.N. report said.

Asif Durrani, Pakistan's special representative to Afghanistan, told a seminar in Islamabad last week that up to 6,000 TTP fighters are sheltering in the neighbouring country.

Bilawal greets all communities celebrating Nowruz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations to all communities celebrating the joyous occasion of Nowruz.

Nowruz, the harbinger of the Persian New Year, is embraced by diverse cultures and communities worldwide, including a significant populace in Pakistan. In a press release from the Media Cell Bilawal House, the PPP chairman expressed that Nowruz embodies themes of renewal, hope, and unity.

"On this auspicious day, I extend heartfelt congratulations to all Pakistanis, including the esteemed Parsi community, who celebrate Nowruz with traditional fervor and joy," he added. Recognizing the Parsi community's integral role in Pakistan's diverse cultural landscape, he acknowledged their significant contributions to the nation's social, economic, and cultural tapestry.

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 Mohammed 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.



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.

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.



ISLAMABAD: Soldiers hang from a rope of a helicopter flying during rehearsal of Pakistan Day parade in Federal Capital.

Dental, diabetes and general surgery to be provided in Sarfraz Rafiqi Shaheed Hospital: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that medical facilities will be available to thousands of people with the opening of dental clinic, diabetes clinic and general surgery in Sarfraz Rafiqi Shaheed Hospital.

He said this while talking to media representatives after formally opening clinics for treatment of various ailments at the Sarfraz Rafiqee Shaheed Hospital in New Chali on Tuesday.

He said that all the assets of this city are the property of the citizens, therefore the demand of the people is absolutely legitimate that their problems should be solved.



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

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 invincible seaward defence of the country.



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 & collaborative efforts in various sectors.

Sindh govt to launch digital payment system for Peoples Bus Service

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government on Tuesday announced launching of prepaid payment system for the Peoples Bus Service in Karachi from next month.

Sindh Minister for Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon while addressing a press conference here said that provincial government will introduce prepaid payment system from April 18 that would gradually replace payment of fare in cash.

He also announced to launch two more routes under Peoples Bus Service in Karachi after Eid while launching the same service

Zardari felicitates Putin on victory 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.

ATC issues arrest warrants for CM Gandapur, 12 other PTI leaders in May 9 case

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.

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 Amir 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 Chovk as their preferred venues.

Underscoring their commitment to a peaceful event, PTI's petition urges the court to direct authorities to implement road closures on the designated day to ensure the safety of participants.



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

Dr. Khalid Maqbool calls for tangible steps to develop technology

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday emphasized transitioning from technology adopter to generator.

He stressed the need to take concrete steps to address the ministry's challenges and enhance its functionality.

During the discussions with the heads of different wings of the ministry, Dr. Maqbool Siddiqui stressed cooperation to streamline ministry functions and tackle existing issues.



LARKANA: Additional Director Pakistan Red Crescent Society Ms. Asima Naseem distributing handover buffaloes certificates to flood-affected families of the IFRC during a ceremony at Municipal Stadium, organized by Pakistan Red Crescent Society.

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 Commissioner 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.

CPPA files application in NEPRA seeking hike in power tariff

ISLAMABAD (Online): Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has filed application in NEPRA seeking hike in power tariff. Under this application the tariff of electricity is likely to be increased by Rs 5 per unit for one month.

The increase in tariff has been sought under Monthly Fuel Adjustment (MFA). In the event of acceptance of application, financial burden of over Rs 40 billion is likely to be shifted to the consumers.

According to CPPA application 6 billion 87 crore and 60 lac units electricity was sold in the month of February.

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 mangroves of the Indus deltaic 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.

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.



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.

Various ongoing

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 Javaid, 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.



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

forward the benefits to the farmer community which is a matter of concern.

In reply to a question, he said the government has planned to control gas theft cases.

He said that Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) were working to install smart meters in all parts of the country.

The smart meter, he said would directly benefit the consumers.



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 \$800m 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.

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. 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. "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.



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 expressed these views while presiding over the budget meeting of the Education Department. Secretary Education Masood Ahmed and other officials of the Education Department also participated in the meeting. During the briefing, the education minister was told that the education department is working on 107 projects including 58 of the planned districts, 19 of the merged districts and 30 of the AIP, and timely completion of these projects would be ensured at all cost.

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 Khuram 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," said 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 in Baghdad 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.

PM calls for ensuring early implementation of Pak-Kuwait agreements

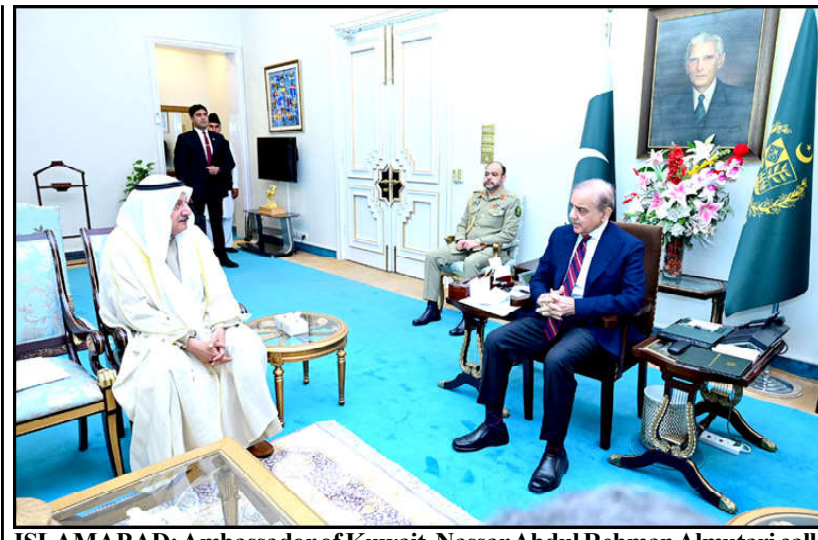
ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for concerted efforts from both sides to ensure the early implementation of seven agreements worth US\$ 10 billion signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in November last year.

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 re-election.

The PM expressed the desire to work closely with them to further strengthen the bilateral relationship with a focus on trade and investment. He



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait, Nassar Abdul Rehman Almutairi 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.

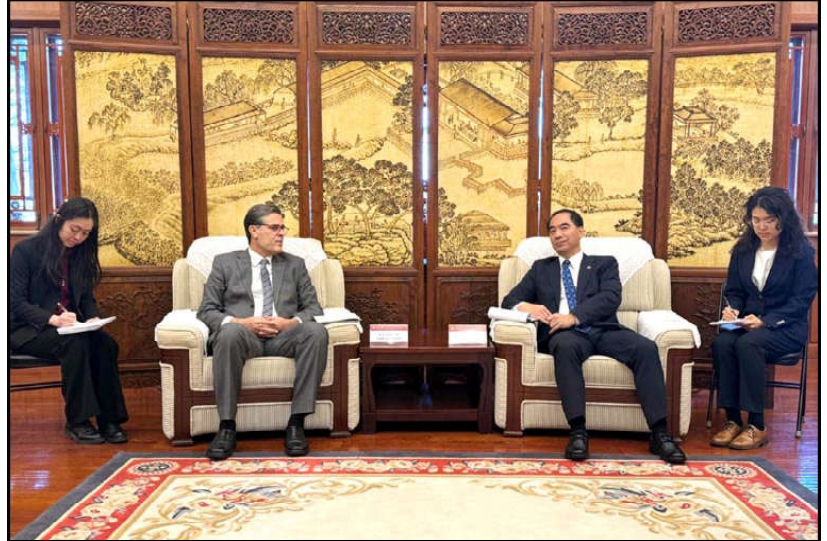
The discussion, a side event, was part of the ongoing 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). It took place at UN Headquarters in New York.

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 Consulting.

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.



Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi visited Peking University today. In his meeting with President of Peking University Mr. Gong Qihuang, the Ambassador paid tribute to the University for its role as an outstanding seat of learning and its rich contribution to the deepening of Pakistan-China relations. He appreciated the University for hosting Pakistan Studies Center and offering Urdu language courses.

Court accepts acquittal plea of Imran in two cases of Long March vandalism

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has accepted acquittal plea of PTI founder Imran Khan in Long March vandalism cases.

The petition regarding production of Imran Khan in the court in two Long March vandalism cases and his acquittal plea came up for hearing before Judicial magistrate Shaista Kundi Tuesday.

Naeem Haider Panjutha, Sardar Masroof and Aamna Ali counsels for Imran Khan appeared in the court.

During hearing of the case Naeem Panjutha requested the court to summon Imran Khan.

Judicial magistrate Shaista Kundi remarked let us debate over Imran Khan acquittal plea first. Who will be responsible if something happens with Imran Khan on the way to court.

Siraj dissatisfied with prevailing law & order situation

KASHMIRE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq expressed dissatisfaction over the prevailing law and order situation especially in Sindh he said that the populace feels unprotected as lawlessness and reign of dacoits prevails.

Speaking to media persons after leading the funeral prayer of JI local leader Maulana Abdul Hafeez Bajarani on Tuesday, he emphasized the necessity for the government to ensure security for the masses. Despite assuming power through a contested mandate, he urged the government to prioritize peace-building efforts and economic development.

Sirajul Haq highlighting inflation, unemployment, and lawlessness as the primary challenges confronting the populace, criticized the government's reliance solely on IMF intervention to address economic woes, stressing the need for alternative solutions. He lamented the rampant abduction-for-ransom has become a business in Sindh, attributing it to the protection provided by feudal lords and local politicians to criminals, rendering it unsafe for citizens to venture out after dark. He asserted that corruption and poor governance were impediments to economic growth and underscored the importance of electing honest and dedicated leadership to address these issues.

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.

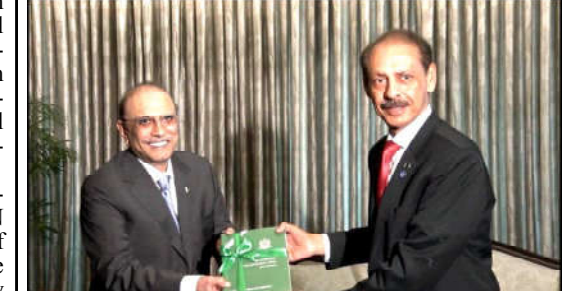
The ambassador extended felicitations to Muhammad Aurangzeb upon his appointment as Minister for Finance and Revenue and conveyed confidence towards further strengthening of economic ties between the two countries, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

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.

He reiterated the government's commitment to completing the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) program and continuing the economic reform process initiated under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) 2019 and Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) 2023, with a focus on achieving fiscal and debt sustainability, social protection, and rebuilding foreign exchange reserves.



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.

Mohsin Naqvi inspects National Bank Stadium

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Chairman of PCB Mohsin Naqvi inspected the National Bank Stadium, Karachi after the conclusion of the HBL PSL 9 final.

He observed various facilities at the venue across all the enclosures. COO PCB, Salman Naseer was also present on this occasion.

The Chairman expressed his reservation on the lack of quality infrastructure at the venue and instructed swift upgradation of the stadium and pressed upon the importance of enhancing the fan's view from enclosures.

According to the new upgradation plan, the chairman asked for the protective palisade in the stadium to be moved further towards the boundary to minimise the hindrance concerning the view of fans.

Naqvi also met the groundsmen of National Bank Stadium and lauded their hardwork throughout the HBL PSL 9.

He said, "As part of our plan to upgrade the three major venues in the country, I have tasked the team to finalise National Bank Stadium's upgradation plan swiftly and start the work as soon as possible."

Food and drinks business man follow the rules of safety D.G Food Authority

LARKANA (APP): The Sindh Food Authority has launched a large-scale awareness campaign for the training and awareness of the people involved in the food and beverage business in accordance with the principles of hygiene at the public level.

In this regard, Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhir Hussain has informed about the rules and procedures of Sindh Food Authority in his interviews on electronic channel and said that all the people involved in the business of food and beverages should get a license from Sindh Food Authority.

Those who are deliberately avoiding taking license will be dealt with under the Sindh Food Authority Act. Authority will provide training to those who are still not aware of the Sindh Food Authority Act.

According to Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhir Hussain, for the establishment of a healthy society, it is necessary to have full awareness about the principles of hygiene at the public level and the people associated with the food and beverage business should also follow on act to aware of the principles of food safety and food handling.



LARKANA: Employees of Larkana Development Authority (LDA) are holding protest demonstration demanding for immediate release of their four year salaries held at Larkana press club.

KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi lauds KUDS nationwide performance

KARACHI (APP): Vice Chancellor of the University of Karachi Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi appreciated the performances and victories of the Karachi University Debating Society (KUDS) across the country throughout the year. He was addressing the students, who have bagged the 'best delegation' title after winning the maximum categories in the recently held Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto University, Lyari, Model United Nations (BBUMUN 2024) conference on Tuesday, at the VC Secretariat.

The KUDS is one of the seven official students' societies of the University of Karachi, which gives a platform to students to showcase their talents in different certified programs and events across the country. He expressed that competitions like debates and discussions give confidence to a person and enhance their skills too. He mentioned that participating in such activities helps them in grooming a personality a lot as well. The model UN conference, a simulation of the United Nations, has different committees and encourages participants to find solutions to various global problems.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Islamabad.

Rising energy costs crushing exporters, pushing millions into poverty: Pasha

KARACHI (INP): Former Finance Minister, Dr. Hafeez Pasha, has voiced concerns over the increasing pressure on exporters and the detrimental impact of rising gas and electricity prices on industries.

Addressing a gathering at the Chamber of Commerce in Karachi, the former federal finance minister highlighted alarming statistics, stating that unemployment has increased to 9 million, with poverty escalating from 35% to 45%, pushing 110 million people below the poverty line.

Dr. Pasha emphasized the gravity of the situation, noting that the number of unemployed youth in Pakistan has reached a staggering 20 million, equivalent to a ticking time bomb. He criticized the imposition of five times more taxes on the industrial sector, while the government has repaid loans worth Rs. 5 trillion, which it did not acquire. Meanwhile, the power sector continues to receive an annual subsidy of Rs. 8 billion for production capacity.

The former finance minister drew attention to long-standing issues such as the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), burdened with a debt of Rs. 800 billion and an annual subsidy of Rs. 30 to 40 billion. Similarly, the National Highway Authority (NHA) suffers an annual loss of Rs. 168 billion.

Dr. Pasha criticized the shift towards public-private partnerships in the development program, stressing that small enterprises contribute only \$4 to \$5 billion to exports. He mentioned that Pakistan is expected to receive \$6 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over three years, but stressed the need for a daily income of Rs. 100 billion to meet interest and loan repayments. The former finance minister's remarks underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to address the economic challenges facing Pakistan.



KARACHI: Volunteers distribute Iftar among the fasting people at a roadside setup arranged by philanthropists in the holy month of Ramadan.

2200 profiteers imposed fine of Rs17.905 mln

KARACHI (APP): Karachi administration, during 13 days of ongoing special price checking campaign, imposed fines of over Rs17.905 million on 2200 shopkeepers and wholesalers while 26 shops were sealed for violating officially notified rates.

The campaign was initiated on directives of Sindh Chief Minister for ensuring availability of essential items of daily use on officially notified rates during Ramadan and Commissioner Karachi is monitoring the campaign, said a statement issued here on Tuesday.

Price magistrates carried out action in their respective areas and paid visits to 545 different places of the metropolis, said the statement adding that administration, on eighth day of Ramadan, imposed fines of Rs1.591 million on 164 illegal profiteers.

As per details, fines of Rs 5,25,000 were imposed on 48 illegal profiteers in district South, Rs1,47,000 on 16 profiteers in district East and fines of Rs80,000 were imposed on 22 profiteers in district West.

In district Central 37 illegal profiteers were charged with fines of Rs4,29,000, in district Malir 17 profiteers were fined Rs97,000, in district Korangi 14 shopkeepers were fined Rs2,25,000 and in district Keamari fines of Rs88,000 imposed on 10 illegal profiteers.



KARACHI: Smoke and flames rise from a Bogie Restaurant as Pakistani fire fighters struggle to control a fire which broke out at Cantt Station in Karachi.

Chairman SHRC calls for ensuring vocational training, medical facilities to women at Dar ul Aman

HYDERABAD (APP): Chairman Sindh Human Rights Commission Iqbal Ahmed Detho has said that the Advisory Council of Dar ul Aman should ensure the vocational training and medical facilities to the women survivors at Dar ul Aman on a permanent basis. He said this while visiting Dar ul Aman Qasimabad along with Additional Chief Secretary Syed Khalid Hyder Shah, Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi on Tuesday.

He also directed officers of Dar ul Aman to conduct psychological sessions on a weekly basis for the mental well being of survivors because most of the victims pass through a trauma. The Chairman HRC Iqbal Detho checked the facilities being provided to victims at Dar ul Aman and asked for the survivors regarding their matters.

The Incharge Dar ul Aman Qasimabad Khalida Soomro briefed the chairman about the recent cases.

She said that most of the cases are related to domestic violence and we provide their legal aid in court matters. She said that there is a dispensary where a lady doctor visits once in a week for routine checkups of women survivors. On this occasion Chairman Iqbal Detho has directed Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad to depute a lady doctor permanently for better medical condition of victims. The chairman also directed authorities of Dar ul Aman and women Development department that they must arrange an Eid Party at Dar ul Aman and invite members of Hyderabad chambers.