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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif casting his vote at the Senate elections at Parliament House.

PM terms promotion of foreign direct investment as top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday highlighted that promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country to transform challenges into opportunities was top priority of the government.

He was chairing a high level meeting to review progress on foreign investment. The meeting reviewed in detail the progress on the memorandum of understandings (MoUs) and agreements with the Gulf countries under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Talking to participants of the meeting, the prime minister said all possible facilities will be given to the investors adding that special cells in the federal ministries will be established to promote innovation and research in the investment

sector.

The prime minister said the establishment of SIFC had helped restoring confidence of the investors.

He directed that a feasibility study should be conducted for such projects which had the potential to attract investors and the services of internationally recognized experts should be obtained in this regard.

He emphasized that there should be no compromise on the quality of the projects presented for investment. The prime minister also directed all the ministries to further improve their relations with the Gulf countries regarding the progress on their respective MoUs.

He said all the necessary requirements should be fulfilled with respect to the foreign investment in the solar energy projects in Muzaffar Garh, Layyah

PM felicitates newly elected senators

Ruling alliance sweeps Senate polls with PPP grabbing 11, PML-N six seats

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb win from Islamabad and Punjab, respectively; polls postponed in KP amid oath-taking dispute

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday took the lead in the Senate polls with 11 seats, while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) clinched six seats.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and an independent candidate Faisal Vawda secured one seat each.

The polling for the 19 vacant seats was held in the National, Punjab, and Sindh assemblies while elections on 11 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's seats were postponed by the Election Commission over the "denial" of oath-taking to the lawmakers elected on reserved seats.

Overall 356 lawmakers cast their votes in the upper house of parliament's elections, whereas, votes of seven NA lawmakers were rejected.

ISLAMABAD

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar won a technocrat seat from Islamabad, garnering 222 votes with Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) Raja Ansar Mehmood coming in second with 81.

Meanwhile, PPP's Rana Mehmoodul Hassan secured 224 votes to win the general seat in Islamabad while PTI's Farzand Hussain Shah garnered 79 votes.

In Punjab, all seven candidates vying for the general seats in Punjab were elected unopposed at the end of March. Today, polls were held on two women and technocrats seats each and one minority seat.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Petroleum Minister Musadiq Malik were successful on the two technocrat seats, garnering 128 and 121 votes, respectively.

In Punjab, PML-N's Anusha Rehman and Bushra Anjum were successful on two seats reserved for women, garnering 125 and 123 votes, respectively. PML-N's Khalil Tahir Sindhu was successful on a minority seat.

Sindh

In Sindh, the ruling PPP secured 10 of the 12 seats up for grabs. The remaining two were won by the MQM-P and an independent candidate.

On general seats, PPP's Ashraf Ali Jatoti (22 votes), Dost Ali Jessar (21 votes), Kazim Ali Shah (21 votes), Mastoor Ahsan (21 votes), Nadeem Bhutto (21 votes) were successful.

MQM-P's Amir Chishti (21 votes) and independent Faisal Vawda (21 votes) also won from a general seat. A day earlier, the PPP had decided to withdraw one of its candidates to support Vawda.

On the technocrat seats, PPP's Zamir Ghumro (58 votes) and Sarmad Ali (57 votes) were successful. PPP's Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani (57 votes) and Quratulain Marri (58 votes) won on two seats reserved for women.

PPP's Poonjo Bheel (117 votes) was also successful on a minority seat.

Prior to the polls, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah had expressed the hope for all PPP candidates to be elected to the Senate. Speaking to the media outside the Sindh Assembly, he said that Sarfaraz Rajar withdrew his nomination papers on the party's directives as the party was Vawda.

In an indirect reference to the PTI, CM Shah said that those who made tall claims about giving surprises in the Senate election finally retreated from the arena and boycotted the election from Sindh.

In its notification, the ECP stated that polls for the Senate seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not be held until the administration of oath to the elected members against the reserved seats.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif felicitated the newly elected senators on their success and expressed good wishes.

In his congratulatory message, the prime minister said the Senate elections were the continuation of democratic process.

He hoped that senators will play their role for the uplift of the constitution and the development of the country.

Newly elected senators should participate in effective legislation for public welfare and national development and prosperity, he said.

Pak, Kazakhstan express keen interest to deepen collaboration on regional, int'l issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Kazakhstan have underscored the shared commitment to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen collaboration on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The commitment was made during a meeting between Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin and Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad



on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador shed light on Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the forthcoming events scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan.

In response, Khawaja Asif emphasized the significant potential for further enhancing cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan across various sectors, including military, military-technical, and other strategic domains.

CM launches Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore initiative

Maryam also sets up task force to check electricity theft

Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Tuesday, announced the launch of a 'Naya Dour, Saaf Suthra Lahore' initiative, under which all major and minor roads of Lahore will be repaved and constructed, streets paved, streetlights installed, and 222,000 streetlights restored.

The CM gave a 3-month deadline to complete the comprehensive development plan of Lahore, saying that she wanted to see every street and neighborhood clean. She said that she herself will review its implementation after every ten days. People should also support the government in this cleanliness drive, he appealed. She also directed to make all water filtration plants of Lahore functional at the earliest.

Earlier, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) gave a detailed presentation on drainage and sewerage rehabilitation, construction and repair project in 9 zones of Lahore. A sewer master plan and the construction of water collecting tanks were also discussed in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a special meeting focusing on electricity theft established a task force to tackle electricity pilferage at the district level. The CM said this task force will include representatives of Police, Magistrate, Intelligence, Recovery, DC Office, Prosecution and Law Departments, adding that more than 600 Special Police teams will also participate in anti-power theft campaign.

Speaker NA calls on President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the speaker congratulated the president on assuming his office. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Matters related to parliamentary affairs and legislation were also discussed during the meeting.

PTI attempts to politicize matter of judges' letter: Law Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Tuesday said that statements of Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf (PTI), and its founder were an attempt to politicize the suo-motu action of Supreme Court in matter of IHC judges' letter.

Giving reaction on a statement of PTI leader Barrister Gohar, the minister said that only the Constitution would be followed in this country, adding that what the PTI founder said was not a law.

He said that those who had been making references against judges in their regime shouldn't give advice to the government.

EC suspends notification of success of speaker BA in PB-51

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has suspended the notification of success in respect of speaker Balochistan Assembly (BA) speaker BA Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

The petitions filed by candidates Abaseen Achakzai and Asghar Achakzai against result of PB-51 Chammam came up for hearing before Election commission.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Wang Wenbin says China firmly supports Pak counterterrorism efforts

Will provide necessary assistance in the investigation of Dasu terrorist attack

BEIJING (APP): China firmly supports Pakistan's counterterrorism measures and will provide necessary assistance in the investigation of Dasu terrorist attack, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday.

China firmly support Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP about Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's assurance of foolproof security measures for the Chinese national working on Dasu Hydropower Project as well as across the country and exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of March 26 attack.

The spokesperson said, since the attack, China has been in close communication with Pakistan and added, we hope that Pakistan will get to bottom of what happened with utmost resolve and efforts, bring the perpetrators and whoever behind the attack to justice and do everything possible to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in the country.

Wang Wenbin remarked that China firmly safeguards the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions overseas.

"China will provide necessary assistance to Pakistan in the investigation of the case," he said.



MUZAFFARABAD: Kashmiris protesting against Indian brutality and demanding UN to take action on completion of 1700 days of Indian military siege on occupied Kashmir in the city.

PTI among five parties to form 'grand opposition alliance'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Five major opposition parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held a meeting and discussed forming the 'grand opposition alliance' to give a 'tough' time to the government.

Chairman PTI Gohar Ali Khan, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Liaquat Baloch, and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Achakzai attended the meeting. Majlis-e-Wadhat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) head Allama Nasir Abbas and Balochistan National Party (BNP) Chairman Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub and Asad

Qaiser were also present on the occasion.

Sources privy to the development said that matters related to the formation of the Grand Opposition Alliance were discussed in the meeting.

All these parties had earlier rejected the February 8 elections results and termed it "manipulated".

The PTI has been mulling over forming a joint opposition alliance since after the general elections 2024 as the party held several meetings with other parties including the Moulana Fazal-ur-Rehman Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) having reservations on the polls.

Islamabad court acquits Imran in vandalism case

ISLAMABAD (INP): In yet another relief for the former prime minister and ex-PTI chairman Imran Khan, a court in Islamabad on Tuesday acquitted him, ex-PTI leader Asad Umar and other suspects, including PML-N MNA Raja Khurram Nawaz, in the case of vandalism registered against them at Margallah police station.

Judicial Magistrate Mureed Abbas pronounced the decision.

Advocate Sardar Masroof Khan and Amina Ali appeared in the court on behalf of the suspects.

The decision came only a day after the

Islamabad High Court (IHC) suspended the sentence awarded by the trial court to Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana case.

IHC's two-member bench, comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Aurangzeb, heard Imran and Bushra's appeals against their conviction and in the reference.

The court gave its ruling in respect of opposition leader was completed in speaker office.

The speaker declared Umar AYub opposition leader after his satisfaction.

Umar Ayub appointed as opposition leader in NA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly (NA) has appointed Umar Ayyub Khan as opposition leader Speaker Ayyaz Sadiq has issued notification of appointment of Umar Ayub Khan.

Umar Ayub Khan will assume charge of his office after issuance of notification.

The process of scrutiny in respect of opposition leader was completed in speaker office.

The speaker declared Umar AYub opposition leader after his satisfaction.

Imran Khan tells court 'Bushra Bibi poisoned in Bani Gala sub-jail'

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan Tuesday apprised the court that his wife and ex-first lady Bushra Bibi was poisoned at the Bani Gala sub-jail.

The PTI founder made the claim during a hearing of the £190 million settlement case in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. Khan informed the accountability court judge that the former first lady had marks on her skin and tongue after "being poisoned". He sought the court's order for an inquiry into the incident and a complete medical checkup of Bushra Bibi. Khan said: "I know who is behind it."

He insisted that the medical examination of the former first lady should be done by Dr Asim Yunus, a doctor at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre.

Science Minister inaugurates a 5,000 fellowships programme for Palestinian students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday inaugurated a 5,000 fellowships programme for Palestinian students in a ceremony held here. The second phase of the programme is announced in collaboration with the Association of Private Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) and COMSTECH consortium.

Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, addressing the event as a special guest, expressed his immense pleasure at initiating this timely and significant step.

He said it is a gift from Pakistan to the Palestinian brothers. He highlighted the

importance of this large-scale scholarship programme in collaboration with partner universities from Pakistan and other Muslim countries in promoting science and technology. The minister emphasized that this initiative reflects the essential and intrinsic relations between Palestine and Pakistan at all levels, in line with the vision of the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Professor Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Chaudhry revealed that in the first phase of the COMSTECH Palestine programme, 500 fellowships were announced in various fields of science, technology, health, and agriculture.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chairing a special meeting focusing on electricity theft, established a task force to tackle electricity pilferage at the district level.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Letter inquiry

There has been a twist in the tale. After the Supreme Court last week deferred to the federal cabinet, asking it to deal with a disturbing letter six Islamabad High Court justices had addressed to the chief justice, observers had worried that a government-sponsored inquiry into intelligence operatives' alleged interference in judicial affairs would prove to be a non-starter.

Even as voices from within the legal community were still criticising the Supreme Court for neglecting its responsibility and ceding full control over the inquiry to the government, a respected former judge, retired chief justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, was duly appointed to head the inquiry commission tasked with looking into the judges' letter.

By Monday, however — following an open statement from more than 300 lawyers, amidst whispers that the six IHC justices may be considering directly petitioning the Supreme Court, and a polite 'no, thank you' from Mr Jilani — the scheme seemed to have fallen apart.

Accepting demands that the letter be taken up by the Supreme Court under its jurisdiction defined in Article 184(3), Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa announced on Monday that his court had taken suo motu notice of the matter. A seven-member bench will take the case up for hearing tomorrow. Although some concerns regarding the size and composition of the bench have been raised by certain quarters, the development is a breakthrough for the legal community and is being seen as a positive step.

It is hoped that the court will now arrange for the proceedings to be broadcast live, as in past important cases. The issues raised by the six justices of the Islamabad High Court have caused quite a sensation, and it would, therefore, be in the public interest if they are also addressed transparently.

The legal community deserves much credit for refusing to accept a compromise in the form of an inquiry commission and pushing for the letter to be taken up by the Supreme Court.

Mr Jilani's well-reasoned refusal to sit in inquiry over six serving justices also deserves commendation. The former chief justice of Pakistan, while thanking the government for its consideration, courteously pointed out that since the letter had been addressed to the Supreme Judicial Council and its chairman, it would be improper of him to interfere in an institutional matter. He also objected to the inquiry's terms of reference, as set by the government, noting that they did not seem relevant to the issue raised in the judges' letter, namely, a consultation on what judges must do when they are placed under duress. In doing so, Mr Jilani greatly strengthened the argument that others had been making: the judiciary must address this issue internally. One now hopes it will do so enthusiastically.

"Should Dr. Arif Alvi Fill the Leadership Vacuum in PTI?"

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Dr. Arif Alvi, the former President, possesses a wealth of attributes that make him a distinguished figure in the political arena. In essence, Dr. Alvi embodies the qualities of an astute politician with a positive, creative, and non-violent approach to governance. Dr. Arif Alvi's political journey began in 1979 with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), where he opposed martial law under General Zia-ul-Haq. He later became a founding member of PTI in 1996, serving as its Sindh president. Despite navigating through General Pervez Musharraf's martial law, he secured a National Assembly seat from Karachi in 2013 and won against MQM-P heavyweight Dr. Farooq Sattar in 2018. Known for his loyalty to Imran Khan, Alvi assumed the presidency in 2018, navigating Pakistan's volatile political landscape effectively with a few hiccups here and there.

Having successfully completed his tenure as the supreme commander of the armed forces of Pakistan and head of all three pillars of the state, Dr. Alvi now faces a pivotal moment in his political career. With the leadership vacuum in PTI growing wider each passing day, exacerbated by the incarceration of its founding chairman, Mr. Imran Khan, the need for Alvi to assume an active role in the party has never been more apparent. Imran Khan's likely prolonged detention un-

derscores the urgency for Alvi to step up, especially as other key leaders of PTI find themselves either in jail or in hiding due to alleged state oppression. As PTI grapples with these unprecedented challenges, Alvi's leadership and guidance could prove instrumental in navigating the party through turbulent times and charting a course towards stability and resilience.

PTI's leadership is currently dominated by lawyers, often labeled as "paratroopers" by analysts. These individuals lack a political background and grassroots support, making them ill-equipped to handle the intricacies of political maneuvering effectively. Their tendency to resort to legal battles instead of leveraging popular support has been detrimental to the party's interests. This lack of political acumen has significantly undermined PTI's standing and effectiveness, leading to its near-complete disarray.

Their failures have been glaring: firstly, their inability to defend their own chairman entangled in numerous frivolous cases and subsequent incarceration. Secondly, their failure to secure the release of key political figures and thousands of workers unjustly imprisoned. Thirdly, the loss of the party's election symbol resulted in a significant blow to PTI's electoral prospects and brand value. Fourthly, their actions inadvertently led to the absorption of newly elected members into a sectarian political party, further tarnishing PTI's identity. Lastly, they were unable to defend the allocation of reserve seats for women and minorities, strengthening rival parties at PTI's expense. These

missteps have not only weakened PTI but have also alienated certain segments of its support base.

Their professional mindset predisposes them to view fellow lawyers as adversaries, contributing to a lack of unity within PTI. This absence of cohesion, a hallmark of effective political parties, has left PTI fractured. Divergent opinions among self-assumed leaders mirror the courtroom dynamics of lawyers competing for favorable outcomes, resulting in internal discord and confusion. As a consequence, PTI finds itself in a state of disarray, unable to present a unified front or pursue a cohesive agenda.

During the PTI government, I had the privilege of serving as Director General to two PTI ministers, Fawad Hussain and Shibli Faraz, and developed a close relationship with Mr. Shah Mehmood Qureshi. From my experiences accompanying Mr. Qureshi on official and unofficial engagements as Press Attache in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and later in Geneva, Switzerland, I observed their exceptional abilities. In my opinion, their presence at the forefront of PTI leadership, the lawyers and Mr. Raouf Hassan had a marginal role in PTI decision making. But in the absence of the political leadership, despite their sincere intentions, these lawyers-turned-PTI leaders have inadvertently damaged the party's standing and undermined the political capital built by PTI's founder, Mr. Imran Khan.

While PTI owes gratitude to lawyers and Mr. Raouf Hassan, who is renowned for his exceptional writing and keen political insight, it is undeniable that they cannot match the experience and expertise of genuine politicians due to many pressing reasons.

Genuine politicians bring years of political activism, governance, and public service to their roles, allowing them to navigate complex challenges with finesse. Their understanding of political dynamics, constituency needs, and policymaking processes equips them to handle intricate political maneuvering, coalition-building, and effective constituency engagement. In contrast, lawyers-turned-politicians may initially lack direct political experience, presenting challenges in grasping the nuances of political dynamics and effectively engaging with constituents.

Secondly, genuine politicians often have strong roots in their constituencies and a profound connection with the concerns and aspirations of the people they represent. Their longstanding presence and engagement within communities allow them to establish meaningful connections with constituents and address their needs effectively. Conversely, lawyers-turned politicians may encounter difficulties in building such connections, especially if they lack prior experience in community engagement or grassroots organizing.

Thirdly, genuine politicians typically demonstrate strong leadership qualities, including the ability to make tough decisions, build consensus, and inspire confidence among party members and supporters. Their leadership is characterized by a keen understanding of political dynamics and a commitment to advancing the interests of their constituents. While lawyers-turned politicians may bring ana-

lytical skills and legal expertise to the table, they may face challenges in adapting their approach to the broader demands of political leadership, including building alliances and navigating internal party dynamics.

Given the context outlined above, it becomes apparent why it is crucial for former President Alvi, a close associate of Imran Khan and someone with deep ties to PTI, to step forward and provide political leadership to the party.

As a genuine politician with years of experience in governance and public service, Alvi possesses the necessary acumen to navigate the complex challenges faced by PTI. His understanding of constituency needs and ability to establish meaningful connections with constituents can help reinvigorate the party's grassroots support.

Moreover, Alvi's demonstrated leadership qualities, including his track record of making tough decisions and building consensus, make him well-suited to unite the party and provide a clear direction amidst internal turmoil. His commitment to advancing the interests of PTI supporters and addressing their concerns underscores the importance of his leadership at this critical juncture.

By stepping forward, Alvi can work towards reclaiming PTI's iconic symbol and disassociating it from sectarian affiliations, thereby restoring the party's brand value and integrity. Additionally, his efforts to secure the release of Imran Khan and other imprisoned party members would signal a commitment to upholding democratic principles and ensuring justice for all PTI members.

With over ten months of experience working closely with Dr. Arif Alvi as his press secretary and media advisor, I can attest to his wisdom, articulate nature, and exceptional team-building skills. As a statesman, Dr. Alvi envisions a vibrant, forward-looking, modern, and prosperous Pakistan. During his over five-year tenure, he persistently master-minded Pakistan-specific COVID-19 protocols, saving many lives and positioning the country favorably compared to others worldwide. Dr. Alvi emphasized the importance of fast-tracked education and skill development through smart and effective short-duration courses to uplift illiterate and unskilled segments, transforming them into wealth-generating assets. He advocated for leveraging the latest technological advancements such as quantum computing, internet of things, big data management, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of research and development as essential for achieving fast-track progress and development. On the social front, Dr. Alvi's advocacy for early detection of breast cancer, addressing mental health issues, and promoting inclusivity for differently-abled individuals underscores his commitment to social causes.

Overall, Alvi's leadership is essential in reasserting PTI's position as a formidable political force, reuniting the party under a unified vision, and overcoming the challenges that lie ahead. His experience, integrity, and dedication to serving the people make him a fitting candidate to lead PTI effectively and take the country towards a brighter future.

Commerce News

Pakistan implementing an economic reform plan critical for a robust recovery

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Bank on Tuesday said that Pakistan was implementing an ambitious, credible and clearly communicated economic reform plan critical for robust recovery and poverty reduction.

Pakistan's economy is expected to grow by only 1.8 percent in the current fiscal year ending June 2024. According to the

World Bank's latest Pakistan Development Update titled Fiscal Impact of Federal State-Owned Enterprises, this subdued recovery reflects tight monetary and fiscal policy, continued import management measures aimed at preserving scarce foreign reserves, and muted economic activity amid weak confidence.

The Update also



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding export sector.

highlights the high fiscal costs of federal state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the critical reforms needed to improve their performance, efficiency and governance through privatization. After a contraction in FY23, the economic activity has strengthened over the first half of FY24 on the back of strong agricultural output, the report said.

According to the report, together with improved confidence, also supported some recovery in other sectors. But growth remains insufficient to reduce poverty, with 40 percent of Pakistanis now living below the poverty line. Macroeconomic risks remain very high amid a large debt burden and limited foreign exchange reserves.

Industry needs competitive energy rates to play role in national development: PBF

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) on Tuesday said that attempts to stem the growth of the energy circular debt through tariff increases was not a sustainable way.

Chairman PBF Punjab Muhammad Naseer Malik said fifty six percent of direct taxes are paid by industry, which is more than twice its share in the GDP. Denying industry competitive energy tariffs undermines its positive contribution to the economy. "Tariff increases may provide short-term relief to the fiscal deficit but undermine the health of the economy," he added.

Muhammad Naseer Malik further stated that since 2013, we have been adding capacity by persuading companies that they will get payments against capacity addition regardless of whether the electricity is sold or not. This condition may have been the ground reality of that time when the country needed more capacity and this was the only way of gaining investors' confidence but now the policy should be revisited.

PM for mechanism to double country's exports in five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for formulation of a strategy aimed at two-fold increase in the country's exports within next five years. He also asked the Ministry of Trade for compiling of such a strategy in consultation with the successful entrepreneurs and stakeholders.

The prime minister chaired a high level meeting on the export sector. The meeting was attended by ministers including Jam Kamal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, prominent e-Commerce entrepreneurs like CEO Utopia Jabran Niaz, Zeeshan Shah, Salman Ahmed and other relevant authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister directed for extending facilitation to exporters in the e-Commerce sector who had been exporting country's product to the world, besides resolution of the issues of "Made in Pakistan" brand exporters.

He said that they were taking steps for maximum

Delegation of All-Pakistan Car Dealers Association calls on Excise Minister KP

Independent Report PESHAWAR: A delegation, led by Ghulam Bilal Javed, Chairman of All Pakistan Car Dealers Association, and President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, met with the Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics, Khaleeq Ur Rehman here on Tuesday.

The focus of the discussion was on a critical issue affecting the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A few months ago, the association successfully advocated for the approval of an Islamabad Excise facilitation desk to assist Peshawar residents with the verification of Islamabad registered vehicles.

However, the KP caretaker government abruptly halted this process. In response, the delegation, under Ghulam Bilal Javed's leadership, urged the Provincial Minister to reinstate the desk.

Ghulam Bilal Javed highlighted the significant inconvenience and financial burden faced by Peshawar residents in traveling to Islamabad for vehicle verification, costing them approximately twenty-five thousand rupees and consuming their entire day.

UAE envoy calls on Commerce Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, on Tuesday engaged in a fruitful discussion with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce.

The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest and strategies to enhance bilateral trade.

During the meeting, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal, emphasized the strong brotherhood relations between the two nations, which have continued to strengthen over time, said a press release issued here.

He emphasized the need to further bolster these ties on the commercial front.

JazzCash launches Islamic savings with highest daily halal profits

ISLAMABAD (APP): JazzCash, Pakistan's largest fintech organisation, has launched its Islamic savings product with the highest daily halal profit rates.

The product offers customers free accidental insurance upon subscribing to the service, giving them an added layer of protection from life's uncertainties said a news release. Murtaza Ali, Head of JazzCash, said, "JazzCash's philosophy has been to build products that suit our people's needs. With Shariah-compliant Savings, we are bridging a crucial gap that, in the past, has prevented people from adopting fintech solutions."

He further added, "We are grateful to Salaam Takaful for enabling us to offer free accidental insurance to customers subscribing to Islamic Savings, paving the way for a secure future for the communities we serve."

Gold rates dip by Rs.500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed a decrease of Rs500 and was sold at Rs237,100 on Tuesday as compared to its last day rate at Rs237,600. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs429 and was sold at Rs203,275 against the sale price of Rs203,704 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also decreased to Rs186,335 as from Rs186,728, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver also witnessed no change and was traded at Rs.2,600 and Rs.2,211.93 respectively.

IT exports increases by 31.79% in February 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ICT services export remittances saw a remarkable surge to US\$ 257 million in February 2024, marking an impressive increase of 31.79 percent compared to \$195 million in February 2023.

According to the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, ICT export remittances witnessed a substantial rise by \$ 257 million (14.94%) to reach \$ 1.977 billion during July 2023 to February 2024 of FY2023-24, compared to \$ 1.720 billion reported for the same period last year.

This surge can be attributed to the concerted efforts of the Ministry of IT & Telecommunication and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in collaboration with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to enhance the ease of doing business environment.

Their initiatives have bolstered confidence within the IT industry, resulting in an uptick in IT & ITeS export remittance receipts.

Momination papers of Murad, Swati others PHC dismisses petitions against acceptance for senate election

PESHAWAR (Online): Peshawar High Court (PHC) while upholding appellent tribunal decision has dismissed the petitions against approval of nomination papers of PTI leaders Murad Saeed, Azam Swati and others for Senate election.



LAHORE: Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Bachar is talking to the media with other MPs, on the occasion of the senate election.

Minister for regularization of tourism activities to increase revenue, service delivery

LAHORE (Online): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Tourism, Zahid Chanzab has stressed to regulate tourism activities of developmental authorities and said that it would positively impact service delivery and increasing revenue generation.

Court decision allowing Pervaiz to contest election challenged

LAHORE (Online): The single bench decision on allowing former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Pervaiz Elahi to contest by election has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

1186 FIRs registered against electricity theft in Rwp Division

RAWALPINDI (APP): Division since 7 September 2023, while 994 accused were arrested and over Rs 88 million were recovered. He directed the authorities to ensure 100 percent electricity theft recoveries in all districts of the division.

Two brothers shot dead in Bahawalnagar

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned down two real brothers in Kora Khoh area of Bahawalnagar on Tuesday.

Minister Health approves promotion of 305 nurses

PESHAWAR: Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday approved promotion and placement of 305 nursing staff promoted through departmental promotion committee in the Health Department.



ABBOTTABAD: Police Rapid Response Force officials are taking part in mock exercise as a practice to defend in perception of any terrorist attack, held in Abbottabad.

Rs 30.5b distributed among 2.9m families under BISP so far: DG Punjab

MULTAN (APP): field teams across the province. BISP was country's biggest social protection program and disbursement of Feb-Mar, third quarter of the ongoing fiscal year, was in progress to cover over 4.394 million registered families living below the poverty line.



LAHORE: Students watching the calligraphy exhibition at Alhamra Art Council.

Committee formed to ensure child birth registration

LAHORE (APP): A meeting on Tuesday decided to form a committee to prepare recommendations to ensure the registration of children at the time of birth.

CM Punjab takes action on Bahawalnagar student rape

BAHAWALNAGAR (APP): Following the disturbing incident of a student's kidnapping and rape at Islamia University's Bahawalnagar Campus, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has swiftly intervened on Tuesday.

Sub inspector suspended for getting bribe

ATTOCK (APP): The District Police Officer Attock on Tuesday suspended a Sub Inspector and charge sheet was issued to station house officer.

International News

Biden and Xi discuss Taiwan, AI and fentanyl in a push to return to regular leader talks

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed Taiwan, artificial intelligence and security issues Tuesday in a call meant to demonstrate a return to regular leader-to-leader dialogue between the two powers.



A vehicle damaged in an Israeli airstrike in Deir Al-Balah, Gaza.

Daytime fire kills 29 people at Istanbul nightclub

ISTANBUL: A fire killed at least 29 people in a 16-storey residential building in Istanbul on Tuesday, the governor of Turkey's economic capital said, updating an earlier toll of 15 dead and eight hurt.

Iran president says Israel's Syria attack 'will not go unanswered'

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday condemned a deadly air strike blamed on Israel against his country's consular annex in Damascus, saying the "cowardly crime will not go unanswered".



Taiwan's former president Ma Ying-jeou speaks to journalists ahead of his visit to China at the Taoyuan International Airport in Taoyuan.

12-year-old opens fire in Finnish school, injuring three: police

VANTAA: A 12-year-old opened fire on Tuesday at a school outside the Finnish capital Helsinki injuring three other children, police said, adding that the attacker was in custody.

NATO at 75 is stronger - but also under threat

BRUSSELS: The NATO military alliance marks its 75th anniversary on Thursday, reinvigorated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine - but menaced by the growing threat from Moscow and the spectre of Donald Trump.

Blinken says US urged Israel to investigate airstrike that killed NGO workers

PARIS: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday said Washington has urged Israel to carry out a swift, thorough and impartial investigation into an Israeli airstrike that killed seven people working for the World Central Kitchen charity in Gaza.

Russia needs new approach to migration after concert attack, Putin says

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called for a new approach to migration after Tajiks living in Russia were detained for a deadly attack on a concert hall outside Moscow that killed at least 144 people and wounded 551 more.

Taiwan leader embarks on 'peace journey' to China

TAIPEI: Taiwan's former president Ma Ying-jeou headed to China on Monday for what he called a "journey of peace" aimed at cooling cross-strait tensions.

SC summons petitioner journalists seeking Intro of media regulations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday summoned the petitioner journalists who filed a case seeking introduction of media regulations in the country. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, heard the case pertaining to the FIA's notices to journalists. The court sought written comments from respondents and adjourned the hearing for indefinite time. The court in its order said that a request to withdraw the petition related to media regulation has been filed. It said neither the petitioner came to the court nor the lawyer, nor the advocate on record. It further said, it was claimed in the application that now the federal government is looking into the matter of media regulation itself. However, the Attorney General denied this attribution to the government, the court noted. The court said that the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has been made as a respondent in this case and no one has raised an objection on it. It said that the lawyer has told that a report of Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) is available regarding the abduction of Matiullah Jan. The court asked the respondents to submit this report. Press Association of Supreme Court (PAS) lawyer Barrister Salahuddin took a position during the hearing that a petition of public interest cannot be withdrawn. During the hearing, the chief justice remarked that false news was aired related to his wife which could have given a wrong impression. He asked whether the responsible should be served contempt of court notice and be sent to jail after indicting them. The CJP asked whether the membership of a journalist would be abolished for running false news. Barrister Salahuddin said that the membership could be abolished after giving a show cause notice to the concern person. The lawyer said that such events happened because the defamation law in the country was not strong.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Managing Director PTDC.

Police khidmat markaz facilitates 12,237 citizens during the last month

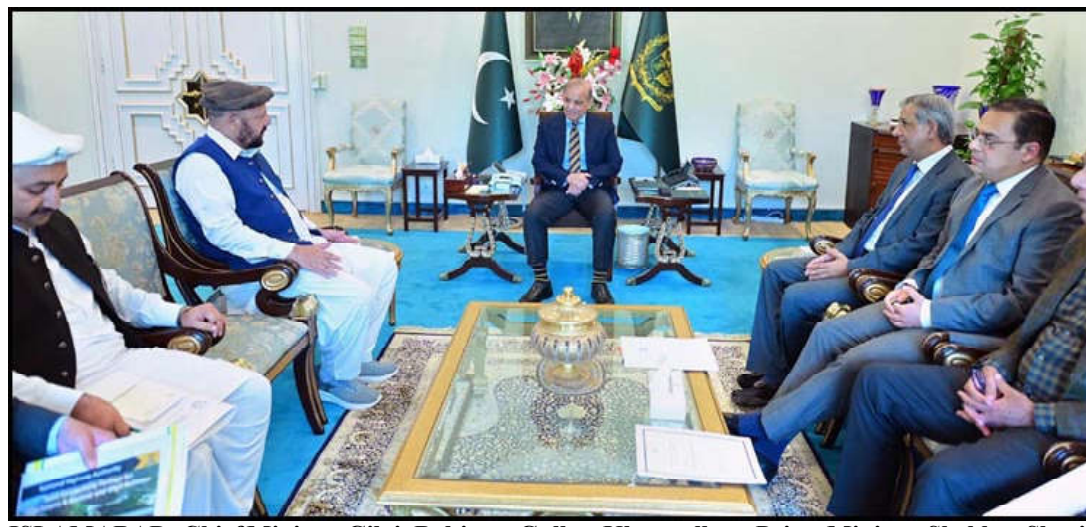
ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police, Khidmat Markaz have facilitated 12,237 citizens with different services relating to issuance of character certificate, foreign registration, tenants registration and house servants, general police verification and report of missing items. A police public relations officer said that, following the special directions of senior police officers, the Islamabad Capital Police were taking all possible measures and initiatives in order to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad. In this regard, the Islamabad Capital Police Khidmat Markaz has provided several services to the citizens including issuance of 2,761 character certificates after the complete verification by police stations concerned, 2,244 general police verification, 553 exit certificates to foreigners, 653 reports of missing documents and valuables, 02 fire copies, 555 vehicles verifications, 5,108 foreigner registration and 348, tenants and 13 domestic servant data have been entered during the last month. Police Mobile facilitation van service has also been working while Police Khidmat Markaz in different areas including sectors F-6, G-10/4, H-11, Bani Gala, Soan Garden, Khanna and at various police stations were also facilitating the citizens. The CPO Safe City/Traffic said that, well

Deputy Commissioner Swat says Provision of quality medical facilities in hospital top priority of district administration

By Haroon Siraj
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan on Tuesday visited the Saidu Group of Teaching hospitals. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Qasim Ali Khan made a detailed visit to various wards and departments of the hospital to review the performance of the Hospital. During his visit the Hospital Management Committee meeting was also held in the conference room of the Medical Superintendent's office under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan. During the meeting the past performance of Saidu Group of Teaching Hospital was reviewed in detail and a plan of action was prepared for the next month. The Chief Executive Dr. Israr ul Haq and Medical Superintendent Dr. Sharafat ali gave a detailed briefing regarding the overall performance of Saidu Group of Teaching Hospital, Swat district, resources, machinery and other issues in the hospital and other important issues were also discussed. Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr. Qasim Ali Khan while appreciating the services and performance of the members of the Hospital Management Committee said that they should ensure the best health facilities to the people even with limited resources. He said that provision of quality medical facilities in the hospital and improvement of all the hospitals of Swat district are among the top priorities of the district administration because only a healthy society can lead the country on the path of development. Deputy Commissioner urged the hospital administration to ensure the provision of all medical facilities to the patients in wards and said that there should be no interruption in medical facilities for surgical emergency patients.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik briefed about the capabilities of NEOC to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce delegation at NDMA HQS



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Gulbar Khan calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Thousands Quran copies distributed at two Holy Mosques

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Arabia's Presidency for Religious Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques continues to distribute thousands of copies of the Holy Quran to worshippers and visitors to the two holy mosques during the blessed month of Ramadan. To enrich the religious experience of non-Arabic speakers, the presidency distributes copies of translated meanings of the Quran, to take them home as a cherished memory of their time in Makkah and Madinah, SPA reported.

The Saudi Arabia's Quran Affairs Department is responsible for providing the Quran to visitors and worshippers of the Prophet's Mosque. It provides translations for non-Arabic speakers and handles organizing the Quran copies inside the mosque, its expansions, and courtyards.

IHC seeks report regarding shifting Pervaiz Elahi to jail

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought report regarding shifting of former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi from PIMS hospital to Adiala Jail. The court instructed the Executive Director PIMS hospital to clarify that why the accused was shifted to jail during his medical treatment. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case filed by the wife of Pervaiz Elahi, Qaisra Elahi. The petitioner's lawyer adopted the stance that Pervaiz Elahi received injuries as he fell down in Adiala Jail.

The doctors have advised to shift the accused to PIMS hospital for his medical supervision. The doctors suggested two weeks complete bed rest to the accused and instructed to keep him in intensive care, the lawyer said, adding that medical treatment was a fundamental right of every citizen as per the constitution.

Naat competition held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized a Naat competition between students of colleges and universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, in which 18 students from different institutions participated and recited Naats. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood was the chief guest while Director General Regional Services (DGRS), Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan hosted the event.

In his address, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that it is a great blessing to present the Naat of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and there is no competition or position in it, but it is an expression of devotion and love.

PM directs to build Daanish Schools in three GB divisions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to build Daanish Schools across all three divisions of Gilgit Baltistan to impart world-class education and accommodation facilities to students from low-income groups. The prime minister, in a meeting with GB Chief Minister Gulbar Khan who called on him, also constituted a committee to look into the issues faced by GB that would present its recommendations after consultation with the stakeholders.

The prime minister assured the GB chief minister that uplifting the GB people by providing them with education and health facilities was among the federal government's priorities. He also sought recommendations on the ways to exploit the immense tourism potential of GB, besides instructing to expedite work on Attabad and Harpo hydropower projects.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also sought a strategy for execution of solar power projects in Gilgit Baltistan. Federal Law and Justice Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Khan Cheema and relevant senior officers attended the meeting which deliberated on the uplift of GB's education, health and tourism sectors. The meeting was briefed about the progress on Attabad and Harpo hydropower projects. It was told that the said projects would help provide an uninterrupted power supply to GB.

ICCI delegation lauds NEOC's proactive approach towards public safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) visited the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Headquarters here Tuesday to gain insights into its operational capacity and appreciated the proactive approach of the Centre towards public safety during disasters. The visit aimed to familiarize the delegation with the cutting-edge facilities and protocols in place to handle emergencies effectively, a news release said.

The delegation was given a detailed briefing on the operational capabilities of the NEOC by Chairman NDMA, Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik. They were given a comprehensive overview of the Center's state-of-the-art infrastructure, advanced technology and the skilled personnel tasked with managing emergencies of various scales. President of ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri expressed his admiration for the NEOC's impressive capabilities and its commitment to safeguarding the people of Pakistan. He lauded the Center's proactive approach towards ensuring the safety and well-being of the citizens, emphasizing the critical role it plays in emergency response and disaster management.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari and Chief Minister Punjab Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a virtual meeting.

CDA adopting comprehensive strategy to ensure best facilities in hospitals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete steps to make the Capital Hospital, a state-of-the-art, hospital besides providing best treatment facilities to the patients there. A comprehensive strategy is being adopted so that the patients visiting the hospitals for medical treatment could not face any kind of difficulty.

In this regard, the administration of Capital Hospital has decided to purchase 'Cochlear Implant devices' for the country's first public sector Cochlear Implant Center established in CDA Hospital with all required modern facilities for the patients. A budget of around 40 million rupees has also been allocated to implement the project.

According to the details, a modern Hearing Assessment System and other devices would also be purchased from this allocated budget. In this connection, advertisements have also been given in the newspapers. It should be noted that many deaf and speech-impaired children have been treated under the supervision of expert surgeons and doctors at the Cochlear Implant Center of the Capital Hospital. The CDA Board granted the status of Cochlear Implant Center to make this facility more functional and a Center of Excellence to make it a specialized center for deaf and hearing patients.

PIDE unveils comprehensive reform agenda for economic revival

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has launched an ambitious reform strategy, "ISLAH: Immediate Reform Agenda - IMF and Beyond," to propel Pakistan towards economic stability and growth amid its looming financial crisis. This initiative, embodying the ideals of rethink, reform, and revive, responds to Pakistan's urgent need for external financing exceeding USD 120 billion over the next five years, as highlighted by the recent IMF Report. PIDE's strategy is a clarion call for a systemic overhaul to ensure economic progress and prosperity, moving beyond the narrow interests that often dominate the discourse on reform in Pakistan. Former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to address Pakistan's economic challenges. The agenda outlines a series of innovative reforms designed to rejuvenate Pakistan's economic landscape. These include debt restructuring and intensified cooperation with the IMF, comprehensive tax reforms for a more business-friendly environment, and strategic opening of the economy to prioritize exports and modernize import regulations. Additionally, it addresses energy sector inefficiencies, agricultural and banking sector improvements, and the development of real estate and capital markets to encourage investment and deepen



capital market participation. The anticipated impacts of these reforms are substantial, promising to catalyze investment, foster job creation, and facilitate higher GDP growth. Addressing the historical event, Dr. Ahmad Waqar Qasim, Dr. Afia Malik, and Dr. Mahmood Khalid Senior Research Economists of PIDE, also took part in presenting PIDE's pioneering study. They stated that PIDE's groundbreaking economic reform initiative aims to streamline governance by addressing the burden of 122 regulatory bodies operating directly under the Federal Government, which currently account for over 50% of the GDP, as revealed by PIDE's Sludge Audits. In our pursuit of economic efficiency, it's imperative to shift from a system of permissions to clear rules, as permissions not only consume valuable time and resources but also incur significant documentation costs, both directly and in terms of missed opportunities. To achieve this, we must prioritize clear rules, digitization, and market liberalization, putting an end to the bureaucratic penchant for permissions and paperwork, thereby overcoming the 'Permissionistan' syndrome. Drawing inspiration from India's successful reforms in 1991, it's evident that piecemeal approaches won't suffice. Instead, we advocate for the implementation of a regulatory guideline, a proven strategy adopted by countries like Hungary, Mexico, South Korea, and the UAE, among others. Nadeem ul Haque further stated that amidst the urgent need for tax simplification and policy certainty, this budget season demands immediate attention towards streamlining taxes in a revenue-neutral manner and ensuring stability for a decade, with a commitment to refrain from introducing new taxes in each budget cycle.

PUC chairman condemns Israel's aggression against Iran's consulate in Damascus

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday vehemently condemned the Israeli brazen act of aggression against Iran's consulate in Damascus, Syria. He, in a statement, expressed his profound dismay over the unwarranted assault on the diplomatic mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The PUC chairman described the attack as a flagrant violation of international law and a blatant disregard for diplomatic norms, emphasizing that such belligerent actions only serve to escalate tensions and destabilize the region further. "The assault on Iran's consulate in Damascus is a reprehensible act of aggression that must be unequivocally condemned by the international community," Ashrafi said adding, "It is imperative for nations to uphold the principles of sovereignty and respect for diplomatic premises, regardless of political differences."

Ashrafi urged the United Nations Security Council to take immediate and decisive action to hold Israel accountable for its actions, stressing the need for a robust international response to deter further acts of aggression in the region. Moreover, he said this egregious crime had garnered significant condemnation from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and other Muslim nations worldwide. "This condemnation signifies unity among the Muslim Ummah and delivers a resolute message to Israel, rejecting its brutalities in all forms and manifestations," he maintained.

"The attack on Iran's consulate in Damascus is not just an attack on Iran, but an attack on the sanctity of diplomatic missions and the principles of international law," Ashrafi asserted adding.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov calls on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

Dr Mukhtar reviews PSDP health projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed on Monday received a briefing on the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) projects of the Ministry. Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, along with senior officials of the Ministry of Health briefed the Coordinator to PM on the scope of ongoing initiatives and utilization of resources towards the improvement of healthcare infrastructure and services.

The discussion in the briefing centered on evaluating the progress of ongoing PSDP projects, identifying potential challenges, and formulating strategies for their timely completion. Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed emphasized the need for innovation, transparency, and accountability in the execution of PSDP projects to maximize their impact and ensure optimal utilization of resources. He stressed the need of institutional reforms in healthcare facilities and regulatory organizations.

Capital markets witness huge rush

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the start of the third Ashra of Ramadan, Eid shopping had gained momentum and the citizens were thronging bazaars and malls. A great rush is being witnessed in almost all shopping malls and bazaars including Jinnah Super Market, Aabpara, Karachi company, F-10 Markaz and other markets of the city.

Several local brands have begun displaying their latest Eid editions of dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to attract buyers and gain maximum profits. The shopkeepers have decorated their shops with colourful lights to attract customers. A large number of women and children are thronging to purchase clothes, footwear, cosmetics, henna, bangles and other items. As the festival of Eid comes closer, the stalls of beautifully designed colorful bangles, jewellery and mehndi in the markets of the city have been set up which are attracting the customers. Number of famous shops also offering upto fifty percent discount to attract customers. However, the buyers also complaining of the price hike on the occasion of Eid.

A customer said that parents and children are unwilling to compromise on purchasing Eid clothes and gifts no matter how much prices rise. The sale of ready-made garments also increased in the last days of Ramadan when garment outlets displayed various ready-made clothes on sale which were attracting customers, said a shopkeeper.