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Cabinet expresses dissatisfaction over probe Commission's report on Faizabad sit-in

Directs to form a special committee that will present its recommendations on the matter; Cabinet members back SC observation on inquiry report; Adopts condolatory resolution; vows to carry forward Raisi's vision of stronger bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal cabinet, with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, on Tuesday expressed its dissatisfaction over a report of an Inquiry Commission into Faizabad sit-in (dharma) by observing that the commission had not adhered to its Terms of Reference (ToR). The meeting directed to constitute a special committee of the cabinet that would submit its recommendations in this regard. The Attorney General for Pakistan submitted an

inquiry report over the matter and gave a detailed briefing to the cabinet, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The cabinet also adopted a resolution expressing condolences on the shahadat of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their companions in a helicopter crash. The meeting also granted its approval to the recommendation of Ministry of Interior for duty and tax exemption on the equipment donated to

Balochistan police by Guangdong Public Security Department, China. However, under Federal Excise Tax 2005, the federal excise duty would be imposed on these items. The cabinet directed that in future, such like donations and grants would be exempted from taxes. It also approved signing of memorandum of understanding between Pakistan and the United Kingdom with regard to handing over of three accused of Pakistani nationality on the recommendation of the ministry of interior.

Meanwhile the federal cabinet on Tuesday adopted a resolution to express condolence over the demise of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, paying tributes to his services for promoting Pakistan-Iran relationship as well as for the region. The federal cabinet, which met under the chair of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also conveyed its sadness over the death of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and others in the same tragic incident.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Kashmiri Diaspora activists calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti chairing meeting of Provincial Cabinet

Justice Mohsin Akhtar says: It makes no difference if some one holds press conference on behalf of some one else

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has remarked if some one holds press conference on behalf of some one he is at liberty to do it as it makes no difference. The case for recovery of missing Baloch students came up for hearing in IHC Tuesday. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani took up the case for hearing. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani inquired from At-

torney General (AG) It is allegation that so many people are allegedly in the custody of agencies. They eat food. The expense is incurred by state. Is annual audit of fund of agencies conducted. The courts will continue to work as long as the cases of missing persons take place. If some one holds press conference on the behalf of some one else he is at liberty to hold it. It makes no difference as the courts transcend these things.

Mourning on demise of Iranian President: National flag flies at half-mast at Balochistan Assembly, other official buildings



QUETTA: The national flag flew at half-mast at the Balochistan Assembly and other official buildings here on Tuesday as the country observed one-day national mourning on demise of Iranian President and other dignitaries who lost their lives in helicopter crash. It may be mentioned here that the government of Balochistan declared Tuesday, 21st as a day of national mourning in the province, in expression of fraternal solidarity on behalf of the government and people of province with the government and people of Iran on the sad demise of Iranian President and other dignitaries.

Railway fares decreased by over 50%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Railways on Tuesday has announced a significant reduction in train fares across various classes. The official notification regarding the fare reduction has been issued and is effective immediately, as reported private news. The fare reduction applies to train journeys ranging from one to 200 kilometers for all classes of trains, benefiting passengers traveling shorter distances. The most notable reductions were seen in the economy and AC classes. Economy class fares on certain routes have been reduced by up to 54%. For instance, the minimum fare for the economy class on the Lahore to Rawalpindi

route has decreased from Rs250 to Rs100. Similarly, the economy class fare for the Khyber Mail, covering distances from 1km to 130km, has also been reduced from Rs250 to Rs100. Passengers traveling in AC class will also enjoy a significant reduction, with fares cut by 40% across various routes. This move comes as a relief to daily commuters and occasional travelers alike, who will benefit from the lowered cost of train travel. The Railways Department emphasizes that this fare reduction aims to pass on the benefits of decreased fuel costs to the public and to make rail travel more affordable.

Visits Iranian embassy Islamic Ummah lost great leader, says Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday paid a condolatory visit to the Iranian embassy here wherein he said that with the death of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the Islamic Ummah had lost a great leader.

The acting president expressed deep grief on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Dr Raisi, the Iranian foreign minister and others in the helicopter accident, saying that the whole nation shared the grief of the Iranian brothers and sisters.

Talking to the Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam, Acting President Gilani said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations based on historical, cultural, and literary linkages.

Parvez Elahi walks free from Kot Lakhpat jail

LAHORE (INP): Former chief minister of Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi was released from Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore on Tuesday.

Jail authorities confirmed the development, stating that Mr Elahi had been released in all corruption cases, registered against him. He has recently been shifted to Kot Lakhpat jail from Adiala prison a few days ago.

His family members and friends received him outside the jail and taken him to home.

Mr Elahi had been arrested in graft case related to illegal appointments in Punjab Assembly and awarding contracts to favourite people.

Peace in South Asia linked with just settlement of Kashmir dispute: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday emphasized that a durable peace in South Asia was contingent upon a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The prime minister, talking to a delegation of Kashmiri diaspora activists, led by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General World Kashmir Awareness Forum which called on him here, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support for Kashmiri people's struggle for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

He lauded the Kashmiri activists' efforts to increase global awareness about the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the plight of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The prime minister recalled that he had never missed any opportunity to raise the voice in support of Kashmiri brothers and sisters, as evident from his address at the 2022 UN General Assembly, as well as at other forums including SCO and with other world leaders.

The Kashmiri activists thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's consistent support to the Kashmir cause.

GoB demands airplane from Ministry of Defence to bring Balochistan's students from Kyrgyzstan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has demanded of the Ministry of Defence a special airplane on an emergent basis for bringing students of the province from Kyrgyzstan after the issuance of orders issued by the Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti in this regard.

According to the sources of Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday, the decision about demanding special airplane from the Ministry of Defence was made because of the non-availability of immediate seats in the commercial airlines.

The sources said that the government of Balochistan would bear the expenses of carrying

the students from Kyrgyzstan to the province.

The Chief Minister has issued standing directives to ensure safe return of the province's students stranded in Kyrgyzstan at the earliest.

He mentioned that the provincial government is making arrangements of the travels of students from Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan. It was mentioned that the data of 95 students has been officially confirmed, who are studying in different educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan.

Meanwhile, the students of Balochistan studying in Kyrgyzstan expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for making arrangements for their return to their country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal chairing a review meeting on CPEC Phase 2 and the 13th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) at the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives.

"Women police station to be set up in Sibi": Balochistan cabinet approves Early Age Marriage Prevention Bill 2024; Elimination of Domestic Violence Bill

Cabinet approves formation of committees for elimination of violence against women at district level; Dr. Rubaba Buledi says long struggle of civil society and NGOs working on women's rights bear fruit

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan cabinet approved the Early Age Marriage Prevention Bill 2024 and the amendment bill of Elimination of Domestic Violence 2023 here on Tuesday.

The cabinet decided to set up women police station in Sibi in order to provide legal aid and guidance to the women.

The cabinet meeting was chaired by the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti at the CM's secretariat on Tuesday.

According to the Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development, Dr. Rubaba Buledi, certain important matters were discussed and decisions were made in the cabinet's meeting.

The necessary approval was accorded to different departmental matters as officially required, mentioned in a hand out issued here. The cabinet meeting would also be held on second consecutive day, today (Wednesday).

However, the Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development mentioned that the cabinet approved in principle the formation of committees for prevention and elimination of violence against women at the district level.

She said that decisions were made on three important matters related to women.

She said that the long struggle made by the civil society and non governmental organizations working on rights of women has bear fruit finally.

Dr. Rubaba Buledi said that the provincial government is taking steps for welfare of the women and protection of their rights under leadership of Chief Minister.

She thanked the Chief Minister and all cabinet members on approval of the bills regarding women in the province. She said that the approval of the pending matters and bills was made possible because of the support of Chief Minister and cabinet members.

Dr. Raghb Naeemi appointed as CII chairman

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Muhammad Raghb Hussain Naeemi, a current member of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), has been appointed as its chairman.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, he has been appointed for the residual period of his membership in accordance with clause (5) of Article 228.

Notably, Dr. Naeemi is also the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Naeemi and Chairman of the Mutahida Ulema Board Punjab. Recently, he was awarded the 'Sitara-i-Imtiaz' (Star of Excellence) by President Asif Ali Zardari on Pakistan Day, March 23, 2024.

Dr. Muhammad Raghb Hussain Naeemi is an alumnus of Government College Lahore, a gold medalist in his master's degree in Arabic from Punjab University, and holds a Ph.D.

PTI spokesperson Raof Hasan injured in Islamabad attack

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Raof Hasan was injured after he was attacked by unknown people in Islamabad on Tuesday evening.

Onlookers said there were four assailants who attacked him outside a private news channel in G7 Markaz. They said the attackers used an object to hit on his face.

The attackers fled after people started gathering and stopping them from beating Hasan. During the attack, the PTI leader suffered injuries on his face. He has been shifted to hospital where he is being treated for the injuries.

PTI leader Shibli Faraz has condemned the attack. While addressing in the Senate, he urged the government to take stern action against the attackers.

Governor, CM, Opposition leader agree on mutual consultation in best interest of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti have agreed on doing mutual consultation and having constant coordination among them in the best interest of the province.

They also stressed the need to take concrete measures for ending poverty and backwardness in the province and especially for decorating the young generation with ornament of education.

The Governor was in meeting with the Chief Minister who called on him here at the Governor House on Tuesday. Also present in the meeting was leader of the opposition, Mir Younas Aziz Zehri.

During the course of meeting, different matters about ongoing development projects as well as important political and administrative affairs were discussed besides the matters of mutual interests.

There was also discussion about the changes taking place in the region, besides the matters about ensuring good governance and different other ones.

The Governor especially insisted to take steps for ending poverty and backwardness from the province. He also stressed that we have to take solid measures for imparting quality education to the young generation.

Ahsan Iqbal chaired review meeting on CPEC Phase-2

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday chaired a review meeting on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase 2 and the 13th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) on Tuesday at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Attendees included the Additional Secretary of the Ministry, senior officials from various ministries, and representatives from federal and provincial ministries.

The officials received a comprehensive briefing

on the preparations for the upcoming online JCC meeting scheduled for this week. Discussions covered projects related to communications, infrastructure, energy, economic development, agriculture, and the security of Chinese officials working in Pakistan.

Addressing the security concerns for Chinese personnel, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal asserted that ensuring the protection and safety of Chinese personnel, projects, and programs is a top priority for the Government of Pakistan.

The officials received a comprehensive briefing



JEDDAH: Federal Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Taawiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiyah.

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Iranian tragedy

The tragic helicopter crash on Sunday, in which Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and several other officials lost their lives, comes at a critical time for the Islamic Republic. While internally, Iran is faced with significant economic challenges, externally,

Tehran is in the midst of an undeclared war against Israel, with the Zionist state's savagery in Gaza the key trigger of this conflict. However, a power vacuum within Iran is unlikely, as an interim president has been named, and elections are due within 50 days. Raisi and his delegation were returning from Azerbaijan when his copter went down in a mountainous terrain, apparently in bad weather. The deaths of all on board were confirmed early on Monday.

Raisi oversaw a truncated but eventful term. He took the reins in 2021. One of the most formidable internal challenges to his administration came in the form of the 2022 Mahsa Amini protests, after a young woman died in controversial circumstances, reportedly while in the custody of the 'morality police'. Anti-government protests shook Iran, and the state responded by cracking down on demonstrators.

On the foreign front, Raisi had reopened channels with Saudi Arabia, thanks to Chinese mediation last year, a process in which Amir-Abdollahian also played a crucial role. But perhaps the late president's most difficult foreign policy moment came in the aftermath of the Israeli attack on Iran's diplomatic facility in Damascus last month, killing a number of high-ranking Iranian military men. Tehran responded with an unprecedented drone-and-missile strike on Israel some two weeks later.

With regard to Pakistan, under Raisi's watch, efforts were made to improve bilateral ties. While there was an ugly exchange of missiles in January over alleged militant hideouts, the late leader's state visit to Pakistan last month indicated that Tehran wanted to deepen ties with this country. It is hoped the incoming Iranian president continues on this trajectory.

Due to Iran's regional and geopolitical influence, the world will be watching the power transition carefully. While some Western observers dismiss the Iranian system as a totalitarian dictatorship run by the supreme leader, the reality is more complex. While the supreme leader does exercise a key veto over state policies, the president and other centres of power are not without agency.

Iran's new leader will have to confront economic woes and political polarisation internally. On the other hand, the Middle East presently resembles a powder keg, principally due to Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Iran has a major role in regional dynamics, as it is a vocal supporter of Hamas, Hezbollah and other armed groups fighting Israel. Therefore, much will depend on how the incoming Iranian president and the Islamic Republic's establishment choose to respond to continuous Israeli provocations.

Climate resilience

Ajaz Ahmed

While the modern economy depends heavily on the smooth operation of critical infrastructure to deliver basic services, there are new challenges confronting the sustainability and durability of this infrastructure. Climate change is one such challenge. Notwithstanding the lack of data and adequate reporting, estimates show that climate-related natural disasters disrupted basic services such as health, education, and transport in at least 44 reporting countries in 2020 and 2021.

According to the World Bank, the financial toll of infrastructure disruptions in low- and middle-income countries reached up to \$647 billion in 2019. If there is one thing that developing countries like Pakistan need to learn from this, it is to ensure that development gains are preserved. This means that there is an urgent need to develop the resilience of critical infrastructure to enable it to withstand climate shocks, such as floods. However, the current approach to infrastructure development rarely factors in climate risks and the cascading impact of climate-related disasters. Similarly, high upfront costs often discourage the incorporation of the climate resilience aspect in infrastructure development.

Whenever a natural disaster, such as floods, hits Pakistan, it destroys infrastructure, depriving people of access to basic services, including water supply, sanitation, electricity, health, and transport to the nearest market to buy food and other needed supplies. The disruption of basic services during natural dis-

sasters amplifies the exposure of the affected population; it aggravates their vulnerability and undermines resilience.

The damage to critical infrastructure also has indirect effects. For example, evidence shows that small businesses that provide livelihood to low-income households suffer losses due to the disruption of transport and electricity supply and not the flood itself. However, infrastructure resilience improves the reliability of service provision and increases the life of assets — including those which are of an income-generating nature — thereby protecting returns, enabling livelihood diversification, and reducing disaster risk.

Since Pakistan has yet to invest in decarbonisation to achieve Nationally Determined Contributions targets etc, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure could be a win-win situation. It would allow the economy to decarbonise and also develop resilience to climate shocks. Making infrastructure resilient to climate shock would mean a marginal increase in the total investment cost. But, not only would these be recouped soon, the extra effort will increase the lifetime of an asset. Nevertheless, investments in climate-resilient and low-carbon infrastructure need a fundamental transformation of critical infrastructure systems, which should be reflected in the projects' planning, design, and delivery. A crucial element is to incorporate this aspect into the public procurement process, while considering different proposals.

With Pakistan

highly vulnerable to climate change and the frequency and intensity of climate-induced natural disasters expected to increase, ensuring infrastructure resilience should be a priority of the government. This requires prioritising investments to develop this resilience and mitigate the impact of natural disasters on vulnerable communities. In addition to such investments, assessing the resilience of existing infrastructure and improving weaknesses is also important to cope with natural disasters. This would require developing quantitative and qualitative techniques and methods to assess the resilience of a system to a potential natural disaster.

In addition to spearheading the resources, generating high-quality data and information, developing required tools, and improving the technical and institutional capacity of relevant departments are crucial to supporting decision-making under uncertain climatic conditions. Integrating this aspect of uncertainty in the planning, development and deployment of tools for decision-making can mitigate infrastructural damage and post-disaster reconstruction costs.

Similarly, leveraging nature-based solutions can significantly reduce climate risks and help develop infrastructure resilience.

Nature-based solutions do much to ensure that infrastructure has a harmonious relationship with the natural environment, so that environmental sustainability is not undermined by weak infrastructure. Such infrastructure assets and corresponding basic services are better protected against climate shocks. -

Courtesy Dawn

Law that rules

Syed Saadat

Not too long ago, it was reported that the Pakistan Customs Group's association had moved a resolution seeking proof of the government's allegations of corruption and inefficiency against certain tax officers. It threatened to take legal action against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for purging the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) of these officers. A majority of votes for the resolution ensured its passage within 24 hours. This was a swift reaction to the removal of 25 officers — 11 of them belonging to Customs and 14 were from Inland Revenue. Apparently, the PM's actions were rooted in adverse reports from the intelligence agencies regarding these officers.

Sooner or later, a court will issue a stay order on these removals and various delaying tactics will ensure that these officers retire in due course of time. If guilty, they would neither be stripped of their privileges nor penalised for the plunder that they might have indulged in during their career. This is the playbook for all unscrupulous elements in powerful quarters. Issue a swift and aggressive rejoinder, let the matter cool down, emerge from media scrutiny and take the exit. This happens with the connivance of comrades in the service, who are sometimes accomplices to the crime and at others too timid to complain about wrongdoing.

The association, instead of just threatening Mr Sharif with legal action, could have gone a step further and revealed the assets of the 'honest' officers for public scrutiny. I am sure investigative journalists can do the

honours — as they do in their scrutiny of political persons. We all know about political sacra-cows, but some civil servants do not lag too far behind; and are themselves often considered 'untouchable' in this sense.

The association took 24 hours to come to the defence of the officers who have been removed from their posts. But on how many occasions has the same association issued press releases calling for departmental action against corrupt officers who bring disrepute to their organisation? Does it mean that no officer in Customs or FBR has been involved in any corrupt practices? I leave the answer to this question to the common sense of the readers.

There have been very few whistle-blowers among the ranks of officers and their fate has not been very encouraging. Either they are tagged as problematic and never get a good posting, or are themselves accused of wrongdoing just to erase the credibility of their accusations.

The various trainings during the career of civil servants are meant to promote camaraderie and coordination within the law and the ambit of Pakistan's civil service. However, these often end up creating a mafia of sorts, whose members ensure they protect each other whenever some adverse action is taken against one of them, even if justified. Loyalty to one's batch-mate takes precedence over loyalty to the state.

It is impossible to obtain proof of kickbacks, because the latter are not received directly in bank accounts, but more often in cash. On top of that, those who give these kickbacks are not in a posi-

tion to become whistle-blowers. If they make any such move, they turn into persona non grata for these services. No businessman wants Customs or FBR officials to scrutinise his day-to-day dealings, because the law is complicated and he can be dragged into long legal battles.

Under such circumstances, there is no official law — just the official who is the law. The proverbial 'software update' (a term used for a change in the stance of someone accusing powerful quarters of wrongdoing) is just round the corner if a mere mortal tries to be a whistle-blower. So, for a businessman, it makes perfect sense to make less profit by paying these elements their cut, rather than making no profit at all by being put out of business.

Forgive me for being harsh but, in protecting each other, civil servants often disregard the law. The only time they go against each other is when one gang is pitted against the other. For example, the Pakistan Administrative Service might find fault with the Police Service of Pakistan, or the Secretariat Group officers might accuse PAS officers of being

promoted undeservingly — but nothing more. It is a fact that civil services personnel tend to protect their own no matter how unscrupulous or corrupt these elements may be, rather than serving a public denied its fundamental rights. Many would say, not incorrectly, that there are two ways of getting rich in this country: giving or taking a bribe. Businesses that wish to grow, give bribes; government functionaries receive it. Whether anyone likes it or not, that is the law that rules. --

Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Khawaja Asif for an end to cigarette manufacturers' influence for tax evasion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday said that it was absolutely saddening that counterfeit cigarette manufacturers were members of the assemblies and watch guard their business' interests through the legislature.

"Pakistan has a capacity to generate 27,000 billion rupees in terms of taxes and we will not need IMF support if we only collect half of this tax," this

was stated by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif at the launching session of the research report titled 'Illicit Cigarette Trade in Pakistan - Current Situation and Way Forward', produced by the National University of Science & Technology (NUST), a news release said. "Two major cigarette manufacturers are contributing Rs170b in taxes while the share of all the other cigarette manufacturers is just 2 billion rupees," he added.

Khawaja Asif quoted ex Chairman FBR Shabbir Zaidi that during his tenure when FBR planned to implement tax on the cigarette industry, at that time Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser pressurized Shabbir Zaidi not to implement taxes on the cigarette industry.

The NUST research report on the tobacco sector revealed that Pakistan is losing 310 billion rupees annually due to tax evasion in the tobacco sector.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan and Federal Minister for Communication, Abdul Aleem Khan, jointly chairing a cabinet committee dedicated to promoting Pakistani enterprises in global markets.

Jam Kamal for fostering Intl collaborations to maximizing market opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday emphasized fostering international collaborations and maximizing market opportunities for Pakistani businesses.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and Federal Minister for Communication, Abdul Aleem Khan, jointly chaired a cabinet committee dedicated to promoting Pakistani enterprises in

global markets, said a press release issued here.

The committee is tasked with developing recommendations for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, drawing on insights from various industry sectors.

In his remarks, Jam Kamal emphasized Pakistan's skilled workforce and competitive labor costs, highlighting the country's potential across multiple sectors.

The initiative identifies key

opportunities in engineering, construction, services, IT, and other industries, leveraging both domestic and international exhibitions with the support of Trade and Investment Officers.

This initiative aims to enhance Pakistan's global market presence and stimulate economic growth. The Prime Minister established the committee to explore export opportunities and assess the potential of Pakistani companies.

CCP approves product supply agreement between Aramco, GO Petroleum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted a time-bound exemption on the relevant clauses of product supply agreement between Aramco Trading (ATC) Fujairah FZE Ltd and Gas and Oil Pakistan Ltd (GO Petroleum) for importing and selling gasoline and diesel products to Pakistan.

ATC Fujairah, registered in the United Arab Emirates, is one of the world's largest integrated energy and chemicals companies, said a press release here on Tuesday.

Gas and Oil Pakistan Limited, an Oil Marketing Company (OMC) registered in Pakistan that operates a network of retail outlets across the country that sell petrol, diesel, and lubricants. Under the referred agreement, ATC Fujairah intends to meet GO Petroleum's demand for essential petroleum products for its outlets, which primarily includes gasoline and diesel. The parties submitted to the CCP that this arrangement is expected to achieve economies of scale in procurement for GO Petroleum.

Gold rates dip by Rs 1,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,900 and was sold at Rs 248,500 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs 250,400 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,630 to Rs 213,048 from Rs 214,678 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 195,295 from Rs 196,788, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41, respectively.

Govt to bring reforms in key areas to provide relief to masses: Energy minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Leghari Tuesday said that the government would bring reforms in key areas to address the issues concerning the masses.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that we will take effective measures to eliminate power theft to reduce the financial burden on the national exchequer.

Talking about Pakistan's solar net

metering policy, he clarified that the government would take all stakeholders into confidence before taking any final decision, adding that the PML-N-led government in 2017 Solarization was encouraged, and there are currently 113,000 connections on the net.

The government is willing to review the solar net metering policy if needed, it supports the continuation of the scheme, "he added.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ahmar Ellahi, Accountant General of Pakistan Revenues along with senior officers visiting all sections of the AGPR.

Finance Minister meets with chairman PRBC to discuss retail sector challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday met with the Chairman of the Pakistan Retail Business Council (PRBC) Ziad Bashir and a delegation to discuss the challenges faced by retail sector.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervez Malik also attended the meeting, said a news release issued here. The PRBC delegation expressed their appreciation over steps being taken by the government to improve economic conditions in the country. They also extended their support for Federal Board of Revenue's Tajir Dost Scheme. Additionally, they informed the minister about the challenges being

faced by the retail businesses. They highlighted the need for the inclusion of untaxed, undocumented retail sector in the tax net.

Furthermore, they gave proposals to encourage documented business in the country.

The federal minister acknowledged their concerns and mentioned that McKinsey and Company has been engaged to assist the FBR's end-to-end digitalization, which will broaden the tax net. He also informed the delegation that he had assigned the minister of state Ali Pervez Malik to oversee this task on a day-to-day basis to ensure its timely completion. Minister of State appreciated the proposals submitted by PRBC.

NAC approves provisional GDP at 2.38% for fiscal year 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accounts Committee (NAC) on Tuesday approved the provisional growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country at 2.38 per cent for the ongoing fiscal year (2023-24).

The approval was accorded in the 109th meeting of the NAC, which was held with the Secretary Ministry of Planning, development and Special Initiatives in the chair, said a press release issued here today.

The committee approved the quarterly GDP growth rates for first-quarter (revised), second (revised), and third quarter during the fiscal year 2023-24 and annual growth rates for 2021-22 (final), 2022-23 (revised) and 2023-24 (provisional). The committee approved the revised first and second quarters estimates for 2023-24. Overall GDP for the first quarter and second quarter for the fiscal year 2023-24 have witnessed a revised growth of 2.71% and 1.79%.

LESCO detects 82,660 power pilferers in 240 days

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 82,660 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) in 240 days of grand anti-power theft campaign. The LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 76,097 FIRs have been registered.



KARACHI: Mashreq Pakistan Chief Information Officer, Khurram Abid and Group Chief Business Solutions Officer PTCL and Ufone 4G Zarrar Hasham Khan sign an agreement for provision of primary data center colocation services to Mashreq at PTCL Tier-III Data Center in Karachi. Mohamed Abdel Razeq, Group Head of Technology, Transformation and Information Mashreq, Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO Mashreq Pakistan and Muhammad Basharat Qureshi, Group VP Enterprise Solutions PTCL Group also attended the signing ceremony.

Minister assures Hangu delegation of resolving village council issue

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Revenue and Estate Nazir Ahmad Abbasi on Tuesday met with a delegation of local elders led by Shah Abu Tarab Bangash, Member of Provincial Assembly from Hangu District.

The delegation informed the Provincial Minister Nazir Ahmad Abbasi about the problems faced by the locals and said that a village council of Hangu district which consists of two villages has been included in Karak district due to which the residents of the area are

facing problems. The Village Council is in every respect near Tehsil Doaba of Hangu District. It is more than 80 KM from Karak district headquarters while 14 KM from Tehsil Doaba headquarters. In the meeting, there was a discussion on the background and solution of the problems.

Member Board of Revenue and other relevant officials were present in the meeting. Nazir Ahmad Abbasi assured the delegation of resolving the problem and said that the Revenue Department has no objection to the inclusion of

said Village Council in Hangu district, but the rejoining Hangu can be done only with the approval of the Provincial Cabinet. He directed for preparing a complete case and submitting all the necessary documents and along with the application.

He further said that public issues will be solved on priority basis. Transparency and merit are being prioritized in the Revenue and Estate Department while accountability will be ensured adding that decisions will be made in the department only on merit.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Teacher's training workshop inaugurated at MUET

HYDERABAD (APP): The Mehran University of Engineering and Technology in collaboration with Sindh Higher Education Commission organised a 5-day workshop for training of Mehran University Teachers in the water center.

Addressing the maiden session Vice Chancellor Mehran University Dr. Taha Hussain Ali said that nowadays teachers were not only a source of knowledge as tools of knowledge had been increased and today's students hold faster access to knowledge than a teacher.

He said that this period is the collective age of learning as the teacher was also learning with students.

He said that we need those best teachers in universities who have the spirit and devotion to learn and teach.

Acting Pro-vice chancellor Prof. Dr. Aftab Ahmed Memon said that Chat GPT and other latest means have made sources of learning easy now students do not depend on teachers.

He urged teachers to equip themselves with the requirements of the modern age.

Four robbery gangs busted

FAISALABAD (APP): The police claimed to bust four gangs by arresting their nine active members along with cash, motorcycles, weapons and other items during past 24 hours.

Police said here on Tuesday that Roshanwala police on a tip-off conducted raid and nabbed three robbers including Faisal, Khaleeq-ur-Rehman and Shahid Iqbal residents of Chak No.249-RB, besides recovering a looted loader truck worth Rs.5 million, 6 freezers, 2 washing machines, one air-conditioner and weapons from their possession.

Similarly, Suddar police team arrested two outlaws of a robbers' gang including Muhammad Nawaz, r/o Chak no.162 Sikandar Pur and Amjad Siddique r/o Chak no.228-GB Chinot along with two stolen motorcycles, cash mobile phones and weapons. Meanwhile, Chak Jhumra police arrested two robbers Shahid Jameel and Shah Jahan along with motorcycle, cash and weapons, where as Jaranwala Suddar police nabbed two robbers- Kashif and Mudassar Aslam along with six motorcycles, cash of Rs.100,000.



KARACHI: Consul General of France Alexis Chahtahtinsky meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

KP's govt commitment for polio eradication laud by global organization

PESHAWAR (APP): Polio Oversight Board (POB), a subsidiary of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) on Tuesday has appreciated the strong commitment and dedication of government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for eradication of polio.

The appreciation is communicated by POB in wake of visit of its members to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, says a press release of Health Department.

In the report filed by

POB after visit of KP, the GPEI's subsidiary appreciated Chief Minister KP, Ali Amin Gandapur over engaging locally elected leaders and officials, particularly in South KP and his strong resolve to make KP polio free.

The Health Minister, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, was also commended by POB for establishing the Outbreak Coordination Committee to fully engage the assets of the provincial health department.

Uzma Khan sisters of Imran Khan, Umar Ayub and others appeared in the court. Prosecution did not present the record of the accused persons in the court. The court expressed displeasure over it.

Judge Arshid Javed of ATC ordered prosecution should evolve some method to include accused in investigation. The procedure for including them in investigation be told to the accused till evening today.

May 9 related cases ATC extends interim bail of sisters of PTI founder; others till June 29

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has expressed annoyance for not providing record by the prosecution in May 9 cases against sisters of PTI founder and others.

Judge Arshid Javed of ATC Lahore took up for hearing interim bail pleas of Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan, Umar Ayub, Fawad Chaudhry and others in May 9 cases Tuesday.

During the hearing of the case, Aleema Khan,

Uzma Khan sisters of Imran Khan, Umar Ayub and others appeared in the court. Prosecution did not present the record of the accused persons in the court. The court expressed displeasure over it.

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Police nominate Pervaiz Elahi in 20 new cases of May 9

LAHORE (Online): Police have nominated former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in 20 new cases related to May 9 incident. IG Punjab has filed report in Lahore High Court (LHC).

It has been said in the report Pervaiz Elahi has been nominated in 3 cases of Lahore and 4 cases of Faisalabad. While he has been nominated in 11 cases of Rawalpindi.

It was told in the report filed in LHC that Pervaiz Elahi is nominated in one case each in Attock and Gujranwala.

According to a police spokesman, City Police Officer (CPO) Kamran Adil paid a surprise visit to Thikriwala police station and found its record incomplete while its Muharrar, Muhammad Tayyab was absent from duty without informing the department properly. Therefore.

Muharrars of two police stations suspended

FAISALABAD (APP): Muharrars in two police stations were suspended over negligence and dereliction from duty.

According to a police spokesman, City Police Officer (CPO) Kamran Adil paid a surprise visit to Thikriwala police station and found its record incomplete while its Muharrar, Muhammad Tayyab was absent from duty without informing the department properly. Therefore.

Youth going abroad can approach FO, says Malik

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Regional Head, Federal Ombudsman Office in Bahawalpur, Dr. Muhammad Zahid Malik on Tuesday said that the youth going abroad could lodge their complaints with the Federal Ombudsman Office against the federal departments.

He expressed these views while addressing an awareness seminar at College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM) Bahawalpur, he said that around 187 federal departments, institutes and corporations came under jurisdiction of the Federal Ombudsman Office.

"Federal Ombudsman Office as

semi judiciary has powers to listen complaints against 187 departments of the federal government besides issuing directives to resolve them," he said.

Zahid Malik said that youth and other people who wanted to go abroad to earn livelihood or for tourism visit could file their applications with the Federal Ombudsman Office if they had legitimate complaints against the federal departments including FIA, Passport Office, NADRA, airports and others.

He added that the Federal Ombudsman Office could also listen to complaints regarding bank transactions.

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Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundli condoles with firs consul over martyrdom of President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi during his visit to Iran's consulate General Peshawar.

Faisalabad police dealing with crime by exploiting IT and AI: CPO

FAISALABAD (APP): The city police have established a number of dedicated units to deal with specialized crimes by exploiting the innovative tools of Information Technology (IT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), said City Police Officer (CPO) Kamran Adil.

Addressing the business community in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said, "We are deficient in police force but we could get best possible results through

multitasking as per prevailing private sector practices. We are passing through a revolutionary age which has particularly complicated urban crimes. We could overcome these challenges by efficiently using IT and AI." He said that he had introduced some fundamental reforms in city police during the last fifteen days with a focused approach to get best possible results through transforming the institution into a unified team.

International News

Iranians pay last respects to late president Raisi killed in helicopter crash

Monitoring Desk TEHRAN: Tens of thousands of Iranians gathered on Tuesday to mourn president Ebrahim Raisi and seven members of his entourage who were killed in a helicopter crash on a fog-shrouded mountainside.

Waving Iranian flags and portraits of the late president, mourners set off from a central square in the northwestern city of Tabriz, where Raisi was headed when his helicopter crashed on Sunday.

They walked behind a lorry carrying the coffins of Raisi and those who died with him, who also included foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. "We, the members of the government, who had the honour to serve this beloved president, the hardworking president, pledge to our dear

people and leader to follow the path of these martyrs," Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said in a speech.

"Everyone has come to bid farewell to the martyred president and his companions regardless of their faction, ethnicity or language," said Tabriz lawmaker Masoud Pezeshkian.

However, although state TV said a large crowd appeared in Tabriz, some insiders see a stark contrast in public grief compared with past commemorations for the deaths of other senior figures in the Islamic Republic's 45-year history.

While Iran proclaimed five days of mourning for Raisi, there was little of the emotional rhetoric that accompanied the death of Qasem Soleimani, a senior commander of the elite Revolutionary Guards

killed by a US missile in 2020 in Iraq, whose funeral drew huge crowds of mourners, weeping with sorrow and rage.

The helicopter lost communications while it was on its way back to Tabriz after Raisi attended the inauguration of a joint dam project on the Aras River, which forms part of the border with Azerbaijan, in a ceremony with his counterpart Ilham Aliyev. A massive search and rescue operation was launched on Sunday when two other helicopters flying alongside Raisi's lost contact with his aircraft in bad weather. State television announced his death in a report early on Monday, saying "the servant of the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, has achieved the highest level of martyrdom".



This handout picture provided by the Iranian president's office shows honour guards carrying the coffin of late president Ebrahim Raisi during a funeral procession in Tabriz, the capital of Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

US, Saudis close to strategic agreement

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States and Saudi Arabia are close to a deal on a bilateral agreement after the US national security adviser made significant progress in talks with Saudis over the weekend, the White House said on Monday.

White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said the two sides are "closer than we've ever been" on an agreement that is now "near final".

US and Saudi negotiators are seeking to complete

work on a bilateral accord that would likely call for formal US guarantees to defend the kingdom as well as Saudi access to more advanced US weaponry, in return for halting Chinese arms purchases and restricting Beijing's investment in the country.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan held talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other Saudi officials over the weekend where progress was made, Kirby said.

Taliban poets sing praise of new Afghan order

Monitoring Desk CHARIKAR: Taliban poets, long fuelled by fervour for jihad against foreign forces, have focused their efforts on flattering the men who now rule Afghanistan.

Overlooking the deserted Bagram airfield, the US military's former centre of operations in Afghanistan, a government-organised poetry reading attracts Taliban bards who eulogise their power.

"It is a pure system, this is our victory," proclaimed Samiullah Hamas in front of an avid crowd in Parwan province.

Yemen's Houthis say they downed US drone over al-Bayda province

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: Yemen's Houthis downed a US MQ9 drone over al-Bayda province in southern Yemen, the Iran-aligned group's military spokesperson said in a televised statement on Tuesday. Yahya Saree said the drone was targeted with a locally made surface-to-air missile and that videos to support the claim would be released. The Houthis said last Friday they downed another US MQ9 drone over the southeastern province of Maareb.

Singapore Airlines flight hits severe turbulence, one passenger dead, seven critically injured

Monitoring Desk BANGKOK: One passenger was killed and 30 injured after a Singapore Airlines (SIAL) flight, opens new tab flight from London hit severe turbulence en route on Tuesday, forcing it to make an emergency landing in Bangkok, officials and the airline said.

"Singapore Airlines offers its deepest condolences to the family of the deceased. We deeply apologise for the traumatic experience that our passengers and crew members suffered on this flight," the airline said, adding it was working with Thai authorities to

provide all necessary assistance. The flight fell into an air pocket while cabin crew was serving breakfast before it encountered turbulence, prompting the pilots to request an emergency landing, Suvannabhumi airport general manager Kittipong Kittikachorn told a press conference.

A 73-year-old British man died during the incident, likely due to a heart attack, he said. Seven people were critically injured with head injuries.

Eighteen people have been hospitalised and 12 are being treated in hospitals, Singapore Airlines said.



A man stands as Israeli military machineries operate in Jenin, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Cohen acknowledges stealing from Trump at hush money trial

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK: Donald Trump's former fixer Michael Cohen testified on Monday that he stole money from Trump's company, an admission that could chip away at his credibility as a star witness at the former US president's hush money trial.

Questioned by Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche, Cohen acknowledged stealing from the Trump Organisation by in-

cluding a reimbursement to a technology company in his bonus package and pocketing most of the money. "So you stole from the Trump Organisation, right?" Blanche asked.

"Yes sir," Cohen, 57, testified. Cohen said he paid roughly \$20,000 of the \$50,000 that Trump's company owed to the tech company in cash, handing it off in a brown paper bag at his office.

Syrian first lady Asma al-Assad has leukemia, presidency says

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: Syria's first lady, Asma al-Assad, has been diagnosed with leukemia, the Syrian presidency said on Tuesday, almost five years after she announced she had fully recovered from breast cancer.

The statement said Asma, 48, would undergo a special treatment protocol that would require her to isolate, and that she would step away from public engagements as a result.

In August 2019, Asma said she had fully recovered from breast cancer that she said had been discovered early.

Since Syria plunged into war in 2011, the British-born former investment banker has taken on the public role of leading charity efforts and meeting families of killed soldiers, but has also become hated by the opposition.

Israeli strikes kill six pro-Iran fighters in Syria

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: A war monitoring body has said that at least six pro-Iran fighters were killed on Monday. Israel conducted strikes in Syria (near the Lebanese border), in an area where Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah group, holds sway.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "Israeli strikes targeted two positions of pro-Iran groups in the Homs region" including "a Hezbollah site in the Qusayr area" (near the border), where "six Iran-backed fighters were killed". The Observatory did not specify their nationalities.

A source from Hezbollah told journalists that "at least one fighter" from the group was killed in the Israeli strikes, within the Qusayr area.

Israel rarely comments on individual strikes conducted in Syria but has "repeatedly" said it will "not allow" its arch-enemy Iran, to expand its presence in the region.

On Saturday, the Observatory said an Israeli drone strike near the Lebanese border targeted a vehicle carrying "a Hezbollah commander and his companion" (without reporting casualties).

Hezbollah did not announce any deaths among its ranks, on Saturday.

On the 9 of May, Israeli strikes on Syria targeted facilities belonging to Iraq's 'Al-Nujaba' armed movement, the Observatory and the pro-Iran group said.

In addition to this, Damascus said an unidentified building was attacked.

Kremlin says it is very curious that US appears ready to sanction the ICC

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Tuesday it was very curious that the United States appeared ready to use sanctions against the International Criminal Court whose prosecutor requested arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his defence chief and three Hamas leaders over alleged war crimes.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan said in a statement issued after more than seven months of war in Gaza that he had reasonable grounds to believe the five men "bear criminal responsibility" for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

US President Joe Biden called the legal step "outrageous", while Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it could jeopardize negotiations on a hostage deal

and ceasefire.

Some US lawmakers called for the United States to impose sanctions on the court. In 2020, the United States imposed sanctions on an ICC prosecutor.

"In general, the situation is more than curious in terms of the US attitude and willingness to use sanctions methods even against the ICC," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

In March last year, the ICC issued warrants for the arrest of President Vladimir Putin on war crimes charges.

Russia says the warrant against Putin is a meaningless attempt by the West to soil Russia's reputation and denies war crimes in Ukraine.

Ukraine says Russia committed war crimes. Russia says the West has ignored Ukraine's crimes, a charge denied by Kyiv.



ASTANA: Official Group Photo of the Foreign Ministers attending the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers taking place at Astana, Kazakhstan. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar is leading the Pakistan delegation.

Dar reaffirms Pakistan's adherence to SCO charter, warns against bloc-based geopolitics

ASTANA (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday addressed the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) wherein he reiterated Pakistan's firm adherence to the SCO Charter and the "Shanghai Spirit" standing for mutual trust and respect for shared prosperity.

In his statement, the deputy prime minister warned against bloc-based or confrontational geopolitics and advocated for a multipolar world firmly grounded in multilateralism.

He explained Pakistan's priorities as the current Chair of SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) which included promoting connectivity, transport links, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, and enhanced practical cooperation among SCO member states.

The deputy prime minister called for upholding international law and the UN Charter, emphasizing the people's right to self-determination and peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

He stressed the need to combat the menace of terrorism through collective and cooperative approaches including by addressing its root causes. He urged the rejection of myopic and self-serving interests to use the mantra of terrorism for political gains.

Ishaq Dar strongly condemned the barbaric Israeli onslaught in Gaza, which had resulted in the killings of over 35,000 innocent civilians, mostly women and children.

He reiterated Pakistan's firm call for an unconditional and urgent ceasefire and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance.

He also emphasized the need to realize the two-state solution for durable peace and stability.

On the Afghanistan situation, he called on the international community to meaningfully engage with the Interim Afghan Government (IAG) for the genuine economic and development needs of Afghanistan and urged the IAG to ensure that Afghan soil was not used for terrorism against any country.

Pakistan, IMF agree to increase budget for BISP

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the ongoing negotiations between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a significant agreement has been reached to increase the budget for the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). The budget for the next financial year is set to rise from the current Rs470 billion to Rs530 billion.

Alongside this increase, there are also proposals to expand the number of beneficiaries and the stipends they receive.

The IMF has underscored the need for greater expansion of social protection programs to eradicate poverty. This includes using data from individuals registered in BISP to implement targeted subsidies more effectively. The government has assured the IMF that provinces will be encouraged to share the burden of social security.

There is a plan to pro-

ject BISP beneficiaries through a cash transfer program to mitigate electricity tariff impacts. This move is part of a broader strategy to provide targeted subsidies using data from BISP registrants. Additionally, the number of beneficiaries is proposed to be increased, with a goal to register 20 million households by September.

Currently, BISP benefits 9.3 million individuals, as per the briefing to the IMF mission, adding that this year, an additional 300,000 families have been included in the sponsorship program.

The health cash transfer program now supports 900,000 families, while the education cash transfer program has enrolled 1.9 million children.

The IMF has demanded increased transparency and improved administrative efficiency within BISP.

Working to provide facilities to private sector; economy on right track: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday while expressing satisfaction over the economic situation of the country, said that from day first, they had been working to provide facilities to the private sector for the economic development, provision of job opportunities and expansion of businesses and investment.

He observed that due to the government's policies, the inflation rate in the country was on the nose and through governance they had been taking steps to pass on the effects of the reduction in the

price hike to the common man.

The prime minister expressed these views while chairing the first meeting of the Economic Advisory Council, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by council members including Jahangir Khan Tareen, Saqib Sherazi, Shahzad Saleem, Mussadiq Zulfarnain, Dr Ejaz Nabi, Asif Pir, Zaid Bashir, Salman Ahmed and Sheharyar Chishti. Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Deputy

Chairman Planning Commission, Dr Jehanzeb Khan, PM Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal, governor SBP and relevant senior officials were also present.

The prime minister observed that the positive trends in the stock market reflected trust of the business community and investors in the government's policies, adding they would provide further facilities to the foreign investors and business community in the next fiscal budget.

The prime minister said that they would reduce the tax ratio on common man and would increase the number of tax filers.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Tehreek Tahafuz Ain-e-Pakistan Mehmood Khan Achakzai along with a delegation offering Fataha for departed soul of Iranian President Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at Iranian Embassy.

Khalid meets UK Dy FS in education forum in London

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has met with Deputy Foreign Secretary and Minister of State (Development and Africa) of the UK, Rt. Andrew Mitchell MP during "Education World Forum 2024" in London.

High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK, Dr. Mohammad Faisal was also present, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The discussions were held on further enhancing collaboration between the two governments and with the British Council.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui briefed Andrew Mitchell MP on the education emergency declared by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif.

The Pakistan delegation is attending the forum under the leadership of the minister.

Dar as DPM case AG, PM, Ishaq Dar, others put on notice in petition against appointment

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notices to Attorney General (AG), federal government, secretary cabinet division, Prime Minister (PM) and Ishaq Dar on the petitions filed against appointment of Ishaq Dar as Deputy Prime Minister (DPM).

The court has sought reply from them till June 12. The case came up for hearing before single bench led by Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amir Farooq Tuesday. Counsel Riaz Hanif Rahi appeared on behalf of petitioner Sher Afzal Marwat and counsel Adnan Sarwar represented Fahd Shabbir. The CJ IHC Amir Farooq inquired Lahore High Court (LHC) has already given decision in this case.

The court inquired from the counsel does he know English. Has he checked LHC judgment. You have come from Lahore and you don't know about Lahore.

The court inquired from the counsel of Sher Afzal Marwat "Rahi Sahb you should tell what are your grounds."

Riaz Hanif Rahi counsel for petitioner took the plea mention about PM and federal minister is made in the constitution but no mention is made about DPM. Two portfolios were given to one person at the expenses of people only for the sake of personal interest.

The counsel for Sher Afzal Marwat said notification on the appointment of Ishaq Dar as DPM was issued on April 28 with the approval of PM. PM is elected office and there is no mention of DPM. PM office is a constitutional office. The constitution of Pakistan is unaware of the post of DPM. There is no such clause in the constitution which allows cabinet division to issue notification about appointment of DPM. Ishaq Dar is already working as foreign minister.



QUETTA: Auditor General of Pakistan Muhammad Ajmal Gondal meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

Iranian national flag flies at half-mast: Many from different walks of life visit Iranian Consulate in Quetta; express condolence

Independent Report QUETTA: A large number of people belonging to different walks of life visited the Iranian consulate located in Quetta on Tuesday.

During the visit, the people including the religious and political personalities expressed condolence over the tragic incident of helicopter crash that had claimed lives of Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister and other personalities the other day.

They also offered fataha for the departed souls. On the occasion, some also recorded their remarks in the condolence

book placed at the Iranian Consulate.

They were included the acting Ameer of JUL-Nazrayati and its other leaders.

Meanwhile, the Iranian national flag continued to fly at half-mast on the sad demise of Iranian President and his companions at the Iranian Consulate on second consecutive day i.e., Tuesday, as mark of mourning on the demise of Iranian President and others.

The condolence and fataha would also remain continued today (Wednesday).

Uzbek defence delegation calls on Secretary Defence Production

RAWALPINDI (APP): A high level defence delegation of Uzbekistan headed by Director General of Defence Industry Agency, Mansurjon Ibodullaev called on Secretary Ministry of Defence Production, Lt Gen @ Muhammad Chiragh Haider here on Tuesday.

The Secretary Defence Production warmly welcomed the delegation, a news release said.

He appreciated existing relations between the two countries in the domain of defence Production.

Balochistan to get 30 AI-based digital x-ray machines under TB control programme

QUETTA (APP): As many as 30 digital x-ray machines equipped with artificial intelligence will be dispatched to all districts of the province as part of Provincial TB control programme's measures to properly diagnose and control the Tuberculosis posing massive hazards to the populace of Balochistan.

"The IA equipped x-ray machines, provided by the global fund will not only diagnose stages of TB but will also give a hint to other pulmonary diseases," Dr. Asif Shahwani, Provincial Manager of TB Control Programme told APP on Tuesday.

There would be no need of Radiologist once the IA equipped x-ray machines are installed in the districts, he remarked.

Shahwani further noted that a technical training session would be launched to train the technical staff for the operation of the digital X-Ray Machines.

He said currently there were 15,000 TB patients with 17 per cent ratio of children in the province and the programme was enhancing efforts to trace the affected people.

With the supports of the programme, the treatment of TB daises has been minimized from 18 to six months, he said, adding that every patient has been providing Rs 10,000 in term of food and Rs 2000 as traveling expenses going for the check-up on monthly basis. As Many as four mobile vehicles equipped with modern machines.

Dawood Shah Acquittal of PTI central leaders in May 9 cases victory of Party's stance

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Balochistan, Dawood Shah Kakar has stated that the honourable acquittal of founder of PTI, Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Qasim Khan Suri and other senior leaders in the case of May 9, 2023 is victory of stance of the party. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Dawood Shah Kakar said that Imran Khan would be among the masses soon after acquittal from what it termed the bogus and baseless cases.

He said that the founder of PTI is the only leader of world against whom more than 200 cases were registered by the so-called governments.

He also said that everyone right from the common men to the institutions as well as the political parties, human rights organizations and judiciary testify that Imran Khan was disappeared after abducting on May 9, 2023. And then Supreme Court freed him after few days, he alleged adding that despite this, the corrupt and fake rulers put him behind the bar.

DG NAB Balochistan says NAB would make its all-out efforts within mandate to facilitate business community

Independent Report QUETTA: In accordance with the vision of the Chairman NAB, NAB (B) Business Facilitation Desk conducted meeting with the Patron-in-Chief Chamber of Commerce District Pishin on 20th May 2024. Director General NAB (B) chaired the meeting along with Business Facilitation Desk officers of NAB (B). The meeting was a part of continuous process for facilitation and an effort to create conducive environment for doing business. NAB has constituted Business Facilitation Cell (BFC) at NAB HQs Islamabad and Business Facilitation Desk (BFD) at all Regional NAB Bureaus for better coordination between NAB and business community and such desk is working proactively in NAB (Balochistan). In this regard, NAB (B) has already conducted meetings with Quetta Chamber of

SC to hear appeals about NAB amend on May 30

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court will take up the appeals against terminations of NAB amendments for hearing on May 30. A five-member larger bench of the top court presided by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa would hear the case. The registrar office of the SC has issued the cause list in that regard. The PTI founder would appear before court on next hearing through the video link and the court had issued instructions in that regard. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has also filed an application to the court seeking live broadcasting of the hearing.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari exchanges views with Iranian Consul General Hassan Noorian during condolence meeting over the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in helicopter crash incident, at the Iranian Embassy in Karachi.

VC BUITEMS calls for funds allocation for varsities

QUETTA (APP): Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering Management Sciences (BUIEMS) Dr. Khalid Hafeez said that measures would be taken to provide the required funds to the universities in order to meet the demands of education and research in the province. He said that the BUIEMS was facing a loss of Rs 4 billion annually, which was affecting the education system.

He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at BUIEMS here.

Dr. Khalid Hafeez said that he was happy to hold a national level festival in the institution, saying that 160 Ph.D. s were serving in the BUIEMS while more

160 Ph.D.s would soon be part of BUITMS's Main Artificial Academy to be activated in the next three years.

With the support of Germany, experts are being prepared to improve the environment and deal with natural disasters, this project will be completed in three years, he noted.

He said that all the universities were facing financial crisis and the budget for higher education institution should be allocated. Separate budget should be allocated for the universities in order to address issues of the varsities in the province, he said adding that for the past five years, there has been no increase in the portion reserved for universities in the budget.

Chairman CMIT visits TTC Hub

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Chief Minister Inspection Team Dostain Jamaldini, along with Deputy Commissioner Hub Rohana Gul Kakar and District Education Officer Habibullah, on Tuesday visited the Technical Training Center Hub.

Chairman CMIT, during his visit, inspected various departments of the Technical Training Institute.

While talking to the students, he appreciated their skills and said that the current government is giving priority to the development of human resources.

Deputy Commissioner HUB Ruhana Gul Kakar on the occasion told the Chief Minister Inspection Team Chairman that the industrialists of Hub district have been demanding to provide them with skilled local youth.

Nazar Baloch expresses resent on absence of doctors in BMC Hospital

QUETTA (APP): Ombudsman of Balochistan Nazir Muhammad Baloch on Tuesday expressed his resentment over the absence of some senior doctors in Bolan Medical Complex (BMC) hospital and depicted them to ensure their attendance provision of health facilities to patients.

He expressed these views while visiting Bolan Medical Complex (BMC) Hospital.

The provincial ombudsman also directed doctors and paramedical staff to perform their duties honestly and courteously in order to provide health facilities to patients.

He said that it was the responsibility of the government to provide health facilities to the people.

Medical Superintendent (MS) of the BMC Hospital Dr. Amin Mandukhel briefed the

Bilawal, Aseefa visits Iranian Consulate, offer condolence

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, accompanied by MNA Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, visited the Iranian Consulate in Karachi to express their condolences on the tragic passing of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his colleagues due to a helicopter crash. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari expressed profound sorrow over the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Amirabdollahian in a helicopter crash.

HUB: Chairman CMIT Dostain Jamaldini issuing directives to Deputy Commissioner Hub, XEN C&W and Principal Girls Degree College during a briefing about Girls Degree College Hub Project

HUB: Chairman CMIT Dostain Jamaldini issuing directives to Deputy Commissioner Hub, XEN C&W and Principal Girls Degree College during a briefing about Girls Degree College Hub Project

Opposition leader Mir Yousif Zehri, Rehmat Baloch, Khair Jan Baloch and Zabid Ali Reki meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

QUETTA: Opposition leader Mir Yousif Zehri, Rehmat Baloch, Khair Jan Baloch and Zabid Ali Reki meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

Passed candidates of S-B-K Central Committee are holding protest demonstration for appointment letters, at Quetta press club.

QUETTA: Passed candidates of S-B-K Central Committee are holding protest demonstration for appointment letters, at Quetta press club.