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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding CPEC Phase II and other projects under Chinese investment in Pakistan.

PM announces to privatise all SOEs sans strategic ones

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced that the government would privatise all state-owned enterprises (SOEs), excluding the strategic ones, regardless of their profitability or financial losses.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to review the matters related to the Ministry of Privatisation and Privatisation Commission, directed all the federal ministries to carry out the necessary procedures and extend their cooperation with the Privatisation Commission for the purpose.

In the meeting, the privatisation ministry and the Privatisation Commission presented a roadmap for the Privatisation Programme 2024-29.

The prime minister said the government had nothing to do with running the businesses but was mandated to facilitate the investors.

He viewed that the privatisation of SOEs would save the taxpayers' money to help the government provide quality services to the people.

Reiterating the government's commitment to a transparent process, the prime minister directed to live telecast the bidding and other procedures of the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines and other entities.

During the briefing on the progress in the SOEs' privatisation, the participants were told that the pre-qualification process for PIA privatisation would be completed by the end of this month.

The consultation for privatisation of Roosevelt Hotel was underway and the government-to-government transaction of the First Women Bank was in process with the United Arab Emirates.

It was told that the power distribution companies had been included in the 2024-29 Privatisation Program and the privatisation of loss-making SOEs would be prioritised.

The participants were told that a pre-qualified panel of experts would be appointed at the Planning Commission for a swift and transparent privatisation process.

Dubai property leaks:

17,000 Pakistanis own 23,000 residential properties worth \$11bn in Dubai

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: A collaborative investigative journalism initiative has unveiled the property ownership of influential figures worldwide in Dubai.

The project, titled 'Dubai Unlocked', relies on data from an extensive insight into hundreds of thousands of properties in Dubai, along with details regarding their ownership or utilization, primarily spanning the years 2020 to 2022.

Pakistani nationals are also among those listed, with their collective property holdings estimated at approximately \$11 billion.

The revelation includes approximately \$400 billion

worth of properties owned by non-residents, including \$11 billion worth of properties owned by Pakistanis.

The "Property Leaks" expose the names of several influential figures, government officials, and retired civil servants from around the world. Among them, Pakistanis own \$11 billion worth of properties in Dubai, making them the second-largest group of non-residents purchasing properties in the city.

According to the "Property Leaks", 17,000 Pakistanis have bought 23,000 properties in Dubai. Indian citizens lead among non-residents purchasing properties in Dubai, with

29,700 Indians owning 35,000 properties in the city.

Additionally, there are 19,500 British citizens who own 22,000 properties in Dubai. The total value of properties purchased by British citizens in Dubai amounts to \$10 billion. At least 8,500 Saudi citizens have bought 16,000 properties in Dubai, totaling over \$8 billion.

The project — "Dubai Unlocked" — is based on data that provides a detailed overview of hundreds of thousands of properties in Dubai and information about their ownership or usage, largely from 2020 and 2022. Properties pur-

chased in the name of companies and those that are in commercial areas are not part of this analysis.

The data was obtained by the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies (C4ADS), a non-profit organisation based in Washington, DC. It was then shared with Norwegian financial outlet E24 and the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which coordinated a six-month investigative project with reporters from 74 media outlets in 58 countries, uncovering scores of convicted criminals, fugitives, and political figures who have recently owned at least one

piece of real estate in Dubai. The News and Dawn were partners from Pakistan.

Among the Pakistanis listed in the Property Leaks are President Asif Ali Zardari's three children, Hussain Nawaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's wife, Sharjeel Memon and family members, Senator Faisal Vawda, Farah Gogi, Sher Afzal Marwat, four MNAs and half a dozen MPAs from the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies. The Pakistani list also features the late Gen Pervaz Musharraf, former prime minister Shaukat Aziz and

more than a dozen retired generals as well as a police chief, an ambassador and a scientist — all of whom owned properties either directly or through their spouses and children.

In 2014, President Asif Ali Zardari had received foreign property as a gift. By the time he declared it in 2018, he had gifted it to someone. In 2014, a business tycoon co-accused with Zardari in the fake accounts case, Abdul Ghani Majid, declared in his wealth statement that he had granted a gift of Rs329m but neither mentioned its type nor the recipient.



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar holds a luncheon meeting with Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Luo Zhaohui.

Pakistan, China reiterate resolve to accelerate all CPEC projects

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China on Tuesday expressed joint determination to accelerate progress on all projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) including ML-1 upgradation, Gwadar Port, and realignment of Karakoram Highway.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao here.

The deputy prime minister is on a four-day visit to China mainly to co-chair the Fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

In the meeting, the two leaders also reaffirmed the importance of the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China and to further reinforce mutually beneficial collaboration.

Italian Defence Secretary General calls on Secretary Defence Production

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Italian Defence Secretary General of De-



He appreciated the Italian Defence Industrial potential and its ability to address needs of the Pakistani defence forces.

Lieutenant General Muhammad Chiragh Haider also emphasized that Pakistan had a lot of potential in the fields of energy and defence production with the possibility of joint ventures which needs to be explored. Both the sides stressed on the need to have a regular exchange of high-level visits between both countries.

Maqbool says: Program prepared to improve literacy rate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday informed the National Assembly that a program is being prepared to enhance the literacy rate in the country. In response to a calling attention notice regarding the cessation of nearly twenty school buses designated for student transportation and their conversion into the Pink Bus Project, along with the non-appointment of teachers for vacant positions in Islamabad Capital Territory, he called upon the elected representatives and other societal segments to actively contribute to this cause.

He said that the government has declared an education emergency to enroll out-of-school children in educational institutions, regarding transportation, he said that in addition to existing school and college bus services, the ministry plans to deploy 20 buses from urban to rural areas specifically for girl students and female teachers from both public and private schools.

These buses will make five daily trips to accommodate students, teachers, and other working women.

He explained that out of 385 buses in Islamabad schools and colleges, 75 were currently unused. Among these, 20 buses are being repaired to serve the transportation needs of students and teachers.



RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo with officials of the Green Pakistan Initiative during his visit to its headquarters

CM chairs 7th cabinet meeting

Can't allow looting of precious national resources: Maryam

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the 7th meeting of the provincial cabinet here on Tuesday.

Advocate General briefed the cabinet members that the Constitution has made mutual consultation of the stakeholders indispensable before making important appointments. It was agreed in the meeting that the government does not believe in conflict with any institution, but undue interference in the executive authority is not acceptable.

The Cabinet approved Food Minister Bilal Yasin's proposal to constitute a ministerial committee for making important appointments after meaningful consultation with the other

stakeholders.

The Cabinet ratified Rock Salt Policy 2022, Rock Salt Amended Policy 2023, and directed to form a committee to decide on rock salt mining leases. It was also decided in the Cabinet meeting to approach NAB against those responsible for corruption in the grant of Rock Salt Leases.

The CM said, "Can't allow looting of precious national resources. Illegal leases of rock salt mining should be suspended immediately." She added that do not waste even a single particle of salt, \$13 billion rock salt mineral reserves is a valuable asset of the province. "If the world can buy our salt at cheap rates and sell it at higher price after value addition, why can't we?" she questioned.

The Cabinet gave approval to extend contract of 23 employees of Policy and Strategic Planning Unit of the Primary and Secondary HealthCare Department, besides lifting a ban on recruitment against vacant posts.

The Cabinet also approved presenting before the Provincial Assembly the special, project and performance audit reports of the Punjab government and District Governments from 2016 to 2022. Approval was also accorded to the appointment of Bakht Fakhri Behzad as Judicial Member and Chairperson of the Appellate Tribunal of Punjab Revenue Authority.

The Cabinet approved Punjab Government Advertisement Policy

President assures support to provinces for Green Pakistan Initiative

RAWALPINDI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday visited the Green Pakistan Initiative Headquarters where he was given a detailed briefing about the Initiative, Land Information and Management System operations.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were also present on the occasion, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president was

briefed about the improved water irrigation system based on modern patterns.

A briefing was also given over agriculture, dredging of canals, IT-based operations and effective irrigation water system under the Green Pakistan Initiative.

The president was also apprised of the concepts of model agri-farms and agricultural smart farms operations to facilitate the farmers' community for progress of the agriculture sector.

President Zardari appreciated the working of

Green Pakistan Initiative and Land Information and Management System under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

While lauding the team of Green Pakistan Initiative, he stressed upon working with equal zeal for the national and economic development of the country.

For the bright future of Pakistan, the president also assured complete cooperation of all the provinces for achieving the objectives of Green Pakistan Initiative.

PM's timely decision on AJK situation averted a tragedy: Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to resolve the ongoing crisis in Azad Jammu and Kashmir had averted a tragedy.

Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam at the Parliament House, he said that the conspiracy of the inimical forces was foiled who faced humiliation due to the Prime Minister's timely actions. Terming Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as "Tehreek-e-Intishar", he said its dreams of creation of chaos and anarchy had also been shattered.

"Along with the enemy, the 'Tehreek-e-Intishar' also

thought that in some way or the other, chaos would spread and there would be anarchy" as its leadership wanted to benefit from the sad situation.

Tarar said that the Prime Minister took all the coalition parties and stakeholders on board and heard their views.

"Yesterday's meeting was attended by all the political leadership including the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir", he remarked.

The minister said the political leadership and federal ministers resolved the issues through mutual understanding.

The minister said that the prime minister resolved the issue with excellent decision making as the crisis can be eliminated only by timely decisions.

IHC bars govt from blocking non-filers' SIMs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday barred the federal government from blocking the SIMs of non-filers.

IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq issued the order in response to a writ petition filed by the telecom operator. The court also issued notice to the federal government in this regard, with the next hearing on the matter scheduled for May 27, 2024.

The petition challenged Clause 114-B of the Income Tax Ordinance and the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Income Tax General Orders against non-filers.

The petitioner argued that the tax regulator's new-found authority violated the fundamental right to freedom of business under Article 18 of the Constitution.

SC orders appearance of PTI founder through video link

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday ordered the federal and provincial governments to ensure the attendance of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) founder in the next hearing in intra court appeals against termination of amendments in National Accountability Bureau law.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa said that if the founder of PTI wants to give arguments, he can give through video link. He said that we accept the re-

quest of PTI founder in this regard and instructed the government to make arrangements.

A five member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi heard the appeals of federation.

In its order regarding today's hearing, the SC said that NAB was asked

whether it is supporting or opposing the appeals to which the bureau stated that it would opt the stance of federal government.

It said that notice was issued to senior advocate Khawaja Haris. It added that lawyer Farouk H. Naek has adopted the arguments of Makhdoom Ali Khan in the case. The court stated that advocate general Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has opposed the intra court appeal and, however, the Attorney General and the remaining four advocate generals supported it.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo along with Air Vice Marshal Amir Shahzad, President Air War College Institute and faculty members during his visit PAF Base Faisal in Karachi.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Privatisation divide

With Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar having clawed his way back to the centre of economic policymaking, a tussle between two competing viewpoints — one represented by him, the other by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb — was inevitable.

Mr Aurangzeb believes that Pakistan's economy can no longer bear the burden of state-owned enterprises, which need to be privatised as early as possible. On the other hand, Mr Dar, who is foreign minister and a confidant of Nawaz Sharif, fears that all-out privatisation could deplete his party's already dwindling political capital. Hobbled by high inflation, recent blunders in wheat procurement and rising energy costs, the party can ill-afford any agitation against privatisation. Hence, no matter what the finance minister says, the two are not on the same page as evident in his outright rejection of Mr Dar's concept of "strategic and essential SOEs". "There is no such thing as strategic SOEs," Mr Aurangzeb told a pre-budget conference. All SOEs, regardless of their categorisation, he asserted, would be handed over to the private sector. His stance on the 'strategic' SOEs is the opposite of what Mr Dar, who was previously finance minister and heads the important Cabinet Committee on Privatisation, had stated recently. Removing seven profitable public companies at the disposal of the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund from the privatisation list, Mr Dar reportedly said that the government would restrict its concerns to "strategic and essential SOEs", whose number — 40 — would be decreased after scrutiny.

The final decision on which the entities are to be categorised as strategic or essential is to be made by the Cabinet Committee on SOEs headed by Mr Aurangzeb. It might not be easy for him to have his way on their privatisation, despite support from the powerful circles that signed him up for implementing taxation, energy, and SOE reforms along with privatisation under the IMF's tutelage. Mr Dar's economic ideas are acceptable neither to the IMF nor to these circles. Under these circumstances, his transfer to the foreign ministry and later his elevation as deputy prime minister were perceived as major concessions from PM Shehbaz Sharif, although under pressure from Nawaz Sharif. Put simply, the differences between Mr Aurangzeb and Mr Dar reflect the tensions within the ruling party as well as the compulsions of an economy that cannot pick up momentum until it has undergone drastic and politically unpopular changes. The disagreement between the current and former finance minister on privatisation has emerged at a time when the government is all set to start talks for another IMF bailout facility in order to revive the economy. How this disagreement within the government will sit with the lender, which is already wary of the risks attached to the execution of the economic stabilisation policies, is anybody's guess.

Climate justice

Jamil Ahmad

In the face of rising risks from climate change, calls for climate action and climate justice have grown stronger. The creation of the Loss and Damage Fund under the UN climate convention is considered an important step towards action. A request is pending before the ICJ for an opinion on states' obligations towards people on climate change.

Civil society has sought judicial assistance to compel national authorities to take swift climate action. Governments and companies have been taken to courts for inaction or failure to implement environmental agreements.

The number of cases on climate and the environment has grown over the years as the dangers associated with climate change became more ominous, with efforts to control global warming falling short of expected targets. Vulnerable communities took the lead in seeking redressal through the courts.

Two landmark cases in Asia are illustrative. In Pakistan, Asghar Leghari, a farmer, took the government to court in 2015 for not acting to combat climate change, arguing that the inaction of the authorities was against the constitutional right to life, because climate change posed a serious threat to water, food, and energy security. In the Philippines, a group of schoolchildren went to court in the 1990s pleading that deforestation harmed their fundamental rights. In both cases, the courts ruled in favour of the litigants.

The rise in climate litigation is propelled also by developments in international environmental governance and breakthroughs in the global environmental

policy domain such as the Paris climate accord and other agreements. Once ratified, their legal injunctions and policy directions are incorporated into national legal frameworks. Failure of the parties to multilateral environmental agreements to abide by their pledges and implement measures to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution give justified grounds for lawsuits against the authorities, industry, and the corporate sector. A report Global Trends in Climate Change Litigation, 2023 by the London School of Economics, citing figures from databases, notes that around two-thirds of climate-centred lawsuits have been filed since 2015, when the Paris Agreement was signed.

Meanwhile, the codification of the concept of a rights-based approach to the environment has taken place in parallel. Historically, environmentalists have advocated a rights-based approach. They challenged governments in the courts and in most cases, obtained favourable decisions. Last year, Brazil's supreme court declared that the Paris Agreement was a human rights treaty, which enjoyed 'supranational' status. Lately, a group of Swiss women obtained a verdict from the European Court of Human Rights that inadequate efforts by their government to control climate change was violating human rights — a ruling that can prompt similar lawsuits elsewhere. The recognition by the UN General Assembly in July 2022 of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right further strengthened a bottom-up, rights-based approach to the environment and climate change. It catalysed legal actions against governments for their failure to implement

climate policies and actions which exacerbated the negative impact of climate change.

According to the UNEP's Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review, "the total number of climate change court cases has more than doubled since 2017" and is growing worldwide. The report found that the "cases mostly fell under one or more of six categories; cases relying on human rights enshrined in international law and national constitutions; challenges to domestic non-enforcement of climate-related laws and policies; litigants seeking to keep fossil fuels in the ground; advocates for greater climate disclosures and an end to greenwashing; claims addressing corporate liability and responsibility for climate harms; and claims addressing failures to adapt to the impacts of climate change".

Increased climate litigation will help climate action and ultimately climate justice. However, the extent of following up on court judgements remains limited in developing countries like Pakistan, where adjudicating on environmental issues is complex and confronts structural obstacles in the way of implementing court orders. Prompt enforcement of statutes, regulations and judicial pronouncements on climate and environment, will be enabled by incorporating the environmental dimension in all aspects of legal actions. All segments of the legal community must be equipped with the appropriate tools and information about environmental matters. A re-vamping of the legal architecture is a 'sine qua non' for coping with surging litigation on the environment and climate. -- Courtesy Dawn

For a better deal

Dr Niaz Murtaza

As the IMF's most habitual client globally, we often get a dose of the Fund's harsh medicine. Each time, business, civil society and other groups rightly object to an IMF deal's harsh terms, but mostly after it has been struck. As an IMF team will arrive soon for a new deal, they must coordinate to influence deal talks.

Some blame our leaders but others the IMF for harsh deals. The problem starts with our governments — from Musharraf to the PTI. In their zeal to get high GDP growth, they take the faulty path of high fiscal and external deficits and money supply growth, instead of high investment, productivity and exports that require politically costly reforms. That path soon leads to high inflation and falling dollar reserves, and finally to the Fund's door. But just as doctors often mistreat serious diseases caused by bad patient habits, so does the IMF often misdiagnose and mistreat economic ills caused by state policies.

The immediate patient symptoms before the IMF are usually high inflation and falling reserves due to high twin deficits and money supply growth. To stabilise the patient, the IMF usually prescribes higher interest rates, rupee depreciation, higher taxes and cuts in state expenses. All these put a brake on GDP growth, albeit fake, and cause a huge loss of jobs and state services that hurt poor and small businesses more.

In our recent deals from 2000 to 2019, the IMF has also included issues that affect the twin deficits and money supply growth indirectly — State Bank autonomy; state units, circular debt and power

sector reform; exchange rate and tax policy; etc. Even though we were at the peak of economic crises each time and needed major stabilisation, many IMF demands were rightly criticised for their sequence, extent and precise focus.

But things now differ. Economic policy targets macroeconomic stability, growth, equity and sustainability. We already have some stabilisation from the last stand-by IMF deal. Inflation and fiscal deficit are falling; reserves are up and the rupee has been climbing for months. Thus, we need an unorthodox IMF programme. We must not raise interest rates but cut them.

The IMF wants high interest rates to treat both inflation and falling currency and reserves. True, a stable rupee has been achieved via stringent controls on dollar demand for imports, profit repatriation, etc. which are slowing GDP growth. Once these controls are ended to raise GDP growth, reserves and the rupee may fall. But this pressure must be fixed via front-loading about half of IMF flows (and back-loading the rest to ensure compliance) and dollar flows expected from multilateral and bilateral donors rather than high interest rates. This will reduce fiscal deficit and create room for GDP and job growth.

Instead of indirect taxes and development and social spending cuts, the Fund must demand non-essential defence and civilian outlays cuts and increased direct taxes on non-taxable sectors and elites. If it signs a deal without this, it would be equally culpable in burdening the poor.

Such steps will help achieve both stability and growth. But durable growth will require more

creative strategies to raise savings, investments, exports and outputs. Our savings must rise, being among the lowest regionally. This means that even for investment for domestic outputs, we often use foreign investment which creates profit repatriation liabilities without export earnings, thus raising our external deficit.

We must ideally use foreign investment for sectors that give export revenues and/or help obtain high-end technical capacities. Increased exports require state-capital col-laboration to enter the high-end export sectors. But growth policies are beyond the IMF's remit, the wrong neoliberal take being that stabilisation will automatically give growth. This raises questions. The IMF must not overdo stabilisation now, to let us follow growth policies. It must ensure equity by requiring big outlays for the poor suffering from years of stagnation.

Beyond specific IMF terms, austerity-linked Fund deals imposed since 1980s don't make sense, unlike earlier condition-free ones. Policy conditions encourage reform-averse states to adopt good policies, but they can't afford them during economic crises when IMF aid must allow counter-cyclical growth policies.

Donors must proactively apply policy conditions linked to bigger aid from bilateral and multilateral donors in normal times when the roots of crises are being laid via faulty state policies. Rich states must also change their unfair global policies that choke growth in poor states. Only then can recipient states achieve stability and equitable growth. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

SATRC on policy, regulation, services starts



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the matters related to Ministry of Privatisation and Privatisation Commission.

ISLAMABAD (APP): First meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) on Policy Regulation and Services commenced on Tuesday.

Organized by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and hosted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), this three-day international meeting convenes regulatory experts and policymakers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Iran, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting started with an inaugural event widely attended by industry and government stakeholders. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) in his welcome address urged the delegates to actively engage in insightful discussions and commend PTA for organizing the workshop. Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokar Member

Compliance & Enforcement PTA who is also the chair of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation, and Services (PRS) in his address, outlined the meeting's primary objective: fostering the exchange of insights, experiences, and best practices to address challenges, explore opportunities, and finalize initial steps on work items.

Chairman PTA, Major General @ Hafeez Ur Rehman in his inaugural note, underscored the

importance of regional collaboration in addressing common ICT challenges through dialogue and knowledge sharing. He highlighted the importance of learning from each other's experiences to effectively introduce new technologies and services while safeguarding consumer rights and nurturing industry growth.

Shaza Fatima, Minister of State for IT & Telecom who was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony.

NAVTTTC, KCCI ink Mou for skill development of youth

KARACHI (APP): National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Tuesday, joined hands for skill development of youth and making the curriculum consistent to market demand.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked, in this regard, here at Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Chairperson NAVTTTC, Gulmina Bilal Ahmed and President KCCI Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh signed the MoU.

The MoU is aimed at imparting skill development training to the employees of KCCI affili-

ated industrial units while it also included acquiring from KCCI feedback on trained youth and suggestions to tailor the technical training curriculum according to market needs.

Chairperson NAVTTTC, speaking at the occasion, said that the curriculum will be updated in the light of the feedback and suggestions of the relevant institutions and the youth will be trained in accordance with the market requirements.

She said that technical education plays an important role in the development of the country and NAVTTTC was making efforts for skill

development of the youth according to requirements of domestic and foreign labour markets. Stressing on the need of creating awareness about the NAVTTTC she informed that currently the commission was regulating more than 5000 training centers across the country with special focus on quality assurance.

Highlighting the measures for ensuring transparency and quality training in the institutes funded by the government, she said that steps were also being taken to install bio-metric system and cameras for monitoring of the institutes.

She urged the vocational and technical training institutes to get international certification and said that internationally certified institutes will be given priority in the NAVTTTC programs aimed at training and skill development of the youth.

KCCI President, speaking on this occasion, underscored the importance of technical training and hoped that signing the MoU with NAVTTTC would benefit the country as well as the business community.



KARACHI: President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh presents Shield to Chairperson National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Gulmina Bilal Ahmed after Signing MoU Ceremony between (NAVTTTC) and (KCCI) at KCCI.

Commerce minister orders review of EDF projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday directed a thorough assessment and analysis of projects funded by the Export Development Fund (EDF) in recent years.

The directive aims to evaluate the initiatives that have bolstered export development and to identify areas for improvement, said a press

release issued here. The ministry of commerce has communicated this directive through a series of letters to various stakeholders involved in EDF-funded projects.

These letters, including one addressed to the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), underscore the need for detailed progress reports and updates on specific projects.

KP Minister launches online wheat procurement App for farmers, suppliers

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, announced on Tuesday the launch of an online app for wheat procurement aimed at facilitating farmers and suppliers.

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has introduced this online app to streamline services for local and provincial farmers and suppliers.

In a video statement, Minister Zahir Shah Toru highlighted that farmers and suppliers can now input information about their available wheat through the app, ultimately aiding the Food Department in its

operations. The online app encompasses all necessary features for wheat procurement, and priority will be given to farmers and suppliers meeting the standards set by the Food Department. Minister Toru emphasized that starting from May 18, wheat procurement will be conducted from those who adhere to SOPs and provide standard wheat.

He mentioned that wheat procurement from local farmers within the province will take place from May 7 to 17. He assured that transparency and merit will be upheld throughout the wheat procurement process.



BEIJING: Executive Vice President of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG) and Chairman of China Three Gorges International Limited (CTGI) Wu Shengliang called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Barkwa advocates cultivating barren lands to boost agri production

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Agriculture, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwa, chaired a meeting of the Agriculture Department on Tuesday to discuss the schemes of ADP, AIP, and PSDP for the financial year 2024-25.

The minister received a detailed briefing on both new and ongoing schemes.

He directed the authorities concerned to cultivate barren lands to boost the province's agricultural production.

Shahid Rasheed says: PM restored confidence of lenders, int'l institutions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the Finance Minister's resolve to sell state-owned firms was commendable, as it would help save trillions of wasted rupees to keep these companies artificially alive.

The country was saved from bankruptcy due to the Prime Minister's efforts, and now the confidence of the international institutions has been restored, he added.

Governor resolves to forge collaboration with KP govt for masses' welfare

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Faisal Karim Kundi Tuesday reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding the rights of the masses through collaborative efforts with the KP government.

Responding to an issue of law and order in KP, Governor Kundi highlighted the resource constraints faced by the KP police, pointing out disparities in salaries compared to their counterparts in other provinces. He expressed determination to secure maximum support from the federal govt to address problems.

In response to queries regarding political difference with CM KP, the governor emphasized his primary focus on forging coordination and collaboration with the provincial government for the welfare of the masses.

He extended a goodwill gesture to the Chief Minister of KP, inviting him to the Governor's office to prioritize the uplift of the province, and setting aside political differences.

Acknowledging his political mentors, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari.

that their rights are protected," adding that his intention to prevent the masses from enduring hardships stemming from political discord with the KP government.

He extended an open invitation to all political parties, stating that the doors of the Governor House KP were accessible to workers from across the political spectrum.

In "Meet the Press" program at Multan, the governor said "I assure the people of KP that I will spare no effort to ensure



MULTAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi addresses to media persons during Meet the Press program held at Multan press club.

GB Govt takes steps for the well-being of Journalists: CM GB

GILGIT (APP): Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan Tuesday assured the Gilgit-Baltistan Union of Journalists that the government is taking concrete measures to address the problems faced by working journalists in the region.

While talking to a delegation of GB Union of Journalist who called on him, GB Chief Minister said a high-level committee has been formed to ensure the safety and well-being of journalists, which will submit its

ANF seizes 384 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 384 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in two different operations at Karachi Airport, 280 grams Ice and 466 grams hashish were recovered from two passengers going to Doha and Bahrain.

Jinnah House attack: ATC grants bail to 7, denies to 3

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday granted post-arrest bail to 7 accused and denied bail to three others in the Jinnah House attack case of the May 9 riots.

ATC Judge Arshad Javed heard the post-arrest bail petitions of the accused and announced the verdict upon completion of arguments by the parties.

The court allowed post-arrest bail petitions of Muhammad Tazeem, Muhammad Qaisar Kamal, Adnan Asghar Butt, Muhammad Imran, Abdul Waqar, Naqem Riaz, and Tayyab Gulzar and ordered them to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each.

Kristin Hawkins inaugurates four restored cultural heritage sites Wazir Khan Mosque

LAHORE (APP): US Consul general to Lahore Kristin Hawkins on Tuesday inaugurated four US-funded restored cultural heritage sites at the Southern-side of the Wazir Khan Mosque including the 17th century tomb of Imam Gammu, six hujras, a central pavilion and the Southeast minaret.

"Dating back to the 17th century, these structures stood as important pieces of Lahore's Mughal Heritage, but over time, neglect and development of the local neighborhood caused significant damage to the buildings," says the plaque dedicated to the citizens of Lahore and inhabitants of the Walled City from the people of the United States.

Kristin Hawkins said it is hoped that the work which has been done to restore the Wazir Khan Mosque will emerge as a strong symbol of Pakistan - United States partnership as well as the respect the US has for the rich and diverse cultural and religious heritage of Pakistan and the respect for the people of Pakistan.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan Service Tribunal Mumtaz Ahmad.

Azad demands concerned quarters to nab culprits behind labourers killing in Gwadar

KHANEWAL (APP): Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad, Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on Tuesday demanded the concerned quarters to nab culprits behind labourers killing in Gwadar.

A handful of terrorists are trying to disrupt law and order situation in the country, he said while talking to journalists after attending funeral prayer of mother of Jameel Khan Pathan, a known political and social figure, in Darul Uloom Eid Gah Kabir walla.

Expressing views on Gwadar tragedy, he said that the killing of innocent labourers in Gwadar is a conspiracy to spread fear and chaos in the country, which will not be allowed at any cost.

Regretting over brutal killing of seven people in Gwadar, he said that he is with the bereaved family in this hour of sorrow. He demanded the concerned quarters to arrest those who are responsible for the murder of innocent labourers.



LAHORE: United States (US) Consul General in Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins visit the Historical place Masjid wazir khan and the Shrine of Imam Gammu after unveiling of plaque of Conservation and Rehabilitation of Southern Side of Wazir Khan Mosque Funded by U.S Department of State and Government of the Punjab.

CECVE, PHILDAT, IRI joins hands to counter violent extremism

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CECVE), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and Islamic Research Institute (IRI), International Islamic University on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop joint projects to strengthen local communities in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The MoU was signed by Chief Coordination Officer KP CECVE Dr Ayaz Khan, President PILDAT, Ahmad Bilal Mehboob, and Professor Zia Ul Haq of Islamic Research Institute (IRI) during a ceremony held at Islamabad, said a press release issued here Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Ayaz Khan highlighted the role and efforts of CECVE for the promotion of peace and tolerance in society.

One woman killed, several injured by dacoits in Shikarpur

SHIKARPUR: An other incident of lawlessness occurred in Shikarpur in the jurisdiction of Rustam police station on last late night in which dacoits opened fires on Car which resulted one woman was killed and three others including woman and child got bullet injuries.

According to reports reached here that some group of armed men opened fires upon a car for road robbery when driver did not stopped the vehicle.

As a result of firing, one woman identified as Musamat Shabnam wife of Muhammad Mirza Mangi succumbed to his injuries. While three others including Car driver Abdul Rahman Mahar and one woman and a minor girl caught bullet injured.

The injured were sent to Sukkur hospital for their medical treatment in precarious condition.

The large number of relatives and angry villagers had protested at Police station Rustam and raised slogans for transfer of sitting SHO Khalil Rind and provide them justice.

KP Tourism advisor bans free accommodation for VIPs in Govt rest houses

ABBOTTABAD: The Advisor for Tourism to the Chief Minister KP Zahid Khan Zeb in response to public complaints has announced an immediate ban on the free accommodation of VIP personalities and their families in government rest houses across the province.

The Advisor aims to address concerns raised by the tourists who often struggle to find accommodation in govt rest houses, cottages, and camping pods under the Tourism and Culture Department. Meanwhile, VIPs and their families have been availing these facilities for free, sometimes for extended periods.

Zahid Khan Zeb has also issued notifications to ensure compliance with the ban, directing all relevant authorities including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority.

International News

Israel pushes into north, south Gaza as toll surpasses 35,000

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: The death toll from Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Oct7 has crossed 35,000, according to the health ministry, as Israel's forces pushed further into north and south corners of the besieged enclave for fresh assault.

In a statement on Monday, the Gaza health ministry put the death toll at 35,091, with 57 killed in the past 24 hours.

Israeli forces pushed deep into the ruins of Gaza's northern edge on Monday to recapture an area where they claimed to have dismantled Hamas months ago, while in the south, tanks and troops pushed across a highway into Rafah.

Israeli operations in Rafah, which borders Egypt, have closed a main crossing point for aid, which humanitarian groups say is worsening an already dire situation.

Gaza's health authority on Monday appealed for international pressure to reopen access via the southern border to allow in aid and medical supplies. "The wounded and sick suffer a slow death because there is no treatment and supplies and they cannot travel," it said.

In northern Gaza's Jabalia camp, residents fled along rubble-strewn streets carrying bags of belongings. Tank shells landed in the centre of the camp and airstrikes destroyed clusters of houses, they said. Health officials said they had recovered 20 bodies of

Palestinians killed in overnight airstrikes.

"We don't know where to go. We have been displaced from one place to the next... We are running in the streets. I saw it with my own eyes. I saw the tank and the bulldozer. It is on that street," said one woman, who did not give her name. Attending a Memorial Day ceremony to mark Israel's fallen soldiers in Jerusalem on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the war against Hamas is a struggle to secure Israel's "existence, liberty, security and prosperity." In Rafah, Israel stepped up aerial and ground bombardments on the eastern areas of the city, killing people in an airstrike on a house.



Palestinians carry the dead body of a child recovered from under the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Turkey says to apply to intervene in ICJ genocide case against Israel

Monitoring Desk KHARKIV: Two teachers met with a smile at the steel door, and down the concrete staircase the mother and daughter clattered, hand in hand, through another blast door and into the bunker for the first day of school.

Hundreds of children began lessons this week in Ukraine's first purpose-built bunker school, 6 metres (20 feet) below the ground to protect them from Russian drone and missile attacks.

Kharkiv's primary school 155 is reached through a door in a small white concrete box on the pavement. At the bottom of the stairs classrooms branch off a corridor. There are no windows, but the rooms are brightly lit and the hallways painted in white and lime green.

Ukraine's second-biggest city, located in the country's northeast near the Russian border, has been under relentless Russian attack since Moscow's invasion was halted at its ramparts 26 months ago.

US ban on Russian-enriched uranium imports begins Aug 11

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: A US ban on imports of enriched uranium from Russia will take effect on Aug. 11, the Department of Energy said on Tuesday. The ban, signed into law by President Joe Biden on Monday, allows waivers in case nuclear power plants have supply issues. The waivers will end on or before Jan 1, 2028.

It was the latest move by Washington aimed at reducing revenues available to Russian President Vladimir Putin to fight the war in Ukraine.

Melinda to leave Gates Foundation, receive \$12.5bn

Monitoring Desk LOS ANGELES: Melinda French Gates on Monday announced she was leaving the mega philanthropy foundation which she established with her ex-husband (the co-founder of Microsoft), Bill Gates.

The resignation, which will come into effect on June 7, will leave Bill Gates as the sole chair of one of the world's most influential and powerful non-governmental organisations.

White House does not see Gaza killings as genocide

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Monday that President Joe Biden's administration did not view the killings of Palestinians in Gaza by Israel as genocide.

Sullivan, speaking to reporters at the White House, said the United States wants to see Hamas defeated, that Palestinians facing the brunt of Israeli onslaught were in "hell", and that a major military operation by Israel in Rafah would be a mistake.

"We do not believe what is happening in Gaza is a genocide. We have been firmly on record rejecting that proposition," Sullivan said.

Biden, who is running for re-election this year, has faced heavy criticism from his own supporters domestically for his support of Israel; some of those critics have accused Israel of committing genocide.

Reiterating a comment Biden made on Saturday, Sullivan said there could be a ceasefire in Gaza now if Hamas would release prisoners.

The world should be calling on Hamas to return to the negotiating table and accept a deal, Sullivan said.

The United States is working urgently for a ceasefire and prisoner release deal, Sullivan said. He said he could not predict when or if such a deal would be sealed.

Belousov says Russia must win in Ukraine while minimising casualties

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia's main task is to achieve victory on the battlefield in Ukraine with the minimal loss of troops, incoming defence minister Andrei Belousov said on Tuesday.

Belousov, an economist whom President Vladimir Putin unexpectedly nominated on Sunday to replace Sergei Shoigu, said the military sector needed more efficiency and innovation in order to achieve its goals.

"The key task, of course, remains achieving victory. Ensuring the achievement of the military-political goals of the special military operation, set by the president. At the same time - I want to specifically emphasise this - with minimal human losses," he told a parliamentary hearing.

His comments were striking because Russian officials rarely discuss casualties in the war except to praise the heroism of fallen soldiers.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine publishes details of their dead and wounded. But Western military analysts say Russia, with a population more than three times larger than Ukraine's, has shown itself much more willing to incur heavy casualties for the sake of even incremental gains. Russian officials say such analysis, as it comes from the West, is neither objective nor accurate. Belousov presented himself as a man of integrity, telling parliamentarians: "I have always been, and will be, guided by the reinforced concrete principle 'You can make mistakes (but) you can't lie.'" Belousov, who has no military experience, has been tasked by Putin with maximising efficiencies in Russia's war economy as its troops.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken watches Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky greet US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink prior to their meeting in Kyiv.

Singapore's incoming PM makes minor cabinet reshuffle, seeks 'continuity and stability'

Monitoring Desk SINGAPORE: Singapore's incoming prime minister Lawrence Wong appointed a new deputy premier in a minor reshuffle of the cabinet on Monday, as he gears up to become the city-state's fourth leader since its independence six decades ago.

Trade Minister Gan Kim Yong was given the additional role of deputy prime minister, one of two in Wong's cabinet, according to the prime minister's office. Gan, 65, will also take Wong's job as chair of the board of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the central bank said.

Wong will retain the finance portfolio and takes over on Wednesday from 72-year-old Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Clashes break out in Afghanistan over poppy crop clearing

Monitoring Desk FAIZABAD: Clashes broke out on Monday between Taliban forces tasked with clearing poppy crops and farmers in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, residents said. Poppy cultivators threw rocks and demanded Taliban security units not destroy their crops, said Jamaluddin, a resident of Barlas Shalmar village in the Argo district of Badakhshan whose name has been changed for security reasons.

In response, Taliban authorities fired their guns to disperse villagers, Jamaluddin, who witnessed the incident, said. An nurse at a medical facility in Argo said the clinic received "two dead and nine wounded people" from the Barlas area — a string of three neighbouring villages. A statement from the Taliban's army unit in Badakhshan said there had been protests to prevent poppy clearing in Argo.

Modi files candidacy for parliamentary seat in India's election in holy city Varanasi

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Cheering crowds greeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday as he submitted his candidacy for a Hindu holy city's parliamentary seat in a general election his party is strongly favoured to win.

Modi remains roundly popular in India, in large part due to his cultivated image as an aggressive champion of the country's majority faith.

Varanasi is the spiritual capital of Hinduism, where devotees from around India come to cremate deceased loved ones by the Ganges river, and the premier has represented the city since sweeping to power a decade ago.

"I swear on God... I will have faith and allegiance to India's constitution," Modi said before handing over the paperwork to an election registrar, flanked by a Hindu mystic dressed in a loin cloth.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasizes need of professional officers, technocrats to achieve government's objectives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that there was an urgent need for skilled and professional officers and technocrats to achieve the fundamental objectives of the government.

He stated this while presiding over a high-level meeting to discuss the role and reforms of the Planning Commission with a committee formed on the instructions of the prime minister, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, important aspects of economic reforms and capacity building necessary for sustainable development of Pakistan were reviewed.

Federal Minister for Power and Water Resources, Mosaad Malik, MNA Ali Pervez Malik, Planning Secretary, Cabinet Secretary and senior officials of the Ministry of

Planning participated in the meeting.

Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the importance of capacity building within line ministries to ensure the efficient preparation of project proposals (PC-Is), thereby enabling the Planning Ministry to focus on strategic planning and thought leadership.

The minister emphasized that over the past 16 months, sector specialists from the market had been recruited within the Planning Ministry to strengthen the technical capabilities across diverse sectors and accelerate project completion.

He emphasized that over the past 16 months, the sector specialists from the market had been recruited within the ministry to strengthen the technical capabilities across diverse sectors and accelerate project completion.

Ahsan Iqbal acknowledged the effective functioning of the operational

and technical sections within the ministry.

However, he emphasized the need to attract top talent from the market to enhance thought leadership within the ministry.

To achieve this, the minister signified the importance of revised remuneration, adding "We have to revise our pay scales to attract people with professional skills and experience from the market."

Reflecting the past achievements, Ahsan Iqbal cited the successful formulation and implementation of Vision 2025 during 2013-18.

In addition, the Planning Ministry has the credit of achieving substantial savings amounting to Rs 700 billion from the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) over five years from 2013 to 2018. This accomplishment was made possible through rigorous scrutiny of PSDP projects and careful financial management.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson BISP, Ms. Rubina Khalid, receives a comprehensive briefing from Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, during an introductory meeting at BISP HQs in Islamabad on May 14, 2024. Also in attendance are Addl. Secretary BISP, Dr. Tahir Noor, and all Directors General of BISP.

Chairperson BISP urges dignity, empowerment for needy women

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid has underscored the importance of upholding the self-respect and dignity of BISP's deserving women.

Addressing senior management and officers during an introductory meeting at BISP Headquarters, she emphasized the need for unwavering commitment to providing essential services to the programme's beneficiaries.

Rubina Khalid made it unequivocally clear that any instances of mismanagement or misconduct would not be tolerated under her leadership, and strict action would be taken against individuals involved.

Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, endorsed the chairperson's statement, reinforcing the commitment

to accountability and efficiency within the organization.

Additionally, Ms. Khalid expressed her intention to personally visit BISP field offices to monitor the situation closely, emphasizing her hands-on approach to ensuring effective implementation of her directives.

Emphasizing transparency and empowerment, she stressed the establishment of bank accounts for BISP beneficiaries, allowing them to access their funds independently, thus minimizing human intervention.

The chairperson emphasized the significance of vocational and technical training, particularly for the children of beneficiaries, as a means to alleviate their hardships and contribute positively to their families' well-being.

Lawmakers call of setting aside political differences, taking steps towards welfare

ISLAMABAD (APP): The lawmakers in the National Assembly on Tuesday called of setting aside political differences and taking steps towards welfare, development, and progress of the country.

Speaking in the National Assembly, Pakistan Peoples Party's Sharmila Farooq said that Asif Ali Zardari was the only civilian who had been elected president twice. She urged political parties to bury politics of hate and confrontation, focusing instead on the welfare of the masses and the uplift of the nation.

She said that it was the responsibility of elected representatives to demonstrate unity and address the issues affecting the people. Ali Muhammad Khan, leader of the Sunni Ittehad Council, said his party not against the dialogue.

He said, that political parties must prioritize decisions that promote the

country's development.

He called for political leadership to set aside differences and focus on resolving the public's issues promptly. Farooq Sattar from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan questioned governance in Sindh province, urging the provincial government to take measures to improve law and order in Karachi.

He requested the prime minister's attention towards development initiatives and the establishment of a modern transport system. The lawmaker advocated for the implementation of universal education programs and the improvement of the healthcare system in the province, urging political parties to unite in their efforts for the country's welfare. Pakistan Peoples Party Leader, Abdul Qadir Patel praised President Asif Ali Zardari's recent address to the joint sitting of parliament.



LAHORE: Senior Journalist and Columnist Mujibur Rahman Shami and Salman Ghani giving shields to the participants in the discussion organized by the Press Information Department on the theme "Religious Harmony."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting of committee for improving the structure and capabilities of Planning Commission.

Climate finance pivotal point in journey towards sustainable resilience in Pakistan: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam said that climate finance was a pivotal point in the country's journey towards securing sustainable resilience in Pakistan.

Addressing the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)'s round-table titled "Climate Finance: Towards Securing Sustainable Resilience in Pakistan" here on Tuesday, the PM's Coordinator said that country must strive to conceive bankable finance in the most cost-efficient manner, leveraging both public and private resources to maximise impact which necessitates a strategic approach aligned with national development priorities.

Romina said, "As we convene here today, the imperative for action on climate change has never been more pressing. The challenges we face are multifaceted, demanding innovative solutions and concerted efforts at both the national and international levels."

She mentioned that the role of non-state technocrats could not be overstated as their expertise and insights were invaluable in designing bankable projects that not only address climate vulnerabilities but also unlock economic opportunities for the local communities.

By harnessing the collective intelligence of technocrats on a regional level, we can ensure the viability and scalability of our climate finance initiatives.

Furthermore, climate diplomacy offers a powerful avenue for advancing our agenda on sustainable finance.

Pakistan must engage with the global community, leveraging diplomatic channels to advocate for our climate priorities and forge partnerships that enable greater access to finance.

By positioning ourselves as proactive and constructive players on the global stage, we can attract the necessary investments to drive our climate resilience efforts forward.

Randhawa chairs Islamabad Development Working Party meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting of Islamabad Development Working Party here at his office. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior, Planning Commission, Pakistan EPA, PWD, Islamabad Police, Local Government and Rural Development and other departments attended the meeting, said the Spokesman of Chief Commissioner Office Nouman Nazim.

A total of 24 development projects were presented in the meeting, including 17 projects of the Local Government, 4 projects of the Islamabad Police, 2 projects of the Agriculture Department, and 1 project of the Libraries Department spanning from grassroots endeavours to modernizing urban infrastructure. With a strategic focus on community involvement, the meeting heralded a new era of collaborative governance. The Chief Commissioner Islamabad directed that all projects be shifted to Geographic Information System (GIS).

Ashrafi presents copy of 'Code of Conduct for Pilgrims' to Saudi envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman and Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Patron-in-Chief, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Tuesday conveyed a meeting with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki and presented him a copy of the 'Code of Conduct for Pilgrims'.

He expressed gratitude to the leadership of Saudi Arabia, particularly to the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Dr. Nizamuddin and Nadeem Mujtaba.

Iranian embassy denounces Nakba Day, demands justice for Palestinian victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Iranian Embassy on Tuesday, marking the Nakba Day, denounced the "apartheid and occupying Zionist regime" for its ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people.

The embassy, in a statement, emphasized that the dark legacy of the Nakba was the "76 years of occupation of Palestinian land" characterized by genocide, displacement, and the violation of human rights.

It accused the Zionist regime of committing "the most heinous crimes ever throughout the history of mankind," including war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

IG Islamabad pins rank badges to newly promoted 91 Sub Inspectors

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a series of departmental promotions are underway in Islamabad Police, a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this regard, a prestigious ceremony was held to promote new officers to the rank of Sub Inspector at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad.

IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi graced the event as a special guest, while senior police officers, and the families of newly promoted inspectors were also present on this occasion.

Over 1,300 patients get treatment at Army medical camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army has organized a medical camp at Raichand Higher Secondary School Chelhar in Tharparkar, providing free medical treatment to over 1,300 patients.

The camp, which included lab testing facilities and minor surgical procedures, aimed to address the healthcare needs of the local residents, PTV reported.

The medical camp was staffed by experienced doctors and paramedical personnel who provided treatment for various ailments, including malaria, diabetes, blood pressure, and stomach diseases.

IRSA releases 217,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 217,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 239,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.00 feet and was 72.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 61,200 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1173.30 feet, which was 123.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

My prayer is that whatever promotion you have achieved, may Allah Almighty give you the grace to do justice with it. May your children consider you their hero, may your mother feel proud of you.

Perpetrators of May 9 incidents to face legal consequences: Amir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr. Amir Muqam on Tuesday emphasized that those involved in the May 9 incidents should not escape legal consequences and must be dealt with according to the law.

Speaking here in National Assembly, he said that a political party should see its past as it remained involved in unrest in the country after 2013 general elections.

They were previously involved in attacking Parliament and Pakistan Television, stirring unrest and now were discussing similar disruptive actions, the minister added.

However, he affirmed that such actions would not be tolerated this time, emphasizing the rule of law.

He also highlighted the damages inflicted on critical locations such as the

Chakdara toll plaza and the Radio Pakistan office in Peshawar on May 9, emphasizing that the public was keenly aware of the perpetrators behind these incidents.

The minister stated that an individual was currently facing in around 100 genuine cases and he should confront them directly, rather than resorting to misleading the nation through mere slogans.

He stated that the former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) cabinet and machinery were utilized for organizing protest gatherings in Islamabad and at the Governor's House in Peshawar.

The minister emphasized that the lives of ordinary people were significantly impacted, with ambulances being stopped due to protests by a certain party in the past, making the public the ultimate victim.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Mr. Mitsuhiro WADA called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

PM Coordinator advises PTI to engage in unconditional national dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ishaan Afzal Khan Tuesday advised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief to change attitude and accept unconditional grand national dialogue with government as a way forward.

Talking to PTV news, he said that his party wanted to establish a "working relationship"

with all other parties, and that the PTI was not cooperating with other parties in order to counter challenges including the economy.

He said that the opposition should support any legislation aimed to protect the national interest, adding, the opposition will be replying to a question, he said that PTI should wait till next general election in the country.

Federal Govt gives historic relief package for AJK people: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu & Kashmir Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan on Tuesday said that the Federal Government had given a historic relief package worth Rs 23 billion for the people of AJK. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said that due to the timely intervention of PM Shehbaz, the issue of subsidies had been amicably resolved.

The AJK Government, he said, issued notifications for subsidies in flour and electricity prices. Under the relief pack-

age, he said, the price of flour had been reduced from Rs 3,100 to Rs 2,000 per 40 kilograms. Likewise, the consumers would be charged Rs 3 per unit for usage of upto 100 units, Rs 5 for 100-300 units, and Rs 6 above 300 units, while commercial rates were fixed at Rs 10 per unit for upto 300 units and Rs 15 for above 300 units. The minister reiterated that the Federal Government had not only resolved the issue amicably but also thwarted the attempts of some elements to exploit the situation for political gains.

Islamabad Police launches "Voice for the Voiceless" to recuperate abandoned animals

ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali



Nasir Rizvi, has decided to launch the initiative "Voice for the Voiceless" for the treatment and rehabilitation of the abandoned, injured, and sick animals.

In this regard, the Islamabad Police DIG Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer and Zulfishan Anushay from JFK Animal Rescue and Shelter Organization have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), under which the Islamabad Police is going to set up Police Animal Welfare Services (PAWS).

The primary goal of this initiative is the welfare of homeless, retired, and non-serviceable animals, whether they belong to government or private institutions.

The project includes establishment of a shelter home, a pet cafe, and a pet hotel for these animals, where citizens who travel or go on long journeys can avail these facilities for

their pet; where the best care of these animals will be ensured through professional caretakers.

Moreover, this center will be built on most modern lines and international standards. Under PAWS, a K-9 mission will also be organized for the K-9 unit dogs of Islamabad Police, where, after retirement, these dogs will be handed over to citizens for complete care.

Further assistance will be sought from other animal welfare organizations as needed.

On this occasion, the IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that this initiative is genuinely a voice for the voiceless and its echo should reach the entire world through the message of love and care for the animals as an important component of the environment, nature and human life.

He further said that animals that retire after serving in any force should not be put down; instead, their complete care should be ensured.