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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: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.



ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressed the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting.

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 where 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 Amir Moghadam, Acting President Gilani said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations based on historical, cultural, and literary linkages.

Opposition to resist defamation bill

LAHORE (INP): Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Tuesday said that a black law is being implemented. Speaking to the media outside Lahore's Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC), Omar stated that they will resist the black law in the national and provincial assemblies. He stated that according to the constitution, no one's speech can be banned. Omar Ayub added that whoever talked about Ayub Khan's martial law, ask him what Nawaz Sharif

did. He further said that Babar Awan has explained the whole law to the court. 'I am grateful to the court who gave justice. I don't have the will to travel all over Pakistan in one day, these are all false cases'.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Babar Awan added that the Chief Minister and Law Minister are insulting the court. The law made to arrest the journalists will not work, they will approach the court against it. He stated that PTI stands with the journalists.

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.

Dr. Raghb Naemi appointed as CII chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Muhammad Raghb Hussain Naemi, 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. Naemi is also the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Naemi and Chairman of the Muttahida 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 Naemi 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.

OGRA proposes up to 10% reduction in gas prices

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) proposed a 4 per cent to 10 per cent reduction in gas prices, on Tuesday.

The spokesperson of OGRA issued an official statement on proposed new gas prices and announced a reduction in gas prices for Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL).

The OGRA spokesperson said the gas price for SNGPL has been reduced by 10%, bringing the average proposed price to Rs 1635.90 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit (mmbtu), a decrease of Rs 179.17 per mmbtu.

For SSGCL, the OGRA spokesperson said the gas price has been reduced by 4%, with the average proposed price now set at Rs 1401.25 per mmbtu, a reduction of Rs 59.23 per mmbtu.

The spokesperson also outlined the estimated revenue requirements for both the companies [SNGPL and SSGCL] for the financial year 2024-25.

The OGRA spokesperson said the decision regarding these gas price adjustments has been sent to the federal government for final approval.

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.

'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 long-standing 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.

Salik pledges to provide state-of-art medical facilities to Pakistani Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain Tuesday pledged to provide state-of-the-art medical facilities to the Hajj pilgrims and available stock of medicines and other devices catering to the emergency needs of the intending pilgrims were being ensured. Talking to a Private news channel, he said that a medical contingent, comprising specialist doctors, nurses, and paramedics, was also extending basic health services to the pilgrims round the clock, adding, separate male and female wards had been also been established.

The minister said that the Pakistan Hajj Mission had also arranged ambulance services to fetch and drop ailing pilgrims from their buildings to the hospitals, adding, elaborate arrangements had also been made to shift serious patients to Saudi hospitals.

He said there would be no compromise on quality of medicines. The minister also appreciated the Saudi government's efforts for making the Hajj more affordable for the Pakistani pilgrims.

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 Attorney 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.

He further observed No Pakistani be a journalist or parliamentarian is supporting terrorists. No court, judge, journalist, lawyer and parliamentarian talks of preventing agencies from working as per law. They talk of preventing them from doing the work against the law. If the procedure of working of agencies becomes clear then it will be good. In law FIA and police can investigate. Agencies can assist in investigation. We have to work within the ambit of law.

Attorney General (AG) Mansoor Awan said we have done a lot of work in missing persons cases.

We will do it what is left. Please give some time more. The political solution to this matter is being explored.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked ceasefire is done in war by waving white flag. Solution is found through talks.

AG said in reply we also request this that some time be given. The missing persons matter will be taken up in next two meetings of cabinet. Court should make change in the committee of DG ISI, SI, DG MI and DG IB. Court should put it in below DG level people so that coordination process is eased.

Judge replied I will issue order. You see it. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani while moving to AG said "AG Sahb tell this where are people like you who resolves problems.

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.

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.

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.

PTI spokesperson Raof Hasan injured in Islamabad attack

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.



Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

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 disasters 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 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 other times 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 kick-backs, because the latter are not received directly in bank accounts, but more often in cash. On top of that, those who give these kick-backs 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 incorrecly, 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 research 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.



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.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awasi 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

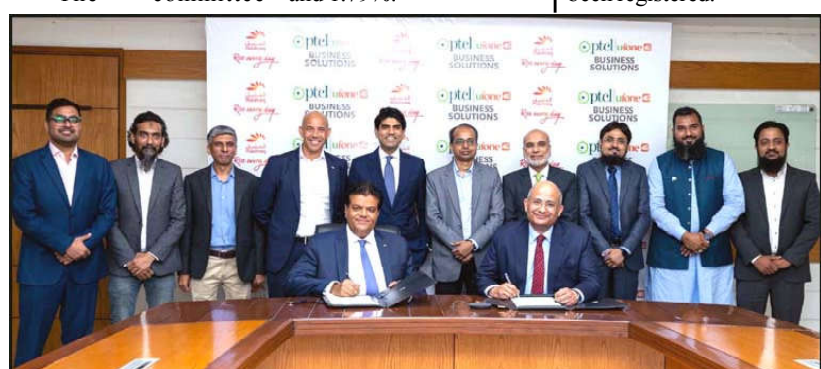
ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accounts Committee (NAC) on Tuesday approved the provisional growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country at 2.38 per cent for the ongoing fiscal year (2023-24).

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 Busharat Qureshi, Group VP Enterprise Solutions PTCL Group also attended the signing ceremony.

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.

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.

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: 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.

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.

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.



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 out 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



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.

PM for maximum utilization of IT sector's potential

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed upon the need of maximum utilization of opportunities in the Information and Technology sector as the country possessed immense potential in this field. He said the government was taking all possible steps for the promotion of IT sector and urged the IT industry to play its role in the country's economy by supporting the government. The prime minister chaired a meeting on the

matters related to Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications and National Information Technology Board. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal (via video link), Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Khan Cheema, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Coordinator Rana

Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister observed that Pakistani entrepreneurs had played a very critical role in the promotion and development of IT sector. He directed for taking of suitable steps for improving the quality of 4G services in the country. The prime minister while underscoring the need of taking practical steps, on priority basis, to enhance IT export, directed for resolution of issues faced by

the IT industry for further enhancing of harmony between the government and the IT industry. The Governor State Bank of Pakistan was directed that there should be no hurdles from the banks with regard to the debit cards and foreign currency issues of the exporters of software products. The prime minister also underlined that the Higher Education Commission, universities and the training institutes should work on priority basis to increase the number of IT professionals.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the matters related to Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications and National Information Technology Board.



DHAKA: Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman Pakistan Prime Minister's Youth Programme delivering statement during 1st D-8 Youth Ministerial Meeting being held in Dhaka.

Chairman of PMYP addresses D-8 youth ministers' meeting in Dhaka

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a momentous address at the D-8 Youth Ministers' meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan representing the Government of Pakistan, highlighted the importance of youth empowerment and collaboration among D-8 countries.

Acknowledging the exceptional leadership of Mr. Nazmul Hassan MP, Minister of Youth and Sports of Bangladesh, the Chairman expressed gratitude for the successful hosting of the meeting, which showcased Bangladesh's dedication to youth development. The Chairman elaborated on Pakistan's comprehensive approach to youth empowerment through the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, highlighting initiatives such as skills development, education, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability. Pakistan demonstrated its commitment to providing opportunities for its youth.

With a focus on youth development, the Chairman underscored Pakistan's commitment to nurturing its vibrant and dynamic youth population. Recognizing the commendable efforts of the D-8 Secretariat and Secretary-General, the Chairman emphasized the significance of integrating youth empowerment into the D-8 agenda.

Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of networking and collaboration among youth leaders.

Tyrian White case: IHC larger bench rejects petition against Imran

ISLAMABAD (Online): A 3-member larger bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has rejected the petition filed against PTI founder Imran Khan for not showing his alleged daughter Tyrian White in nomination papers declaring it non maintainable. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri remarked there is closed envelope in this file. Open it. There are decision of two judges. 2 judges have declared the petition non maintainable. Therefore, how can we hear this case further. He gave these remarks on Tuesday.

The petition came up for hearing before a three members larger bench of IHC comprising Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and justice Saman Rafat Imitiaz Tuesday.

Education ministry to launch 'Each One Teach One' initiative to eradicate illiteracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, a landmark move to combat illiteracy in Pakistan, the Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (FE&PT), with the support of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), has announced the launch of the "Each One Teaches One" (EOTO) initiative under the Prime Minister's Roshan Pakistan - National Literacy Drive. This groundbreaking program aims to eradicate illiteracy and empower citizens

across Pakistan by mobilizing students from schools, colleges, and universities to serve as literacy teachers, said a press release on Tuesday. The EOTO initiative, meticulously designed and led by the National Commission for Human Development under the Ministry of FE&PT, also aims to harness the potential of Pakistan's youth by engaging students from schools, colleges, and universities as literacy teachers. The Secretary's vision is to empower citizens across Pakistan through education, thereby contributing to the country's broader development objectives.

NDMA issues alert to departments' concerned amid GLOF threat in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in view of possible Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) threat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Tuesday issued an alert to the departments concerned.

After the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted a possible GLOF in KP and GB, the NDMA issued instructions to PDMA, KP and GBDMA. In view of increasing temperature and meteorological conditions, GLOF or severe floods, landslides and strong winds were likely to increase in the mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan from May 21 to 27. The Provincial Disaster Management Authorities have been directed to be in full coordination with the concerned departments to arrange and pre-deploy necessary inventory and equipment in case of any disruptions, road closures and damage as well as emergencies in vulnerable locations.

BISP blocks 170 fake websites, deactivates 37,389 SIM cards to combat fraudulent practices

ISLAMABAD (APP): In order to combat fraudulent practices, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Technology Wing has so far blocked 170 fake websites and deactivated 37,389 SIM cards involved in scams with the help of concerned departments.

This was disclosed during a briefing given to the Chairperson BISP, Rubina Khalid by the Technology Wing officials during a meeting held here Tuesday.

The officials revealed the significant achievements by the Technology Wing including the blocking of 170 fake websites in cooperation with the FIA and the deactivation of 37,389 fraudulent SIM cards. The meeting was aimed at discussing the ongoing efforts and future strategies to counter fraudulent activities associated with BISP. The meeting was also attended by the Additional Secretary of BISP, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor. The primary focus of the meeting was to brief the Chairperson about the Technology Wing's functions and the measures taken so far to combat fraud. Rubina Khalid emphasized the need to publicly identify and shame those involved in fraudulent activities that

defame BISP. She advocated for a "name and shame" policy to deter future misconduct and protect the integrity of the program. During the meeting, Rubina Khalid instructed the Technology team to organize a meeting next week with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and other relevant stakeholders to address and resolve security issues collaboratively. She also directed the Technology Wing to draft a comprehensive proposal to present to the FIA, aiming to strengthen their efforts in tackling individuals

involved in fraudulent activities that defame BISP. She advocated for a "name and shame" policy to deter future misconduct and protect the integrity of the program. During the meeting, Rubina Khalid instructed the Technology team to organize a meeting next week with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and other relevant stakeholders to address and resolve security issues collaboratively. She also directed the Technology Wing to draft a comprehensive proposal to present to the FIA, aiming to strengthen their efforts in tackling individuals

Senate expresses grief, sorrow over martyrdom of Iranian President

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution expressing profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in a tragic helicopter crash on May 19.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam visits Iranian Embassy to extend her heartfelt condolences over martyrdom of Iranian President Agha Ebrahim Raisi and Iranian FM Hussain Ameer.

The resolution was presented by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Senator Sherry Rehman in the House. The resolution expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of President Iran.

PBM empowers 190,000 destitute children through Rehabilitation Schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 190,222 trainees have successfully completed their training from 159 Pakistan Bait ul Mal Schools for the Rehabilitation of Child Labour working across the country since 1995 to enable destitute children to achieve self-sufficiency. According to the website of Pakistan Bait ul Mal (PBM), 19,888 trainees have also benefited from these schools since their inception. The main objective of Pakistan Bait ul-Mal (PBM) is to serve destitute, needy widows, orphans, invalids, infirm, and other needy persons. PBM initiated the establishment of PBM schools for the rehabilitation of child labor (SRCL) in 1995 under the name of the National Centre for Rehabilitation of Child Labor (NCRCL). Within these schools, orphans and children engaged in hazardous labor receive complimentary primary education. Over time, it underwent a name change to Pakistan Bait ul Mal School for Rehabilitation of Child Labor (PBM-SRCL). Among the 159 SRCL establishments, 46 are located in Punjab, 20 in South Punjab, 37 in Sindh, 24 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 14 in Baluchistan, 13 in Islamabad Capital Territory/Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

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Police determined to address public' issues on priority: SP Rural

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SP Rural Zone holds a Khuli Kachehri at Shahzad Town Police Station, a public relations officer said. He said that the Khuli Kachehri was attended by citizens and senior police officials. Khuli Kachehri are being held as per the directions of IGP Islamabad across the city to ensure the early redressal of public complaints. At the outset of the proceedings, the participants shared their grievances and also gave suggestions to resolve them. The

SP Rural Zone Shoaib Masood issued orders on the spot to address the issues of the participants and assured them that their suggestions will be taken into account. He highlighted that police were determined to resolve the issues faced by the citizens. However, Khuli Kachehri were helpful in maintaining direct relationships with the public. He asserted that better strategy on part of the police led to reduction in crime in the city. Islamabad Police are taking steps to control crime further. He asked the participants to cooperate with the police in controlling the crime in the city.



ISLAMABAD: Police officials are busy in investigation outside a local news channel office after the attack on PTI Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan from transgender in the Federal Capital.

Iranian people not to forget concern of Pakistan over death of Raisi: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Iran Reza Amiri Moghadam has extended his heartfelt gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for expressing sympathies and solidarity over the martyrdom of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hussain Amirabduhahian and other dignitaries in the consequence of a helicopter crash. This was stated by him while talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari who along with a delegation visited to the Embassy to condole the death of President Raisi

and other high-ups in the tragic incident. Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam while describing Pakistan a great friend of Iran said that President Raisi's vision of strengthening and promoting Pakistan-Iran relations would continue and all the agreements inked on the occasion of his recent visit to Pakistan will be implemented letter and spirit and that there will be no change in the foreign policy of Iran. He especially expressed his thanks to President and Prime Minister of Pakistan for sharing their deep concern and grief over the tragedy.



Students of Political Science Department from Islamic International University, Islamabad visiting senate museum at Parliament House, Islamabad

ICP ensuring foolproof security at High Security Zone

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Officer (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi the Islamabad Police is using all available resources to ensure the peace and tranquility within the federal capital, a public relations officer said. He said that the Islamabad Police ensured data registration, identification documents and effective search of citizens entering the high security zone on a regular basis. During the last week, the Islamabad Police removed tinted glasses from 942 vehicles and improper number plates from 125 vehicles. Strict directions have been issued to police officers and officials performing their duties at high security zone checkpoints to exercise their duty with full responsibility.

Health delegation from Ethiopia visits HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the health sector of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on Tuesday visited the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and held a fruitful discussion with the management of the commission for potential collaboration between the two countries in healthcare and education sector. On arrival, the HEC management including its Chairman Dr Mukhtar Ahmed accorded a warm welcome to the delegation led by Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a press release of embassy said issued here. The two sides had a detailed discussion on the matters of mutual interest including the modalities for initiating a collaboration for sharing knowledge, experiences and expertise in the health sector. They also discussed arrangements regarding mutual initiatives for capacity building of health experts from both the countries through short and long term training courses. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Jemal Beker said, this is an ideal time for forging strong collaboration in the health and education sector.



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Ambassador of Spain to Pakistan H.E. Jose A. de Ory, addressing during exhibition "Impression of Pakistan" by Gonzelo Ruiz Navarro organized by Pakistan National Council of the Arts and the Embassy of Spain at PNCA.

Randhawa commends role of 'Margalla Hills' firefighters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman and Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday invited the "Margalla Hills" firefighting crew to his office, honouring them as a special guests. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Randhawa acknowledged the successful containment of fires on Margalla Hills. He praised the diligent role of Margalla Hills firefighters, in preventing significant damage through effective fire control. Randhawa stated that the crew was invited for encouragement in accordance with the directive from Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. Additionally, Randhawa confirmed that, following the Federal Minister's directive, the firefighting crew would be rewarded. He mentioned that the crew will be supplied with modern equipment to enhance their accessibility to hills during fire incidents. Additionally, he stated that vehicles will be acquired for transporting the crew during such occurrences. Randhawa cautioned about the heightened risk of fires on Margalla Hills during intense heat and urged the crew to maintain their preparedness as usual.

These countries have been recognized for their favorable business environments, open travel policies, well-developed transport, tourism, and ICT infrastructure, as well as rich natural, cultural, and non-leisure attractions. They collectively accounted for over 75% of the Travel & Tourism industry GDP in 2022 and 70% of GDP growth between 2020 and 2022 Within the Asia-Pacific region, Pakistan shows potential, especially in natural resources and cultural assets.

Swat mayor vows to resist taxes in Malakand, demands economic relief

By Haroon Siraj SWAT: Mayor Shahid Ali Khan has vehemently opposed the proposed taxes in the Malakand Division, pledging to resist any attempts to impose them on the already struggling population. In a press statement, Khan commended Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for announcing that the province will not impose taxes, winning the hearts of the people. However, he emphasized that the government must do more to address the region's economic woes. The people of Swat and Malakand Division have made immense sacrifices in the war against terrorism and have faced natural disasters, devastating their economy," Khan stated. "Instead of imposing taxes, the government should provide employment opportunities and address their issues." Khan warned that any attempt to impose taxes

would face strong resistance from the people. "We will not let the government impose taxes on our people without a fight," he declared. "We demand that the government take stakeholders into confidence and prepare a plan of action with their consultation." The Mayor's statement comes amid growing resentment among the people of Malakand Division over the proposed taxes. The region has faced economic hardship for years, and the proposed taxes are seen as an additional burden on the already struggling population. Khan's bold stance against the government's policies has been welcomed by the people of Swat and Malakand Division, who see it as a beacon of hope. The issue is likely to gain momentum in the coming days, with more protests and demonstrations expected in the region.