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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of an International Consultancy Firm called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM assures to extend facilities to private sector for revival of economy

Okays massive electricity tariff reduction for industrial sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday instructed the relevant authorities to hold consultation with the globally reputed consultancy firms to realize the investment agreements with the friendly countries.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of an international consultancy firm headed by former State Bank Governor Raza Baqir, also directed for consultation with the reputed firms to reduce the volume of government infrastructure and enhance effectiveness of the governance system.

He told the delegation that there existed a huge potential for investment in minerals and energy sectors.

Appreciating the key role of the private sector in national economic development, the prime minister assured of all-out facilitation by the government for economic revival.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Dr Musaddik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Awais

Ahmed Leghari, ministers of state Ali Pervaiz Malik and Shaza Fatima Khawaja and relevant senior officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday approved a massive reduction in electricity tariff for the industrial sector by Rs 10.69 per unit in order to boost production and exports.

In view of the prime minister's initiative, the new electricity price per unit for the industrial and export sector had now been fixed at Rs 34.99, a PM Office press release said. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) had recommended a reduction of Rs 10.69 per unit for industries. "The PM's package, which is expected to provide relief of over Rs 200 billion to the industry, will help bring down the manufacturing cost of the goods making them competitive in the global market," the news release added.

Similarly, the initiative would also help decrease the prices of agriculture commodities.

Government reduces petrol, diesel prices to ease inflation pressure

Petrol price reduced by Rs10.20 per litre while HSD will see a reduction of Rs2.33 per litre

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government announced on Friday a significant reduction in petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) prices for the upcoming fortnight, providing relief to consumers grappling with inflation.

Effective from June 15, petrol prices will decrease by Rs10.20 per litre, bringing the new price to Rs258.16 per litre. HSD will see a reduction of Rs2.33 per litre, with the new rate set at Rs267.89 per litre, according to a

statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

Kerosene oil will remain priced at Rs171.61 per litre, and light diesel oil (LDO) will stay at Rs157.32 per litre in the open market.

Petrol is primarily used for cars and motorcycles, while HSD powers heavy vehicles such as trucks and buses, as well as industrial machinery.

Information Minister Atta Tarar announced that the new prices for petrol and diesel will take effect from midnight tonight.

It is noteworthy that on June 1, the government reduced the price of petrol by Rs4.74 per litre and diesel by Rs3.86 per litre. So far, a total relief of Rs35 per litre has been provided to the public for petrol.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took a historic step to boost industry and exports by reducing the electricity price for industries by Rs 10.69 per unit.

The electricity price for the industrial and export sectors has been set at Rs 34.99 per unit.

Political parties must prioritise country's progress: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr here Friday.

During the meeting issues of mutual interest and country's overall situation were discussed in detail.

President Asif Ali Zardari emphasized we need to take Pakistan forward and everyone has to play their role in this regard.

He stressed that political parties must prioritize the country's progress and prosperity by fulfilling their democratic and constitutional responsibilities. He added we must only think about Pakistan and put aside personal differences.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi concurred that any challenge can be countered through the power of unity and solidarity.

CJP Qazi Faez Isa says Court reporting is a challenging task

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa said on Friday the culture of mudslinging could not be completely eradicated but it could certainly be reduced.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of the Supreme Court Press Association, CJ Isa said judicial reporting was a very challenging task.

The chief justice administered the oath to the new members. Justices Athar Minallah, Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Naeem Akhtar Afghan also participated in the ceremony.

The chief justice said he and his mother, Saeeda Qazi

Isa, used to write articles years ago. In those days, writing involved a lot of research, he said. "It has become very easy to say whatever comes to mind now," the top judge lamented.

The chief justice said that he compiled media rules and published them in the form of a book.

He noted that the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto case had been decided, so now opinions can be formed about it.

The Lahore High Court and the Supreme Court wrote 963 paragraphs in judgments in the Bhutto case, he added.

No point negotiating with powerless govt: Imran

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Friday stated that there is no point in negotiating with a government that lacks authority.

During an informal conversation with the media during the hearing of the £190 million reference at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, he accused the administration of pressuring judges who rule in favour of PTI and criticised the recent budget for burdening salaried individuals.

Khan alleged that a judge from Sargodha in-

formed the Lahore High Court about pressure exerted by intelligence agencies.

He claimed that the judge's household gas supply was cut off and that judges sympathetic to PTI face immense pressure. "Journalists speaking in favour of PTI are being targeted; Raof Hassan was attacked, and Ali Zaman was tortured," Khan asserted, implicating intelligence agencies in these actions. Khan urged the Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa to uphold the rule of law amidst these interferences.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari

Maximum steps being taken for welfare of media community: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that the government was taking all possible steps for welfare of the media community.

Addressing a ceremony regarding launch of the health insurance scheme for the journalists, the minister said the government had been playing its due role for the welfare of journalists community and he had personally requested the prime minister to take more initiatives in that regard.

The minister requested the All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS) to give due rights of the media workers and journalists. He had spoken to the owners of media organizations in that regard, and it was his desire cheques pertaining to outstanding dues should be distributed among the journalists directly instead of through the Implementation Tribunal for Newspaper Employees (ITNE) platform.

He said after assuming charge as information minister, he ensured clearance of the outstanding dues of media organizations on priority. He said former information minister Marriyum Aurangzeb had taken the

initiative of health insurance scheme, and he was carrying forward it.

"Some 5,000 journalists will be provided will be provided medical cover in the first phase and 10,000 more in the second phase," he added.

Rs 1 billion, the minister said, had been allocated for the project in the budget. He said he had requested the Principal Information Officer to add those who died of unnatural causes, in the insurance package so that financial assistance should be provided to their families as well.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif questioning from patient that why he had brought on wooden cot during her visit to OPD of Orthopedic at Sahiwal Teaching Hospital.

Interference of establishment in judiciary will soon come to end: CJ LHC

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief Justice (CJ) Lahore High Court (LHC) Malik Shehzad Ahmad Khan has said establishment interference in judiciary will soon come to end.

"Different institutions are involved in the affairs of judiciary. The interference started from Moulvi Tameez ud Din case. Establishment interference in the matters of judiciary will soon come to end, he said this while addressing a ceremony here Friday.

He went on to say We together will have to get rid of interference in judiciary. Our judiciary is performing

its obligations without fear or inducement. He held "during telephonic talk with a judge he told me all what happened with him. Judge said he does not fear. He will perform his duty honestly.

He remarked complaints have come regarding pressure on judges. Those who fear Allah don't fear any blackmailing.

"I had come out from my home alone for the sake of justice system in 2007, he added.

There is general complaint that judges don't sit in courts on time. We have brought biometric system

in Punjab for the attendance of judges. Action will be taken against the judges who don't reach courts on time.

He underlined there are black sheep every where. Some judges get do their work by readers and go home after sipping tea. CCTVs have been installed in court rooms to see the presence of judges.

The chief justice's comments came after six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges wrote a letter (IHC) Supreme Court on March 25, accusing spy agencies of meddling in judicial affairs.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari briefed by Sarfraz Bugti, Balochistan Chief Minister on his government performance, future plans and other measures regarding solving public problems in the province through video link, in Karachi.

T20 World Cup 2024: Pakistan eliminated as rain abandons USA, Ireland match

Sports Desk

NEW YORK: Pakistan suffered early exit from the T20 World Cup 2024 after USA bagged one point to qualify for the Super Eights following the abandoning of their match against Ireland due to rain.

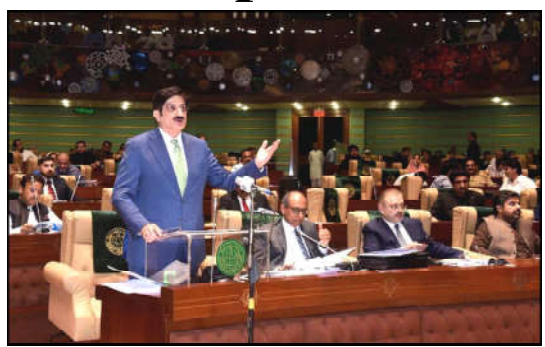
Pakistan's hopes of qualification to the Super Eight Stage in West Indies might remain alive if USA lost against Ireland in today

(June 14) match. However, rain played spoilsport and both the co-hosts and Ireland bagged one point each.

The one point has consolidated the USA second spot in the Group A as Pakistan stand at third place. From this group, India has already qualified for the Super Eights.

The Team Green will face Ireland in the dead rubber on Sunday (June 16).

Govt employees get up to 30pc raise in salaries Sindh Govt presents Rs 3.056.27 trillion development, social protection-oriented budget



KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday presented a Rs. 3.056.27 trillion development and social protection-oriented budget of the province for the next fiscal year 2024-25 on the floor of Provincial Assembly of Sindh.

The next fiscal year's budget marks 34 percent increase over budget estimates of Rs. 2,282.58 billion in current year 2023-24.

The chief minister,

who also holds the portfolio of the Sindh Finance Minister in his budget speech, proposed a hike of 22 to 30 percent in salaries and a significantly higher development expense of Rs 959 billion, which accounts for 31 percent of the outlay.

While terming as the balanced budget, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the budget mainly centred around the rehabilitation of flood-affected people and social protection for the poor.

The total projected revenue for the province is Rs. 3 trillion. The majority of this comes from federal transfers 62 percent, followed by provincial receipts 22 percent. The remaining receipts are through current capital receipts of Rs. 22 billion, foreign project assistance of Rs. 334 billion, other federal grants in the form of PSDP of Rs. 77 billion, foreign grants of Rs. 6 billion

and a carryover cash balance of Rs. 55 billion. Provincial Receipts of Rs. 662 billion comprise Sales Tax on Services of Rs. 350 billion, Tax excluding GST of Rs. 269 billion, and provincial non-tax receipts of Rs. 42.9 billion. These funds are strategically allocated 63 percent or Rs. 1.9 trillion goes towards Current Revenue, 6 percent or Rs. 184 billion for Current

Capital, and the remaining 31 percent or Rs. 959 billion is dedicated to Development Expenditure.

Murad Ali Shah said that a hefty 30 percent increase in salary of employees of BPS-1 to BPS-6 with Personal Allowance 2024 for them have been proposed. He said this relief has been provided to them in order to bring their monthly salary at the level of minimum wage Rs. 37,000 as announced by the federal government.

He said that such remarkable step shall provide a huge relief to the existing staff serving in the non-gazetted category, to cater the challenge of inflation.

Whereas, for the employees in BS-7 to BS-16 increase of 25 percent and for the category of BS-17 and above 22 percent increase in salary have been proposed.

He further said that 15

percent increase in pension of retired employees has been proposed in the budget.

Shah said that considering the surging inflation and increasing cost of living, minimum wage for labour has been proposed as Rs. 37,000 for FY 2024-25.

Salaries account for the largest portion 38 percent, followed by grants 27 percent directed towards various programs. Non-salary expenses 21 percent encompass operational costs, transfers, interest payments, maintenance, and repairs.

Employee pensions and retirement benefits claim the remaining 14 percent of current expenditures. Current Capital Expenditure includes repayments of loans and others of a budgeted amount of Rs. 42 billion and Government Investment of Rs. 142.5 billion.

Court discharges Imran Riaz

LAHORE (Online): Local court of Lahore has ordered to discharge and release Anchorperson Imran Riaz from the case of interference in state affairs.

Police presented Imran Riaz in the court for physical remand.

Police took the plea the accused was arrested a day before being nominated in FIR.



ISLAMABAD: A view of electric buses on their way at a road sector G-7 during test running service in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Budget and politics

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday expressed his 'resolve' to increase Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio to 13pc in the next three years. Addressing a post-budget media briefing, he said: "Our basic principle while framing this budget was to expand the tax base."

Given this statement and his earlier declaration at the launch of the Economic Survey that "countries cannot be run on charity but taxes", it was expected that the new budget would have significant measures to broaden the tax base. The reality of the taxation measures announced by him in the budget, however, does not match his rhetoric. Before we delve into the reasons for this gap, it should be acknowledged that the budget does propose the revocation of certain tax exemptions being enjoyed by certain privileged sectors of the economy. That, though, has been done to raise the annual tax collection to Rs12b.97tr, a sine qua non to qualify for the three-year Extended Fund Facility being sought from the IMF.

One does not have to be a financial wizard to see that the budget still follows the same tried, tested, flopped and, therefore, oft-rejected trope of milking those already in the tax net even more. A large part of the additional revenue measures being proposed target the same two segments — the salaried classes and documented businesses — which already pay the bulk of personal and direct taxes.

At best, the government can only hope that its proposal to levy higher taxes on non-filers trying to buy or sell property will force them to join the tax net voluntarily. At worst, it will force more people to engage in cash transactions and, thus, increase tax evasion.

The next budget, in fact, reflects the ruling PML-N's political concerns more than its economic reform agenda. For one, it has left its traditional support — traders — virtually untouched. Nothing except such political imperatives explain why the finance minister did not levy any direct taxes on retail trade even when the government has talked a lot about it of late.

Similarly, while there is a proposal to levy federal excise duty on property, real estate developers and agents have been shielded from any additional tax burden. This, too, stems from political expediency: the PML-N cannot afford to anger the middle class other than those sections that have already turned against it. The budget, therefore, lacks both imagination and courage. It shows that the finance team did not envision any structural changes to broaden the tax-to-GDP ratio and, instead, chose to stick to old formulae. It also shows that the ruling party is scared of taking bold steps lest it loses whatever little public support and legitimacy it has. Consequently, the budget it has presented signifies nothing but a lost opportunity to fix the system.

A helping hand

Zubeida Mustafa

In a country without institutionalised social security, how do people of limited means survive in an emergency? A wage earner might lose his job unexpectedly, a young woman with small children may be widowed, or a serious illness might strike. The well-to-do have their savings and insurance to help them tide over the emergency. But for the indigent, the options are limited. At best, they can beg, borrow or steal.

It is in this context that the social network system has assumed great significance. Many large communities existed even before Pakistan, such as the Ismailis, Memons, etc. Several biradaris are relatively new, having been formalised after 1947 when populations were uprooted and needed support. The fact is that communities have stepped in to fill the vacuum created by the failure of the state to provide economic and social security to its citizens. A well-known community is the Saudagrani-Delhi.

These communities are structured diversely and perform complex functions. I learnt more about them from Seema Liaquat of the Anjuman-i-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, Partabgarh [Awadh]. Seema's father died in 1974. She is grateful to the AIMPG as it came to her mother's rescue when she was left with four young children. The community assigned her a stipend, which arrived, without fail, every month at her doorstep until her eldest son began to work and support the family. "When my mother requested for the stipend to be discontinued, a committee member was dispatched to check if all was well," Seema recalls.

The AIMPG is an urban community though its founding members traced their origins to various villages of

Partabgarh, a district of Awadh. It was not based exclusively on common paternal descent but included the fraternity of households of the area.

Following partition, 100-odd Part-ab-gar-hians migrated to Karachi to test the greener pastures promised by the Muslim League. Then followed the migration of families. Meanwhile, the sight of a woman from Partabgarh begging on a Karachi street upset the pioneers so much that they decided to set up a welfare society in 1955 so that no one would have to beg. The idea was also to connect members with relatives with whom they had lost touch. There was no looking back after that.

The community's membership has risen to 6,000, comprising a number of highly educated and socially and economically well-placed individuals. It had started as a group of illiterate men, mostly unskilled workers such as gardeners, peons, drivers and chowkidars. The Anjuman now boasts a 99 per cent literacy rate and has PhD doctors, a veterinarian, an MPhil (to be), an MNA, two MPAs and lawyers in its ranks. For many, it has been a story of from rags to riches.

I was impressed by the AIMPG's self-help spirit. Its focus has been on humanitarian service, the Shoba-i-Khidmat-i-Khali being its most important department. When I asked the organisation's president Khalil Qureshi what he took most pride in, he replied: "We have delivered stipends or assistance to those on our list on the first of the month for the last 69 years without fail. Today, 82 families between them receive Rs1,000,000 every month."

Mr Qureshi, who is commercial manager at Port Qasim, also speaks proudly of the 60-bedded Awadh General Hospital,

a healthcare centre and the Awadh Public School that provides education to 400 children — 100 of them receiving fee subsidy.

The Anjuman raises its own funds. The membership fee is a token one rupee, which was fixed in 1955. But members and non-member beneficiaries are generous with their zakat, fitra and other donations.

The administration is democratically elected. It is divided into 19 wards in the city (Karachi) with a representative to monitor the well-being of the members under his jurisdiction. Above the wardens is a three-member council consisting of a president, general secretary and finance secretary assisted by an auditor. Elections are held every two years.

Events held periodically are well-attended and help the members bond. Membership is entirely voluntary and those who choose to join demonstrate a strong sense of brotherhood, which means a lot in a country that has failed to give its people a sense of ownership. The AIMPG has been progressive in its outlook and had managed generational change effectively. No wonder all children are attending schools, and the emancipation and empowerment of women in an extremely patriarchal community has proceeded smoothly. How does the government feel about such communities? Obviously, it welcomes them because they are apolitical and do not challenge the state's power.

The wealthier communities contribute a lot to the national economy. But with membership hardly amounting to anything in a country of 241 million, the communities make no impact on the social security situation in the country. -- Courtesy Dawn

Protecting the coast

Umar Farooq

Pakistan's coastal and marine ecosystems, such as the Indus delta, Karachi's mangroves, and the Makran coast, are not merely scenic beauties but foundational to the country's environmental and economic stability. The Indus delta mangroves alone encompass about 130,000 hectares (321,237 acres) serving as vital carbon sinks that store approximately 14.4 million tonnes of carbon annually. Yet, these ecosystems face critical threats — industrial pollution, rampant overfishing, and the overarching impacts of climate change compromise their ability to perform essential functions.

In Karachi, the unchecked discharge of industrial pollutants has severe consequences on its marine ecosystems. Notably, the city's release of about 90 per cent of its untreated wastewater into the Arabian Sea introduces pollutants such as heavy metals and hydrocarbons, with the tanning industry releasing toxins that have been shown to damage sensitive mangrove roots and reduce the water quality, affecting the health of fish and other marine life. The recent controversial construction of the expressway along the route of the Malir river, poses a direct threat to these ecosystems resulting in increased sedimentation that might suffocate the mangrove forests, which are crucial nurseries for many species of fish.

One solution to these problems is the establishment of a national marine data repository. This centralised data system would enable better management and moni-

toring of marine environments by providing accurate and timely information on pollution levels, biodiversity health, and the effectiveness of conservation efforts. The data on pollution levels, including concentrations of heavy metals and chemicals from industrial discharges, will help identify pollution hotspots and guide regulatory enforcement. Biodiversity data, tracking species populations and health, monitoring the health of the mangroves and coral reefs through satellite imagery, and field surveys and data on water quality indicators such as pH, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient levels would help in tracking the broader environmental health of the blue ecosystems.

Strengthening regulatory frameworks is essential to addressing the threats faced by Pakistan's marine ecosystems. One specific policy would be the introduction of a 'marine pollution control act' which would mandate industrial facilities to install and maintain wastewater treatment plants to remove harmful pollutants before discharge. The act should be reinforced with the setting and offsetting of toxin release. Additionally, a permit system for factories along the coast, mandating the treatment of wastewater before the release and investment in catchment restoration, should be introduced. This would be in the form of 'marine credits' for funding coral reef restoration or seagrass meadow rehabilitation, which could then be used to offset their pollution footprints. These permits would be linked to regular inspections and hefty fines for non-compliance, ensuring a deterrent effect that

would encourage industries to adopt cleaner practices.

Community involvement is equally critical for sustainable outcomes. Local and indigenous communities, which have depended on Pakistan's coastal and marine ecosystems for generations, are often overlooked in policymaking processes. These communities are key stakeholders, possessing invaluable traditional knowledge and a deep connection to the environment. Yet, policymakers from urban centres frequently impose re-regulations without consulting them, leading to ineffective and unsustainable outcomes. True progress can only be made by genuinely engaging these communities, earning their trust, and implementing tailored awareness campaigns where needed. Without their involvement, no policy will be effective or enforceable.

Looking at international examples, community-led initiatives were one of the key components in the success of Marine Protected Areas, which helped to revitalise coral reefs. Ensuring justice means recognising these communities' rights, incorporating their insights, and creating inclusive conservation strategies that honour their roles as stewards of the environment. In the words of a local fisherman, "We protect what we love, and we love what we understand." Just as the tides sustain the shores, so, too, we must sustain our efforts to protect these vital ecosystems. For the future of our oceans, and the communities that depend on them, a shared responsibility we cannot afford to ignore. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Masood Khan urges greater US investment in Pakistan, trade to boost bilateral ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has called for greater American investment in Pakistan and more trade between the two countries in an effort to further strengthen their relations.

Speaking at the World Affairs Council in Philadelphia, he urged US businesses to increase their investment portfolios, especially in tech-startups, renewable energy, agriculture and extractive industries.

"Pakistan is a big market for American manufacturers," the ambassador told a gathering of scholars, policy-makers,

legislators, entrepreneurs, business leaders and professionals. "If you manufacture state-of-the-art products, you have 240 million consumers in Pakistan," he said.

In his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan dealt with Pak-US relations, war on terror, recalibration of their bilateral ties in the post-withdrawal period, Pakistan-India relations and the issues of regional stability. In this regard, he focused on the existing investment and trade opportunities between the two countries that provided new sinews to the relationship.

Tracing the roots of

Pak-US relations, especially the US support during the initial days of Pakistan and the robust partnership of the two countries both in times of war and peace, the Ambassador presented a holistic view of the ties spanning over seven decades, saying the two countries are now investing in people-centric diplomacy.

"We have a big human capital and it is growing. Pakistan is digitally connected with the rest of the world and it is tech savvy, with hundreds of institutions which are investing in future technologies," he said.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Beijing, Victorian Kosan and Xin Hai Tong-23 carrying Containers, Chemicals and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile three more ships, Bristol Trader, Two Million Ways and Magique Marline with Chemicals, Gas oil and Steel coil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Beijing, Victorian Kosan, Asia Inspire and Hafnia Excellence are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 143,392 tonnes, comprising 106,111 tonnes imports cargo and 37,281 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,206 Containers (13 TEUs Imports and 2,193 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. Three ships are at outer anchorage, out of them two ships namely Bristol Trader and Two Million Ways & another ship Eleoussa carrying Chemicals, Gas oil and Coal.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja exchanging views with Julian Gorman, GSMA Head of Asia Pacific during meeting held in Islamabad.

Envoy Tirmizi, UAE minister discuss insurance, facilitation of Pakistani workers

DUBAI (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Faisal Tirmizi on Friday met with the UAE's Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar wherein they discussed the issues of mutual interests especially those pertaining to Pakistani diaspora working in the multiple sectors.

Ambassador Tirmizi conveyed regards and gratitude on behalf of

Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain to Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar. He lauded and thanked the leadership of the UAE for reposing great trust in Pakistan as a brotherly and friendly country. He appreciated the government and people of the UAE for hosting about 1.7 million Pakistanis who were supporting their families and country by sending

remittances back home. Both sides underlined the significant role played by Pakistanis in the UAE's development, and the tremendous potential and opportunities for further enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields. The meeting focused on enhancing mutual collaboration aiming at the efficiency in visa processing, screening, attestation of documents, and others, with a view to facilitating Pakistanis seeking jobs in the UAE.

RDA inflows rise to \$8.055 bn in May 24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$8.055 billion by the end of May 2024 as compared to US \$7.831 billion by April (2024) end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The data showed that the inflows of remittances during April were recorded at US\$ 224 million as compared to US\$ 171 million in

Rupee gains 9 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Friday gained 9 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.59. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.5 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 3.06 to close at Rs 298.22 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.28.

Govt committed for transforming Pak into digital economy: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja here on Friday said that the government is committed for digitalization and transform Pakistan into Digital economy.

During the meeting with GSMA's Head of Asia Pacific Julian Gorman matters related to digital transformation, and upcoming GSMA Digital Nation Summit were discussed said a news release.

Country Lead Digital Transformation,

Pakistan, GSMA, Saira Faisal was also present in the meeting.

She said Ministry of IT will play pivotal role in GSMA Digital Nation Summit. Ministry of IT & Telecom will extend full support and facilitation regarding GSMA Digital Nation Summit to be held on August 7.

Julian Gorman expressed his gratitude to MoITT for their support of the GSMA Digital Nation Summit in August and assured full support to the government in their digitization journey.



ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Shaikh addressing a press conference at his office in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan Food Festival Inaugurated at Shangri-La Hotel, Chengdu

BEIJING (APP): The Pakistan Food Festival was inaugurated on Friday at the prestigious Shangri-La Hotel in Chengdu, celebrating the rich culinary heritage and diverse flavors of Pakistan.

The festival with signature Muslim cuisine is jointly being presented by Shangri-La Chengdu and Pakistan Consulate General in Chengdu.

The event saw the participation of several distinguished guests and officials, including Director General Zhang Tao of the Sichuan Foreign Affairs Office, Director General Jiang Bin of the Chengdu Foreign Affairs

Office, Vice President Tang Jian of the Sichuan People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries, Vice President Wang Guangjun of the China Council for Promotion of Investment and Trade - Sichuan Branch, Song Junwu, Deputy Director General of the Sichuan Provincial People's Department of Culture and Tourism, He Di, Director of the Office of International and Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress, and Thomas Gou, Assistant General Manager of Shangri-La Hotel.



HYDERABAD: Family busy in selecting and purchasing sandal on a roadside stall in connection with Eid-ul-Azha at Resham Bazaar.

Indonesia embassy, ACI hosts 'ASEAN Movie Night'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee in Islamabad (ACI) has hosted a ASEAN Movie Night event featuring the award-winning Indonesian film "Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap" directed by the Indonesian Producer Bene Dion Rajagukguk.

The event was a delightful fusion of cinema and cuisine, celebrating the

rich cultural ties and immense similarities between Indonesia and Pakistan.

On this occasion, the Indonesia Chargé d'Affaires (CDA) Rahmat Hindiarta in his welcoming remarks apprised the distinguished guests from the diplomatic and Pakistani community that the ASEAN Movie Night reflects the spirit of continuously bolstering friendship among ASEAN family members.

Punjab Governor says: Sundus Foundation doing great work for thalassemia patients

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan today visited Sundus Foundation on World Blood Donor Day. He met children suffering from thalassemia and hemophilia. Governor Punjab also donated blood on this occasion.

which are serving humanity should be encouraged. He said that blood donation is a hope of new life for people suffering from life-threatening diseases including children suffering from thalassemia and hemophilia. Sardar Saleem Haider said that millions of patients get new lives every year through blood donation while it is harmless for the persons who donate blood. Speaking to the media, the Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Sundus Foundation has a good reputation as a reliable organization which is serving the persons suffering from thalassemia and hemophilia. He said that the people have faith

in Sundus Foundation that their donated blood would reach the rightful persons. Governor Punjab said that Sundus Foundation has state of the art system for blood screening and tests which is on a par with the international standards. He said that Sundus Foundation has also test facility to prevent diseases like thalassemia. The Governor of Punjab said that he appeals to the public, especially the youth, through the media, to donate blood for the noble cause. He said that as the chancellor he would also issue special instructions to set up blood banks in the universities to motivate students to donate blood.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a pre-budget cabinet meeting at CM House.

Punjab health ministers stress collective responsibility in dengue control

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir have emphasized that combating dengue is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders, not just one department. They made these remarks while chairing a crucial meeting on dengue, infectious diseases, and disaster management at the Civil Secretariat, on Friday. Minister Khawaja

Salman Rafique stressed the need for commissioners and deputy commissioners to actively monitor anti-dengue operations. He urged religious scholars to raise public awareness about dengue during Jummah prayers and called for increased dengue surveillance in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, and Multan. "All departments must be mobilized at the district level to tackle the dengue threat

effectively. The health department is implementing a comprehensive plan to prevent dengue and other diseases, with the timely revamping of major hospitals being a top priority," he stated. To date, Punjab has reported 170 confirmed dengue cases this year. He also mentioned the availability of ample dengue medicines in government hospitals.

KP Governor lauds performance of national health services academy

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday visited Health Services Academy Islamabad where he lauded its performance. Upon arrival, the Governor was received by Vice Chancellor of the Academy, Dr Shahzad Ali Khan, says a statement of Governor house. He was accompanied by Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Ahmad Kundi. The Governor visited different departments of the National Health Services Academy

working under an aegis of Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. He was briefed on its' over all performance and its future projects. While appreciating performance of the national health services academy Islamabad, the Governor said that the academy can play an effective role in elimination of unemployment and provision of better healthcare facilities to the remote and far flung areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan donating blood for children suffering from thalassemia and hemophilia during his visit to Sundus Foundation on World Blood Donor Day.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Punjab for Finance Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman addressing during pre-budget press conference in the Provincial Capital.

PTI founder enjoying lavish lifestyle in jail: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Friday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder was enjoying a lavish life in jail, as six jail cells had been vacated for him. In the last eight months, the PTI founder met 288 people in jail, she added. His family and his lawyers meet him thrice a week, the minister said while rebutting Barrister

Saif's statement. She said Imran Khan had been provided with TV, room-cooler, study table, chair, exercise bike, stretching belt, bookshelves, books and a separate space for walking twice a day, along with a separate kitchen. She recalled that Mian Nawaz Sharif was allowed to meet his people only once a week on Thursday.

Coaster accident claims one life, leaves injured

ABBOTTABAD (APP): At least one person was killed and several others injured when the brakes of a coaster carrying students and teachers of Haripur Rehana Umar Islamic Public School failed at Batangi Mor Bagnetar in Abbottabad on Thursday.

According to rescue sources, the coaster carrying 42 students and 8 teachers met with an accident in which 12 people were injured. Rescue 1122 shifted the injured to the Ayub Teaching Hospital (ATH) Abbottabad. Unfortunately, one injured student could not survive and succumbed to injuries, and the condition of four patients remains critical, while others injured are stable. The injured were identified as Zahid, Imran, Mah Noor, Riyadh, Noor Fatima, Fiza Sharif, Anabia, Ayesha, Shanza, Manahil Aziz, and Khizra Warris. Mazhar Iqbal, a resident of Darband Khelabat, lost his life in the accident.

Punjab presented tax-free budget with largest ADP: ministers

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Punjab government has presented a tax-free and surplus budget of Rs 5,446 billion, having the largest ADP (Annual Development Programme) for fiscal year 2024-25, mainly focusing on social sector, infrastructure, production sectors, services sectors, and special initiatives for people's welfare and poverty alleviation. This budget is not an exaggeration of figures but a consolidated document that has full cash cover and it is the outcome of the effective and well-thought-out policies of the incumbent government. The full cash cover due to surplus revenue receipts,

particularly the provincial own revenue receipts, will ensure complete utilisation of the ADP, thus ensuring maximum relief to the common man. Provincial Senior Minister for Planning and Development (P&D) Mariyum Aurangzeb and Provincial Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman stated this while addressing the post-budget conference, here on Friday. The senior minister said that now the elected government was in place and "we have shun politics for the sake of politics and blame game, and we will have to make joint efforts for people's well-being". The opposition has the constitutional right of criticism and the

government would welcome its objections which deemed better for the people and the country, she added. She said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the Punjab government was putting in order comprehensive measures such as promotion of information technology, skill development among youth, women, transgender community and the minorities. The priority sectors of the government are Education, Health, IT, Agriculture, infrastructure, and law and order. She elaborated that the government has allocated more funds for the above sectors, stating that Health Sector has been allocated a total of Rs 539 billion with

ADP of Rs 129 billion; Education sector was allocated Rs 670 billion with Rs 66 billion ADP; Local Governments to get Rs 321 billion with Rs 62 billion ADP; Agriculture budget is Rs 117 billion with Rs 65 ADP; Rs 375 billion would be spent on infrastructure; and Rs 220 billion on Law and Order. During the next financial year, she said, the government will also give subsidy in various sectors including Agriculture Rs 26.6 billion; Transport Rs 24.3 billion; and Rs 100 billion for the special initiatives. Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba said that Rs 842 billion ADP was 28 per cent higher than the outgoing FY 2023-24 containing Rs 655 billion on this count. Out

of the development budget, he elaborated, 33 per cent would be spent on Social Sector, 29 per cent on Infrastructure, 13 per cent on Production Sector, and 5 per cent on Services Sector, while 20 per cent would go to Special Programmes/Initiatives. The finance minister said that total revenue collection was estimated at Rs 4643.40 billion; Rs 3,683.10 billion will be received from federal divisible pool; provincial receipts (Own Resource Revenue) are estimated at Rs 960.30 billion (54 per cent higher than the current fiscal year) for financial year 2024-25, while Non-Tax Revenues are estimated at Rs 488.40 billion (111 per cent higher than the current FY).

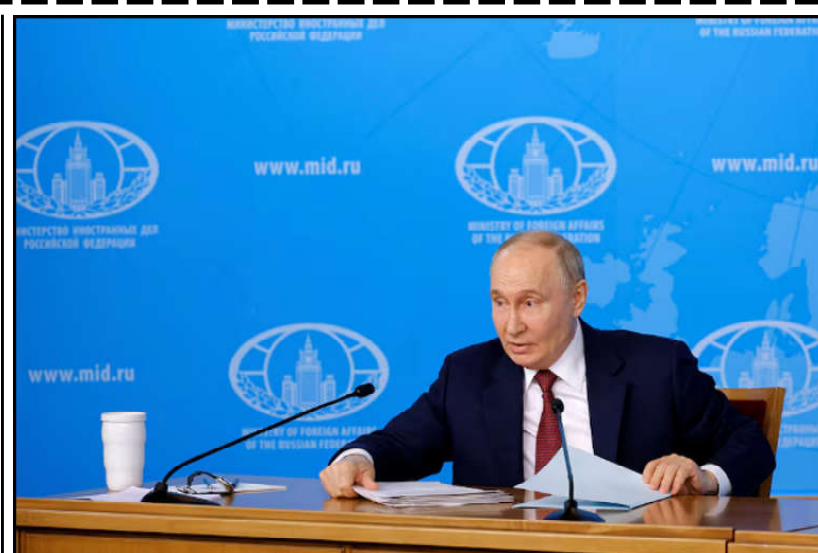
International News

Putin demands more Ukrainian land to end war; Kyiv rejects 'ultimatum'

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Friday Russia would end the war in Ukraine only if Kyiv agreed to drop its NATO ambitions and hand over the entirety of four provinces claimed by Moscow, demands Kyiv swiftly rejected as tantamount to surrender. On the eve of a conference in Switzerland to which Russia has not been invited, Putin set out maximalist conditions wholly at odds with the terms demanded by Ukraine, apparently reflecting Moscow's growing confidence that its forces have the upper hand in the war. He restated his demand for Ukraine's demilitarisation, unchanged from the day he sent in his troops on Feb. 24, 2022, and said an end to Western

sanctions must also be part of a peace deal. He also repeated his call for Ukraine's "denazification", based on what Kyiv calls an unfounded slur against its leadership. Ukraine said the conditions were "absurd". "He is offering for Ukraine to admit defeat. He is offering for Ukraine to legally give up its territories to Russia. He is offering for Ukraine to sign away its geopolitical sovereignty," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak told Reuters. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told Italy's SkyTG24 news channel: "These are ultimatum messages that are no different from messages from the past." U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told re-

porters at NATO headquarters in Brussels: "He (Putin) is not in any position to dictate to Ukraine what they must do to bring about peace." The timing of Putin's speech was clearly intended to preempt the Swiss summit, billed as a "peace conference" despite Russia's exclusion, where Zelenskyy seeks a show of international support for Kyiv's terms to end the war. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is meeting world leaders for a summit this weekend. "The conditions are very simple," Putin said, listing them as the full withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the entire territory of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in eastern and southern Ukraine.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends a meeting with the leadership of the Russian foreign ministry in Moscow, Russia.

Huthi missile attack severely injures sailor on cargo ship: US military

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Two cruise missiles launched by Yemen's Huthi rebels struck a bulk cargo carrier in the Gulf of Aden on Thursday, severely injuring a sailor who was evacuated by American forces, the US military said. The Huthis have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023 in attacks they say are in solidarity with Palestinians during the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Although this has caused major disruption to international shipping,

casualties have been rare. The M/V Verbenia—a Palauan-flagged, Ukrainian-owned, Polish-operated ship—reported damage and subsequent fires on board. The crew continues to fight the fire. One civilian mariner was severely injured during the attack," the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement. "Aircraft from USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) medically evacuated the injured mariner to a partner force ship nearby for medical attention," CENTCOM said.

Palestinians say Israeli West Bank raid kills 3

Monitoring Desk
QABATIYAH: Palestinian officials said Israeli troops killed three Palestinians in a raid in a town in the occupied West Bank Thursday, as Israel's military reported it had "eliminated two wanted suspects". The raid took place in the town of Qabatiyah near the city of Jenin, said Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub who confirmed the "deaths of two martyrs". The Palestinian Red Crescent said a third Palestinian was also killed in the raid. The Ramallah-based health ministry identified him as 21-year-old Qais Muhammad Zakarneh.

Pope Francis tells G7 that humans must not lose control of AI

Monitoring Desk
BORGO EGNAZIA: Pope Francis became the first pontiff to address a Group of Seven summit on Friday, warning world leaders that Artificial Intelligence must never be allowed to get the upper hand over humanity. An array of global chiefs warmly embraced the 87-year-old pope as he made his way around their huge oval table, pushed in a wheelchair as age and infirmity limit his mobility. The pope said AI represented an "epochal transformation" for mankind, but stressed the need for close oversight of the ever-developing technology to preserve human life and dignity. "No machine should ever choose to take the life of a human being," he said, adding that people should not let superpowerful algorithms decide their destiny. "We would condemn humanity to a future with-

out hope if we took away people's ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives, by dooming them to depend on the choices of machines," he warned. The G7 draws together the leaders of the United States, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Japan. In addition, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the summit host, invited 10 other nations to join the talks on Friday, including the prime minister of India and presidents of Turkey and Kenya. On entering the conference room ahead of his speech, Francis was warmly enveloped by a fellow Argentine, President Javier Milei, received a hug from Jordan's King Abdullah, a kiss from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and had a long, whispered conversation with U.S. President Joe Biden.

Putin is in no position to make demands of Ukraine for peace, US defense secretary says

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Russian President Vladimir Putin is in no position to make demands on Ukraine to end the war, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Friday, as he touted Kyiv's military successes confronting Moscow's full-scale invasion. Putin said earlier on Friday that Russia would end the war in Ukraine only if Kyiv agreed to drop its NATO ambitions, hand over the entirety of four provinces claimed by Moscow, and carry out a demilitarization. "He is not in any position to dictate to Ukraine what they must do to bring about peace," Austin told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Russia controls nearly a fifth of Ukrainian territory in the third year of the war. Ukraine says peace can only be based on the full withdrawal of Russian

forces and the restoration of its territorial integrity. "He's had some hundreds of thousands of troops wounded and killed in this unjust and unprovoked invasion. He could end this today if he chose to do that. And we call upon him to do that and to leave Ukrainian sovereign territory," Austin said. In his address, Putin said "the future existence of Ukraine" depended on it withdrawing its forces, and on adopting a neutral status, and on beginning talks with Russia, and said Kyiv's military situation would worsen if it rejected the offer. The timing of Putin's speech was clearly intended to preempt Ukraine's Swiss summit, billed as a "peace conference" despite Russia's exclusion, where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy seeks a show of international support for Kyiv's terms to end the war.

Heavy rain, landslides kill 6 in India's Sikkim, 2,000 tourists stranded

Monitoring Desk
GUWAHATI: At least six people have been killed this week and around 2,000 tourists stranded in India's Himalayan state of Sikkim in landslides and floods after incessant rainfall, officials said on Friday. Another four people have been killed in Nepal's Taplejung district, which borders Sikkim, after a landslide following rains swept away the house in which they were sleeping, officials there said. Heavy rains triggered landslides at several locations in Mangan district, which covers north Sikkim and lies about 100 km (60 miles) north of the state capital Gangtok, the local government of the north-eastern Indian state said. "It's been raining continuously for 36 hours. The road to north Sikkim has been damaged in mul-

iple locations, snapping connection to the district," said Hem Kumar Chettri, the district magistrate of Mangan. "The stranded tourists are all safe but we have not been able to evacuate them because of the damage," he said, adding that 11 of them were foreign nationals. The small Buddhist state of 650,000 people, wedged between Bhutan, China and Nepal, is a popular tourist destination but also faces natural disasters caused by extreme weather events in the Himalayas. At least 179 people died last year in Sikkim when a Himalayan glacial lake outbreak triggered floods. Personnel and machinery have been deployed to fix the road. Chettri said, adding that the damage was "extensive" and repair will take some time.

Finland will host a NATO land command and troops

Monitoring Desk
HELSINKI: Finland will host a new land command unit of the NATO military alliance, Minister of Defence Antti Hakkanen told reporters on Friday following a meeting of the alliance in Brussels. After decades of military non-alignment, Finland joined NATO last year in response to neighbouring Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "I'm pleased to state that today all NATO member states have given their political consent to Finland's key goals in its NATO integration," Hakkanen said. "Finland will host a NATO command and there will be land force presence in Finland," he added. Hakkanen said the Finnish NATO command will have as a task to direct land warfare operations in northern Europe and in Scandinavia.

Over half of cropland in Gaza has been damaged, says UN

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: More than half of Gaza's agricultural land, crucial for feeding the war-ravaged territory's hungry population, has been degraded by conflict, satellite images analysed by the United Nations show. The data reveals a rise in the destruction of orchards, field crops and vegetables in the Palestinian enclave, where hunger is widespread after eight

months of Israeli bombardment. The World Health Organisation warned on Wednesday that many people in Gaza were facing "catastrophic hunger and famine-like conditions". Using satellite imagery taken between May 2017 and 2024, United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) found that 57 per cent of Gaza's

Hamas' armed wing says Israeli airstrike killed two hostages in Rafah

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Hamas' armed wing al-Qassam Brigades said on Friday that two Israeli hostages held in Gaza were killed in an Israeli airstrike on Rafah a few days ago. The group, in a video posted on its Telegram channel, did not release the names of those said to have been killed or provide any evidence.

Romina Khurshid says: Coordination among federal, provincial departments vital to mitigate heatwaves, floods' impacts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Ministry of Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday urged all the federal and provincial departments to take all-out measures to protect lives, livelihoods of the people from ongoing heatwave spell and possible monsoon floods. She also directed all the provinces including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) to ensure the maintenance of sufficient stocks of disaster relief items pre-monsoon onset to ensure in time preparedness against above-normal rainfall.

The PM's Coordinator was chairing the meeting of the 2nd Task Force on Global Warming and Heatwaves here whereas representatives of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Ministry of Science and Technology, Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), Ministry of Climate Change, Ministry of National Health, Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan Meteorological Department, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and officials from the provincial governments joined through video link.

She urged all Federal and Provincial departments concerned to enhance their preparedness with regard to threat of flooding due to upcoming monsoon spell, stock maintenance and heat wave effects.

PM's Coordinator emphasized on timely execution by all stakeholders on NDMA's National Action Plan regarding flood threats in Southern Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan provinces. She also stressed upon inclusion of Lady Health Workers, Midwives in the medical relief camps to be established by concerned Federating Units during the emergency situations.

Chairing a high-level meeting, the PM's aide highlighted that the country's vulnerability to climate change-caused disasters would continue to deepen as the disasters, particularly heatwaves and floods are becoming more intense and frequent as the world continues to heat up because of untamed heat-trapping carbon emissions.

"The adverse socio-economic impacts of the disasters are unlikely to be overcome as long as the well-coordinated disaster risk mitigation or prevention measures are not taken jointly by all federal and provincial departments," Romina Khurshid Alam warned. She assured of her Ministry's unwavering support at all levels so as the country's disaster vulnerability is lessened through effective collaboration among the federal and provincial departments.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam chairing second meeting of Task Force on Global Warming & Heat Wave.

NHMP cracks down on overloading, overcharging during Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to ensure the safety and security of passengers during the busy Eid-ul-Azha holidays, the National Highways and Motorways Police (NHMP) has announced strict legal action against public service vehicles (PSVs) involved in overloading and overcharging. Inspector General of NHMP, Salman Chaudhary, emphasized that heavy fines will be imposed under the National Highways Safety Ordinance 2000 (NHSO-2000) for any violations.

Talking to APP IG Salman Chaudhary said that safety of passengers is top priority during this festive period. "On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, our utmost priority is the safety and security of passengers. We are implementing special measures to ensure a safer journey for commuters," said Chaudhary.

To achieve this, NHMP Regional Commanders have been instructed to utilize all available resources for the timely assistance and guidance of commuters on motorways and highways. This includes the deployment of

additional patrolling vehicles and officers to enhance patrolling efficiency. Chaudhary urged commuters to report any instances of reckless driving by PSVs to the NHMP through the toll-free helpline (130) or via social media.

He assured that immediate legal action would be taken against the owners and drivers of offending vehicles. "Reckless driving should be reported immediately. NHMP will take swift action to ensure compliance and safety," he stated.

In addition to addressing overloading, the IG emphasized the importance of adhering to traffic rules. "Drivers should avoid overloading, overcharging, and reckless driving. Unfit vehicles should not be operated on the National Highways. Commuters are advised to use seat belts, observe lane discipline, and drive safely."

These measures are part of NHMP's ongoing efforts to maintain safety and order on Pakistan's roadways, particularly during high-traffic periods such as Eid-ul-Azha.

Pirzada discusses plan for winding up PWD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Friday convened a meeting for a transition plan for winding up the Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) under the directives of the prime minister.

Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, Secretary of Housing, senior officers of the Establishment division, and Pak PWD also attended the meeting.

The committee deliberated on developing a comprehensive transition plan for the PWD to ensure the efficient utilization of resources and the unified continuation of public sector development projects. Furthermore, discussions were held regarding the maintenance of assets currently under charge of the PWD.

Plans to deal with HR issues and for continued oversight of ongoing projects during and after the transition period were also considered.

IRSA releases 295,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 295,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 257,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1445.06 feet and was 47.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 101,300 cusecs and 120,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1183.20 feet, which was 133.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 45,400 cusecs and 65,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 169,200, 153,600, 104,000 and 53,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 74,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 9,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

PHMH thanks Saudia counterpart for arrangements of pilgrimage train this year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Head of Pakistan Hajj Medical Mission Brigadier Jamil Ahmed Lakhair Friday thanked Saudi counterpart for arranging up to the mark transport arrangements for hajj this year where high-speed train facilities were being provided to all pilgrims from Mina to Arafat.

Talking to PTV news channel, he said Pakistan government has better coordination with the Saudi authorities to serve Hajj and this year's Hajj will be more comfortable than the previous one.

"We are happy with the special attention of the Saudi Hajj minister for the convenience of Pakistani pilgrims, he said, adding, due to these smooth train operations our pilgrims expressed their heartfelt grati-

tude to the Saudi authorities". He also praised the Saudi government's security and safety measures and other services for pilgrims, adding, pilgrim who performed Hajj for the first time are also impressed by huge facilities and services of Hajj mission in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom's air ambulance service is also remarkable step to reach patients in various locations quickly, provide specialized emergency medical services, and transport patients to specialized health facilities within a short period of time, he added.

A specialized supervisory medical team monitors and evaluates the health status of the transferred pilgrims throughout the journey is also being ensured their safety and well-being of hajj, he mentioned.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chairs a meeting for transition plan for winding-up Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD)

Nikah during iddat case: I will give decision on appeal plea within 10 days if I remain alive: Judge local court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Local court of Islamabad has issued notice to the respondents on appeal pleas of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi against their conviction in Nikah during iddat case.

Additional and Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka remarked "if I remain alive I will decide the appeals within 10 days.

District and Sessions judge Afzal Majoka took up for hearing petitions filed by Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi seeking early hearing

of their appeal pleas against their sentence and suspension of their conviction Friday. Usman Riaz Gul counsel for Bushra Bibi appeared in the court.

He presented written decision of Islamabad High Court (IHC) requesting direction has come therefore, the case be for fixed for hearing tomorrow.

Judge Afzal Majoka remarked "I remain alive I will give decision within 10 days. Tomorrow it is not possible because several bail pleas are fixed for hearing.

If the other party does not appear even then I will give my decision.

Usman Riaz Gul advocate said "fix them for hearing tomorrow then notice will become part of record.

Judge Afzal Majoka remarked "I am writing order in respect of today's hearing. There will be too much more than notice in it.

The court while issuing notice to the respondents adjourned hearing till June 21.

PRCS celebrates World Blood Donor Day to raise awareness about regular blood donations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) celebrated World Blood Donor Day on Friday, aimed to raise awareness about the significance of regular blood donations and express gratitude to voluntary donors for their life-saving contributions to those in need.

Under the theme "20 years of celebrating giving: Thank You Blood Donors" a ceremony was held at the PRCS National Headquarters. The event was attended by officials of the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), PRCS, Red Crescent Movement Partners, staff, volunteers,

blood donor coordinators, and regular blood donors.

In his message, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari stressed the dire need for regular and voluntary blood and plasma donations to ensure the availability of safe and life-saving products for those in need.

He underlined that by donating a part of ourselves, "we have the power to share the gift of life and positively impact countless individuals."

He also appreciated the PRCS' efforts in managing and supplying blood to deserving patients, emergencies, and accidents.

Federal govt abrogate 'B-Form' requirement for school admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government has abolished the mandatory "B-Form" requirement for admissions to federal government schools on Friday.

According to private news channel, Secretary of Education Mohiuddin Wani said that the 'B-Form' requirement had disproportionately affected vulnerable populations. "Our aim is to ensure that every child has access to quality education," he added. He further said that the move aims to increase school enrollment and reduce the number of out-of-school.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chairing a high level meeting

Our commitment to protect the lives and upholding law 24/7; IG says

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a high-level crime meeting was chaired by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi at the Central Police Office. The meeting was attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, zonal SPs, SDPOs, and all SHOs.

During the meeting, IG Islamabad reviewed the performance of all officers and issued directions to intensify the ongoing "Nasha Ab Nahe" movement against drugs peddlers.

IG Islamabad said that all police officers should ensure the prompt arrest of criminals, those involved in serious crimes, murders, abductions, and other offenses, as well as wanted persons, judicial fugitives, TOs, and drug dealers.

Officers should utilize the assistance of Safe City for crime eradication, expedite the pace of work, prepare challan of under-investigation cases, and send them to the relevant courts.

He further said that, a zero-tolerance policy will be adopted against corruption and negligence in duties will not be tolerated. IG

emphasized that law and order should not affect crime eradication.

Social and moral crimes will not be tolerated in the federal capital, drugs and gambling will not be allowed in Islamabad, and a strict policy will be in place for robbery incidents.

IG Islamabad directed the officer to take personal interest in crime eradication and under investigation cases, and continue the crackdown against drugs and professional beggars, and make the performance of night patrolling officers more effective. He said that, all vehicles should be deployed on patrolling duties from 7 PM to 2 AM. Enhance the effectiveness of the Dolphin Squad and patrolling duty. He further directed that the issues of citizens visiting every police station in Islamabad should be resolved 100% on merit, and only those officers who work will remain in positions. The top priority of Islamabad Police is the protection of citizens' lives, property, and honor. Officers who are negligent in protecting citizens' lives and property will face strict departmental action.

Education ministry to start advance learner course for ICT colleges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced to start advanced learner course for Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 students to ensure a smooth transition and a strong foundation for new students of Islamabad Colleges.

According to the Education Ministry, this program will run for the whole month of July.

Sharing the key highlights of the programme, the ministry said that the best teachers have been identified for English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology.

Additional salary for teaching faculty has also been finalized for this purpose. "Our commitment is to provide the best academic ecosystem for our students. We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure our students receive the best possible support and resources to excel in their academic journey", the ministry said.

The ministry is also inviting students from private schools to join this exciting initiative.

AJK PM reiterates his commitment to establishing strong public-private partnerships

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that his visit to MTBC projects in AJK was a testament to his commitment to establishing a strong public-private partnership to work together for a prosperous future. He expressed these views during a visit to the MTBC office in Bagh, AJK, on Friday.

The MTBC provides a platform for young professionals coming from different backgrounds across the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan, to learn and practice their innovative ideas in a healthy working environment.

The PM was briefed in detail by MTBC Chairman Mehmoor Haq regarding IT, medical transcription billing, and other projects,

including Kashmir Airline, Bagh Grammar School, Indus Hospital, and many others the corporation has been working on.

During his visit, the prime minister inspected different sections of the office and interacted with educated youth working in the company. On the occasion, the AJK PM praised the MTBC chairman for his significant contribution to the local economy and for providing employment opportunities to youth on such a large scale.

He especially appreciated the efforts made by the MTBC to promote economic growth and development in the liberated territory.

The PM was accompanied by government Minister Faisal Rathore, Information Minister Mazhar Saeed Shah, and others.



ISLAMABAD: Governor of Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, giving souvenir to PPP vice president of social Gulf and Syed Matloob Hussain Shah during a Mehfil-e-Sama ceremony title Sufi Night at Gun Club in the Federal Capital.

Seminar held to promote awareness on nuclear safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): A one day seminar on 'Knowledge Sharing with women in Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Security' was arranged here to promote awareness on nuclear safety and security.

The event was organized by Women in Nuclear Pakistan Chapter (WiN-Pakistan), Pakistan Nuclear Society (PNS), and Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority and Pakistan Science Foundation in that regard. The event was comprised over two main sessions including Plenary session and technical session.

In plenary session, senior female officers who have served on leading positions or currently serving on leading positions in different capacities related to nuclear safety.

ergo Commission (PAEC), Dr. Ansar Parvez (HI) and attended by around hundred female officers.

President Win-Pakistan Chapter, Dr. Shazia Fatima highlighted the activities of chapter carried out nationally and internationally. She appreciated the support of Pakistan Nuclear Society, Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority and Pakistan Science Foundation in that regard. The event was comprised over two main sessions including Plenary session and technical session.

In plenary session, senior female officers who have served on leading positions or currently serving on leading positions in different capacities related to nuclear safety.

Good performance will be rewarded, negligence will not be tolerated; CTO says

ISLAMABAD: Following the orders of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Chief Traffic

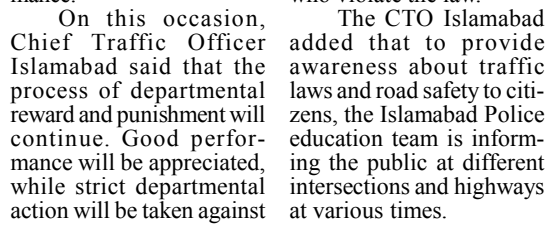
Officer Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk awarded cash prizes and commendation certificates to field lifter operators based on their good performance.

On this occasion, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad said that the process of departmental reward and punishment will continue. Good performance will be appreciated, while strict departmental action will be taken against

officers showing poor and unsatisfactory performance.

He further said that special measures are being taken to keep Islamabad safe from accidents and to ensure smooth traffic flow. All officers should ensure harmony with their subordinate staff and take strict legal action against those who violate the law.

The CTO Islamabad added that to provide awareness about traffic laws and road safety to citizens, the Islamabad Police education team is informing the public at different intersections and highways at various times.



More than 77000 Pilgrims benefit from health services during the last five weeks

ISLAMABAD (APP): In continuation of the efforts made by the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health (MoH) to provide integrated care to the guests of God during the Hajj season 1445 H, more than 77000 pilgrims benefited from the various health services provided by health care centers over the last five weeks.

In a statistical report, the MoH said that the health services provided to the pilgrims from the first day of the month of Dhu al-Qi'dah

until the sixth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah 1445H covered medical and specialized clinics, pharmaceuticals, dialysis centers, intensive care units, and isolation units, SPA reported.

As many as 16 open heart surgeries, 200 catheterizations, and 584 dialysis surgeries were performed, the report said, adding that 1,745 pilgrims entered hospitals and medical centers to receive the necessary health care.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Qurat Ul Ain Marri, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee On Planning, Development And Special Initiatives presiding over a meeting (evening session) of the committee at Parliament House.