



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ (یک وقت ایسا آئے گا کہ جب) علم اظہار جائے گا۔ جہات اور فتنے پھیل جائیں گے اور برین بڑھ جائے گا۔ آپ سے پوچھا گیا کہ یہ رسول اللہ! برین سے کیا مراد ہے؟ آپ ﷺ نے اسے ہاتھ کو حرکت دے کر فرمایا اس طرح: تو کیا آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے اس سے کس مراد لیا۔ (تذکرہ: حدیث نمبر 85)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Fed budget is balanced and poor friendly: Riaz Pirzada

Minister for Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada says the federal budget is balanced and poor friendly. Special relief is being given to the poor segment in the federal budget despite serious economic challenges. Special relief is being given to the salaried class, farmers and daily wagers. The government has announced 15 percent increase in the salaries of the government employees which is very encouraging.



Fed budget is a pack of lies: Tarin

Former Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin says budget 2022-23, presented by the coalition government, is a pack of lies. The incumbent government has started with lies and malice. The rate of economic growth will not remain at 5 percent and there is a contradiction in their statistics. Inflation rate would likely to increase to 25 or 30 percent. As the prices of petroleum products and electricity increase, so will the inflation. It is not known how the IMF has approved this budget.

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Fiscal management

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail presenting Budget for Financial Year 2022-23 at the National Assembly on Friday.



Photo: PID

Will steer country out of difficult time: PM

Congratulates Miftah on presenting balanced, progressive and pro-people budget

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Defending the budget presented by his government Friday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured the nation that the finance bill will steer the country out of the difficult time that has been brought on by recent years of economic mismanagement. These are difficult times brought upon us by recent years of economic mismanagement. Through this budget, my government will steer our way out of these challenges by taking tough decisions while minimising the impact on vulnerable segments of the population, said the premier.

In a Twitter thread, PM Shehbaz shared his thoughts on how the government was hoping to shield financially weaker citizens from economic hardships by taxing the financially stronger people. We have allocated billions of rupees for target-

ed subsidies. This amount is in addition to Rs344 billion allocated for Benazir Income Support Programme. Only deserving people to get the subsidy, said PM Shehbaz. He added that the government has increased its employees' salaries by providing a raise of 15% and merging the ad hoc allowance in their basic pay.

The tax slabs have been revised. Those earning up to Rs1.2 million annually have been exempted from taxes. Government has decided to tax non-productive assets of the rich including 5% tax on the purchase of second property and increase in tax on luxury cars, said the PM. The premier also highlighted that his government has reduced the tax on the import and distribution of solar panels to zero, adding that a zero tax has been announced for import of agricultural machinery and implants.

Rs9.5tr 'stabilising' budget unveiled

Govt adopts painful economic path to secure IMF bailout; Rs 800 billion earmarked for PSDP for next fiscal year

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail is presenting the budget for the financial year 2022-23 (Budget 2022-23) in the National Assembly. The federal budget 2022-23 has a total outlay of 9502 billion rupees has been announced, encompassing measures for what the government termed 'sustainable economic growth, industrial and agriculture development and relief for the poor people'. The budget envisages Federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) worth Rs 800 billion for the next fiscal year.

It has been centered on improvement in sectors such as water resources, transport and communication, energy, higher education, health, science and technology, and balanced regional development. The emphasis of PSDP is also on revival of CPEC and related projects for inter-provincial and regional connectivity with equal importance to Special Economic Zones to promote trade, industrialization and create job opportunities. The major thrust in Information and Communication Technology sector including establishment and operations of Special Technology Zones.

Under the PSDP, the government has

Budget 2022-23

Tax rate increased on non-filers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has jacked up tax rates on non-filers buying cars from 100 to 200 percent. The decision was announced by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail while presenting the Budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 (FY23) in the National Assembly. The government has also increased advance tax on vehicles with engine capacity of 1600CC or above has been increased. In the case of electric engine, 2 percent advance tax will be imposed. Meanwhile, the ban on the import of vehicles will continue to be in place.

allocated 44.179 billion rupees including foreign aid of 1.3 billion rupees to the Higher Education Commission for implementation of 151 development projects. The allocation indicates an increase of one hundred percent over the last year. An allocation of over 197 billion rupees has been made for 117 power related projects. These include hydro power generation projects such as Diamer-Bhasha, Mohmand, Nai Gaj and fifth extension of Tarbela. Initiatives like developing water storages, automatic telemetry system, rainwater harvesting, decreasing water losses, ground water regulation and management would be undertaken in consultation with the stakeholders.

Miftah Ismail started his speech by saying that the past government left the country's economy in doldrums and hurt investor confidence by changing finance ministers and financial policies frequently. The finance minister was of the view that the ruling coalition took over the country's reins despite "the fact that it will have to take difficult decisions to save the economy" which may harm their respective parties' popularity but they chose to keep national interest above party interest. He maintained that the budget is aimed at giving the working class and the down-trodden more relief as compared to the elite class as working class mostly chooses to buy local products rather than imported

ones and give economy a boost. He deeply criticised former PM Imran Khan by saying that he never cared for the poor for he himself said that "keeping a check on potato and tomato prices is not a PM's job".

Miftah Ismail said that Budget 2022-23 will focus on providing facilities to farmers growing crops that produce cooking oil, like corn and sunflower, so that the country doesn't have to import palm oil, which is touching a record high in international market. He said that, keeping in view the current economic situation, the government has decided to cut the operating expenditure to maximum so there will be a complete ban on buying new furniture, stationary for govt offices. There will also be a complete ban on govt-sponsored foreign trips other than necessary diplomatic visits.

The minister said that the government has earmarked 65 billion rupees in the current budget for Higher Education Commission. In addition 44 billion rupees have been allocated for the development schemes of the HEC which is 67 percent higher than the previous year. He said this is manifestation of our commitment towards the youth.

Govt earmarks Rs73b for power sector

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail on Friday said that keeping in view importance of energy for development of the country, the government has earmarked Rs 73 billion for power sector. Presenting budget speech for fiscal year 2022-23 in the National Assembly, the minister said bringing improvement in electricity generation, transmission and distribution was government's top priority.

He said out of total allocation, a sum of Rs 12 billion would be spent for early completion of Mohmand dam. The project would benefit both the agriculture sector and the

farmers. The minister said that Pakistan was facing acute energy shortage. The thermal energy has become expensive due to sky rocketing prices of imported fuel. Promotion of renewable energy was a possible way forward to cope with such situation, he added.

He said it was proposed to exempt sale tax on import of solar panels and local supply. Moreover, through banks, easy loans would be provided to consumers using less than 200 units for purchasing solar panels, he said. Miftah said it would not only promote environment friendly energy in the country but also help reduce import of expensive oil and gas.

Cabinet approves budget proposals for FY 2022-23

Govt employees' salaries increased to 15%



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs Special Cabinet Meeting in Islamabad on Friday. Photo: PID

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday approved the budget proposals for the fiscal year 2022-23. The cabinet also accorded approval to the Finance Bill 2022. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail will present the budgetary proposals in the National Assembly this afternoon. The federal cabinet on Friday approved a 15% increase in the salaries of the federal government employees and a 5% increase in pensions, sources said. The decision comes

less than an hour before the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government is set to present its first budget. Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb took to Twitter and said: "The Prime Minister has rejected the Finance Ministry's proposal of a 10% increase and has approved an increase in government employees' salaries of 15% with the consent of the cabinet."

She added that the adhoc allowances have also been merged into the basic pay. Sources privacy to the matter said that the recent

rise in salaries of the government employees will put a burden of Rs71.59 billion on the national exchequer. The federal cabinet on Friday met to review the budget proposals. Following the approval of the cabinet, the budget will be presented in the National Assembly by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail today. A day earlier, Ismail announced that Pakistan and IMF agreed to increase the salaries of employees. He, however, said that the salaries of government employees will be increased as per the economic situation of the country.

Rupee slips against US dollar

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee extended downward trend against the US dollar in the interbank market at the start of today's trading. According to forex dealers, the local unit depreciated by 1.73 rupees versus the greenback in the interbank market to trade at Rs 202.50 at 12:10 pm. The US dollar is being sold at over Rs206 in the open market, they said. The dollar had closed at Rs200.77 against the Pakistani rupee the other day. According to experts, the resumption of the IMF programme is a must to stabilize foreign exchange reserves.

On May 19, the dollar had reached a record high of Rs202.83 for the first time in interbank market.

The respite for the rupee had come only after the government had increased the fuel prices by a whopping Rs30 a litre, paving the way for the release of a \$1 billion tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Derogatory remarks

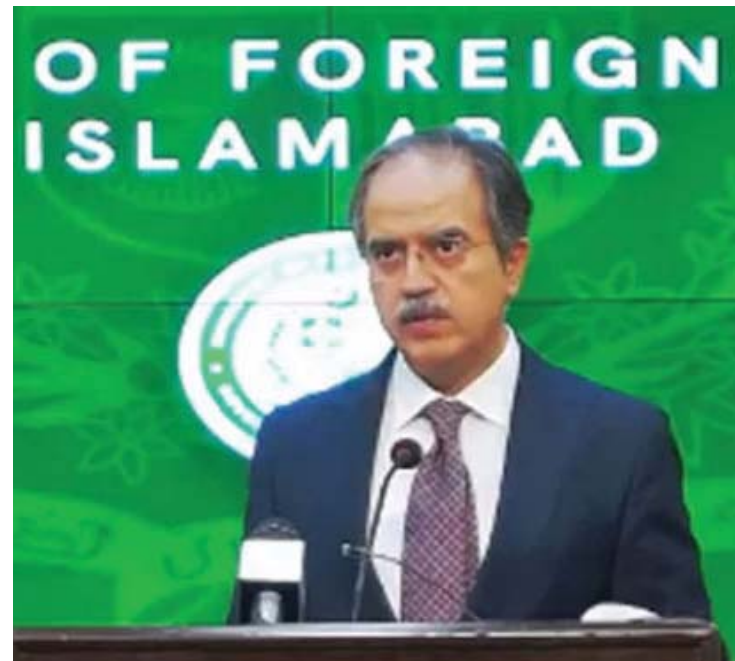
India should hold BJP leaders accountable: Pakistan

FO says Bharatiya Janata Party involved in atrocities against minorities, especially Muslims

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) has strongly condemned the derogatory remarks made by two officials of India's ruling party BJP against the Holy Prophet (PBUH), demanding the Indian government hold them accountable. Addressing a weekly press conference today, FO Spokesperson Asim Ifikhar Ahmed pointed out that India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was involved in atrocities against minorities, especially Muslims.

He noted that Pakistan had summoned Indian Charge d' Affaires and conveyed its strong protest and condemnation of the highly derogatory remarks about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The FO spokesperson further said that the Foreign Secretary had briefed OIC and P-5 envoys about the Indian atrocities on minorities. "Indian state machinery was being used against Muslims in the country," he added.

Asim Ifikhar stressed that the BJP top leadership should unequivocally condemn the sacrilegious comments of the officials and ensure that they are held accountable. He noted that India was continuing its campaign against Muslims and other minorities while Pakistan was promoting religious



harmony and tolerance. "Pakistan has issued visas to more than 6000 Sikh pilgrims," he added.

The spokesperson also said that Pakistan has its own position on India's membership of the Security Council and Nuclear Suppliers Group. Refer-

ring to the United States report on religious freedom in the world, the FO spokesperson said that the US report has double standards. "The report ignores the ground realities and positive steps, we are committed to respecting human rights," he added.

Diplomacy

The Outgoing High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, Mr. Pengiran Abdul Samad Bin Pengiran Haji Metasan, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on Friday.



Photo: PID

People-friendly

Pro-poor budget to change economic landscape: Marriyum

Says Pakistan is going through a difficult situation due PTI govt's theft & corruption

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Friday said, pro-poor and people-friendly budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 would change economic landscape by stabilizing the national economy. "This budget will lead the country towards economic stability, help provide relief to the people especially the poor, and promote industry, trade and commerce in the country," Marriyum said while addressing protesting government employees here. Gone were the days when the prime minister of country did not pay heed to the problems of government employees, she said, adding Pakistan was going through a difficult situation today due to the incompetence, inefficiency, theft and corruption of Imran's regime.

The minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed for 15 per cent increase in sala-

ries of the government employees, besides merger of adhoc relief in the basic pay. There would be a big announcement for pensioners in the budget today, she added. Today, when the Finance Ministry proposed a 10 per cent increase in the salaries of government employees, the Prime Minister rejected it and approved 15 per cent increase in salaries of government employees during the meeting of Federal Cabinet. Due to the incompetence of a gang which ruled the country for four years, the poor people were facing extreme inflation, poverty and unemployment.

Now, the country was being ruled by the coalition government which not only had representation of all the political parties, but also the vision which would ensure welfare of poor people and the middle class, she maintained. The minister said despite the difficult circumstances, the budget would not only provide relief to the masses, but also

boost the industry, trade, commerce, and agriculture sector in the country. Historic announcements would also be made for agriculture, IT, industry, food security and youth in the budget, she added. She vowed that the government would continue to provide relief to the poor people and government employees in the current and future budgets.

Despite the strict conditions of the IMF, she said the government and the Prime Minister were thinking of the poor and low-income people. The minister said when Imran Khan was given power in 2018, the national economy was stable but he ruined it. The government wanted to save the poor people from inflation and unemployment caused by the bad policies of the PTI regime. The government employees present in the rally chanted slogans in favour of the present government, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Information.

Blasphemous remarks

MPs stage protest outside Indian HC

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani along with members of the Senate from all political parties staged a protest demonstration on Friday in front of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad against blasphemous statement of BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma. The protest rally was attended by Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem, Senator Maulana Atta ur Rehman, Senator Abdul Ghafoor Haidri, MNA Khalid Hussain Magso, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, Senator Hidayatullah, Senator Danesh Kumar, Senator Gurdeep Singh, MNA Rubina Irfan, Senator Hilal ur Rehman, Senator Seemi Ezdi, Senator Sania Nishitar, Senator Fawzia Arshad, Senator Sana Jamali, Senator Dilawar Khan, Senator Azam Swati and Senator Keshoo

Bai and others. Addressing the participants, Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that Muslims across the globe are ready to sacrifice everything for the protection of "Namoos-e-Risalat". Such sacrilegious remarks are not acceptable and should be condemned in strongest possible terms, said Chairman Senate adding Nupur Sharma's statement has not only hurt the Muslim Ummah but has also exposed the ugly face of Indian government to the world. The blasphemous statement of the spokesperson has been strongly condemned by both the houses and the people of Pakistan expressing their deep grief and anger. He said that millions of Muslims in the Islamic world are ready to sacrifice their lives and property for the sake of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Agencies

IHC bars police from arresting PTI leaders

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday barred police from arresting former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry, Qasim Suri, Sindh opposition leader Haleem Adil Sheikh and other PTI leaders in different cases registered against them in connection with May 25 'Azadi March. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the petition filed by PTI leaders through their counsels.

PTI leaders Haleem Adil Sheikh, Fawad Chaudhry and others moved the Islamabad High Court for bail in cases registered by police for damaging government properties and attacking police during Azadi Long March towards Islamabad. The IHC directed police to submit details of cases registered against PTI leaders and adjourned the hearing till June 28.

It is to be noted that several PTI leaders including former prime minister Imran Khan, Asad Umar, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Fawad Chaudhry and others had been booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March.

6.3% up

Remittances surge to \$28.4b in 11 months

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The overseas Pakistani workers' remittances grew by 6.3 percent in 11 months (Jul-May) of current fiscal year to US\$28.4 billion against the inflows of \$26.7 billion in same period of the previous year. On year-on-year basis, the remittances decreased from \$2.5 billion in May 2021 to \$2.3 billion in same period of current fiscal year. On month-on-month basis, the inflows of remittances also declined from \$3.1 billion in April 2022 to \$2.3 billion in April 2022.

According to data released by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday, remittances' inflows during May 2022 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$541.9 million), United Arab Emirates (\$435 million), United Kingdom (\$354 million) and the United States of America (\$232.9 million).

During the corresponding month, the overseas Pakistanis living in Bahrain sent \$39.1 million, from Kuwait \$67 million, from Qatar \$76 million whereas \$114.6 million were dispatched from Oman.

Azadi March

ATC grants interim bail to PTI leaders

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Anti-terrorism court has granted pre-arrest bail to 14 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders till June 17. Earlier the ATC in Lahore had issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the former ruling party's leaders at the request of Shahdara police station under charges of damaging public property, torturing police officials, and creating chaos during the party's long march to Islamabad on May 25. Upon the issuing of warrants, former ministers Shafqat Mahmood, Hammad Azhar, Dr Yasmeen Rashid, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, Ijaz Chaudhary, Zubair Niazi, Nadeem Abbas Bara and others reached the court seeking bail.

The arrest warrants were issued to former ministers Shafqat Mahmood, Hammad Azhar and Dr Yasmeen Rashid. Other non-bailable warrants have also been issued against PTI leaders Nadeem Bara, Mian Mahmood Al-Rasheed and Ejaz Chaudhry, amongst others. The Gulberg police and Shahdara police had registered First Information Reports (FIR) against the alleged perpetrators under different sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) including 7-ATA related to punishment for terrorist activities and violence. The court had issued the warrants on the request of Shahdara police station. While the anti-terrorism court Judge Abhar Gul Khan had issued the arrest warrants.

Long march

Imran caused disorder in capital: Police

IG Islamabad submits PTI Red Zone Breach's report to SC

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police on Friday submitted their report to the Supreme Court, declaring Imran Khan responsible for causing disorder in the federal capital during PTI's "Azadi March". The report, regarding the violence during PTI's long march on May 25, further stated that the party chairman had directed protesters to enter the Red Zone after the culmination of the march against the court's orders to hold a rally on H-9 ground. The apex court, over Islamabad High Court Bar Association's (IHCBA) plea challenging the government's decision to block the roads to stop the march, had directed

the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and other relevant authorities to submit a report explaining whether the judicial orders were violated in the May 25 riots in Islamabad.

The SC has directed that the IGP of Islamabad, the Chief Commissioner of ICT, the Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, the Director-General of Intelligence Bureau, and the Director-General of ISI shall file reports answering. In the report, the police stated that 700-800 protesters violated the court's orders by entering the Red Zone. The police claimed that a total of 21 citizens were injured while the PTI protesters, equipped with arms and sticks, tried to enter the restricted area.

During this, the police used tear gas shelling to disperse the protesters.

"The PTI Chairman Imran Khan told his workers to reach the D-Chowk in a video message. The police and law enforcers made every effort to stop the protesters but they advanced removing all containers and barriers on the night between May 25 and 26," the report stated, adding that the police didn't use any type of force when the protesters breached the security cordon.

The report further stated that the police themselves removed some of the barricades, mainly at Faizabad, Zero Point and 26 number Chowrang, to let the participants of the march move towards the H-9 ground.

Directionless

PTI rejects coalition govt's budget

Hammad says budget gave no direction to resolve economic crisis

ISLAMABAD: The coalition government unveiled the "toughest" federal budget for the next fiscal year 2022-23 with an outlay of Rs9.5 trillion as it seeks to fulfill the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) conditions, but the Opposition rejected the budget, criticising it for having "no direction" which would lead to "more unemployment".

The federal government unveiled the budget amid strict conditions laid forth by the IMF for the revival of the \$6 billion loan programme stalled for months over policy breaches. In a video statement, PTI leader Hammad Azhar said the inflation will increase by 2%-3% in the country and the gross domestic product (GDP) will be halved — dropping from 6% to 2%-3%.

Azhar, a former finance and energy minister, said there was "a lot of instability" in Pakistan's economy and the country was on the brink of default — a notion that Finance Minister Miftah Ismail rejected a few days back.

"In the budget, we did not see the direction that we needed to take the country out of the economic crisis and clear the uncertainty that the incum-



bent government has created," Azhar said, adding that Pakistan would face "more employment". Azhar said the budget was passed "in a haste" and does not hold "any importance". PTI Senator Ejaz Chaudhry said the government unveiled a "people's enemy" budget and the nation would deal with the rulers themselves.

PTI Secretary-General Asad Umar wondered at what rate would the inflation rise when it witnessed an increase of 24% as compared to the last year. PTI leader and ex-science minister Shibli Faraz said a "handicapped" Parliament did not have legal or moral

grounds to present the country's budget as they have "deteriorated" the economy within two months after coming into power. "We reject this budget. Each day this government remains in power, it will be a burden on the masses. There is only one solution to this: hold early elections," the ex-science and technology minister said.

Talking to journalists outside the Parliament, Senator Shahzad Waseem said since the incumbent government came into power, the price of petrol and all other essential commodities have increased.

"This budget does not have anything but sorrows for the people. A voice matters more than numbers in the Opposition. We will expose this government every day," the PTI senator added.

PML-Q Senator Kamil Ali Agha, in a press conference, said today's budget was just a "formality" as the coalition government has already increased the prices of all commodities. "The [finance minister], in his speech, repeatedly mentioned that a common man will pay tax through their bills," Agha added.

Highlights of PSDP 2022-23

ISLAMABAD: Following are the highlights of allocations under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for various ministries and divisions for the fiscal year 2022-23 announced by the Federal Government.

- Total outlay of the PSDP for the fiscal year 202122 is Rs 2.263 trillion
- The share of federal PSDP is Rs 800 billion while that of provincial PSDP is Rs 1.146 trillion.
- Rs 2,484.871 million has been earmarked for Aviation Division.
- Board of Investment will get Rs 807,500 million.
- Rs 70,058.816 million has been earmarked for Cabinet Division.
- The Climate Change Division will get Rs 9,600 million.
- Rs 1,174.440 million has been set aside for Commerce Division.

- Rs 180 million are allocated for Communication Division (other than NHA).
- Rs 2,232.090 million has been earmarked for Defence Division.
- Rs 2,200 million has been set aside for Defence Production Division.
- Rs 900 million are allocated for Establishment Division.
- The Federal Education and Professional Training Division will get Rs 7,239.597 million.
- Rs 1,659.997 million has been allocated for Finance Division.
- Rs 135855.627 million has been earmarked for Provinces and Special Areas.
- The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will get Rs 44,178.907 million.
- Rs 13,985.204 million has been earmarked for Housing and Working Division.

- Rs 184.682 million will be provided to Human Rights Division.
- Rs 2,850 million has been set aside for Industries and Production Division.
- Rs 2,100 million are allocated for Information and Broadcasting Division.
- Rs 6,330.696 million will be provided to Information Technology and Telecom Division.
- Rs 3,472.420 million has been set aside for Inter-Provincial Coordination Division.
- Rs 9,093.009 million has been granted for Interior Division.
- Rs 1,813.892 million has been earmarked for Law and Justice.
- Rs 3,465.378 million has been allocated for Maritime Affairs Division.
- Rs 207,917 million has been granted to Narcotics Control Division.
- Rs 10,129.134 million has been

- Rs 12,650.997 million has been allocated for National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination Division.
- Rs 550 million has been provided for National Culture and Heritage Division.
- Rs 25,990.602 million has been earmarked for Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.
- Rs 289.890 million has been set aside for Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority.
- Rs 1,480.509 million has been earmarked for Petroleum Division.
- Rs 42,176.535 million has been allocated for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division.
- Rs 500 million has been allocated for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division.

- Rs 32,648.036 million has been set aside for Railway Division.
- Rs 600 million has been allocated for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Division.
- Rs 3,188.639 million has been earmarked for Revenue Division.
- Rs 5,716.394 million has been earmarked for Science and Technology Research Division.
- Rs 7,395.01 million has been earmarked for SUPARCO.
- Rs 99,572.465 million has been allocated for Water Resource Division.
- Rs 118,403.402 million has been set aside for National Highway Authority.
- Rs 43,133.262 million has been allocated for NTDC/PEPCO.
- Rs 500 million for EERRA.
- Rs 73,000 million for Viability Gap Fund (VGF).

Women empowerment a priority of PML-N govt : Governor Punjab

Baligh says women will be encouraged to key slots universities

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that quality research and immediate appointments to important posts in universities are a priority. Former Vice Chancellor of Lahore College for Women University Prof. Dr. Farkhanda Manzoor and Senior Faculty Member talking to former Dean of Sciences Prof. Dr. Shagufta Naz.

The Governor Punjab said that empowerment of women has always been a priority of PML-N government. Women will be encouraged to hold important positions in women's universities. She added that as Chancellor she is keen on the development and promotion of universities. He said that instructions have been given to fill the vacancies of Deans and other important posts without any delay. On this occasion, both the professors briefed the Governor of Punjab about the performance of Lahore College for Women University in the field of education.



USAK University, UAJK in MoU on academic collaboration

MUZAFFARABAD: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Turkey's reputable USAK University and the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad. The memorandum was signed by the Rector of the USAK University Prof. Dr. Ekrem Savas and Vice-Chancellor of UAJK, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi. The two institutions agreed to cooperate on the exchange of students and staff in the context of the Erasmus program. They commit to respect the quality requirements of the Erasmus Charter for higher education in all aspects of the organization and management of the mobility, in particular the recognition of the credits (or equivalent) awarded to students by the partner institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Vice-Chancellor University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, thanked Dr. Ekrem Savas,



Rector of USAK University, and other members of the management for signing an MoU with his institution. He expressed the hope that the agreement of mutual cooperation between the two universities will enable the students and teachers of the UAJK Muzaffarabad to benefit from the vast opportunities in the field of higher education and research. The USAK University, he went on to say, has also offered fellowships by allowing us to send our students to join USAK University in the final

semester for practical training. He particularly thanked the Turkish government and the people of Turkey for their generous support to the people of Azad Kashmir after the catastrophic earthquake of 2005 and said that the great humanitarian spirit and Islamic brotherhood demonstrated by the Turkish government and people will never be forgotten. "The present building of City Campus of UAJK in Muzaffarabad would remain an emblem of the friendship and brotherhood between the



people of Turkey and Azad Kashmir," The Vice-Chancellor remarked. Prof. Abbasi said that the Turkish government was gradually opening the door to higher education for the students of Azad Kashmir. More than 32 students from UAJK are currently pursuing Ph.D. and undergraduate studies at various Turkish universities and this number will grow further in the coming months and years, he added. He also expressed the hope that the number of students and teachers coming from Azad Kashmir

for higher education in Turkish institutions indicates that time is not far off when a sustainable educational corridor will be established between the people of the two regions. Prior to the signing of the MoU, Dr. Muhammad Naem Ahmed, Director Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) introduced the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, its history, and educational programs and exchanged souvenirs with Dr. Amjad Baraham, President of Palestine University.

Govt contractors threat shutting down work on all projects

LAHORE: Constructors Association Pakistan (CAP) Chairman Engr. Kamal Nasir Khan has urged the government to sit with the representatives of constructors for evaluating the loss being inflicted on them because of unprecedented rise in the construction material and to pay a suitable escalation on ongoing projects. We will shut down work on all the projects across Pakistan if our demands are not met and contractors especially the smaller ones are not compensated properly, said Engr. Kamal while addressing a press conference here.

He claimed 26,000 small contractors of category C-5 and C-6 have already stopped working on their ongoing projects as they are neither in the position to get loan from the market nor can spend from their own pocket on these projects. Only those who have completed 80-90 per cent work of

their projects are carrying out rest of the work hardly as they cannot back out at this stage. He also claimed that projects worth Rs 2500 billion to Rs 3000 billion have been affected due to price hike. However, he said mega projects being carried out by WAPDA or with the assistance of Asian Development Bank or World Bank are excluded as donor agencies monitor these projects themselves and ensure payments.

Engr. Kamal Nasir Khan said that an important meeting of their members from all the provinces was held the other day in which contractors expressed that they could not carry on with their projects because of the price spiral after the loss and mental stress bearing in COVID-19 restrictions. He said that not only work on ongoing projects would be closed but boycott of tenders for future contracts would also be observed. "Whole burden of the

situation arising out of these steps of contractors will be on the government," CAP Chairman warned.

Engr. Kamal Nasir Khan said construction sector is the biggest industry after agriculture and 40 industries are attached with it. Closure of work on construction projects might result in a flood of unemployment which would be more embarrassing for the government so the government should take some immediate measures. He said a committee had been formed by the previous government to assess the losses being incurred by the contractors but the exercise was also closed after the regime change. Kamal said he is in favour of resolving all the issues through negotiations and the incumbent government should follow the suit of the previous government to assess the impact on construction sector through mutual efforts.

Budget Session of Punjab Assembly to be called on 13th

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly's 40th Session was turned into Budget Session of Punjab and will be presented on June 13 at 2 pm. As per details, the Governor Punjab Baligh Ur Rehman has approved the Budget Session to be held on June 13 and summary has been sent by the Assembly Secretariat. While the Budget of fiscal year 2023 will be presented and approved on the same day. The Punjab government sent a summary to the governor for summoning the budget session. The Punjab governor will summon the budget session after concluding the current session, sources added.

The budget has been formulated while considering the existing challenges being faced by the economy on domestic and international fronts. Miftah Ismail will also present Supplementary Grants 2021-22.

Irsa, Fahad star in Short Film "Radio"



LAHORE: As one of Pakistan's fastest growing digital platforms, SeePrime will be releasing its latest short film 'Radio', directed by Abdul Wahab on their YouTube channel, on June 10th, 2022. Radio follows the story of Dania a 27 year old male who takes care of his psychologically ill aunt, Fatima while hiding his gambling problem. The seemingly naïve Dania pretends to study while looking for a job to help fund his addiction, and to settle his debt.

Written by Mohammad Tanveer Khalil, Radio features Irsa Ghazal, Fahad Sheikh and Sajid Shah as the leading characters who bring to life this murder mystery plot, with its roots in greed, and the human condition of always wanting more. Radio delves into the story of a young boy and his battle with his discontentment for his prevailing financial situations and the lengths he decides to go to, in his greed-riddled pursuit.

"It asks the very important question, 'how much will be enough' without ever posing it in a direct way. With these short films we aim to start conversations that are usually swept under rugs and hope to provide content that sparks introspection and a positive change in our society." Commented Seemeen Naveed, the executive producer. "Radio" is set to release at 06:00 PM on Friday, June 10, 2022 - and will be available for viewing on SeePrime's official YouTube channel.

Azadi march

Police denies payment to held containers

By Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Police kept more than 30 containers impounded at Chachh interchange in the jurisdiction of Hazro police station for two weeks to block roads in the wake of PTI long march but did not pay a single penny to transporters to compensate their financial losses. Transporters Qazi Khizar and Malik Bashir Akhtar said this while talking to newsmen. They said, each container has a staff of three persons which include two drivers and a helper and average expenditure including earning is Rs 8000/ per day. Police kept more than thirty containers impounded for almost two weeks thus transporters suffered more than three million rupees loss. Beside this the staff of the containers faced lot of problems as there were no proper wash rooms, drinking water and other facilities available in this extremely hot weather. They said, the containers have been released after two weeks with out any financial compensation which is a great injustice. They demanded that govt to compensate them properly. PRO Attock Police Tahir Iqbal when contacted for his comments said that the transporters will be paid as per the rules after completion of the formalities.

Flour's smuggling won't be allowed: DC Attock

By Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Muhammad Zulqarnain has said that the smuggling of flour and other items will not be allowed at any cost and those involved in it will be brought to justice. He said this during his surprise visit to Jallo Burhan and Jhari Kas check posts where three trucks were impounded in his presence trying to smuggle flour. FIRs have been registered against the truck owners. DC Attock also checked the attendance of the staff deputed at the check posts and emphasised to perform their duty efficiently to control illegal transportation of flour, wheat and other items.

KP legislates online taxi services registration

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Assembly has passed a bill making it necessary for all online taxi services to register themselves with the government. According to the bill registration of the online taxi services has been made compulsory. The company will be compelled to provide information about the owner and drivers of the company. The bill says that companies operating without registration would be fined up to Rs1 million.

The Transportation Department will have the authority to cancel a company's registration, the registration bill read. It adds that the company can be fined in case of a legitimate complaint by a customer. The driver will be penalized if a case of harassment is proven. On June 5, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) government passed the universal number plate bill from the provincial assembly.

According to the KPK adviser on Excise, Taxation and Narcotics, the PTI government of KPK had passed the universal number plate bill for the whole province from the provincial assembly. After the passage of the bill, all KPK vehicles would now carry a provincial number instead of a district number plate, KPK advisor told.



NFEH, Arts Council jointly mark World Environment Day

'Karachi should immediately introduce wastewater recycling to increase tree cover'

KARACHI: Wastewater recycling systems should immediately be introduced in Karachi to increase green cover without further depleting the scarce water resource for residents of the city. This was one of the unanimous demands by the concerned speakers who spoke at a moot titled "Climate Change and our responsibilities" at the Arts Council, Karachi. The National Forum for Health and Environment (NFEH) in collaboration with Arts Council of Pakistan and EHS Services organised the programme to mark World Environment Day. The speakers, including concerned environmentalists, were of the view that household wastewater could easily be recycled for its use to increase tree cover in the city. They said that besides waste-

water recycling for tree plantation the city should have a proper mass transit system for catering to the daily commuting needs of Karachiites with minimal harm to its environment. They lamented that the proper mass transit system should have been built in Karachi after its population had exceeded three million but the same facility was still missing despite the fact that the provincial capital would soon be home to about 30 million people. Karachi's Administrator, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, who was the chief guest on the occasion assured the delegation that Karachi's municipality would try its best to implement all the recommendations of the moot to improve the environment of the city. He lamented that graveyards in Karachi had ample green

cover but there was a very lesser number of trees for the living people in the city. He said that coming generations should know the importance of planting trees and actively taking part in their nurturing and growth. He told the audience that he had planted a tree in his house each time his son and daughter were born as the trees were now as old as his child were. Barrister Wahab advised the citizens to adopt the same practice for playing their due role in improving the environment. CEO EHS Saquib Ejaz Hussain stressed that work should be accelerated to complete the network of bus rapid transit systems in Karachi as its first-ever modern mass transit system to control harmful vehicular emissions. He said the wastewater from



kitchens and bathrooms of houses in Karachi shouldn't go into the drain as instead it should be recycled for fulfilling water needs for tree plantations. Senior journalist Afia Salam lamented the situation that Pakistan ranked fifth on the global vulnerability index of the countries most affected by climate change. She said the government should wake up to the situation of rising mercury levels in the urban areas as its

response to tackle recurring heat waves shouldn't just be confined to measures like setting up roadside stalls of cold water as a long-term and effective strategy should be adopted to combat the issue of climate change. Shabina Faraz, who extensively writes on environmental issues, said that the mass transit system should be introduced in Karachi without any further delay. She said the mass transit

system would not just decrease the load of vehicles on the roads of the city but at the same time let hundreds of thousands of girls and women safely commute daily for their educational and job requirements. She said that extreme weather in Thar had been a contributing factor to an alarming increase in suicides in the desert area of Sindh as high mercury levels were the reasons behind frequent incidents of domestic violence. Dr Raza Gardezi, General-Secretary of Citizens for Environment, said that good personal habits like proper disposal of trash without throwing it away would contribute a lot towards the improvement of the environment. Former MPA Sindh, Mehtab Akbar Rashdi, told the audience that she had served as

the director-general of Sindh Environmental Protection Agency for six years and later as provincial Environment Secretary when the bureaucracy had the firm impression that such postings for a civil servant were of no use. Rashdi recalled that with the help of the then Director of Schools, late Anwaar Ahmed Zai, she had established 700 environmental clubs comprising school students in Karachi. She said that those environmental clubs had used to frequently hold activities to highlight the importance of good practices like energy and water conservation and tree plantation. She said that strict penal action should be taken against erring industries responsible for spreading pollution as was the firm practice in the West to protect the environment.

Islamabad
23° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr3:14 am
Zohr12:07 pm
Asr5:07 pm
Maghrib7:18 pm
Isha9:01 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9276044
Motorway Police927601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 927601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi0331-5022125

NPC urges India to apologize for blasphemous comments

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: In its recent meeting, the members of the Executive Committee of Nazriya Pakistan Council Islamabad (NPC), have shown great concern on the blasphemous approach of Nopor Sharama, a female member of a commonly

known prejudice Indian political party, BJP. The act in question has highly hurt the sentiments of the Muslim world at large as none of us can ever tolerate disrespect to our Holy Prophet (PBUH) or Islamic values and practices, the meeting expressed. Presiding over the meet-

ing, Mian Muhammad Javed, Chairman NPC, maintained that this heinous crime by the lady politician has sparked a chain of protests by the Muslim Governments, as well as all peace loving bodies around the world and the Muslim Ummah is not going to over look it at all. We demand the Indian

Governments to tender immediate apology, put the blasphemous to the task and ensure that there would be no such happening at any Indian forum against the respect of our Holy Prophet and the Islamic practices in future. as the Muslim World is ready to react unimaginably strong against it, he said

President asks SLICP to pay insurance money to widow

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) to pay the Group Insurance claim with profits to the widow of a fireman from City District Government, Multan, who had died after retirement. "The insured employee died in June 2016, and it has been six years since his widow is waiting for the insurance claim. Besides pain and agony, even the monetary value decreases", said the President while upholding the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib ordering SLICP to pay the insurance claim to the widow along with profits accrued.

The President, after the perusal of the record, rejected the representation on the grounds that a group insurance contract had been

executed between the local government and the Agency on 12.03.2008 which provided that each and every employee of the local government in Punjab who is under sixty years of age shall be assured subject to payment of premiums. He observed that the deceased fireman had paid monthly premiums according to his basic pay scale during his service and all the required documents in this regard were also available.

The President held that there was nothing on record to contradict the said observation and that the original order of the Mohtasib was well reasoned warranting no interference. "The Agency is under an obligation to pay group insurance claim to the complainant in accordance with the group insurance contract", said the President while rejecting the representation of SLICP.

Bid to smuggle wheat, flour foiled

Staff Report

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Friday foiled a bid to smuggle wheat and flour and seized 2450 flour bags besides 2720 wheat bags.

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department and Naserabad police confiscated eight truckloads of wheat and flour and also impounded eight trucks. Eight drivers namely Abbas, Zakir, Fareed, Burhan ud din, Sajjad, Mukhtar and Rehmat were also sent behind the bars, he added.

The authorities concerned had been directed to strictly monitor district exit points to control wheat smuggling, he said adding, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq had instructed the authorities to strictly monitor the movement of wheat and take strict action in accordance with the law against the rules violators.

The spokesman said that all the exit points of Rawalpindi division were being monitored round the clock to control wheat smuggling



as the administration had set up 14 check posts at exit points of the four districts of the division to check wheat smuggling.

The administration in collaboration with police and special branch, was carrying out operations and a special monitoring system had also been developed particularly for exit points of Rawalpindi division to check wheat smuggling.

A comprehensive plan had been formulated to curb the smuggling of wheat, he added.

The check posts were set up at exit points of Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal districts, he said and informed, the district administration in collaboration with the Motorway police and the food department was making efforts to control wheat smuggling.

Security steps

ISLAMABAD: Workers of local administration are placing the shipping containers to seal Constitution Avenue to counter any unexpected situation during rallies from different Organizations, Parties and Citizens against Nupur Sharma's controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammed (SAW) made by a former BJP spokesperson, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Diplomatic Corner

Sweden Day celebrates innovation and sustainability

Ambassador says Sweden is open for co-creation, collaboration

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Sweden Day was celebrated with the theme of 'Pioneer the Possible' with focus on Sweden's journey towards becoming the world's first fossil-free welfare state. Henrik Persson, Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan in collaboration with prominent Swedish companies co-hosted a reception at the Swedish Residence in Islamabad.

The Ambassador welcomed the guests and said 'A green industrial revolution is under way in Sweden. Today we are presenting to you how far Swedish companies have come in terms of sustainability and innovation—and that Sweden is open for co-creation and collaboration.' Several prominent Swedish companies showcased technologies and solutions developed by them as they lead in innovation and sustainable transformation and shared their experiences of contributing to the green transition in Sweden.

Senator Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change took a detailed tour of the companies stall and appreciated the strong Swed-

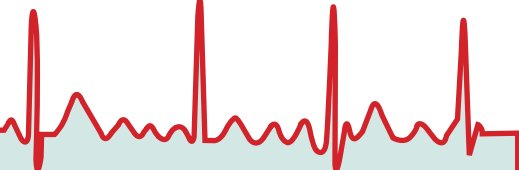


ish business presence in Pakistan. An exhibition featured Sweden's climate strategy and what Sweden has to offer as a nation of innovation and knowledge with examples of innovative companies driving the change. The exhibition has been developed by Swedish Institute in cooperation with Fossil Free Sweden, Environmental Protection Agency and Business Sweden. Live

performance by Natasha Humera Ejaz featured popular Swedish songs sung by ABBA, Zara Larsson, Roxette, Avicii, Molly Sandén and Ace of Base. The reception was co-hosted by Swedish companies including ABB, Ecolean, Ericsson, H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M), Tetra Pak, Talkpool, Quixel, BIMA Milvik, Tundra Fonder, Oriflame, SAAB, Hitachi ABB Power Grids, Nordic

International School Lahore, Wah Nobel and Pakistani partner companies including Gul Ahmed, Panasian Group and S.I.S. Engineering Enterprises. Over 300 partners of Sweden attended the reception, representing different spheres of the society including business community, multilateral agencies, high level government officials, civil society, Swedish alumni and media.

Health Corner



Headache affects 52% of global population

ISLAMABAD: A new review of the evidence suggests 52% of the global population are affected by a headache disorder every year, with 14% reporting migraines. The review is published in The Journal of Headache and Pain.

Headaches are one of the most prevalent and disabling conditions worldwide. However, studies of headache prevalence can vary greatly in their methods and samples, which may impact how the global rates of headaches are estimated.

Authors from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology reviewed 357 publications from between 1961 and the end of 2020 to estimate the global prevalence of headaches. The majority of publications considered in the review reported on adults between 20 and 65, but some also included adolescents and children down to 5, and elderly people above 65.

Building on a previous report from 2007, Lars Jacob Stovner and colleagues also measured the differences in methods across the studies they reviewed. They modelled these differences in methods and how they are associated with estimates in headache prevalence. Most studies reported on headache prevalence during the past year. However, some studies reported on headache prevalence across the whole lifetime and some for much shorter periods, including instances of headache within the last day.

Based on the 357 publications reviewed, the authors estimate that 52% of the global population have experienced a headache disorder within a given year, with 14% reporting a migraine, 26% reporting a tension-type headache and 4.6% reporting a headache for 15 or more days per month. From the 12 studies that reported on headache during the last day, the authors estimate that 15.8% of the world's population have a headache on any given day, and almost half of those individuals report a migraine (7%).

Lars Jacob Stovner, lead author, said: "We found that the prevalence of headache disorders remains high worldwide and the burden of different types may impact many. We should endeavour to reduce this burden through prevention and better treatment. To measure the effect of such efforts, we must be able to monitor prevalence and burden in societies. Our study helps us understand how to improve our methods."

All types of headache were more common in females than males, most markedly for migraines (17% in females compared to 8.6% in males) and headaches for 15 or more days per month (6% in females compared to 2.9% in males).

The authors also investigated the association between study methods and headache estimates. Some of the different measures the authors looked at, such as screening questions, sample size, publication year, and how diagnostic criteria are applied, amongst others, explained 29.9% of the variation in migraine estimates and less for other headache disorders. This suggests that there may be other methodological factors accounting for the greater variations across the studies. When modelling the variation in migraine prevalence estimates, the publication year of studies was associated to 6% of the variation in headache estimates, with higher prevalence estimates associated with more recent publication. The publication year was not associated with other headache types. The authors propose that this might reflect a real change with migraines becoming more common over the last three to four decades. Alternatively, this finding could suggest improved methods of diagnosing migraines. The authors also acknowledge that the majority of publications they reviewed came from high-income countries with good healthcare systems so this may not reflect every country. Further investigation into middle and low-income countries would help present a more accurate global estimate. However, to obtain data from as many countries as possible, the authors did use a broad range of studies that sampled participants outside of clinical settings, such as employees of a company, university students and hospital staff, amongst others.

Lars Jacob Stovner said: "Compared to our previous report and global estimates, the data does suggest that headaches and migraines rates may be increasing. However, given that we could explain only 30% or less of the variation in headache estimates with the measures we looked at, it would be premature to conclude headaches are definitively increasing. What is clear is that overall, headache disorders are highly prevalent worldwide and can be a high burden. It may also be of interest in future to analyse the different causes of headaches that varied across groups to target prevention and treatment more effectively."

The authors conclude that this study provides a baseline in how to estimate headache rates across the world and future research could build on this to improve methods for measuring the success of interventions and treatment. Courtesy Science Daily

Islamabad to get cancer hospital

ISLAMABAD: The government will establish a cancer hospital in the capital with the objective to provide advanced medical treatment to cancer patients.

For the new project under the National Health Services and Coordination Division, the government has allocated Rs 250 million in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

The hospital, to be equipped with the latest technology, will help the cancer patients get better medical facilities including oncology laboratories and operation theatres.

For the treatment of poor cancer patients of Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit Baltistan, the PSDP will share Rs 416.636 million of the total cost of Rs 4772.150 million of the ongoing project. In this PSDP, the government has earmarked Rs 100 million.

Furthermore, Rs 900 million have been allocated for the cancer hospital of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) in AJK.

For the upgradation of PAEC's cancer hospital Kiran in Karachi, Rs 1.795 billion have been allocated in the PSDP.

Govt allocates Rs65 bln for HEC

ISLAMABAD: The government, due to financial constraints, has allocated Rs. 65 billion for the Higher education Commission (HEC) in the budget 2022-23.

This was revealed by Federal Minister of Finance, Miftah Ismail in the National Assembly during his budget speech.

Besides, Rs.44 billion has been allocated for the development schemes which are 67 percent higher than the previous year's allocation.

The government has announced 5000 stipends for Balochistan and the merged districts.

Around 100,000 laptops will be provided to the students across the country on easy installments while funds have been allocated for providing state-of-the-art equipment to upgrade Engineering and Technology Education.

Law Ministry establishes Directorate of Legal Education

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice on Friday in light of the Supreme Court decision announced for establishment of Directorate of Legal education in the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC).

The Law Ministry established the Directorate at the request of the Pakistan Bar Council and by the special efforts of Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

According to a statement issued by the ministry, the Directorate of Legal Education would be headed by Osama Malik, Deputy Adviser to the Ministry of Law, and would serve as the Director of the Directorate of Legal Education while Zahoor Ahmed, Legislative Adviser to the Ministry of Law, would be the focal person on behalf of the Ministry.

Other law enforcement officers and support staff had also been deployed.

Arrangements made by the Ministry of Law would continue till amendments in the relevant rules and establishment of a directorate by the Pakistan Bar Council.

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China-EU Economic Ties & Ideological Confrontation

Ding Gang

A big challenge facing China and the EU is that bilateral economic and trade relations have come to the brink of an ideological confrontation trap. Unless the two sides make joint efforts, meet each other halfway, show enough courage and carry out concrete actions to stabilize bilateral economic and trade ties, especially in terms of making progress on the resolution of investment, market and supply chain issues between the two, there is a risk of intensifying “decoupling.”

Since “decoupling” was triggered by the US-launched trade war with China in 2018, conflicts in China-EU economic and trade ties caused by differing ideologies have continued to increase. In recent years, Washington has focused on forming a “value alliance” against China, with particular emphasis on containing China in the fields of information technology and emerging technologies.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict in Europe has cemented the foundations of the EU’s value alliance. But Europe must not

think that such a banner of values can better help its own enterprises and capital to enter the vast Asian market, including China. Considering that European countries have a colonial past in Asia, Europe’s ideology promotion needs to be more restrained.

China needs to put more emphasis on opposing hegemony and war, and maintaining world peace based on UN principles. The most important thing is to start the approval process of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment as soon as possible through coordinated negotiations. At the same time, it is necessary to explore the possible ways to expand cooperation in non-sensitive technical fields, and to promote technology trade and market access of both sides through continuous bargaining as much as possible.

The Chinese side should coordinate with European companies to deal with the business issues that European companies are most concerned about in an earnest manner. Especially after the initial control of the epidemic, it is necessary for China to solve possible supply chain problems in the future according to EU’s requirements as much as possible, and boost their faith in the

Chinese market. The economic and trade ties between China and the EU have not come easily. The two sides should avoid falling into an ideological confrontation, adopt a pragmatic attitude, and attach more attention to the actual benefits achieved through cooperation.

Anti-China forces within the European Parliament are expected to create fresh damage to China-EU relations by once again provoking China over the Taiwan question. The European Parliament is scheduled to vote on Wednesday on a report for China, in an aim to calling on the EU to build a new strategy to deal with China. Among a list of policy ideas proposed in the report, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) advocated that the ratification process for the China-EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment cannot commence until China removes sanctions, and urged the European Commission and the European Council to progress on an EU investment agreement with the island of Taiwan.

The vote comes just a few days after the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted a report, titled “EU-Taiwan Relations and Cooperation,” pushing for so-called closer ties between the bloc and

the island of Taiwan, which the Chinese Foreign Ministry and Chinese Mission to the EU firmly opposed. Whatever the outcome of the European Parliament’s vote, the chances of the EU adopting their proposals are slim. The Taiwan region is an inalienable part of China’s territory, and the one-China principle is the political foundation on which China and EU diplomatic relations have developed.

The European Parliament’s advocacy of closer ties with the island of Taiwan, which is apparently beyond the scope of normal non-official economic and trade cooperation, is a blatant demonstration of putting political interests ahead of economic ones. The negative impacts of those anti-China MEPs on China-EU relations are obvious. With their resolution hindering the normal ratification process of the China-EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, they have also contributed to empowering radical anti-China voices across Europe.

Political stunts staged by anti-China forces from the European Parliament to garner attention regardless of the consequences do not necessarily represent the future direction of the EU policy toward China. Since economic and trade cooperation

have become the most substantial component of China-EU relations, the EU knows clearly that the Taiwan question is a red line issue for China and provoking China on the subject will only have negative repercussions.

In 2020, the Taiwan island represented the EU’s 14th largest trading partner, accounting for only 1.4 percent of the total EU trade, according to statistics from the European Commission. By comparison, the Chinese mainland overtook the US to become the EU’s biggest trading partner in 2020, and their bilateral trade continued to grow this year despite political headwinds.

With China’s consumer market becoming one of the key markets for growing number of European firms, the EU’s economic recovery post-pandemic cannot risk losing China. In any case, it doesn’t make any economic and political sense to trigger some irresponsible confrontation that would only damage the atmosphere and market confidence as it relates to bilateral trade. In this sense, the EU needs to be careful that its ties with China are not held hostage by radical and extreme ideologies.

The author is a senior editor with People’s Daily. Courtesy Global Times

Booming tourism

Pakistan is heading in the right direction in tourism industry as its beautiful landscapes have attracted both the local and international communities. Malakand and Hazara divisions have attracted over 1.6 million tourists during last Eidul Fitr holidays. Approximately, 1.2 million tourists including 45,000 had visited Buner, 58,000 by Chitral Lower, 1,25,000 by Dir Upper’s Kumrat, 1,45,000 by Dir Lower, eight lakh by Swat and three lakh by Galiyat. Resultantly, Rs300 million revenue was generated only from Naran, Kaghan and Kurmat valleys.

Following severe heat waves in plains districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other parts of the country, the tourists have thronged to Nathiagali and Ayubia to spend sometimes in its soothing environment. The hide and seek between the sun and clouds with moderate to erratic rainfalls over the snow-clad Mukeshpuri (9,200 feet) and Miranjani (9,816feet) on western Himalaya hills near Nathiagali in Abbottabad take tourists into a state of ecstasy.

At weekend, Nathiagali and Ayubia are flooded with tourists, trekkers and adventure sports enthusiasts enjoying its breathtaking natural beauty, spectacular landscapes, waterfalls, chairlift ride and colonial era walking trails amid great fun and laughter. Dongagali-Ayubia, Nathiagali-Ayubia and Mukeshpuri Top are the most frequented site of tourists with ride on horses, camels and photography.

However, a visitor could be disappointed to see garbage and polythene bags thrown at open places at these picturesque sites because Kaghan Development Authority (KDA), Wildlife Department and District Administration are responsible to ensure and maintain its cleanliness and make it pollution-free. As per international practice, vehicles are parked outside of the chairlift’s premises to protect its ecology from plastic pollution. The construction of parking areas and installation of dusts bins should be enhanced to protect it from plastic pollution.

Ten more new camping pods would be established at Jarogo Asbhar, Sulatar Swat, Lashkargas Broghal and Surlaspur Shandur Upper Chitral, Kumrat Upper Dir, Kalam, Lilowani and Alpuri Shangla, Samani top Hangu/Orakzai, Larham Top Lower Dir and Bin Shahi Lower Dir. Seven sites in merged districts were identified for camping pods, picnic spots, excess roads and rest areas.

Waterfalls of Lamchar, Sajkot, Noori, Chajjani Hari-pur, Jarogo Swat, Lanchar Dir and Umbrella Abbottabad would be developed on modern lines to promote ecotourism. Tourist home stay loan project is being launched with an assistance of the Bank of Khyber to financially support local people to build a guest room for tourists’ stay. The project would help generate employment opportunities for local population of tourists’ areas.



Openness as Prerequisite & Essential Pillar of Reforms in the New Uzbekistan

Spokesman Report

Openness and transparency are considered among the most effective tools in the fight against corruption. Thus, the efforts instigated in Uzbekistan to secure the rule of law, introduce effective forms of openness and transparency, establish genuine public control over the activities of government authorities have been gaining momentum as decisive and steadfast in nature. As a result, initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, considerable positive strides have been conspicuous lately in the country in combating various forms of bureaucracy and corruption. In particular, new procedures have been established to ensure the openness and transparency of the activities of government bodies and organizations, so have the conditions necessary for effective public oversight.

To this end, within a short period of time the system for considering appeals from individuals and corporate bodies has been radically redefined, the People’s Receptions, Helplines and Virtual Reception of the President were launched. Thus, the head of state demonstrated readiness for open communication with citizens. In addition, a functioning mechanism has been set up in each ministry and government agency to work with appeals in the form of ministerial helplines and virtual receptions or field receptions. Moreover, the widespread use of digital and online technologies has helped bolster the government accountability before the civil society. In particular, the Open Data Portal (data.gov.uz), the registered database of legal entities and business entities (my.gov.uz) and other platforms play an important role in reducing and eliminating bureaucracy, as well as combating and preventing corruption.

The adopted regulatory acts of conceptual significance and other administrative reforms aimed at preventing corruption also bear fruit in ensuring the openness of government authorities and administrative bodies.

For example, in order to prevent theft of budgetary funds, the Public Procurement Law was adopted. Now, according to this normative act, all information on public procurement is posted on d.karid.uz portal. Efficient mechanisms of public control have been created, and the newly launched Open Budget portal has allowed the population to be directly involved in the management of budget funds. In accordance with the 22 September 2021 Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, an effective system overseen by the local population and the general public was introduced for spending budget funds and surplus amount of the forecast of local budget revenues. The act also kick-started the Initiative Budget project.

In the first season of the Initiative Budget project in 2022, a total of 70 thousand initiatives were received from citizens, 2,215 of which won the contest. More than 6.7 million people took part in voting on these projects. Thirty-four percent of the winning initiatives were related to secondary school renovation projects. In addition, a system was instituted whereby the sale of public property, real estate, land plots, vehicles, license plates, the right to build and install outdoor advertising facilities, those for speed cameras should be realized through open online auction (https://e-auksion.uz/). Another example: a newly created system establishes mandatory public discussion of draft laws as well as draft regulatory acts to be adopted by the President and the government, with the launch of the portal regulation.gov.uz.

This, in turn, contributes to the transparency of important decisions planned for adoption, and the practical implementation of the principle of accountability to citizens. One of the main achievements in this area is the improvement of press services that inform the public about the activities of government bodies and organizations. That is, all government bodies and organizations have press services, and the status of spokespersons has been raised to the level of advisers to the head of a government agency on information policy. In addition, the maximum openness and

transparency of statistical data for a wide range of domestic and foreign users has been ensured. Accordingly, open statistical data are posted on the Open Data Portal, including information on public procurement, registration of patents, medicines and medical products, public transportation, land use and other information.

Similar systemic and consistent reforms have significantly improved the position of Uzbekistan in a number of international rankings and indices, one of the main of which is the index of openness. For example, as of 2020, Uzbekistan rose by 125 positions, to 44th in the Open Data Inventory Ranking. The introduction of the practice of disclosing indicators in 20 areas of state and public administration proved instrumental. And, in the updated Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International for 2021, Uzbekistan climbed six positions compared to 2020, ranking 140th out of 180 countries. As a logical continuation of the reforms, on June 16, 2021, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a decree envisaging additional measures to ensure the openness of the activities of government bodies and organizations, as well as the effective implementation of public control, which, according to both local and international experts, has become a truly groundbreaking document.

The decree approved the list of socially significant information to be posted as open data, and clearly defined government bodies and organizations that develop data, as well as procedure for publishing open data. Committees on information policy and ensuring openness in government bodies under the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, as well as standing commissions on information policy and ensuring openness in local government bodies under regional, district and city councils of people’s representatives started operating. The Anti-Corruption Agency is tasked with coordinating and constantly monitoring the openness in the activities of government authorities, expanding the list of open data, strengthening public control and cultivating in

civil servants a culture of public accountability.

A new department for ensuring the openness in activities of government bodies and organizations has been created within the Agency structure. Based on the information disclosed by government bodies and organizations, local media, including major media outlets, published about 140 news reports and journalistic investigations. The Anti-Corruption Agency has established a system of continuous monitoring of the timely placement of socially significant information in designated resources as open data approved by the Decree. For example, in January-February 2022, the Agency published on its official website reports on the study of the work done by 135 ministries and departments, local government bodies regarding the placement on its official websites and the Open Data Portal of the necessary information about its activities, in particular about public procurements, expenses for business trips of officials and for the reception of foreign guests, and others.

At the same time, from December 1, 2021, sessions of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional, district and city Councils of people’s representatives are mandatorily broadcast live on TV channels and the Internet. The live broadcast of the sessions serves to raise the level of legal awareness of citizens and their direct acquaintance with the content and significance of the discussed legislative acts, as well as with the opinions of the experts who developed them. Over the past period, the Agency submitted 26 statutory notices and 35 warning letters to ministries, departments and local governments to eliminate violations identified as a result of monitoring and analysis.

Now it is planned to work on this issue on an ongoing basis, to organize seminars with the involvement of experts from nongovernmental organizations working in this area. One of the main issues on the agenda is expanding the list of open data and raising it to a qualitatively new level, developing propos-

als for the further development of the area. Over the past period, legislation on the activities of government bodies and organizations in the field of openness has been fully documented, reasonable proposals have been developed to fill existing gaps and improve mechanisms that do not give the expected results. In particular, three laws, one resolution of the President and three resolutions of the government and one departmental document aimed at regulating the openness were adopted.

For example, a draft law ‘On amendments to the Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan on administrative responsibility’ has been developed. According to it, the new Code of Administrative Responsibility is supplemented by a new article 2157, which provides for a fine of 3 to 10 reference calculation values for officials of government authorities who violate the requirements of openness legislation. Another important issue is that in accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ‘On additional measures to further improve the activities of the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan’, a Public Control Development Fund was established under the Agency.

From now on, the preparation of materials on the openness of the activities of government bodies and organizations, the financing of projects of NGOs, other civil society institutions to ensure openness in government bodies and organizations, as well as research in this area and a number of other areas will be implemented at the expense of the Fund. Also, at the expense of the Fund, the work of a call center with a single short number ‘1253’ was established, which allows citizens to promptly report facts of corruption. In addition, the Agency plans to form an Openness Index (rating) of government bodies and organizations and publish the rating based on the results of each year. Most importantly, the Index allows to visually show the level of openness of any government body and organization to the public.

The Anti-Corruption Agency pays special attention to further improving

the position of Uzbekistan in international rankings and indices by improving the efficiency of work in this area.

In particular, to improve the position of the country, a comprehensive analysis of the Open Government Factor, WJP Rule of Law Index, was carried out (Uzbekistan ranked 122nd out of 139 countries with the highest index over the past 6 years in terms of the Open Government Factor-0.37 points in 2021). Based on the results of the analysis, a program of measures was developed to improve the country’s position in this international index. In addition, as of 2022, steps are being taken to further improve and update Uzbekistan rankings in the Open Data Inventory, the Rule of Law Index, the Global Open Data Index, and the Open Data Barometer.

If we want to achieve fundamental changes in the field of openness, we must, of course, meet the requirements of generally recognized standards through membership in international organizations. In this regard, Uzbekistan became a member of the International Open Data Charter last year. The Charter works to ensure openness and transparency of information from over 150 governments and organizations around the world. The Agency established close cooperation with this organization and, together with the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, developed recommendations and the Final Report on open datasets on combating corruption in Uzbekistan. The priority is to further expand access to open data, create an open data infrastructure based on international standards.

In a word, the policy of openness and transparency in Uzbekistan will now only gain momentum, the government will be even more open, greater transparency will be ensured, cooperation between citizens and authorities will continue to improve and develop. After all, openness and transparency are not only a requirement of the time, but also a prerequisite and essential pillar of reforms in the New Uzbekistan.

Ukraine calls for more help

Russian forces are pushing from north and south

KYIV: Ukrainian officials pleaded for more help from the West on Friday, including quicker deliveries of artillery and battlefield rocket systems, to hold off Russian forces at a critical time in the battle in the east.

Heavy fighting was still being reported in Sievierodonetsk, the small eastern city that has become the focus of Russia's advance and site of one of the bloodiest battles in a war that has increased financial and physical hardship around the world.

Chronic hunger could afflict up to 19 million more people globally over the next year due to reduced exports of wheat and other food commodities from Ukraine and Russia, the United Nations' food agency said.

Within Ukraine, officials said they were worried about the spread of deadly cholera and dysentery in the southern city of Mariupol, where tens of thousands of civilians live in ruins captured last month after being pulverized by Russian siege.

In a speech via video-link to a democracy conference in Copenhagen, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pleaded for his country to be accepted as a part of the West, with binding guarantees for its protection.

"The European Union can take a



historic step that will prove that words about the people of Ukraine belonging to the European family are not just words, and therefore are not empty," he said, calling on the EU to accept Ukraine's request to be accepted as a membership candidate.

Ukrainian officials say the war in the east has become primarily an artillery battle, in which they are severely outgunned by Moscow. The tide could be turned only if the West fulfills promises to send more and better artillery,

including rocket systems that Washington and others have promised.

"This is an artillery war now," Vadym Skibitsky, deputy head of Ukraine's military intelligence, said in an interview with Britain's Guardian newspaper.

"Everything now depends on what (the West) gives us," said Skibitsky. "Ukraine has one artillery piece to 10 to 15 Russian artillery pieces. Our Western partners have given us about 10% of what they have." Russia has concen-

trated its forces into a battle for the city of Sievierodonetsk, hoping to capture the full territory of eastern Luhansk province, which it demands Ukraine cede to separatists along with neighbouring Donetsk province.

Ukrainian troops have largely pulled out of the residential areas of the city but have not yielded their foothold on the east bank of the Siverskiy Donets river, and have so far thwarted Russia's efforts to encircle them. Both sides say they have inflicted massive casualties in the battle for the city.

Russian forces are also pushing from the north and south in the surrounding areas to try to encircle the Ukrainians, but so far have made just limited progress. Ukraine's ministry of defence said the Russians were still trying to test Ukrainian defences along the river.

The Ukrainian mayor of Mariupol, now operating outside the southern port which is fully controlled by Russians after a near three month siege, said thousands more could die from cholera.

Russian occupying forces had failed to properly dispose of bodies scattered throughout the city, which were rotting in hot weather and rain, contaminating the water supply, said Vadym Boichenko.

Syria suspends Damascus airport flights after Israel strike

DAMASCUS: Syria has suspended all flights to and from Damascus International Airport after an Israeli airstrike on Friday hit an area close to the facility, a pro-government newspaper reported.

Al-Watan said the strike left the runway damaged, without giving further details about the attack.

The airport is located south of the capital Damascus where Syrian opposition activists say Iran-backed militiamen are active and have arms depots. Israel has for years carried out strikes in the area, including one on May 21 that resulted in a fire near the airport, leading to the postponement of two flights.

State news agency SANA said the Ministry of Transportation confirmed that all flights have been suspended because "some technical equipment stopped functioning at the airport." It did not mention a strike.

The private Sham Wings airlines said it is diverting all its flights from Damascus to the Aleppo International Airport in the country's north. It added that all passengers will be shuttled by buses between the two cities for free.

The airport is located south of Damascus. Flightradar24 showed no flights in the vicinity of airport on Friday at noon.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the Friday morning Israeli strike hit three arms depots for Iran-backed militiamen inside the airport, adding that the northern runway at the facility was damaged as was the observation tower.

The Observatory added that the northern runway was the only one functioning after Israeli strikes last year badly damaged the other runway, known as the southern runway.

The announcement came hours after Syria's state media reported Israeli airstrikes on some military positions south of Damascus early Friday, wounding one person and causing material damage.

UN elects new council members

UNITED NATIONS: U.N. member nations elected five countries to join the powerful U.N. Security Council on Thursday with no suspense or drama because all were unopposed — Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland.

Winning a seat on the 15-member Security Council is considered a pinnacle of achievement for many countries because it gives them a strong voice on issues of international peace and security.

Today, the war in Ukraine is at the top of the list. Although Russia's veto power has prevented the council from taking action, it has held numerous meetings since Moscow's Feb. 24 invasion that have seen contentious exchanges between top diplomats from both countries and their supporters.

The results of the secret ballot vote in the 193-member General Assembly were Ecuador 190, Japan 184, Malta 185, Mozambique 192, and Switzerland 187.

Even if a country is running unopposed, it must obtain the votes of two-thirds of the member states that voted in order to win a seat on the council.

Mirwaiz condemns closure of Jamia Masjid Srinagar

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has strongly condemned the repeated closure of Jamia Masjid Srinagar for Friday prayers by the authorities.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who is under illegal house detention since August 05, 2019, in a statement in Srinagar said, anti-Kashmir and anti-Muslim measures are a trademark of the Modi regime.

He said hurting the sentiments of Muslims across the world, including IIOJK, to appease their constituencies across India, the BJP leaders are using derogatory language against Islam and the holy Prophet (PBUH). "In their harshness towards Muslims they do even allow us to raise our voice against such bigotry and hatred that causes us so much pain, so they lock down our mosques, especially the Jamia Masjid," he deplored.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq denounced the derogatory remarks made against Islam and holy Prophet (PBUH), which is a sickness that has afflicted the hearts of these bigots. "We strongly believe in respect and reverence for all religions and religious figures, a fact borne out by peaceful coexistence of people of this land for centuries," he added.

He said people are reeling under severe repression and intimidation day in and out, and leadership jailed and gagged and all channels of communication with people blocked, no local newspaper and news agency or social media is allowed to even carry our statements. As part of the policy of shooting the messenger, another local journalist, Shabbir Tantray of Caravan magazine, is being harassed and haunted by authorities for reporting the truth, he lamented.

Modi's Hindutva agenda under int'l scrutiny: CPI-M

NEW DELHI: Amid the ongoing row over controversial remarks on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by BJP officials, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) said the "Nupur Sharma episode" has shown that the Hindutva agenda of the Modi government and the BJP is now under international scrutiny.

CPI-M in a statement issued in New Delhi said the BJP-led government has faced strong diplomatic backlash from most of the Muslim countries, including the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey, after Sharma, a former spokesperson of the party, made controversial remarks against the Prophet (PBUH).

It said in India, the authorities came down with a heavy hand on the protests in Kanpur and scores of Muslims were arrested under the National Security Act.

It was when the Qatar government summoned the Indian ambassador on June 5, followed by Kuwait and other Gulf States, the BJP suspended Sharma and expelled its Delhi media unit head Naveen Jindal from the party.



Erdogan warns Greece to demilitarize Aegean islands

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday warned Greece to demilitarize islands in the Aegean Sea, saying he was "not joking" and posting tweets in Greek and English, in a marked harshening of rhetoric against Turkey's neighbor and historic regional rival.

Turkey says Greece has been building a military presence in violation of treaties that guarantee the unarmed status of the Aegean islands. It argues the islands were ceded to Greece on the condition they remained demilitarized.

Athens counters that the islands, which have been garrisoned for decades and lie within close striking distance of a large Turkish landing fleet, can't be left undefended.

"We invite Greece to stop arming the islands that have non-military status and to act in accordance with international agreements," Erdogan said on the final day of



military exercises taking place near Izmir, on Turkey's Aegean coast. "I'm not joking, I'm speaking seriously. This nation is determined."

Greece and Turkey are NATO allies, but have a history of disputes over a range of issues, including mineral exploration in the eastern Mediterranean and rival claims in the Aegean Sea.

The two countries came close to war three times in the past half century, the last being in 1996 over owner-

ship of an uninhabited eastern Aegean islet. But Ankara has recently been questioning Greece's sovereignty over large, inhabited Greek islands — Rhodes, Kos and Lesbos, for example, would meet the description of "militarized" islands.

"We warn Greece to stay away from dreams, statements and actions that will lead to regret, as it did a century ago, and to return to its senses," the Turkish leader said. A hundred years ago, Turkey defeated Greece after

a three-year war that saw Greek armies invade western Turkey.

Greece maintains Turkey has deliberately misinterpreted the treaties and says it has legal grounds to defend itself following hostile actions by Ankara, including a long-standing threat of war if Greece extended its territorial waters.

Later Thursday, Erdogan made the rare move of tweeting in Greek and English, saying: "As Turkey will not resign its rights in the Aegean, it will not hesitate either to make use of its rights arising from international treaties on the issue of the islands' demilitarization."

Greek government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou commented that Erdogan's choice of Greek was "notable."

"Greek is known as the language of reason, freedom and justice," he said. "The tactics Turkey has chosen do not fall under any of these categories."

South African president confronted in parliament



JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's attempts to speak in Parliament were disrupted for a second day Friday as opposition lawmakers confronted him over allegations he tried to cover up the theft of cash from his game farm.

Lawmakers from the populist Economic Freedom Fighters, the second biggest opposition party in Parliament, were removed by security guards as they shouted that Ramaphosa should not be allowed to address the house.

They accused Ramaphosa of laundering money at his game farm and trying to hide it by not reporting the theft of a large amount of cash to the police. The party is also demanding that Ramaphosa step down as president pending the investigations into the theft. "The president of the republic, there are serious allegations against him, so he can't come to the house to address us. He must step aside and allow the law to take its course," protested EFF lawmaker Omphile Maotwe, interrupting Ramaphosa's attempts to speak.

Parliamentary proceedings descended into chaos for the second day running prompting the Speaker of Parliament, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, to order the removal of several lawmakers.

Ramaphosa has denied any wrongdoing, saying his farm got the money from selling animals and that he had reported the theft to his presidential protection unit.

Ramaphosa on Friday told lawmakers that the robbery was under investigation and that "the law must be able to take its course".

"I have listened very carefully to the views of members of this house who have raised thoughts, suggestions and proposals on this matter," said Ramaphosa. "Some of the views have been to counsel me, and yet others have been laced with insults. I will not respond to insults, but will say that the counsel and suggestions that have been made raise points that I will consider."

Hard-left leader sees win in French vote

PARIS: Leftist parties that had nearly disappeared from the French political landscape have grown wings in the runup to Sunday's legislative elections and now threaten to weaken President Emmanuel Macron and his hopes of slam-dunking his agenda through parliament.

An alliance of leftist parties cobbled together by hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon is now soaring in polls. The campaign poster "Melenchon Prime Minister" no longer draws chuckles from opponents.

Commentators have yet to agree on how to pronounce Nupes, the French acronym for the alliance, the New Popular Ecological and Social Union. Melenchon simply calls it the Popular Union.

It combines his party, La France Insoumise (France Unbowled), Socialists, Communists and Greens.

"It is amazing, so inspiring and motivating. All of the left wing is in line behind Melenchon," said Michael Gorre, a 45-year-old computer scientist attending a Paris rally last week by the coalition. "It feels good to have someone who talks about concrete things."

Macron, a centrist, has made clear that it is he alone who names the prime minister, although in practice his choice is governed by the outcome of the election, which will not be clear until the second round on June 19. So if Nupes won a majority, he would likely pick someone from the coalition, but it might not be Melenchon.

Macron won a second mandate in April's presidential elections and is now looking for an absolute majority — 289 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, the lower house — to swiftly pass legislation. Among laws on his radar is his controversial decision to raise the retirement age from 62 to 65. Melenchon, meanwhile, wants to lower it to 60.

The audacious bid by the 70-year-old Melenchon to be named head of government is symptomatic of France's shattered political landscape. Traditional mainstream parties like the Socialists and the conservative right The Republicans slid off voters' radar following losses in previous elections. Three blocs emerged: Melenchon's

hard left, Marine Le Pen's far right and the centrists of Macron, who warn against "the extremes."

Melenchon's alliance is jockeying for the lead with Macron's centrists in polls. Nupes was on top in one poll this week, although within the margin of error. Le Pen, who lost to Macron in the presidential runoff, was third. Le Pen is keenly aware that her anti-immigration National Rally party cannot compete with Melenchon's alliance under the current voting system.

In calls to get out the vote, Le Pen asks supporters to help her party get as many deputies as possible in "last chance elections" to block the French president's highway to unshackled power.

Comments

Modi trying to create religious confrontation in India

Turan Rzayev

India has gone too far: which god will save Modi from the wrath of Muslims?

Officials of India's ruling radical nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have used insulting language against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. One of those officials, Naveen Kumar Jindal, a spokesman for the ruling party, received a backlash on Twitter for insulting the Prophet Muhammad.

It is clear that Naveen Kumar Jindal's systematic insults to the Prophet of Islam against his wife

and Islam in general are not without reason. Jindal is supported by the BJP party and its leader Narendra Modi. Although Jindal had previously committed specific crimes in the crackdown on Muslims, his crimes were ignored by the ruling party.

Since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, Islamophobia and attacks on Muslims in the country have increased every year. The spread of videos of Indian nationalists threatening Muslims with death has caused a backlash, both at home and abroad. It is true that such speeches are targeted at communities such as Christians, Muslims and Buddhists in terms of

discourse, but in practice target Muslims.

Another Islamophobic move by Narendra Modi against Muslims is the amendment to citizenship. The new amendment simplifies the granting of Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. An interesting point is that these people are placed in the northern provinces, where Muslims live compactly, at the expense of Muslim lands and houses. Even since 2021, protests against this law continue in India.

Narendra Modi's anti-Muslim stance was, in fact, evident even before he became prime minister.

Even for this reason, most Muslims protested his victory in the elections. While still governor of Gujarat, Modi turned a blind eye to the massacre of Muslims. He applies a double standard to Muslims, and has even been named in many murders. Modi is also known as a sponsor of widespread anti-Muslim campaigns in India. It is no coincidence that the recent escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India is also linked to Modi's name. Thus, the abolition of the special status of Kashmir has led to renewed tensions between the two countries.

Modi is actually trying to create a religious confrontation in India.

He is trying to cover up the country's sharp income injustice, economic downturn and failed domestic policies. The Indian economy has been in decline for the last 7-8 years. This decline was exacerbated during Modi's rule. His failed domestic policy has also caused public discontent. That is why Modi took such a step to protect his power and distract the people.

Until Modi, the main task of the country's domestic policy was to reduce this tension. However, Modi's rise to power exacerbated the Muslim-Indian conflict. Such a radical and wrong policy of the Modi government is a dangerous

step for India.

I think this last step will be costly. Insulting Islam and its prophet is not the limit of Modi or anyone else. For us Muslims, our religion is dearer to us than our Prophet. From the wrath of the Muslims, neither the god Brahman, nor Shiva, nor Krishna, nor anyone else whose number is known to him, can save him!

Indian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bavitlung Vanlavavna has been summoned to the Foreign Ministry. Officials in India's ruling party have said it is unacceptable to use insulting language against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.

It was noted that the Islamophobic attitude of Indian officials affected the feelings of Muslims around the world, and the Indian ambassador was informed that Azerbaijan condemned this behavior.

Although the official state religion of Azerbaijan is not Islam, the vast majority of the population believes in this religion. In addition, our country is known around the world as a country where religions live in peace, tranquility and harmony. As the most active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, it was the right step for our country to react to this issue.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
42,014.73	41,735.96
Day's High	Day's Low:
42,076.14	41,715.05
Index Value	Change
2,056,295,217	+278.77
Percentage	Time
+0.67%	10 Jun, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,305.57	-170.64
Percentage	Time
-2.27%	10 Jun, 3:32 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
32,910.90	-269.24
Percentage	Time
-0.81%	8 Jun, 5:09 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
27,824.29	-422.24
Percentage	Time
-1.49%	10 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	144.1	145.35
Bahrain Dinar	533.42	537.92
Canadian Dollar	160.23	161.58
China Yuan	28.95	29.2
Danish Krone	25.65	26
Euro	213.1	215.6
Hong Kong Dollar	27.65	28
Indian Rupee	2.58	2.66
Japanese Yen	1.5	1.55
Kuwaiti Dinar	654.28	659.28
Malaysian Ringgit	45.64	46.09
New Zealand \$	129.74	130.94
Norwegians Krone	21.26	21.56
Omani Riyal	521.53	526.03
Qatari Riyal	55.09	55.59
Saudi Riyal	53.15	53.95
Singapore Dollar	145.6	146.9
Swedish Korona	20.51	20.81
Swiss Franc	205.66	207.41
Thai Bhat	5.81	5.91
U.A.E Dirham	54.4	55.2
UK Pound Sterling	250.6	253.1
US Dollar	200.5	202.5

China ready to invest in solar energy projects

Chinese investment will generate employment opportunities

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairman Board of Investment Chaudhary Salik Hussain chaired a high level meeting with energy china international group.

The minister was informed about Energy China International Group which has global presence and handling international businesses and are experts in renewable energy projects. The minister was informed that Energy China has delivered about 23 mega projects in the last three decades with value of more than 15 Billion dollars. The federal minister has said that clean and renewable energy is the way forward and is essential for the growing economy of Pakistan.

The minister said clean and cheap solar energy would provide relief to general masses and asked for special tariff policy for solar powered mega projects. The minister has said that the Chinese investment in solar energy will generate employment opportunities in



country and will help in growth of economy. The minister has said that Pakistan's growing economy requires low cost electricity in the long run and renewable energy is the way forward.

The minister proposed a solar powered water treatment plant for Karachi and urged Chinese investors to establish a solar panel manufacturing plant in Pakistan. The minister also said that government would ensure import of low cost solar panels for general masses. The minister has said that government is committed to provide ideal environment for Chinese investors in clean energy.

The minister appreciated China Energy's proposed projects of 1.5 Giga Watt of solar power projects worth 1.96 billion Dollars of investment. The minister has said that government is committed to provide ideal environment for Chinese investors in clean energy. The meeting was attended by Secretary BOI, Vice President China Energy and officials of Board of investment.

Korea commits USD 1 bln to Pakistan for next 5 years

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Affairs Division (EAD) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea held a ceremony here in Islamabad on Thursday at the Prime Minister's Office for the signing of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) Agreement, worth USD 1 billion that will be provided to Pakistan from the Government of the Republic of Korea for the years 2022 through to 2026.

This agreement was mutually signed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Mr. Mian Asad Hayaud Din, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo. The Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and other senior EAD and Embassy officials were also present at the ceremony.

This development comes, following months of constructive negotiations between the two sides and under the terms of this agreement, Federal and Provincial bodies are to submit their proposals to the EAD to avail funding for projects aimed at the socio-economic uplift of the country and its citizens.

The Minister and Secretary EAD, while



speaking at the ceremony collectively appreciated the Ambassador for paving the way for this agreement and thanked the Government of the Republic of Korea for its everlasting support to Pakistan.

The Ambassador added that the Korea and Pakistan have always enjoyed cordial ties and Korea aims to further enhance the bilateral relations between the two countries to new heights.

9th African Islamic Banking & Takaful Summit on July 22

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: 9th African Islamic Banking & Takaful Summit will convene in Johari Rotana, Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania on July 26, 2022 with two-days post event workshop on Practical and Operational Aspects of Takaful. The purpose of this event is to explore the untapped African financial market for Socio-Economic Benefits of the region. The Banking and Takaful industry of Tanzania and the surrounding areas will actively participate in the conference to gain ample knowledge of the Islamic financial sector and solutions to the escalating problems of the society. More than 20 international speakers would give their valuable contribution in the topics of discussion.

The event will be held in association with the Center for Islamic Finance, Compliance and Advice (CIFCA).



Participants are high profile personnel for 20 countries e.g., from central banks, banking and finance sectors of Tanzania and the rest of the African countries, micro-finance and Takaful/insurance industry. Muhammad Zubair Mughal Chief Executive Officer AIHuda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics-United Arab Emirates organizer of this event mentioned that he is very optimistic about the future of Islamic finance industry in Africa. African countries are facing a lot of challenges for the development of people's social and economic lives, their economies are just on the way to growth.

Swedish Embassy honors Tetra Pak

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Tetra Pak was recently honoured by the Swedish Embassy through a special invitation to co-host Sweden's National Day event organized inside the embassy premises on June 9.

The Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, attended the event as a Chief Guest.

The event followed an inspiring theme with the title of 'Pioneer the possible' which represented Sweden's journey towards becoming the first fossil-fuel-free country and showcasing technologies and solutions by Swedish companies as leaders in innovation and sustainable transformation.

As a global company of Swedish origin operating in Pakistan, the event was a good opportunity for Tetra Pak to showcase its sustainability credentials driven by its guiding principle that a "package should save more than it costs". Tetra Pak's fundamental commitments driving its sustainability agenda were presented through a special display area.

The Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, also visited Tetra Pak's stall and was greeted by the company representatives to apprise her about Tetra Pak's sustainability-related vision and goals.



These included details pertaining to Tetra Pak's announcement in 2020 to reach net-zero GHG emissions in its own operations by 2030, the use of 100% FSC Certified Paperboard in all packaging material, and their recycling success story in Pakistan.

Tetra Pak Pakistan's local partnership with Green Earth Recycling started in 2014 and since then has been successfully achieving increasing recycling targets every year by collecting and recycling packaging waste into sellable products

such as garden furniture, school desks, roofing solutions, and much more. Guests were also pleased to learn that in 2021, Tetra Pak Pakistan achieved a recycling rate of over 42% of its produced cartons, while the goal for 2022 is to increase this volume and recycle around 32,000 tonnes of beverage cartons.

The event was attended by representatives from several Swedish companies operating in Pakistan, including Tetra Pak, in addition to senior Government officials and Islamabad's intelligentsia.

Comment

War and rise in oil prices

Muhammad Omar Cheema

Oil prices have risen before meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, as ministers prepare to set output targets for July in their first gathering since the EU imposed sanctions on Russian crude. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is under pressure from some members to exclude Russia, the world's third largest oil producer, from future quotas, in a move that could pave the way for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to pump more oil. The UK and EU have also worked together to ban insurers from covering ships transporting Russian oil, another move to make it more difficult for Russia to export.

Demand for oil and energy prices have surged over the past year as major econ-

omies reopen from pandemic lockdowns, compounded by the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Rapid price swings have contributed to inflationary pressures and cost of living crises around the world as households struggle with higher fuel prices.

The price increases have prompted unsuccessful attempts by US president Joe Biden and UK prime minister Boris Johnson to persuade other major oil producers such as Saudi Arabia to pump more, angering environmental campaigners who argue that governments should focus instead on energy efficiency measures that could quickly reduce demand. At a meeting in Germany last week the G7 energy ministers called for Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to produce more.

The Iranian deal could immediately increase supply by 1 thousand barrels

of oil per day over the next two months through the release of floating storage. As Iran ramps up production from the current 2.5 thousand barrels of oil per day, another 0.8 thousand barrels of oil per day could be added throughout the second half of the year. Another potential supply response could come from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies (OPEC+).

The alliance has the capacity to quickly release 1.5 thousand barrels of oil per day of supply but so far, there is no indication that the group will alter its current plan to increase output in 400 thousand barrels of oil per day increments. Finally, the third option is the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) release. The International Energy Agency (IEA) agreed to release 60 million barrels from its members' strategic reserves, worth barely two weeks of lost Russian supply.

TikTok to launch new screen time management tool

Staff Reporter



ISLAMABAD: TikTok is preparing to launch two new practical tools as a part of its digital wellbeing mission to make it easier for its growing community of users to manage the time they spend on the entertainment platform.

The new tools will enable users to have regular screen time breaks, allowing them to remain in full control of their TikTok experience. A new screen time dashboard will give TikTok's creative community data on how much time they are spending on the platform, including summaries on daily usage and the number of times they opened the app. Users can also opt for weekly notifications to review their dashboard and monitor the time spent in a single sitting. These prompts will remind TikTok users to take a break after a certain amount of uninterrupted screen time, which they can set as per their choice and convenience.

TikTok will also introduce weekly digital well-being prompts for younger users. When users aged between 13 and 17 spend more than 100 minutes on the app in a single day, he or she will get a reminder from TikTok about using the screen time limit tool the next time they open the app. TikTok is focused on delivering digital experiences that bring joy, entertainment and enrichment to its community.

Part of this includes ensuring that the community has a positive relationship with their devices and allowing them to be more in control of their experiences. These new features are in line with TikTok's goal to promote a safe and positive experience for all its users and ensure that the platform is equipped to offer the best possible viewing choices for the TikTok community. By rolling out the new screen time management tools, the platform hopes to encourage its community to think about their digital habits. Accordingly, TikTok will publish a new guide, titled "How can I reflect on my digital well-being with my family and friends?" on the platform's Safety Centre.

Infinix launches NOTE 12 VIP

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Infinix on Friday released its all-new NOTE 12 VIP that includes high-performance with the 120W HyperCharge capabilities, a sleek 6.7" FHD+ Super Light AMOLED display with 120Hz refresh rate, 108MP Cinematic Triple Camera and more. The NOTE 12 VIP will be available for Rs. 55,999 on Daraz and Xpark. Customers can also avail an early bird discount up to Rs. 2500 starting from 13th June. With innovative performance features such as aerospace-grade ultra-thin glass fiber, up to 5GB of extended RAM and 103 charging and battery protections that keep users' devices charged safely up whenever they need them. "Infinix is creating a new standard for high-quality smartphone performance and design with its new NOTE



12 Series, which embodies impeccable form and function," shared Vento Lin, Product Manager of NOTE Series at Infinix Mobility.

"This series packs quick-charging power and strong chipsets into an iconic design that is perfect for emerging professionals who need a light, flexible and high-performance device." Infinix integrated the NOTE 12 VIP smartphone with 120W Hyper Charge and a 4500mAh battery to give users maximized battery capacity and supersonic charging speeds that power up the device from 0% to 100% battery power in just 17-minutes.

Sastaticket welcomes Fly Jinnah onboard

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah-another low-cost carrier joins Pakistan's aviation industry. The airline is a joint venture between Air Arabia and Lakson Group. Fly Jinnah got the license from the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority last year and will now soon start their operations in June 2022. Sastaticket.pk welcomes Fly Jinnah and look forward to great times ahead.

Fly Jinnah is the fourth airline in Pakistan's aviation sector and will be operating with three leased A320s aircraft. With time, it has

plans to expand its wings in the industry and touch new heights in the international market. Currently, AirSial, Airblue, and PIA are successfully operating in the market. With the launch of another domestic carrier, we expect competitive airfares where customers will enjoy low prices and best services.

The airline has worked intensively on its cabin crew training and is focusing on customer service as their prime objective. This is the perfect time to make its mark in the industry as travel restrictions have now been lifted and people have started to travel more.

Pakistan win ODI series against West Indies

Babar Azam breaks world record during second ODI

MULTAN: Mohammad Nawaz registered his career-best figures as Pakistan beat West Indies by 120 runs to clinch ODI series on Friday.

The visitors had no answer to Nawaz's left-arm orthodox as they were bowled out for just 155 in 32.2 overs at Multan Cricket Stadium. Chasing a 276-run target, the Windies were pushed on the back foot courtesy of Shaheen Shah Afridi's first over wicket. The left-arm pacer removed the first ODI centurion, Shai Hope (4), who managed to hit only one boundary. Kyle Mayers and Shamarh Brooks made a good 67-run stand, which was broken by Mohammad Wasim. He bowled Mayers, who scored 33 off 25 deliveries.

From there onwards it was Nawaz's show. He first removed Brandon King (0) with an absolute unplayable delivery. Then it was Romman Powell turn to walk back to the hut. Brooks, who scored 42 for West Indies, was trapped leg before wicket (LBW) by Nawaz.

Captain Nicholas Pooran (25) was also bowled by Nawaz, who ended up



with the figures of four for 18 from his 10-over spell.

Wasim bagged three wicket while, Shadab Khan claimed two wickets for the winning side.

After opting to bat, in the second ODI, the hosts went off to a cautious start with Fakhar Zaman and Imam ul Haq at the crease. The explosive left-hander once again departed early after miscuing a

back-of-a-length delivery from Anderson Phillip. Fakhar scored 17 off 28 balls.

After his departure, Skipper Babar Azam and opener Imam ul Haq hit solid half-centuries to bring Pakistan back into the game.

Imam was unlucky as he was run-out after scoring 72 from the same number of deliveries. He smashed six boundaries in that innings.

Pakistan's all-format captain and arguably the best batter in the world, Babar Azam, has broken another world record.

The prolific right-hander scored 77 runs in 93 balls, with the help of five fours and a six, during the second ODI.

The innings meant that Azam now has nine consecutive fifty-plus scores across all three formats, which is the longest streak for any batter in men's international cricket.

The record was previously held by another Pakistan legend Javed Miandad, who achieved the feat in 1987 with eight consecutive fifty-plus scores.

The Pakistan skipper is the number one batter in both ODI and T20I cricket, meanwhile he is ranked fourth in Test cricket.

The three One-Day Internationals (ODIs) are part of the Super League cycle and both sides are eager to secure crucial points to direct qualify in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, 2023. An ODI win in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League fixture adds 10 points to a team's tally. Agencies

Dunith Wellalage called-up in Sri Lanka's squad



COLOMBO: All-rounder Dunith Wellalage, who topped the wicket-takers chart at this year's ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup, has earned a spot in Sri Lanka's upcoming assignment.

Wellalage took 17 wickets in six matches at 13.58 with his left-arm spin, including two five-wicket hauls against Scotland and Australia. Not only that, he even finished the tournament as his side's top run-maker, scoring 264 runs across six innings at an average of 44 which also featured an impressive century against South Africa.

The Sri Lanka side will be led by their regular skipper Dasun Shanaka, with the five-match series starting on 14 June. The first two matches will be played in Pallekele and the remaining three in Colombo.

The 21-member squad features 12 players from the team that featured in the ODIs against Zimbabwe earlier this year, which Sri Lanka won 2-1. Nuwan Thushara, who is yet to make his ODI debut, has retained his spot while uncapped Pramod Madushanka has also earned a spot.

Dhananjaya de Silva, who was on paternity leave during the Zimbabwe assignment, returns to the side. Also making his comeback to the ODI setup is all-rounder Lahiru Madushanka, who last featured in a 50-over game for Sri Lanka in June 2017.

Sri Lanka have also added Wanindu Hasaranga, Danushka Gunathilaka, Bhanuka Rajapaksa and Niroshan Dickwella, who all last featured in ODIs in 2021.

UCL final CCTV footage 'deleted'

PARIS: CCTV footage from the Stade de France during the Champions League final last month has been deleted, a commission at the French Senate investigating the fiasco heard on Thursday.

The French football federation (FFF) revealed video surveillance from the ground had been destroyed — in line with French law that stipulates it must be destroyed within seven days unless it is subject to a warrant from judicial authorities.

"We're surprised," the Senate commission's co-president, Laurent Lafon, told AFP, adding that an investigation was opened the day after the game.

"There was plenty of time to request them (the images). We need to understand what happened."

He said the debacle at the stadium appeared to be "an accumulation of dysfunc-



tions" linked to a "lack of preparation."

Liverpool mayor Steve Rotherham, questioned after the FFF delegation, said that "he fails to understand why the videos were destroyed."

Senate leader Bruno Retailleau added "everything leads to believe that we know-

ingly let compromising exhibits be destroyed."

French police, however, said later Thursday that they still have their video footage from the stadium on the day of the game between Liverpool and Real Madrid on May 28.

French Interior Minister

Gerald Darmanin blamed "industrial scale" ticket fraud and the presence of 30-40,000 people with fake tickets or without tickets for causing a crush before the game. That figure has been widely disputed since by witnesses and media using images from the ground.

Russian accuses IOC chief of creating 'new war'



PARIS: Russian Olympic high jump champion Mariya Lasitskene on Thursday accused IOC president Thomas Bach of having created a "new war" by recommending Russian athletes be banned from international competition.

Following the invasion of Ukraine in February, the International Olympic Committee had recommended a ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes, a request followed by most federations.

"You say you made this decision for our safety but it's not true. Russian tennis players who play around the world prove it. Fans love athletes for the show they put on, not for their nationality," Lasitskene wrote in an open letter published on Instagram in both English and Russian.

"In high jump, my main competitors are Ukrainians. I wouldn't know how to look them in the eye, or what to say to them. They and their families are experiencing what no human being should have to experience.

"Your decision did not stop the war but gave birth to a new one, around and inside sport, which is impossible to contain."

The three-time world champion added: "I suspect that you will not have the courage or the dignity to put an end to the sanctions against Russian athletes."

In recent years, Lasitskene has been an outspoken critic of her own national sporting bodies mired in scandal.

She and her track and field teammates were banned from taking part in the 2016 Olympics in Rio when Russia was punished for its state-backed doping.

Jackson eyeing worlds 200m gold

ROME: Shericka Jackson is gunning for an individual gold medal at next month's world championships after seeing off a star-studded field to claim victory in the women's 200m at Thursday's Diamond League meeting in Rome.

Jamaican Jackson clocked 21.91sec to cross well clear of double Olympic gold medalist Elaine Thompson-Herah and reigning world champion Dina Asher-Smith.

The 27-year-old won bronze in the 100m in last year's Tokyo Olympics and was part of the 4x100m relay team, alongside Thompson-Herah, which won gold in the Japanese capital.

"My aim is to add a gold medal to my name," said Jackson.

"I have many individual medals at 400m and 100m, but I need to get that gold medal in any event that might be. This is my aim this season."

Jackson ended Thomp-

son-Herah's unbeaten record this season with a meeting record and season's best time as the worlds in Eugene, Oregon, loom.

Her performance was all the more impressive due to her compatriot and Briton Asher-Smith both running respective season's best times of 22.25sec and 22.27sec.

"This race was a good one. I ran a season's best, I cannot complain," said Thompson-Herah.

"I still have to work on some stuff. Now I concentrate on my nationals and I am looking forward to the world championships."

Another Tokyo gold medal winner in Athina Muehlebach, who showed what she was made of by strolling to victory in her favored 800m on her first appearance in a European Diamond League meeting.

American Mu, one of the stars of last year's Olympics who turned 20 on Wednesday, finished in 1:57.01, the fastest time in the world this

year.

Mu was racing the distance for the first time in a serious outdoor event this season and blitzed the opposition, finishing nearly two seconds ahead of France's Renelle Lamont.

"I knew the pace was going to go out, but by the time we got to next two hundred I had no idea. I am very happy with the time," said Mu.

Femke Bol took the honors in the women's 400m hurdles with a season's best time of 53.02sec.

Dutch hope Bol, silver medalist at this year's indoor worlds over the 400m flat, finished ahead of Jamaican Janieve Russell and Ukraine's Anna Ryzhykova.

Nicholas Kipkorir Kimeli set a new meeting record in the 5,000m, winning his first Diamond League race in 12:46.33 to beat marathon legend Eliud Kipchoge's previous stadium best set back in 2004.

His time, over five seconds

better than his previous personal best, was also the fastest of the year so far and allowed him to pip fellow Kenyan Jacob Krop to the win.

"I am so proud to achieve a world lead and a personal best and the meeting record," said Kimeli.

Fred Kerley eased to victory in the men's 100m, cruising home in 9.92sec well ahead of a field which was without injured home hero Lamont Marcell Jacobs.

Shock Olympic gold medal winner Jacobs pulled out of the event and a chance for a rematch at an outdoor event with American Kerley, who finished behind the Italian in Tokyo's blue riband event.

Jacobs said that he was hoping to compete in "one or two" events before the July 15-24 world championships in Eugene after suffering a problem with his glute muscles during a meeting in Savona last month.

Salah-less Egypt suffer shock loss

JOHANNESBURG: Egypt sorely missed injured captain Mohamed Salah as they slumped to a shock 2-0 defeat by Ethiopia on Thursday in 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying.

A strain ruled out the prolific Liverpool scorer after he defied his club last Sunday and played in a victory over Guinea despite not being fully fit.

Egypt lacked several other injured first choices, but were still expected to secure maximum Group D points in neutral Malawi against opponents 108 places lower in the world rankings.

But the quick Ethiopian forwards repeatedly troubled a slow Egyptian defence in the opening half and goals from Dawa Hotessa and captain Semeles

Bekele gave them a two-goal half-time advantage.

Egypt had more possession in the second half on a pitch badly cut up in places due to torrential pre-match rain.

Ethiopia were forced to play in Lilongwe because, like 16 other countries competing in qualifying, they do not have an international-standard stadium.

Coach Ehab Galal has only been in charge of Egypt for two matches after Portuguese Carlos Queiroz could not agree terms for an extension of his contract.

Galal, who left Cairo club Pyramids to take over the Pharaohs, will now come under intense pressure as a year filled with disappointments for Egypt continues. They lost the last Cup of Nations

final to Senegal on penalties in February and one month later suffered a similar fate against the same team in a play-off to decide who went to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Egypt needed 87 minutes to score the goal that beat Guinea in the opening round of 2023 Cup of Nations qualifying and the loss to Ethiopia left them bottom of the table. The only consolation for Galal and his squad is that the other teams in the section — Ethiopia, Malawi and Guinea — have also won and lost so each side has three points.

Guinea left it late to beat Malawi 1-0 in Conakry with Naby Keita, a Liverpool teammate of Salah, scoring in added time.

Nigeria ended a five-match

winless run by coming from behind to beat Sierra Leone 2-1 in a Group A match played behind closed doors in Abuja because of crowd trouble in a World Cup play-off against Ghana.

All the goals came before half-time with Jonathan Morsay nodding the Leone Stars into an early lead, Alex Iwobi levelling and Victor Osimhen scoring what proved the match winner on 41 minutes.

Guinea-Bissau lead Nigeria on goal difference after hammering Sao Tome e Principe 5-1 in the Moroccan city of Agadir with Belgium-based Zinho Gano bagging a brace within eight minutes.

The brilliance of South Africa captain and goalkeeper Ronw-



en Williams could not prevent Qatar-bound Morocco winning a high-profile Group K clash 2-1 in Rabat.

It was the first match for both teams in a group reduced to three

Van Aert rules fifth stage to turn Dauphine screw

CHARENTRE: Belgium's Jumbo-Visma rider Wout van Aert sprinted to victory in the fifth stage of the Criterium du Dauphine on Thursday to consolidate his lead in the overall standings.

It was a second stage win for the Belgian champion, coming four days after his victory in the opening sprint stage in Beauchastel.

Van Aert was made to work for the win, however, edging fellow Belgian Jordi Meeus by a third of a wheel at the end of the 162.3km stage that was almost witness to an unlikely heist.

The peloton left it incredibly late, at under 1km from the finish, to reel in a four-strong breakaway group comprising Austrian Sebastian Schoenberger, Belgium's Jan Bakelants and the French pair of Fabien Doubey and Benjamin Thomas.

In a thrilling finish, Van Aert bolted past the quartet who had broken clear at the 30km mark, taking Meeus with him, Britain's Ineos rider Ethan Hayter left to round out the podium.

"Until the last kilometer, I was focused on catching the break and then I quickly shifted to trying to do a good sprint," said Van Aert, quick to praise his Jumbo teammates.

"Luckily Christophe (Laporte) did a master pull in the end and before I asked the boys to do everything they could.

"It's huge to win again on the Dauphine. Today it was really hard again to catch the break. I needed all my teammates to bridge the gap and it worked out in the end. I'm really proud of my teammates."

Friday's sixth stage is a 196.5km ride between Rives and Gap which includes two category two climbs.

Williamson misses second Test with Covid-19



WELLINGTON: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson will miss the second Test against England at Trent Bridge, after testing positive for Covid-19 the night before the match.

Williamson was found to be positive for Covid following a Rapid Antigen Test after experiencing minor symptoms during the day.

The skipper has begun five days of isolation, with Tom Latham leading the side in Williamson's absence. Latham led the team during the New Zealand summer when Williamson with absent through injury.

The rest of the squad have returned negative tests, with Hamish Rutherford joining the squad as Williamson's replacement.

"It's such a shame for Kane to be forced to withdraw on the eve of such an important match," New Zealand coach Gary Stead remarked.

"We're all feeling for him at this time and know how disappointed he will be.

winners, edging plucky minnows Burundi 1-0 in Tanzania though a goal from Karl Toko Ekambi.

Minnows Lesotho exceeded expectations by holding an Ivory Coast side stacked with Europe-based stars 0-0 in cold Soweto.

The Ivorians qualify automatically as 2023 hosts but are competing in Group H to gain competitive match practice.

This leaves rivals the Comoros, Lesotho and Zambia fighting for just one place at the finals and the Zambian Chipolopolo (Copper Bullets) lie second on head-to-head records.

Mali scored twice in added time with 10 men to defeat South Sudan 3-1 and build a three-point lead over Congo Brazzaville and the Gambia in Group G.