



We will not waste time in talks, every obstacle in the way of the country's development will be removed

Minister of State for IT
Shaza Fatima Khawaja

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Pakistan highly values its ties with Bahrain: President



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that Pakistan attached great value to its fraternal ties with Bahrain which were based on shared religion, culture and history. He also highlighted the need to translate the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bahrain into a mutually rewarding economic partnership.

The president expressed these views while talking to Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain, General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan Mohamed Ibrahim Mohamed Abdul Qader was also present during the meeting.

Welcoming the visiting commander, the president said that Pakistan and Bahrain enjoyed excellent relations, which needed to be further strengthened in the areas of mutual interest. He said that it was his firm belief that Pakistan would grow stronger as it had immense potential to become a prosperous country. During the meeting, the commander of the National Guard of Bahrain felicitated the president on assuming the office for the second time and expressed the hope that Pakistan would move forward under his leadership. He said that both countries enjoyed excellent defence cooperation and expressed his gratitude for the supportive role of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. He also reiterated Bahrain's continued support to Pakistan. General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa extended an invitation to the president to visit Bahrain. President Zardari thanked the commander National Guard of Bahrain for his visit and felicitations.



Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi visited Peking University today. In his meeting with President of Peking University Mr. Gong Qihuang, the Ambassador paid tribute to the University for its role as an outstanding seat of learning and its rich contribution to the deepening of Pakistan-China relations. He appreciated the University for hosting Pakistan Studies Center and offering Urdu language courses.

Chairman HEC meets Minister of State for IT



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has met with Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja here on Tuesday. In the meeting, both the dignitaries dis-

cussed the issues in detail on IT graduates training program, start-ups, to make the youth talented and skilled, said a press release.

The demand and supply gap in the IT field should be minimised by bridging gap between industry and academia, said Shaza Fatima during the meeting. Such steps are necessary to provide required talent to IT companies around the world, including Pakistan, the minister added.

She went in saying that Pakistan is rich in talented youth, brand it better. We will not waste time in talks, every obstacle in the way of the country's development will be removed, Shaza Fatima said. APP

Security czar seeks review of social media laws amid nationwide X disruption

LAHORE: Amid countrivide disruption of the popular social networking platform, X, for more than a month, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has sought review of social media laws to "stop its misuse". X, formerly Twitter, remains inaccessible to millions of netizens in Pakistan since its suspension before the February 8 general elections. "Social media laws should be envisaged," Naqvi said while speaking to journalists in Lahore on Tuesday, adding "Social media is being misused. Social media regulations have been implemented across the globe." The interior minister was of the view that freedom of expression should be separated from propaganda, and smear campaigns against people. "Everyone has right to freedom of speech, however, it should not be misused."

Responding to the question, Naqvi said that smear campaigns against politicians, judiciary, and other national institutions should be stopped. He advocated implementation of social media laws in the country following patterns of developed countries like the United States (US).

His statement came after Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarar's admission that the social networking app was suspended in the country.

Tarar, responding to queries regarding X's (former Twitter) suspension, said that the platform was already banned when they came to power, whereas, there was no official notification regarding the ban.

Stressing the need for a charter on "do's and don'ts", the info minister said that there should be talks between the political parties that which "red lines" should not be crossed on the social media platform.

He expressed his annoyance over allegation against women, abuses, misbehaviour and smear campaign against martyrs' sacrifices on the social media.

Disruptions continue despite court orders Besides a complete suspension of internet on the polling day, netizens have been facing sporadic disruptions and hindrances in accessing the social media platform despite different courts' orders for the resumption and uninterrupted access to the masses, Geo News reported earlier. Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness. APP

PM Shehbaz directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a report regarding swift completion and transparent provision of relief to the people affected by recent torrential rains across the country. He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to accomplish a joint survey report in collaboration with the provinces, besides enhancement of cooperation with the provinces to face the future calamities.

The prime minister also sought an implementation report over his directive in the previous tenure regarding technical improvement of NDMA, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people The prime minister was given a detailed briefing by the NDMA about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness. The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Ahmad Khan Cheema, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen. Inam Haider Malik and relevant senior officials. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the meeting through video link. PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people The meet-

ing was apprised of the recent damages, rescue efforts and distribution of assistance amount. The NDMA with assistance of provinces, specially Balochistan would soon complete a collective verification survey over number of complete and partially damaged houses. Under the prime minister's directive, a total of 766,000 kg dry ration would be distributed in Gwadar till March 24 out of which about 388,000 kg ration had been distributed so far till March 16. Moreover, 97,000 kg ration had been distributed in Quetta and Dalbadin, it was further informed. The prime minister directed that the relief process should be completed immediately, besides

ensuring transparency in its distribution. With earlier completion of joint survey, the aid should be provided to the affected people only, he stressed, adding that affected people from the recent rains could not be left in despair and it was among government's top priority to support them. The meeting was further informed about the weather forecast during April to June and July to September in the current season and the preparedness of NDMA. The prime minister was also apprised of the relief assistance sent to the affectees of Gaza by the NDMA. From October to this day, a total of 320 tons relief goods had been sent.

PM for efforts to implement Pak-Kuwait \$10b agreements signed last year

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for concerted efforts to ensure the early implementation of seven agreements worth US\$ 10 billion signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in November last year. The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan Nasser Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi who called on him. The prime minister noted with satisfaction that both countries had signed seven agree-

ments for cooperation in diverse areas including food security, technology, hydel power, mining and minerals, water supply and mangrove rehabilitation, a PM Office press release said.

In this context, he emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which provided a robust and efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into Pakistan. He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its historic and deep-rooted ties with Kuwait.

Maqbool calls for tangible steps to develop technology

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday emphasized transitioning from technology adopter to generator. He stressed the need to take concrete steps to address the ministry's challenges and enhance its functionality. During the discussions with the heads of different wings of the ministry, Dr. Maqbool Siddiqui stressed cooperation to streamline ministry functions and tackle existing issues. The Pakistan Halal Authority's role in promoting 'Halal' trade and monitoring imports was highlighted in the meeting. It was briefed that the Council for Works and Housing Research, in Karachi, requires restructuring for improved efficiency, as conveyed to the minister. Notably, the Technology Commercialization Corporation of Pakistan will be replaced by the Research and Development Agency (IRADA) to enhance collaboration for technological progress.

The insights on the National Institute of Electronics' work on electric vehicles and high-demand chip designs were also shared, reflecting a focus on advancing technology in Pakistan. DNA

Kh Asif, Naval Chief discuss Regional Maritime Security, operational preparedness



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and discussed with him matters pertaining to Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of Pakistan Navy.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters Islamabad, the Defence Minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff and was presented guard of honour. The Defence Minister was also introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters.

Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf apprised

the Defence Minister on roles, capabilities and future modernization plans of Pakistan Navy. He briefed the minister on recent acquisitions of state-of-the-art platforms and equipment to ensure an invincible seaward defence of the country.

Later on a detailed briefing was presented by Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) on the prevailing maritime environment, challenges being faced by Pakistan Navy and response by Pakistan Navy to meet the challenges. At the end of the briefing recommendations were given to the Defence Minister for capability enhancement of PN and promotion of maritime sector (Blue Economy) for revival of the national economy.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif appreciated the importance of Pakistan Navy to safeguard maritime interest of the country. The Defence Minister assured that his Ministry will make all efforts to meet the requirements of Pakistan Navy despite the prevailing economic constraints. INP

Pirzada directs to maintain highest standards of construction across all projects



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Housing and Works Main Riaz Hussain Pirzada Tuesday directed the con-

cerned to maintain the highest standards of construction across all projects, and provision of all basic amenities to the residents. Chairing a meeting of the Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA), he stressed on timely completion of all ongoing projects to provide modern residential facilities to the employees and general public. During the meeting the minister review the progress of ongoing projects and strategize for future endeavors.

Managing Director Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA) Shahid Hussain apprised the minister about the management and working of the department.

Shahid Hussain informed the minister that to date, a total of 24 pro-

jects comprising 6,362 apartments/houses have been successfully handed over to the allottees. He informed about the development of the I-16/3 project, which includes 3,200 apartments of D&E type category. Shahid Hussain informed that approximately 90% of the infrastructure development work for the project has been completed and physical possession has already been handed over to 356 allottees, with 35 families already residing in the buildings.

Additionally, MD PHA provided an update on the I-12/1 project, which comprises approximately 2,400 apartments out of which possession of 500 units has already been handed over to beneficiaries, with

the remaining units set to be offered soon.

The minister was also informed about the PHA Residencia, Kuchlak Road Project, Quetta.

During the meeting, Riaz Pirzada directed the MD PHA for the implementation of robust tree plantation programs across all the PHA projects.

He emphasized the importance of planting trees not only for environmental conservation but also for improving air quality, enhancing aesthetics, and promoting a healthier lifestyle for residents.

Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash and other senior officers of the ministry and PHA were also present during the meeting.

Donald Blome underscores his commitment to expanding further US-Pakistan economic cooperation in areas of mutual interest

Meets with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb



ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome met on Tuesday with the Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss further U.S. cooperation and support for Pakistan's efforts to meet its reform targets, including improvement of the country's tax administration and investment climate. Ambassador Blome noted the U.S. government's support for Pakistan's work with the IMF to complete its current Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). Ambassador Blome underscored his commitment to expanding further U.S.-Pakistan economic cooperation in areas of mutual interest. SABAH

Pakistan denounces fresh round of curbs on Kashmiri political parties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday denounced the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and four factions of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League as "unlawful associations". It also denounced the decision to extend the ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd Yasin Malik faction) for five more years, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

India's ongoing campaign to crush dissent in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) contravened the international human rights and humanitarian law as well as democratic norms, the spokesperson further said. "The Government of India is urged to lift the curbs on the banned Kashmiri parties; release all the political prisoners, including Yasin Malik; and implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," it was reiterated. With the fresh notifications, a total of 14 Kashmiri political parties have become outlawed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). APP

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Schools under attack

ZEEBA T HASHMI

Schools in Nigeria and Pakistan are at risk from the growing threats of militant attacks. In 2022, the Global Coalition for Protecting Education from Attacks (GCPEA) reported seven attacks on schools by militants in Pakistan, a decline from 34 schools attacked in 2018-19. However, there is again an uptick in such attacks with the presence of the TTP in North Waziristan and other newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This comes in years after they were contained through military operations against them. In Nigeria, the GCPEA counted 10 attacks on schools and over 14,000 student abductions from various states. This may be associated with the rise in movements of militant groups. Pakistan stands vulnerable to militancy and has recently started accusing the Afghan Taliban setup of not doing enough to stop backing the TTP in the attacks carried out here. However, as has been pointed out by many civil rights and political activists and journalists here, the re-grouping of militants in the country is not a new development as the group was openly allowed to get rehabilitated and reorganize. In Nigeria, Boko Haram is an evolution of what has been known as the Nigerian Taliban. With scholars and historians divided over its origins, the movement against the state started in the northeast local government area of Kanamma of Yobe state in 2003. At that time, no direct connection could be found between Al-Qaeda operatives and the actions of this new group. However, what was relatable between the two was the ideology of puritanical religion and a distaste for anything considered Western. A religious nationalist idea that prevailed provided for shared motivations though it was not necessarily the same entity. Nigerian Scholar Audu Bulama Bukarti believes that the nomenclatures for this movement, the Nigerian Taliban, may be the result of stereotypical portrayal in the media that may have linked this group's formation with the Afghan Taliban and thus gave a false impression of the spread, whereas, in reality, there is little evidence to support this. However, it is important to note that the violent demand for Shariah to replace state laws became the premise for their revolt against the state and the Nigerian government. It was not, at that time, a concern of Al-Qaeda or the ISIL, which have a strong presence in the neighbouring Sahel region comprising borders of Lake Chad Basin, Cameroon, Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, also considered a hotbed of Jihadist groups who launch attacks and infiltrations, or are in-fighting over territorial claims. The traction that this particular movement in the Yobe state of northern Nigeria caught that later resulted in thousands of casualties and attracted military interventions to control and contain the situation could have been caused by enabling factors that were prevalent there. The external jihadist groups might have only aided at a later stage to facilitate a commonality in the ambitions they seek in establishing a state. Boko Haram has widely been curtailed, and normalcy has finally returned in northeast Nigeria. However, movements detected in and near schools in some communities caused temporary school closures as pre-emptive steps. The memory of how Boko Haram terrorized communities and schools is still fresh with residents. Just recently, in the Kaduna state in Nigeria, around 247 school children were kidnapped by abductors, which is very similar to the situation when scores of girl students were kidnapped by Boko Haram militants in the Chibok community in Borno state in 2017. It is not clear if the recent abductions in Kaduna have been carried out by the same militant group. So what makes 'Talibanization' or militancy gain traction here in Pakistan even if there is a shift in policy towards them by changing governments? At the community level, the Taliban work by instrumentalizing the indigenous and nationalist political aspiration of people within a country, and unintentionally ends up serving the purpose of external wider militant groups attempting to spread out for global or wider regional control, as we have seen in the African context. Religious nationalism becomes a convenient tool for militants to impose this ideology through hegemonic and authoritarian means, provided the mindset of their recruits also adheres to it. The Taliban in Afghanistan may digress from Al-Qaeda or ISIS' ulterior control objectives for domination and control. However, this digression is based on their practical want of staying away from military backlash, but they do provide an amicable ground for their militants to launch their proxies. The first motivation of militant groups is to lay siege to the thought of people which they find in contravention to their hardened ideologies. Heavy propaganda through print and social media is not a new tool for them. In doing so, to kill any idea of critical or diverse thinking in populations, they spread terror and hold no bars in targeting schools or any seminary that breaks away from old conventions of learning. Unbeknownst to the governments that take up the matter of forging state narrative through textbooks, more harm is being done by not allowing communities and children to open up to diversity of thought. This acknowledgement is vital for society to understand that today's children will be able to safeguard Pakistan's interests by shunning regressive and violent ideologies during their formative and adult life. But if the fixated growth of the mind is the aim of the state, then it comes as no surprise to find even educated classes supporting militancy. This may be due to denying diverse literature to students and making critical thinking in children an undeclared crime by the state. The state must work to diversify knowledge streams and not subject people to only one thought process that it wants to promote. With lack of exposure of students to different realities and literature, they will become easy prey to militant ideologies. Because to them, critical thinking is a sinful crime. In Pakistan, the state owns the narrative and focuses on a single Islamic identity. This makes for a perfect gateway for militants to infiltrate and further brainwash recruits. There may be external proxies causing terror attacks, but the mindset with which our citizens are becoming recruits is an internalized problem that needs to be fixed first.

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Mosharraf Zaidi

Disruption or destruction?

People tend to cling to ideas formed previously; they tend to work better within already established networks; and they tend to be more comfortable with associations that are familiar. Even the most intelligent and capable people. Even people who can think outside the box. Even people capable of creativity. Indeed, even people that have a lot of knowledge and expertise. No one is immune from these tendencies to stick to what one already knows. The common theme among societies and countries that are broadly seen to be successful is disruption, but this disruption cannot be wild and out of control. Instead, meaningful disruption tends to be within a canopy of a stable architecture – something akin to some broad rules of the game. Change takes place when long-standing ideas about what is normal and how things should be are challenged by new ideas, but those new ideas are afforded space through a delicate balance between radical new approaches and robust adherence to stability. Too radical and you end up creating instability, which undermines the entire ecosystem that you are interested in improving through new ideas. Too strict about stability and you end up throttling any new ideas. Just like ideas, networks and associations also work the same way. There needs to be enough churn in how people and communities relate to each other to create the tensions and alliances that help advance new ways of doing things, but there cannot be so much churn and so much flux that the whole system is thrown into uncertainty and instability. There is a lot of genuine sadness, disenchantment, and anger about the trajectory of Pakistan today. At the heart of the matter is a growing belief that the people running Pakistan – what I refer to as the 'elite' of the country – are incapable of governing over the changes that Pakistan desperately needs. It needs disruption, but it doesn't need

destruction. Sadly, it seems it cannot get one without getting the other. This was crystallized on May 9 last year, but it has been the under-girding and overwhelming motif of Pakistan throughout its history. The internal economic situation is dire – as two years of relentless inflation and uncertainty have battered household incomes and complicated the already delicate economic balancing act that millions of Pakistani families must deal with. The vast and overwhelming youthfulness of the country has a low base of human capital, limited economic and social mobility for young women, no financial support from the state, and no market-based solutions to meet the economic and material aspirations that Generation Z everywhere has. To top off this toxic cocktail of difficulties, there is a widespread belief that freedom of association and freedom of expression are under threat – and that this threat is skewed and targets some, but not all, Pakistanis. These are the circumstances that created the election results of February 8. As if to literally confirm the worst suspicions of Pakistanis, the uber-elite of the country then decided to muddy the waters further by altering some of the results of the elections on the night after the election. The resulting minority government is now saddled with an impossible set of tasks – and despite the otherworldly work ethic of the prime minister and much-maligned 'one page' that the government enjoys with Rawalpindi – it is incredibly difficult to see how this dispensation can generate the disruption Pakistan needs. One of the abiding challenges the government faces is the same challenge every government in Pakistan has faced since at least 1988. There isn't enough money. This problem needs a disruptive solution – but remember: people tend to cling to ideas formed previously, they tend to work better within already established networks and they tend to be more comfortable with associations that are familiar. This means that conversations about 'disruption' suffer from something called path dependency. This is why, even some of the smartest Pakistanis alive tend to keep getting stuck in old conversations. The older you are, the more locked you become into doing things how you have done them before – and this is especially true for people and groups that have enjoyed success when they were younger. General Asim Munir won the Sword of Honour at Mangla at the age of eighteen. Nawaz Sharif first became finance minister of the Punjab at the age of thirty-two. Imran Khan was capped at the age of nineteen, was a fast-bowling wonder and global sensation by the time he turned twenty-two. We can't identify every single Pakistan Administrative Service officer who serves at BPS-22 today, or every military officer above the rank of a one-star, or every judge in the Supreme Court, but we know that each one has been a top performer for most if not their entire careers. When we demand disruption from our elites, we should understand just what we are asking for. We are asking for people who have enjoyed incredible individual success for most of their lives to fundamentally challenge how they do things. This is a tough ask. So the natural question is: if this is so hard to do, how are other countries doing it? The answer isn't straightforward, and there is no single formula, but one way to understand the unique stasis that Pakistan finds itself in is to juxtapose elite behaviour in other places with that in Pakistan. My two favourite examples are India and Saudi Arabia. In India, economic transformation began in the early 1990s and not surprisingly (since new economic realities tend to produce social and political implications) the BJP emerged in the late 1990s – but this BJP was run by elite adjacents that were broadly non-disruptive. Traditional elites in India, like everywhere, resist change. More importantly, India is no beacon of light when it comes to social mobility. Yet India's democratic system created enough space for the disruption that has been the source of India's incredible economic advancement in recent years. This disruption has been led by Narendra Modi and the RSS leadership – a decidedly non-elite combine for most of India's existence. Yet it has been undergirded by two constants in India – its relatively fluid democracy, and big-money capitalists, most of whom are traditional elites. Modi is the disruption. Democracy is the stability. Disruption plus stability. Maybe there is no better example than Saudi Arabia. Prior to King Salman's ascension to the throne, the role of crown prince was consistently awarded to someone from the same generation as the king – and every king thus far has been a son of the founder of Saudi Arabia – King Abdul-Aziz Bin Saud. By the time the late King Abdullah ascended to the monarchy in 2005, the Saudi elite were facing a substantial problem of aging kings. King Abdullah formed the Allegiance Council in 2007, which has since been the venue through which succession is decided. When King Salman ascended to the throne in 2015, he took the even more bold decision of appointing Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman as the next in line, making MBS the first grandson of the founder of the monarchy to be in line for the throne. A lot of the changes in Saudi Arabia have been long in the making, but the speed and scale of transformation in society and economy are almost entirely down to the fact that in 2017 a millennial national leader was formally assigned the task of preparing to ascend to the throne. Vision 2030 is all disruption. The Saudi state and monarchy is all stability. Disruption plus stability. Similar parallels exist, with very different storylines, in countries large and small. In Qatar, in Turkey, in Indonesia and other ASEAN countries that often offer a more viable critical path for how Pakistan will need to change for the better than perhaps oil-rich Gulf States do. Regardless, everywhere there has been change, there has been disruption – and this disruption has taken place within a broad context of stability. This is why Afghanistan and Iran (and many African states) don't make the cut. They suffer disruption minus stability. That leads to destruction. When judging debates that seem to be about reform, we must insist on this one, single litmus test. What existing interests will our proposed change disrupt, and will this disruption be toxic and destructive or can its effects be harnessed and managed for the better? It isn't as sexy as foaming at the mouth with rage or 'picking a side' – but it is, the world over, the only way societies and countries win.

The writer is an analyst and commentator.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

Pakistan

Rajgopalacharia, suggested a formula for a separate Muslim state in the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, which was rejected at the time, but later on, in 1944, formed the basis of the Jinnah-Gandhi talks. PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

The Pakistan demand became popular during the Second World War every section of the Muslim community. MEN, WOMEN, STUDENT, ULEMA AND BUSINESSMEN Organized under the banner of the All-

India Muslim League. Branches of the party were opened even in the remote corners of the subcontinent. Literature in the form of pamphlets, books, magazines and newspapers was produced to explain the Pakistan demand and distributed widely. The support gained by the All-India Muslim League and its

demand for Pakistan was tested after the failure of the Simla Conference, convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in 1945. Elections were called to determine the respective strength of the political parties.

To be continued....

Cardi B reveals what is stopping her from making new music

Cardi B admits she is afraid of online criticism

Cardi B openly discussed how her fear of being criticised caused her to lose herself and become "afraid to do everything." The Bodak Yellow rapper is presently promoting her much anticipated second album, but she said that there was a moment when she felt anxious about her music and that another record looked unachievable. In an interview with 360's Speedy Norman, the mother of two previously disclosed that she was "afraid" to release new songs and that she shunned social media because she was "tired" of receiving negative feedback. "I just feel like I lost myself like with everything like, you know like a lot of like music commenters and



everything and a lot of people just be like, you know, 'She's afraid to drop an album, she's afraid to drop music,' the 31-year-old explained. "Like last year, I barely dropped music. It's just like I was just afraid to do everything." Since her meteoric rise to global popularity in 2015, Cardi has not taken a break from social media posting. She also said that she was so tired that she refrained from sharing anything online for fear of receiving negative feedback from her fans and followers. "I was afraid to go live, I was afraid to post a picture, I was afraid to go to the club, and then the next day seeing people, what they going to say about me, and everything.

Showbiz

Have scientists discovered a 'dark mirror universe' to ours?

The invisible dark matter remains one of the biggest mysteries in the science world. A news study has proposed the existence of a "dark mirror universe" to ours, Popular Mechanics reported. Dark matter is the invisible, the unknown mysterious substance that lurks around the universe. According to scientists, it fills up about 85% of our universe, which means for every 1kg of regular matter, there is 5kg of dark matter present. The reason why we know this is through the study of light, when there is dark matter present, the objects near it gets affected. Scientists have proposed a new idea in the preprint journal arXiv, explaining the relationship between normal matter and dark matter. According to it, researchers say that for every physical interaction in normal matter, there is a mirror of it in the dark universe, linking the normal and mirror universe together, Live Science reported.



Furthermore, the paper suggests that while protons and neutrons have the same mass in our world, in the dark realm, this is not the same. In the dark mirror universe protons can evaporate, destabilising the atom interaction between protons and neutrons. As protons are not present, a "free-floating sea of dark neutrons" is created. This study is not the first to propose the idea of a dark mirror universe, scientists from the University of Toronto suggest that we could see glimpses of dark matter stars, if they contain even the slightest of normal matter.

Health

Ramadan 2024: How to cope with mental health, substance abuse challenges while fasting

Mental health is often stigmatised during Ramadan making it difficult for neurodivergent people to cope

Muslims focus on their spiritual connection with Allah through prayer, fasting and increasing good deeds during the holy month of Ramadan. Our sleep schedules are usually irregular due to nightly prayers and pre-dawn meals and our bodies, minds, and spirits are pushed to their limits with fasting from sunup to sundown, according to Teen Vogue. Ramadan fasting has been proven to decrease stress and depression in some but can cause mental health deterioration in people with neurodivergent tendencies.

Children, the elderly, those who are traveling, pregnant, or ill are exempted from fasting. Additionally, if a person is facing severe mental health challenges then they have a valid reason not to fast but for those who are still fasting, there are few tips to cope with their mental health. There may be options for extended release tablets or changing the times you take your medication in order to accommodate fasting, if you take mental health medications during the day. However, it is important to check with

your medical expert first. Getting treatment can already be difficult for many Muslims who experience substance use disorder struggle in silence during Ramadan. Muslims going through this should work with a multidisciplinary team including a trusted religious figure, a doctor, and a therapist to help them recover. Islam is very much pro-mental health although mental health challenges are often stigmatised in the Muslim community. Considering this, it is always better to seek therapy.



روزنامہ شہباز شریف کی گراف

یوم پاکستان کے موقع پر خصوصی پریڈ کی تیاریاں زور شور سے جاری

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹر) 23 مارچ کو پورے پاکستان کے موقع پر شہباز شریف کی خصوصی پریڈ کی تیاریاں زور شور سے جاری ہیں۔ 23 مارچ کی پریڈ میں شہباز شریف کی خصوصی پریڈ کی تیاریاں زور شور سے جاری ہیں۔ 23 مارچ کی پریڈ میں شہباز شریف کی خصوصی پریڈ کی تیاریاں زور شور سے جاری ہیں۔

بدھ 20 مارچ 2024ء



اسلام آباد، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف حالیہ طوفانی بارشوں کے باعث ہونے والے نقصانات کے ازالے سے متعلق اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں۔

پولیس کو مراد سعید، پرویز امبی کی گرفتاری کیلئے وارنٹ جاری

سینیٹر فیصل جاوید، اعظم سواتی، اظہر مشوانی اور خرم دیشان کے خلاف کوئی مقدمہ درج

راولپنڈی (پریورٹ) پی ٹی آئی کی رہنمائی میں وفاقی ڈیڑھ سو سید اور سابق وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب چوہدری پرویز امبی کے خلاف راولپنڈی پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔ کوئٹہ پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔ کوئٹہ پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔ کوئٹہ پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔

گواور میں پاک آرمی کا فائدہ

گواور (پریورٹ) پاک فوج کی ریسکیو ٹیموں نے گواور ڈال سکول کیمپن سربراہی میں وارڈز میں ہارن سے تعلق پانی کے ڈیوڑھنگ اور آرمی میں شامل کر لیا۔ ماڈل ہائی اسکول گواور، بلوچستان کی تاریخی اہمیت کے لیے ایک اہم اسکول ہے جو 1956ء سے قائم ہے، جس میں 500 سے زائد طلبہ تعلیم ہیں۔

سینٹ اختیارات، پنجاب میں 14 امیدواروں کی جانچ پڑتال مکمل

لاہور (پریورٹ) پنجاب میں 14 امیدواروں کی جانچ پڑتال مکمل ہوئی۔ سینیٹ اختیارات کے تحت جانچ پڑتال کے لیے 14 امیدواروں کی جانچ پڑتال مکمل ہوئی۔ سینیٹ اختیارات کے تحت جانچ پڑتال کے لیے 14 امیدواروں کی جانچ پڑتال مکمل ہوئی۔



اسلام آباد، 23 مارچ کے حوالے سے سڑکوں پر پانی کی سطح پر چھوڑا گیا ہے۔

طوفانی بارشوں کے متاثرین کو تنہا نہیں چھوڑ سکتا، شہباز شریف

مشترکہ سرورے مکمل کر کے امداد صرف متاثرہ مستحقین کو ہی پہنچانی جائے، شہباز شریف، وزیر اعظم سے ارشد ندیم کی ملاقات، کھلاڑی کیلئے 25 لاکھ روپیہ انعام کا اعلان، پاکستان کیلئے ہر مقابلے میں حصہ لونا، کھلاڑی جیولین تھرو

ذریعہ، پی ٹی آئی کی رہنمائی میں وفاقی ڈیڑھ سو سید اور سابق وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب چوہدری پرویز امبی کے خلاف راولپنڈی پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔ کوئٹہ پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔ کوئٹہ پولیس نے 9 مئی سے تعلق حاصل کیا گیا ہے۔

نواز شریف کا ماہ رمضان میں سعودی عرب ہلندن جانے کا فیصلہ

لاہور (پریورٹ) پاکستان مسلم لیگ ن کے قائد نواز شریف نے رمضان المبارک کے آخری مہینے میں سعودی عرب جانے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے۔



وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب نواز شریف سے ایران کے توفیق جزل مرہان مواصلات کے لیے ہیں۔

موہا کی فونزی کی درآمدات میں 8 ماہ کے دوران نمایاں اضافہ

اسلام آباد (نامہ نگار) موہا کی فونزی کی درآمدات میں جاری ماہ سال کے پچھلے 8 ماہ میں سالانہ بنیادوں پر نمایاں اضافہ ریکارڈ کیا گیا۔ پاکستان بھر کے درآمدات کی شرح میں نمایاں اضافہ ریکارڈ کیا گیا۔

حسن اور حسین نواز ایون فیلڈ، اعزیز یہ ملز اور فلیگ شپ ریفرنس میں بری

اسلام آباد (پریورٹ) اسلام آباد کی عدالت نے حسن اور حسین نواز کو تین سال کی جیل کی سزا سنائی۔ اعزیز یہ ملز اور فلیگ شپ ریفرنس میں بری قرار دیا گیا۔

پاکستان، بحرین کیساتھ تعلقات کو اہمیت دیتا ہے، صدر مملکت

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹر) صدر مملکت آصف علی زرداری نے کہا ہے کہ پاکستان بحرین کے ساتھ اپنے برادرانہ تعلقات کو بہت اہمیت دیتا ہے۔



راولپنڈی، ایس پی آئی کی پیش قدمیوں کو ختم کرنے کے لیے فوجی دستوں کو روانہ کیا گیا ہے۔

پنجاب کا بینہ، عمران خان، شاہ محمود کے جیل ٹرائل کی منظوری

پنجاب میں لاء انفرنگ کی اجازت دینے کے لیے جیل ٹرائل کی منظوری دی گئی ہے۔

جمہلی ڈگری کیس میں سابق امپریل اے ٹی سی کے تعلق سے جانچ پڑتال کی

اسلام آباد (پریورٹ) جمہلی ڈگری کیس میں سابق امپریل اے ٹی سی کے تعلق سے جانچ پڑتال کی گئی ہے۔

توشیحہ خاندانوں کا کیس، نیب نے عدالت سے مہلت مانگی

اسلام آباد (پریورٹ) نیب نے توشیحہ خاندانوں کے کیس میں مہلت مانگی ہے۔



پشاور میں ایشیا مینا مینار کے افتتاحی تقریب میں شہباز شریف کی شرکت ہوئی۔

اسٹاف رپورٹر کی مہلتوں کیلئے ایڈجسٹمنٹ کی مدد مانگا گیا، ایس پی آئی کے درخواست گزار

اسٹاف رپورٹر کی مہلتوں کیلئے ایڈجسٹمنٹ کی مدد مانگا گیا، ایس پی آئی کے درخواست گزار۔

سنی اتحاد کونسل کے ملک احمد خان بھچرا پوزیشن لیڈر نامزد

سنی اتحاد کونسل کے ملک احمد خان بھچرا پوزیشن لیڈر نامزد۔



اسلام آباد، وفاقی وزیر سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی ڈاکٹر خالد جلیل اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں۔

روپے ہرجائے کا فیصلہ پٹیج کر دیا

روپے ہرجائے کا فیصلہ پٹیج کر دیا۔

عمران خان لاگ مارچ اور توڑ پھوڑ کے 2 مقدمات میں بری

عمران خان لاگ مارچ اور توڑ پھوڑ کے 2 مقدمات میں بری۔



اسلام آباد، وفاقی وزیر سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی ڈاکٹر خالد جلیل اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں۔

نیب کا تماشہ ختم ہونا چاہیے ورنہ ملک کے معاملات نہیں چلیں گے، شاہد خاقان

نیب کا تماشہ ختم ہونا چاہیے ورنہ ملک کے معاملات نہیں چلیں گے، شاہد خاقان۔



اسلام آباد، وفاقی وزیر سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی ڈاکٹر خالد جلیل اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں۔

صدر، وزیر اعظم نیب کے گرجبوت ہیں، چاروں ذرا اعلیٰ بھی نیب کی آغوش بھگت چکے، کوئی اشرکام کرنے کو تیار نہیں

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کونہ سمیت، بلوچستان کے مختلف علاقوں میں 54 شہادتوں کے جھنگلے

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اسلام آباد سپریم کورٹ کی فیصلہ کیلئے ڈاکٹر کے خلاف تازہ وار وارنٹ منظور

اسلام آباد سپریم کورٹ کی فیصلہ کیلئے ڈاکٹر کے خلاف تازہ وار وارنٹ منظور۔

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹر) اسلام آباد کے

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سرماہ کار آزاد کشمیر میں سرمایہ کاری کریں، حکومت تحفظ فراہم کرے گی، سیرسٹر سلطان

سرماہ کار آزاد کشمیر میں سرمایہ کاری کریں، حکومت تحفظ فراہم کرے گی، سیرسٹر سلطان۔

پاکستان ہمارا اہم شراکت دار، افغان سرزمین سے دوسرے حملے کیے جائیں، امریکہ

پاکستان ہمارا اہم شراکت دار، افغان سرزمین سے دوسرے حملے کیے جائیں، امریکہ۔

پاکستان اور افغانستان اختلافات کا حل نکالیں، پرمز ہیں کہ افغانستان دوبارہ دہشت گردوں کی محفوظ پناہ گاہ بنے، ویدانت ٹیبل

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پشاور میں ایشیا مینا مینار کے افتتاحی تقریب میں شہباز شریف کی شرکت ہوئی

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Awais Leghari: Architect of sectoral reforms in Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, who has been assigned the portfolio of the Ministry of Power by the Prime Minister, is the architect of transformative sectoral reforms in Pakistan. During his term as Minister for Telecommunication and Information Technology, the telecom sector saw deregulation, privatization of PTCL, and a competitive environment that immensely benefited the consumers.

Sardar Leghari served as the Minister for Power Division for more than a year, from 2016 to 2018, and had the credit for introducing and allowing net metering in Pakistan. Additionally, legislation for strict action against overbilling was authored and introduced by him during the same period. Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari also remained chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for four years from 2013 to 2017.

KSrelief provides 2,625 food baskets in Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) distributed 2,625 food baskets to the most vulnerable and displaced communities in the Balochistan and Punjab provinces.

The assistant programme benefiting 18,375 individuals, as part of the food security support project in Pakistan, SPA reported. The aid comes as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's relief efforts through KSrelief to enhance food security in Pakistan amid the humanitarian crisis. APP

PM felicitates Islamabad United over PSL 9 win; says cricket unites whole nation

VOM Report



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated the Islamabad United team for winning the 9th Pakistan Super League, saying that the cricket was a unifying factor for the whole nation. In the last ball thriller, Islamabad United defeated Multan Sultans by two wickets in the PSL final at National Bank Stadium, Karachi on Monday, becoming the first team to have won the title for the third time as the team already championed the PLS in 2016 and 2018 as well. "Both teams played a fabulous game. This is the victory of whole nation, not any single team. The cricket game unites the whole nation," the prime minister said in a statement. He also lauded the Pakistan Cricket Board, security forces, administration, all the organisers and the spectators for ensuring the success of the PSL 9. The whole PLS Series presented the great contests as well as the sportsman

spirit, he said and particularly thanked the international players who had participated in the tournament. "The PSL did not only provide recreation to the cricket lovers but also played a key role in exploring the sports talent at the grassroots level. It also helped revive the international cricket in Pakistan," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked. He also reiterated that the incumbent government was determined to take all-out measures for promotion of cricket and other sports in the country.

Preparations gear up for Pakistan Day March 23 celebrations



ISLAMABAD: Preparations are getting momentum for country's forthcoming Pakistan Day parade, scheduled to take place on March 23. With citizens from every corner of the nation actively participating, the event promises to be a vibrant celebration of Pakistan's rich heritage and spirit. Enthusiastic efforts are underway to ensure that the parade showcases Pakistan's diverse culture in captivating ways, welcoming guests from far and wide to partake in the festivities.

Representatives from different regions have shared their sentiments regarding their participation in this grand event. Izhar Naqvi, representing Kashmir, spoke of the beauty of their land, promising to bring forth their culture to enrich the Pakistan Day celebration. Similarly, Farhan Akhtar from Balochistan, emphasized

the rich cultural heritage of Balochistan, describing it as a vibrant bouquet to be displayed during the parade. Rashid Balti, speaking on behalf of Gilgit-Baltistan, extended warm wishes in their native language, expressing the region's contribution to the celebrations with its towering mountains and serene lakes. Nayab Khan, representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, highlighted the fearless and hospitable nature of its people, affirming their participation in the festivities alongside other provinces. Ramzan Jutt, representing Punjab, underscored the historical significance of Lahore, where the resolution for Pakistan's creation was passed. He assured the presentation of Punjab's rich culture during the parade. Meanwhile, Rab Nawaz, representing Sindh, pledged a fervent celebration, promising to showcase the vibrant culture of Sindh through dance and music performances. As preparations continue at full throttle, anticipation mounts for a memorable Pakistan Day parade, set to unite the nation in celebration of its diverse heritage and unwavering spirit. With each province poised to display its unique cultural tapestry, the event promises to be a testament to Pakistan's unity in diversity. APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui chairing a meeting.

Law minister chairs meeting of appellate tribunals' heads



ISLAMABAD: Upon the directive of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif regarding tax reforms and tax collection, Minister

for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar convened a meeting of heads of Appellate Tribunal benches and conducted a lengthy consultative session, obtaining figures from the heads. Expressing concern, the Law Minister said that there are numerous cases pending under trial. He called for the establishment of a system to hear cases on an urgent basis and to make decisions based on immediate grounds. It

was decided to introduce a modern automation system in the tribunal, and the performance of each bench will be reviewed on a weekly basis, said a press release issued here.

The discussions were held in the meeting regarding legal reforms to enhance the performance of tribunals. Finally, the Law Minister reiterated that the biggest challenge in addressing national issues and challenges is the collection of taxes from the affluent class, which will not be compromised. Immediate decisions will be made on cases pending for years under continuous orders.

Parvez Elahi suffers minor injuries, court informed

LAHORE, Mar 19 (APP): An anti-corruption court was informed on Tuesday that former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi fell in the bathroom of the jail on March 17 and sustained minor injuries. This statement was made in a report from the superintendent of Adiala Jail, which was filed before Anti-Corruption Court Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta, who was presiding over the Punjab Assembly illegal appointments case. Deputy Superintendent Jail Tahir submitted Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's medical report to the court. Following the report's submission, the court noted that the indictment could not be made due to an incomplete number of accused. The court adjourned further hear-

ings until April 4 and summoned all accused for indictment on the next hearing date. It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time the indictment of the accused has been delayed in this matter. The accused could not be indicted during the previous hearings on March 6 and March 11 as well. The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Punjab registered the case, accusing Parvez Elahi of unlawful appointments and kickbacks. Allegedly, qualified candidates were denied positions while those who had not taken exams were appointed. The ACE claimed that as the then-chief minister, Parvez Elahi misused his authority by influencing appointments after receiving bribes.



Bilawal greets all communities celebrating Nowruz

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations to all communities celebrating the joyous occasion of Nowruz. Nowruz, the harbinger of the Persian New Year, is embraced by diverse cultures and communities worldwide, including a significant populace in Pakistan. In a press release from the Media Cell Bilawal House, the PPP chairman expressed that Nowruz embodies themes of renewal, hope, and unity. "On this auspicious day, I extend heartfelt congratulations to all Pakistanis, including the esteemed Parsi community, who celebrate Nowruz with traditional fervor and joy," he added. Recognizing the Parsi community's integral role in Pakistan's diverse cultural landscape, he acknowledged their significant contributions to the nation's social, economic, and cultural tapestry. Bilawal Bhutto emphasized, "Let us harness the spirit of Nowruz to champion peace, unity, and cooperation, transcending boundaries and bridging divides. APP

Siraj dissatisfied with prevailing law & order situation

KASHMIRE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq expressing dissatisfaction over the prevailing law and order situation especially in Sindh has said that the populace feels unprotected as lawlessness and reign of dacoits prevails. Speaking to media persons after leading the funeral prayer of JI local leader Maulana Abdul Hafeez Bajarani on Tuesday, he emphasized the necessity for the government to ensure security for the masses. Despite assuming power through a contested mandate, he urged the government to prioritize peace-building efforts and economic development. Sirajul Haq highlighting inflation, unemployment, and lawlessness as the primary challenges confronting the populace, criticized the government's reliance solely on IMF intervention to address economic woes, stressing the need for alternative solutions. He lamented the rampant abduction-for-ransom has become a business in Sindh, attributing it to the protection provided

by feudal lords and local politicians to criminals, rendering it unsafe for citizens to venture out after dark. He asserted that corruption and poor governance were impediments to economic growth and underscored the importance of electing honest and dedicated leadership to address these issues. He reaffirmed Jamaat-e-Islami's commitment to advocating for the rights of the people and striving towards the establishment of an Islamic welfare state. Siraj extended condolences to the family of the deceased JI leader, praising Bajarani's lifelong dedication to promoting the Islamic system in the country. He stated that Gaza has transformed into the world's most oppressive prison, with the city ablaze from artillery fire and its inhabitants succumbing to hunger and disease. The JI leader said that over the past five months, 32,000 Palestinians, including 11,000 children, have fell victim to Israeli bombings, with 38,000 missing and 77,000 injured. INP

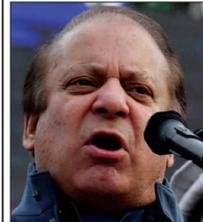
US urges Taliban to prevent terror attacks from Afghan soil after Pakistan hits TTP hideouts

WASHINGTON: The United States' Department of State on Tuesday urged the Taliban government in Afghanistan to prevent terror attacks from their soil while also asking Pakistan to ensure the security of civilians during counterterrorism operations. A day earlier, Pakistani forces carried out intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in the border regions inside Afghanistan against terrorists launching attacks in Pakistan from Afghan soil following the March 16 attack. The Mir Ali attack martyred at least seven Pakistan Army soldiers — including a lieutenant colonel and captain — after they gallantly fought with terrorists as they attacked a security forces' post in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). "We deeply regret the loss of life and injustices sustained during the attack in Pakistan, and the loss of civilian lives during the strike in Afghanistan," said Vedant Patel, State Department's principal deputy spokesperson. "We urge the Taliban to ensure that

terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil, and we urge Pakistan to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counterterrorism efforts. And we urge both sides to address any differences," he added. The Afghan Taliban had claimed that two air strikes carried out inside Afghanistan by Pakistani forces had killed eight people in the war-torn country. Patel said that Washington remains committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a "safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States or our partners and allies". When asked to elaborate US stance on Pakistani strikes in Afghanistan, the spokesperson said: "Any loss of civilian life is troubling and heartbreaking to us, and so we want to make sure that when some of these operations are being conducted, that every step possible is being taken, that it's the perpetrators that are being held to account, and that it's not civilians who are being impacted." To a query, the spokesperson said

that US was in regular communication with Pakistani leaders to discuss Afghanistan in detail including through the counterterrorism dialogue and other bilateral consultations. "Pakistan repeatedly urged Afghanistan to take action" Foreign Office, in its detailed statement on Monday, said that Pakistan carried out operations as for the past two years, Islamabad repeatedly conveyed its serious concerns to Kabul over the presence of terror outfits including TTP inside Afghanistan. The statement said that these terrorists pose a grave threat to Pakistan's security and have consistently used Afghan territory to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory. The FO said that Pakistan accords prime importance to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, adding that it has always prioritised dialogue and cooperation to confront the terrorist threat. "We have repeatedly urged the Afghan authorities to take concrete and effective action to ensure that the Afghan soil is not used as a staging ground for terrorism against Pakistan. We have also called on them to deny safe havens to TTP and to hand over its leadership to Pakistan," the FO said. The statement added that Pakistan has great respect for the people of Afghanistan; however, certain elements among those in power in Afghanistan are actively patronising TTP and using them as a proxy against Pakistan. "We urge these elements in power to rethink the policy of siding with Khwarij terrorists shedding the blood of innocent Pakistanis and to make a clear choice to stand with the people of Pakistan," it added. "We fully realise the challenge Afghan authorities face in combating the threat posed by the TTP. Pakistan would therefore continue to work towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism and to prevent any terrorist organisation from sabotaging bilateral relations with Afghanistan," the statement concluded. Agencies

Nawaz questions hike in power, gas tariff amid IMF pressure



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme, Nawaz Sharif, questioned the hike in rates of electricity and gas following the directions by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a The News report stated on Tuesday.

The former prime minister, when speaking during a meeting of the Punjab government alongside Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, raised concerns regarding the increase in power and gas tariffs, wondering how it could be stopped. The PML-N supreme, when commenting on the unprecedented inflation, also asked for how would the nation's patience be tested, calling on authorities to resolve the problem of expensive electricity for small farmers by providing them solar panels. Senior provincial minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information Minister Azma Bukhari, Transport Minister Bilal Akbar, MPA Sania Ashiq, provincial chief secretary, Planning and Development Board chairman, Transport secretary and other officials concerned were also present at the meeting. The former premier said a small farmer should get full reward for his hard work and should be saved from exploitation at the hands of big farmers and millers. During the meeting, Nawaz and the Punjab CM called for a plan for an underground train project in Lahore, while a decision was reached in principle that the metro bus project would be launched in three more cities of the province.

Nawaz requested the provincial government to increase the number of bikes for students. He said monthly instalment of bikes for students should be kept minimum, as it was a responsibility of the government to share the financial burden of students. He said bus fare for public should also be fixed at the minimum possible.

The meeting was informed that 19,000 petrol and 1,000 electric bikes would be given to students on monthly instalments without any interest. Monthly instalment of petrol bike would be less than Rs5,000 per month and instalment of e-bike would be less than Rs10,000 per month. In villages, 70% quota was reserved for male students and 30% for female students. The CM ordered that schedule for receiving applications for bikes should be announced before Eid. CM Maryam called a comprehensive plan for providing solar panels to farmers in Punjab and decided in principle that the government would give farmers solar panels for running tube-wells. She promised that farmers would be provided modern machinery and drip irrigation would also be introduced to save water and reduce costs. She directed that a comprehensive strategy should be formulated to check the mafia selling fertilisers at higher rates. The meeting was also informed that 300 hybrid diesel buses would be bought for Lahore, 78 for Rawalpindi, 100 for Multan, 110 for Faisalabad and 42 for Bahawalpur, and 27 electric buses would be operated in Lahore. Agencies