



Directed the chief secretaries for taking all possible measures to stabilize sugar prices across the country

Federal Minister for Industries and Production
Rana Tanveer Hussain

Pakistan Navy takes over command of combined task force



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has taken over the command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) for the 13th time at an impressive change of command ceremony held at Headquarters US NAVCENT, Bahrain. Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy assumed the Command from Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy. CTF 150 is one of the five Task Forces operating within the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Its mission is to promote maritime security in order to counter illicit activities at sea.

While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150, Commodore Asim Sohail Malik assured that his team is fully geared up to efficiently shoulder this prestigious responsibility to contribute towards Maritime Security and Stability in the region. He lauded the outgoing Commander, Capt Mathews of Royal Canadian Navy and his team for their staunch commitment and commendable services to achieve the set objectives of CTF-150. Commodore Asim Sohail Malik underlined that CTF-150 area of responsibility consists of some of the world's most challenging and important international waters. He assured that his team will strive to further strengthen efforts of this multinational task force to provide a robust security in this vital maritime region.

The CCTF also highlighted that Pakistan Navy is committed to work with coalition navies for ensuring peace and stability within the Area of Responsibility. Pakistan Navy has the distinction of commanding CTF-150 twelve times previously. This being 13th Command, is a manifestation of the trust and respect reposed in Pakistan Navy by the coalition partners.

The change of command ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain H.E. Saqib Rauf, Honorary Consul of Canada in Bahrain Mr. Hatim Zubi, Commander Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Vice Admiral George M. Wikoff, Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Al Binahri besides representatives of several other navies operating with CM. DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Ibtisam Al Farouji, Undersecretary of Investment Promotion, Oman presenting souvenir to Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of the National Export Development Board.

PM gives \$60 billion target for country's annual exports in three years

PM welcomes Beijing Declaration for Palestinian interim Government

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the National Export Development Board wherein he tasked the authorities concerned to take the country's annual exports to \$60 billion within three years. The prime minister asked the commerce ministry and other relevant departments to take all necessary measures to achieve the given target. He said the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark during the previous fiscal year, and the government's policies also took the IT exports to over \$3.2 billion. The prime minister asked the ministry to resolve the issues pointed out by the exporters and present a report within two weeks. He said that he would personally chair the National Export Development Board meeting every one-and-a-half months. Calling for collective efforts for the country's development, he paid tribute to the business community and investors for their role in increasing exports despite tough circumstances.

Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the commerce ministry to finalise the policy proposals, in coordination with representatives of the potential export sectors. He also tasked the Ministry of National Food Security to improve extension services, in coordination with provinces, to enhance agricultural exports.

He instructed for exporting of quality seeds and agricultural products after further processing and taking measures to introduce crop vari-

eties with high yields.

He said that the delivery time of Pakistani goods to Europe and America should be reduced by solving the problems related to the shipping of exports immediately. Similarly, the commerce ministry and Board of Investment should ensure cooperation regarding the transfer of Chinese export industries to Pakistan.

He also called for carrying out research and development, innovation and brand development to increase the export of Pakistani goods. The prime minister warned against any delay by the Federal Board of Revenue in refunds to the exporters, besides emphasising the trade officers in Pakistan's missions abroad to promote Pakistan's exports and for guiding the exporters. The prime minister tasked the power ministry to present a comprehensive plan to provide low-cost electricity to the industries.

Highlighting the crucial role of the private sector for national development, he called for the sector's inclusion in the policymaking process. The representatives of the export sector appreciated the prime minister for his frequent meetings to resolve their problems and called his keen interest in the export sector "very encouraging". They also appreciated the prime minister's initiative to ensure timely refunds by the FBR to the export industry. The meeting was briefed about the steps taken for the uplift of the export sector. It was noted that the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark this year and a five-year plan to double the exports was also presented in the meeting.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Abdul Aleem Khan, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Sardar Awaiz Leghari and Dr Musaddiq Malik, Ministers of State Ali Pervaiz Malik and Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan, State Bank Governor, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, relevant FBR officers and representatives of textiles, IT, leather, agriculture and other sectors attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the Beijing Declaration, which involves an agreement among prominent Palestinian groups to unify and create an interim unity govt. The prime minister specifically praised the People's Republic of China for achieving this significant diplomatic milestone.

In a statement on his official X account, the PM remarked that the people of Palestine have endured prolonged hardship and suffering. The prime minister stated that Tuesday's agreement sparks hope for achieving lasting peace. He called for global solidarity with the Palestinian people and urged Israel to cease its aggressive actions, which have devastated Gaza and resulted in the deaths of approximately 40,000 innocent Palestinians over the past ten months. The prime minister affirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause and reiterated its call for a two-state solution, establishing an independent Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders and Al Quds as its capital.

Brazilian Naval Chief calls on Defence Minister



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff of Brazilian Armed Forces, Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes called on Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday. During the meeting, matters related to regional situation and bilateral cooperation, came under discussion, a news release said.

The Defence Minister said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Brazil and intended to expand cooperation in all fields.

Highlighting Pakistan's role in the region and its relation with neighboring countries, the Defence Minister dilated on Pakistan's efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region.

Both the leaders exchanged views on enhancing and diversifying defence cooperation for which considerable potential exists between two countries.

The two sides also agreed on the institutionalization of defence cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding. Moreover, regular exchange of trainees to each other's training institutions also came under discussion. DNA

Interior minister directs CDA to ensure timely drainage of Water

ISLAMABAD: Following heavy rainfall in Islamabad, Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to remain alert.

Minister called CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa and directed him to expedite the drainage process under his supervision, ensuring timely drainage of water from low-lying areas.

He also directed that relevant officers and staff must remain in the field until the drainage work is completed.

While directing regular monitoring of Islamabad's streets, drains, and waterways, he emphasized ensuring water drainage at underpasses and other locations. He also instructed traffic police to proactively perform their duties to maintain traffic flow. He stated that additional resources should be deployed in the water drainage efforts. DNA

NCSW hosts conference on Women with disabilities

VOM Report



ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) on Tuesday hosted a groundbreaking national conference on women with disabilities as part of its esteemed series, "The Next Horizon".

This significant event convened experts from across Pakistan to chart a progressive path forward for the empowerment of women with disabilities. Chairperson NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar in her opening remarks, underscored the pressing need to address the challenges faced by differently abled women in Pakistan. She highlighted the critical importance of making public spaces universally accessible and ensuring comprehensive support in health and education sectors. Deputy Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Latika Maskey Pradhan lauded NCSW's efforts and reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to empowering all women in Pak-

istan, advocating for a healthier and more inclusive society. Senator Mahesh Kumar, the chief guest of the inaugural session, pledged his unwavering support for the empowerment of differently abled women in Pakistan. He emphasized the need for societal reforms to foster inclusivity and equality. Federal Secretary for Law and Justice, Raja Naem Akbar, reiterated the ministry's dedication to providing equal opportunities for all citizens. Federal Secretary for Education, Mohyuddin Wani, expressed his commitment to crafting inclusive education policies.

Federal Secretary for Human Rights, Allah Dino Khawaja, announced the forthcoming launch of the Integrated Social Welfare System, a groundbreaking initiative designed to provide comprehensive support to persons with disabilities. This innovative system will be interconnected with all relevant authorities, ensuring seamless assistance and empowerment at the highest level. The conference featured dynamic group discussions focused on four pivotal areas: Legal Framework and Protection, Accessibility and Inclusive Services, Education and Employment Opportunities, Combating Gender Violence and Support.

Mastermind of May 9 conspiracy confesses his crimes: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar Tuesday demanded strict action against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its founder who, according to him, orchestrated and facilitated the May 9 conspiracy to attack more than 200 military installations, the Corps Commander House Lahore and other important buildings. According to the Information Minister, the leader of the "Tehreek-e-Intishar" has finally confessed his crime of "planning and facilitating" the May 9 tragedy. His family members found instructing outside the Corps Commander House Lahore to attack the building. He said the PTI sought nothing but violence, chaos and anarchy to do political point scoring on the "dead bodies". Petrol bombs were manufactured at Zaman Park which was used as a training headquarters for "terrorists", who were trained there to attack the state, the minister alleged. The PTI founder did everything in his capacity to harm the national interests and security, he said while accusing him of writing a letter to International Monetary Fund to default the country, hatching the cipher conspiracy and defiling the memorials of the martyrs on May 9. He said strict action against the "Tehreek-e-Intishar" was a matter of the national security and national interests. APP

Over 150,000 retailers registered as first-time taxpayers, marking a significant stride towards broadening the tax base: Muhammad Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb had a zoom meeting with the representatives from Moody's Ratings at Finance Division on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by senior officials of the Ministry. The Federal Minister commenced the session by giving an update on Pakistan's economic outlook. He highlighted the foreign exchange reserves surpassing USD 9 billion, stable CPI inflation at 12.6%, and a robust 7.7% increase in foreign remittances, reflecting economic resilience. He emphasized a 30% rise in tax collection in FY 2024 and outlined reforms to broaden the tax base, including new agricultural taxes and digital initiatives at the FBR. He also noted that over 150,000 retailers have registered as first-time taxpayers, marking a significant stride towards broadening the tax base.

The Minister mentioned the ambitious targets aimed to increase revenues by 3% of GDP by FY 2027, with plans for a primary surplus of 1% of GDP, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to fiscal sustainability and growth. Furthermore, Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb updated Moody's representatives on the successful completion of Pakistan's 9-month Stand By Arrangement with the IMF, emphasizing its positive impact on macroeconomic indicators. He highlighted multilateral institutions' confidence in financing Pakistan's developmental projects and apprised Moody's of Pakistan's recently finalized Staff-Level Agreement (SLA) with the IMF for a new medium-term program. The Minister underscored ongoing reforms in the energy sector and State-Owned Enterprises, including privatization and rightsizing efforts aimed at improving operational efficiency and governance. Moody's Ratings representatives appreciated the comprehensive briefing and expressed confidence in Pakistan's economic trajectory underpinned by robust fiscal reforms and strategic initiatives. SABAH



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Durable peace in South Asia remains contingent on peaceful resolution of J&K dispute: Ishaq Dar

Turkmen FM Rasit Meredow says relations with Pakistan are one of the priority areas of our foreign policy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkmenistan have agreed to work together for trade diversification, early finalization of transit trade agreement and a liberal visa policy to facilitate greater contacts between businessmen of the two countries.

The understanding came at the third round of Pakistan-Turkmenistan's Bilateral Political Consultations in Islamabad on Tuesday. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar led the Pakistani delegation while the Turkmenistan side was led by its Foreign Minister Rasit Meredow. Later sharing details of the meeting at a joint press stake-out, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the two sides undertook

a comprehensive view of bilateral relations in all dimensions. He said the two countries have agreed to intensify joint efforts to further expand and deepen bilateral cooperation including in political, economic and defense domain. We especially deliberated upon ways and means to develop close economic engagement in the priority areas of trade and investment, energy, connectivity and Information Technology. Ishaq Dar invited the Turkmenistan's companies to benefit from investment opportunities in Pakistan. He pointed out that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is facilitating foreign investors to invest in different sectors. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan's



seaports offer the business communities of both the countries to explore win-win opportunities. We welcome

businesses and enterprises in Turkmenistan to avail Gwadar and Karachi seaports for trade connectivity with

Middle East, Africa and beyond. The two sides also reviewed progress on TAPI gas pipeline as well as electricity transmission lines projects.

Ishaq Dar said these projects offer enormous opportunities for the two countries and the region.

The Foreign Minister said we have decided to promote bilateral parliamentary and cultural exchanges, educational scholarships and people to people contacts.

Ishaq Dar said that he also briefed the visiting dignitary about the dismal human rights situation in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said durable peace in South Asia remains contingent on peaceful resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accor-

dance with UN Security Council resolutions and aspirations of Kashmir people. Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rasit Meredow, in his remarks, said relations with Pakistan are one of the priority areas of our foreign policy.

Rasit Meredow said we have expressed the unwavering resolve to implement projects such as TAPI, power transmission lines and Fiber Optic communication, saying these will not only strengthen our bond of friendship but also exemplify the mutually beneficial partnership.

Rasit Meredow said we have decided to maintain active dialogue on creating international transport routes to capitalize on the transit potential of both the countries. SABAH

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This is a budget for the rich

I HUSSAIN

The major issue with the federal government's recently announced budget is its failure to convince anyone outside the government's core supporters that it can achieve its intended results. Another significant problem concerns fairness. Why should the salaried class, already bearing the bulk of income taxes, be expected to pay even more when those who own the overwhelming majority of the country's assets, particularly land and property, benefit from tax exemptions?

According to the latest edition of the 'Pakistan Economic Survey' published by the government of Pakistan's finance ministry, the cumulative growth of per capita income between 2017-18 and 2022-23 was 98 per cent. Concurrently, the cumulative growth of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of inflation affecting the average household, during this same period was slightly less than income growth at 87 per cent, resulting in a meager annual average real per capita income growth rate of just over 1.0 per cent. The planners need to address how, given the severe recession indicated by the Economic Survey figures for the large-scale manufacturing industry, the government plans to generate a massive 40 per cent increase in tax collections with its heavy reliance on increased direct and indirect taxes? This is like asking a severely dehydrated person to become a blood donor which is unlikely to end up well for the prospective donor should he agree to go ahead. Another indicator of the country's recession is the stable exchange rate. Data show that if Pakistan's GDP grows at 4.0 per cent or more, the Pak rupee tends to depreciate significantly. The rupee's relative stability compared to the previous year reflects the slowdown in economic activity. Electricity and gas bills are at rich country levels in a desperately poor country in which the large majority is barely getting by as a cruel imposition. Amidst scorching summer temperatures defaults on payments as well as theft will skyrocket, exacerbating the circular debt issue.

The budget also fails to address the massive level of current government expenditures (debt servicing, defense, etc.) relative to revenue collections. Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, the annual average growth rate of all government revenue (both tax and non-tax and federal and provincial) was 13.6 per cent (the compounded annual growth rate was 13 per cent). However, the average annual growth in total expenditure for both the central and provincial governments was 16.9 per cent (the compounded annual growth rate was 16.6 per cent). Escalating fiscal deficits of 6.0 per cent of GDP or more are now more the rule than the exception. On the other hand, development spending is anemic at best. The average annual growth rate of development expenditure was 5.5 per cent between 2017-18 and 2022-23, far lower than the cumulative inflation during this time, meaning that in real terms, development spending has decreased significantly. Currently, debt servicing (comprising repayments of both interest and the principal amount) is an onerous burden. The country's debt servicing requirement amounted to 37 per cent of total revenue in 2017-18 but climbed to 63 per cent in 2018-19 and 2019-20. There was a decline to 54 per cent in 2020-21, possibly due to Covid-related relief from international creditors. However, this decrease proved fleeting.

Thus, in 2021-22, debt servicing resumed its upward climb, crossing 61 per cent, and then soaring to a stratospheric 91 per cent in 2022-23. Contributing factors to this latter spike were a State Bank interest rate hike from 13.75 per cent in end-June 2022 to 21 per cent by end-June 2023 and a depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar by about 37 per cent in FY2022. (The nine-month figures for 2023-24 are a continuation of past trends as total debt servicing as a percentage of revenues exceeds 70 per cent). The current budget projects a fiscal deficit of around 6.0 per cent of GDP. Because of the heavy reliance on borrowing from commercial banks and the public, interest rates should stay elevated keeping private investment subdued with adverse effects on GDP and employment growth. The need for tax reform has been evident for many decades. For example, in the mid-1980s, two noted public finance experts, Dr Ehtisham Ahmad and Professor Nicholas Stern, conducted a thorough review of Pakistan's tax system. They recommended that the federal government introduce a Value Added Tax (VAT) on wholesalers that could later be extended to the retail sector. They envisaged a less significant role for customs duties. A VAT system of one or two rates was suggested along with selected excise duties (cement, tobacco, petroleum products) and a strengthened income tax. The duo also suggested a land tax that the provincial governments could enact with an exemption for land holdings below 12.5 acres. The quality of the land would be assessed by an updated valuation of the traditional standard for measuring land productivity through the prevailing system of 'Produce Index Units' assigned to specific parcels of land. Their proposals were not implemented. However, a modified VAT system was introduced in 1990 called the General Sales Tax (GST) but this failed to achieve its revenue objectives due to poor administration, limited coverage of businesses, and 'rent-seeking'. The current proposal to tax agricultural incomes by the provincial authorities is a welcome move to strengthen the finances of the provincial government. However, can this initiative come to fruition? Most of the large land holdings belong to the political elites of this country with many paying no tax. Getting them to agree to act against their own financial interest without an element of coercion goes against the grain of human nature; otherwise, it would already have happened given the dire need for revenue by the center and the provinces. What the IMF should have highlighted - but may have avoided doing thus far (at least from the discussions made public) - are the mechanics of implementing an agricultural income tax.

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Masood Lohar

Global climate chaos

might be at play. This year, several intense air turbulence incidents occurred, causing death and injuries. The most tragic was on May 21 when a Singapore Airlines flight from London to Singapore encountered severe turbulence, resulting in the death of a 73-year-old passenger and injuring 30 others. The plane experienced a sudden drop of 177 feet in five seconds, causing passengers to be thrown against the cabin ceiling, leading to significant internal damage to the aircraft. Another incident, on May 26,

returning from the lavatory. Airplanes typically travel through the troposphere, the lowest layer of Earth's atmosphere, extending from the Earth's surface up to about 8 to 15 kilometers high. Most commercial flights cruise at altitudes within the upper troposphere, around 10 to 12 kilometers. There are speculations that extreme turbulence is due to the shrinkage of the troposphere caused by greenhouse gases. This shrinkage is mainly due to increased greenhouse gas emissions, which have two key effects:

ing the stratosphere, the atmosphere's stability is compromised, potentially leading to more frequent and severe turbulence. This turbulence poses significant risks to aviation, as demonstrated by the numerous incidents reported this year.

In addition to turbulence, lightning activity has increased as a result of global warming. Studies suggest that for every degree Celsius rise in global temperature, lightning strikes could increase by approximately 12 per cent. Some projections estimate that the frequency of lightning strikes could surge by about 50 per cent by the end of the century if current warming trends continue.

Warmer temperatures contribute to more intense thunderstorms, producing more lightning. This escalation in lightning activity not only endangers lives but also exacerbates the risk of wildfires, further contributing to the cycle of climate change.

The tragic deaths during Hajj this year due to extreme heat, unusual rains in New Delhi, Dhaka, China, Dubai, Oman and now Toronto, alongside extreme air turbulence, suggest that the ugly face of climate change has taken the world off guard, posing a potential all-out war against civilization.

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Extreme weather events continue to manifest worldwide in various forms. A few days back, Toronto (Canada) experienced over 100 millimeters (about four inches) of rain, matching the average rainfall for all of July.

The thunderstorms led to torrential rain and flash flooding, leaving residents stranded, roads submerged, and nearly 170,000 customers without power. Toronto's Pearson Airport reported 97.4 millimeters of rain within 3.5 hours. Prime Minister Trudeau called this a "significant event", emphasizing the need to intensify Canada's fight against climate change.

In Pakistan, extreme heat has made life unbearable since June - with unusually hot and humid days having been observed recently. Temperatures soared above 50 degrees Celsius across the country. In Karachi, a new phenomenon was seen where clouds appeared to touch tall buildings like Icon Tower and Dolmen Mall. This could be due to a combination of meteorological factors, possibly fog enveloping skyscrapers, creating the illusion of clouds 'touching' the buildings. However, recent air turbulence incidents causing death and injuries to passengers suggest other climate change phenomena

In Pakistan, extreme heat has made life unbearable since June

involved a Qatar Airways flight from Doha to Dublin encountering severe turbulence over Turkey, injuring twelve people - six passengers and six crew members. Upon safely landing at Dublin Airport, eight of the injured were taken to the hospital.

On July 9, a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight from Riyadh to Cairo experienced severe turbulence, injuring both passengers and crew. Reports indicated that the unexpected turbulence caused passengers to be thrown from their seats, even those wearing seatbelts.

On April 17, an Air New Zealand flight from Bali to Auckland encountered severe turbulence shortly after takeoff. This clear air turbulence caused the aircraft to drop unexpectedly, leading to a passenger breaking his leg while

warning of the troposphere, causing it to expand and compress the stratosphere, and the addition of CO2 into the stratosphere, cooling and contracting its gases.

The stratosphere is the second layer of Earth's atmosphere, situated above the troposphere and below the mesosphere. It extends from about 10 to 15 kilometers above the Earth's surface to approximately 50 kilometers high. This layer contains the ozone layer, which is crucial in protecting life on Earth by absorbing most of the sun's harmful UV radiation.

Recent studies indicate that the stratosphere is shrinking due to increased greenhouse gas emissions. This shrinkage has profound implications for air travel safety and weather patterns. With the troposphere expanding and compress-

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

History of Pakistan

Today in History

Nuclear power provides only a tiny proportion of the country's total energy production.

Mining and quarrying account for a small percentage of GDP and of total employment. Manufacturing, however, constitutes a healthy proportion. The beginning of the main industrialization effort dates to the cessation of trade between India and Pakistan in 1949, soon after the two countries gained independence. Initially it was based on the processing of raw agricultural materials for domestic consumption and for export. This led to the construction of cotton textile mills—a development that now accounts for a large part of the total employment in industry. Woolen textiles, sugar, paper, tobacco, and leather industries also provide many jobs for the industrial labour force.

The growing trade deficit in the mid-1950s compelled the government to cut down on imports, which

encouraged the establishment of a number of import-substitution industries. At first these factories produced mainly consumer goods, but gradually they came to produce intermediate goods and a range of capital goods, including chemicals, fertilizers, and light engineering products. Nevertheless, Pakistan still has to import a large proportion of the capital equipment and raw materials required by industry. In the 1970s and early '80s Pakistan set up an integrated iron and steel mill at Pipri, near Karachi, with the financial and technical assistance of the Soviet Union. A new port, Port Q sim (officially Port Mu ammad Bin Q sim), was built to bring iron ore and coal for the mill.

Initially Karachi was the centre of Pakistan's industrialization effort, but in the late 1960s and early '70s Lahore and the cities around it began to industrialize rapidly. Karachi's ethnic problems in the late 1980s and early '90s accelerated

this process, and Punjab increasingly became Karachi's competitor in industrial output.

Major manufactured products include jute and cotton textiles, cement, vegetable ghee, cigarettes, and bicycles. Although the country still imports most of its motor vehicles, some Pakistani firms have entered into contracts with foreign companies to produce automobiles, motorcycles, and industrial tractors domestically.

Finance contributes a relatively small value to GDP, though its growth rate in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been considerable. Pakistan has a variety of state banks, state-run banks (though more-recent trends have been toward privatizing these), scheduled (i.e., commercial) banks, private banks, and foreign banks. Noteworthy has been the spread of banks that operate within the principles of Islamic law. A number of such institutions were established

beginning in the 1980s, and, more recently, several established Western-style banks have opened up divisions offering Islamic banking services.

Pakistan has a fairly well-developed system of financial services. The State Bank of Pakistan (1948) has overall control of the banking sector, acts as banker to the central and provincial governments, and administers official monetary and credit policies, including exchange controls. It has the sole right to issue currency (the Pakistani rupee) and has custody of the country's gold and foreign-exchange reserves. Pakistan has a number of commercial banks, called scheduled banks, which are subject to strict State Bank requirements as to paid-up capital and reserves. They account for the bulk of total deposits, collected through a network of branch offices.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Keanu Reeves is 'thinking about death all the time' at 59

Keanu Reeves talks about life, death an a new upcoming novel

Keanu Reeves thinks about death more than he thinks about life. "I'm 59, so I'm thinking about death all the time," the Hollywood superstar told BBC News in an interview. "Hopefully it's not crippling, but hopefully it's sensitised [us] to an appreciation of the breath we have, and the relationships that we have the potential to have," the actor added. The Matrix star's discussion about life and death comes in relation to a new novel he is writing, *The Book of Elsewhere*, which is based on Reeves' widely successful comic book series *BRZRKR*, pronounced "Berserker." "I love the images," he said about



comics. "I love words and storytelling and I love the way that you can have this engagement that overlays. And so you can look at the art and then you can follow the story."

Reeves is writing the novel in collaboration with British science fiction author China Miéville, and it follows the story of an immortal warrior, who wants to be able to die. "I didn't write a novel. China wrote a novel," the star said, humbling himself. However, Miéville contests the statement and calls it "putting it too far," adding, "It wouldn't exist in the form without a lot of very thoughtful and careful work with Keanu."

Tech

Meta's WhatsApp rolls out background gradient filter for status updates



Have you ever tried updating your WhatsApp status with an image or video but it looked incomplete because they did not fully cover the screen? Well, not anymore! WhatsApp has announced that it is rolling out a feature that likely addresses this issue and enhances the visual appeal of images and videos on status updates. According to WABetaInfo, Meta's instant messaging app is rolling out a feature automatically generates a background gradient filter for images and videos shared via status

update when the selected image or video doesn't completely fill the screen.

The new background blends the edges of the media with a gradient that harmonises with the overall design of the status update screen, choosing the predominant colour of the selected media to ensure a smooth transition with the background, WABetaInfo reported.

Currently, only the users of WhatsApp beta for Android can try out the new feature after installing the latest updates for the app from the Google Play Store.

Try sharing a 1:1 photo format in their status updates and if the background gradient filter appears around the edges of the photo, it means that the feature is available to your account.

Experimenting with different photo formats can help users understand the filter's impact on their status updates and enjoy a more polished presentation.

This feature is rolling out to even more people over the coming weeks.

Feeling Tired? These 5 Foods Can Help Combat Iron Deficiency And Low Haemoglobin

Haemoglobin is a vital protein found in red blood cells. Its main job is to carry oxygen from your lungs to your body's cells, and it also helps remove waste products like carbon dioxide. However, just like how a machine needs fuel and maintenance, our body needs the right foods to boost haemoglobin levels and ensure these protein cells perform their best. Nutritionist Nmaani Agarwal shares her expertise on combating low haemoglobin and iron deficiency through dietary changes. According to her, feeling tired or sluggish could be a sign of iron deficiency, which can impact haemoglobin production. In her latest post on Instagram, she recommends five delicious foods we can fuel our body with that are naturally rich in iron.

1. Pomegranate and beetroot: Pomegranate seeds are rich in iron, and beetroot has nitrates that

turn into iron in your body. The nutritionist recommends eating them together in a smoothie, salad or drink beetroot juice to boost your iron levels. This duo is a tasty way to stay healthy and strong.

2. Garden cress seeds: These tiny seeds may be small, but they pack a big punch when it comes to iron and other essential nutrients. Dr Agarwal advises to add a sprinkle of garden cress seeds to your salads, soups, or yogurt for a flavourful boost and an increase in iron intake.

3. Prunes & dates: Sweet treats that are good for you? Yes, please! Prunes and dates are a delicious duo that will satisfy your cravings while boosting your iron levels. Plus, they are packed with fibre, making them a guilt-free snack that will keep you going.

4. Rajma, or kidney beans: They are a staple in many vegetarian diets, and for good reason.

These small, red beans are a rich source of iron and protein, making them an excellent addition to a healthy diet. Whether you enjoy them as a curry, spicy chili or simply boiled and tossed in a fresh salad, Rajma is a versatile and nutritious choice.

5. Sarso & methi leaves (mustard & fenugreek): Sarso (mustard) and Methi (fenugreek) leaves are a nutritional powerhouse that deserves attention. These leafy greens are rich in iron, making them an excellent addition to meals for those looking to boost their iron levels. These leaves also add a unique flavour and can be used in a variety of recipes, including curries, dals or sautéed as a side dish. Lastly, Dr Agarwal recommends, "incorporating a variety of these iron-rich options into your diet is key. For an extra absorption boost, pair your iron-rich meals with a source of Vitamin C, like citrus fruits, amla, guava or bell peppers."



Health

دینی ایشین ٹیلی ویژن کی طرف

اسلام آباد

بدھ 24 جولائی 2024ء

بھارت میں وفاقی بجٹ پیش، تنخواہ دار طبقہ کو بڑا

نئی دہلی (انٹرنیٹ ڈیسک) بھارت میں بجٹ 2024 نوٹری پیشہ طبقہ کو ٹیکس کی دہش یوزی چھوٹ دی گئی ہے۔ اس طرح انٹرنیٹ ڈیولپمنٹ میں اضافہ کر کے 80 ہزار سے بڑھا کر 75 ہزار کر دیا گیا، بھارتی میڈیا کے مطابق مودی کی حکومت کا پہلا بجٹ پورے پانچ سالوں میں سب سے زیادہ بڑا ہے۔ اس میں 10 لاکھ روپے کی آمدنی پر 10 لاکھ روپے کی اخراجات کی گئی ہیں۔ اس کے علاوہ 15 لاکھ روپے کی آمدنی پر 20 لاکھ روپے کی اخراجات کی گئی ہیں۔



اسلام آباد، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف قومی بجٹ کی اجلاس کی صدارت کر رہے ہیں

ملکی برآمدات 60 ارب ڈالر سالانہ پر پہنچانے کا ہدف مقرر

مشکل حالات میں سامنے دینی کاروباری شخصیات اور سرمایہ کاروں کو سلام پیش ہے، پاکستان کی ترقی کیلئے سب کچھ کرنا ہے، اسحاق ڈار، وفاقی وزیر جاوید غلامی، امداد خان، چیف ایگزیکٹو آفیسر ایچ ایم اے، ایم ایم خان، رانا، اور دیگر اہلکاروں نے مل جل کر کام کرنے کے لیے ہدف مقرر کیا ہے۔

میٹرو بس سروس عالمی معیاری سفری سہولیات فراہم کر رہی، کمشنر راولپنڈی

آبادی بڑھنے کے ساتھ ساتھ بسوں اور سروس کی تعداد بڑھانا ناگزیر ہے، عالمی معیار کے میٹرو بس سروس کی نئی فرہنگی سٹڈی کے تحت اس سروس کو بہتر بنایا جائے گا۔

پنجاب، پوزیشن ارکان نے اجلاس خود بخود بل کر سڑک پر اسمبلی لگائی

لاہور (پورٹ) پنجاب اسمبلی کے پوزیشن ارکان نے اجلاس خود بخود بل کر سڑک پر اسمبلی لگائی ہے۔



راولپنڈی، نالٹی کے بل پر ریڈیو ایسٹریڈنگ کی بجائے حالت سے نمٹنے کیلئے تیار کر رہے ہیں

کوئی بیج جان بوجھ کر غلط فیصلہ کرتا ہے تو اس پر اللہ کا قہر نازل ہوگا، جسٹس طارق محمود جہانگیری

اللہ نے ہمیں انصاف کا منصب دیا، اگر ہم کسی کو انصاف نہیں دے سکتے تو یہ بددینی ہوگی، میں نے کسی عہدے کے لیے کبھی سفارش نہیں کی۔

فائر ڈال کا تجربہ مکمل، بمونو مواد اپ لوڈ نہیں کیا جاسکے گا

اسلام آباد (انٹرنیٹ ڈیسک) بھارت میں بجٹ 2024 نوٹری پیشہ طبقہ کو ٹیکس کی دہش یوزی چھوٹ دی گئی ہے۔

موسمیاتی تبدیلی تلخ حقیقت جو آج بڑا چیلنج بن چکی، سجاد حسین

راولپنڈی (سٹاف رپورٹر) وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب مریم نواز کے وزیر سجاد حسین نے موسمیاتی تبدیلی کی تلخ حقیقت کو اجاگر کیا ہے۔

اب عمران خان کو جرم کی معافی مانگنی چاہئے، شبیر رحمان

اسلام آباد (سٹاف رپورٹر) سینیٹر شبیر رحمان نے عمران خان کی معافی مانگنی چاہئے کی بات کہی ہے۔

متعلقہ حکام بارشوں کے پیش نظر ہنگامی صورتحال سے نمٹنے کیلئے الرٹ رہیں، حسن وقار

راولپنڈی کی صفائی کیلئے گئی ہجوم کی سہولیات فراہم کرنا انتظامیہ اور صحت کی ذمہ داری ہے، ڈپٹی کمشنر راولپنڈی نے کہا ہے۔

جلا وطن گھیراؤ ایکسپرمیٹ، 41 ملزمان کی ضمانتوں میں توسیع

لاہور (پورٹ) انسداد دہشت گردی عدالت نے 41 ملزمان کی ضمانتوں میں توسیع کی ہے۔

پنی پی آئی کا مرکزی دفتر پھر سیل، روف حسن جسمانی ریمانڈ پر ایف آئی اے کے حوالے

انٹرمیٹو آئی اے کے دفتر کو ہونے کی وجہ پر دفتر سیل کیا، سوشل میڈیا کا ڈانٹش کی ڈیو ایسز برآمد ہوگی تو مزید تفتیش ہوگی، ایف آئی اے پر ایکسپریٹ

اسلام آباد اور پنجاب میں بارش، شبی علاقے زیر آب

اسلام آباد اور لاہور (سٹاف رپورٹر) ایک، وزیر آباد سمیت پنجاب کے متعدد شہروں میں بھی بھلی اور تیز بارش ہوئی جس سے موسم خراب ہو گیا، شدید بارش کے بعد سڑکیں ٹھیک ٹھیک ہونے لگی ہیں۔

صارفین کو بہترین سروسز فراہمی پر سنجھو نہیں کریں گے، نعیم جان

انٹرنیٹ ڈیسک، ایک مہاری سب کا تماشہ لکھا ہے، صارفین کو بہترین سروسز فراہمی پر سنجھو نہیں کریں گے، نعیم جان نے کہا ہے۔

پاکستان اور ترکمانستان کا مختلف شعبوں میں تعاون بڑھانے پر اتفاق

دووں ممالک میں دو طرفہ برادرانہ تعلقات ہیں، ترکمانستان کی کمپنیوں کو پاکستان میں سرمایہ کاری کی دعوت دیتے ہیں، اسحاق ڈار

بالا آخر 9 مئی کے ماسٹر ماسٹرز نے منصوبہ بندی کا اعتراف کر لیا، مریم نواز

لاہور (پورٹ) وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب مریم نواز نے کہا ہے کہ ان کے خلاف کی گئی کارروائیوں کی وجہ سے ان کی زندگی میں بے بسی کا تجربہ ہوا ہے۔

راولپنڈی پولیس کی مختلف کورڈوں میں 18 ملزمان گرفتار

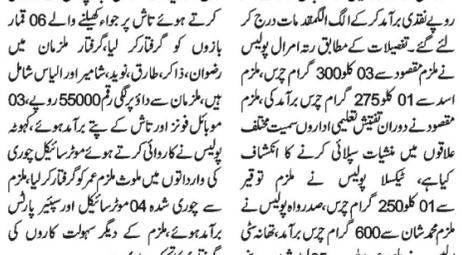
راولپنڈی (سٹاف رپورٹر) راولپنڈی ڈویژن پولیس کی مختلف کورڈوں میں 18 ملزمان گرفتار کیے گئے۔

پاکستان اور ترکمانستان کے مختلف شعبوں میں تعاون بڑھانے پر اتفاق

دووں ممالک میں دو طرفہ برادرانہ تعلقات ہیں، ترکمانستان کی کمپنیوں کو پاکستان میں سرمایہ کاری کی دعوت دیتے ہیں، اسحاق ڈار



راولپنڈی، بی ای سی اور سید خالد ہمانی پولیس افسران سے میٹنگ کر رہے ہیں



راولپنڈی، بی ای سی اور سید خالد ہمانی پولیس افسران سے میٹنگ کر رہے ہیں



کوئی وزیر اعظم چوہدری اور سابق جلاوطن قبائل بھارتی سپلائی زاروں کا راز کھلا گیا ہے

Ahsan chairs meeting on transfer of PSDP projects executed by Pak-PWD



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday chaired a meeting to address the matters related to the transfer of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects being executed by Pak-Public Works

Department (PWD) to provinces and various federal government entities.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Housing & Works, members of working groups and senior officials from the Ministry of Planning, who deliberated on the optimal redistribution of these projects, a news release said.

Out of the 162 PSDP projects managed by Pak-PWD, as many as 138 projects are attributed to provinces and 24 to federal entities.

The minister underscored the pivotal role of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) in this process, emphasizing that all PSDP projects must be presented before the CDWP forum before any transfer decisions were made.

He directed the departments concerned to compile comprehensive 'Position Papers' outlining each province's projects for consideration during upcoming CDWP meetings, facilitating informed decisions on project reassignment.

In his directives, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the urgency of expedient project transfers without undue delay.

He highlighted the necessity of establishing robust Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and documentation protocols to streamline the handover process, ensuring clarity on project completion statuses and outstanding tasks.

Chairman Senate felicitates Egyptian parliament, people, govt on their National Day

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has extended heartfelt congratulations and warm wishes to the Egyptian parliament, people and government on National Day of Egypt.

In a felicitation message on Tuesday, he highlighted the enduring friendship and cooperation between Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Arab Republic of Egypt, expressing desire to further strengthen ties between the two brotherly nations.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani also conveyed prayers for Egypt's continued progress and prosperity.

Our two countries share strong and historic ties, marked by mutual respect and cooperation across various fields, he observed adding that we have consistently supported each other on numerous international platforms, reflecting the depth of our relationship. The Chairman Senate said, "I am hopeful that our friendship and collaboration will continue to grow towards achieving common goals and ensuring prosperity for both our nations." INP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Mr. Rashid Meredov, called on the President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, was also present on the occasion.

President Zardari calls for further expanding bilateral ties with Turkmenistan in all fields of mutual interest

Calls for further enhancing job quota for minorities

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for further expanding bilateral ties with Turkmenistan in all fields of mutual interest. He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to its relations with Turkmenistan, saying that Pakistan-Turkmenistan relations were based on a common vision for peace and prosperity in the region. He added that the exchange of high-level visits between the two countries signified the mutual desire to further strengthen bilateral understanding and cooperation.

President Asif Ali Zardari expressed these views while talking to the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday. Welcoming the Minister, the President urged the need to enhance connectivity and communication between Pakistan and Turkmenistan, saying that Gwadar port offered great opportunities for promoting regional trade and Turkmenistan should benefit from the port.

President Asif Ali Zardari stressed the need for continued exchanges and dialogue at all levels and enhanced trade, economic, investment and cultural relations for the prosperity of the two countries. He offered that Turkmen students could seek education from the medical institutions of Pakistan. The President

noted the importance of the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations held today by the two Foreign Ministers.

The Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoyed cordial relations. He stated that his country would continue to promote economic, cultural and educational cooperation with Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of constructing motorways and railways, through Afghanistan, to connect the two brotherly countries. Foreign Minister Meredov conveyed the greetings of the leadership of Turkmenistan to the President.

The President reciprocated the sentiment and said that he was looking forward to welcoming the Grand Leader of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari signed into law the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024, during a special ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday. The Act provides for raising the marriageable age for Christian men and women to eighteen years.

Speaking during the ceremony, President Asif Ali Zardari called for further enhancing the employment quota for minorities in all government jobs, saying that he would write to the Government in this regard. He said that all minorities were equal citizens of the state having equal rights. He highlighted that minorities should not be disheartened by some isolated incidents, saying that they had

equal ownership over the homeland as much as anybody else.

President Asif Ali Zardari accorded assent to the Act under Article 75 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Act amends Section 60 of the Christian Marriage Act of 1872. Prior to the amendments, the age of Christian men and women intending to be married was required to exceed sixteen and thirteen years respectively.

The ceremony was attended by the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony (MORA), Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Secretary MORA, Zulfiqar Haider, members of the Christian community and senior government officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Bishop Abraham Daniel said that raising the age of marriage for men and women had been a long-standing demand of the Christian community. He expressed his gratitude to the President for signing the Act into law during a special ceremony.

He also thanked President Asif Ali Zardari for his role in his previous tenure in reserving a 5% quota for minorities in government jobs, besides allocating special seats for minorities in the Senate as well as declaring 11th August as Minorities' Day in Pakistan.

Secretary MORA, Zulfiqar Haider, said that the Government was committed to safeguarding the rights of minorities in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan, and the vision and values of the country's founding fathers.

Nation stands united with one voice against terrorism, says Aleem Khan



ISLAMABAD: President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday said the whole nation stands united with one voice against terrorism and it is needed to fully implement the National Action Plan.

Talking to President of Awami National Party (ANP) Senator Aimal Wali Khan who called on him here, the minister said that there was a dire need for taking strict action against the facilitators of terrorists, said a press release.

President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan congratulated Aimal Wali Khan on the success of ANP in the recent by-election at Bajaur. He said that for the development of the country, political harmony among parties was of utmost importance to ensure stability of political policies on a long-term basis.

He said that the construction of the motorway from Mansehra to Babu Sir Top in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was his top priority because he believed that the fastest road network from Mansehra to Gilgit would be a game changer for the entire province.

He said that the entry of overloading trucks and trailers on the motorways has been prohibited to protect the national highways from vandalism and accidents. President ANP Senator Aimal Wali Khan discussed the current domestic and political situation with President IPP and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and pointed out some problems related to their area. Moreover, the Member of National Assembly of Pakistan Muslim League-N from Mansehra, Sardar Muhammad Yusuf, also called on President of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and invited him to visit Mansehra.

He discussed with the federal minister about the political situation of KPK province in particular and informed him about the construction of certain roads connected to Mansehra. Talking to Sardar Muhammad Yusuf, Abdul Aleem Khan said that he himself would come to Mansehra and the problems would be resolved on the spot, there.

Iran urged to provide comfort to Pakistani Arbaeen pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ambassador to Tehran, Muhammad Mudassar Tipu, on Tuesday met with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister and requested assistance in providing comfort and facilities to Pakistani pilgrims visiting from August 1 to 26 for the Arbaeen procession. According to a message received here, the Iranian government has instructed pilgrims to ensure their entry visas were valid, within the prescribed time frame, and in accordance with Iranian government policies. Pilgrims must have medical insurance costing five euros each and undergo dengue tests. Those with positive test results will not be allowed to cross the border. APP

Rana Tanveer directs CSs for all possible steps to stabilize sugar prices



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain has directed the chief secretaries for taking all possible measures to stabilize sugar prices across the country. He issued the directives while chairing the meeting of the Sugar Advisory Board held here

on Tuesday to review the availability of sugar stocks and price trends. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that ex-mills prices of sugar have remained stable in recent

months. Provinces should strictly monitor retail sugar prices, as maintaining sugar prices was the primary responsibility of the government, he added.

The Minister Industries and Production warned that increase in sugar prices will not be tolerated under any circumstances. INP

ECP seeks wealth statements from political parties by Aug 29

ISLAMABAD: The ECP asked all political parties to submit their respective wealth statements for the last financial year 2023-2024, a mandatory requirement under the relevant electoral laws, by August 29. The ECP asked all political parties to submit their consolidated statements of accounts for financial year 2023-24 on or before August 29. "The Election Commission of Pakistan reminds all the heads of Political Parties, in terms of section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 read with section 204 of the Act ibid and rule 159 & 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, thereof, that they are required to file with Election Commission their Consolidated Statement of Accounts on (Form-D) for financial year, 2023-24 ended on 30th June, 2024 on or before 29th August 2024," the ECP said in a press statement. It is pertinent to mention here that Section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 provides that a Political Party shall, in such a manner as may be prescribed, submit to the Commission, within sixty days from the close of a financial year, a consolidated statement of its accounts audited by a Chartered Accountant on Form-D containing, annual income and expenses, sources of its funds and assets and liabilities, it further said. INP

Pakistan, Egypt agree to enhance mutual cooperation

Egyptian ambassador calls on MORA Chaudhry Salik Hussain



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain here on Tuesday said that Pakistan wants to strengthen its relationship with Egypt in various areas of mutual interest, including religious education.

The minister said this during a meeting with Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid Hassan where the two sides discussed ways to further enhance bilateral relations between Pakistan and Egypt. Both the dignitaries also discussed to exchange mutual studies in enhancing the

Masjid roles as center of religious, spiritual, Pakistan's social guidance and social services.

The ambassador who called on the federal minister at his office informed him about establishing an institution in Punjab affiliated with Alazhar university to impart religious education.

The ambassador said 11 professors of Egypt are already teaching in different faculties in International Islamic University Islamabad. He also invited the minister to attend a conference on the role of women in building awareness. DNA

Pakistan's digitisation, end to gender digital divide PM's top priority: Shaza Fatima Khawaja

Says Digital Diagnostic Report guiding document for govt to ensure digitisation goals

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said Pakistan's digitisation and end to the prevailing gender digital divide is the top priority of the Prime Minister whereas the digital ecosystem diagnostic report is the guiding document for the government's vision.

The Minister of State was addressing the launching ceremony of the Country Digital Ecosystem Diagnostic Report jointly prepared by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the title Pakistan's Transformative Digital Future: Growth Strategy and Roadmap here. Shaza Fatima Khawaja congratulated the team SDPI and ADB for preparing a comprehensive analytical report and termed such reports evidence providing baseline data helpful in setting future KPIs and goals in the field of digitisation.

She announced that the Ministry of IT sector and therefore was given the and Telecommunication would focus highest budgetary allocations in the on implementing most of the Report's ongoing fiscal year, the Minister stated.



recommendations. "The IT sector exports surged to record \$3.2 billion this year which is the highest ever. The Prime Minister has strong focus on digitisation of the country as the IT exports are breaking records every month. The PM vision and target is \$25 billion in IT exports, and we are striving to meet it," she added.

Information Technology is a resilient and robust sector that is growing with every passing year, whereas the PM has not slashed the budget of the IT sector and therefore was given the and Telecommunication would focus highest budgetary allocations in the on implementing most of the Report's ongoing fiscal year, the Minister stated.

"The country required complete digital transformation in the next few years, where digital economy, governance, and society are the key pillars of digitization," Shaza Fatima said.

The government, she said is working on national policy on digitization whereas the Islamabad smart city project is also in the offing to develop a model of a digital city whereas the mapping of the federal complete was completed in this regard. "First of all every individual needs to have internet access, however, the gender digital divide is highest in Pakistan and there is no concept of progress without it. We are preparing a comprehensive dig-

ital plan that will be rolled out by the prime minister," she added. She added that internet, device availability, and training will build up and grow in the digitisation realm whereas the government has allocated Rs 8 billion budget for IT training for different sectors and individuals belonging to various strata of society. "There is no alternate route to growth and development for the country. It's an opportune moment for Pakistan to avail the opportunity and take it as a challenge for exploring further opportunities," she said.

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on the occasion said that digitisation is imperative for the country's growth and economic stability in line with the growing regional and global trends in digital modernization. Pakistan, she said is facing severe competition due to emerging technologies and rapidly expanding digitisation, however, the Prime Minister is aware of all the challenges and therefore has aligned his vision to transform the challenges into opportunities by ensuring grassroots-level digitisation. SABAH

US, China, and UAE top destinations for Pakistani exports during FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the fiscal year 2023-24, followed by China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Total exports to the US during July-June 2023-24 were recorded at US \$ 5,432.929 million against the exports of US \$ 5,932.358 million during July-June 2022-23, showing a decline of 8.41 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$2,707.225 million against the exports of US \$2,025.741 million last year, showing an increase of 33.64 percent. UAE was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$2,082.206 million during the year under review against the exports of US \$1,475.832 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Kingdom (UK) stood at US \$2,012.643 million against US \$1,968.432 million last year while the exports to Germany were recorded

at US \$1,512.458 million against US \$1,600.413 million last year, data said.

During fiscal year 2023-24, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$1,383.094 million against \$1,445.738 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$1,121.772 million against \$1,151.241 million.

Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$1,449.465 million against the exports of US \$1,375.019 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$554.008 million against \$522.271 million last year. The exports to Bangladesh stood at US \$666.516 million against US \$768.548 million.

Similarly, the exports to France during the year under review were recorded at US \$507.739 million against US \$570.094 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$556.163 million against US \$701.013 million.

Pakistan's exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at US \$710.335 million compared to US \$503.851 million last year whereas the exports to Turkey stood at US \$335.137 million against US \$323.398 million. DNA