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People facing worst circumstances after PTI's four years

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Govt to file reference against Imran, others

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Government of Pakistan has decided to file reference against former prime minister Imran Khan and several other members of the former government under Article 6 of the constitution.

According to sources, the new government will file reference against President Arif Alvi, former prime minister Imran Khan, former deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Suri and Governor Punjab Omar Sarfraz Cheema. Ministry of Law & Justice and Ministry of Interior have started preparation of the reference.

Sources said that President and former Deputy Speaker allegedly violated the constitution on directions of Imran Khan

while Governor Punjab violated constitution by sabotaging constitutional process in Punjab Assembly. The concerned departments have started gathering record of assemblies and court observations and directions which could be used as evidence in the reference.

As per law, only federal govt can initiate action under Article 6 by preparing and filing the reference.

Additional Secretary PM office removed

Additional Secretary of PM Office Nadeem Mehboob has been replaced by Shakeel Ahmed Mangnejo on Thursday.

Nadim Mehboob services have been handed over to the National School of Public Policy. Shakeel Ahmed Mangnejo was waiting for Establishment Division order for his appointment. —Online



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif departs for his three-day visit to Saudi Arabia.

■ PM forms 21-member Economic Advisory Council

Shehbaz departs for Saudia to seek more economic ties

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif left for Saudi Arabia on a three-day official visit to the Kingdom on Thursday. The Prime Minister is embarking on his first visit abroad after assuming the Office earlier this month on the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz.

The Prime Minister is accompanied by a high-level delegation including key members of the Cabinet. During the visit, the Prime Minister will have bilateral interaction with Saudi leadership, with particular focus on advancing economic, trade and investment ties and creation of greater opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Saudi Arabia.

The two sides will also exchange views on a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Earlier in his video message before embarking on his three-day official visit to Saudi Arabia, Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by deep-rooted and abiding fraternal ties, which are built on the solid foundations of mutual trust and mutual support. He said the people of Pakistan hold the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in the highest esteem. He said we are profoundly grateful to Saudi

Arabia for its consistent support to Pakistan in its difficult hour. For its part, Pakistan always stood by Saudi Arabia and will always stand shoulder to shoulder with our Saudi brethren.

Shehbaz Sharif said the visionary Saudi leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has worked assiduously to achieve greater progress and prosperity for the brotherly people of Saudi Arabia. He said we take pride in the remarkable development achieved by Saudi Arabia within the framework of Crown Prince's vision of 2030 which is a transformational initiative.

He also commends the Kingdom's leadership of the Muslim Ummah and its deep commitment to Muslim causes.

Another report adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday constituted the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) comprising 21 members.

In a notification, the Finance Division said that the 21-member EAC will be chaired by PM Sharif. The members of the EAC are as under: Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Miftah Ismail, Saleem Mandviwalla, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Dr Ayesha Ghous Pasha, Mussadiq Malik, Tariq Pasha, Mian Muhammad Mansha, Mohammad Ali Tabba, Arif Habib, Dr Asim Hussain, Atif Bajwa, Faisal Farid, Muhammad Aurangzeb (President and

CEO of HBL), Waqar Ahmad Malik (MD/CEO Fauji Foundation), Salman Ahmed, Shahzad Salim, Rahman Naseem, Musadaq Zulqarnain, and Dr Ijaz Nabi.

The EAC is being established to review and formulate economic policies in a more holistic manner, read the notification. The EAC will advise on short-term macro-economic stabilisation as well as structural reforms for stable and sustained economic progress. The council will be convened on a

PM against increase in Pol prices

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday decided against increasing prices of petroleum products. PM has rejected summary seeking hike in prices of the petroleum products. Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that prices will remain unchanged for the coming month. She further said that government cannot punish people for incompetence and mistakes of the past government. Government cannot further burden the people who are already suffering from inflation, she added.

FSC declares interest-based financial system un-Islamic

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Shariat Court on Thursday said that existing laws related to riba and interest are against Shariah and declared the Interest Act 1839 un-Islamic.

The three-member bench of the Federal Shariat Court in its verdict said that it is the responsibility of the government to replace the existing system and bring laws in accordance to the guidance in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Interest payment on all interest and external debts by the government is Riba, the top Islamic court ruled and directed the government that transactions with international institutions including IMF and World Bank should be made interest free.

It also directed the government to following Shariah laws while finalizing

agreements with Chinese government for CPEC projects. The government should remove the word "interest" from every law, the order said. From June 1, all legal clauses that contain the word "interest" will be considered null and void, the shariah court said.

CII welcomes FSC verdict against interest-based economy

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) on Thursday welcomed the Federal Shariat Court's ruling declaring interest-based financial system against sharia.

Chairman CII Dr Qibla Ayaz lauded the shariat court's decision adding that the court has declared the existing laws with regard to the interest-based system contravening the sharia. Chairman CII highlighted the need of new legislation in this respect and said that the council of Islamic ideology will extend all pos-

sible cooperation in this respect. "The CII has always emphasized for replacing the interest-based financial system in the country with alternate Islamic legislation", CII chairman said.

"The Council has already submitted its report based on comprehensive recommendations on economy in the parliament," Qibla Ayaz added. The FSC declared interest-based financial system in the country against sharia in its verdict in Riba case. Jamaat-i-Islami chief Siraj ul Haq termed it a historic moment and lauded the three-member bench that announced the verdict. A three-member bench of the FSC in its verdict said that the existing laws related to riba and interest are against Shariah and it is the responsibility of the govt to replace the existing system and bring laws in accordance to the guidance in Quran and Sunnah. —DNA

Rupee staggers to 185.87 against dollar

KARACHI: Pakistani rupee snapped a three-day winning streak against the US dollar and fell to 185.87 on Thursday.

The State Bank of Pakistan said in a statement that the rupee opened at 185.45 against the US dollar in the interbank market and closed at 185.87 after losing 42 paise (-0.23 percent). Within the open market, the rupee was traded at 185.40/186.90 per dollar against 185/186.5 a dollar a day earlier. Overall, the rupee has gained Rs0.88 against the dollar during the last four days after shedding Rs5.20 last week. The rupee has depreciated by Rs28.44 against the US dollar during the ongoing fiscal year 2021-22 and Rs9.42 during the current year 2022.

The rupee reversed gains against the dollar today after the IMF downgraded its growth rate forecast for Pakistan. According to the lender's latest report "Regional Economic Outlook Middle East and Central Asia, divergent recoveries in turbulent times", Pakistan's GDP growth is projected to moderate from 5.6pc in 2021 to 4 percent in 2022, and 4.2 percent in 2023. —TLTP

Zardari reaches Dubai after name removed from ECL

DUBAI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday reached Dubai after his name was removed from Exit Control List (ECL). The PPP co-chairman left for Dubai from New Islamabad International Airport, said sources.

Asif Ali Zardari met his daughter Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari after reaching Dubai, they added. It is pertinent to mention here that the names of PM Shehbaz Sharif, former president Asif Zardari, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Faryal Tapur and other important political personalities were recently removed from the ECL by the interior ministry. The names of more than 100 political personalities including PM Shehbaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari, Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah, Faryal Talpur, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Saad Rafique, Khawaja Asif and others have been removed from the ECL. —DNA

EC takes notice of Imran Khan's statements

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission (EC) has taken notice of PTI chairman Imran Khan statements and has sought from the PEMRA the record of Imran Khan's address to workers convention in Peshawar.

The EC has also sought record of statements of leader of the opposition in Sindh Assembly (SA) Halim Adil Sheikh and Khuram Sher Zaman. The record of statement from PTI leader Senator Ijaz Chaudhry has also been summoned by EC. Former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan while addressing workers convention two days earlier had demanded of Chief Election Commissioner to resign alleging Raja Sultan is agent of PML-N. He decides alone and his all decisions are against PTI. —Online

FIQH-E-HANFIA

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3:51	6:43

FIQH-E-JAFRIA

SEHR	IFTAR
3:41	6:53

PA secy, police play hide and seek in LHC

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Lawyers foiled on Thursday Punjab police's attempt to arrest provincial assembly secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti from outside the gates of the Lahore High Court (LHC), in an FIR registered against unidentified persons for attacking police officials inside the Punjab Assembly chambers on April 16.

Lawyers rushed Muhammad Khan Bhatti inside the court, and advocate Ahmad Saeed Rawn informed police officials that the high court's premises did not come under their jurisdiction. The police officials and Bhatti played hide and seek as the former continued to seek his arrest, while the

lawyers tried to protect him.

According to reports, a heavy contingent of police officials dressed in uniform and plainclothes lay in wait outside the court premises. Later, the police entered the high court but lawyers resisted them from making an arrest and took Bhatti towards the Pakistan Bar Council's office.

The police surrounded the parameters of the LHC as station house officers (SHOs) were reportedly in conversation with their senior officials regarding Bhatti's location, adding that he would be arrested as he left the high court. Muhammad Khan Bhatti's arrest warrant is part of an FIR registered in Qila Gujjar Singh police station.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administers the oath to Senator Musadik Malik as the Minister of State, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

\$3.23b ADB aid for various projects in Pakistan in 2021

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed \$3.23 billion in 2021 to help Pakistan tackle the immediate effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and promote a green recovery.

The commitment made by the Bank in 2021 includes loans and guarantees, grants, equity investments, and technical assistance provided to governments and the private sector. In addition, ADB also mobilized \$2.019 billion in co-financing.

According to a report issued by the ADB, \$300 million were committed for Balakot Hydropower Development, \$372 million for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement,

and \$5 million were committed for Preparing Kurram Tangi Integrated Water Resources Development Project. In addition to reducing dependence on fossil fuels and increasing energy security, the 300-megawatt, run-of-river hydropower plant in Balakot, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, will boost economic activity and create jobs for local communities.

During construction, more than 1,200 workers will be hired and at least 500 community members, including many women, will benefit from skills development programs. Furthermore, the ADB also committed \$600 million for Pakistan's Integrated Social Protection Development

Program and \$235 million for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridor Development Investment Program n Tranche 2.

ADB provided the loan to strengthen and expand social protection programs in Pakistan. The project includes measures to boost access to secondary education for children and adolescents of poor families, especially girls. It will also enhance access to health services and nutrition supplies for impoverished mothers and children in 22 districts. In Pak, ADB provided \$377.8m (with an additional \$200m in cofinancing) to assist the provincial govt of KP in improving living conditions across five cities. —APP