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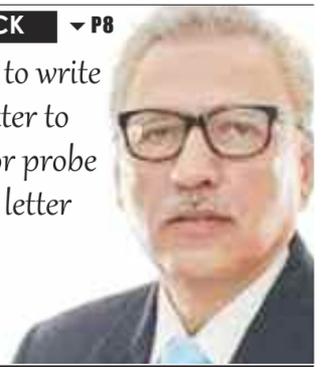
Sicilian mafia trying to make institutions its 'bullying force'

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Imran to write a letter to Alvi for probe into letter



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Govt has strategy to boost forex reserves: Miftah

KARACHI: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has said that despite fast-shrinking foreign exchange reserves, Pakistan will not be in dire straits like neighbouring Sri Lanka and has a strategy to boost its reserves. "No chance of default, none," said Ismail in an interview with Al Jazeera. "Yes, we have a strategy to increase our reserves and you will see that they will start to increase," he added. The finance minister acknowledges that being heavily dependent on imports is a problem. "Pakistan has an economy that is not geared towards exports," Ismail said. "And so, every growth cycle leads to an increase in imports but the exports don't increase much, resulting in a forex shortage that forces a boom-bust cycle," he added. Ismail told a private news channel that Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif has asked him not to burden common people. With that goal, the government will make a policy to raise fuel prices in a way that rich people with cars would not be given subsidies while motorcyclists would get fuel at cheaper rates, he said. Foreign exchange reserves have dropped to a 28-month low in Pakistan to below \$11bn, barely enough to cover imports for the next two months. The last time forex reserves were below this level was in December 2019. But economists are not too alarmed as the country has dealt with such near crises several times in the past years. "It is not just two events, it has happened at least 13 times during the last 50 years," said Atif Mian, economics professor at Princeton University. —Online



MADINA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offers Juma Prayer in the Masjid-e-Nabwi (PBUH).

■ Pak will seek Saudi action over protest at Masjid-e-Nabvi: Rana

150 held for slogans against Shehbaz govt at Masjid-e-Nabvi

MADINAH: A group of people shouted slogans against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation as they reached Masjid-e-Nabwi (PBUH). Social media is abuzz with video clips showing the crowd surrounding the government team and chasing them while keeping on shouting slogans consisting of unethical and immoral words. A group of people shouted slogans against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation as they reached Masjid-e-Nabwi (PBUH). Social media is abuzz with video clips showing the crowd surrounding the government team and chasing them while keeping on shouting slogans consisting of unethical and immoral words. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his 13-member delegation including Shahzain Bugti and Marriyum Aurangzeb A clip shows Shahzain rushing to catch the man who attacked him. Saudi Arabian authorities sprang into action and arrested more than 150 suspects. The act invited ire among their supporters and condemnation by politicians. Maulana Tahir Ashrafi condemned the incident, stressing such acts must be stopped. "I strongly condemned such an act and use of immoral and unethical words at the holy place. Former interior minister Sheikh

Rashid predicted the shameful act at a press conference. "See what the people will do as they reached there." He told the media Imran Khan's focal person for the UK and Europe Sahibzada Amir Jahangir was also present there. Another report adds: The government has decided to request the authorities in Saudi Arabia to initiate action against those people who raised slogans at Masjid-e-Nabwi and misbehaved with Pakistani ministers during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit. Addressing a joint news conference with Adviser to PM on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira in Islamabad on Friday, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that the government will request Saudi Arabia to take action against those who raised slogans at Masjid-e-Nabwi. Sanaullah said the interior ministry has sought advice from the law ministry about taking legal action against the culprits. "My ministry is going to make a humble request to the Saudi government to take appropriate action in this regard so that such behaviour is controlled. We will also apprise them that the whole nation passed through a stressful period when they came to know what happened at the holy mosque." He added that the government will also request the kingdom to identify the

culprits through CCTV footage and share details with the government so that action is taken against them. "They should be sent back, they should not be allowed to stay there [Madinah], they don't deserve to be at holy places as it could spark religious disharmony here," said Rana Sanaullah. Rana Sanaullah and Qamar Zaman Kaira vehemently condemned the catcalls and jeers hurled at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his coterie at Masjid-e-Nabawi apparently by the supporters of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI). The interior minister said the incident that took place in Madinah the previous day was unfortunate. "The incident is a disgrace to the entire nation. It was planned and organised from Pakistan," he maintained. "It had been stated in a press conference a day earlier that people in Makkah and Madinah will treat the government delegation badly," Rana Sana pointed out. "Such incidents are regrettable. Insulting people will make politics difficult. You [PTI] have tested our patience for four years," he warned. Sana said that he, as a president of PML-N Punjab, was under intense pressure as the party workers were encouraging him for giving the PTI leaders

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PSX comes up with budgetary proposals

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: The PSX has presented important proposals for the federal budget 2022-23 to address economic challenges, boost the national economy and grow the capital markets. Implementation of the proposals will help to document the economy and increase tax revenues, while also helping to meet important social objectives, PSX said. These proposals have been submitted to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, the Chairman, SECP, and the Chairman, FBR, for their consideration. They said no modern economy can grow efficiently without a large and well-functioning capital market. The proposals

have been prepared keeping in mind the current economic challenges faced by the country. The stock market is one of the most documented sectors of the economy. In line with FBR's efforts to increase tax base in Pakistan, the stock market and its stakeholders, investors and issuers, are all well documented and comply with the relevant tax laws. However, it is imperative that there is an efficient, equitable and broad-based tax system to enhance and augment corporatisation and the capital markets. PSX has presented budgetary proposals that focus on impediments and disincentives that have created obstacles for the development of the capital market.

ECP rejects PTI's plea against Gillani

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has dismissed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's petitions filed for the disqualification of Yousaf Raza Gillani from the Senate seat. The commission announcing its decision in Islamabad Friday said no evidence has been found against Yousaf Raza Gillani. The Election Commission however asked the District Election Commissioner Islamabad to proceed against Ali Haider Gillani, Member National Assembly Faheem Khan and Jamil Ahmad Khan for their involvement in corrupt practices. The Election Commission pronouncing

the judgment said that PPP senior leader and former PM Yousaf Raza Gilani would continue to remain senator while disposing of the PTI's petitions challenging his election. In its ruling, the ECP said that the commission was not presented with correct facts in the Yousaf Raza Gilani case. As many as 20 hearings of the case were held and 12 times the hearings were adjourned. The verdict in this case has not been reserved even for one month. However, the district election commissioner has been directed to register a case against Ali Haider Gillani for employing corrupt political practices. —APP

Electricity matters likely to improve in 10 days: Dastgir

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir has said there is no crisis of electricity generation but there is crisis of fuel and former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan is responsible for it. "However loadshedding matters will start settling gradually from May 01. It is our endeavour the situation does not aggravate more during Eid days. We are working on estimate of 23000 megawatt", he said this while addressing a press conference here Friday. He went on to say loadshedding is continuing all over the country owing to power crisis. Elaborating the factors behind load shedding he said the power productive capacity of 5739 megawatt is lying suspended for want of fuel. If fuel becomes available immediately then 5739 megawatt electricity can be generated. The shortfall of 2156 megawatt

electricity is due to technical fault. We are endeavoring the situation does not worsen further during Eid holidays. He went on to say supply of furnace oil is sure to continue from May 02. The electricity matters are likely to improve within 10 days. We are seeing revenue targets of all Discos. We can ask security institutions to stem power pilferage. We will sort out complaints related to distribution. Non availability of fuel and technical repair are main reason for ongoing load shedding, he added. **Electricity supply suspended after Guddu station catches fire** The supply of electricity to several grid stations was halted on Friday after a 220 kV high-frequency transmission line tripped at the Guddu Thermal Power Station following a fire. Many areas of the

country are expected to face power cuts in addition to scheduled loadshedding. Fire brigades had arrived at the 600 MW power station in Kashmir to get the fire under control. Last year, Pakistan suffered a massive power blackout after the Guddu power plant developed a fault after officials failed to follow the standard operating procedures during maintenance work. At the time of the blackout, power consumption in the country stood at 10,000MW. The tripping of high transmission line brought down the system frequency from 50 to zero in less than one second, which caused the tripping of power stations nationwide. After the incident, the National Transmission and Dispatch Company created a committee to probe into the reasons and facts leading to the collapse of the power system and deter-

'Saudia arrests Pakistanis over sloganeering'

ISLAMABAD: Media Director of Saudi Embassy in Islamabad had confirmed the arrest of pilgrimages on Friday, who hounded and chanted slogans against PM Shehbaz and his delegation at Masjid-e-Nabwi. The protesters have been taken into custody for "violating the regulations" and "disrespecting" the sanctity of the holy mosque. People chanted the slogan of "chor chor chor" thieves as soon as they saw Premier and his delegation who headed to Masjid-e-Nabwi after their landing in Saudi Arabia at three-day visit on the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Sulman. In video circulating on social media, the pilgrims could be seen heckling and chanting abusive slogans against federal ministers Marriyum Aurangzeb and Shahzain Bugti, as the pair are escorted by Saudi guards. A pilgrim was also seen pulling Bugti's hair from behind. Later, in a day message in response to the chants, Aurangzeb had said that the act was perpetrated by a "select group", while most Pakistanis respected the sanctity of the holy mosque. "I don't want to name the person responsible for this incident because I don't want to use this holy land for political purposes." —Online

Rupee gains 24 paisas against dollar

KARACHI: Pakistani rupee gained 24 paisas against the US dollar and appreciated to 185.63 on Friday. The State Bank of Pakistan said in a statement that the rupee opened at 185.87 against the US dollar in the interbank market and closed at 185.63 after gaining 0.13 percent. Within the open market, the rupee was traded at 185.50/187 per dollar against 185.40/186.90 a dollar a day earlier. Overall, the rupee has gained Rs1.12 against the dollar during the last five days after shedding Rs5.20 last week. The rupee has depreciated by Rs28.20 against the US dollar during the ongoing fiscal year 2021-22 and Rs9.18 during the current year 2022. According to experts, the rupee witnessed some respite on the back of limited trading activity. However, the gloomy macros will continue to put pressure on the local unit. They said though there is stress on the economy, yet some stability is visible. —TLTP

Pakistan faces over 8000 MW of power shortfall

ISLAMABAD: The power plants are still not provided by the required amount of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Furnace Oil still causing a national shortfall of electricity. Amid sizzling hot weather, Power outages have severely hit Pakistan during the holy month of Ramadan as Pakistanis have been suffering more than 12 hours of power loadshedding. All urban centers, such as Karachi, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Sialkot have been severely hit with more than half a day loadshedding

FIQH-E-HANFIA

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FIQH-E-JAFRIA

SEHR 3:39	IFTAR 6:54
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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah and Minister for Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira address an important press conference at the PID Media Centre.

LHC orders NA speaker to take oath of Punjab CM today

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday ordered the National Assembly Speaker to take oath on the newly elected Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz Sharif today (Saturday). The LHC judge Justice Jawad Hassan pronounced the reserved verdict on Punjab Chief Minister-elect Hamza Shehbaz's plea seeking the administration of oath to him — as he moved the court for the third time in this regard. Delivering the verdict, Justice Jawad Hassan directed that Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf should administer oath of

Hamza Shehbaz as Punjab Chief Minister at 11:30 am tomorrow (Saturday). Earlier report adds: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Friday reserved the verdict on Punjab Chief Minister-elect Hamza Shehbaz's plea seeking the administration of oath to him — as he moved the court for the third time in this regard. Justice Jawad Hassan of the LHC will announce the judgment at 7pm today, a statement from the court said. The petition against the Federation of Pakistan and Province of Punjab has been filed under Article 199 and all other enabling provisions of the Constitution of the Islamic

Republic of Pakistan and Law. In his petition, Hamza said: "The high court had issued orders regarding the administration of the oath; however, the court's order has not been implemented." He mentioned that Punjab Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema, once again, refused to comply with the court order, urging the court to appoint a representative who can administer the oath to him. Moreover, President Arif Alvi also did not respect the observation of the apex court. Terming the attitude of the president and governor as "treacherous and insulting", the petitioner said that the high court should intervene for the fundamental rights