

## Assault on Army officer: Salman Rafique, Hafiz Noman arrested

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leaders Khawaja Salman Rafique and Hafiz Noman were arrested by police on Thursday in Army officer torture case. Khawaja Salman Rafique and Hafiz Noman surrendered to police at the Garden Town police Station after they were nominated in the Army officer torture case. The complaint stated that he had been subjected to torture on the instructions of Salman Rafique and Hafiz Noman who are sitting in another vehicle at the crime scene. —*The Business Report*

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## PTI plea seeking orders for stopping passport, held Nawaz, fixed for hearing

ISLAMABAD: The petition seeking Islamabad High Court (IHC) orders for stopping the government from issuing diplomatic passport to PML-N supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif and arresting him on his return to Pakistan has been fixed for hearing. The petitioner Naem Haider has filed the petition through his lawyers advocate Intezar Hussain and advocate Ali Ijaz Butt. Praying the court for issuing the order to arrest Nawaz Sharif on his arrival in Pakistan the petitioner took the plea Nawaz Sharif is convicted proclaimed offender. —APP

## German Chancellor greets Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz Thursday congratulated Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on his election as new Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The message of felicitation was shared by the embassy of Pakistan in Germany, on the social media platform Twitter. —Online

## AI wants urgent release of PTI social activists

ISLAMABAD: Regional Director Amnesty International has urged Pakistan on Friday to release eight people held by Federal Investigation Agency on 'criticising the state' on twitter.

He wrote on twitter "The Pakistani authorities must stop using the draconian Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) to punish people who are simply exercising their right to freedom of expression online." Successive government has used this law a tool to crush the dissent and intimidate supporters of the opposition, said she. While demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all eight peoples, Dissanayake said that instead of crushing the dissent voices authorities should stop 'repressive crackdown' on people's right of 'freedom of expression.'

Earlier this week, the FIA launched a crackdown on social media activists that it believed were involved in a "smear campaign" against institutions, especially the army, since former Prime Minister Imran Khan was ousted through a no-confidence motion. —Online

## Bilquis Edhi passes away at 74

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Bilquis Bano Edhi, the wife of renowned humanitarian and philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi, passed away at the age of 74 on Friday after a brief hospitalisation.

Earlier today, her family had said that her condition had stabilised. She was admitted to a hospital in Karachi for three days and was rushed there after her blood pressure had suddenly dropped. According to an Edhi Foundation spokesperson, Bilquis was ill for the last one month. "Though she is not in a serious condition, she will remain in the hospital for a couple of more days," the spokesperson of the Edhi Foundation Muhammad Bilal had said.

Bilal had added that Bilquis had congestive heart failure and she has already undergone a heart bypass twice. First Lady Tehmina Durrani had also visited her during PM Shahbaz Sharif's maiden visit to the port city on Wednesday. Earlier, Pakistan's towering philanthropist and humanitarian was declared the "Person of the Decade", along with human rights rapporteur of the UN Prof Yanghee Lee and the US ethicist Stephen Soldz.

A spokesperson for the Edhi Foundation had told APP that as per the domino effect verdict, announced on Friday by the Impact Hallmarks, Bilquis Edhi was declared the most impactful person of the first two decades of the 21st century.

## Gold jumps to Rs116,000 per 10gm

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices remained on the defensive on Friday after going up for seven successive sessions amid the stronger US dollar and treasury bond yields.

As of 1300 hours GMT, gold in the international market was available at \$1,974.80 per ounce, shedding \$2.50 (-0.13 percent). Out of the \$2.50 per ounce decrease, -\$3.15 was due to strengthening of the US dollar and +\$0.65 was due to predominant buyers, according to Kitco Gold Index. The price of 10 grams of 24-carat yellow metal in Pakistan, meanwhile, increased to Rs116,000 after gaining Rs1,000.

Gold price in the local market settled at Rs115,000 on Thursday last. An increase in local gold prices was due to overnight change in the international prices when the local



ISLAMABAD: Vice-President of Pakistan People's Party Sherry Rehman addresses a press conference along with others at the PPP Secretariat.

# PM should pay more attention to agri sector uplift: FPCCI

KARACHI: Former Chairman Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), Convener FPCCI Standing Committee on Rice Exports Rafique Suleman congratulated Mian Shahbaz Sharif on being elected Prime Minister of Pakistan and assuming office as Head of State.

In the current situation, the focus should be on improving the economic situation, further improving the GDP growth rate, and further developing the agricultural sector. Rafique Suleman said that the election of Shahbaz Sharif as the Prime Minister of Pakistan is encouraging for the business community. He hoped that Shahbaz Sharif would meet the expectations of the people of Pakistan, achieve the goals of national development and he said that the government programs on agriculture should not only be continued but also abolish duty and taxes on agricultural machinery which the previous government had imposed.

Rafique Suleman further said that special attention and priority should be given to increase the export of rice so that the country can earn more in foreign exchange. He requested the Shahbaz Sharif government to increase the area for rice cultivation. At present Pakistan is in dire need of dollars. Rice sector is the only sector which accounts for about 10% of the whole of Pakistan. He said that the new Prime Minister would have to formulate a strategy to remove all the obstacles in the

way of economic growth.

### PIA offers 15 percent discount to ICCI members on domestic flights

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has offered 15 percent discount on domestic flights and 10 percent discount on international flights to the members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

For this purpose, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between PIA and ICCI. Muhammad Shakeel Munir President ICCI and Junaid Khan, District Manager, PIA Islamabad signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI.

According to the MoU, PIA will offer 15% discount on domestic sectors and 10% discount on international sectors on economy & executive economy classes on applicable base fare along with the waiver of service charges, if applicable to ICCI members and their immediate family, on request from ICCI secretariat letterhead with production of valid ICCI Membership Card by the members. The ICCI will extend support and will facilitate promotion of PIA products and services from all its platforms including electronic, print and social media. ICCI will declare PIA as official travel partner and PIA will be preferred travel airline for all of their members' visits on both international and domestic sectors.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) appreciated the initiatives of PIA for offering discounts to ICCI members in domestic and international flights. He said that airlines play an important role in business and economic development of a country, therefore, improving the performance of PIA is vital to promote Pakistan's trade and exports to international markets.

He hoped that the PIA discounted offer would help the business community in exploring new markets for improving trade and exports of the country. He assured that the business community would cooperate in promoting PIA's branding.

Junaid Khan, District Manager, said that PIA is now focusing on corporate customers for business generation and signing MoU with ICCI is a part of such efforts. He said that the business community should facilitate PIA in improving its cargo business. He said that PIA is ready to dedicate aircrafts for cargo flights if the private sector supports it with more business volume. He said that PIA is making efforts to expand its foreign destination that would help the business community in tapping new markets for business opportunities.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan, Vice President ICCI said that PIA should consider giving more incentives to its fre-

# LSM grows 4.6 percent in 8 months, 8.4pc in February

ISLAMABAD: The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) production grew by 4.6 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The LSMI Quantum Index Number (QIM) was recorded at 156.9 points during July-February (2021-22) against 150.0 points during July-February (2020-21), showing growth of 4.6 percent, according to latest PBS data. The highest increase of 3.8 percent during July-February (2021-22) was witnessed in the indices monitored by the Ministry of Industries, followed by 0.8 percent increase in indices monitored by Provincial Board of Statistics (BOS) and however no increase witnessed in the products monitored by the Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC).

On year-on-year basis (YoY), the industry rose by 8.4 percent during the month of February 2022 compared to the

growth of February 2021, according to PBS latest data. The major sectors that showed positive growth during July-February (2021-22) included textile (1.5 percent), food, beverages and tobacco (6.6 percent), leather products (4.8 percent), wood products (174.0 percent), paper and board (8.0 percent), coke and petroleum products (0.3 percent), chemicals (7.9), automobiles (32.5 percent), iron and steel products (22.5 percent), fertilizer (1.5 percent).

The commodities that witnessed negative growth included non metallic mineral products (2.5 percent), electronics (8.1 percent), engineering products (2.5 percent) and rubber products (22.8 percent). It is pertinent to mention here that the provisional QIM is being computed on the basis of the latest production data received from sources, including OCAC, MoIP, and PBS.

### FPCCI committed to hold Pakistan-Afghan Expo

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of

Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) committed to hold Pak-Afghan Expo, they intensified contacts with relevant agencies, said Regional Coordinator FPCCI Sartaj Ahmad Khan while talking to media here on Friday.

He said, Pak-Afghan Expo, FPCCI, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and Export Development Fund's important consultative meeting, mutual cooperation and cooperation to make the Expo a success.

Pak-Afghan Expo would be held soon, paving the way for business development in the region and it would be a historic expo, he said. "Afghanistan and Pakistan are neighboring fraternal countries, and the business community on both sides wants to promote trade, he further mentioned."

Meetings with the Afghan govt and its ambassador were held in a positive atmosphere, conditions were favorable, ties were strong, EDF should complete necessary action for proposed expo soon, he added. He said, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan would provide full support for Pak-

## We agree with Pak army conspiracy statement: US

WASHINGTON: US State Department has said they agree with Pakistan army spokesperson statement regarding conspiracy.

Addressing a media briefing, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said we congratulate newly elected Prime Minister (PM) Shahbaz Sharif on assumption of his office. He said for almost 75 years, the relationship between the United States and Pakistan has been a vital one. About conspiracy our message and stance is very clear. We don't support any one party in Pakistan but we support peaceful democratic principles and human rights. And in that spirit, we've congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his election by the Pakistani Parliament.

He further held there is no substance in the allegations leveled against US. US want to continue work for peace and prosperity in the region and Pakistan along with government of Pakistan. —Online

## BNP chief Akhtar Mengal meets PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan National Party's (BNP) Chairman, Sardar Muhammad Akhtar Mengal held meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.

Missing person issue has been raised during the meeting. Agha Hassan Baloch, Sana Baloch, and Hammal Kalami were also present in the meeting. Akhtar Mengal has demanded for opening of trade route and Chaman Quetta Karachi motorway from the PM. Sardar Akhtar Mengal also invited Shehbaz Sharif for Quetta visit. —Online

## Imran struggling for independence, says Fawad

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said Friday former PM Imran Khan was leading a movement to restore Pakistan's "real independence".

"[Freedom] Movement under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was carried out in Holy month of Ramadan. After that, now former PM Imran is leading the movement to ensure Pakistan's real independence," Fawad wrote in his twitter statement on Friday. Former PM Imran is currently leading a heavenly mass contact movement by carrying out rallies in all parts of country. He initiated the campaign with a huge public gathering in Peshawar on Wednesday. —Online

## Shehbaz becomes PM by democratic style: Shazia Marri

KARACHI: Central Information Secretary of PPP-P and member of the National Assembly Shazia Atta Marri has said that Shehbaz Sharif was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan by democratic style and with the power of the vote and Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while challenging the Imran Khan ousted him from the power.

This she said in a statement issued here on Friday. She said that Chairman of PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had given warning to Imran Khan to quit from the power and also asked him to resign from the post of Prime Minister respectfully before the vote of no confidence motion against his government but he didn't while Imran Khan had lost the trust of his allies as well. While criticizing on PTI, Ms Marri said that it is strange, the person who had collected donations from Jews and Indians was talking about the foreign conspiracy behind his ouster and she added that Imran Khan has no dare to respond the Indian Prime Minister Modi bravely and saying foreign powers are working against him, she termed it an stupid and false statement.

Shazia Marri said that the hatred statement of PTI leaders against the National Institutions is showing they are work on Modi's agenda.

She further said that it is the responsibility of the Supreme Court to uphold the Constitution of Pakistan and Imran Khan was deviating from acting upon the constitution due to which the courts were opened late night. Imran Khan will be responsible. —DNA

## Kitchen items' prices ease as SPI goes down by 0.68 percent

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on April 14 for the combined consumption group, witnessed a decrease of 0.68 percent as compared to the previous week.

The SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 173.27 points against 174.45 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) released here Friday.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 16.44 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential

items for all expenditure groups.

The Sensitive Price Indicator for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed 1.01 percent decrease and went down from 184.35 points in last week to 182.48 points during the week under review. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs17,732-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 0.95 percent, 0.80 percent, 0.73 percent and 0.56 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 17 (33.33pc) items increased, 10 (19.61pc) items decreased and 24 (47.06pc) items remained stable. The items, which recorded decrease in their average prices on WoW basis, included tomatoes (34.14pc), onions (8.46

percent), potatoes (3.73pc), garlic (3.68pc), bananas (2.61 percent), mustard oil (0.34 percent), wheat flour (0.33pc) and sugar (0.25pc), non-food items, LPG (1.25pc) and firewood (0.80 percent).

The commodities, which recorded increase in their average prices, included cigarettes (5.46 percent), eggs (2.12 percent) and pulse masoor (1.15 percent).

On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease in prices included chillies powdered (39.50 percent), pulse moong (26.95 percent), potatoes (22.36 percent), eggs (20.13 percent) and sugar (11.02 percent). The commodities that witnessed decline in prices included tomatoes (85.04 percent), lpg (79.12 percent), garlic (77.00 percent). —DNA



ISLAMABAD: President ICCI Shakeel Munir and Junaid Khan, District Manager PIA Islamabad sign MoU at the meeting.