

## 9 MPs of PTI, PML (Q) get bail till 29th

LAHORE: Additional Session Judge on Tuesday, approved bail of nine Punjab Assembly members of the PTI and Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) till April 29, in Punjab Assembly perturb case. While barring the court from arresting the MPs court ordered Police Station Qila Gujjar Singh to present the report on incident. Ammar Yasir, Shehbaz Ahmed, Waris Aziz, Khayal Ahmed and Mahinder Singh were the petitioners along with Shujaat Nawaz, and Malik Nadeem. While saying that MPs are not involved in perturb MPs requested the court to approve the bail. —Online

# The Business

Lahore, Wednesday, April 20, 2022 Ramazan 18, 1443

## Rupee continues losing streak, falls by Rs1.9 against dollar

KARACHI: Rupee has further slid by 1.9 rupees against dollar in Tuesday's interbank session as the currency closed the trade at PKR 184.44, compared to yesterday's closing of PKR 182.54. The rupee endured a highly volatile trading session with quotes being recorded in a range of 2.55 rupees per USD showing an intraday high bid of 184.95 and an intraday low offer of 182.55. The govt has decided to resume talks with the IMF for the revival and completion of the EFF programme from today which would give some breathing space for the local unit. —

## Bilawal to take oath as FM after return from UK

ISLAMABAD: There is no deadlock between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on the issue of foreign ministry.

It is learnt that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari wants to take oath after Awami National Party, Balochistan National Party and Mohsin Dawar are conferred ministries.

It is also reported that Bilawal will go to London to congratulate Nawaz Sharif on the formation of the PML-N government and the election of Shehbaz Sharif as Prime Minister. He will take oath as Foreign Minister upon his return from London. —DNA

## Mengal declines ministry against Chaghi incident

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Akhtar Mengal, an ally of the federal government and head of Balochistan National Party-Mengal, did not attend the oath-taking ceremony of the federal cabinet on Tuesday in protest against Chaghi incident.

Sources privy to the development revealed that the BNP-Mengal chief refused to become part of the federal cabinet as he did not attend the oath-taking ceremony despite being invited. All efforts of the government to persuade Sardar Akhtar Mengal last night were in vain, the sources added. He demanded formation of a probe commission on Chaghi firing incident. —DNA

## PML-N knocks LHC over delay in Hamza oath taking

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has filed an appeal in the Lahore High Court (LHC) in which it is stated that the Governor is not administering the newly elected CM of Punjab Hamza Shahbaz Sharif's oath taking ceremony, on Tuesday.

According to details, it is stated in the petition that the Governor of Punjab Umar Sarfraz Cheema is not swearing in the Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz on which the Governor along with the Chief Secretary are made parties in the petition. The newly elected CM has further stated in the petition that it is a violation of the law and the constitution of Pakistan that the oath is not being administered.

Hamza Shahbaz appealed before the court that they should order the Punjab Governor to swear in the newly elected Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz Sharif. It merits mention here that, Punjab Governor Omer Sarfraz Cheema declined to administer the oath to newly-elected Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz, stating that the Punjab Assembly secretary's report, the Lahore High Court's instructions and the facts presented to him raised questions on the validity of the chief minister's election. I should be registered here that, PML-N leader was elected as 21st Chief Minister of the Punjab by grabbing 197 votes.

Hamza bagged 197 votes in total while his opponent PML-Q leader Parvez Elahi did not manage to receive any votes as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and PML-Q lawmakers walked out of the session in boycott.

## Flour price cut by Rs100 per 10kg bag

LAHORE: The Punjab government has announced a Rs100 decrease in the price of a 10kg flour bag, dubbing it a big relief for the people hit hard by rampant inflation.

The Punjab Food Department took the step following the instructions of Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif. The last government announced the price cut just for Ramadan bazars. The Shehbaz government has implemented a uniform system till Eid.

The 10kg flour bag will be sold for Rs450 at every place across Punjab and flour mills have been barred from selling 20kg flour bag. Just a 10 kg green bag packing will be sold and the flour mills will start supply from Thursday. The food department will provide wheat to flour mills at a price of Rs1600 per 40kg and the scheme will end by Eid. Flour Mills Association leaders Asim Raza and Chairman



ISLAMABAD: Ms Pangchunxue, Charge de Affaires of the Embassy of People's Republic of China calls on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail at the Finance Division.

# LCCI pins hopes on new federal Cabinet

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) has hoped that the new Federal Cabinet would play an instrumental role to pull the country out of the economic crisis.

In a statement, Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) President Mian Nauman Kabir, Senior Vice President Mian Rehman Aziz Chan and Vice President Haris Ateeq said that the country is passing through a critical time and needs a strong and diverse cabinet to deliver and keep Pakistan moving forward on the economic front.

They said that Miftah Ismail, Rana Sanaullah, Mariam Aurengezeb, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Khurram Dastagir Khan, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Mian Javed Latif, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar, Sherry Rehman, Abdul Qadir Patel, Shazia Marri, Syed Murtaza Mahmud, Sajid Hussain Turi, Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari, Abid Hussain Bhayo, Asad Mahmood, Abdul Wasay, Mufti Abdul Shakoor, Muhammad Talha Mahmood, Syed Amin-ul-Haque, Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, Muhammad Israr Tareen, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti, Tariq

Basheer Cheema, Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Abdul Rehman Khan Kanju, Hina Rabbani Khar and other team members have vast experience and have the abilities to play an important role for economic uplift of the country.

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) office-bearers said that economic growth can speed up provided a business friendly atmosphere is ensured for the business community. They said that exports have a paramount importance in Pakistan's economy as they are the main source of revenue generation and employment creation. They said that exports are also important for maintaining the balance of payment stability for our country.

They said that however, the export performance of Pakistan as compared to other regional economies has been appalling in the last few decades. They said that the inability of Pakistan exports to tap some of the most dynamic world markets along with high concentration in a few products and low technological level meant that Pakistan's growth rate of exports remained stifled and considerably below that of other economies. While calling for an easy and friendly taxation system, the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) office-bearers said that there should be elec-

tronic communication between taxpayers and tax departments.

They suggested that the government should take steps to control smuggling at the borders and Frontier core deployed there should be equipped with state of the art technology and made them more vigilant and to advise them to play their role in controlling the smuggling by exercising their authority under customs Act.

They suggested that the duties on such goods which are prone to smuggling should be reduced as it has been practiced successfully in many other countries.

They also called for reduction in duties and taxes on raw materials. They said that all export-oriented sectors, including Halal food sector, should be given zero rated facility as the country has a little share in the international Halal food trade of trillions of dollars. They said that the energy mix of the country is very expensive due to the lack of hydel power generation. This results in tariff hikes and makes the industry uncompetitive in the international market. They said that despite being an agrarian country, Pakistan is importing fruits, vegetables and other agri products on a large scale that is a matter of concern. They said that this particular sector should be focused and issues should be resolved at the earliest. —APP

# PM remarks on Pak-China ties, CPEC appreciable: Wang

BEIJING: China on Tuesday highly appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's positive remarks on Sino-Pakistan relations and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), saying they fully reflected the Pakistani side's emphasis on China-Pakistan all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation.

"China has noticed that for sometimes, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made positive remarks on China-Pakistan relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on many occasions, which fully reflects the Pakistani side's emphasis on China-Pakistan all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation. China highly appreciates this," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said in response to a question asked by this agency during his regular briefing.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the mass transit bus project on Monday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said China had greatly contributed to strengthening Pakistan's economy and expressed gratitude to President Xi for launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a game-changer for the country. Wang Wenbin remarked said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was an important pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Since its launch, it has made important contributions to Pakistan's economic development and improvement of people's livelihood, and has been widely praised and recognized by all walks of life," he added. The spokesperson said the Chinese side was willing to work with the Pakistani side to ensure the continuous advancement of the projects under construction and the smooth operation of the completed projects, continue to release the positive effects of the corridor in promoting growth and improving people's livelihood, and make the corridor a demonstration project for high-quality development of the Belt and Road.

According to media reports, during his address, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also termed China a great friend that stood by Pakistan throughout history and appreciated the Chinese leadership's support for Pakistan at all international forums. He also called upon China to support Pakistan in launch of the Karachi Circular Railway for the benefit of the people of the metropolitan.

**China assures full support to Pakistan in developing SEZs**

China on Tuesday assured its full support and cooperation to Pakistan in developing Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Chinese Charge de Affaires Ms Pangchunxue gave the assurance in this regard during a meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail here at the Finance Division. Minister of State for Finance Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha was also present in the meeting, said a Finance Ministry press release.

The Chinese envoy extended her felicitations to the minister on assuming his new responsibilities and expressed her good wishes for the new government.

She also thanked the Government of Pakistan for facilitating Chinese companies in various projects in the country.

Minister Miftah Ismail greeted the guest and extended his best wishes for the People's Republic of China.

He thanked the charge de affaires and expressed his desire to further enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Referring to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the minister said the corridor would play an important role in taking Pakistan's economy forward as well as cementing the bilateral relationship between both the countries.

He assured his full support and assistance in that regard. —APP

## US to continue working with Pak govt: State Dept

The Business Report

WASHINGTON: The United States is working with Pakistan to bring about a more stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan that respects the fundamental rights of all Afghans, including minorities and women.

At his daily news briefing, State Department Spokesman Ned Price said US views Pakistan as an important stakeholder and partner, with whom it is engaging and has engaged to work together to stabilize Afghanistan. Highlighting US ties with Pakistan, he said we look forward to continue working with the new government in Pakistan across regional and international issues that has the potential to promote peace and prosperity in Pakistan and throughout the region.

## Mazari blames PTI, Elahi for Punjab crisis

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari on Tuesday strongly criticised Parvez Elahi, blaming him and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for creating a constitutional crisis in the province.

He said in a statement that PA Speaker Parvez Elahi had asked him to go on leave. "Am I his personal servant that I should obey every word of him?" Mazari said. He added that he did not join the party of Parvez Elahi, nor did he join the group of Usman Buzdar. "I will tell everyone when I join any party," he declared. "If Parvez Elahi asks me to do something illegal, I will not do it at all," he stated.

"The party line is fine for them when they give orders for a dacoity or murder of someone," flayed Dost Mazari and added that he was blamed for deviating from the party line because he abided by the law for which he had taken oath as deputy speaker.

"Some people want to derail the system and thwart democracy," Mazari alleged and flayed that Parvez Elahi and the PTI created a constitutional crisis in the province.

"Imran Khan questions the opening of courts at night. He himself should think why they were opened," he remarked. He said that no one should consider him weak as he was also the chief of his tribe. —DNA

## ECP holds hearing of PTI foreign funding case

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) foreign funding case hearing was held by the election commission of Pakistan, Dunya News reported on Tuesday.

According to details, a three-member bench of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja is continuing hearing of the foreign funding case of PTI. Moreover, Counsel of PTI Anwar Mansoor and petitioner Akbar S Babar have appeared before the Election Commission.

During the hearing, Anwar Mansoor, in his argument stated that the Scrutiny Committee has compared the laws of Pakistan as well as those of India. PTI council Anwar Mansoor also said that no citizen in India has the right to keep dual nationalities. He also said that he needs three days to complete the arguments.

The PTI council further stated that his assistant lawyers will assist the Election Commission over the accounts case.

## Gold prices up by Rs 900 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs 900 and was sold at Rs133,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs132,400 in the local market the previous day.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold increased by Rs771 to Rs114,283 from Rs113,513 while that of 10 gram 22 karat also went up to Rs104,760 from Rs104,052. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs1520 and Rs1303.15 respectively. The price of gold in international market decreased by \$15 and was traded at \$1976 against its sale at \$1991, the association reported. —APP

# MoIB, media links priority, says Marriyum

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to the people in the current political and economic situation of the country.

The minister said that role of MoIB in providing authentic information and news to the people could not be forgotten. She hoped that all the departments of the ministry would carry out their professional duties in the best interest of the nation. On her arrival at the Ministry of Information, she was warmly welcomed by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid and other senior officials of the ministry.

**Amin Ul Haque assumes charge as Minister for IT**

Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque on Tuesday assumed charge of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. He was welcomed by senior officers of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication.

Syed Aminul Haque held the portfolio of Minister of IT and Telecommunications

from April 2020 to March 2022 and during this period, telecommunication projects worth billions of rupees were launched in all the four provinces, said a news release.

In the same period, IT exports reached the highest level in the history of the country, creating a wide network of freelancers. He said that the projects of IT ministry would be completed on time. "The Ministry of IT and Telecom will continue its performance in the future too" he pledged.

**Hina for sincere efforts to steer Pakistan on diplomatic front**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Tuesday stressed the need for employing sincere efforts to address the challenges on the diplomatic front.

The new MoS, who assumed her responsibilities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after taking the oath of office today, expressed these views while chairing a high-level meeting. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood briefed the MoS on the working of various divisions of the ministry.

The meeting was also attended by Special Secretaries including Dr Khalid Hussain Memon, Raza Bashir Tarar and additional secretaries of the ministry. Earlier upon arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to join her new responsibilities, Hina Rabbani Khar was received by Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood and senior officials. Belonging to Pakistan People's Party, Hina Rabbani Khar has previously served as Foreign Minister from February 2011 to March 2013 – the youngest person and the first woman to hold this office in the country. Earlier, she has also served as the State Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs.

**New govt to actively engage China in CPEC: Ahsan Iqbal**

Federal minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said the new government would actively engage China to speed up various projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the country. He said the top priority of the new coal-

ition government was to strengthen the country's economy as it was the only pre-requisite for any country's sovereignty.

Talking to media during his visit to National Centre for Artificial Intelligence here at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), the minister said he inaugurated the Center in 2018 to prepare the youth according to the latest technologies in the world. He said the youth the artificial intelligence, automatic robotic, big data cloud, cyber security, and applied mathematics were driver sectors of fourth generation industrial revolution, so that the youth could apply their skills globally.

In next few years, he said "we will train the 100,000 youth in these skills so that can become part of the global digital intelligence". He said it was unfortunate that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) was neglected during the previous government. He expressed resolve to restore the autonomy of the Commission besides restoring the funding of HEC. Replying to a question,

the minister said the coalition government had not a full term of five years but still he termed the coalition government as a big blessing as it would be easy to build consensus over national reforms.

He said soon after the coalition government took the office of the government, country's stock exchange showed positive response while the value of PKR also strengthened against US dollar.

**Aun Ch appointed as adviser to PM**  
Aun Chaudhry, a member of the PTI's Jahangir Tareen Group, was appointed as adviser to PM Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday.

Earlier, the Cabinet Division drafted the summary for the appointment of Aun Chaudhry as Adviser to PM Shehbaz on Youth Affairs. Aun, who was once a close associate of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, threw his weight behind 'estranged' PTI leader Jahangir Khan Tareen after relations between the latter and Imran soured a few months ago. —Agencies