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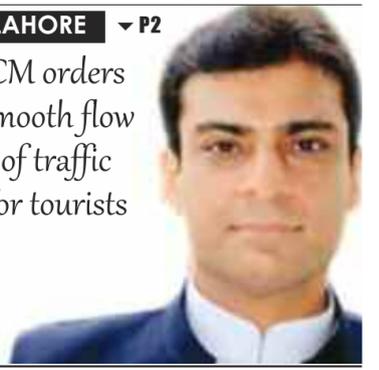
Cheema express wishes for freedom of Kashmiris, Palestinians

The Business

An English Daily published simultaneously from Lahore and Faisalabad

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CM orders smooth flow of traffic for tourists



PAGES 08 | Rs 15

www.thebusiness.com.pk

Shawal 04 1443 Friday, May 06, 2022

Cheema to send reference against Justice Jawad

ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Omar Sarfraz Cheema on Thursday decided to send a reference against Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Jawad Hassan to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC).

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Governor Punjab asked him to tell in connection with the law that who could administer the oath, with the exception of the Governor and President. Omar Sarfraz claimed that one constitutional institution could not interfere on the matter of another one. He alleged that the judiciary was misused, adding that none of the political leader staged protest over the affecting supremacy of the parliament.

Omar Sarfraz questioned: "How could they

provide justice to the masses, who failed to consider the supremacy of the parliament?" He added that he does not believe that they had ever studied the political history of Pakistan. The Governor Punjab went on to say that in this crisis, three characters were surfaced, which included the Judiciary, Parliament and political parties, questioning that what were their roles?

Omar Sarfraz further said that he could say with pride that the Judiciary gave important ruling despite all the situation, adding that they should study that what was happened with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Governor Punjab said that despite the pressure, no unconstitutional ruling were given. —APP



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offers Eid-ul-Fitr Namaz at the Raiwind.

■ Commission's terms of reference would be laid before cabinet

Commission to probe Imran's conspiracy claims: Marriyum

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to form an inquiry commission to investigate into former prime minister Imran Khan's claims about a foreign conspiracy to oust the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government.

This was announced by Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday during a press conference.

The minister said that the commission would be headed by an impartial person so no one would be able to "raise a finger" against them and that the commission's terms of reference would be laid before the federal cabinet at its next meeting. The inquiry report would also be made public, she added.

She added that the foreign conspiracy is a lie made up to save former PM's wife Bushra Bibi's close aide Farhat Shehzadi aka Farah Khan. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has ordered an inquiry against Farah on allegations of accumulating "illegal assets beyond known sources of income, and money laundering." Former PM Imran

has repeatedly blamed a West-led conspiracy for the no-confidence motion against him. He also flashed a piece of paper during a rally on March 27,

which he said was a letter proving the threat made to his government.

He said the "threat letter" carried details of a meeting that Asad Majeed Khan, ambassador of Pakistan to the US, had with Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs Donald Lu in which the latter allegedly threatened Pakistan. Lu apparently said Khan's continuation as prime minister would have repercussions for bilateral relations. Khan claimed that the US was annoyed with his "independent foreign policy" and visit to Moscow.

Imran and his party have also claimed that the alleged threat of his ouster in the cable and the no-confidence motion against him in the National Assembly were interconnected. He said in his speeches that the NSC had endorsed the alleged conspiracy.

PTI rejects inquiry commission proposed by the govt

The PTI senior leader and former information minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain has rejected the inquiry commission proposed by the government for investigating the 'foreign conspiracy'.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Thursday, Fawad maintained that they would accept only such a commission which will be under the independent judiciary. The PTI leader

demanding that the proceedings of such a commission should be broadcast live.

Fawad claimed that the time will come soon when this government will find itself cornered.

Selected govt was darkest period in history of Pakistan: Murtaza

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi Thursday said that three and a half years of Imran Khan's govt was the darkest period of the country. He said, Imran Khan was removed by the PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and PDM parties.

Murtaza Javed Abbasi said that the country will develop under the leadership of PM Shahbaz, PTI led incompetent and corrupt gang has destroyed every sector of government during three and a half years which is unprecedented in the history of Pakistan.

The minister said that during the last government of PML-N the country was right on the track of development.

He further said that the corrupt gang has looted the country and got the record highest debt from various banks which has damaged the infrastructure of the economy. Murtaza Javed Abbasi thanked all the people of his constituency who came to congratulate him after assuming charge as minister, he also assured them that the develop-

PM orders to dispatch relief goods for flood-hit Afghans

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday expressed solidarity with the people of Afghanistan facing loss of lives due to severe floods and said Pakistan was sending emergency relief goods for the victims.

"We are with the Afghan people in this difficult hour and will provide them every possible assistance," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office. PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives due to floods in 10 provinces of Afghanistan. He called upon the international community to come forward and provide emergency assistance to the Afghan people in the wake of devastating floods.

He urged the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to intensify its efforts in assisting the affected Afghan

people through the Afghan Humanitarian Trust Forum. Shehbaz Sharif said floods could worsen the situation of ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. He pointed out that if timely action was not taken, there was a danger of increasing casualties.

He said the international community, particularly the United Nations, should launch a programme to help the people of Afghanistan by providing food, medical aid and shelter to the displaced. The PM prayed for the patience of the families who lost their loved ones in floods.

PM, MNA discuss political situation

Member National Assembly Barjees Tahir called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday and discussed current political situation in the country. During the meeting, MNA Barjees

Tahir congratulated the prime minister on his successful visits to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Murad orders investment policy to attract investment

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the provincial investment department to prepare investment policy so that investment in different sectors and economic zones could be invited.

"We have vast investment opportunities in different sectors in the province, but we have to open them with the best policy." This he said on Thursday while presiding over a meeting here at CM House on Thursday. The meeting was attended by CM Special Assistant on Investment Syed Qasim Naveed, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, Special Secy to CM Sohail Rajput, Additional Secy Fi-

US to help Pak on counterterrorism: State Dept

WASHINGTON: The United States will continue cooperating with Pakistan on counterterrorism and border security, a State Department spokesperson said Wednesday, while reiterating Washington's condemnation of last month's terrorist attack in Karachi University, amid spike in such attacks across the country.

"We value our bilateral relationship. We want to continue to work together in areas where we do have mutual interests with our Pakistani partners. That includes counterterrorism. That includes border security as well," Spokesman Ned Price said at his daily press briefing on Wednesday.

He was responding to a question whether the U.S. was reviewing the former Trump administration-imposed suspension of security aid to Islamabad following the deadly terrorist attack in Karachi, as such attacks emanating from Afghanistan continue to rise across Pakistan. —APP

Mazari's letter interference in Pak affairs: PDM

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) spokesperson Hafiz Hamdullah on Thursday responded to Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shireen Mazari's letter to the United Nations (UN) and said that it was an invitation to international establishment to intervene in Pakistan's internal politics. "The PDM strongly condemns and rejects this undemocratic act," said Hafiz Hamdullah, adding: "The blasphemy law is not going to be used against anyone. But, under the national law, no one is allowed to blaspheme."

He said the Islamic provisions of the Constitution and the protection of Islamic values were bothering Imran Niazi and his masters. "You [Shireen Mazari] and Imran Niazi and company remained silent on the violation of the sanctity of Roza-e-Rasool and Masjid-e-Nabawi," he directed his criticism at Mazari and the PTI leadership. —DNA

Govt to address Sindhi's water woes: Sharjeel

KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon on Thursday appealed to the federal government to provide water to the province to address its water woes.

He federal government should take notice of the water woes in Sindh as the province is facing an acute water shortage, said Sharjeel Memon. He added "There is a severe shortage of drinking water in the province along with problems in irrigation canals."

He also warned that Sindh has played an important role in the country's agricultural economy, which is already facing challenges. "The economy will face more difficulties if the situation is not addressed." "Water scarcity is affecting agricultural production and orchards," he said. "Farmers and cultivators are worried as the costs of crops were not being met," he added. —Online

Murtaza takes over as SBP Governor

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan's new governor is Murtaza Syed, a deputy governor of the institution, who is taking over upon the expiry of the three-year term of incumbent Reza Baqir, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said late Wednesday.

Syed was an "eminently qualified economist with rich IMF experience," Ismail said on Twitter, adding that as the most senior deputy governor, he would take over according to the law. Dr Syed has more than 20 years of experience in macroeconomic research and policy making and worked with the IMF for 16 years.

Material ready against my character: Imran

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan claimed late Wednesday that opponents have hired companies to prepare material for his character assassination.

He expressed those views in an interview on a private TV channel. During the interview, the actor asked the cricketer-turned-politician about marketing companies being used in politics and fifth-generation warfare. His remarks also come as PTI-linked social media accounts have warned supporters of the dangers of "deepfakes", videos which use a form of artificial intelligence called deep learning to create life-like but fake videos of people.

"I had to face mafias, the biggest of which is the

Sharif mafia, they always attack on a personal level because are indulging in corruption for the past 35 years. When someone points out their corruption, they attack a person's character," Imran said.

He said that his ex-wife Jemima was also targeted in the past and a campaign was run against her accusing her of being part of the "Jewish lobby". He said that a false case was also filed against her accusing her of exporting antique tiles. He also prefigured "Now that Eid is over, you will see they are fully prepared for my character assassination. They have hired companies that are readying the material."

He maintained that 60pc of the cabinet was out on bail. "The father (Shehbaz) is on bail and so is the son

Imran's loot ruined economy, says Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that inflation in the country was at an all time high because of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's incompetence, inefficiency, loot and plunder.

In her reaction to Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf leader Ch Fawad Hussain's statement, she said that Imran's corruption, loot and plunder were the cause of ruined economy, unemployment and worst inflation. During the rule of Imran Khan, the prices of flour, sugar, Ghee, medicines and fertilizer remained at the highest level in history of the country, she maintained. "Prime Minister She-

hbaz Sharif has given relief to the people from inflation of years in just two weeks time", Marriyum Aurangzeb remarked.

She said that today, after four years, people were getting cheap sugar, wheat flour and ghee because today cartels and mafia were not imposed on them.

Taking a dig on the PTI leadership, she said the hue and cry was not about foreign conspiracy, rather it was the mourning for rescue of Farah Gogi.

Denouncing the policies of the previous government, she said economic terrorists who planted, "economic mines" were today mourning their own incompetence, loot and plunder. —Online



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb addresses a press conference.

No final decision on raising POL prices, says Miftah

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail once again slammed the previous government's economic policies, coming down hard specifically on untargeted subsidies and tax amnesty schemes for the real estate and industrial sectors, which he said had raised Islamabad's need to borrow money and crowded out private-sector lending.

"The government announced a real estate amnesty scheme two-and-a-half years ago. They didn't ask (the International Monetary Fund) for subsidy on medicines or milk powder," said Ismail during his press conference on Thursday afternoon.

"After that, they announced an amnesty for the industrial sector without even talking to the IMF. Then, they gave a fuel subsidy. All these are landmines for the economy."

"Because of this, we need to borrow money from the banks. This untargeted subsidy, favouring the wealthy, has now forced us to go to the wealthy again to borrow money at 15 percent," added the finance minister, stressing that due to this investment drops, which hits labour the most through rupee-depreciation and inflation.

Ismail also blamed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government for implementing decisions that contradicted what was agreed during

meetings with the IMF.

"Imran Khan has left difficult decisions for us to make. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has no intention to increase the burden on the poor-income groups. But we can take in a contribution from the wealthy," said Ismail, hinting that a targeted fuel subsidy may still be in the offing.

"But we aren't taking a decision on it today. It's decided every 15 days."

"No government can afford to sell petrol on a loss. On diesel, the government is suffering losses to the tune of Rs70 per litre. However, as per promises made to the IMF by the previous government, Rs30 levy should be imposed on it.