

Salman Sufi appointed as head of PM's Strategic Reforms

ISLAMABAD: PM Shehbaz Sharif has appointed Salman Sufi as head of the PM Strategic Reforms. He will discharge his duties voluntarily. Salman Sufi is an expert of public policy and has been awarded with Mother Mary Teresa Award. He was also enlisted among the world's five prominent personalities including US President Joe Biden, for working for women's rights. All the Ministries have been directed to make every possible effort for making the reforms' agenda of the Prime Minister successful. —Online

The Business

Lahore, Friday, May 27, 2022 Shawal 25, 1443

APNS condoles

KARACHI: Sarmad Ali, President and Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) have expressed profound grief on behalf of APNS office-bearers and members of the Executive Committee over the sad demise of Muhammad Moosa Abbasi, father of Mrs. Zahida Abbasi, Chief Editor, Daily Nau Sijj, Karachi and member of the APNS Executive Committee. The APNS offered condolence to the bereaved family and prayed to the Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give the family courage and patience to bear the loss. —PR

30 law officers linked with PTI, PML-Q sacked

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday sacked 30 law officers linked to PML-Q and PTI parties and appointed 29 new law officers belonging to the PML-N.

Those who were sacked included eight additional advocate generals and 22 assistant advocate generals. The Law Secretary has issued the notification of new law officers and de-notified the law officers from PTI and PML-Q. Officers sacked were: Assistant advocate general Mrs. Alia Ijaz, Waqar Saeed Khan, Junaid Razaq, Azra Israr, Assistant advocate general Syed Al Hassan Jafari, Jam Khalid Farid, Zafar Rahim Sekhira Sulaiman Alam Khan, Assistant advocate general Amjad Ali Ansari, Qaiser Abbas Shah and Shams Tabriz, Assistant advocate general Irfan Ahmad Khan Niazi, Aziz-ur-Rehman, Ahmad Nadeem Ghahla, Malik Shaukat Mahmood, Assistant advocate general Muhammad Imtiaz Mirali, Shehryar Ahsan Mehboob, Prince Khushbakht Khan, Assistant advocate general Jam Muhammad Afzal, Jam Abdul Malik, Shahid Mahmood and Malik Shah Nawaz.

Punjab Law Secretary sent copies of the notification to Principal Secretary to Governor, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Punjab Advocate General, Secretary Finance and other concerned officers. —DNA

Rupee loses 8 paisas against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: Exchange rate of Pak Rupee further dipped by 08 paisas against the US Dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 202.00 against the previous day's closing of Rs 201.92.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 201.5 and Rs 203.5 respectively. Moreover, the price of Euro witnessed appreciation by 11 paisas and closed at Rs 216.02 against the previous day's closing of Rs 215.91.

Meanwhile, Japanese Yen gained one paisa to close at Rs 1.59, whereas an increase of 84 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound, which was being traded at Rs 254.26 as compared to its last closing of Rs 253.42. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paisas to close at Rs 54.99 and Rs 53.85 respectively. —APP

Alvi approves appointment of Shahadat Awan

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Thursday approved the appointment of Senator Shahadat Awan as Minister of State.

The President gave the approval on the advice of the Prime Minister under article 92(1) of the Constitution. —APP

Yasin punished to give advantage to Modi: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullah, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik said that undoubtedly, the hypocritical and barbaric Indian authorities have influenced the court decision against Yasin; but she added that they cannot suppress the voice of prison of conscious.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Mushaal, who is also Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organization, said that the Indian court gave a verdict of life imprisonment to her husband to give political advantage to fascist Narendra Modi, who is known as the world worst criminal Prime Minister. She said that India must end these war crimes and politics of hatred and intolerance in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

"Now I look upon the international bodies UN, UNHCR and world powers to take notice of this war crime and save the life of a warrior of his motherland and to stop this grave injustice against Yasin," she added.

"They can give all the verdicts they want. It won't stop us from fighting for our freedom. I will continue this struggle till my last breath and then my daughter will continue this fight. And we will fight for generations till we are



KARACHI: Pakistan navy Ship Dehshat seizes large quantity of drugs at the Arabian Sea during maritime security operations.

Pak Navy seizes huge cache of drugs at sea

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy (PN) Ship "Dehshat" in collaboration with PN air units Thursday seized approximately 4500 Kgs of drugs at North Arabian Sea.

While undertaking maritime security operations, PNS Dehshat intercepted the suspicious dhov and recovered large cache of drugs that valued approximately 6.7 million dollar in international market, said a news release. The successful operation by Pakistan Navy in seizure of huge quantity of narcotics is a testimony to the fact that Pakistan Navy remains committed to fulfill national and international obligations maintaining good order at sea. Pakistan Navy is vigilant to counter any illegal activity and safeguard its maritime borders.

The successful execution of anti-narcotics operation is a demonstration of Pakistan Navy's resolve to deter and disrupt illegal activities in maritime zone of Pakistan. —APP

PM appoints Mandviwala chief whip in Senate

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has appointed Senator Saleem Mandviwala as chief whip in Senate.

The status of Saleem Mandviwala will be equal to the state minister. Tauqir Shah secretary to PM has issued notification in this regard. Copy of notification has been sent to chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani. —Online

LG elections in Balochistan to be held on 29th: ECP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan is all set to hold polling for local government election Scheduled to be held on May 29 in 32 districts of Balochistan in a free, transparent and peaceful atmosphere.

According to Provincial Election Commission, the total number of registered voters in these districts is 3,552,398 including 2,006,274 male and 1,546,124 female.

The voters will cast their votes for seven Municipal Corporations, 49 Municipal Committees, 838 Union Councils in these districts. There are 6,259 wards including 5,345 rural and 914 urban in the said districts.

In all Union Councils, 33 percent seats have been reserved for women, 5 percent for farmers and workers, 5 percent seats for minorities in the Local Government elections.

As many as 23,835 candidates were in the run of contesting election on 6259 wards.

Similarly, 1584 candidates have been elected unopposed on general seats and election would be held 4456 remaining wards.

The Election Commission of Pakistan has setup 5226 polling stations including 576 for male, 562 for female and 4088 combined for facilitation of voters and 149 polling station are improvised. Similarly, 12219 polling booths including 6350 for male and 5869 for female were also set up to facilitate voters including young and female voters. —APP

Ultimatum reflects Imran's grief for 'failed politics'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting on Thursday said Imran's six-day ultimatum to the government for announcement of the fresh election's date reflected his grief over the "failed politics".

Talking to the media persons outside the Parliament House, she said the government would announce the date of fresh election in consultation with its allies, and after completing its constitutional term. She believed that Imran Khan would never come to Islamabad with a long march again. Marriyum said the people had rejected the politics of "chaos and anarchy" by staying away from the "bloody march" which was a "flop show". The masses had told Imran that they would only support the politics of progress and prosperity.

She said the people recognized the faces of those who left empty hand after giving a sit-in in Islamabad in 2014. The masses had seen the difference between the politics of development and degeneration on Wednesday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was working

Govt firm to revive IMF programme for sustainable growth

ISLAMABAD: The government is committed to revive the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and put the economy of the country back on a sustainable growth path, Finance Ministry said here Thursday. In a statement issued after the conclusion of talks with the fund, the finance ministry said, Pakistan's team led by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail held final meeting with the IMF Mission at Doha on the seventh review.

The week-long consultations reviewed fiscal and monetary situation for Fiscal year 2022 and proposed measures for FY2023. The fund expressed concern on the fiscal and current account situation arising from government's actions especially electricity and fuel subsidies and other slippages, it added. The meetings identified areas of divergence and corrections required in the current account and fiscal deficit.

The IMF team emphasized the importance of rolling back fuel and power subsidies, which were given by the previous administration in contravention of its own agreement with the fund. The statement said that the govt was committed to reducing the overall budget deficit in FY2023.

It is pertinent to mention here that the fund in a statement at the conclusion of talks with Pakistan stressed for taking concrete policy actions, including in the context of removing fuel and energy subsidies and the FY2023 budget, to achieve program objectives. An IMF mission led by

Nathan Porter held both in-person and virtual discussions in Doha, Qatar with the Pakistani authorities during May 18-25 on policies to secure macroeconomic stability and support sustainable growth in Pakistan.

"The mission has held highly constructive discussions with the Pakistani authorities aimed at reaching an agreement on policies and reforms that would lead to the conclusion of the pending seventh review of the authorities' reform program, which is supported by an IMF Extended Fund Facility arrangement, Porter said in a statement after conclusion of the discussions.

Considerable progress was made during the mission, including on the need to continue to address high inflation and the elevated fiscal and current account deficits, while ensuring adequate protection for the most vulnerable. In this regard, the further increase in policy rates implemented on May 23 was a welcome step, he said adding that on the fiscal side, there have been deviations from the policies agreed in the last review, partly reflecting the fuel and power subsidies announced by the authorities in February.

"The IMF team looks forward to continuing its dialogue and close engagement with Pakistan's government on policies to ensure macroeconomic stability for the benefit all of Pakistan's citizens", he added.

African continent offers huge potential to Pak for trade ties

PAJCCI for sustainable infrastructure at border

KARACHI: The Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) and business community on both sides of the border appreciated the decision to operationalize additional border crossings for trade and people to people movement between Pakistan & Afghanistan.

Muhammad Sadiq, Special Envoy for Afghanistan announced this week that the Government of Pakistan has decided to open several additional border crossings with Afghanistan to facilitate economic activity and people movement.

Arandu between Chitral & Kunar and Beshahi between Lower Dir & Kunar are the first two crossings of the series to be made operational. These crossings are in addition to five fully operational border crossings of Torkham, Ghulam Khan, Kharlachi, Angoor Adda & Chaman-Spin Buldok and one partially opened Dalbaeden crossing. He said that several new border crossings will be opened after

agreement of the Afghan Government and making necessary arrangements.

Zubair Motiwala; Chairman PAJCCI welcomed this announcement and hoped that the government will facilitate business activities especially with neighboring Afghanistan as it is a cost effective and efficient trading partner. We are one on both sides of border sharing cultural, social and economic values and well being of the masses in border areas who are employed in border trade areas instead of coming to big cities with already stressed infrastructure. This is the right step in uplifting the socio-economic status of both countries.

He recommended that before operationalizing new border crossings, governments of both countries must take all measures to first developing supportive infrastructure and operational set ups including trained human resources, security, service areas for transporters and general public, functional booths for quick clear-

ance, provision of electricity, roads, bank counters, drinking water and internet.

These measures will ensure facilitation of trade and also revenue for governments. He also asked governments to consider opening more border crossings in Balochistan; at present only one border crossing Chaman is functional and bearing the loaf whereas the opportunity is great where CPEC is based and Gwadar port is available with capacity for transit trade with the rest of the world.

He reiterated PAJCCI demand made in March that Swat has been a traditional trade partner of Afghanistan and was using Bajur border for bilateral trade which was closed after August 2021 due to regime change in Afghanistan. There are four border points connecting Swat and Afghanistan however "Navapass" border crossing has infrastructure on both sides and both governments must take measures to open it at the earliest possible instance. —DNA

ADB projects worth \$2b

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over 37 billion dollars to promote inclusive economic growth and improve the country's infrastructure, energy and food security, transport networks, and social services etc.

He said that the Lahore Chamber is already calling for a targeted subsidy. He said that we want pharma sector of Pakistan self-sufficient. International private sector should collaborate in this sector with Pakistan that will also help transfer of modern technology to Pakistan. He also called for the promotion of mechanized farming and solar energy in Pakistan. He said that at present, Pakistan is going through the toughest economic times of history as the devaluation of more than 30% has taken place in last one year, inflation has crossed 13% while the trade deficit has surpassed 39 billion dol-

lars in the first ten months of current financial year. The state bank foreign exchange reserves have depleted to around 10 billion dollars. These steep economic challenges have an adverse trickle-down effect on the growth of private sector.

Mian Rehman Aziz Chan said that Pakistan needs to ensure macroeconomic stability, fiscal consolidation and consistent improvement in the business environment through better facilitation of private sector. He said that we need to promote high value-added exports, expand social spending, increase the cost-effectiveness of energy sector and implement structural changes to remain economically sustainable. The role of private sector in transformation of our economy is pivotal.

He said that one of the biggest impediments in the growth of private sector is inadequate access to fi-

nance. The credit availability to the private sector in Pakistan is only around 16% of the GDP, which is the lowest in the region. Furthermore, the SMEs in Pakistan get only 6.5% of the private sector credit. He said that this scenario makes it clear that the traditional banking system in Pakistan is crowded out and does not enable the private sector to play an adequate role in dealing with the current economic challenges.

LCCI SVP said that access to Finance enables the private sector to play its role in economic development as a provider of income, jobs, goods, services and innovation to enhance people's lives and help them escape poverty. It also can provide the Government with the fiscal room to meet basic infrastructure requirements and the tax revenue to tackle urgent priorities and address wider development challenge.



ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Julien Harnais calls on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail at the Finance Division.