

## Food exports up by 5.70pc in Q1 FY23

ISLAMABAD: Food group exports from the country witnessed an increase of 5.70 percent during the first quarter of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, PBS reported. The exports of various food commodities were recorded at \$1,077.834 million during July-September (2022-23) as compared to the exports of \$1,019.676 million in July-September (2021-22), according to PBS data. The food commodities that contribute in positive growth in trade included vegetables, the exports of which grew by 44.34 percent, from \$50.082 million to \$72.289 million. —APP

# The Business

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## Nature delivered a memo to humanity through flood, Sherry

ISLAMABAD: "What goes on in Pakistan [in terms of climate change] will not stay in Pakistan. The devastating recent floods in Pakistan were nature's memo to humanity delivered through Pakistan," said Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman. She was speaking at the event titled "Pre-COP 27: From Paris to Sharm El-Sheikh" jointly organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Wednesday. —

## NAB decides to withdraw plea against Zardari

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has decided to withdraw petitions against acquittal of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

The anti-graft watchdog, in its petitions in Islamabad High Court (IHC), says that further prosecution of the case will be a futile effort as available evidence is not as per legal standards and requirements. The graft-buster body has decided to withdraw appeals in corruption cases registered against PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari 25 years ago. In this context, a plea has been filed in the Islamabad High Court seeking the withdrawal of four appeals against Asif Ali Zardari.

The NAB has said that the available record against Asif Zardari is not 'sufficient' and the relevant evidence is also in the form of photostat copies. Pleading the cases will be an exercise of wasting time, the NAB said in its plea submitted to the IHC. Earlier, former president Asif Ali Zardari moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to withdraw his acquittal appeal in the Rs8 billion suspicious transaction reference. The PPP co-chairman appealed through his counsel in the Islamabad High Court, seeking withdrawal of the acquittal appeal in a reference pertaining to a suspicious transaction worth Rs8 billion.

An accountability court (AC) had rejected his petition for withdrawal of acquittal plea in the reference, filed by the National Accountability Bureau, last year. —DNA

## TTP seeks Rs8m as extortion from KP minister

From Our Staff Correspondent

PESHAWAR: Senior Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Atif Khan has received a letter demanding Rs8 million in extortion from the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Sources within TTP have confirmed the issuance of the letter by their Mardan chapter. Atif also confirmed that he has received the extortion letter. Speaking to journalists, Atif said that he has shared the letter with the relevant officials. "We will take whatever action [needed] on the letter. Security agencies have been informed rest is up to them," said the minister. The letter comes after reports of TTP's resurgence in the KP. Recently a terror attack also took place in Swat on a school van that killed a van driver. Following the incident, the National Security Committee (NSC) took stock of the security situation in the country.

In the meeting, officials of the country's security apparatus gave a briefing on the security situation — in light of the recent terrorist activities. The meeting made it clear that the blood of every citizen is precious and noted that the law will strictly deal with those involved in the bloodshed of innocents.

"Our citizens rendered unprecedented sacrifices along with the armed forces and played a historic role in the war against terrorism," read a statement. The forum decided to constitute an apex committee, headed by PM Shahbaz and revive the Nacta, which will work in collaboration with the provincial-level counter-terrorism departments to prevent any resurgence of terrorism in the country.

## Court adjourns Azam Swati's bail petition till today

ISLAMABAD: A lower court here on Wednesday adjourned hearing till tomorrow on post-arrest bail petition of PTI's Leader Azam Khan Swati in controversial tweets case. Special Judge Central Raja Asif Mehmood heard the post arrest bail case of Swati who was currently in jail on judicial remand.

At the outset of hearing, petitioner's lawyer Dr. Baber Awan read out the FIR contents registered by FIA. He said that the tweet had been considered as against the integrity of the country. The FIR was registered after few hours of the tweet without conducting inquiry, he said.

The lawyer said that how the FIA could arrest his client without any inquiry and notice.

He said that the statement of any politician could not affect the state institutions. During hearing, special prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi prayed the court to grant some time for case preparations. At this, the court adjourned further hearing till today (Thursday). —APP

## PM visit to China to give new impetus to CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has said Prime Minister Shehbaz visit to China next month is expected to give a new impetus to CPEC project.

Talking to the media persons in Islamabad on Wednesday, he however regretted that PTI Chairman Imran through its long march wants to damage Pakistan's image at the international level. He said no progress was seen on CPEC project during the government of PTI. Ahsan Iqbal said the next general elections were not possible before July-August 2023 in the wake of relief and rehabilitation activities in flood hit areas of the country, and delimitation after results of new population census.

"In March (2023), the results of new population census would be received and after that, the ECP would require at least four months to finalize delimitation across the country, so the time frame automatically goes till July-August 2023 and before this, holding of next general



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addresses the All Pakistan Chartered Accountants Conference 2022.

# Leadership should find lasting solution to Balochis' wounds

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif has said the political leadership should take the initiative to find a permanent solution to the problems faced by the people of Balochistan.

Responding to the points of Akhtar Mengal of Balochistan National Party in the National Assembly on Wednesday, he said we are one nation and cannot stay indifferent to the problems of any federating unit. Khawaja Asif said the points raised by Akhtar Mengal regarding the Balochistan situation are genuine and there is a dire need to heal the wounds of the people of the province. He said the problems of Balochistan can be addressed by sitting together with the leaders and people of Balochistan.

The Defence Minister also voiced concerns over the security situation in Swat and other areas, warning this could also spread to other areas. He said responsibility rests with all the institutions to find a solution to the threats faced by the state. He was appreciative of the people of Swat for standing up against the terrorist elements. Khawaja Asif also alluded to the devastation caused by floods in the country. He said the PTI government was removed through a constitutional way, regretting that its Chairman is now trying to blackmail and take hostage the state.

Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif proposed that either Truth and Reconciliation Commission or a judicial commission be formed to address the situation in Balochistan. He said he will also raise the issue in the federal cabinet. The Minister for Defence said Pakistan has been a frontline state in the war on terrorism. He said

our civilians and security forces have rendered matchless sacrifices in the war against this menace. He pointed out that over the last three months, 53 security personnel embraced martyrdom which also included a three star general. He said we are continuously giving sacrifices.

Federal Minister Javed Latif said that over the last three months, 53 security personnel embraced martyrdom which also included a three star general. He said we are continuously giving sacrifices.

In his remarks on the occasion, Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada emphasized for taking collective and strong decisions to ensure protection of the people and their rights.

Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman said Pakistan has paid a heavy price in the war on terrorism. She said we have conducted successful operations against terrorism which has also been acknowledged by the world community.

She said the terrorists cannot be allowed to raise their ugly heads again in Swat or other areas. As regards Balochistan, the Minister for Climate Change proposed the formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission to take the situation towards improvement in the province.

Mohsin Dawar also supported the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission saying it is imperative to take the country in the right direction. Later, the house was adjourned to meet again tomorrow at eleven am.

**Do not push us to a point of no-return, warns Akhtar Mengal**  
Federal ministers Khawaja Asif and

Sherry Rehman on Tuesday suggested the formation of a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" for the resolution of Balochistan's issues after their ally Akhtar Mengal raised the issue of missing persons in the National Assembly.

"Balochistan's issues must be resolved," said Asif in the lower house after Mengal briefed the house on the problems facing the province. The defence minister said that the "elites" of the country have made mistakes and admitted that some of the sins and crimes were committed by the rulers. He also lamented that politicians have spoken on the issue verbally just to get votes.

The minister shared that a battle for power has been ongoing in Pakistan and targeted his party's arch-rival Imran Khan. "[Last] government was removed via constitutional and legal way. The person whose government was removed is blackmailing the state," said Asif. He urged that the battle for power can be fought later.

Asif also deplored that after one and a half years after independence, different opinions were not tolerated. Khawaja Asif said the points raised by Akhtar Mengal regarding the Balochistan situation are genuine and there is a dire need to heal the wounds of the people of the province.

He said the problems of Balochistan can be addressed by sitting together with the leaders and people of Balochistan.

On the other hand, Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman said that a war is being fought in the name of religion but it was only a "war of power" — a reference to Imran Khan's call terming his Azadi March as "jihad" against the

# SC punches holes in Imran's challenge to NAB amendments

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan's Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has observed why PTI Chief Imran Khan has not raised an objection to the exemption of establishment from the accountability process by the accountability watchdog in his current challenge to the amendments to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO).

He expressed these remarks during the hearing of petition filed by the PTI chairman against the amendments to the NAO on Wednesday. The judge wondered why the establishment transcended the accountability whereas the latter was undertaking the biggest commercial ventures in the country and was in possession of great wealth. "Why Imran did not raise the point to hold the establishment accountable in his petition," Justice Shah added.

PTI lawyer Khwaja Haris contended that NAB could not lay its hands on any regulatory authority and official company.

He said that it was wrong to not take an action against an officer who received illegal favours. Justice Shah remarked that if a culprit managed to evade the NAB law after new amendments then he would be caught in another law (for his felony).

Addressing the PTI counsel, the judge said that it seemed evident from his arguments that only the NAB was responsible for conducting accountability in the country. But there are other institutions in the country which are also responsible for conducting accountability, he added. However, Justice Ijazul Ahsan remarked that no other law penalized the misuse of authority.

The PTI lawyer told the court that in the NAB amendments, private people's crimes were eliminated and the NAB would take action in the asset beyond means cases only when corruption had been proved in such cases. Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial inquired of the

lawyer whether he meant that the new amendments had decriminalized several crimes. The top judge inquired if the PTI had no objections to how long would be the remand of the accused and how the accused would get bail. He asked him if he had no objection to these amendments.

The PTI lawyer told the court that these were good amendments and his client had no objections to them. The CJP remarked that several crimes including asset beyond means were stricken down through recent NAO amendments. He inquired if other laws were available to punish these crimes.

Justice Shah asked Haris which crimes were done away with after new amendments. The lawyer said that crimes related to asset beyond means and misuse of authority was removed from the NAB jurisdiction after amendments. Justice Shah observed that the asset beyond means crime could still be punished under the NAB law.

## SC to hear contempt case against IK today

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has fixed the contempt petition filed against former prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan by the Ministry of Interior for hearing today (Thursday). A five-member larger bench of the apex court led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi would take up the contempt matter against Imran Khan on October 20.

The federal government through the interior ministry had approached the Supreme Court for initiating contempt of court proceedings against former prime minister Imran Khan for violating its May 25 order wherein the PTI was restricted from holding its Azadi March near Peshawar Mor between the H-9 and G-9 areas of Islamabad. However, Imran and his supporters made their way towards D-Chowk. —APP

## Turkiye support to flood affectees to continue: AFAD

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkey Mehmet Pecaci has said there exists a strong bond between the people of Turkiye and Pakistan adding all the humanitarian assistance has been directed to Pakistan on behalf of the people of Turkiye. His country stands shoulder to shoulder with the brothers and sisters of Pakistan at this critical juncture.

Ambassador Pecaci made these remarks while addressing a press conference, at the Turkiye embassy on Wednesday. The Vice President of AFAD also spoke to the media persons and highlighted the efforts of his organization. The vice president said, more than 30 million-people have been adversely affected, more than a thousand people have lost their lives, hundreds of thousands of houses have been destroyed, and thousands of animals have perished in the floods disaster caused due to the monsoon rains that have been effective in Pakistan since June 14. It has been reported by Pakistani authorities that approximately 35 billion dollar of financial damage occurred due to the flood disaster.

## ICCI for strict IPRs enforcement to promote brands

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to ensure strict enforcement of intellectual property rights in the country to promote innovations, brands and attract more investment to the country.

He said that due to lukewarm enforcement and IPR violations, the government was losing significant revenue besides engendering the life of the public exposed to counterfeit products. He said this while addressing an awareness seminar on IPR issues for women entrepreneurs and start-ups organised by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IWCCI).

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that lengthy processing timelines for granting IP rights, complicated procedure for registration and long drawn judicial procedure for the protection of IP rights are the key issues that should be addressed to promote their compliance.

## USAID shares KP, merged areas projects progress

ISLAMABAD: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partners with the Government of Pakistan at the federal, provincial, and district levels to improve the lives of citizens in KP had issued fact sheet about progress on projects and impacts on lives of people on Wednesday.

USAID is partnering with the Govt of Pakistan to expand the presence of govt institutions, provide basic services, and strengthen economic opportunities in KP's Merged Areas formerly known as FATA. These jointly-prioritized objectives are in line with Pakistan's Tribal Decade Strategy for 2020-2030 and the mutual goal of increasing stability by delivering development to the Merged Areas. Through a donation of \$130m completed the Gomal Zam Dam, which provides enough ca-

# Parvez inaugurates first Punjab Dementia Plan

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Punjab would also treat them and give them medicine for free. I told the federal government six times that Punjab does not have wheat. The federal government gave wheat to Sindh and other provinces but neither gave wheat to Punjab nor allowed it to import, he regretted. The dementia-affected federal government forgets every time and Shehbaz Sharif is committing enmity with the people of Punjab, he stated. If the federal government permits us, we will import wheat ourselves, the CM added.

It is the fault of Shehbaz Sharif's government to create this situation. If the federal government had delivered and solved the problems of the people, this situation would not have happened, he stressed. The federal government could also be treated and they would be given medicine for free, he added. On the issue of wheat, the provincial gov-

ernment would approach the Supreme Court, he said. N-League and PDM are un-nerved because they are unable to handle themselves. They dream of ruling Punjab but cannot manage themselves. The N-League government is responsible for the bad economic conditions, he said. We want to hold local bodies elections in the province.

The local govt bill will be passed in the assembly today. We have already passed the local govt bill in the assembly but the N-League's Governor did not sign it.

**CM chairs meeting of Rawalpindi Division parliamentarians**

A meeting of MNAs and MPAs of Rawalpindi Division was held under the chair of CM Punjab Parvez at his office to discuss suggestions about the resolution of people's problems and the constituency-related developmental schemes.

Addressing the meeting, the CM said that specific areas would be zoned for housing

and green and brown areas. The development projects of Rawalpindi Division should be completed without delay and different roads including that of Adiala and Chakri areas should also be repaired. Similarly, the repair of inter-district link roads and suburban roads of Rawalpindi Division should be completed, he directed.

The CM ordered legal action against illegal housing schemes in Rawalpindi Division and an in-principle decision was taken to prepare the master plan of Rawalpindi.

The CM ordered that the recruitment process should be started soon to functionalise Rawalpindi Urology Institute and wardens be deputed to resolve traffic problems. Alongside this, he added that Rescue 1122 centres should be established on main roads and in remote areas to facilitate the needy. Similarly, hospitals and educational projects should be completed on a priority basis; he stressed

and asked the deputy commissioners to visit the hospitals and monitor the supply of free medicines.

**Patients should be greatly looked after in the hospitals**

Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi participated in the second convocation of the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences of Kind Edward Medical University. CM distributed degrees among the successful doctors.

While addressing the convocation of the College of Ophthalmology and Allied Vision Sciences, the CM said that we have announced to lift the ban on the induction of grade 17 posts of optometrists in the rural health centres (RHC) and from other posts affiliated with the allied vision.

Pervaiz Elahi revealed that we are also granting permission for induction on all the posts subsequently being required by the Health Department.