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Pak GDP may fall 18-20pc due to climate risks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is at risk of falling by 18 to 20 percent by 2050 due to the combined risks from the intensification of climate change and environmental degradation in the country if the climate change issues are left unaddressed.

"The combined risks from the intensification of climate change and environmental degradation, unless addressed, will further aggravate Pakistan's economic fragility; and could ultimately reduce annual GDP by 18 to 20 percent per year by 2050, based on the optimistic and pessimistic scenarios", a report recently published by the World Bank said.

Between 6.5 and 9.0 percent of GDP will likely be lost due to climate change (in the optimistic and pessimistic scenarios, respectively) as increased floods and heat waves reduce agriculture and livestock yields, destroy infrastructure, sap labour productivity, and undermine health, the report further said. Additionally, water shortages in agriculture could reduce GDP by more than 4.6 percent, and air pollution could impose a loss of 6.5 percent of GDP per year.

The use of water for non-agricultural purposes is likely to increase significantly with climate change. Under a high-growth (4.9 percent per year) and high-warming (3°C by 2047) scenario, water demand is projected to increase by almost 60 percent, with the highest rates of the increase coming from the domestic and industrial sectors, the report said. —APP



ISLAMABAD: US delegation led by Lt. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, Commanding General of US Army Central held a meeting with Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik at the NDMA.

■ US terms Imran Khan's allegations 'mere propaganda'

US values long cooperation with Pakistan: State Dept

WASHINGTON: The United States says it values its longstanding cooperation with Pakistan and has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to the US interests not just in the region, but also the world more broadly. Answering a question during his press briefing at the US State Department in Washington, the Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said the United States supports peaceful upholding of democratic, constitutional, and legal principles. And we don't have a position on one political candidate of a party versus another.

The US State Department Deputy Spokesperson said we will not let propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation get in the way of any bilateral relationship, including our valued bilateral partnership with Pakistan.

"The US values our longstanding cooperation with Pakistan and has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to US interests," the Department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson, Vedant Patel, said. "That remains unchanged," he stressed. "We don't have a position on one political candidate of a party versus another," Patel said, adding, "We support the peaceful upholding of democratic, constitutional, and legal principles."

The United States has once again rejected the allegations levelled by former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan, saying Washington will not let propaganda get in the way of bilateral relationship with Pakistan. US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while briefing the newsmen in Washington on Wednesday said that US valued its longstanding cooperation with Pakistan. Patel said that the United States has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to the US interests and that position remained unchanged.

When asked that former prime minister Imran Khan has backed out of his allegations when he (Imran) said he no longer blamed the US administration for removing him from power, Vedant Patel said that as they've previously said, there has — there is not and there has never been a truth to these allegations.

He said that they don't have a position on one political candidate of a party versus another. "We support peaceful upholding of democratic, constitutional, and legal principles. And ultimately, we will not let propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation get in the way of any bilateral relationship, including our valued bilateral partner with Pakistan," he maintained. He said that the US valued its longstanding cooperation with Pakistan. It has always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan as critical to their interests not just in the region, but also the world more broadly, the spokesman added. When asked to comment on Imran Khan's statement where he termed his Moscow visit an embarrassment, Patel said "I really don't have anything else to offer on Foreign Minister — or former PM Khan's comments on that."

Pak's unique geo-economic position ideal destination for US investors

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has said that Pakistan is an ideal destination for US investors and businesses due to its unique geo-economic position and impressive demographic cohorts. In an exclusive interaction with the board of Directors of the PACC in Los Angeles, he appreciated the work done by the Chamber to promote trade and investment ties between the two countries.

He said that while bilateral trade between the two countries jumped from 8.5 to 12 billion dollar last year, there was potential to increase it further by enhancing economic cooperation in targeted areas such as technology. —APP

PM consults before COAS appointment

ISLAMABAD: PM Shahbaz Sharif has made consultations with senior leadership of allied parties of government prior to appointment of new army chief and they have fully mandated PM for making appointment as per set procedure and traditions.

Certain ministers have proposed to PM to obtain approval from the federal cabinet in regard to appointment of army chief but the majority has not agreed with it. According to sources PDM head Maulana Fazlur Rehman telephoned PM to inquire about his welfare and the two leaders exchanged views on prevailing situation in the country and appointment of new army chief.

Sources said Maulana Fazlur Rehman threw all his weight behind PM side, saying PM should appoint new army chief as per set procedure. As per sources majority have termed the appointment of army chief as administrative and discretionary powers of PM while PPP and JUI-F has left the matter entirely on the PM.

On the other hand, PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari is also in Islamabad and it is in the air that he is likely to meet Maulana Fazlur Rehman and PM Shahbaz Sharif soon.

Zardari in Islamabad for consultation on key appointment

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari has reached the federal capital on Thursday.

In a meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, the former President will join the discussion regarding the political situation of the country and the future strategy. He will also take part in the consultation for the appointment of the new Army Chief. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has left from Karachi for Islamabad, as he will also become a part of the main consultation. —DNA

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 164 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday by losing 164.03 points, a negative change of 0.38 percent, closing at 42,819.72 against 42,983.75 points on the previous day.

A total of 181,226,661 shares were traded during the day as compared to 186,709,771 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.159b against Rs 6.663b on the last trading day. As many as 346 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 103 of them recorded gains and 221 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were BankIslami

Pak with 17,130,000 shares at Rs 13.92 per share, Unity Foods Ltd with 11,590,963 shares at Rs 17.37 per share, and Telecard Limited with 11,545,500 shares at Rs 10.19 per share. Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 80.31 per share price, closing at Rs 1153.31, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Textile with a Rs 76.85 rise in its per share price to Rs 1102.18. Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 350 per share closing at Rs 9650.01 followed by Nestle Pakistan with a Rs 145 decline.

The market opened in the positive zone however, due to the rupee-dollar parity and delayed review of the IMF programme snapped investors' confidence resulting in the index losing

Minimum fare of Orange Line fixed at Rs 20

LAHORE: Minimum fare for Orange Line Train has been fixed at Rs 20 which was approved by the Punjab cabinet on Thursday. New fares will be imposed from today (Friday).

Orange Line Train's minimum fare for 4km travel will be Rs.20 and for the travel of 5 to 8km journey the fare will be Rs 25. Nine km to 12km at 30 and from 13 km to 16 km it will be raised to Rs.35. About 16 km to 27km travel fare will be Rs 40. —Online

No right to close highways, motorways: IHC

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq has remarked no party has right to close highways and motorways.

The petition filed by the traders against the possible closure of the roads and ways due to PTI dharna came up for hearing Thursday. The lawyer told the court containers have been placed on the ways which are creating difficulties. AG Barrister Barrister Jahangir Jadoon and AAG Munawwar Iqbal Dogal appeared in the court.

They told the court the application of PTI in connection with NOC for dharna and public meeting is too pending hearing. It should also be heard along with it.

The court clubbed the petition of traders with the PTI application for obtaining NOC for dharnas and public meeting.

AAG Munawwar Iqbal Dogal told the court we have written to law ministry to solicit legal opinion. CJ IHC remarked action has to be taken immediately in such things. The counsel for petitioner requested the court that orders be issued to ensure smooth flow of traffic on highways and motorways. The CJ remarked the trade will be affected if highways and motorways are closed. It is not right of any one to say that he will stage dharna on motorways and he stands over there. Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui had given decision in dharna case all the public meetings will take place in parade ground. —APP

SC disposes of petition to stop PTI long march

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday disposed of a plea seeking orders to stop PTI Chairman Imran Khan's long march, observing that the apex court's interference on the matter would be "premature".

The SC told the petitioner a fresh plea could be filed if the law and order situation worsens in light of the long march. "Prima facie, the court's interference on the issue would be premature [...] court will exercise judicial restraint in such political matters," Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial remarked while terming the plea infructuous.

The petition filed last week by JUI-F Senator Kamran Murtaza court had moved the top court to pass restraining orders to halt the long march, which is moving towards the federal capital with every passing day. The govt has warned the party against engaging in violence once it enters Islamabad — which is expected by this week — with the party's assurance that it will not indulge in violence.

The CJ, comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Ayesha Malik, that heard the plea. At the outset of the hearing, Murtaza said it's been two weeks since long march kicked off, and according to PTI Senior Vice President, it will reach Islamabad by this Friday.

Assassination threat still intact; IK tells French outlet

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Thursday expressed the fear that those who want him dead may try again as he said that the 'true' attacker was still at large.

He said this on Thursday in an interview to French news outlet France24. In the interview, he said that his attackers may still feel that the job is not done, which is why he is now taking precautionary measures. "They think that the only way to get me out of the way is actually [to] eliminate me. So I think that there is a threat, still," he said.

Imran reiterated his accusation that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and a senior military official as being responsible for the November 3 Wazirabad attack because they feel threatened by

him.

The former prime minister added that the suspect apprehended soon after the attack in Wazirabad was just a 'decoy' the divert attention away from the real attacker who remains at large. He contested the official view that there was just a single attacker by maintaining that he was shot at from two separate directions pointing to the presence of two attackers. Imran reiterated that he only trusts an investigation helmed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court to hold transparent investigations into the attack. He argued that any other investigation, especially one involving the country's powerful intelligence agencies could be influenced or tainted by the federal government.

Despite the lingering threat, following which a bulletproof cubicle was erected atop his principle container,

Imran vowed to rejoin his party's march in person when it reaches Rawalpindi later this month. On his recent climb down from accusations that the US were involved in an international conspiracy with the government coalition to engineer a surprising vote of no-confidence loss that effectively ended his government, Imran said he still accuses Washington of having played a key role.

Rulers will once again go into self-exile, claims Imran

Former prime minister and PTI chairman Imran Khan on Thursday claimed that the rulers will once again go into self-imposed exile. Addressing long march participants in Jehlum, Khushab, Peshawar and Chakdara through video link, he said that the debt default risk has reached 80 percent today which means Pakistan couldn't be able to pay



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Ch Parvez Elahi started releasing relief money to over 55,000 flood victims by cutting ribbon.

CM starts release of funds to 55,000 flood affectees

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Ch Parvez Elahi has started releasing relief money to over 55,000 flood victims. While addressing the ceremony of distributing relief funds to the flood victims, the CM said that he was also given an opportunity by Allah Almighty and he delivered but did not beat the drum like Shehbaz Sharif. Shehbaz Sharif went to the flood victims, took photos, etc and came back. Shehbaz Sharif is very fond of the protocol.

He is so 'lucky' that the officer who shakes hands with him has to quit. What is the use of your gov-

ernment if you don't help the province or give a good officer?

Parvez Elahi added that a total of Rs 12.20 billion in aid is being given to 55,400 flood victims. The government is giving Rs 2.8 lac each to the owners of 47,500 mud houses and Rs 4 lac each to the owners of 8,000 concrete houses. Valuable work has been done by armed forces, Akhuwat and religious NGOs for the victims, he noted. I went to different areas of DG Khan to assess the situation; he said and added that thousands of people's houses, mosques and schools were washed away. He also commended the efforts of officers who lend a helping hand and noted that Sania Nishtar

developed a wonderful distribution system within two months.

The transparency of the aid programme is unprecedented as the record is available on the PDMA system.

Meanwhile, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and ambassadors have also praised the aid programme.

The CM said that the Ehsaas programme is Imran Khan's plant which is going to become a tree. The work of helping the helpless brings blessings in other works; he added and stated that work equal to one year has been done in three months which would benefit the common man.

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