

Efforts underway to increase trade ties with UAE, other states, NA told

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Naveed Qamar on Friday told National Assembly that Pakistan's trade with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has increased and effort were underway to further increase bilateral trade with the friendly country. Answering the question of Ms Shamim Ara Panwar during question hour, he said UAE was the member of GCC and Pakistan was negotiating free trade agreement (FTA) with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to get market access and services. —APP

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Govt focused to resolve issues of poor, says Nehal Hashmi

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Syed Nehal Hashmi on Friday said the govt was focused to resolve the issue of the general public. Talking to a private news channel, he said that whether in power or in opposition, politicians' first priority should be the betterment of the poor. Nihal further said that the coalition govt should complete their constitutional term. Gathering a few thousand of people and demanding early elections was a bad precedent, Nehal said, adding it was unfortunate to see through this said precedent the democracy was always undermined. —APP

Rupee continues fall, settles now at 223.17

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Pakistan's rupee maintained its downward trend against the US dollar, falling 0.22 percent in the inter-bank market on Friday.

As per the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the rupee closed at 223.17 after a decline of Re0.50. In the last six trading sessions, the currency has lost Rs1.75 or 0.78% against the greenback. On Thursday, rupee had depreciated against the US dollar, to settle at 222.67 after a decline of Re0.26 or 0.12%.

In a key development, talks on ninth review of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Enhanced Fund Facility (EFF) have been further delayed as the Fund linked the arrival of its mission to Islamabad with the finalisation of macroeconomic framework with necessary adjustments.

An official, on condition of anonymity, said that the date has not yet been finalised as the Fund wants to first finalise the macroeconomic framework and then it would send the mission to Pakistan.

The development is expected to irk market sentiments, after Pakistan's perceived risk of default, measured by the 5-year credit default swap (CDS), hit 75.5% just days ago, owing to uncertainty over the IMF ninth review.

Internationally, the dollar was headed for its best week in a month on Friday, as hawkish remarks from Federal Reserve officials and stronger-than-expected retail sales data have put the brakes on a pullback that was triggered by signs of softening inflation.

The US dollar index is up about 0.1% so far this week to 106.53, stabilising after a small miss on US inflation last week triggered one of the dollar's sharpest weekly drops in the free-floating exchange rate era on excitement about an end to rate hikes.

PM to appoint new COAS as per law: Zardari

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Former President and President of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Asif Ali Zardari has said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will appoint the new Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) in line with the law and the Constitution.

According to the spokesman for the Bilawal house, here, on Friday, Asif Ali Zardari said that "they strongly believe in the system of promotion in the Pakistan Army".

He said that all the "three-star generals are equal and they are fully able to lead the Pakistan Army".

He was of the view that the matter of new COAS appointment must not be "politicized" at any cost, which could cause "damage to the institution".

SC gives time to Imran to reply in contempt case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) while giving time to PTI Chairman Imran Khan to give reply on evidences in contempt of court case adjourned the hearing till next week.

The state counsels during the hearing of the case told the court the USB filed by the interior ministry proves that mobile service was not closed at that day. Tweets and posts kept on coming from long mach container to social media continuously and long march target was to go to D-Chowk.

Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial gave remarks on the arguments of the state counsels there are some facts of the case. The state counsels are saying jammers were not there. The court order had spread all over the country through social media. This court is very cautious in exercising the contempt of court powers. Likewise SC is too cautious that our orders are not violated. A five-member larger bench of SC presided over by the CJP took up the case for hearing. During the hearing of the case Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi while addressing lawyer Suleman Ahmad Butt inquired if the other side of USB refutes then what will happen. —Online

USC cuts price of edible oil, ghee

LAHORE: The Spokesperson of Utility Store Corporation (USC) here on Friday informed that the corporation has drastically reduced the prices of ghee and cooking oil with immediate effect.

The price of Habib Banaspati has been reduced by Rs.34 per kg, while the price of Habib cooking oil has been cut by Rs.36 per kg, according to USC press release.

Similarly, the price of Eva ghee premium brand has reduced by Rs 39 per kg, while the price of Soya Supreme ghee premium has reduced by Rs 25 per kg, the price of Soya Supreme cooking oil 1 liter has reduced by Rs 7, he added. It should be noted that the special subsidy available on flour, sugar and ghee has also extended by the federal government at all stores across the country under the Prime Minister's Relief Package.

The corporation has recently launched SMS service 5566 for transparent and innovative procurement of subsidized items, therefore providing consumers with quality and affordable items in a better way.

The federal government is also taking more steps to provide affordable and quality food items to the masses. —APP



LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan meets with a delegation of Overseas Pakistanis Vice Chairman, Makhdoom Syed Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hassan.

MPAs from different districts call on Governor

Everyone should play a positive role in uplift of country

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly members from different districts including Pir Rafi ud Din Shah Bukhari, Mehwish Sultana, Bilal Farooq Tarar, Zahid Akram, former minister Chaudhry Shaikat Dawood and President Muslim League (N) Hafizabad Chaudhry Muhammad Bakhs Tarar called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here at the Governor House, Lahore, on Friday.

During the meeting, important issues including the political and economic situation of the country was discussed.

Talking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that economic development in the country is related to political stability, the politics of chaos is not in the interest of the country. He said that everyone should play a positive role in the development of the country. Governor Punjab said that the Muslim League (N) has always taken steps

for the welfare of the common people in every field including education and health. He said that the federal government has given relief to the farmers in various sectors including the agricultural package despite the difficult conditions. He said that all efforts are being made to provide relief to the people from inflation and other problems. Governor Punjab asked the members of the Provincial Assembly to continue public service as per the vision of the party. He further said that they should develop close liaison with the people and solve their problems.

Subsidy provided to farmers on DAP fertilizer should be investigated

Meanwhile, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today disposed of two separate representations of the Agriculture Department by setting aside the decision of the provincial ombudsman. He said that the entire issue of subsidy provided to farmers on DAP fertilizer should be investigated by the chief minister's in-

spection team to identify those responsible for poor planning and failure to prevent corruption during the implementation of the scheme. He said that it is imperative that the matter be thrashed out and the responsibility be fixed regarding poor planning during execution of the scheme and inability to adopt preventive measures to curb corrupt practices especially keeping in view the magnitude of public exchequer involved. He directed the Secretary Agriculture Department to initiate a summary for the Chief Minister Punjab for seeking approval to assign the matter to Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMT) for thorough investigation in to the matter especially the slackness committed by the agency viz-a-viz the responsible, determination of genuine claims payable to the dealers and recommendation for the administrative departments to avoid such instances in future. He also stressed on taking effective steps to improve the subsidy system in future.

Alvi for creating awareness on women empowerment

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Friday underlined the need for a comprehensive awareness campaign with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders to inform and educate female population of the country regarding steps taken by the government for the empowerment of women and to urge them to fully utilize and profit from these initiatives.

He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation of the Women Business Network here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, the president said that multiple products targeting women had been launched, which include opening bank accounts online without requiring women to visit bank branches and fulfilling cumbersome processes, Property Rights acts, which have made it mandatory for giving the inheritance to the women.

"Females are also being offered loans on easy terms and conditions", he added.

The President said that BISP and Ehsaas programmes were extremely effective and were playing a pivotal role in maintaining data of the women population, providing them with financial stipends, helping them to open bank accounts and creating a digital communication network to communicate with the women of Pakistan through digital, SMS and other such services. He said that although there was a pressing need for taking more steps for empowering women both

economically and financially and to encourage women to profit and benefit from the laws, programmes and initiatives already in the field of empowerment of women.

The president expressed his deep concerns that although the banks had been offering preferred loans to women, however, only two to five percent of loans were being availed. He called upon all the women's networks and other relevant organisations in private and government sectors to take decisive action and roll out advocacy and awareness programmes to advise the women to fully utilize these loans, which he said would play a pivotal role in their empowerment.

The president said that if Pakistan was to make progress, it needed to ensure that its women population was involved in the active economic stream, was empowered financially and economically and equipped with education and marketable skills through the existing skilled-based institutions and also benefiting from the free of cost training and education and programmes offered online. He said that women parliamentarians, Chambers of Commerce, NGOs and advocacy groups should join hands to develop a comprehensive strategy to reach out to women at the grassroots level and equip them with the information and education for their self-empowerment.

The president said that there was also a

need to develop a comprehensive strategy and advocacy campaign to bring women into the formal structure and elevate them to decision-making positions, which would encourage other women to follow suit.

He said that the women and youth bulge of the country were two great assets, which need to be fully equipped and geared to contribute their pivotal role in the progress and development of the country.

The president appreciated that women were entering into professional education in reasonable numbers but expressed his concerns that 50 percent of these women preferred to stay at home without being economically active after graduation, which was a great loss to the country.

He urged all the advocacy groups, organisations and parents to ensure that all women graduates of professional colleges enter into the economic mainstream and contribute their share in the development of country. Women Business Network is a global network of business professionals and corporate leaders to uplift women for key leadership positions in the industry and to create cross-border opportunities for their businesses. It aims to support and connect women's organisations and cross-sector collaborations, supporting women entrepreneurship, women lead businesses and empowering women businesses through international exchange programmes. —APP

Pak power generation cost dips by 9pc month-on-month in Oct

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: The total cost of generating electricity in the country declined by 9%, hitting Rs9.02 KWh in October 2022 compared to Rs9.91 KWh in September.

However, on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, electricity generation cost declined marginally by 3%. "On YoY basis, the decline in fuel cost is witnessed after 22 months," said Arif Habib Limited (AHL) in a note on Friday. "On a YoY basis, the decrease in fuel cost is witnessed mainly due to a

rise in hydel, nuclear, wind, and solar-based generation. "On a MoM basis, the decline in fuel cost is triggered by a decline in coal (-2% MoM), RFO (-3% MoM), RLNG (-7% MoM), and gas (-1% MoM) based cost of generation." Moreover, power generation went down by 5.2% YoY to 10,705 GWh (14,388 MW) during October, compared to 11,296 GWh (15,183 MW) during the same month last year. On a monthly basis, generation also decreased by 16.9%, as compared to 12,878 GWh in September. During 4MFY23, power

generation decreased by 9.3% YoY to 51,786 GWh (17,543 MW) compared to 57,086 GWh (19,338 MW) during 4MFY22.

Data on generation mix revealed that electricity generation decline on a yearly basis was led by Regasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) 1,844 GWh, coal 1,657 GWh, and Residual Furnace Oil (RFO) 157 GWh, which decreased by 31.8%, 12.2% and 87.3%, respectively. Moreover, power generation from hydel and gas sources stood at 3,144 GWh and 1,296 GWh respectively, showing a YoY

increase of 19.7% and 18.6%, respectively, on a yearly basis. In October, hydel was the leading source of power generation, accounting for 29.4% of the generation mix. Whereas, power generation from nuclear improved to 20.6%, after recording a YoY increase of 58.4% at 2,206 GWh. Moreover, electricity generation from wind sources improved significantly by 20.3%, as the renewable source share in the power generation mix increased to 3.2% in October 2022, in comparison to 2.3% in the same month last year.

Postponement of the IMF review dangerous: PBIF

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF), and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said the postponement of the IMF ninth review mission is very dangerous.

The economy does not have the capacity to oppose the IMF, so the agreement made with the international organisation should be respected, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the former government did not show seriousness in dealing with the IMF, as a result of which the economy was ruined and the rupee became as worthless as tissue paper, the effects of which will take at least ten years to recover.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the mistakes of the previous government should not be repeated.

Pakistan can get a tranche of 894 million dollar only after the success of the ninth review of the IMF, but neither the flood damage has been accurately assessed nor the revenue has been increased as per the deal with the lender, he added. —Online

Marriage can't be maintained sans woman's consent

LAHORE: After 10 years of the legal battle of a woman, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday declared that the marriage could not be maintained without the consent of a woman.

LHC Justice Abid Hussain Chattha ruled the hearing of the case against harassing a woman by making fake marriage documents. He stated, "It is up to a man, to provide evidence whether the wedding was held with a woman's consent or not."

The court has termed the decision of the trial court as 'null and void', while Justice Abid Chatta has issued the documents of a nine-page verdict. As per the petitioner, a woman was blackmailed after the fake marriage documents were made in 2012.

The alleged husband had also verbally divorced a woman in panchayat. A woman also made it clear in her statement that she never tied the knot with her alleged husband. According to the verdict, "A woman's story is simple as the alleged husband prepared the fake marriage documents in order to harass her." —DNA

Rs 1b for Sindh

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electric vehicles. It was principally decided to run electric rickshaws in Punjab. CM approved that 50 percent subsidy will be provided to the electric vehicles in respect of taxes. Approval was granted to induct 3000 vacant posts in the Punjab police. Approval was also granted during the cabinet meeting to purchase drones for the police and to disburse Rs. 350 billion grant for the Bar Association. Approval was granted to extend the contract of Chief Operating Officer Punjab Safe City Authority Kamran Khan for two years. Approval was accorded about the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of PSCA with Huawei.

The cabinet granted approval to appoint the President of LDA Tribunal, to declare Sargodha and Bahawalpur city areas of the concerned development authority, amendment in Punjab Drug Rules, revamping of provincial quality control board, annual report on the State of Women Punjab Commission, audit reports about the accounts of Punjab government, audits of the accounts of Public Sector Enterprise Government of Punjab. Rules and regulations for the appointment of Chairman Zakat & Usher Council, amendment in the Quaid-e-Azam Library schedule regulation 1984, amendment in the Punjab Public Library general regulation 2012, to review the contract of Quaid-e-Azam Business Park and the payment of the three months notice period salary to the former Chairman RUDA. Approval was also granted to extend the contract of 11 staff members of the capacity building of P&D for Policy Planning and Monitoring of Development process in Punjab.

Provincial Ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants, Chief Secretary and concerned officials attended the meeting.

CM condolese demise of mother-in-law Mir Javed

Parvez Elahi expressed his deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of the mother-in-law of Chairman Jang Group Mir Javed-ur-Rehman (late). The Chief Minister in his condolence message expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolence with the bereaved family. The CM prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant fortitude to the bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity. Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has also expressed his deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of the mother-in-law of Justice Shahid Karim.

MPAs call on Parvez Elahi

Punjab Chief Minister Ch Parvez Elahi met with Member Provincial Assembly Hafiz Ammar Yasir and a local leader Arshad Sheikh at CMO, on Friday.

The Chief Minister while talking on the occasion stated that the people of Talagang always acknowledged him and how they could be forgotten. He vowed that he would undertake all possible steps in order to remove deprivations of the people of Talagang. He said that if Allah Almighty gives him an opportunity then he will also work to make Talagang and Chakwal a division. He apprised that the promise to set up an industrial estate in Talagang will also be fulfilled.