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Economic stability, public relief, govt's top priorities; Pakistan prepared to face global economic challenges: PM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, said that economic stability and provision of relief to the public remained government's top priorities and all measures were being taken to not only provide immediate relief but also ensure long-term economic stability.

He said that the Government of Pakistan was prepared to face any situation arising from the ongoing global tensions.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting regarding enforcement of austerity and relief measures and conservation and management of petroleum reserves in the wake of emerging situation in the region.

The prime minister directed petroleum

distribution companies to ensure sale of petroleum products at the government-determined prices and to maintain transparency in this matter, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar, Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani and relevant senior officials.

The prime minister told the participants that in view of the current global situation, consultations were being held regarding,



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding enforcement of austerity and relief measures and conservation and management of petroleum reserves in the wake of emerging situation in the region.

Pakistan army launches decisive strikes against Afghan Taliban along border

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Armed Forces continue decisive operations against Afghan Taliban and Fitanah al-Khawarij elements.

According to security sources, the military carried out a major operation in the Bajaur sector, targeting Afghan Taliban posts near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, destroying them completely.

Sources confirmed that the Pakistan Army also employed guided missiles to strike Taliban positions along the border. Security officials stated that Operation Ghazab Lil-Haq will continue until all objectives are achieved.

It may be recalled that the security forces conducted an intelligence-driven operation in Lakki Marwat a day earlier, killing five militants linked to the India-backed group Fitna-e-Hindustan.

An ISPR statement said the operation targeted terrorists whose presence had been reported in the area. Officials confirmed that the slain militants were involved in multiple terrorist activities in the region, and a large cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered.

In letter to CJP, jailed PTI leaders seek early hearing of appeals pending before LHC 'for last 8 months'

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Several jailed PTI leaders have written to Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi, seeking the early hearing of appeals against their convictions in a May 9 riots case, it emerged on Monday.

On July 22, 2025, a Lahore Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) sentenced Yasmin Rashid, Omar Sarfraz Cheema, Ejaz Chaudhry, Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed and others to 10 years in prison in a case related to violence on Sherpao Bridge.

In the letter — a copy of which is available with Dawn — Rashid, Cheema, Rasheed and Chaudhry contended that despite being "law-abiding citi-

zens of Pakistan", their constitutional rights had been "trampled" upon as



they continued to suffer "political victimisation".

"We have been languishing in jail for the last 34 months," the letter stated.

Recalling the July 2025 sentences, the leaders said they had submitted appeals against their convictions before the Lahore High Court (LHC) since their sentencing. "[However,]

for the last eight months, our appeals and suspensions have not been

heard." The leaders recalled that their lawyer had "submitted a petition three months back for an early hearing, but to no avail".

"Our families have been running from pillar to post without any response," the letter read.

The incarcerated leaders stressed that "justice delayed was justice denied" appeal-

ing to the CJP to issue instructions to the LHC for hearing the appeals "as soon as possible".

"We are appealing to you for our constitutional rights," the leaders said, addressing CJP Afridi.

"Sir, as you expedited the court regarding our trial and early disposal, please expedite our appeals and suspension order also," the letter concluded.

The state had launched a crackdown against PTI founder Imran and his party in the wake of the May 9 riots in 2023, filing several other cases against them.

In the case of these jailed politicians, Sarwar Road police had registered a case against PTI leaders.

At least five killed in roof collapse during BISP disbursement in Rahim Yar Khan

PEAK POINT

RAHIM YAR KHAN: At least five women were killed and several others were injured when the roof of a shop collapsed during the distribution of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) payments in Punjab's Rahim Yar Khan district, a spokesperson for the district administration said.

District administration spokesperson, Mohammad Ateeq Khan, while talking to the media persons said reports suggest more than 200 people were gathered at the site, the first floor of a local shop in the Chak.

KSE-100 plunges over 4,000 points amid oil price surge

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan's benchmark KSE-100 index slipped 4,687.50 points to close in the red on Monday, marking a turbulent start to the week as selling pressure returned to the market.

The index shed 3.05 per cent from its previous close of 153,866.16 points. During the session, the benchmark touched an intraday high of 153,943.69 points and fell to a low of 148,747.72 points, reflecting persistent downward pressure throughout the day. The sharp decline follows.

Iran FM says ready to take war with Israel, US 'as far as' necessary

PEAK POINT

IRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that Tehran had shown it was ready to take the war with Israel and the United States as far as necessary.

"I think by now they have learned a good lesson and understood what kind of nation they are dealing with, one that does not hesitate to defend itself and is ready to continue the war wherever it may lead, and take it as far as necessary," said Araghchi during a weekly foreign ministry briefing. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmacil Baghaei on Monday said the Strait of Hormuz will not be open to any country seeking to strike Iran, adding that Iran's armed forces control the passage and no country

can use it to launch attacks on Iran. He said the pas-



way. He stated that Iran has historically been the guardian of safe passage through the strait but blamed the US and Israel for creating the current conditions.

According to Al Jazeera, Baghaei further said Iran never trusted the US during their talks. The spokesperson said that negotiations with the US had been conducted with Tehran's eyes wide open and with absolute distrust

Trump says talks with Cuba ongoing, action possible after Iran

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that the United States could soon reach a deal with Cuba or take other action, signaling that developments in the long-strained relationship may come quickly.

"Cuba also wants to make a deal, and I think we will pretty soon either make a deal or do whatever we have to do," Trump said to reporters on Air Force One. "We're talking to Cuba, but we're going to do Iran before Cuba."

The comments come as tensions between Washington and Havana remain elevated following years of sanctions, diplomatic friction and disputes over migration and security, with regional allies and investors watching closely for signs of a policy shift.

Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on Friday that the country opened talks with the United States as the island faces one of its most severe economic crises in decades.





SPORTS



South Africa tear through NZ to win first T20



PEAK POINT
MOUNT MAUNGANUI: A new-look South Africa scythed through New Zealand's batting lineup to comfortably win Sunday's first Twenty20 International by seven wickets, with 20 balls to spare. The visitors' seam attack proved unplayable early on as World Cup finalists New Zealand were reduced to 36-5 before being dismissed for 91 in the 15th over, their 10th lowest total in T20s. South Africa eased to 93-3 in response, with opener Connor Esterhuizen's unbeaten 45 off 48 balls ensuring they would claim early honours in the five-match

series. The 24-year-old was one of four South African players making their international debut in any format, alongside Ruben Hermann, Dian Forrester and Nqobani Mokoena. Teenage pace bowler Mokoena impressed with the ball, exploiting unpredictable bounce at Mount Maunganui's Bay Oval to take 3-26 off 3.3 overs. The 19-year-old ripped through New Zealand's tail to ensure they didn't push their total past 100. "It was quite cool making my balls debut. I just went out there and enjoyed it," Mokoena, 19, said.

"The whole team was backing me and I was quite excited for it. I just stuck to my plans and thank God it came off." Fellow pacemen Gerald Coetzee and Otneil Baartman took two wickets each for South Africa. The match came a week after New Zealand were beaten by India in the T20 World Cup final in Ahmedabad. Only captain Mitchell Santner and allrounder Jimmy Neesham were retained, with most of New Zealand's leading players rested. Santner was the pick of their bowlers, taking 1-8 off four overs while Neesham top-scored with 26

before he was Mokoena's first victim. South Africa's last match was their World Cup semi-final defeat to New Zealand. The only Proteas survivor from that match was spinner Keshav Maharaj, who is captain for this series and played his 50th T20 international. Game two is in Hamilton on Tuesday. **Scoreboard**
NEW ZEALAND:
D. Conway c de Zorzi b Coetzee1 T. Latham lbw b Coetzee7 T. Robinson c Linde b Baartman6 N. Kelly b Baartman2 B. Jacobs run out10.

Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan, Fatima Sana nominated for Player of the Month award



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan and women's team captain Fatima Sana have been nominated for the for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for February.

In men's category, the ICC has also nominated England all-rounder Will Jacks and United States of America fast bowler Shadley van Schalkwyk.

In women's category, India seam bowler Arundhati Reddy and Sri Lanka's Harshitha Samarawickrama complete the women's shortlist.

Sahibzada outshone other batters with a record aggregate in an ICC Men's T20 World Cup while Will Jacks and Schalkwyk were other standout performers. All three were in the ICC Team of the Tournament announced at the end of the event. Schalkwyk named as the 12th player. The hard-hitting opener amassed 383 runs at an average of 76.60 and a strike-rate of 160.25 in seven T20is during the tournament. He broke Virat Kohli's record runs in one edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and became the first to register two centuries in a single edition - against Namibia and Sri Lanka.

Pakistan lodge complaint over controversial umpiring decision in third Bangladesh ODI



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan cricket team has formally lodged a complaint with match referee Naeem Rashed regarding a contentious umpiring decision during the third One-Day International against Bangladesh in Mirpur.

Reports indicated that the Pakistani team management objected to on-field umpire Kumar Dharmasena allowing Bangladesh to take an LBW review after the ball had already been shown on the stadium's big screen. Pakistan argued that, according to the rules, a review should be taken before the replay becomes visible to players. The incident occurred on the penultimate delivery of the final over, with Pakistan needing 12 runs off two balls. Bangladesh's leg-spinner Rishad Hossain bowled a

delivery down the leg side, initially called a wide. After consultation, Bangladesh opted for an LBW review, and ball-tracking technology showed the ball had missed Shaheen Afridi, leaving Pakistan with 12 runs off one ball. On the final delivery, Shaheen Afridi was dismissed, and Bangladesh won the match by 11 runs, clinching the series 2-1. This marks the second consecutive match where Pakistan has raised concerns over umpiring decisions, following an earlier dispute involving Salman Ali Agha.

BN Polo win President of Pakistan National Open title



PFF chief Gilani sets new precedent, donates allowances to rising star

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani has launched a pioneering initiative aimed at recognising and motivating emerging football talent in the country. Under the initiative, the first of its kind in Pakistan football, Gilani will distribute his allowances from attending PFF Congress and Executive Committee meetings among top-performing players, making it a regular practice to reward outstanding performances.

The PFF president inaugurated the initiative by presenting his allowance from the Congress meeting held on December 29, 2025, to Pakistan men's U-20 team player Mohammad Abdullah during a brief visit to Jinnah Stadium in Islamabad, where the national side is preparing for the upcoming SAFF Under-20 Championship.

During his visit on Saturday, Gilani observed the team's training session under head coach Shahzad Anwar and



Abdullah became the first recipient of the PFF president's allowance award in recognition of his outstanding performances in the SAFF U-17 Championship. The young striker finished as the tournament's top scorer with six goals, helping Pakistan reach the semifinals.

PSL11 tickets to go on sale today



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PIA Privatization moves toward financial close as senate panel reviews assets, profits and pensioners' benefits

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The ongoing privatization of Pakistan International Airlines came under detailed scrutiny during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatization, where officials informed lawmakers that the transaction is moving toward financial close while questions were raised regarding the airline's assets, liabilities, and benefits for retired employees. The meeting, chaired by Senator Afnan Ullah Khan at Parliament House, reviewed the progress of the privatization process and the restructuring of the national flag carrier. Officials from the Privatization Commission told the committee that the financial closing of the transaction is expected by the end of April,

indicating that the privatization process is approaching its final stage. Privatization Commission Secretary Usman Bajwa informed the committee that a consortium led by Arif Habib is currently working on forming the airline's future management structure and is in the process of identifying a new chief executive officer and management team for the airline once the privatization is completed. Officials also revealed that a new corporate entity named PIA Equity Limited has been established to facilitate the privatization structure. The company will include all shareholders participating in the consortium that will take control of the airline. Authorities further informed the committee that Fauji Fertilizer Company is

expected to join the consortium, subject to approval by the Cabinet Committee on Privatization. The committee was briefed that two working groups have been constituted to manage different aspects of the privatization transaction. These groups are reporting to a central steering committee overseeing the process, while officials indicated that no major obstacles currently remain in completing the deal. Lawmakers were also informed about the financial and asset structure of the PIA Holding Company, which retains the airline's major assets and liabilities during the restructuring process. According to officials, the holding company currently manages properties valued at approximately Rs12 billion, while liabilities

amounting to nearly Rs180 billion have also been transferred to it as part of the financial restructuring plan. One major asset highlighted during the briefing was a prime commercial plot in Islamabad's New Blue Area, estimated to be worth around Rs3 billion, reflecting the significant real estate holdings connected to the national airline. Officials also informed the committee that PIA recorded a profit of Rs7.3 billion during the year, while a profit figure of Rs26 billion has been submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, indicating improved financial performance ahead of the privatization transaction. The committee also examined the issue of medical facilities for retired PIA employees and

pensioners, an issue that has generated complaints from former staff members. According to officials, the airline currently has approximately 16,500 pensioners, out of which around 12,500 are active beneficiaries of various welfare schemes. Authorities told lawmakers that proposals from the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan for providing medical insurance coverage to retired employees have been approved, and arrangements with hospitals across the country are currently being finalized to ensure access to healthcare services. Chairman Senator Afnan Ullah Khan took notice of the complaints raised by retired employees regarding medical facilities and directed the relevant

authorities to ensure better healthcare support and timely implementation of the insurance arrangements. Committee members also raised questions regarding PIA's asset valuation, the structure of the privatization transaction, and tax concessions granted on the purchase of new aircraft, seeking clarity on how these issues will be addressed during the final stages of privatization. During the meeting, the chairman also highlighted the strategic significance of Gwadar International Airport, stating that its location near the Middle East and Central Asia offers the potential to develop it as a regional aviation hub capable of attracting international traffic and boosting Pakistan's aviation sector.

HEC advises IT students to register for NSCT by March 20, 2026

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has advised the students enrolled in 7th and 8th semesters of computing programmes to contact their university focal persons before the deadline of March 20, 2026, and register for the National Skill Competency Test (NSCT). The free-of-charge, computer-based NSCT – to be

conducted simultaneously across Pakistan in early April – enables the IT students to be part of the national IT talent pool and have access to employment opportunities in the IT industry. High-achieving students will receive a joint certificate by HEC, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), and Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA). These students will also be

included in the national talent pool that is accessible to both local and international employers. In addition, the qualifying students will receive one academic credit from their respective institutions and gain prioritised access to internships, apprenticeships, and international certification pathways. It is pertinent to mention here that HEC announced the commencement of

NSCT for IT graduates in January as a landmark initiative to align academic outcomes with the rapidly evolving demands of the global technology sector. The test has been designed in pursuance of the Prime Minister's directives and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication (MoITT), and P@SHA. HEC has urged the high-

er education institutions to ensure participation of their students in view of its importance. The Commission has linked the results of this test to national benchmarking of universities in the computing domain, under which the universities will be categorised into performance tiers based on their students' success in the NSCT. HEC has already sensitised the universities to facilitate the

registration process through nominated focal persons and recently held an orientation session for the university focal persons. The NSCT offers a transformative opportunity to the students currently enrolled in their 7th and 8th semesters of computing programmes, including Computer Science, Software Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and related fields.

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Managing Lahore's balance sheet

Nadeem ul Haque
A COMMON refrain among critics and residents of other Punjab cities is that Lahore has been unduly pampered by successive provincial governments. Substantial provincial transfers, it is argued, have financed its infrastructure and socioeconomic services at the expense of other jurisdictions. The reality, however, is more sobering. Lahore does not need such supposed favours. In fact, Lahore suffers from being heavily controlled — and effectively taxed — by a provincial administration that does not allow the city to own, manage and leverage its assets for value. Lahore is among the wealthiest cities in South Asia in terms of public assets. Yet its potential to become vibrant, liveable and economically dynamic is stifled by provincial domination, primitive regulatory congestion and chronic political and bureaucratic misgovernance. These failures are compounded by a fragmented institutional structure of multiple agencies with overlapping mandates. An equally important — and less understood — constraint is the failure to measure what the city actually owns. Lahore sits on trillions of rupees worth of public land, real estate, metro corridors, parks, heritage sites and other fee-generating instruments. But a critical piece is missing: there is no comprehensive balance sheet — no sys-

tematically developed registry cataloguing and valuing urban assets to present a consolidated financial position, and no governance framework designed to harness and grow this capital. In global cities such as Toronto, Singapore and Copenhagen, public assets are actively managed to build wealth, improve services and support sustainable growth. In Lahore, we do not even count them. The result is a city that owns billions but behaves as if it owns nothing. A proper asset accounting system would shift the focus from political control to economic performance, strengthening fiscal autonomy and governance. Leveraging these assets could unlock major resource mobilisation through commercialisation, user charges, rezoning, revaluation, and better capture of rising land and property values. Such an exercise would clarify responsibilities, align incentives and enhance transparency — making corruption harder to sustain. It would enable realistic assessment of available resources, better planning of future development and rational trade-offs between new projects and maintenance of existing assets. It would also support sustainable financing mechanisms such as municipal bonds and other capital market instruments. A credible financial profile would attract private investment in infrastructure and service

Our own one battle after another

Fahd Husain
We are all in battle mode. Ask Donald Trump. Ask Masood Pezeshkian. Ask Leonardo DiCaprio. And ask Pakistanis braving loitering munitions, rising prices and growing uncertainty engulfing every aspect of their lives. War in the season of Oscars could well be a movie title itself. Today the Hollywood's best and the brightest gather in Los Angeles for the 98th Oscar award ceremony, taking place under the shadow of a Trump/Netanyahu imposed war on Iran whose script has gone awry. As Sinners fights One Battle After Another for the best picture Oscar, never before have titles of the two leading contender films more reflected roles being played by American and Israeli leaders on the geo-political screen. Life often imitates art in the most grotesque manner. X Life has also acquired the nasty habit of throwing informational curve balls on our digital timelines. With the Gulf war dominating global and local news cycles at the expense of literally every other issue (including our very own war), the insatiable appetite for information is growing by the minute. To satiate this craving — and make money via audience engagement — content generators have gone into overdrive to disseminate content regardless of how much it weighs on the Truth-o-Meter. It is such a struggle: this stress-inducing losing battle to make sense of the ballooning chaos around us. In a world seemingly spinning out of control, how does one excavate sense from a growing reservoir of senselessness? Those familiar support structures we all used to depend on, they are all slowly withering away in a digital storm that shows all signs of growing stronger and wilder in times ahead. When a genocidal maniac like Netanyahu gets to ignite wars and unleash mayhem at whim, what can make sense anymore? Courtesy Tribune

Death by negligence

Eighty lives — that is the toll now quantified in the KMC Fire Department's report presented to the judicial commission probing the Gul Plaza blaze. Despite multiple fire safety audits by Civil Defence and KMC, the gutted shopping plaza of Karachi lacked alarm systems, sprinklers, hydrants and functional emergency exits. The report does not speak in conditions. It concludes, plainly, that serious violations of fire safety protocols turned a commercial plaza into a killing field. Among the dead is firefighter Furqan, who gave his life trying to undo what years of regulatory dereliction had made inevitable. The horror inside Gul Plaza that January 17 night was compounded at every turn by failures that were entirely preventable as per the report. When electricity was cut as a precautionary measure, the blackout plunged an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 people into darkness, triggering panic as smoke-filled corridors and staircases reduced visibility to near zero. Thirteen of the sixteen exits were locked. Thirty bodies were eventually recovered from a single crockery store on the mezzanine floor. These are not the casualties of an unforeseeable disaster but of a system that routinely issued warnings it never enforced and approved plans it never inspected.

CM Bugti vows to end educational backwardness by upgradation of 1000 schools in next fiscal year budget



PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Monday said that incumbent provincial government has decided to take revolutionary measures to eliminate educational backwardness in the province.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting regarding the preparations for the next fiscal year budget, in which a comprehensive strategy was considered for the improvement of the education sector and bringing out-of-school children into educational institutions.

The meeting was briefed in

detail by Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan on the salient features of the next fiscal year budget.

In briefing said that a five-year comprehensive program has been proposed to bring out-of-school children into the sphere of education in the province, so that maximum children could be brought to schools.

The meeting also decided to upgrade 679 primary and 409 middle schools in the budget of the next fiscal year.

According to the briefing, the educational imbalance that has arisen during the last fifteen years is expected to be eliminated to a large extent with the upgrading of about one thousand schools.

The meeting also considered the proposal to provide reasonable monthly stipend to female students to promote female education so that the education of girls could be promoted and their attendance in schools would be ensured.

On this occasion, a detailed briefing was also given by the Planning and Development Department on 308 departmental development schemes at a cost of Rs 174 billion.

Addressing the meeting, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti said that reforms in the education sector are the top priority of the government and it is the responsibility of the government to send every child to school.

He said that education, health and provision of basic facilities to the people would be given priority in the budget of the next financial year. The Chief Minister said that investment in education is actually an investment in the bright future of Balochistan and the government is taking practical steps to make the educational facilities in the province compatible with modern requirements so that the young generation gets better opportunities. He said that the improvement of educational institutions.

Rana Mashhood continues Sahoor, Iftar arrangements for worshippers observing Itikaf

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), has continued special arrangements for daily sahoor and iftar for worshippers observing "itikaf" and members of the public at Jamia Masjid Darul Quran Wal Tartil during the holy month of Ramadan, aiming to facilitate devotees and strengthen the spirit of collective worship and service.

The arrangements are being carried out regularly at the mosque located on Lytton Road in Mozang, Lahore, where a large number of worshippers gather for prayers and many spend the last ten days of Ramadan observing "itikaf", dedicating themselves to prayer, recitation of the Holy Quran and spiritual reflection.

According to organisers, special arrangements have been



made to provide freshly prepared meals for both sahoor and iftar to ensure convenience for worshippers and visitors attending the mosque. Volunteers and community members are assisting in the distribution of meals to facilitate devotees engaged in extended prayers and help them focus on their spiritual practices without concern for food arrangements.

Chairman PMYP said the initiative reflected the values of generosity, compassion and service that define Ramadan, adding that serving worshippers and facilitating those engaged.

Pakistan posts largest current account surplus of 2026: Khurram Schehzad

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recorded its largest current account (CA) surplus of 2026, posting a \$427 million surplus in February 2026, the highest since March 2025 when it stood at \$1.28 billion, Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad posted on X.

He said, this also marks the second consecutive monthly surplus, following a \$60 million surplus in January 2026, signaling continued improvement in Pakistan's external sector.

The back-to-back surpluses reflect strong remittance inflows, improving value-added exports, and disciplined imports (growth-



driven), strengthening macroeconomic stability and easing pressure on external financing.

Though challenges exist given the regional conflict, however, Pakistan's stabilized external account with adequate

buffers, is a key milestone for sustainable economic recovery and investor confidence, he added.

Cabinet body briefed on comfortable fuel stocks, import diversification

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices was informed here Monday that the country currently had comfortable stocks of crude oil and key petroleum products for March, with supply arrangements secured until mid-April and efforts underway to further extend coverage while diversifying imports.

The Committee met under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, as part of its ongoing daily review of developments in the energy sector in light of evolving regional conditions.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik; Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry; Governor State Bank of Pakistan, federal secretaries and senior officials from the concerned ministries, divisions and regulatory authorities.

The Committee undertook a comprehensive review of petroleum product stock posi-

tions across the country and was briefed in detail on the current national inventory of crude oil and refined petroleum products, ongoing import arrangements, and supply chain logistics.

The Committee was informed that the country remains adequately positioned in terms of fuel availability, with March requirements fully secured.

It was further noted that based on current cargo planning and supply arrangements, coverage is available up to mid-April and efforts are underway to extend coverage further towards the end of April. Overall stock levels and scheduled imports indicate that the country maintains comfortable inventories of crude oil and key petroleum products for March, with sufficient planning in place to ensure continued availability during April. The meeting also reviewed procurement patterns and maritime logistics.

In the context of ongoing regional developments. In this regard, the Committee emphasized the importance of further diversifying sources of supply to enhance resilience of the national energy supply chain.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices to review petroleum stocks, global supply chain developments, and national energy preparedness at the Finance Division.

President expresses grief over tragic incident in Rahimyar Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Monday, expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the tragic incident in Rahimyar Khan which resulted in women's casualties at a private payment point.

According to media reports, a number of women were dead and injured when the roof of the shop collapsed while Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiaries were also present at the time of occurrence of the tragedy.

The president expressed his condolences with the bereaved families and prayed for the early recovery of the injured. President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

He also directed provision of best possible health facilities to the injured and all possible support to the affected families.

The president further directed BISP Chairman Senator Rubina Khalid to immediately visit Rahimyar Khan. He also directed for submission of a report after evaluation.

RTI information board inaugurated in Bannu

ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: The RTI information board has been inaugurated. The board was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance) Umar Khattab Khan on the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner Bannu. Speaking to the media on the occasion of the inauguration, Additional Deputy Commissioner Umar Khattab Khan said that the Right to Information (RTI) Act was introduced in the province to eliminate corruption and malpractice, and it is an excellent law. He said that this law has brought institutions under the scope of accountability and has given citizens the power to ask questions. If institutions fulfill their responsibilities and the public starts asking questions from them, it will make good governance possible. He further said that all institutions in Pakistan that are engaged in public service are accountable to



the people because the system is run through taxpayers' money. Therefore, under the RTI Act, the public has the right to ask how their tax money is being spent. One benefit of this Act is that it will also help ensure the implementation of merit-based policies. He added that the doors of government offices are open to the public and citizens can submit applications to obtain any kind of information. On this occasion, Chief Executive of CDPK, Faiz Mashal, gave a detailed briefing regarding the organization's activities related to RTI in Bannu.

Governor KP briefed on rehabilitation work of CRBC breach in DI Khan

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi was briefed on Monday regarding the ongoing rehabilitation work at the breach site of the Chashma Right Bank Canal near Mochianwala in Tehsil Paharpur, District Dera Ismail Khan.

During the briefing, General Manager North Wapda, Mujahid Tanveer informed the Governor that the canal had developed a breach at RD 148+500 on March 4, causing damage to a portion of around 150 feet.

He said the breach was likely caused by the formation of porcupine burrows on the canal bank, adding that although no loss of life was reported, water entered some nearby houses and damaged a few crops in surrounding areas.

The Governor was informed that immediate steps were taken after the incident to control the water flow, including reducing discharge from the regulator at Chashma Barrage and operating escapes at Bilot and Pusha to manage the situation.

The briefing further stated that dewatering of the



site was completed on March 6 and rehabilitation work resumed after security clearance from the district administration. Heavy machinery, including dumpers, loaders, bulldozers, excavators, rollers and tractors, has been deployed to expedite restoration work

at the site. It was also shared that earth filling, spreading, watering and compaction work at the breached portion was progressing rapidly, while field density tests were conducted to ensure proper compaction and stability of the fill material. As of March

16 morning, around 90 percent physical progress has been achieved and the earthwork is expected to be completed by the evening. After completion of the earthwork, a geo-membrane will be installed on the slope of the newly filled material on March 17. The briefing added that the canal is expected to become operational again by March 18, restoring irrigation supply to the command areas dependent on the canal. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi appreciated the prompt response and professional efforts of the teams of Wapda working on

the rehabilitation of the Chashma Right Bank Canal breach. He commended the engineers and field staff for ensuring swift restoration work despite operational and security challenges, and expressed hope that the canal would be fully functional soon to facilitate irrigation for farmers in the area. The Governor also emphasized the importance of taking preventive measures to avoid such incidents in the future and directed the authorities concerned to ensure continuous monitoring and timely maintenance of irrigation infrastructure.