

Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar presents Economic Survey for fiscal year 2022-23 during a press conference.

Unveils Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23 Govt rescued crippling economy, averted default in face of serious inherited challenges: Dar

Says Rupee's real value is around Rs 240/\$; GDP posted a growth of 0.29% in FY23

ISLAMABAD (Online): The government's economic team headed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday while presenting the Economic Survey 2022-23 that there is no quick fix, but the decline of the economy has been stopped and the risk of default has been averted. He maintained his argument, however, that the rupee's real value is in the 240s against the dollar. "We have stopped the decline of the economy and have prevented Pakistan from default. Now our objective is 3.5% growth for next year," said Dar. "The baseline is core inflation, which is in the range of 16-20%. The world over the core inflation is followed and not the headline inflation," he added. Unveiling the Economic Survey, the finance minister said that the fiscal year 2022-23 was a difficult year for the economy. There are 17 chapters in the economic survey on different sectors of the economy. The report discusses in detail sectoral, socio-economic development, agriculture, manufacturing, energy, IT, capital market, health, education and transport sectors. "Pakistan was the 24th largest economy in 2017, but has now dropped to the 47th position," said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, adding that, "For the restoration of the economy, we have made a plan, our objective is to restore macroeconomic stability, we need to bring it back to what it was in 2017." Higher international commodity prices (crude oil, edible oil, pulses etc), global supply disruptions, damages of major and minor crops due to flood, currency depreciation, administrative price adjustment and political uncertainty are major factors responsible for high inflation, said Ishaq Dar on Thursday.

BAP not to become part of federal budget session: CM announces boycott of federal budget session of NA starting today

President BAP and Chief Minister directs members of National Assembly and Senate not to participate in budget session; urges Asif Ali Zardari, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Sardar Akhtar Mengal and other national leaders of province to support our stance

Independent Report
QUETTA: In yet another major development after boycott of the meeting of National Economic Council (NEC), the President of ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has announced to boycott of the federal budget session of the National Assembly due to commence today (Friday). In an official statement issued here on Thursday, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has asserted that the BAP would not become part of the federal budget session. It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister has already boycotted the NEC meeting held in Islamabad couple of days earlier due to "non-cooperative" and "cold" attitude of the federal government towards the province. The Chief Minister maintained that the members of National Assembly and Senators would not be participating in the federal budget session. In this regard, clear directives have been issued to the members of NA and

TAPI project to strengthen energy security of Pakistan, region: PM

Pakistan, Turkmenistan sign joint implementation plan to execute TAPI gas pipeline project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that being a critical component of his government's vision, the TAPI gas pipeline project would ensure energy security, economic growth and prosperity in Pakistan as well as the entire region. The prime minister, in a meeting with a high ranking delegation from Turkmenistan, said the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas project was manifestation of the strategic cooperation between Pakistan and Turkmenistan in the energy sector. The delegation was headed by State Minister and Head of TurkmenGaz Maksat Babayev, a PM Office press release said. Welcoming the delegation, the prime minister said Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoyed brotherly relations underpinned by common history, culture and religion. He said the leadership on both sides had been desirous to further promote economic and commercial relations. He underscored that Pakistan could be a gateway for quick access to Turkmenistan's rich energy reserves.



ISLAMABAD: State Minister of Turkmenistan and Head of TurkmenGaz, Maksat Babayev and Minister of State for Petroleum of Pakistan, Dr. Musaddiq Malik signing TAPI Joint Implementation Plan meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing.

Imran's arrogance & ego cause party's disintegration, says Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) disintegrated due to arrogance, ego and stubbornness of its chief who himself had destroyed his own politics. She cited a famous couplet of an Urdu poet on her Twitter handle, referring to the current state of the PTI and its chief. "Dil Kay Phapholay Jhal Uthay Seenay Kay Dagh Sy, Is Ghar Ko Aag Lag Gai Ghar Kay Chiragh Sy," the minister said in the tweet while calling out the PTI chief for his arrogance and ego. "The house of cards based on the idols of arrogance, ego and selfishness has faced a sudden collapse. The PTI is now spiritless with the departure of those who had laid the party's foundations," Marriyum said. She said the "arrogant man" had once stated that joining or quitting of the people did not matter for the party but he himself had now become a lesson for others (after the departure of his party leaders).

Jahangir Tareen launches Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party with PTI defectors

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior politician Jahangir Khan Tareen announced the formation of a new political party — Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party — during the party's first joint press conference in Islamabad on Thursday. He was flanked by former PTI leaders Imran Ismail, Aleem Khan and Ali Zaidi, among others during the press conference. A day earlier, nearly 100 former PTI members of the national and provincial assemblies joined the new party, expressing confidence in Tareen's leadership. "Today, we're announcing formation of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party. Under one platform, we're together and will try to steer Pakistan out of current crises," Tareen said. "Today, our nation needs hope the most so this country could achieve its true potential. No one can be allowed to attack state institutions in shape of mobs. It is not just about attacking institutions but most importantly people are losing hope." "We have to make a Pakistan where establishment, judiciary, political forces and all stakeholders are on the same page. We all want to take Pakistan towards prosperity," he added. "Today, we need to change how politics is conducted in our country. It needs a new direction. We will make joint efforts to achieve that." He emphasised that to take Pakistan out of economic turmoil, focus has to be shifted towards increasing exports and incentivising the IT sector.

CJP back in action to revive 'pre-May 9 position'

ISLAMABAD (Online): The remarks passed in the last two days suggest that the Supreme Court, led by the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP), is trying to revive its position before the May 9 violence, triggered by the arrest of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman. The May 9 mayhem had even pushed those judges, who had tried hard to hold the elections to the Punjab Assembly on May 14, on the defensive. Later, they had no choice but to show restraint in matters wherein confrontation between the judiciary and other institutions especially the parliament, executive, security establishment, etc, could have worsened. Now it is being witnessed that CJP Umar Ata Bandial has listed petitions against the federal government's formation of an inquiry commission, led by SC's Justice Qazi Faez Isa, to investigate the audio leaks in relation to judges. While the hearing of the audio leaks commission case was underway, CJP Bandial wondered who had planted the audio leaks on social media. The bench allowed Shoaib Shaheen, the lawyer for one of the petitioners, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid Zuberi, to present his arguments that the leaks were released on social media after the SC's February 16 order wherein the CJP was requested to invoke his suo motu jurisdiction over the delay in elections to Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) assemblies.



QUETTA: Inspector General Prisons Shuja Kasi meeting with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango

Two policemen among three martyred in Swat

From Arif Ahmad
SWAT: Three persons, including two police personnel, were martyred in the firing by unknown persons in the main city of Swat, Mingora. According to police sources, three unidentified armed men opened fire on two policemen near Mingora vegetable market, as a result of which police constables Umara Khan and Ashraf were killed on the spot. While Bank Security Guard Musa Khan was injured and shifted to Saidu Sharif Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. According to police sources, both policemen were posted at Mingora police station. According to SP Farman Khan, the accused fled after the incident and a search operation has been started to arrest them. "Blockades have been imposed on the entry and exit routes of Swat and soon the accused will be caught by the police. This is an incident of terrorism and the terrorists will be arrested soon." He added. On the other hand, the relatives of the martyred police blocked Saidu Sharif road and protested. The protesters kept the bodies on the road and raised slogans against the incident. The protesters said that they had no enmity with anyone, so the police should present the accused and arrest them immediately, bringing the facts before the people. Later, after talks with SP Farman Khan, DSP Atallah, DSP Amjad, and Additional Deputy Commissioner Sohail Khan, the protest ended.



TURBAT: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over a review meeting during his visit of University of Turbat

GoB disburses Rs 19.6b for education in FY 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Balochistan government has allocated an amount of Rs 19.6 billion for higher education and secondary education, provided for 503 on-going and 237 new development projects during the financial year 2022-23. According to Economic Survey 2022-23 unveiled here Thursday, the amounts of Rs 8.8 billion and Rs 10.8 billion were earmarked for the higher and secondary education, respectively. During the financial year 2022-23, multiple measures have been taken in the Education sector including Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25), priority areas are governance and management, reforming data and research, access and participation, childcare and welfare, assessment and examination and teaching and learning.

Governor visits Turbat University: Concrete steps being taken to materialize dream of literate & developed Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that concrete steps are being taken for materializing the dream of educated and developed province. He said that education is the basis of every kind of development, this is why the incumbent government is determined to provide quality education in the province. The Governor was speaking on occasion of the visit of Turbat University on Thursday morning. During the visit, he met the Vice Chancellor of Turbat University, Professor Dr. Jan Muhammad, Principal Secretary to Governor, Abdul Nasir Dotani and other faculty members and staff. He went round of different departments and sections of the University. He was also briefed about the overall performance and functioning of the University.

Protest of Govt & varsities' teachers echoed in session: Opposition leader accuses of Govt. of not realizing funds for current year PSDP

Independent Report
QUETTA: The leader of Opposition in Balochistan Assembly, Malik Sikandar Khan Advocate has stated that amount of the current financial year's public sector development programme (PSDP) and the PSDP plus has not been released yet. He said that the work on development projects are stopped due to non-release of the funds. The Opposition leader raised the point while speaking on budget proposals for the next financial year during the session of Balochistan Assembly on Thursday. The Speaker, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali was in the chair.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Mir Naseebullah Marri, MPAs Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Sana Baloch and Sardar Khan meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali

Cabinet meets today to approve federal budget

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal cabinet will meet today (Friday) under the Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to accord approval to the federal budget for the next financial year of 2023-24. The meeting will take place in parliament house. Finance Minister (FM) Ishaq Dar along with his economic team will give detailed briefing in the meeting on the salient features of budget. The final decision about enhancement in pay and pension of government employees will be taken and approval thereof will be accorded in this meeting.



LAHORE: Senior Politician Jahangir Tareen announces new political party named 'Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party' (IPP) during a press conference.

Directs to launch Health Cards instantly: CM bans holding of inaugural ceremonies of development projects in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has imposed a ban on holding of the inaugural ceremonies of the development projects in the province. According to an official communique issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister directed the provincial ministers, members of provincial assembly and government high ups to avoid from holding of the foundation stone laying and inaugural sessions of the projects. He asserted that the public works are done with the resources of the masses and public exchequer. The credit of these projects should not be given to anyone but it is right of the people, adding he stressed. The Chief Minister asserted that the inauguration of public nature development projects is nothing but sheer wastage of public resources and machinery. He also said that it doesn't create a good impression from publicity and pictures of the inauguration of projects and solution of the problems is important instead of the apparent publicity and show-off, he maintained. He said that it is our responsibility to reach the fruits of development process. He said that the development projects are the right of people and it is not a sort of any kindness. Moreover, the Chief Minister directed to launch the Balochistan Health Card Programme at the earliest. He also directed not to hold any inaugural ceremony of the initiation of Health Card Programme.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Qureshi returns

PTI vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has been granted his freedoms back. Given how brazenly the state has targeted the party's leadership while denying them due rights and liberties, one wonders why.

On Tuesday, he simply walked out of Adiala Jail after a Lahore High Court bench set aside his detention order. There was no police escort waiting for him outside to whisk him away on an erstwhile unknown charge, as has been the norm for other PTI leaders.

Nor did he address a press conference to denounce Imran Khan, the PTI, or politics altogether — the usual price for liberty paid by those who have deserted.

Instead, Mr Qureshi used his brief appearance before the media to reiterate his commitment to stand by the PTI chief's side and to assert that he still holds "the flag of justice" in his hands and wishes to see the party succeed.

Those speculating that Mr Qureshi had only been allowed to walk because he was needed to relay an important message to Mr Khan may be on to something.

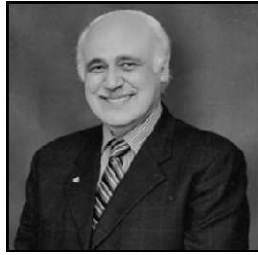
Mr Qureshi had announced a planned meeting with the PTI chairman on Wednesday, in which, he said, he would be sharing his political analysis and seeking guidance from Mr Khan on the path forward.

There was speculation that the message he was actually taking to Mr Khan was simple: excuse yourself from politics, or continue to watch your party be decimated by the state.

If true, this would be a tricky dilemma for Mr Khan. Mr Qureshi was named heir by Mr Khan himself; choice number one would see him seize the prize of the campaigning and considerable effort put in by Mr Khan into reviving his party post the 2022 vote of no-confidence. Choice number two could leave Mr Khan isolated and perhaps years away from a comeback to mainstream politics. Presenting a popular public leader with such choices is, of course, unfair; not to mention it is unlikely to dent his actual power. The 'minus-ing' of popular politicians has been tried many times before, with the usual result that it creates lasting problems and resentments instead of providing enduring solutions.

What our powerbrokers continue to not understand is that political legitimacy is not conferred by the state that it can be taken away by it too. It is drawn from public support and can only be contested through the democratic process. Taking the PTI chief out of the elections process may satisfy a few egos, but doing so will also make those who are lawfully entitled to make the decision regarding his political future resentful of the state. Why would anyone risk alienating a very youthful population for very short-term goals? One hopes there are better options on the table instead.

Au revoir, Noah



F.S. Aijazuddin

The Biblical scriptures tell us that Noah loaded his Ark with a pair of every species, especially rodents. He calculated that if his Ark was ever in danger of sinking, rats would be the first to jump ship.

The recent exodus of the senior leadership from the PTI is unparalleled in the history of Pakistani politics. Over the seven decades of our dyslexic democracy, every political party, whenever it came under pressure, has challenged it, or withstood it, or made sacrifices despite it. None more so than the Pakistan Peoples Party, to whom prison became a home away from home.

Never before, though, have so many in the PTI owed so much to so few; in fact, to one sole benefactor — their leader Imran Khan. Yet, they have deserted him with unseemly alacrity. Even the leadership of the Nazi Party in Germany waited until it was clear that the Second World War had been lost before they abandoned Hitler.

Here, the PTI high command when in government had postured, pretending to be leaders with a lofty mission to effect 'true change' in the country. Then, suddenly on a caprice, they quit parliament, effectively abandoning their constituencies, and, after the shameful events of May 9, within days, one by one, they betrayed their modern messiah. Gethsemane became a rout. Disciples became turncoat Judases — all but one, that is. The only one who remains by him — his senior vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi — continues to

pledge his feigned allegiance. What must Imran Khan be feeling now, when even a nonentity like Usman Buzdar, whom he disinterred from obscurity and made chief minister Punjab, resigns from the PTI? Buzdar's elevation in 2018 inevitably drew comparisons with the legendary nomination by the Roman emperor Caligula of his horse, Incitatus, to the Roman Senate. Mr Z.A. Bhutto's selection of G.M. Khar as governor Punjab in 1971 evoked similar derision amongst those who understood the pun on his name.

Was the elevation of both Khar and Buzdar a deliberate slight to the Punjabi elite, or simply an extreme example of cronyism? Imran Khan's faulty selection of his team (some of whom are padding up to play for the other side) makes one appreciate why the Pakistan Cricket Board uses a panel to select players who will play for the nation. Favouritism has no place in any game, especially not in one as dangerous as politics.

Recent machinations have made it clear that Mr Jahangir Tareen — the Croesus kingmaker who helped make Imran Khan prime minister in 2018 — is mobilising his resources to create another realm. For whom? For himself? Before he can enter the fray, though, he needs to be rid of the ban that prohibits him and Nawaz Sharif (PML-N's king across the waters) from contesting elections.

Once these gilded handcuffs have been removed from both of them — it has to be before the next general elections — one should expect to see Nawaz Sharif reigning in the presidency and Jahangir Tareen (health permitting) ruling if not from, then certainly behind the throne in Islamabad.

Switching loyalties or changing parties is not a Pakistani phenomenon. It has happened wherever there is a functioning democracy and a choice of causes — in India, the United States, even in the United Kingdom, where, in that mother of parliament, the father of parliament Winston Churchill began as a Conservative, crossed the floor to become a Liberal, and then returned to the Conservatives.

Ghost in the machine



Rafia Zakaria

The already heated debate around the potential and pitfalls of artificial intelligence reached fever pitch last week, when some of the most respected leaders working in the field got together to say that AI was improving at such a rate that it could potentially lead to an 'extinction' event. This means that AI technology is improving at a pace faster than human beings can come up with ways to govern these new frontiers of machine capability. So what is now ChatGPT and other similar language-based chatbots could soon make the need for human endeavours redundant.

Some of those to sound the alarm are industry leaders whose companies are benefiting from the progress. Together, they issued a statement released by the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Safety: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war." The executives who signed on include Sam Altman, who is the chief of OpenAI, Demis Hassabis, the CEO of Google DeepMind, and Dario Amodei of Anthropic.

Besides these leaders, 350 other researchers, engineers and scientists also signed on to the statement because they too believe that the risk of AI technology progressing into realms that are no longer governable by human beings is a very real possibility and even a likelihood.

Altman has suggested that the world is in need of an overseer agency to govern AI in the same way as the International Atomic Energy Agency monitors the use of atomic technology and prevents those it sees as bad actors from obtaining technology that can be used to construct bombs, which could destroy the world. This parallel should particularly resonate here in the subcontinent, where the technology to build atomic bombs has defined everything for decades now.

Imagine if an arms race for AI was also underway, with errant actors threatening to use the most menacing aspects of AI to derail other countries' transportation systems, flight-operating systems, utilities and all kinds of other mechanisms. Just as the constant threat of terrorists getting control of the atomic bomb frightens people today, so too would the prospect of AI on the march towards human beings' extinction frighten people tomorrow. Add to this the fact that atomic governance was actually something initiated at a moment when constitutional liberalism reigned and international cooperation was considered valuable in itself, and the picture gets more worrisome for many.

In today's times, the world cannot even agree on basic means with which to arrest the cataclysmic pace of climate change. It appears even more unlikely that a whole new frontier could be regulated and governed on the basis of common principles. A grim estimation of this state of affairs would be taking bets on whether it would be a climate catastrophe and a too-hot-to-inhabit planet, or AI-induced extinction of the human race that would end the world as we know it first. Nevertheless, a word must be said here about just how tantalising AI-generated tools are. When one American university professor was questioned about how she was dealing with students using ChatGPT, she shrugged her shoulders and said she wasn't doing anything about it. Instead, she responded, the quality of writing taught in American high schools had become so poor and the legibility of student papers was plummeting at such a rate that she would be pleased if they used the tool and produced a readable paper.

Many in the group called GenZ, who do not remember a time when the internet did not exist, have already accepted the tool and put it to use doing all the onerous non-creative sort of writing, such as producing instruction manuals or giving directions from one place to another. It is not difficult to envision a time when this generation, saved from all the 'from scratch' tasks, will not be able to imagine a world without the existence of AI.

Some hope for AI can be drawn from the fact that Sam Altman and others in the industry emphasise that the reason to invest in AI technology is simply that it has the potential to create a better world. The ability to synthesise vast troves of information — whether it is in biomedicine, education or energy — can drastically reduce waste of all sorts and vastly improve the utilisation of limited resources.

No one can stop AI from being developed further, and many say that it is precisely its potential for great good that is driving so many companies into the race to build better in a machine-run world. At the same time, it is also necessary to point to just how large the gap between those with access to technology and those without it is becoming. Even as AI promises new frontiers of efficiency and optimisation, a drastic reduction in the utilisation of labour is in sight. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

USAID official

Pak has tremendous potential to overcome economic challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): USAID Deputy Administrator Isobelle Coleman on Thursday said despite all facing difficulties on economic fronts, Pakistan had tremendous potential to overcome all the challenges.

Talking to the media, she said, "When I look at Pakistan's economy, yes I see high inflation, but I also see enormous opportunities to see IT sector exports grow and enhance food security. The US wants to see a stable and prosperous Pakistan."

Responding to another question, she said that Pakistan needed to

follow robust economic reforms agenda to come out of the current economic crisis.

However, she said the private sector and other stakeholders during meetings with her expressed hope for coming out from the current economic challenges.

The USAID official said she held meetings with the private sector working in various groups. She said the US and Pakistan enjoyed cordial relations for the last 75 years.

To a question, Isobelle Coleman said soon after her arrival in Pakistan she visited flood-affected areas and witnessed that the

situation on the ground was not good enough.

She said flood-affected areas of Sindh province were facing the worst situation due to damaged infrastructure, washed away crops and livestock.

She said the USAID had pledged an additional \$16.4 million in funding to bolster the recovery and resilience of communities in Pakistan devastated by the unprecedented floods of 2022. She said these catastrophic floods affected an estimated 33 million people, wreaking havoc on vital infrastructure, crops, livelihoods, and livestock

across the nation.

The newly allocated funds, she said, would provide support to over 20 million individuals affected by the floods, facilitating their recovery, enhancing risk reduction measures, and fostering resilience.

"The assistance will tackle the growing challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease outbreak prevention." Moreover, she said the funding would empower humanitarian partners to deliver nutritious meals to mothers and children, aid in the reconstruction of local infrastructure to mitigate future disasters and expand.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the economic team presenting Economic Survey of Pakistan for FY-2022-23 to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Govt taking all possible measures to make country economically strong, stable

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation of All Pakistan Business Forum led by Syed Muaz Mehmood called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, measures regarding promotion of business and industries in the country were discussed.

Speaking on the

occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is taking all possible measures to make the country economically and economically strong and stable. He said that the business community is a great source of generating employment opportunities in the country.

Naveed invites British Pakistanis to invest in Pak

LONDON (Online): Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar has invited British Pakistanis to invest in Pakistan to benefit from profitable business opportunities and business friendly environment in the country. He was addressing a reception hosted by High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan at the Pakistan High Commission London.

The event brought together UK Parliamentarians, British Pakistani community, and businesspersons. During his speech,

Minister Qamar called upon the British Pakistanis to explore the diverse investment opportunities in Pakistan and highlighted the potential for lucrative profits. He gave an overview of the favorable business environment in Pakistan, mentioning the presence of successful British companies operating in the country.

The Minister expressed his appreciation for the positive contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in the progress and development of Pakistan, as well as their instrumental role in fostering strong bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Earlier, in his welcome remarks, High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan underscored the deep-rooted and longstanding relationship between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

He regarded Minister Qamar's visit as a testament to the enduring strength of this special bond between the two nations.



LAHORE: A delegation of All Pakistan Business Forum led by Syed Muaz Mehmood photographed with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman after a meeting

Property tax rate lowest in Pakistan: Excise Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Caretaker Excise and Communications Minister Bilal Afzal has said that although the property tax rate was lowest in Pakistan as compared to other countries of the South Asia, yet the people still avoided from paying taxes.

He was addressing a briefing arranged to review performance of Excise & Taxation Department (ETD) Faisalabad here on Thursday. He expressed concern over the collection of tax less than its target and said that ETD Faisalabad

would have to work hard to meet tax collection targets. He added that only those inspectors who had excellent performance should be appointed in the areas to overcome the issue of low tax recovery rate. In this connection, a special media awareness campaign should also be launched to motivate the people for paying taxes, he suggested.

The minister assured that he would extend all possible support to resolve the shortage of staff and other problems in ETD Faisalabad.

IT registers phenomenal upward growth of 178%

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over the past 5 years, a phenomenal upward growth of 178 percent in Information Technology and ITES exports has been witnessed at compound annual growth rate of 30 percent, the highest growth rate in comparison to all other local industries in services. According to the Economic Survey 2022-23 launched by Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar here on Thursday Pakistan's IT.

Round Table discussion on 'African Continental Free Trade Area' held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The African Missions in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI), organized a Round Table Discussion on African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA).

The Heads of African Missions in Pakistan and Heads of Pakistan Missions

in Africa also spoke on the occasion. Senior Officers from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Commerce, academics, area specialists and members of the business community and students participated in the event. In his keynote address, the Dean of the African Group/ Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammed Karmoune, said that Africa had a significant role to play.

PQA handling cargo of Rs 31.53m tonne FY 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Port Qasim Authority (PQA) was handling cargo of Rs 31.53 million tonne as compared to Rs 42.20 million tonne during the corresponding period of last year depicting a 25 percent decrease in handled cargo compared to previous fiscal year. According to the Economic Survey on Thursday,

Economic Survey Agriculture sector grew 1.55% in 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The agriculture sector in the country recorded about 1.55% growth during 2022-23 as against the growth of 4.27 percent of the same period last year.

According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23 launched here Thursday, the contribution of important crops recorded at 18.23

percent to value addition in agriculture sector and 4.18 percent to GDP. Other crops contributed 14.49 percent in value addition of agriculture sector and 3.32 percent in GDP. To lessen the miseries of flood affects and revival of the agriculture sector, the government announced Kissan Package-2022, consequent upon the floods-2022.

Governor KP says: Despite difficulties PDM's government will provide relief in fiscal budget

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday said that despite the fact that PDM's federal government is facing difficult economic conditions but fiscal budget 2023-24 will provide relief to the public without the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He expressed these views while talking to the media at Abbottabad Press Club.

The Governor further said that the government has already provided relief

to the masses in the prices of flour, petroleum product and pulses before the budget. The federal and provincial governments are actively engaged in finding solutions to the difficulties faced by the nation, adding he said.

Ghulam Ali stated that the previous government has ruined the healthcare system and their every step during the government demanding probe, they hired people to sit at home and abuse others and malign institutions.

Talking about provincial assembly elections the governor said

that the Supreme Court of Pakistan has also ordered to hold the election on the same day and urged the political parties to decide collectively, which is a positive development.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali, said that the PTI government has misused public resources by forming boards, government institutions should not exceed their authority and neither they should neglect their responsibilities.

He said that the incident of 9th May is the result of the indoctrination of the young generation for the past 10 years which has created hatred in the minds of young people against the army and police. Haji Ghulam Ali said that the nation is living in peace and progressing due to the efforts of the Pakistani army, rangers, and police and after the May incidents the nation has proven that it stands with the Pakistani army and those who are safeguarding the constitution.

SIU arrest three street criminals, recovers snatched motorcycle

KARACHI (APP): The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi Police on Thursday arrested three alleged street criminals and recovered a snatched motorcycle and arms from their possession.

According to a spokesman for SIU, the unit on a tip-off conducted a raid near Eidgah Ground, Nazimabad and arrested the accused identified as Imran, Irshad and Rehmatullah during initial investigations revealed their involvement in a number of street crimes. They also used to rob people coming out of banks with huge cash. The accused also confessed to having snatched two motorcycles from Karimabad and Sachal. The motorcycle snatched from Karimabad on June 3 this year was recovered from their possession. They revealed committing street crimes in Karimabad, Iqbal Market, Mominabad, Metroville, Sachal, Korangi, Shah Latif, SITE-A, Pakistan Bazar and Pirabad areas.



KARACHI: View of venue after traffic accident due to over speeding and break failure, while people busy in rescue work, located on Shahrah-e-Faisal road in Karachi.



ABBOTTABAD: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali addresses to media persons during press conference held at Abbottabad press club.

13th Sartyoon Sang Crafts Exhibition concludes

KARACHI (APP): Scores of people including foreigners appreciated the work of skilled women entrepreneurs displayed at the four-day '13th Sartyoon Sang' exhibition, which concluded here on Thursday.

In an exquisite display of traditional crafts at the Dolmen Mall in Clifton, a wide mixture of Sindh's handicrafts made by rural women were exhibited, including home textiles, baskets, jewellery, rillies, dresses, dupattas and shawls, embellished with traditional embroidery and

cutwork. The event was arranged by Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO) in an effort to provide market links to rural women and artisans.

The festival attracted large numbers of women residents of Clifton, Defence Housing Authority, Bath Island and nearby areas. SRSO Chief Executive Officer, Muhammad Dital Kalhoro said the event's objective was to facilitate better income for women artisans of rural Sindh. "We have trained over 110,000 men and women in differ-

ent skills and trades and these over 40,000 from most underdeveloped regions including Jacobabad, Kandhkot, Kashmir, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Kambar Shahdaddkot, Khairpur and Sukkur, Larkana, Umerkot, Badin, Thatta, Benazirabad, Nosheroferoz, Sanghar and Mirpurkhas."

The exhibition comprised stitched and unstitched cloth, needlework with different types of embroidery, straw work, bed sheets, crocheted work, machine embroidery and other items for women.

DC chairs meeting regarding removing waste of sacrificial animals

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Kanwal Nizam chaired a meeting on removing waste of sacrificial animals and other garbage on Eid-ul-Azha. Addressing the meeting the DC said the Municipal and Town Committees shall immediately remove sacrificial waste to prevent bad odour and take measures to maintain sanitation and cleanliness.

DC instructed officials of Municipal and Town Committees to set up Control Rooms and nominate Focal Persons while a contingency plan be prepared at ward level in this regard. Department of Local Government was directed to initiate strict legal action against citizens

found involved in dumping animal waste in sewerage lines, she added.

All Assistant Commissioners were instructed to visit their domain areas to inspect the sanitation situation and submit reports in this regard.

On the occasion, Additional Director Local Government Abdul Sattar Rathore, Municipal and Town Committee officials informed about steps taken for better sanitation situation and removal of animal waste outside the city limits at a safe location.

Addressing the meeting SSP Mehzoor Ali said the plan is being prepared to maintain law and order during the Eidul Azha days.



PESHAWAR: Khateeb Masjed Muhabat Khan Molana Tayyab Qureshi is addressing the press conference.

PPP Policy Board decides to launch Yellow Line buses project, Oil Palm Nursery, Rani Bagh project

KARACHI (APP): The 40 PPP Policy Board meeting Thursday was held under the chairmanship of Sindh Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and decided to launch a number of important projects on PPP Mode including supply and operations of buses for Yellow Line BRTS, establishment of Oil palm Nursery & Tissue Culture Laboratory, financial close of ongoing Ghotki-Kandhkot Bridge, construction of Tando Allahyar Bypass and drainage system at Tando Rani Bagh, Hyderabad project.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Ministers, Dr. Azra Pechuho, Ismail Rahu, Sharjeel Memon, Sajid Jokhio, Murtaza Wahab, Syed Qasim Naveed, Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, VC NED Dr. Sarosh Lodhi, Nasir Brohi, and concerned secretaries. Sindh Minister for Transport Sharjeel Memon told the CM that with the collaboration of the Federal and Sindh Governments, a comprehensive solution to Karachi's urban mobility problem was underway by implementing a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), as

related services. The meeting was told that the World Bank would provide 50 percent of the project cost - which meant the development and operation of the BRT Yellow Line Corridor and the rest of the amount the private partner would have to arrange.

The private partners would also develop the marketing strategy to sensitize potential investors' participation in the bidding process and assist the SMTA during procurement.

The PPP Policy Board accorded post facto approval to the concept of the project as well as for initiating the procurement process to carry out feasibility studies and transaction advisory services in relation to the supply and operation of buses for the Yellow Line BRT Project. Provincial Minister for Environment & Climate Change Ismail Rahu told the meeting that Pakistan annually imported 4.5 million tons of edible oil worth \$5 billion, the second highest import bill after petroleum products. He added that the project successfully undertook plantation of oil palm trees in an area of 30 acres at Kathore Forest and established an oil extraction mill with the capacity of two tons oil extraction per day.

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International News

Russia says top UN court should dismiss Ukraine's case over Crimea and terrorism funding

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: Russia urged judges at the United Nations' highest court on Thursday to throw out a case brought by Ukraine against Moscow over the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the arming of rebels in eastern Ukraine before Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. "We appear before you today in order to demonstrate that Ukraine's application must be dismissed because it is without any legal foundation.

Nor does it have any factual evidence to back it," Russian Ambassador to the Netherlands Alexander Shulglin told judges at the International Court of Justice.

Lawyers for Ukraine said as hearings in the case opened Tuesday that Russia bankrolled a "campaign of intimidation and terror" by rebels in eastern Ukraine starting in 2014 and sought to replace Crimea's multiethnic community with "discriminatory Russian nationalism."

Ukraine filed the case in 2017, asking the world

court to order Moscow to pay reparations for attacks and crimes such as the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 by a Russian missile fired from territory controlled by Moscow-backed rebels on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew. The Ukrainian government alleges that Russia breached two treaties: the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

India rebukes Canada over parade float showing assassination of Indira Gandhi

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's foreign minister on Thursday hit out at Canada for allowing a float in a parade depicting the 1984 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards, perceived to be glorification of violence by Sikh separatists.

"I think there is a larger underlying issue about the space which is given to separatists, to extremists, to people who advocate violence," S. Jaishankar told reporters in New Delhi while commenting about

the tableau in a parade. "I think it is not good for relationships, not good for Canada," he said.

Canada's High Commissioner for India also condemned the incident at a parade by Sikh activists in the Canadian city of Brampton. Video circulated in recent days on the internet showed a tableau from the parade featuring Gandhi wearing a blood-stained white saree with her hands up as turban-clad men pointed guns at her. A poster behind the scene read: "Revenge".

No further details were available about the cause of the accident.



French police personnel maintain a secure cordon in Anancy, south-eastern France, following a mass stabbing in the French Alpine town.

24 killed after van falls into ravine in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Twenty-four people, including 12 women and eight children, died on Wednesday when the van they were travelling in fell into a ravine in northern Afghanistan, police said.

"Due to the neglect of the driver, the vehicle deviated from the road and fell into a ravine. Twenty-four people are dead," said Den Mohammed Nazari, a police spokesman in Sare Pol province.

No further details were available about the cause of the accident.



French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and French Interior and Overseas Minister Gerald Darmanin leave the Haute Savoie prefecture in Annecy, French Alps.

UN commission accuses Israel of taking aim at Palestinian human rights groups

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Investigators commissioned by the U.N.'s top human rights body on Thursday accused Israel of "delegitimizing and silencing civil society" by outlawing Palestinian human rights groups and labeling their members as "terrorists."

The findings came in the annual report by the Human Rights Council's "Commission of Inquiry." The commission, led by a three-member team of human rights experts, was established in 2021 following an 11-day war between Is-

rael and the Hamas militant group in Gaza. Israel accuses the rights council, and the commission, of being unfairly biased.

The report also accused both Hamas and the rival Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of committing rights violations. But it said most of the violations had uncovered were committed by Israel as part of a campaign it says is aimed at "ensuring and enshrining its permanent occupation at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people."

Former U.N. human

rights chief Navi Pillay, who leads the commission, accused Israeli and Palestinian authorities of "limiting the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful association." "We were particularly alarmed by the situation of Palestinian human rights defenders, who are routinely subject to a range of punitive measures as part of the occupation regime," she said. In 2020 and 2021, Israel designated seven Palestinian rights groups as terrorist groups, effectively outlawing them. It later raided and shut some of their offices.

4 children injured in knife attack in French town, 2 in critical condition

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: A Syrian national wounded four children and an adult in a knife attack in a French park on Thursday, police said, leaving some of the victims critically ill in hospital. The attack, which happened in the French Alpine town of Anancy, was carried out by a Syrian national with legal refugee status in France, a police official told Reuters.

"Children and one adult are between life and death. The nation is in shock," French President Emmanuel Macron said in

a statement on Twitter, calling the attack "an act of absolute cowardice".

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on Twitter that the attacker had been arrested.

Two children and one adult are in life-threatening condition, while two children were slightly hurt, police said.

Witnesses said at least one child involved was in a stroller.

BFM TV showed footage of several policemen overpowering an individual in a park.

Iran's president to visit three Latin American countries next week

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will visit Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela next week, Iran's state news agency IRNA announced on Wednesday, adding that the upcoming tour stemmed from invites from the presidents of each of the Latin American nations.

IRNA said documents to expand bilateral cooperation will be signed between Iran and the three countries during Raisi's visit, mentioning economic, political and scientific issues.

Tensions in US-Saudi ties cloud Blinken visit to Riyadh

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: A visit by the U.S. Secretary of State to Saudi Arabia drew little Saudi media coverage on Thursday at a time of soured relations despite a U.S. push to defuse rows that have touched on oil prices, human rights and Riyadh's opening to Iran.

Antony Blinken was the second top U.S. official to visit Washington's closest strategic ally in the Middle East in less than a month, following a May 7 trip by White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

However, Blinken's meetings with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, and Gulf Cooperation Council foreign

ministers were relegated to the inside pages of Al-Watan and Okaz, the two major newspapers in Saudi Arabia.

Their front pages were devoted to unrelated topics including the arrival of star French football striker Karim Benzema in Jeddah to join the Al Ittihad club.

Blinken and the crown prince, widely known as MbS, had "open, candid" talks for an hour and 40 minutes, a U.S. official said, covering topics including the conflict in neighbouring Yemen, the war in Sudan, Israel, and human rights.

The semi-official English-language daily Arab News covered Blinken's comments in his talks at GCC headquarters, including those touching on Yemen.

UK's Sunak, Biden to focus on deepening economic ties at White House meeting

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will focus on deepening close economic ties between the United States and Britain when they meet at the White House on Thursday, with Russia's war in Ukraine another big topic for the NATO allies.

U.S. and British officials said the two leaders will review a range of global issues, including joint economic and security interests, artificial intelligence, support for Ukraine, and further action to accelerate the clean energy transition.

The meeting, their fourth in as many months, comes as Western officials race to ascertain whether Russia was responsible for the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam, which has displaced thousands of people and caused major economic and environmental damage. Ukraine and Russia have traded blame for the dam's destruction.

The two leaders will

field questions at a joint news conference after their meeting, an opportunity not afforded to every world leader who visits the White House, and will also issue a joint statement, officials said.

Biden and Sunak last met in Hiroshima, Japan, at the Group of Seven summit last month. They also met in Belfast in April and in San Diego in March at a trilateral event marking the defense partnership of the U.S., Australia and Britain.

The two will discuss joint U.S.-UK leadership on critical and emerging technologies, as well as coordinated efforts to strengthen both countries' economic security. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Wednesday. The discussion will touch on artificial intelligence safety. Britain announced late Wednesday, saying it would host the first summit on the issue this autumn to discuss how the risks of AI can be mitigated through internationally coordinated action.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the National Vice Chancellors Peace Conference.

PM approves 'revolutionary program' for uplift of youth, farmers, women in budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the inclusion of a 'revolutionary programme' in the upcoming budget 2023-24 for the uplift of youth, women and farmers.

As per the prime minister's directives, the funds have been allocated in the upcoming budget for projects on the welfare of youth and women as well as for agriculture tube-wells.

According to a PM Office statement, in the next fiscal year, the youth would be provided interest-free loans and endowment fund would be established

for education and sports.

The prime minister approved the establishment of Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education on the pattern of Punjab Endowment Fund.

Under the Fund, the intelligent but poor students from across the country, would be given educational scholarships.

The funds have been allocated Prime Minister Youth Programme to extend small loans to the youth.

The government has also specified funds to impart skill training to the youth, including in information technology.

The upcoming budget

would also have funds for the distribution of 100,000 laptops among youth, besides extending financial support to the IT startups.

The government has made budgetary allocations for the promotion of sports activities among youth and to encourage their participation. The upcoming budget will also feature the funds allocations for a programme to achieve the economic empowerment of women. The prime minister also approved a programme for the solarisation of agriculture tube-wells which would be implemented in the second phase of PM's Kissan Package.

Addressing a news conference while launching the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23 along with Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, he termed the FY 2022-23 "the year of force majeure due to the extraordinary situation confronted by the country after the previous government allowed \$84 billion unnecessary im-

ports, \$50 billion trade deficit, the Finance Division's inability to pay any penny for the last quarter of 2021-22 and devastating floods of the last year.

Elaborating what he called "unprecedented tragedies", the minister said the country faced \$50 billion trade deficit mainly because of the \$84 billion imports, which the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) allowed in its last year for luxury items and to oblige friends.

"The \$84 billion imports pushed the country into the severe economic crisis that has eaten away all the foreign exchange reserves."

Ahsan Iqbal says: No comparison of figures & targets due to 2022-23 as 'a year of force majeure'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said during the current fiscal year Pakistan faced unprecedented financial and natural calamities, so it was not a "normal year."

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President Dr. Alvi says Universities must keep students away of extremism, violence

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Thursday called upon the universities to play an active role in preventing intolerance, extremism and violence among students and guide them towards a positive mindset.

The universities, he said, should arrange regular capacity-building training sessions for their management and faculty members to inculcate in students the ability to resolve conflicts and extremism.

Addressing the National Vice Chancellors' Peace Conference, the president said banning the students' unions in universities was not a solution and stressed that there was a need to change their mindset through proper teaching methodologies.

He said the step would ensure the reformation of students to help them contribute towards the country's better future, sustainable peace and prosperity.

President Alvi stressed the need for promoting ethics, morality, empathy, forgiveness and tolerance among the students. He said the students must not be indulged in activities which created stress among them.

To overcome the ongoing crisis, he said, priorities should be defined in streamlining the country's economy, reducing inflation, poverty and the rule of law.

The president hoped that the challenging times would pass soon and the country would witness exponential growth within

five to seven years. The country will stand on strong footings again, he said. The two-day conference was jointly organised by Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and Shaor Foundation for Education and Awareness (SFEA). The conference themed "Academic Discourse on Countering Extremism - The Way Forward" is a significant milestone in the implementation of the Peace, Advocacy and Community Engagement through Transformation (PACT) for Tolerance project, which is built on a foundation of collaboration and cooperation between SFEA, HEC Pakistan, NACTA, and other policy-level stakeholders.

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KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori exchanging views with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar at Governor House.

Community Led Local Governance Policy officially launched

Independent Report

QUETTA: A step towards development and prosperity of Balochistan, Under the Banner of Balochistan Local Government and Rural Development Department the "Community Led Local Governance Policy" has been officially launched.

On this occasion a grand ceremony was organized in Provincial capital Quetta.

This Policy shows the commitment of the Balochistan Government to foster a more inclusive and participatory approach to local governance, one that fully recognizes the needs and builds on the strengths of communities and citizens. Secretary Local Government Rural Development Mr Dostain Jamaldini launched the CLLG policy through digital launching.

Honorable guest Member provincial Assembly and chairman standing Committee local government Qadir Nail expressed his views and said that it

gives me great pleasure to be here today to address such an esteemed gathering at the launch of the Community Led Local Governance Policy Launch Event. As we all know, governance is a critical issue facing the entire country, particularly the Balochistan province where the problem of governance is contributing to many socio-economic and political problems and directly impacts the daily life of its ordinary citizens. In order to ensure that the government is able to provide its citizens with the necessary services and amenities, it is essential that the problems of governance are addressed.

The Local Government Act 2010 of Balochistan was an important step towards improving local governance in the province. However, with the passage of time further reforms were needed to improve the functioning of the system.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing persons are holding pictures of victims during a seminar.

NAB found more evidence in Al-Qadir Trust case: Irfan Qadir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Accountability Irfan Qadir on Thursday said the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had found more evidence in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. Addressing a press conference, the SAPM said the accountability watchdog had traced transactions worth Rs 4.50 billion from the accounts of Farhat Shehzadi, the friend of former prime minister's wife, and efforts were underway to bring her and her husband back from abroad for further investigation.

The NAB Ordinance

stressed for across the board accountability and there was no sacred cow "when it comes to accountability", he added.

SAPM Irfan Qadir said the matters of superior court judges could be referred to NAB if they had "criminal overtones or an element of corruption".

He viewed that the judicial system was being manipulated by certain people on the outside and that there were indications of an element of corruption. The government while considering such matters exercised extreme caution regarding the formation of the commission to investigate the matter.



Tribal elders of Zhob meeting with Provincial Advisor Information Mitha Khan Kakar

Kickboxer Rind calls on Jan Jamali

QUETTA (APP): Kickboxer Shaazib Rind called on Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali here on Thursday. Jamali congratulated Rind for his excellent performance in the light-weight 68 kg kickboxing competition in the United States of America. He said that the youth of Balochistan were now shining the name of Pakistan's green crescent flag all over the world.

The Speaker said that the current government was utilizing all resources for the promotion of sports and athletes so that they would show their talent at the world level through games.

Provincial Minister Muhammad Khan Lehri, Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Sanaullah Baloch, Mir Zabab and tribal leader Sardar Khan Rind were also present on this occasion.

Balochistan Disability Act 2017

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government is keen to implement Balochistan Disability Act 2017 and initiated the development of Rules of Business for its successful implementation.

The initiative will help transform the Disability Act into practical guidelines to ensure effective implementation of the Disability Act 2017, said a news release issued here Thursday.

Balochistan is the pioneer in the approval of the Disability Act in 2017 but the Act has not been fully implemented due to the absence of Rules of Business.

In their efforts towards ensuring the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Balochistan, the provincial



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel and USAID Deputy Administrator Isabel Coleman with Pakistan and U.S officials participating in Pak-U.S Health Dialogue.

Sanjrani terms his visit to Russia a historic one

ISLAMABAD (Online): During his four-day visit to Russia, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani held meetings with Russian Parliamentarians and Government officials to strengthen ties between the two nations. Notably, Chairman Sanjrani met with Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, Chairman of the state, VV Volodin, and paid respects at the monument of the unknown soldiers near the Kremlin wall by laying flowers.

In addition to these engagements, Chairman Sanjrani delivered a significant address at the plenary session of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, marking a new chapter in the development of bilateral relations.

During the meetings, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani emphasized the importance of Pakistan's historical and political relationship with Russia. He highlighted the role of regional relations in promoting social and economic development and expressed Pakistan's commitment to the vision of regional progress. The purpose of the visit was to elevate bilateral relations to new heights.

According to local sources, some 50 people died while 25 others sustained injuries during the blast at Nabawi mosque in the Hesa-e-Awal area of Faizabad.

Eyewitnesses revealed that the explosion was triggered by a suicide

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In their efforts towards ensuring the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Balochistan, the provincial

Social Welfare Department along with Sightsavers held a two-day consultative workshop on the development of Rules of Business for Disability Act 2017.

Muhammad Saleem Khosa, Director General Social Welfare Department appreciated Sightsavers and other stakeholders including HANDS, CBID Network, TSO and Quetta Online on this much-needed support especially consultations with people with disabilities. He said that it would help in ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities creating an equal access to opportunities and services for them. He requested the stakeholders for their active participation and open feedback.

Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said, "We are reminded of the plight of the Kashmiri children, who continue to suffer because of continued siege and brutal oppression by the Indian forces."

She said an entire generation of Kashmiri children has grown up in a climate of fear, violence and repression.

Addressing the weekly press briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, she expressed concern over the prevailing situation in

50 dead in 'suicide blast' at ex-governor's funeral in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk

KABUL: A devastating blast rocked a mosque in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province where funeral prayers of the province's former deputy governor were being offered on Thursday.

According to local sources, some 50 people died while 25 others sustained injuries during the blast at Nabawi mosque in the Hesa-e-Awal area of Faizabad.

Eyewitnesses revealed that the explosion was triggered by a suicide

bomber who targeted the congregation directly. Among the victims was Mulvi Saifullah Samim, the former police chief of Baghlan province.

"The locals estimate that the blast claimed the lives of around 50 people, including senior officials and Samim, the ex-police chief.

The wounded were promptly transported to Faizabad hospital for urgent medical treatment," stated a local resident, claiming that the blast was carried out by a suicide bomber.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Turkmenistan headed by Mr. Maksat Babayev, State Minister and Head of Turkmenistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Hunting of rare birds & animals banned: GoB cancels all allotments of birds' hunting areas in Balochistan

CM declares there would be no permission of hunting of rare birds to any local or foreigner in province; directs concerned authorities to ensure implementation on UN Charter and Balochistan Wildlife Protection Act

Independent Report

QUETTA: In a major development, the Government of Balochistan has cancelled all allotments of the birds' hunting areas all over the province.

This was announced in an official hand out issued here on Thursday.

According to the official communique, the provincial government has the authority to allot of the hunting areas or cancel it under the 18th constitutional amendment. Moreover, on this, the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo asserted that we would wholeheartedly defend our right and power in this regard. He said that the government has the constitutional and legal protection of using its very that authority, and the government's decision can not be challenged at any legal forum. In addition to

this, the Chief Minister declared that there would also be ban on trophy hunting in the province.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo maintained that there is no need of earning money and establishing relations at the cost of life of innocent birds and animals.

The Chief Minister said that if anyone has any doubt about the decision of government, then one may contact with the Forests and Wildlife Department. Earlier, taking action for protection of the rare birds and animals, the Chief Minister declared the land of Balochistan prohibited for the hunting.

of houbara bustard, ibex and other rare species. The Chief Minister said there would be no permission of hunting of the rare birds to any local or foreigner in the province.

He directed the concerned authorities to ensure implementation on the UN

Charter and Balochistan Wildlife Protection Act for protection of the rare birds and animals in the province.

He also termed it mandatory for all the deputy commissioners and officers and staff of the Forests and Wildlife department to protect the wildlife.

He warned that the action would be taken against those Deputy Commissioners and concerned staff of the areas where the information of hunting of rare birds was received.

The Chief Minister stressed that protection of wildlife is a national obligation and as such the general public should also fulfill it.

Moreover, Mr. Bizenjo also directed to initiate crackdown against those hunting the birds for business or keeping them in shops or their homes. The Chief Minister pledged to make the province safe region for the wildlife.

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13 women including Khadija Shah, Sanam sent to jail on judicial remand

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has sent to jail on judicial remand 13 women including Khadija Shah and Sanam Javed allegedly involved in vandalism and attack on Jinnah House.

Admn judge of ATC Abher Gul Khan took up for hearing attack on Jinnah House case Thursday.

Police presented 13 women including Khadija Shah and Sanam Javed.

The court inquired who are Khadija Shah, Sanam Javed and Tayyaba Raja. Have the sticks been recovered from them.

The women denied about recovery of sticks from them.

The investigation officer took the plea petrol bomb and other equipment have to be recovered from these women. Therefore, more physical remand be granted in respect of these women.

The court while rejecting plea of investigation officer ordered to send the women accused to jail on judicial remand for 14 days.

Wang Wenbin says China-Pak-Iran trilateral meeting successful step to enhance regional security

BEIJING (APP): Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Thursday said the first meeting of China-Pakistan-Iran trilateral consultation on counter-terrorism and security was a successful step taken by the three countries to enhance regional security and stability.

"On June 7, Director-General Bai Tian of the Department of External Security of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs held in Beijing the first meeting of the China-Pakistan-Iran trilateral consultation on counter-terrorism and security at directors general level," he said during his regular briefing while sharing information about the meeting.

He said Seyed Rasoul Mosavi, Assistant to the Foreign Minister and Director General of South Asia of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Abdul Hameed, Director General on Counter Terrorism of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting. China's Assistant Foreign Minister Nong

Rong met the heads of Pakistani and Iranian delegations, he added. The spokesperson said the three sides held in-depth exchange of views on the regional counter-terrorism situation and joint efforts to tackle the cross-border movement of terrorists.

among other issues, and decided to institutionalize the trilateral consultation on counter-terrorism and security.

"The meeting was a successful step taken by the three countries to act on the Global Security Initiative and enhance regional security and stability," he added.

He said terrorism was a common enemy of humanity and "China firmly opposes and strongly condemns terrorism in all its manifestations".

"We stand ready to work in close collaboration with Pakistan, Iran and other regional countries to resolutely crack down on terrorist forces that endanger the interests of the three countries and regional security," he added.