

Independent

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PM calls on int'l community to ensure fair, judicious distribution of resources

It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is painful for the rest of the body as well

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday called on the international community to come up with a plan for fair, equitable and judicious distribution of resources to ensure sustainable peace and harmony in the world.

Speaking here at the summit for a "New Global Financing Pact", he said North had made progress and they would look forward to implementing its experiences in Pakistan, for providing jobs and livelihoods and for promoting industry and agriculture by learning from its model of success.

"It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is painful for the rest of the body as well."

The prime minister said last year, Pakistan faced devastating floods due to climate change and in those floods 33 million people were affected, millions of acres of standing crops were washed away, 1700 people including children died and half a million animals were drowned.

Two million houses were either completely demolished or partially damaged, he said, adding the people of

Pakistan bravely faced the devastating impacts of the floods.

He said his government had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars from its own scarce resources to give financial assistance to the flood affectees all over the country.

"We are very grateful to friendly countries across the globe for the valuable and timely contribution," he added. He said the international financial institutions agreed to give loans for help of millions of people, but it would have burdened Pakistan, further exacerbating the already precarious financial situation.

Shehbaz Sharif said he took the United Nations Secretary General to the flood affected areas where city after city was sunk. Thousands of women gave birth to children in the camps set up for the flood affectees, he recalled, adding in far flung areas, the government had to provide food, medicine, water and education at temporary camps.

He said the people of Pakistan faced crises and problems in the past courageously and they would also overcome the adverse effects of the floods.



FRANCE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Shaif addresses the round table discussion "Innovating with instruments and financing to address new vulnerabilities" at Summit for New Global Financing Pact being held in France.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the International Conference on Health Research organized by Rehman Medical Institute.

SC seeks details of arrested accused of May 9 riots

Justices Isa, Tariq recuse themselves; seven-member bench hears petitions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday sought complete details of accused arrested in connection with the May 9 riots and instructed respondents to submit written comments in the petitions against trial of civilian offenders in military courts.

A seven-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhter, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Muzahir Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik heard the case.

Earlier, a nine-member bench was dissolved after Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood recused to hear the

case. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial asked Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan to produce the correct details of people who had been arrested as the bench wanted to conclude the case as soon as possible.

It should be told that how many people had been arrested and where the women prisoners were being kept, he added.

The CJP observed that every accused should be given an opportunity to defend himself through their counsel, but the lawyers were also being arrested and harassed, which was intolerable.

AGP Mansoor Awan

said harassing any lawyer was an illegal act.

The chief justice remarked that the court wanted to remain limited to the facts, asking why the names of some police personnel were also included in the cases.

He observed that the bench would also view the previous decisions of the apex court on army courts.

The CJP asked as per the Official Secrets Act which crime fell in the jurisdiction of military courts.

Latif Khosa, counsel for petitioner Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, replied that it had been mentioned that a trial in military court could be run on attack on military installation but this matter was related to the Core Commander's House.

Higher education imperative for country's sustainable development: President

PESHAWAR (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said the promotion of higher education was imperative for sustainable progress and development, and stressed on universities to use technology in order to increase the number of graduates for the ultimate benefit of the country.

The president expressed these views during a high-level meeting here at the Governor House, which discussed problems related to the higher education sector and universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and his cabinet members, chief secretary and inspector general of police attended the meeting.

President Alvi said higher education was a very important sector and the

universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should increase the number of graduates with the help of technology for the country's prosperity and development.

The universities should enhance the number of online courses, besides initiating more shifts for producing quality skilled vocational and technical manpower, which was imperative for sustainable economic and industrial growth and socioeconomic development. He advised the universities to hire the services of grant specialists for addressing their financial issues.

CM Azam Khan underlined the need for early appointment of the vice chancellors in KP's universities.

On the occasion, the president was given a briefing on the financial and administrative affairs of the provincial universities.



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President of France Emmanuel Macron and President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during New Global Financing Pact Summit

Governor urges moderate & enlightened segments of society to promote democratic norms

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has urged the moderate and enlightened segments of the society to promote democratic behaviours in the society and play wholehearted role in upholding the human dignity.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation comprising the representatives of different bar associations who called on him at the Governor House on Thursday.

The member of Pakistan Bar Association, Munir Kakar led the delegation. During the course of meeting, the overall law and order situation, implementation on the

rights and authorities of the masses and prospects of the sustainable development and prosperity were discussed. Speaking on the occasion, there's a key role of lawyers in ensuring justice to the masses.

He said that heavy responsibility rests with the lawyers for implementing the public rights. He said that a lawyer has the capability to play one's part in stopping the irregularities in any department and ending the social evils. Meanwhile, the provincial head of UNHCR also called on the Governor here the same day, e appreciated the role of UNHCR and international community to help the country in difficult times.



QUETTA: Secretary Information Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and DGPR Kamran Asad meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali

We want solution of issues, says BNP chief: No one challenging writ of govt to be spared at all, asserts Zia Langove

Sardar Akhtar Mengal insists it's govt.'s responsibility to resolve issues by meeting dwellers of areas and inquiring about issues; Zia directs IGP & other concerned high ups to take stern action against those involved in extortion

Independent Report

QUETTA: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP) and Member National Assembly, Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove have come to an understanding to resolve the issues including those related to tribals ones through mutual talks.

While the Provincial Minister for Home Mir Ziaullah Langove stressed that we would have to find solution of the issues through talks and adopt a way out of the problems in future, Sardar Akhtar Mengal insisted that we want solution of the issues.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the tribal areas have their own traditions. He stressed the need to hold meetings with dwellers of the areas and ask them about their issues and affairs.

The BNP chief maintained that it is responsi-



WADH: President Balochistan National Party, MNA Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal receiving Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango upon arrival in Wadh

bility of the government to resolve the issues.

Mir Ziaullah Langove was in interaction with Sardar Akhtar Mengal during his visit to Wadh area of Khuzdar on Thursday.

Mir Ziaullah Langove reached Wadh to meet personally to Sardar Akhtar Mengal over the tribal and other issues.

Also accompanied with him were the members of provincial Assembly, Mir Zaid Ali Reki and Mir Younas Aziz Zehri, Inspec-

tor General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and Commissioner Kalat Division, Dawood Khilji.

Moreover, present in the meeting were also the Member of Assembly of BNP, Mir Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo, Sardar Asad Mengal, religious leaders and other tribal notables.

Inspector General of Police and Commissioner Kalat Division briefed the participants about the overall situation.

CM lauds jirga resolving tribal conflict in Wadh

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudous Bizenjo has expressed his satisfaction about the progress in resolving the tribal conflict in Wadh Tehsil of Khuzdar District. The Chief Minister has said that the settlement of disputes through mutual discussion and negotiation are the long-standing and strong traditions of our tribal society.

"The parties will show patience and tolerance", he hoped.

The chief minister maintained it is a matter of satisfaction that the political

tribal and religious elders of the area are also playing their role in this regard, while the members of the provincial assembly Zaid Riki Ahmed Nawaz Baloch Akhtar Hussain Longo Yunus Aziz Zehri former provincial minister Sardar Muhammad Aslam Bizenjo tribal elders and scholars. Sincere efforts for a peaceful resolution of the dispute are commendable, along with this, Commissioner Kalat and Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar are also taking steps to remove the obstacles in the resolution of the long-standing dispute



HUB: View of worst traffic jam on Hub River alternate route, showing the negligence of concerned authority in Hub.

Wadh tribal conflict echoed in BA's budget session

Independent Report

QUETTA: The lingering tribal conflict was echoed in the budget session of Balochistan Assembly when members of the assembly from opposition and treasury benches spoke about it on Thursday.

The budget session was resumed after gap of two days with Speaker Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali in the chair.

Soon after start of the session, the BNP Member

of assembly, Akbar Mengal pointed out on a point of order that law and order situation is critical in Wadh. He alleged that some elements in Wadh are enjoying the government's patronage.

Akbar Mengal further charged that we are not being provided security, but others are provided the same.

He on the occasion demanded of the house to take notice of making private militia in Wadh.

4th phase of LG polls completes with voting on reserved seats of district councils

Independent Report

QUETTA: The fourth phase of local government (LG) elections was completed with the voting process conducted for election on the reserved seats of 31 district councils in Balochistan on Thursday.

The elections on reserved seats of 31 district councils were held in 31 districts of the province as the candidates in other four districts had already been elected unopposed.

The process of polling started at 08:00 AM, which remain continued till 05:00 PM without any break.

In all 1001 candidates

were in the competition run for 430 seats reserved for women, peasant, workers and non-Muslims in 31 districts of the province.

The polling process remained peaceful throughout the day as no untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the province.

With this, fourth phase of the local government elections has been completed, stated the Provincial Election Commissioner, Sharifullah in a statement issued here.

According to him, the polling process was completed peacefully and no untoward incident was reported during the voting.

Asif urges judiciary to work within its ambit

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday the judiciary had already interfered in the domain of parliament and must be stopped from doing so.

Addressing a session of the National Assembly chaired by Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, the minister said the matter of the trial of civilians in military courts had been taken to the Supreme Court and during the previous regime, 24 or 25 people were sentenced by military courts.

He said the SC bench had split and the result would come in a day or two. He said those who had raised the issue had political interests.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Pipe dreams

Our sinking economy has been assigned a new crew, but what does this new crew know about navigating a catastrophic storm? Clearly, very little. The plan it has come up with is little better than asking the ship's band to play a new tune while the storm outside rages on.

Though the new Special Investment Facilitation Council sounds great in theory, it cannot achieve its goals by simply offering a secure bubble for foreign investors to operate in. After all, any business that wishes to operate in the country needs to be organically embedded in its larger economy in order to thrive.

The SIFC has to promise a fundamental change in the way business is done in this country. Unfortunately, as the PDM government's unimaginative budget for the next fiscal year has signalled, there seems to be little appetite for actually setting our house in order before inviting foreign investors into it. This, primarily, is what makes its plan appear outlandish rather than revolutionary.

For perspective: Pakistan received foreign direct investment inflows of only about \$1.3bn in the 11-month period from July 2022 to May 2023. This represented an almost 21pc decline in FDI compared to the previous year.

In the same period, foreign investors were prevented from receiving the profits and dividends from their investments outside the country. At least \$1bn in profits were blocked by the government from being repatriated in this period.

This limitation had to be placed because the government was running out of foreign exchange due to a sustained drop in exports and remittances received from overseas Pakistanis.

In other words, foreign investors were made to suffer over policy failures that were entirely the government's own. Now, the same decision-makers responsible for that fiasco would like to sell 'preferential access' to the Pakistani state to foreign investors. How many will take them seriously?

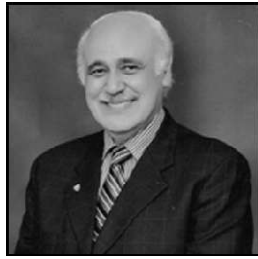
"The immediate task [for the SIFC] is to increase foreign direct investment to \$5bn," the prime minister said in a Tuesday tweet. That is well more than thrice the level of annual FDI expected to be recorded by the end of the outgoing fiscal year.

One would expect the country to become at least three times better for doing business if it wishes to attract three times more investment, yet Islamabad's priorities have lately seemed to be something else entirely.

Our senators this week moved legislation that will give current and former Senate chairpersons outlandish new perks in addition to the ones they already enjoy.

These perks will come at the expense of the nation's rapidly depleting resources. How safe would any foreign investor feel sinking their money into a country which doesn't seem to respect the limitations of its own reality? That is the key point to ponder.

Sterile charters



F.S. Aijazuddin

Life is cyclical — what goes around, comes around. The ancients believed that in a full lifetime, if you are born rich, you will suffer poverty but die rich. If you are born poor, you may see riches but die poor.

Pakistan was born poor — Jinnah's "motherland" rescued at birth by the intervention of M.K. Gandhi who forced Nehru's government to release the Rs55 crores due to it. A lifetime later, Pakistan is still poor, with about \$4 billion to its name and external debt and liabilities of \$126bn. To whom does it owe all this money?

One US analyst has categorised its creditors into: multilateral debt, Paris Club debt, private and commercial loans, and Chinese debt.

Multilateral creditors include the World Bank (\$18bn), the Asian Development Bank (\$15bn) and the IMF (\$7.6bn). Smaller amounts are owed to the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Interest on these is concessional and the burden of repayment spread over 18 to 30 years, which explains why repayments of \$4.5bn for the year to multilateral creditors represented a fifth of the total debt repayment. A second category — Paris Club debt — is owed to 22 creditor countries — Japan, Germany, France and the US. It amounts to \$8.5bn, repayable over 40 years with 1pc interest rate.

To private debtors, we owe \$7.8bn in the form of Eurobonds and Sukuk bonds, and to commercial lenders — mostly Chinese financial institutions — an

other \$7bn. Commercial loans are short-term and carry biting rates of interest.

Our obligations to the Chinese are high — over the Himalayas. We owe China about \$27bn. Of this, \$10bn is bilateral debt, \$6.2bn provided by the Chinese government to Pakistani public-sector enterprises, and \$7bn Chinese commercial loans.

In 2024-25, it is estimated that Pakistan's debt repayment and servicing alone will be about \$24.6bn. In 2025-26, the debt-servicing burden will be no easier to bear. It is predicted at approximately \$23bn.

"Where did all this money go?" is a question many Pakistanis who are still waiting to vote can ask, with justification. There is no new Mangla or a second Tarbela. No bullet trains hurtle across our dehydrated landscape. We are nuclear but remain starved of conventional power. We have insufficient schools, too few universities, inadequate hospitals and medical facilities, and stagnant job creation.

Some remember with nostalgia the days when saner governments used the Planning Commission as a tool to regulate equitable development across the country. Five-year plans were declarations of national priorities, and each annual development programme tried to balance federal and provincial demands with available resources, foreign and local. These plans and programmes were like the Ten Commandments — only as good as those who abided by them. Some rulers were tempted to bypass such fiscal discipline. In 1969, soon after martial law had been declared, Air Marshal Nur Khan (then deputy chief martial law administrator) called on Mr Qamar-ul-Islam (then the powerful secretary, Planning Commission). Nur Khan asked him for an economic plan. "Do you want a short-term one or a long-term one?"

the sage bureaucrat replied. "What is the difference?" the DCMLA retorted testily. "Depends on how long you intend to stay in power."

Not surprisingly, later governments found the constraints of the Planning Commission irksome. In India, Prime Minister Modi (for different reasons but with the same intent) dissolved the Indian Planning Commission in 2015, replacing it with NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India).

In Islamabad, the Planning Commission exists as a ministry. It functions, but in name, miming fiscal control. The ministry crunches numbers but with all the bite of a toothless geriatric.

Where is the power of the PC-1 form without which no project could be considered for inclusion in the government's budgetary system? Where is the authority of the Central Development Working Party, a filter that preceded submission of justifiable projects to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council?

In 2006, a Charter of Democracy was signed by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. It envisaged political harmony and reconciliation, yielding a strong democratic system. That charter, though not dead, is buried. The latest mantra by their successors is a 'charter of economy'. Can a coalition of 13 disparate political parties be expected to agree on a common list of economic priorities? They cannot even agree on an election date that will decide their future. Meanwhile, a beleaguered Imran Khan is made to bide his time in forced isolation. He may find more productive solace in the retort of the defeated royalist to Cromwell's supporters during the English Civil War: "Now that you have done with us, go fight amongst yourselves!"

Bonn climate talks



Aisha Khan

The 58th session of the Subsidiary for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SB58) of the United Nations Framework Convention held in Bonn concluded in mid-June. Every year the Bonn meetings represent the last big milestone culminating at the year-end annual Conference of Parties. These meetings are also used to focus diplomatic attention and build champions and alliances that can rally around a shared vision of an ambitious package of outcomes.

The end of the Bonn talks, with agenda agreement on SB58 in extremis on last day, mostly on procedural decisions, reflects more than just negotiators reaching the limits of political mandates. The lack of agreement on agenda set the tone of low trust and fragmented outcomes. The delay in agenda agreement also had a negative spill-over into other negotiations and created a disconnect between negotiations and the reality of the escalating climate crisis. The lack of good faith in engagement and vacuum created by the absence of strong leadership highlights challenges that could mar negotiations at COP28. Far from shifting to high-ambition territory, the meeting was not successful in producing a package of comprehensive outcomes that is balanced across thematic areas.

In the backdrop of this uncompromising mood and core political differences, it is very important that stalling areas such as adaptation, loss

and damage and finance are taken up by champion parties to help shift from current positions and find common ground for unlocking upward movement at COP28.

The UAE can play a role by providing greater clarity on its COP vision and how it plans to deliver. The state of play on the Global Stocktake (GST) will make it difficult to develop a coherent vision without political agreement on sticky issues. Bonn ended with a significant consensus gap that needs to narrow on vision and pathways for a satisfactory outcome in Dubai. Political-level diplomacy will be needed especially on fossil fuel transition language, finance outcomes, adaptation, loss and damage and the overall GST package to facilitate dialogue across the diplomatic corridors.

The next steps in adaptation finance will require greater clarity on the roadmap as well as on other components such as adaptation conversations in the New Collective Quantified Goal, finance targets and indicators in the Global Goal on Adaptation framework, and adaptation in the global finance reform agenda including Bridgetown Agenda. Finance remains central to the agenda. It was contentious in Bonn and is likely to emerge as a fault line across discussions on mitigation, GST, just transition as well as loss and damage. Pledges and signals sent through upcoming moments like the summit in Paris and UNSG the GCF Replenishment Conference in Bonn and annual meetings in Marrakech in October as well as in discussions taking place in Bangkok and Geneva can help in building trust and moving towards negotiated outcomes.

There was growing concern about the effectiveness of the Santiago Network on Loss and

Damage and its usefulness on feeding into the transitional committee to ensure an outcome at COP28. With little time remaining it will be crucial for TC members to build on progress and work towards potential landing zones for developing recommendations for COP28.

With so much at stake, forward movement on mitigation was slow and negotiators fell back on emphasising familiar political statements, instead of using the dialogue as a collaborative problem-solving space. In the coming months, it is important to undertake further political dialogue to enhance mutual understanding of the aims and outcomes of the Mitigation Work Programme and make concrete progress on finance to address the concerns of developing countries.

The present situation risks a lowest common denominator outcome across the COP28 package. Parties will need to work intensively to find an acceptable arrangement on the agenda and more work to articulate comprehensive and scientifically rigorous visions of outcomes. The core task of diplomacy in the lead-up to COP28 for the parties and the presidency will be to further flesh out a clear vision of a final package of outcomes. As the climate clock continues to tick, it is time to dial down differences and accelerate momentum on just agreements. The mood at every COP since Poland (2018) has been on a downward trajectory with visible signs of growing frustration at the slow pace of progress. COP28 provides a GST moment of hope where every effort should be made to capitalise on discussions organised under the UNFCCC umbrella, IFIs and other platforms to strengthen cooperation and build resilience for all. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Japan provides ¥ 315m for Human Resource Development Scholarship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Japan on Thursday announced grant aid worth 315 million Japanese Yen (around 2.25 million USD) for the Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) program in Pakistan.

ITO Takeshi, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan and Muhammad Humair Karim, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the Exchange of Notes on this program at the ceremony,

said a news release.

The grant agreement for the aforementioned program was also signed between Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs and KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office.

JDS is designed to support the social and economic development of the country by providing government officials with the opportunity to obtain

Master's or Doctoral degree in Japan with aims to enhance their knowledge in public administration and to strengthen the relationship between Japan and Pakistan. The participants of JDS program engaging in the formulation and implementation of such policies will be enrolled at the partner universities in Japan and are expected to acquire further knowledge in their field while learning about Japanese culture and traditions.

Since 2018 when JDS

was launched in Pakistan, 31 government officials have successfully completed their degrees while 35 are currently pursuing their academic goals in Japan. Further, 18 officials will be dispatched to Japan in the middle of the year 2023.

This occasion celebrates the signing of the sixth batch of the program in Pakistan. For this batch, the maximum number of slots for JDS participants in Pakistan is 17 seats for the Master's degree.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT).



ISLAMABAD: Joint Secretary (Japan), Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, EAD, and Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative JICA signs the Grant Agreement regarding the Human Resource Development Scholarship Program (JDS) for the year 2023 at Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Exports increase by 22.13pc to Rs.8.187trln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 22.13 percent during the past seven months of the current fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Thursday.

Exports from July 2022 to May 2023 were recorded at Rs. 6,187,511 million as against Rs. 5,066,143 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 22.13 percent according to provisional data released by PBS.

On year-on-year basis, exports from the country during January 2023 amounted to Rs. 628,037 million as against Rs. 512,962 million during May 2022, showing growth of 22.43 percent. On month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 3.15 percent when compared to the exports of Rs. 608,863 million in April 2023. Main commodities of exports during May 2023 were knitwear (Rs. 94,969 million), ready-made garments (Rs. 76,422 million), bed wear (Rs. 57,521 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 49,865 million), rice (other than basmati) (Rs.32,197 million).

Dar chairs CCoIGCT meeting

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT), today, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of State for Petroleum Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Attorney General of Pakistan, Secretary Finance, Secretary Maritime Affairs, Secretary Law & Justice, and other senior officers attended the meeting.

USF meeting discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Universal Service Fund (USF) Board of Directors meeting held here on Wednesday to discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan. The 85th meeting was chaired by Secretary Information Technology and Chairman USF Board, Navid A. Shaikh, said a press release. The board members were joined by the newly appointed members, who bring a wealth of expertise and diverse perspectives to the organization.

Among the newly appointed board members are Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunica-

tion Authority (PTA), Hatem Bamtraf, CEO of PTCL (Nominee of Fixed line licensees), Wang Hua, CEO of Zong (Nominee of mobile cellular licensees), and Independent Members/Directors Sofia Saeed, Ayla Majid, and Muhammad Yousuf. Muhammad Omar Malik, Member-Telecom, MoITT, as well as other board members and USF management, were also in attendance. The USF, under the leadership and vision of the Minister of IT and Telecommunication, is proud to announce a significant achievement with the appointment of two distinguished female members.

Sustainable agri development is govt's top priority: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Energy, Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skill Development SM Tanveer has said that sustainable agricultural development is the top priority of the government and an action plan committee will be constituted to identify causes of decrease in citrus exports.

Presiding over a meeting on citrus at the University of Agriculture

Murtaza assures ICCI for establishment of industrial park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood Thursday said that government would cooperate for the establishment of an industrial park in Islamabad.

He expressed these views while addressing the reception ceremony organized in his honour by the Islamabad Chamber, said a press release issued here.

Syed Murtaza said despite resources, the reason for Pakistan's problems is the lack of continuity in policies.

"We need to correct our direction, the government has taken many steps for industrial development

to bring economic stability through an increase in exports," he added.

The minister said that the government has presented a budget in difficult circumstances, which includes measures to facilitate the business environment and speed up the industry.

"The sustainable solution to Pakistan's economic problems is only in increasing exports, unless there is an increase in manufacturing at the local level, the dream of a large increase in exports cannot be fulfilled," he added.

Syed Murtaza said that "The situation we are facing today is the result of the wrong policies of the last 75 years. Countries

develop by making their own policies, unfortunately, we adopted import policies and discouraged manufacturing. Our SME sector has not been able to develop as it should have. As a minister, I am trying my best to adopt policies that will benefit the economy. Our exports are 30 billion dollars while imports are 80 billion dollars annually, there is no shortage of anything in this country. Only vision is needed. The government and the opposition should leave their personal egos behind and come on the same page for the country. Economic policies should be formulated not for five years, but for 25 years.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach \$ 8.86bln

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 8,863.8 million while reserves held by the central bank reached US\$ 3,536.9 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank decreased by US\$ 482 million to US\$ 3,536.9 million due to external debt repayment in the week ended on June 16, 2023.

Shahzad highlights potential to achieve food autarky, save foreign exchange

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik emphasized that Pakistan

has the potential to achieve food autarky by utilizing 18 million hectares of arable land and saving a significant amount of foreign exchange.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Momin Ali, he said last year \$14.5 billion were spent on agri-

culture-related imports to avert food insecurity, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

He welcomed the substantial allocation for the promotion of the agriculture sector in the federal and provincial budgets however expressed reservations over the lack of setting aside sufficient funds for conducting modern research by plant breeders of public and private sectors.

Punjab cabinet meeting rejects proposal to tax 5-acre farmers

Independent Report
LAHORE: The 18th provincial cabinet meeting, presided over by the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, was held in the walled city. During the session, the proposal to impose agricultural income tax on owners of 5-acre lands was rejected. Additionally, the cabinet decided to maintain the stamp duty rate at one percent and approved amendments to the First Schedule of the Stamp Act 1899. Amendments to the Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012 were also ap-

proved, abolishing all taxes and duties on IT business, education, and training in Punjab.
Furthermore, the cabinet approved the extension of contracts for employees of the hepatitis and infection control program, as well as the provincial TB control program. A significant decision was made to restore historical buildings and ancient gates across Punjab, including Lahore. The restoration of the 12 ancient gates of Lahore to their original grandeur was entrusted to the Director-

General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority, by the CM. DG WCLA provided a briefing on the restoration of historical buildings and expressed gratitude to the chief minister and the cabinet for their support, which was appreciated by the cabinet.
The cabinet also approved the renewal of the agreement regarding new issues and the scope of the Punjab Health Facilities Management Company. Various matters related to the Universal Health Insurance Program in Punjab

were also approved. Additionally, the extension of contracts for 605 employees of the Directorate General of Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education was approved. In terms of vehicle registration fees, a one percent reduction was approved for vehicles ranging from 1500cc to 2000cc in Punjab, aligning them with the fees in Islamabad.
Regarding mining, the cabinet approved the revision of royalty rates for limestone and argillaceous clay in large-scale mining operations.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the Higher Education Sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Governor House.



RAWALPINDI: Senator Walid Iqbal, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights and members of the committee are being briefed during their visit at Central Jail Adiala, Rawalpindi.

US Consul General visits flood hit area of Rajanpur

RAJANPUR (APP): US Consul General, Lahore Consulate, William K. Makaneole on Thursday visited a flood-hit village of Tahsil Rohjan Mazari, district Rajanpur, where he talked to the people for some time and witnessed how they were doing life in challenging circumstances.
The US Consul General met with all the flood-hit people of Balachani village and had a frank conversation with them on how they were doing life in odd circumstances. He also enquired about their socio-economic conditions and witnessed their mud brick houses, and took a keen interest in their cattle heads.

Upon arrival at Balachani village, the US Consul General was received by Sardar Dost Ali Khan Mazari who presented him traditional 'Ajrak' and Sindhi cap. District government officials gave him detailed briefing on the devastation caused by floods triggered by torrential rains in south Punjab. Earlier, William K. Makaneole met with Deputy Commissioner Rajanpur Dr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan Baloch at his office. The DC gave him a briefing on socio-economic aspects of life in Rajanpur, culture, heritage, law and order situation and the development projects under execution there.

Minister visits WASA disposal station

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir has visited Disposal Station of Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) in Dawood Nagar here on Thursday and reviewed arrangements to deal with flood emergency.
He said that Rs.600 million had been spent on Dawood Chowk Disposal Station to facilitate 200,000 people of this area with trouble free sewerage disposal facilities.
He directed the staff of disposal station to make generator sound proof in addition to shifting it near gate of the station.

PPP believes in practical steps rather than promises: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Kundi on Thursday said that his party believed in practical steps rather than just promises.
In a statement issued here, the state minister said another promise made with the people of Paroa has been fulfilled and a NADRA office in the Tehsil will start functioning from tomorrow.
He said the residents

5 Patwaris dismissed, 11 suspended on various grounds

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar has sacked five patwaris and the services of eleven (11) others have been put under suspension for tampering with revenue records, non-depositing of taxes, corruption and causing suffering to the public and subverting official orders. According to a press release issued here on Thursday, a case against one Tehsildar, two Naib Tehsildars and a Gurdawar had been sent to the provincial government.

Governor Baligh says: Islam is complete code of life which teaches us love, peace & tolerance

LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, today attended a seminar on promoting tolerance and harmony at Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore as a special guest.
Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Islam is a complete code of life which teaches us love, peace and

tolerance.
He said that we should take guidance from principles of Islam. Governor Punjab said that all of us should strive to create a society that is free from intolerance and hatred.
He said that teachers can play an important role in promoting tolerance and harmony.
He added that the teachers should pay special attention to character building of the students.

Dr. Jamal directs to expedite anti-dengue surveillance

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir on Wednesday directed the relevant officials to expedite anti-dengue surveillance to combat dengue.
Presiding over a meeting along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha to review anti-dengue arrangements, the minister directed the relevant officials to imple-

ATC rejects bail plea of PTI Khadija in Askari tower attack case

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday dismissed post-arrest bail petitions of 197 accused, including fashion designer Khadija Shah, a daughter of ex-advisor to chief minister Punjab Salman Shah, Sanam Javed, Aalia Hamza, Tayyaba Raja and others, in Jinnah House (corps commander's house in Lahore) attack case.
However, the court granted post-arrest bail to 33 accused, Maryam Mazari, Ayesha Masood, Huma Saeed, Maria Khan, Farhat Farooq and others,

Jinnah House attack: ATC dismisses bail petitions of 197 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday dismissed post-arrest bail petitions of 197 accused, including fashion designer Khadija Shah, a daughter of ex-advisor to chief minister Punjab Salman Shah, Sanam Javed, Aalia Hamza, Tayyaba Raja and others, in Jinnah House (corps commander's house in Lahore) attack case.
However, the court granted post-arrest bail to 33 accused, Maryam Mazari, Ayesha Masood, Huma Saeed, Maria Khan, Farhat Farooq and others,

and directed them to submit surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief.
ATC Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar announced the reserved verdict on bail petitions of 230 accused. A day earlier, the court had reserved the verdict after hearing detailed arguments of the parties.
In final arguments, the defence counsel argued before the court that their clients did not have any link with the case and they were implicated with mala fide intention.

International News

US to ease visas for skilled Indian workers as Modi visits

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration will make it easier for Indians to live and work in the United States, using this week's state visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help some skilled workers enter or remain in the country, according to three people familiar with the matter.
The State Department could announce as soon as Thursday that a small number of Indians and other foreign workers on H-1B visas will be able to renew those visas in the US, without having to travel abroad,

one of the sources said, part of a pilot program that could be expanded in coming years.
Indian citizens are by far the most active users of the US H-1B program and made up 73 per cent of the nearly 442,000 H-1B workers in fiscal year 2022.
"We all recognize that mobility of our people is a huge asset to us," said another US official.
"And so our goal is to approach that in a sort of multifaceted way. The State Department already has been working very hard to find creative ways to make changes to things."

A State Department spokesperson declined to comment on questions about which visa types would qualify or the timing of the pilot launch. Plans for a pilot program were first reported by Bloomberg Law in February.
"The pilot would begin with a small number of cases with the intention to scale the initiative over the following one to two years," the spokesperson said while declining to define small. The steps could change and are not finalised until they are announced. The White House declined to comment.



US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden welcome Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to the White House in Washington.

Restaurant explosion kills 31 in northwest China

BEIJING: At least 31 people were killed when an explosion caused by a gas leak ripped through a restaurant in the northwestern Chinese city of Yinchuan, state media said Thursday. The blast occurred on the eve of the three-day Dragon Boat Festival holiday, when many in China go out and socialise with friends.
Footage on state broadcaster CCTV showed more than a dozen firefighters working at the site as smoke poured out of a gaping hole in the restaurant's facade.
Shards of glass and other debris littered the darkened street, which is also home to a number of other eateries and entertainment venues. Nine people including the restaurant's "owner, shareholders and staff" were held by police following the explosion, CCTV said, adding that "their assets have been frozen". "A leak of liquefied petroleum gas... caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant," state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist Party committee.
Seven more people were receiving medical treatment, the agency said, with one of them in a "critical condition".
Two others suffered severe burns, two had minor injuries and two had scratches caused by flying glass, Xinhua said.

High school students and retirees were among the casualties, many of whom died due to suffocation likely caused by smoke inhalation, state-backed media outlet The Paper said, citing anonymous officials involved in the rescue effort. The explosion at about 8:40pm (12:40pm GMT) on Wednesday took place at the Fuyang Barbecue Restaurant in a residential area of downtown Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia autonomous region.
Chinese President Xi Jinping "demanded all-out efforts in treating the wounded and the strengthening of safety supervision and management in key industries and fields to effectively protect people's lives and property".

Macron would be inappropriate guest at BRICS summit, says Russia

MOSCOW: French President Emmanuel Macron would be an inappropriate guest at the BRICS summit, the RIA news agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Thursday, criticising countries whose policies Russia considers hostile.
The BRICS group of emerging economies, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is due to hold a summit in Johannesburg in August.
Asked about Macron's reported desire to attend the summit, Ryabkov said: "Clearly, leaders of states that pursue such a hostile and unacceptable policy towards us, discussing with

such emphasis and conviction that Russia should be isolated on the international stage, and share the common NATO line on inflicting a so-called strategic defeat on us - such a leader is an inappropriate BRICS guest." "And we are not hiding this approach of ours, we have told our colleagues from South Africa.
We expect that our point of view will be fully accepted," Ryabkov was quoted as saying. South Africa is currently mulling its legal options if Russian President Vladimir Putin decides to attend the BRICS summit because the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March issued an arrest warrant for Putin over the Ukraine conflict.

US Coast Guard ship sailed through Taiwan Strait a day after Blinken's China visit

TAIPEI: A U.S. Coast Guard ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken completed a trip to Beijing during which he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, in a move that Chinese authorities called "public hype".
The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Stratton conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" on June 20 through wa-

ters where "high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said in a statement Thursday. "The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," it added. China often maintains that the strait, which separates Taiwan and mainland China, is part of its exclusive economic zone.

New Zealand PM disagrees with Biden, says Xi Jinping not a 'dictator'

SYDNEY: New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, ahead of his official trip to China at end of this month, said on Thursday he did not agree with U.S. President Joe Biden's remark that Chinese leader Xi Jinping was a dictator. "No, and the form of government that China has is a matter for the Chinese people," Hipkins told reporters.

UAE leader welcomes Iranian foreign minister in latest softening of Persian Gulf tensions

DUBAI: The president of the United Arab Emirates met with Iran's visiting foreign minister on Thursday in the latest sign of improving relations between Arab Gulf countries and the Islamic Republic.
The UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have long harbored suspicions about Iran because of its nuclear program and support for militant groups across the region,

and have cultivated close defense ties with the U.S. But in recent months they have charted a more independent path, reaching out to U.S. adversaries as Washington increasingly focuses on Russia and China.
Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "discussed the importance of building on positive developments to benefit the people of the region."

Fighting surges in Sudan's capital as three-day ceasefire expires

DUBAI: Heavy clashes broke out between rival military factions in several parts of Sudan's capital on Wednesday as a 72-hour ceasefire that saw several reports of violations expired, witnesses said. Shortly before the truce ended at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) fighting was reported in all three of the cities that make up the wider capital around the confluence of the Nile.

Yellen says it's critical to maintain U.S.-China ties after Biden's dictator remarks

PARIS: U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday that it's "critical" the U.S. and China maintain a relationship so they can "work together" on global challenges, coming just after President Joe Biden's remarks calling Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "dictator" drew condemnation from Beijing.
Speaking at a news conference in Paris, Yellen said that "with respect to the comments, I think President Biden and I both believe it's critical to maintain communication... to clear up misperceptions, miscalculations.
We need to work together where possible." "But we have disagreements, and we are also forthright in recognizing we do have disagreements," she added. Yellen has recently advocated for improving relations between the U.S. and China, arguing cooperation is needed for the sake of maintaining global stability.
Biden's remarks at a fundraiser Tuesday, when

he also said China had "real economic difficulties," opened a new rift just after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing. The trip sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low.
China delivered a formal protest of Biden's remarks on Thursday, with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng telling senior White House and State officials that Washington "should take earnest actions to undo the negative impact" of what Biden said or "bear all the consequences," a Chinese embassy spokesperson said in a statement.
"With the latest irresponsible remarks about China's political system and its top leader, people cannot help but question the sincerity of the U.S. side" in seeking to stabilize relations, the statement said. "The Chinese government and people do not accept any political provocation against China's top leader and will resolutely respond."



Firefighters put out fire after an explosion at a restaurant in Yinchuan, China killed at least 31 people, officials said.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani chairing meeting of the Special Committee on Balochistan at Parliament House.

PM appreciates Macron for convening New Global Financing Pact Summit

Pak, Egypt agree to strengthen cooperation in multiple fields; PM emphasizes resources mobilization to address issue of climate change during meeting with John Kerry

PARIS (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the New Global Financing Pact Summit being held in Paris, France. The Prime Minister appreciated President Macron for convening the New Global Financing Pact Summit. He also thanked the French President for inviting him to the Summit and for his warm hospitality. Speaking on this occasion, Shehbaz Sharif hailed the French President's bold step towards a system, based on financial justice with developing countries. He said the developing countries are facing problems of non-availability of resources, burden of interest for debt payments and slow development. The Prime Minister said under the new Global Financing Pact, help of the indebted developing countries is the need of the hour so that the people of these countries can get relief. He said devastating effects of climate change have added the hardship to already troubled developing countries. Shehbaz Sharif praised the French President saying that he made a significant effort to create global consensus on an important issue. On this occasion, the French President thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending the New Global Financing Pact Summit. During the meeting, the two leaders also agreed to remain engaged on issues of mutual interest. Prime Minister



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director International Monetary Fund.

Balochistan govt to distribute 1,000 tractors among farmers

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government has decided to expand the 'Balochistan Green Tractor Programme' to distribute 1,000 more locally produced tractors among the small farmers of the province in the fiscal year 2023-24. In the first phase, the government has awarded 500 tractors to the small farmers of the province on subsidized rate, the provincial minister for agriculture and cooperation, Mir Asadullah Baloch said while talking to APP. The recovery will be made in a period of seven years, every beneficiary has to pay monthly installments, the minister informed. He further said that the latest technologies would be introduced to enhance the productivity of agriculture in the province. The Balochistan government had been provided seeds of worth Rs 2.2 billion to increase production which ultimately benefited the farmers, he said. He said that the provincial government has already constructed 400 tunnels aimed at enhancing the production of off-season vegetables and fruits in the province through tunnel farming. Asad Baloch said the Agriculture Department has awarded bulldozers' hours on a subsidized rate to the farmers and brought 5000 acres of barren land under cultivation to ensure food security by increasing agri production.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Sardar Saleh Muhammad Bhotani, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Sardar Safaraz Domki and Senator Manzoor Khan Kakar holding a meeting

Army distributes essential items among students

CHAGAI: Pakistan Army has provided electric coolers, sports equipment and uniforms, books and other essential items for Government High School and Girls Middle School Shadi Shef Chagai. Sports equipment, uniforms, electric coolers and other essential items were distributed to the students of Government High School and Girls Middle School Shadi Shef. On this occasion, the political and tribal leaders of the area, Malik Dilmarad Muhammad Hosni, Chairman Muhammad Murad Muhammad, Mir Abdul Jabbar Muhammad Hosni, Mir Salahuddin Muhammad Hosni, Haji Muhammad Hosni, Fazal Muhammad Hosni, Counselor Sardar Aminullah Muhammad Hosni and Maulvi Hafeezullah Muhammad Hosni and other dignitaries were present. While doing so, they said, "Pakistan Army is

slow development. The Prime Minister said under the new Global Financing Pact, help of the indebted developing countries is the need of the hour so that the people of these countries can get relief. He said devastating effects of climate change have added the hardship to already troubled developing countries. Shehbaz Sharif praised the French President saying that he made a significant effort to create global consensus on an important issue. On this occasion, the French President thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending the New Global Financing Pact Summit. During the meeting, the two leaders also agreed to remain engaged on issues of mutual interest. Prime Minister

Sibi, surrounding areas in trip of intense heat

SIBI: Sibi and its surrounding areas are in the grip of intense heat. People and animals wait for the rain. According to the details, in Sibi city and its surroundings, the sun was shining, due to which the intensity of heat increased. Special measures have been taken by the Ministry of Health to prevent and treat heatstroke. Due to the intense heat, markets and streets are deserted from noon. People are confined to their homes from afternoon noon. Rain is waiting for mercy, while the supply of cold and sweet water by Boys Scout.

Over 20 professional beggars captured

QUETTA: The Quetta district administration has launched crackdown against the professional beggars here in the metropolis on Thursday. During the crackdown, over 20 beggars were apprehended and handed over to the officials of Social Welfare Department. The beggars were captured during crackdown on Prince road, Mannan chowk, Toghi road, railway station, and other areas.



WADH: Mir Shafiq-ur-Rehman Mengal talking with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langu, MPA Zaid Reki and Sardar Aslam Bizenjo are also present

Govt's responsibility to protect minorities: Hindu, trader community led by Akhtar Mengal meet Zia Langove

QUETTA: A delegation of Hindu minority and traders community of Wadh area met the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove in Wadh, Khuzdar on Thursday. The senior politician and President of Balochistan National Party, Sardar Akhtar Mengal led the delegation. Also present in the meeting were the former Provincial Minister, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo and Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh. During the course of meeting, the issues being faced by the Hindu and traders communities were discussed. Mir Ziaullah Langove said that it is responsibility of the government to protect the life and property of the minorities and traders community. He on the occasion directed the IGP and other concerned quarters to find solution to all the issues being faced by the traders.

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Master Plan for reconstruction, rehabilitation of flood-affected areas by July 15: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced finalizing a Master Plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas by July 15. "It has been agreed [by the special committee formed by the PM] that the Ministry of Planning sit together after the budget [passage] and finalize the \$16.3 billion Master Plan of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas tentatively by July 15," he made this announcement on floor of the National Assembly. He said the government had allocated sufficient funds in the budget to execute projects of urgent nature in flood-affected areas. The minister said immediate rescue and relief work had been done throughout the country with disbursement of Rs 80 billion through the BISP programme, adding almost Rs100 billion had already been spent in addition to the assistance extended by National Disaster Management Authority in kind. On urgent basis, he said the relief goods had been taken from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) store, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet recently approved Rs12 billion to replenish its stock, keeping in view the predicted threats of the monsoon and the cyclone. He said a comprehensive report had been prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, following the widespread destruction caused by the heavy rains and floods in 2022. The report calculated that Pakistan collectively suffered over \$30 billion in economic and physical loss. He said funds amounting to \$16.3 billion were required to execute the physical work like repair of damaged houses and infrastructure, under the '4RF' strategy i.e. resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The estimate was for the projects to be completed in 4 to 5 years, he added. Ishaq Dar clarified that 50 per cent expenses of reconstruction and rehabilitation work would be borne by the federal government.

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Khurram Dastgir says No work done on CPEC during previous anti poor, anti CPEC PTI govt

GUJRANWALA (Online): Federal minister Khurram Dastgir while dubbing former PTI government anti poor and anti CPEC has said anti poor and anti CPEC government remained in power for four years. "No work was done on CPEC during the previous government. The effects of anti development government have been counteracted, he said while talking to media men here Thursday. He pointed out that Chinese company will make investment to the tune of 3.5 billion dollars in Pakistan.

Elections held on special seats of District Council Lasbela

By Aziz Yousafzai UTHAL: Elections were held on the special seats for farmers, labour and women of District Council Lasbela. Jam Group's nominated candidate for the special seat of Labour was Chief Tribal Sardar Ghulam Farooq Sheikh and the nominated candidate of Lasbela Awami Ittehad Abdul Wahid. Meanwhile, there was a contest in which the Jam Group Sardar Ghulam Farooq Sheikh won a clear lead by getting 16 votes and the well-known tribal figure Sardar Abdul Rasheed Phorai on the reserved seat of Famar between the Awami Ittehad nominee Aman Ullah and the People's Party nominee Bilal Lasi.



WADH: Mir Shafiq-ur-Rehman Mengal talking with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langu, MPA Zaid Reki and Sardar Aslam Bizenjo are also present

Commander Turkish Air Force visits Air Headquarters

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation led by Commander Turkish Air Force, General Atilla Gulan called on Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here at Air Headquarters on Thursday. During the meeting, several key areas of mutual interest along with regional developments were discussed, a PAF news release said. On his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented General Atilla Gulan the guard of honour. He also laid a floral wreath on the martyrs' monument. Later, the visiting dignitary was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu shared the broad contours of PAF's modernization plan of smart acquisitions from allied countries, up-gradation of infrastructure and revamping of training. Air Chief highlighted that both countries enjoy long-standing religious and historic relationship.

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Balochistan govt allocates Rs 2 billion for skill development programme

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government has allocated two billion rupees for the skill development programme in the budget 2023-24 to impart technical skills to the youth in reputed vocational institutions of the country in order to produce quality technical human resources. Talking to APP, an official of the Balochistan government said the huge allocation was aimed to impart technical skills among youth to get good employment opportunities under CPEC projects and also tap jobs in global labour markets. The government was also working to strengthen the technical and vocational education system.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetrn, Parliamentary Secretary Bushra Rind and MPAs Nasrullah Khan Zarey, Mir Akbar Mengal and Zeenat Shahwani expressing their views on provincial budget FY 2023-24

Govt earmarks Rs 25b to educate drop-out children: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the government had earmarked Rs 25 billion for imparting elementary education to drop-out children in the country. Addressing the Pakistan Learning Conference 2023, he expressed confidence that investing in early childhood education would lead to a significant reduction in dropout rates and enable children to fully utilise their inherent potential. Ahsan Iqbal underscored that intellectual growth in the early period of children was an essential requisite for their later success and for leveraging the impending available opportunities in their lives. "The children who receive early childhood education experience lower failure rates, exhibit better academic performance, and are more likely to pursue higher education," he added. Ahsan Iqbal stressed that investing in early childhood education was an investment in the nation's development and future, as the growth and prosperity of a nation depended on the quality of education provided during the crucial phase. The survival and progress of nations in the modern era were not determined solely by military might but by the quality of their education systems, he stressed. The minister said classrooms and laboratories, where knowledge was imparted and creativity was nurtured, held the key to a nation's success.

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KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari's witnessing MoU Signing Ceremony between KPT & UAE during the inauguration ceremony of Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited.

Pak-UAE joint venture Karachi Gateway Terminal inaugurated

KARACHI (APP): Limited (KGT), a joint venture of UAE's Abu Dhabi Port Group and Karachi Port Trust to improve infrastructure and facilities at one of the major ports of Pakistan was unveiled on Thursday. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori inaugurated the Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited by unveiling the plaque in a ceremony held here at Karachi Port Trust. An agreement and memorandum of understanding were also signed between Abu Dhabi Ports Group and Karachi Port Trust at the occasion. The 50-year concession agreement would attract a much-needed investment of over \$2 billion to expand and modernize shipment facilities, and establish special economic zone and rail connectivity between KPT and Port Qasim. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ADPG Captain Juma Shamsi and Chairman KPT Syed Sayedain Raza signed the agreement in presence of Federal Minister of Maritime Affairs Faisal Sabzwari.

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Ending tribal disputes our collective duty, Zia tells Shafiq Mengal

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langou has stressed that it is our collective duty to end tribal disputes in the province. He particularly referred to the ongoing dispute and tension in Wadh area of Khuzdar, Mir Ziaullah Langou said that it is our endeavour to bring an end to the prevailing tension. The Minister wasn't speaking to the tribal elder Mir Shafiqur Rehman Mengal whom he called on in Khuzdar. Also present on the occasion were the Mir Zaid Ali Reki, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo, Sardar Nasarullah Salsoli, Inspector General of police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other high ups.

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LAHORE: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of War Gaming Simulator held at Pakistan Navy War College.

GoB's grant cheque of Rs. 2 mln handed over to Gwadar Press Club

QUETTA: The cheque of grant of Rs. 2 million issued by the provincial government has been handed over to the office bearers of Gwadar Press Club at Gwadar on Thursday. The Assistant Director Public Relations Department, Gwadar, Wahab Ishaq Baloch handed over the cheque of Rs. 20 lakh amount to the President of Gwadar Press Club, Noor Mohsin, its Vice President, Javed Ahmed and General Secretary, Suleman Hashmi at the press club. Speaking on the occasion, Wahab Baloch said that the present government not only strongly believes in welfare of the media persons, but is also taking solid steps in this regard. He also mentioned that every possible steps are also being taken for resolving the issues being faced by the press clubs and the persons associated with media in the province. In this regard, the grant of Rs. 2 million is being provided to the press clubs in the province and handing over cheque to Gwadar Press club is part of this initiative, Assistant Director Public Relations Gwadar mentioned.

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