

Independent

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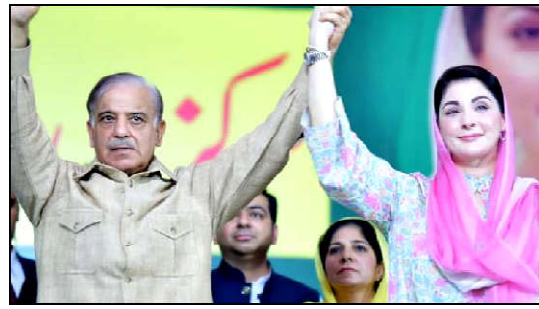
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Shahbaz elected PML-N President unopposed Nawaz Sharif to return to lead Pakistan on road to progress & prosperity : PM

Maryam Nawaz elected as Chief Organizer, Ahsan Iqbal as General Secretary and Marriyum Aurangzeb as Information Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said Nawaz Sharif would return from abroad to lead the country on the road to progress and prosperity, as the prime minister for fourth time.

Speaking after his re-election as President of Pakistan Muslim League(N) for a four-year term at the party's Central General Council, he said Nawaz Sharif was the architect of modern Pakistan and during his tenure as prime minister, he eliminated energy shortages, laid down the network of roads, built infrastructure and developed agriculture, industry and other vital sectors of the



economy.

He said he would hand over the presidency of the party to Nawaz Sharif after his return to Pakistan.

He thanked the General Council for electing him as its new president and his associates for the leadership positions in the party.

He lauded Maryam Nawaz for courageously leading the party all across Pakistan, despite all the difficulties that came in her way.

He said sixty percent of the population of the country were youth and Pakistan Muslim League (N)

needed young leaders for the future.

He appreciated workers of the party for standing by PML(N) despite going through hardships in jails and facing difficulties, adding similarly party leadership also stood their ground and faced oppression and suffering with courage and determination.

He said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was working hard to steer the country's economy out of the present difficulties. Those who were unduly criticizing Ishaq Dar had no place in the party, he added.

The prime minister said the government fulfilled all conditions of International Monetary Fund to meet financial needs of the country.

He reminded that the PML(N) spent its political capital for the sake of the State at a time when inflation was high and international commodity prices skyrocketed.

Despite difficult economic conditions, common man was given relief in the budget and salaries were raised by 35 percent and pensions by 17 percent, he noted adding Pakistani nation was brave and would emerge from the present challenges.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review progress regarding ongoing Mega Development Projects.

Senate approves bill allowing ECP to announce election dates

Bill also limits period of disqualification of a person to maximum of five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate took a significant step towards electoral reforms as it approved the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 in a session held on Friday.

The Bill, presented by Minister of State for Law and Justice Senator Shahadat Awan, aimed at amending the Election Act 2017.

He said that the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 sought to bring about changes in the current electoral framework and processes, with the primary objective of enhancing transparency and fairness in the electoral system.

He informed that the Bill would now progress to the National Assembly for further review and approval before it could be enacted into law.

Shahadat said the ap-

proval of the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 by the Senate represented a significant milestone in the country's journey towards electoral reforms.

The government and Opposition will now engage in further deliberations and discussions in the National Assembly, ensuring a thorough examination of the proposed amendments, he said adding that the ultimate aim was to strengthen democratic practices and ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the future.

During the Senate session, Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Tarar, emphasized the historical context of the Bill.

He highlighted that the power to determine election dates was initially vested in the Election Commission. However, following the imposition of martial law in

1977, the authority to fix election dates was granted to the President through an ordinance, he added.

He said that in response to recommendations from the Election Commission, a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Amendments was formed and the presented Bill aligned with those suggestions.

Senator Tarar further underscored that the responsibility for determining election dates was lying with the Election Commission, while legislation in accordance with the Constitution was the prerogative of the Parliament.

In response to the Senate's approval, Senator Dr. Shahzad Wasim, leader of the opposition party, expressed the need for amendments to be made through constitutional means.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presenting the shields to employees of ISSI during the "50th Foundation Day" ceremony of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Sector F-5 in Federal Capital.

FM Bilawal emphasises imaginative, multidimensional foreign policy for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday emphasised that Pakistan's foreign policy must be imaginative and multidimensional considering the rapidly transforming geopolitical landscaping across the globe.

The foreign minister, addressing a ceremony to observe the 50th Foundation Day of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad here, said after assuming office in April last year, the country faced serious challenges on the diplomatic fronts. However, the government pursued a foreign policy aimed at addressing the national challenges, improving access to goods and services, preserving sovereign decision making and promoting multilateralism and international law.

He said addressing the country's domestic issues required quick rebuilding of ties, restoring trust with key capitals, and reinvigorating

extensive engagement with traditional partners. The foreign minister said that Pakistan was committed to forging good relations with all major powers, which include US and China, also beyond Europe, Russia, Japan and ASEAN. He said Pakistan reinforced and deepened the partnership with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, Iran and Qatar, besides seeing a positive trend in the Pakistan-Africa linkages.

He told the gathering of ambassadors, think tanks, researchers and educationists that Pakistan always opposed the bloc politics and advocated cooperation as a main driver of international relations.

He said the Pak-China Strategic Partnership had been enduring and beneficial over several decades. He said Pakistan was fully committed to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan and to the West

would further advance the agenda of connectivity and economic integration.

Coming to the Pak-US ties, the foreign minister said the pro-active outreach resulted in the engagement of high-level visits from both sides and hoped that the de-hyphenation would further strengthen the bilateral relations.

With Russia, he said Pakistan continued to build relations based on trust as there was so much potential to realise across multiple sectors. He said as a friend of Russia and Ukraine, Pakistan desired a peaceful end to the ongoing crisis. He said the ties with India were marked by mistrust primarily due to the unilateral and illegal Indian actions of August 5, 2019, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said Pakistan was committed to having good neighbourly relations with India based on mutual respect and sovereign equality.

No delay in construction of ongoing uplift projects in IBD is acceptable: PM

Asks CDA chairman to ensure fast execution of development projects

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif while directing to complete the ongoing development projects in Islamabad has said neither any delay in the construction of development projects is acceptable nor will any compromise be made on the standard of these projects.

"The completion of development projects within stipulated period be ensured, he said this while presiding over a high level meeting in connection with ongoing uplift projects in Islamabad Friday.

The meeting was attended by interior minister Rana Sana Ullah, Advisor to PM Ahad Khan Cheema, Former MNA Hanif Abbasi, DG FIA, DG NLC, Chairman CDA and

respective authorities. The participants of the meeting were informed in details about the progress in ongoing development projects in Islamabad.

The PM said chairman CDA should himself monitor the work on development projects besides ensuring the standard and quality of the work. Special focus be placed on landscaping of development projects. International standard be kept in view during landscaping of the projects, he added.

The PM emphasized ensuring quality work while implementation of the development projects.

The meeting was informed about the progress on development work being carried out by the CDA.

Punjab election and review case: Respondents not telling grounds: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked the respondents are talking about expanding the scope of review but they are not telling grounds.

He further observed the real question in case is this the scope of review can be expanded till what extent.

He gave these remarks while presiding over a 3-member bench of SC during the hearing of Punjab election and review of judgment and order case here Friday.

The Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) while continuing his arguments told the court when high court decides any case then other forums of appeal including intra court are there. The SC is also be approached against high court decision. When SC hears any case under article 184(3) then this is first judicial forum. The parameters of all the three pillars of the state are determined under constitution.

The law makers legislate keeping in view the present time.

He said a five members bench will hear appeal plea against the decision of clause 3 of article 184 under review of judgment and order act. These three judges will also include in five members bench who have given the decision before.

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan while addressing the AGP remarked your real case is then that there is similarity in both the laws. In one law you are saying that the right to appeal be given and in second law you want that review is on the pattern of appeal.

Justice Munib Akhtar remarked this is open contradiction.

Asad Gilani assumes charge as Nadra chairman

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Asad Rehman Gilani, a grade 22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service and currently serving as secretary to the Board of Investment, on Friday assumed additional charge as the new chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra).

Gilani assumed the

additional role, succeeding Tariq Malik, who quit abruptly on June 14.

Reserves get boost as China rolls over \$1 bn to Pakistan

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: In a major boost to the forex reserves, China rolled over \$1 billion to Pakistan, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) confirmed late on Friday.

The news of the deposit comes hours after Finance Minister Ishaq Dar informed the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue that China would be refinancing the \$1 billion loan it had given to Pakistan earlier.

"\$1 billion will come from China today or on Monday," Dar had said.

Toshakhana Case: PTI chairman files written reply in NAB

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI chairman has not appeared on being summoned for NAB inquiry in Toshakhana case but he has filed reply in NAB through his counsel Barrister Gauhar.

The NAB jurisdiction was challenged in Toshakhana inquiry.

PTI chief's vote bank declined in Pakistan after May 9 mayhem: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah on Friday said that the vote bank of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief has declined in the country after the 9th May incident.

PTI chief's party was found involved in attacking national institutions on May 9, he said while talking to a private television channel.

The PTI leaders promoted the culture of uncivilized language among the youth, he said. The minister said he held the PTI chief responsible for polluting politics of Pakistan.

In reply to a question about the performance of PTI, he said it had damaged the economy and other sectors during the period of four years. Nobody will cast his vote in favor of it due to attacks on security institutions, he said.

Conspiracy hatched by PTI Chairman against Pakistan had badly affected the institutions, he said.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), he said after coming into power will take all neces-



sary measures to revive the economy.

To a question about elections, he said the PML-N would win the next elections with a thumping majority.

To another question regarding delaying tactics for elections, he said the caretaker setup would organize elections on time. The incumbent government after completion of constitutional tenure would establish a caretaker setup so that the next polls could be held in a transparent manner.

We are not interested in delaying general elections, he informed. Commenting on PTI leaders facing jail due to criminal offenses, he said there is a routine procedure in jails for medical check-ups for prisoners.



ISLAMABAD: Engineer Amir Muqam, Advisor to Prime Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, Alhaj Shah Jee Gul Afridi Ex MNA and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi addressing press conference at Press Club.

Khawaja apologies in NA for calling vice chancellor dacoit

ISLAMABAD (Online): Defence minister Khawaja Asif has apologized in National Assembly (NA) on calling vice chancellor dacoit.

He said this during his speech in NA that his speech was against corruption and if teachers are hurt then he apologizes.

My target during my speech was corruption but I overstepped limits by calling vice chancellors dacoits.

Speaker NA said we have respect for teachers in our heart. I have invited vice

chancellor in the house. We respect the teachers. I expunge the word dacoit from the proceedings, he added.

Ji MNA Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali said Pakistan is Islamic Republic Pakistan. "A game was played in Karachi on yesterday and the democracy was assassinated. The majority was changed into minority. 30 elected members of a party were made hostage. Party with 9 lac voters lost the election and those who bag 3 lac votes became mayor, he said.

Biparjoy cyclone starts weakening

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) "BIPARJOY" over the northeast Arabian Sea after crossing the Indian Gujarat coast (near Jakhau port) has weakened into a Severe Cyclonic Storm (SCS).

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the SCD lies near Latitude 23.8°N and Longitude 69.4°E at a distance of 200km east-southeast of Keti Bandar, 180km southeast of Thatta and 270km east of Karachi.

The associated maximum sustained surface winds are 80-100 Km/hour. Very rough sea conditions over Northeast Arabian Sea prevail with wave heights of 10-12 feet. The system is likely to weaken further into a Cyclonic Storm (CS) by today noon and subsequently into a Depression by today evening.

About the possible impacts under its influence, widespread rain-thunderstorm with some heavy or very heavy falls accompanied by squally winds of 80-100Km/hour likely in Sujawal, Badin, Tharparkar, and Umerkot districts.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication, Senator Kauda Babar, presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Budget concerns

The IMF's criticism of Pakistan's reckless budget for fiscal year 2023-24 carries profound risks for the economy. The June 30 deadline for meeting the lender's conditions to unlock funding will likely be missed unless the government agrees to review the document and remedy its weaknesses.

It would not be surprising if it does so, considering that it had to hurriedly, but comprehensively, revise its budget for the outgoing year to accommodate the IMF's concerns for the resumption of its funding programme when Miftah Ismail was at the helm of the Finance ministry.

Responding to the Fund's concerns, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told senators yesterday that Pakistan "cannot accept everything from the IMF". So, what would be the consequences if the government fails to pull off the deal? In the best-case scenario, Pakistan would struggle throughout the next fiscal to seek bilateral debt relief and secure fresh loans and rollovers of existing ones to meet its external debt obligations of \$23bn. Even if it succeeds in getting concessions from bilateral lenders and new loans from friendly countries, these will come at the cost of further economic slowdown, the loss of more jobs and higher inflation. In the worst-case scenario, Pakistan will default on its debt, something the government has tried to prevent by choking economic growth.

Moody's has also warned that Pakistan's failure to restart its \$6.7bn bailout programme with the IMF is pushing the country closer to defaulting. "There are increasing risks that Pakistan may be unable to complete the IMF programme," a Moody's analyst was quoted as saying. Without an IMF programme, Pakistan could default, given its very weak reserves, Moody's said, hours before the IMF made public its reservations on Wednesday night.

The IMF has criticised the budget on multiple counts, ranging from unfair tax policies that "missed an opportunity to broaden the tax base", to tax amnesty for a money-whitening scheme through remittances that runs against the programme's conditionalities and governance agenda.

The criticism wasn't unexpected as most financial analysts had ruled out the Fund's approval of the expansionary budget. The statement issued by the IMF's resident representative for Pakistan shows that the Fund is still willing to "work with Pakistan in refining this budget ahead of its passage".

Some argue that cooperating with the Fund could give the government another chance to put its fiscal house in order to conclude the review before the expiry of the programme. Pakistan's current crisis is driven mainly by external debt obligations. Hence, strict import controls have failed to improve foreign exchange reserves. What the government needs to understand is that falling reserves, uncertainty around the IMF programme and policy inaction is adding to the crisis. Unless the IMF is on board, our debt distress will only increase.

Disaster tourism?



Zubeida Mustafa

In an emergency, the best and the worst in human nature comes out for all to see. Unfortunately, the scenes witnessed on Wednesday and Thursday in Karachi's Seaview area were shocking. They did not reflect well on the psyche of Karachiites. People made their way in huge numbers to the beach to "enjoy" the sight of Mother Nature unleashing her wrath. All this happened as the administration and disaster management authorities issued warnings of the dire impact that Cyclone Biparjoy would have.

Karachi may not have been directly in the line of the cyclone's wrath, but the public's attitude left much to be desired anyway. Anticipating the public's tendency not to obey orders, Section 144 had been imposed and the police stationed on the spot. Yet nothing could stop the adventure-seekers out to have some fun.

The people did exactly what the authorities expected they would. How should one describe this cavalier behaviour? Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman aptly termed it "disaster tourism", while appealing to the people not to expose themselves to the danger. I will simply describe it as the height of stupidity and selfishness — after all the warnings had been issued.

The episode has left me wondering why our people behave in this bizarre manner. We still have to recover from last year's catastrophic floods that left Sindh devastated. What is worse, the prov-

ince is even now a ravaged place. With the exception of some areas where people have managed to reconstruct their homes without any official assistance and where life has begun to return to some semblance of normality, Sindh has a long way to go to return to the pre-2022 situation. Some villages destroyed then remain deserted today as their inhabitants have not returned. Many schools collapsed and were never replaced by new ones. I don't know if the government has even carried out a survey and kept count of the schools that are no more. Where are the children and where are the teachers?

Today, we do not know what is in store for us. Post-cyclone reconstruction will add to the challenge. Even before the cyclone hit, ferocious waves had begun to show how helpless man is before the fury of the elements, especially in times when callous governments fail to fulfil their duties. Still, the authorities managed to evacuate 77,000 people to safe places. One of them is Saleem Dublo, a fisherman from Keti Bandar that was expected to be hit by the storm, who has single-handedly taken upon himself to save the mangroves that the government has chosen to neglect. Dublo knows that his bread and butter depends on the mangroves where the fish lay their eggs. When he returns home, will the mangroves he had planted still be there?

There are fishermen who are worried about their boats. Having been grounded for several days because of the rough weather in the Arabian Sea, they are not even sure if their boats will be recovered intact. Their boats are a valuable asset and the main source of their livelihood. In the absence of quays and platforms to anchor

their vessels, the latter must have been battered beyond repair by the raging wind and waves.

It is in the backdrop of this situation that the Seaview crowds' sense of adventure is misplaced. Again, I return to my original question: why? A number of answers come to mind. The crowds which had gathered did not understand the danger that lurked behind the waves, which were smashing against the Seaview wall. Although Karachi is the only major city in Pakistan that can boast of being located on the seafloor, we seem to lack an understanding of the ocean. We know little about its sense of timing, its moody behaviour and how the ocean can be a soothing friend but also an enemy, which can drag you away forever. There are so many drowning deaths reported every year in Karachi.

Recklessness has penetrated the people's temperament as life no longer appears to be a major investment worth preserving for the common man.

Most importantly, the government, media and opinion-makers have lost all credibility. People had to see the storm to believe it was really there. The elements of nature have not been helpful. Take the cyclone. We had been hearing about the storm but the forecast about the level of danger to the city kept changing.

The same is the case in all walks of life. Few believe what is first announced. Even the mayor's election in Karachi — a stormy affair itself — on the day the cyclone was to make landfall produced a familiar uncertainty and lack of credibility. Such nonchalance and carelessness on the part of the public and lack of governmental credibility are a tragedy for society at large. Will anything now restore our faith in this country? — Courtesy Dawn

Wheat for all



Tabinda Ashraf Shahid

Food insecurity in Pakistan has aggravated sharply over the past few years, the inevitable outcome of persistent political instability and declining economic health. With one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, poverty, and vulnerability to climate change, Pakistan's road to nutritional sufficiency has been long and tumultuous.

A key challenge preventing governments here from formulating a clear roadmap to nutritional self-sufficiency lies in their inability to define the actual extent and nature of food insecurity. The last national nutritional survey was conducted five years ago. The National Nutritional Survey 2018 revealed shocking but long-existing realities. For example, a key finding was that childhood malnutrition rates have shown little improvement over the past five decades. Other findings were of equal concern: nearly 40 per cent of Pakistan's children were stunted, 29pc underweight while 18pc suffered from wasting. Even in areas near the federal capital, the rate of stunting was found to be as high as 33pc (the lowest in the country!) while the highest at 47pc-48pc was found in Balochistan, GB and KP's newly merged districts.

Though the report's findings will stay relevant for years to come, a lot has happened in the past half a decade alone to bring significant regional-level changes to the nutritional trajectory proposed by the document. For example,

the 2022 floods destroyed over four million acres of standing crops causing revenue losses of over \$30 billion. However, estimates for FY22 already showed a decline in wheat production, 26.4m tonnes against a target of 28.4m tonnes, leading to the import of the staple from war-torn Ukraine. In contrast, 2021 had arguably seen the highest domestic yield of wheat (27.5m tonnes).

Nutritional damage resulting from natural disasters lasts not for months but years, even decades. Data collected by the Livelihood Recovery Appraisal-2013 to investigate the impact on livelihood and food insecurity in Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab after the 2012 floods indicated that even after a whole year only 15pc of the affected population consumed nutritionally adequate food — meat, lentils and fruit along with the staple wheat. According to LRA-2013, food insecurity in Balochistan was the highest at 47pc, followed by Sindh at 41pc.

Meanwhile, global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war have also left their mark on the economics of global food insecurity. Their effects have been severely compounded in Pakistan because of the worsening political instability that is also responsible for the current economic crisis.

At present, short-term inflation hovers around 47pc, while overall inflation in 2022 was nearly 20pc, the highest in decades. This has a direct impact on food consumption of not just the poor but also the salaried and middle classes. Rising inflation, reduced purchasing power and a growing population with limited earners have lowered the consumption of other healthy food items, and increased dependence on wheat. The Pakistan Agriculture Council has re-

vealed that up to 60pc of Pakistan's daily dietary needs depend on wheat with a per capita consumption of 125 kg annually. Because of its high consumption new wheat crops are biofortified with iron and zinc to overcome micronutrient deficiencies common in women of reproductive age and children under five in Pakistan. But biofortified wheat flour was already scarce in many cities even before the wheat crisis.

According to the International Food Policy Research Institute's 2022 report, global inflation is already harming some 1.27m children in 44 low- and middle-income countries, putting them at greater risk of wasting and stunting. Volatility in real prices increases the risk of wasting by 9pc on average. Moreover, food inflation during pregnancy and infancy plays a significant role in raising the likelihood of stunting between the ages of two and five years. These findings underscore the urgent need for early intervention to mitigate the impact of food price volatility on mother and child.

The USDA's Global Agriculture Information Network Report 2023 shows that insufficient wheat production is a significant challenge in Pakistan, owing to a fast-growing population. To prevent serious food insecurity, an integrated approach with comprehensive policies are needed to manage food inflation. Conducting a new NNS is necessary to obtaining up-to-date data that helps nutritionists and policymakers assess the extent of malnutrition. Also, empowering farmers through modern technologies is vital. Prioritising the equitable distribution of imported wheat among provinces and implementing social protection programmes can ensure subsidised access to wheat by all. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Govt firmly committed to IMF programme, keen to complete 9th review

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Finance on Friday said the coalition government was fully committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and keen to at least complete the 9th review as it had already taken many difficult and politically costly decisions in that context. Responding to the statement of IMF's Resident Representative Ms Esther Perez, the Finance Ministry spokesperson said negotiations with the Fund were going on, however, it

would be appropriate to clarify "our position" on some specific issues raised in the press statement.

He said the 9th IMF review was conducted in early February 2023 and the government completed all technical issues at a fast pace. The only outstanding issue was of external financing "which, we understand, was also amicably resolved in the prime minister's telephonic call of May 19, 2023, with the Managing Director (MD) of IMF". The spokesperson said

the budget for the financial year 2023-24 was never a part of the 9th Review, however, "in line with the prime minister's commitment to the IMF MD, we shared the budget numbers with the IMF Mission and we are continuously engaged with them even on the budget". On the specific issues raised by Ms Esther Perez, he said as far as the broadening of the tax base was concerned, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had added 1,161,000 new tax payers i.e. 26.38% to its tax base in the last 11 months.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, Golden Denise and Fuwairit with 7,000 tonnes of Chemicals and 64,734 tonnes of LNG are arrived at Outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Kition-M, PS-Pelican and Dona BIBI are expected to sail on Friday.

Cargo throughput of 30,849 tonnes, comprising 30,849 tonnes imports Cargo exclusively, was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Elim, Cielo Rosso, Fuwairit and MilahaRasLafan & two more ships, APL California and Cosco America scheduled to load/offload Palm oil, Mogas, LNG and Containers are expected to take berths at Liquid Terminal, Oil Terminal, Engro Terminal, Gas Terminal and Container Terminal on Friday, & two more container ships, Olympia and Maersk Nyssa are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Saturday, & Navios Lapis and MSC Flosta-III are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Sunday.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira cutting the ribbon for opening ceremony of Furniture Exhibition.

Commercialization of 6G expected to be realized around 2030 in China

ISLAMABAD (APP): It is necessary to accelerate research and development of 6G mobile network which will realize the deep integration of physical and virtual worlds, as the next generation mobile technology will be combined with advanced information technology like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain, Global Times reported on Friday.

The next-generation 6G is the main trend for the development of the global mobile communication industry, and now, the world's major economies are competing in 6G research and development in order to lead the new tech.

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) ratcheted up efforts to promote the comprehensive development of 6G on June 4 at PT Expo China. The ministry said 6G will almost certainly lead the Chinese economy to a much higher level, and open up a brand-new cyber landscape. China has rolled out the world's largest and also most advanced 5G network. New forms of industrial internet integration are flourishing.

Real estate sector growth vital for economic uplift

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said on Friday that the real estate sector was the backbone of the economy, which was contributing to economic recovery, employment creation and promoting investment in the country.

Addressing a ceremony organized by Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA), he said that the collaborative

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,700

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,700 and was sold at Rs 223,400 on Friday against its sale at Rs 220,700 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,315 to Rs 191,530 from Rs 189,215 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 175,569 from Rs 173,447. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

PSX loses 67.87 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 67.87 points on Friday, a negative change of 0.16 per cent, closing at 41,301.30 points against 41,369.17 points the previous day.

A total of 156,023,085 shares were traded during the day as compared to 149,676,270 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 3,746 billion against Rs. 3,606 billion on the last trading day. As many as 323 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 108 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 24,009,338 shares at Rs. 13.53 per share; K-Electric Ltd.

Cheema, Zafar successfully get approval for exporting more rice to Russia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister National Food Security and Research (NFSR) Tariq Bashir Cheema, through the scholastic guidance of Secretary Zafar Hassan, successfully got approval for the Department of Plant Protection (DPP) to export rice to Russia by 15 more mills, following the recommendation after a technical audit by the DPP, said a press release issued here Friday.

The development is a major success towards boosting exports and the overall economy of the country. Russia had put a ban on rice exports a few years back because of pest interception in rice.

However, the ban was lifted in 2021 and only four rice mills which complied with their quality standards, were allowed to export rice from Pakistan to Russia.

The DPP with the support of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) took special steps to upgrade 15 more mills as per the Guidance Document prescribed by the Russian Federation for compliance with the requirements for rice exports.

The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.20 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on June 15, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The weekly SPI with

the base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732, increased by 0.11 per cent and went up to 261.66 points from last week's 261.36 points whereas it also increased by 0.11 per cent for the consumption group from Rs 17,732-22,888. The SPI for the combined consumption group from Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175, and above Rs 44,175 witnessed an increase of 0.28 per cent, 0.29 per cent and 0.20 per cent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.25%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable.

Weekly inflation increases by 0.20 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.20 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on June 15, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The weekly SPI with



FAISALABAD: Display of a goat that got first position in heavy weight/beauty competition during "25th International Goat Mela 2023" at University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Food group exports reduced 0.84% in 11 months of FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group imports into the country during 11 months of current financial year reduced by 0.84 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-May, 2022-23, food commodities costing \$8.380 billion imported as against the imports of \$8.451 billion of same period of last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The imports of the commodities including milk cream decreased by 10.35 percent, dry fruits

41.75 percent, tea 11.09 percent, spices 30.89 percent and sugar imports reduced by 97.21 percent as compared to the imports of same period last year, it added. The other commodities that observed negative growth in their respective imports during the period under review included palm oil 0.43 percent and all other food items reduced by 18.33 percent as compared to their imports of first 11 months of last financial year.

However, during last 11 months of current financial year the imports of wheat unmilled increased by 34.85 percent.

Baligh asks medical students to equip contemporary knowledge of their field

Independent Report
BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that advanced research in the health and education sectors is very important in this modern time.

Addressing the seventh annual convocation of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College as the chief guest here Friday, he said that medical graduates should use technology to acquire contemporary knowledge of their respective fields. He urged the students to see for themselves in which eras of Pakistan's history the highest GDP growth

was observed. He said that mega-development projects were completed in Bahawalpur during the era of the Pakistan Muslim League (N).

He told that a 400-bed Sir Sadiq Mohammad Khan Abbasi Hospital (Civil Hospital), Drug testing laboratory, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Government Sadiq Women University, and other educational institutions were established in Bahawalpur during the period of Pakistan Muslim League (N) government. During this period, he added the construction of the Home

Economics College building started which is completed now.

Engr Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that approval was taken for the establishment of Bahawalpur Institute of Science and Technology in 2018 and the federal government has now allocated the budget for the institute in the coming fiscal year.

The Governor condemned the incident of May 9 and said that Nishan-e-Haider was awarded only to those who sacrificed their lives for the defense of the country and they deserved all the respect and honor.



PESHAWAR: Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurating Peshawar Model Sapphire Hayatabad Campus at City University.

CJ PHC chairs 11th provincial justice committee meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musarrat Hilali on Friday chaired the 11th Provincial Justice Committee (PJC) meeting at the PJC Secretariat, PHC here. The committee reviewed the implementation status of the decisions taken in the previous meeting and the chair expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the decisions. A press release issued here on Friday said that directions were issued to departments regarding

decisions partially implemented.

The Committee was informed that land at Hayatabad had been earmarked and possessed by the Home Department where after the release of funds by the concerned department, a state-of-the-art Forensic Science Laboratory would be established in a phase-wise manner.

The Offenders' Management System and data integration of Justice Sector Stakeholders were also on the agenda.

PTI affiliated NCs chairmen, councilors quit party

PESHAWAR (APP): Neighbourhood Councils (NCs) chairmen and councilors on Friday quit Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), condemning May 9 vandalism, and announced to join Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Addressing a news conference here at Peshawar Press Club (PPC), they said that they were elected on tickets of PTI as they were interested to serve the people of Peshawar city and later after the end of the party government at federal and provincial levels remained part and parcel of the agitation politics. But, after the violent incidents of May 9-10, they couldn't remain within the fold of PTI. They said, "The manner under which the building of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Peshawar

Ghulam Ali says: Govt make no compromise on quality education, supremacy of merit

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Friday said that provision of quality education was the top priority of the government and no compromise would be made on the supremacy of merit and learning in the educational institutions.

He was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of the Peshawar Model Softer project of the Peshawar Model Educational Institute during his visit to the City University of Science and Technology, Peshawar.

Provincial ministers Adnan Jilil, Saboor Sethi, Gayoor Sethi and Secretary Higher Education were present on the occasion.

While appreciating the owners and administration of the City University and its allied education institutions for the provision of quality education at a minimum fee to people, the Governor said that the promotion of quality education was the top priority of the government and no compromise would be made on quality education and supremacy of merit.

Interim ministers review progress of development projects of Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Interim Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer and Interim Provincial Minister for Communications, Construction and Excise and Taxation Bilal Afzal presided over a high-level meeting held at Commissioner Office Bahawalpur.

In the meeting, Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtesham Anwar briefed the provincial ministers about the ongoing

development projects of Bahawalpur Division.

Provincial Minister SM Tanveer said that visits are being done to review the performance of the districts on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. He said that the ongoing development projects should be completed on time and all resources should be utilized to provide relief to the people. Provincial minister Bilal Afzal said that the government is taking steps to improve the economy.

PFA DG visits Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) will give a free-of-cost nutrition counselling and nutrition guide kit to 39,279 Hajj pilgrims, who will travel from Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan to Saudi Arabia through more than 131 flights.

This was stated by PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar while visiting the Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk (HNGD), set up at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore.

He said the purpose of providing the nutrition kit is to protect the pilgrims from health problems while performing the Hajj.

The nutrition guide kit provides dietary guidelines to prevent various diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, breathing problems and skin diseases.

The director general said that a first-ever nutrition program for Hajj pilgrims had been launched with the collaboration.

Accused in May 9 incidents LHC orders for completion of identification parade within 48 hours

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed sessions judges and special courts of Punjab province to complete the identification parade within 48 hours in respect of persons accused in May 9 incidents.

The court maintained the process of identification parade is very important for any accused. The present identification parade process is very futile. Delay in identification

parade renders all the process dubious. Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh of LHC issued 13-page decision on the petition filed by a citizen Muhammad Ramzan Friday. It has been said in the decision that registrar should send copy of decision to all sessions judges and IG Punjab.

The decision said that delay in identification parade is violation of fundamental rights, respect and fair trial.



Minister of State / SAPM for Industries and Production, Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi cutting a cake to celebrate birthday of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto in Sargodha.

Police constable shot dead by unknown outlaws

RAJANPUR (APP): A police constable was shot dead by unknown outlaws at Dajal road in Jamrupur city on Friday.

According to police sources, Shakeel Ahmed was going on duty when some unknown outlaws started firing on him. Resultantly, he sustained bullet injuries and died on the spot, however, the criminals managed to escape from the scene.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ghazi Khan, Capt (retd)

Sajjad Hassan Khan while taking notice of the incident, directed District Police Officer (DPO) Rajanpur Capt (retd) Dost Muhammad to reach the crime scene at the earliest and ensure early arrest of the criminals.

He said that the criminals involved in the crime would be arrested soon and added that all possible resources would be utilized to provide justice to the family of bereaved constable.



RAWALPINDI: Rescue 1122 worker demonstrating about firefighting, during session in Govt Post Graduate College in City.

International News

Poverty, climate, regional stability on agenda as Saudi crown prince visits France

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Friday with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris as part of an official visit, during which he will also participate in a global summit aimed at fighting poverty and climate change.

Macron and the prince sat down for a one-to-one working lunch at the Elysee presidential palace. The French presidency said the talks would focus on bilateral relations between the two countries and on regional stability issues, es-

pecially after long-time rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran restored diplomatic ties earlier this year. France is a major weapons and defense supplier to Gulf nations. The leaders also are preparing for a global summit next week "aimed at bringing together private and public funding" to fight poverty, support climate transition and protect biodiversity, the French presidency said.

The event is expected to gather over 50 heads of states and governments as well as many NGOs and prominent climate activists.

During his stay in

Paris, Prince Mohammed is also expected to push for Riyadh to host the 2030 World Fair's Expo.

His visit to France comes as the prince has sought to rehabilitate his image abroad following the 2018 killing and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. While Saudi Arabia denies the prince's involvement, U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed he likely ordered Khashoggi's killing as part of a wider crackdown on any challenge to his rule.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman poses with French President Emmanuel Macron.

China's Xi tells Bill Gates he hopes US-China friendship will continue

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Xi Jinping called Bill Gates "an old friend" and said he hoped they could carry out activities together beneficial to both China and the United States, in the Chinese president's first meeting with a foreign entrepreneur in years. In a meeting at Beijing's Diaoyutai state guesthouse, where China's leaders have historically received senior foreign guests, Xi told the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist that he was very happy to see him after three years and described Gates as the first American friend he had met this year.

"I often say the foun-

date of US-China relations lies with its people. I place my hopes on the American people," a video published by state broadcaster CCTV showed Xi saying. "With the current global situation, we can carry out various activities beneficial to our two countries and people, activities that benefit humanity as a whole," he said. Gates, who arrived in Beijing on Wednesday, told Xi that he was "honoured" to have the chance to meet. "We've always had great conversations and we'll have a lot of important topics to discuss today. I was very disappointed I couldn't come during the last four years

so it's very exciting to be back."

Xi stopped travelling abroad for nearly three years as China shut its borders during the pandemic and his international meetings since the reopening have mostly been with other state leaders. Plans for his meeting with Gates were first reported by Reuters. A number of CEOs have visited China since it reopened early this year, but most have met with government ministers. Gates stepped down from Microsoft's board in 2020 to focus on philanthropic works related to global health, education and climate change.

At least 15 killed in Canada highway crash after truck hits bus in Manitoba

Monitoring Desk
MANITOBA: At least 15 people were killed in the Canadian prairie province of Manitoba on Thursday after a semi-trailer truck hit a small bus that was carrying a group of mainly elderly people, police said.

The crash is one of the most lethal road accidents in recent Canadian history.

The crash occurred at the junction of two major roads near the town of Carberry in southwestern Manitoba, 170km west of Winnipeg. The bus passengers had been on their way to a casino in Carberry, CBC News reported, citing a casino spokesperson.

"We've been able to establish that at least 15

people have been confirmed deceased as a result of this collision," said Assistant Commissioner Rob Hill, who commands the Manitoba Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Hill told a televised news conference that "sadly, this is a day in Manitoba and across Canada that will be remembered as one of tragedy and incredible sadness."

The bus had been carrying about 25 people, most of them elderly, he said.

Ten other people were being treated in hospital. Police said the drivers of both vehicles were alive, and declined to say who might have been responsible for the crash.

Blinken heads to Beijing hoping to calm fears of a US-China break

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken goes to Beijing this weekend with expectations low that he will make headway on the long list of disputes between the United States and China. But he and his Chinese counterparts can achieve at least one thing, say analysts - show that the world's most important bilateral relationship is not about to fall off the rails.

Blinken will hold meetings in China on June 18-19 and may meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping, sources said. He will be the highest-ranking U.S. government official to visit China since Biden took office in January 2021.

In a pre-trip briefing on Wednesday, U.S. officials said they have no expectation the trip will yield a breakthrough in how the U.S. and China deal with each other. That followed a tense evening phone call with Blinken on Tuesday during which Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang told

the U.S. to stop meddling in China's affairs.

China's foreign ministry followed up on Friday, warning that "vicious competition ... cannot be engaged in" and that the United States "should not fantasize that it is dealing with China from a position of strength."

"This is not so-called responsible competition, but extremely irresponsible hegemonic behaviour which will only push China and the U.S. towards confrontation," foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters.

The visit, which could set the stage for a flurry of other diplomatic engagements including a meeting between Xi and U.S. President Joe Biden later in the year, would show that the two rivals have not given up on diplomacy. "Both sides want to show the rest of the world that they are managing the relationship responsibly," said Andrew Small, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund's Asia program.

Russia, Turkey agree on Putin visit to Turkey 'soon' -ifax cites Kremlin aide

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have agreed that the Russian leader will visit Turkey "soon", Interfax cited a Kremlin aide as saying on Friday. The visit would be Putin's first to a NATO country since he ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Putin has only rarely travelled outside Russia since the beginning of full-scale hostilities.

"There is an invitation from the President of Tur-

key. Putin and Erdogan agreed that the visit will be in the near future, but we have not yet talked about a specific day, specific dates," Interfax cited Kremlin foreign policy advisor Yuri Ushakov as saying.

Erdogan, re-elected last month for another five-year term, has sought to maintain strong ties with both Moscow and Kyiv since the start of the conflict in Ukraine.

Turkey has refused to join its Western allies in imposing economic sanctions on Russia.

Qatar emir holds Baghdad talks with Iraq PM

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq signed several gas and infrastructure deals with Qatar on Thursday as it welcomed the Gulf state's emir to Baghdad as part of its push to secure foreign investment in reconstruction. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani was welcomed by Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani at the airport, images broadcast on Iraqi media showed. Relations between the two countries saw a long period of tension under ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, before easing up over the past decade.

Palestinian leader Abbas ends China trip after backing Beijing's crackdown on Muslim minorities

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas wrapped up a trip to China Friday after seeking economic aid and voicing support for Beijing's repressive policies toward Muslim minorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

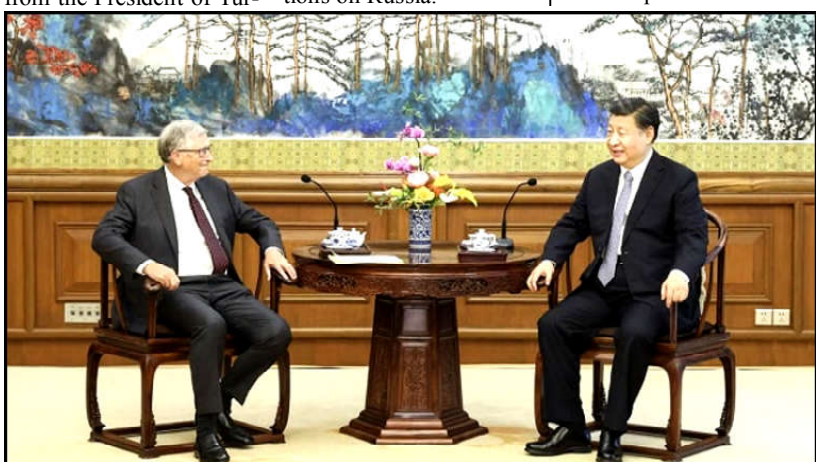
During his four-day visit, Abbas met with Chinese President and head of the ruling Communist Party Xi Jinping. The lead-

ers then issued a joint statement endorsing Beijing's domestic and foreign policies and repudiating Western concepts of human rights.

In the statement, the Palestinian Authority said issues regarding China's policy toward Muslims in Xinjiang have "nothing to do with human rights and are aimed at exciting extremism and opposing terrorism and separatism."

US, Iran in talks to cool tensions with a mutual 'understanding'

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: The United States is holding talks with Iran to sketch out steps that could limit the Iranian nuclear programme, release some detained US citizens and unfreeze some Iranian assets abroad, Iranian and Western officials said. These steps would be cast as an "understanding" rather than an agreement requiring review by the US Congress, where many oppose giving Iran benefits.



Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing.

President for AI-based solutions to business, industrial problems

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday urged Pakistan's business and industrial sectors to adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based solutions for solving their problems and boosting their efficiency and productivity.

The president, talking to a delegation from Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF), at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that exponential advancements in information technology had created new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in various fields such as health, education, business and industry, and

Pakistan's IT companies should adopt a global outlook to fully benefit from them. Chairman Soliton Investment Fund, Dr Mansoor Ali Khan, Founder and CEO of Soliton Group, Dr Fauzia Khan, representative of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, and senior officials of the government attended the meeting.

Talking to the delegation, the president underlined the need for Pakistan's IT companies to develop win-win partnerships with academia and industries at both the local and international levels.

He added that robust

and mutually beneficial partnerships among academia and industry stakeholders would help achieve key economic and technological milestones.

President Alvi emphasised the need for promoting skills-based education in Pakistan, besides equipping the youth with employable skills through online courses and short-term associate degree programs.

He said that he had been constantly urging the stakeholders to produce more skilled graduates, invest in emerging technologies, make fast decisions

and timely implement policies for the IT sector.

He said that AI-based solutions could also help deliver personalized education/lessons to Pakistan's almost 27 million out-of-school children, which otherwise would consume enormous time and resources. The delegation briefed the president about Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF) which aims at promoting AI-based industry solutions at a massive scale. The delegation also highlighted the diverse applications of AI and its benefits for various sectors of the economy.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation from Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF), at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik addressing to participants of chairman raiser ceremony of Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023.

Senator Qadir assures collective steps for economic development of country

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Abdul Qadir on Friday said that collective measures would be taken for economic development of the country. With the arrival of Russian crude oil and gas, where Pakistan's energy needs will be met, the pressure on the economy will also be reduced to some extent, he added. In a statement issued here, he said that Pakistan had paid for cheap crude oil from Russia in Chinese currency, which was a significant change in the country's policy of export payments dominated by the US dollar. In principle, the way for China to trade crude oil in Chinese currency is open, he said adding that the benefit of oil should be reached to the public. After refining Russian oil, petroleum products should be cheaper by 35 to 40 rupees, he added.

He said that the IMF has declared the levy of 50 rupees on petroleum products as insufficient and there was a fear of increasing the charge by 10 rupees.

He said that Pakistan needed to free itself from the clutches of the IMF, so far, an agreement had been signed with Russia for the purchase of 100,000 tons of oil and this oil was to be brought to Pakistan in two ships. For the first time in the 75 years history of Pakistan, a Russian crude oil ship has reached Pakistan, the second ship will also arrive Pakistan by next week, he noted. He said that European countries should also be discussed to set up LNG plants in Pakistan and the TAPI gas pipeline agreement was also a major development. The Senator said that it was also very gratifying that the revolving credit of the country's gas has been cleared, after the crude oil.

NDMA announces 1st ever Pak Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday inaugurated the launching of the first-ever Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR-23) to be held from July 12-14. The event was attended by government officials, representatives from international partners, humanitarian organizations, academia, media and members of private sector, a news release said.

The PEDRR-23 is part of NDMA's efforts to raise awareness of disaster risk reduction and to build resilience to disasters in Pakistan. It will showcase the latest technologies and innovations in disaster risk reduction and will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to network and share best practices. The expo would constitute academic conferences, seminars, exhibitions and various youth competitions to ensure maximum participation.

Nazir Tarar says: No one can dare to cast ill eyes on Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday informed the Senate that Pakistan is a responsible state and no one can dare to cast ill eyes on atomic and other assets of the country. Speaking in the Senate in response to points raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, the minister said that no member of the federal cabinet was taking salaries and very minimum perks were being given to them. Only 1800 CC car and petrol at par with federal secretary was being given to them.

Earlier resuming debate on the budget, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed said that International Monetary

Fund (IMF) wanted to default Pakistan and creating hurdles in disbursement of \$ 1 billion tranche. Such tactics were being adopted to snatch atomic bomb facility of Pakistan, he added.

He suggested that elimination of elite and protocol culture besides curbing various 'mafias' were mandatory to address the key challenges to the national economy.

He criticized the government for not giving any concrete plan for debt retiring, controlling inflation, civil and police reforms. He said that the national debt had surged to record Rs 60,000 billion and the budget lacked any concrete plan to address this grave issue.

Pak is responsible country, our defence assets in safe hands: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate was informed on Friday that Pakistan is a responsible country, our defence assets are in safe hands.

Replying to the questions raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan during debate on the next year's budget, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said we have the capacity to defend our motherland.

He said under the austerity measures, no member of the cabinet is taking salary. Taking part in the discussion, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan said that the share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National Finance Commission should be given well in time as it is directly linked with the lives of the people. He asked to exempt erstwhile FATA from taxes for more ten years.

Rana Maqbool said the latest oil deal with Russia will definitely help improve the economy.

The Senate today passed "The Elections Amendment Bill 2023".

The Bill which was moved by the Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan contains amendments in the Elections Act 2017.

Talking about the Bill, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said that under this bill, the Election Commission of Pakistan will now be able to announce the dates for the general elections.

Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani while supporting the bill said that the bill is tantamount to protecting the future generations of Pakistan.

The House also passed unanimously "The Members of the Senate Salaries and Allowances Bill 2023". It was moved by Senator Qauddin Babar.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui paid tribute to the Chairman Senate for delivering a speech in Urdu at the Russian Parliament saying that such great practices should be continued in the future.

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, James Cleverly telephoned Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and discussed issues of mutual interest.

FM Bilawal in his statement on twitter handle account said that he was pleased to receive the phone call from his British counterpart, with whom he discussed bilateral ties.

He mentioned that the conversation focused on the urgent need for mitigation measures to combat climate change and natural disasters.

Abbasi welcomes TIP merger in PML-N to strengthen party in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Friday welcomed the merger of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Tehreek-e-Istehkham Pakistan (TIP) political party in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to further strengthen his party in the province.

Addressing a press conference in National Press Club (NPC) flanked by Adviser to Prime Minister (PM) on National Heritage and Culture Division Engr Amir Muqam,

and TIP Founder Shahge Gul Afridi, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister said it was the happiest, most delightful, and wonderful day as TIP has joined PML-N under the leadership of Shahge Gul Afridi.

He said TIP leadership announced joining PML-N by fully trusting and believing in the dynamic leadership qualities and prudent policies of PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Arif Alvi meeting with educationists and experts on inclusive education for persons with disabilities, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Samina stresses teachers' training to educate differently-abled children at regular schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): Begum Samina Arif Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need for mainstreaming the differently-abled children in society and providing them better educational facilities.

She expressed these views in a meeting with Dr Fauzia Khan, a US-based expert on the education of special children, and the representatives of World Health Organization, a regulatory authority of private educational institutions and the Directorate of Special Education.

Samina Alvi stressed

the need for training the teachers to accommodate the differently-abled children at regular schools.

She said providing quality education to such children was essential and pointed out the need to address discrimination against them in the society.

Begum Alvi lauded the efforts of the American education expert in providing online training to master trainers in Pakistan relating to the education of differently-abled children.

She urged the Pakistani teachers to benefit from international stan-

dards of special education training.

The teachers should be assigned to educate special children at private and government institutions, she said.

The meeting held in-depth discussion on the steps taken for educating the differently-abled children and the need for their inclusion in regular classroom setups.

The participants highlighted the importance of capacity-building of teachers for educating the differently-abled from the primary level.

Bilawal, UK foreign secy discuss bilateral ties, climate finance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, James Cleverly telephoned Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and discussed issues of mutual interest.

FM Bilawal in his statement on twitter handle account said that he was pleased to receive the phone call from his British counterpart, with whom he discussed bilateral ties.

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ISLAMABAD: President JUI-F Maulana Fazl-Ur-Rehman and Federal Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mahmood calls on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Danish Minister describes meetings with Pak leadership as highly productive, fruitful

ISLAMABAD (APP): Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Dan Jørgensen on Friday described his meetings with Pakistani leadership as highly productive and fruitful. Following the witnessing of the signing ceremony of two projects including Increasing Communities Resilience to Climate Change and Unlocking Pathways to support the implementation of carbon markets in Pakistan, he spoke to the media and expressed satisfaction with his discussions with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman. The first project was signed with Agha Khan Foundation, heralding a new era of resilience in northern Pakistan. Over the next two years, a groundbreaking project will be implemented, encompassing a range of innovative measures designed to enhance disaster response, strengthen infrastructure, and promote sustainable practices.

This transformative initiative will witness the

formation of community-based disaster risk response teams and committees, ensuring that local communities are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively respond to emergencies. The project's scope extends beyond disaster management, as it envisions a comprehensive habitat plan for ten villages in the picturesque Kalash Valley.

In close collaboration with government and civil society stakeholders, this plan will pave the way for sustainable development, balancing the needs of the communities with the preservation of natural resources. A key focus of the initiative is promoting climate-forward natural resource management through nature-based solutions.

This will include the installation and upgrading of irrigation infrastructure, harnessing solar power for lift irrigation, empowering communities to establish passive solar greenhouses, and providing training to local farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices.

PDMA working in Sindh for rehabilitation of flood affected people: Aisha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha on Friday said the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) was working in collaboration with all stakeholders for early rehabilitation of the flood-affected areas of Sindh.

Responding to concerns of PPPP Lawmaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah about financial assistance of the flood-affected people during the National Assembly debate on budget 2023-24, the minister said the federal government in collaboration with the Sindh government would further deliberate on the matters related to the relief and rehabilitation of the people affected by heavy floods and rains last year.

Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah urged the federal government to fulfill the commitment of Rs 100 billion financial assistance made to mitigate suf-

ferings of the flood-affected people of the province.

Earlier participating in the budget debate, Romina Khurshid Alam of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) condemned the incidents of May 9 and stressed the need for strict action against those involved in the vandalism of military installations and memorials of martyrs.

She said martyrs and ghazis of the country were heroes of the nation and their services could never be forgotten, calling for giving due attention to the wellbeing of the ghazis especially those who suffered injuries and disabilities.

She said the incumbent government presented the budget amid severe financial constraints and tried to give maximum relief to the common man especially the federal government employees both serving and retired.

Indian troops martyr five Kashmiri youth in Kupwara

SRINAGAR (Online): In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred five youth in Kupwara district Friday. Indian troops martyred the youth during a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Jumgund area of the district. The Indian troops used heavy weapons during the operation and claimed killing five persons in Jumgund area of the district.

The operation was going on till last reports came in.

British Council Pakistan, FDE launches schools connect programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The British Council Pakistan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and the Federal Directorate of Education, is proud to announce the launch of the school leadership standards for head teachers under Schools Connect Programme.

The ceremony was hosted by British Council Pakistan and held in Islamabad.

It was attended by senior representatives including the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain, the Director General Federal Directorate of Education Dr. Ikram Ali Malik and Country Director British Council Pakistan Amir Ramzan.

This initiative aims to address the challenges faced by Pakistan in achieving high-quality and inclusive education, particularly in

the areas of teaching, school leadership, inclusion of marginalized children, and curriculum effectiveness.

Through the Schools Connect Programme, local institutions will have the opportunity to learn from successful school systems around the world, enabling them to enhance their quality domestically while internationalizing their curriculum.

The programme focuses on system development and reforms on education through leadership training of more than 200 school leaders in Federal territories.

Country Director British Council Amir Ramzan said: "We are delighted to organize this programme in collaboration with our education partners. This will provide local institutions the tools they need to impact tens of thousands of children across Pakistan."

Delegation of minorities community visits CPO Islamabad, meets ICCPO

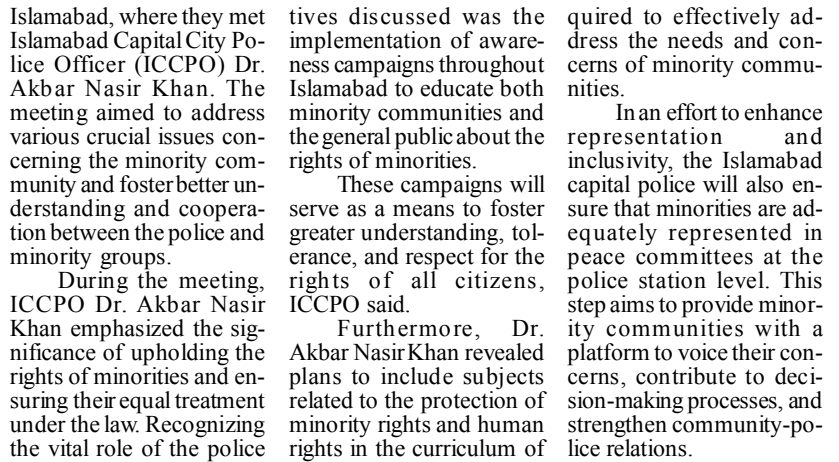
Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a delegation representing the minorities community visited the Central Police Office

in safeguarding the rights of minorities, ICCPO pledged to undertake several initiatives to promote awareness and protect minority rights. One of the key initia-

tives discussed was the implementation of awareness campaigns throughout Islamabad to educate both minority communities and the general public about the rights of minorities.

These campaigns will serve as a means to foster greater understanding, tolerance, and respect for the rights of all citizens, ICCPO said.

Furthermore, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan revealed plans to include subjects related to the protection of minority rights and human rights in the curriculum of



Islamabad, where they met Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan. The meeting aimed to address various crucial issues concerning the minority community and foster better understanding and cooperation between the police and minority groups.

During the meeting, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan emphasized the significance of upholding the rights of minorities and ensuring their equal treatment under the law. Recognizing the vital role of the police

required to effectively address the needs and concerns of minority communities.

In an effort to enhance representation and inclusivity, the Islamabad capital police will also ensure that minorities are adequately represented in peace committees at the police station level. This step aims to provide minority communities with a platform to voice their concerns, contribute to decision-making processes, and strengthen community-police relations.



ISLAMABAD: Director General (COORD/PDU), Senate Mir Shai Mazar Baloch, attending the meeting with Senate Parliamentary Development Unit (PDU) and the team of Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), at Parliament House.