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PM underlines need to invest in young talent

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday stressed that they had to make huge investments on the country's youth because those nations had always excelled whose youth got skills and requisite degrees in different fields.

Addressing a ceremony of the Prime Minister's National Innovation Awards, the prime minister expressed his pleasure over the strides made by the country's youth in different fields by utilizing their talents and skills.

The country's future was in safe hands and they had to make investments on the youth's talent as they direly deserved it, he added.

The prime minister said it was a matter of satisfaction as the young people strived during their educational careers and showed their innovative skills in the information technology (IT) sector, biodiesel, traffic lights, motorbikes etc. Under the Prime Minister's National Youth Award Programme, a total of Rs 160 million was distributed among the 100 talented youths who had achieved innovative business projects.

The ceremony was also attended by ministers, parliamentarians and foreign ambassadors.

The prime minister said Pakistan was facing financial challenges, but he was confident that they would steer the country out of the issues.

Such situations arose in the lives of nations, he said, stressing that the Pakistani nation had to make the determination and chart its way forward and once they had

decided, then nothing could hamper it.

The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to China for supporting Pakistan during the economic constraints by extending \$1 billion loan facility.

During the last 75 years, he opined that foreign debts proved a hefty burden upon Pakistan whereas those nations had progressed that utilized the foreign loans and returned it on the basis of their talent, honesty and skills.

"We have to get rid of these debts as they could not thrive on the foreign debts," he said, adding the country was gifted with precious resources.

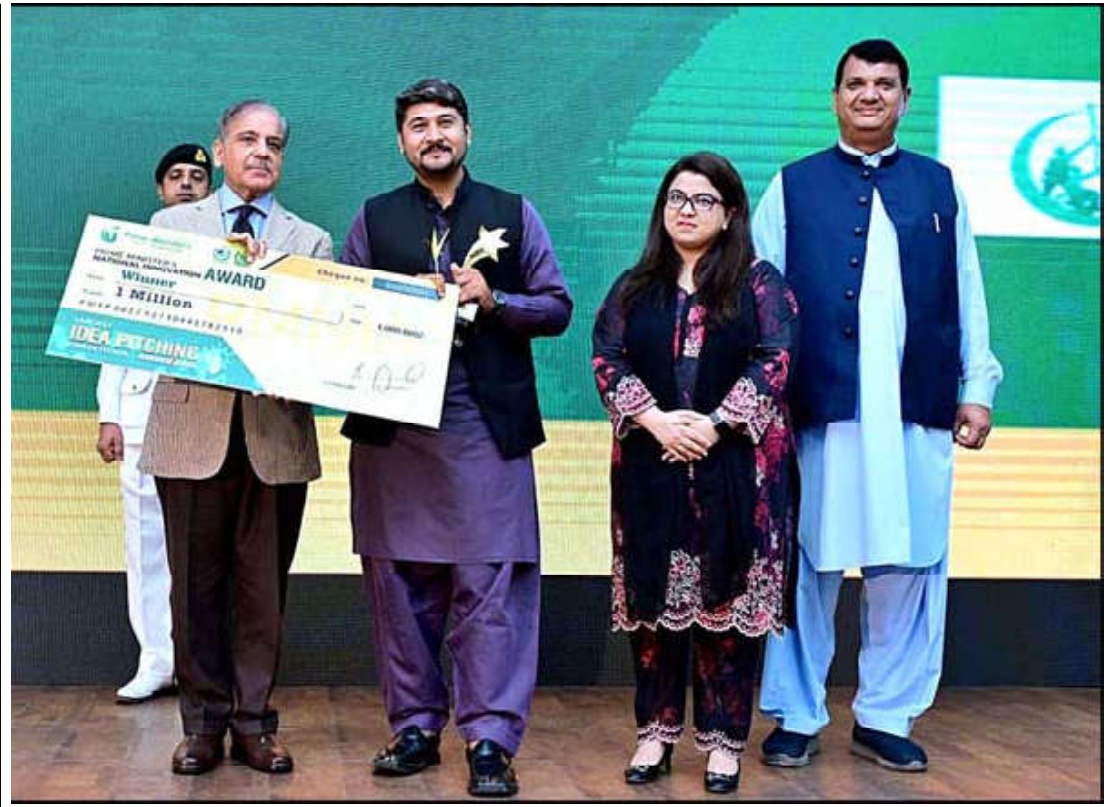
The prime minister, without naming the previous government, said he would not go into details about the man-made crises in the past.

He said the challenges were faced by the nations and stressed that they should make a promise to change the fate of Pakistan without seeking foreign debts.

Referring to 1971, he said they lost one part of the Quaid's Pakistan but never learnt lessons from the past.

The prime minister said the leg-pulling and game of allegations must be ceased and they all have to agree upon a unified national agenda as being practiced by different countries.

"The whole nation has to decide upon one national agenda with salient contours for foreign and economic policies," he reiterated. The prime minister also regretted that words of certain personalities in the previous government had annoyed China.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing PM's National Innovation Award among the successful candidates.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presenting souvenir to Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Newly Elected Mayor and Salman Abdullah Murad, Newly Elected Deputy Mayor during oath taking ceremony held at Polo Ground in Karachi.

Bilawal pledges to fulfill expectations of Karachiites

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Monday vowed to live up to the expectations of Karachiites.

He said that Karachi was the biggest city in the country and it could take the country out of all problems. 'I will take a personal interest in the development of the city.'

He stated this while talking to media persons after attending the oath-taking ceremony of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Karachi, here at Gulshan-e-Jinnah (Polo Ground).

The PPP chairman advised Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) to work with political parties. He said that JI shook hands with those, who attacked the Jinnah house, military installations and other buildings.

Bilawal said that those,

who levelled fake allegations of rigging would be replaced with PPP's performance and hard work.

He said that elections were snatched from them but they did not snatch the same from anyone.

He further said that PPP was deprived of Mayor in 1978, 1983 and 2001.

After the end of the dictatorship and facilitators, political orphans were being defamed from Karachi to Kashmir in the elections, he said adding that the work started from now.

The PPP chairman said that his party had always tried to resolve the issues of the people and it would continue this spirit.

He said that PPP would resolve the issues of the city through unity.

He said that the graveyards of this city were full of 'Jeayalas' when this city was run by a phone call.

Bilawal said that PPP workers had sacrificed their lives for this city, the restoration of democracy and the country.

Replying to a question, he said that the federal and provincial governments would cooperate with the Karachi administration.

Replying to another question, he said that the federal government should contribute to flood affectedes and it was not a new stance of PPP.

On the Greece incident, he said it was very disappointing. He said that illegal immigration was being thwarted. The government was in contact to repatriate dead bodies and action would be taken against those, who were involved in the illegal immigration.

Answering a question, he said PPP did not have any differences with Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N).

President directs Information Ministry to pay retirement benefits to Radio employees

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) to pay pensionary benefits to 38 employees of Radio Pakistan within three months as their families were facing hardships due to delayed payments.

The president noted with grave concern that a revenue-generating institution, such as Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), was facing an acute shortage of financial resources.

He emphasized taking up the matter of providing funds to PBC at the highest level and directed the Secretary MoIB to seek approval of the competent authority to obtain funds

for payment in lieu of pension, gratuity, and commutation within three months and report compliance to Wafaqi Mohtasib.

The president gave these remarks while disposing of a representation filed by PBC against a decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to make the payment to the aggrieved employees.

The act of non-payment of benefits to employees under the garb of financial constraints amounted to maladministration, he added. The Mohtasib had regretted that the superannuated employees were roaming to get their genuine and legal rights, in such old ages, where every penny was a basic necessity of that retired employee.

Khawaja Asif calls strong action against illegal human trafficking

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Monday emphasized the need for firm action against individuals involved in the illegal transportation of people abroad.

Speaking on floor of the National Assembly, the minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the tragic deaths of Pakistani migrants in a recent boat incident near the coast of Greece. Minister Asif highlighted that numerous families in Azad Jammu Kashmir, Sialkot, Gujranwala,

and Gujrat were currently enduring immense grief as a result of the incident.

He called for a collective effort from the government and opposition parties to take stern action against human traffickers, emphasizing the urgency to put an end to this illegal movement.

While acknowledging the arrest of some individuals within the country, Asif stressed that these human trafficking networks also exist in various other countries. He urged international cooperation to effectively combat this issue.

ANF Balochistan drug burning ceremony: Collective efforts needed to make society drug-free, says Shahzain Bugti

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti has underlined the need to make collective efforts to make the society drug-free. The Federal Minister exhorted upon the parents, civil society and stars of different fields to join hands with the government against narcotics.

He said that at a time when Pakistan is heading towards development, we

can't afford that our youth are indulged in the menace of narcotics.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Federal Minister for Narcotics while speaking on occasion of the drug burning ceremony organized by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Balochistan on Monday.

The Federal Minister torched and destroyed around 85 metric tons of different types of drugs in the ceremony.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti pressing button to burn recovered smuggled narcotics at Kuch-More area.

SC reserves judgment on petitions regarding Reviews of Orders and Judgments Act

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday reserved its judgment on petitions pertaining to SC Reviews of Orders and Judgments Act 2023.

A three-member bench of the top court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the case.

At the outset of the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan argued that there were different judgments of the apex court regarding the powers of the Parliament for legislation. A separate scope had been set for the review of the judgments in

cases of Article 184/3, he said.

The AGP said before introduction of the act which had not affected the right of anybody, there was no method for review in the cases of Article 184/3. It did not limit the scope of review.

He said as per the act it was the court's authority to choose members of the bench for a review case, and that bench should be larger than the bench, which had heard the main case.

CJP Bandial remarked that the government could introduce legislation but giving right of appeal in the review cases did not seem appropriate. The government should take a decision on the matter after thorough consideration.

He noted that there was also no right of review appeal in India in cases like those of Article 184/3. Justice Munib Akhtar questioned whether the power of review could be compared with civil laws and whether civil laws fell in the jurisdiction of provinces.

The act did not mention provincial laws, he said, asking the AGP to give arguments on section-II of the act.

He further questioned whether the SC could raise any new legal points in the review appeal. To this, the AGP answered in affirmative.

The chief justice remarked that everyone was agreed on the point that the Parliament was authorized to extend the scope of reviews.



TEHRAN: Secretary Defence Lt. Gen (Retd) Hamood Uz Zaman Khan and Commander Border Guards of Islamic Republic of Iran Brig. General Ali Goudarzi signing MoU.

Pakistan-Iran sign MoU to enhance Maritime cooperation

TEHRAN (APP): Pakistan and Iran have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance Maritime cooperation.

The MoU was signed between Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) and the Iranian border guards during the visit of Secretary Defence, Lt. Gen (Retd) Hamooduz Zaman to Iran. It will strengthen relations between PMSA and Iranian border guards.

Upon arrival in Tehran, the Secretary Defence was welcomed by the Iranian Deputy Defence Minister. During interac-

tion, the Iranian Deputy Defence Minister expressed best wishes for Pakistan's political and military leadership.

The Secretary Defence emphasized the importance of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. He also expressed the hope that bilateral relations will continue to evolve on principles of mutual respect and shared common interests. During talks, both sides aimed to further enhance the collaboration in various areas of common interest including security,

joint counter terrorism measures and ensuring regional economic connectivity.

Meanwhile Pakistan and Iran have agreed to enhance and diversify bilateral trade and expand cooperation in energy, transport connectivity, education and people-to-people exchanges.

The 12th round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Iran was held in Tehran on 17-18 June 2023, said a press release received here on Monday.

PTI govt imposed in country to fulfill foreign agenda: Fazal

TANK (APP): Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Monday said he had raised voice against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government which was imposed to fulfill the foreign agenda in the country. He expressed these views while addressing a public gathering after inaugurating mega development projects worth billions of rupees in Tank. On this occasion, Fazl inaugurated a 36-km long Tank to Pezu Road and a link road from Tank to Yarik Inter-

change of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at a cost of Rs 4 billion.

Fazl, who is also chief of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), said "We have ended the government which was imposed in 2018 rigged elections." He said the role of that evil has been removed from the politics of Pakistan and now that would not be allowed to rise again. He said, after coming into power in the federation, the JUI-F got approved several projects worth in billions of rupees within only one year.



KARACHI: Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad announcing the sighting of Zilhajj moon and Eidul Azha will be on 29th June.

Zil Hajj moon sighted, Eid ul Azha on June 29

KARACHI (APP): The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan announced on Monday that the Zil Hajj moon has been sighted in Pakistan, adding that Zil Hajj 01, 1444 A.H., will fall on June 20 (Tuesday), thus Eid ul Azha in Pakistan will be observed on June 29 (Thursday). Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan Maulana Syed Abdul Khabir Azad announced the decision following a meeting of the committee, held at the Met Complex here after Maghrib prayers to sight the crescent moon.

PDM alliance splitting: Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI co-chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said PDM alliance is splitting and its beginning has started a day before. "Practically this alliance has ended. Only announcement has yet to be made, he said this while talking to media men here Monday.

He went on to say I appeared in the court. Ali Bukhari was my counsel. Investigation officer was a bit confused.

Nation mourns loss of precious lives in Greece ferry disaster

LAHORE (APP): The nation observed a mourning day on Monday over the Greece boat disaster, in which dozens of precious lives were lost. An overloaded ferry had capsized in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Greece on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had announced Sunday observance of a mourning day to share the grief of the grieving families. The national flag flew at half-mast across the country.

Various bar councils and civil society members held special prayers, 'Ghaebana Namaz-e-

Janaza' (funeral prayers) and 'Fatehah khawani' in the native villages, towns and cities of victims of the ferry disaster.

The United Nations Human Rights office said in a statement on Sunday that at least 500 people were still missing and that dozens of people were known to have perished. A good number of women and children were among the missing persons in the 'horrific tragedy' that left at least 78 people dead.

The ferry boat was carrying up to 750 people that went down 50 nautical miles off Pylos in southern Greece, it further said.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Death at sea

It is unlikely that more survivors will be found. That means that at least 600 migrants — out of possibly 750 — on the fishing boat that set off from Libya towards European shores, may have perished when their vessel capsized in the Mediterranean on Wednesday.

The details are still sketchy but the passengers largely comprised Pakistanis, Afghans, Egyptians, Palestinians and Syrians. According to some reports, up to 300 Pakistanis may have drowned. It is a recurring tragedy — with no end in sight as economic, political and climate crises compel increasingly large numbers of people to flee their homes.

Who should be held responsible for this incident? The Greek coast guard that were not far off and that had, in fact, communicated with the people on the boat before it sank? If reports are to be believed, they tried to tow the boat. Did this in any way contribute to the tragedy? But the larger question is, why in the presence of maritime authorities did a tragedy of such immense proportions take place?

Only a comprehensive, unbiased investigation can reveal what happened between the time the authorities were first alerted to the presence of the overcrowded boat and when the vessel capsized later at night. Regrettably, the absence of help by the coastal authorities is part and parcel of Europe's larger xenophobic policy that aims to keep migrants out.

However, Fortress Europe alone cannot be blamed for why people in developing countries, such as Pakistan, choose to leave. This is not the first time Pakistani migrants have lost their lives at sea.

There have been several incidents. In a particularly heartbreaking one earlier this year, sportswoman Shahida Raza, who was unable to afford medical treatment for her young son in Pakistan, drowned as the migrant boat carrying her and scores of others crashed against the rocks.

She had been attempting to reach foreign shores to build a better future for her child. Therein lies the tragedy: an inept, uncaring government has made little effort to crack down on a vast network of human smugglers who fleece desperate individuals and put them on a path strewn with hazards. It is telling that in the latest incident, very few of the victims' families registered a complaint against the human smugglers. Perhaps they did not expect anything to come of it or perhaps they feared harassment at the hands of the authorities themselves. It is bad enough that the spectacular failure of the government to fulfil its part of the social contract by providing economic security to its citizens drives desperate individuals — even the educated ones — to leave the country. It is a crime when the government decides to ignore a grave issue that has snowballed into a crisis of deadly proportions.

Cultural challenges of adoption



Tahera Hasan

In recent years, child adoption has increased across all sections of society. However, the practice often remains concealed, and couples are compelled to live with a web of lies. The adoption journey typically commences due to infertility, which holds significant cultural and social implications. In our society, women are often considered incomplete if they are unable to conceive. The ability to give birth is deemed an essential aspect of being a complete person. Consequently, individuals grappling with infertility not only face personal and relational struggles but also endure intrusive and insensitive questioning that is often masked as well-intentioned concern.

Unless someone has personally experienced the emotional turmoil of infertility, it is challenging to comprehend the depth of the pain it inflicts. Regrettably, the burden of blame usually falls on women, with men being encouraged to remarry in order to have children. Even when the root cause of infertility lies with the man, it is seldom discussed openly. I recall an encounter I had 21 years ago when I met a man from Balochistan who had three wives. These wives, unable to communicate in Urdu, accompanied him to an infertility clinic in Karachi. To his surprise, after medical investigation, he discovered that the issue rested with him, not the women. This realisation left him feeling ashamed for subjecting his wives to undue blame and distress.

Women undergoing countless cycles of IVF and enduring invasive and painful procedures often experience the anguish of repeated failure. Unfortunately, counselling is scarce, and the genuine option of adoption is rarely discussed or encouraged. Adoption has touched my life in various capacities, both personally and professionally. I have interacted with adoptive parents, counselled adopted children, and assisted individuals through the emotional and legal aspects of the adoption process. Throughout this journey, one recurring theme has emerged — the desperate need for answers to the questions that arise and the need to dispel misconceptions.

Cultural and social acceptance plays a pivotal role in adoption. When individuals choose to become parents through adoption, they make a commitment to protect and support their child, regardless of the circumstances. Yet, unwarranted beliefs persist that adopted children are more troublesome and a source of distress. But do biological children not cause parental worries, or refrain from abandoning their parents, indulging in drugs, or engaging in other behaviour that could cause pain? Such concerns apply to all children, irrespective of their biological or adoptive status. The fear of bonding with an adopted child often emerges as a question. It is worth noting that parents who choose adoption have usually endured immense suffering and possess an intense longing for a child. In my experience with over 100 adoption cases, I have never witnessed a lack of bonding between parents and adopted children; however, there can, of course, be challenges. On the other hand, the possibility of postpartum depression and the subsequent rejection of biological chil-

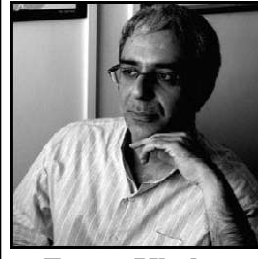
dren rarely surfaces as a concern during pregnancy. The fear that one may not bond with their child is not a valid reason to dismiss the option of adoption.

Managing intrusive questions becomes a necessary skill for adoptive parents. Setting personal boundaries is crucial, as there are aspects of a child's story that are not to be shared with everyone. Those who have undergone the adoption process should become advocates, sensitising others and fostering a more accepting society for our children. To illustrate the kind of questions adoptive parents encounter, let me share an example. Once, someone asked me about my child's 'real parents'. I responded with a smile, saying, "I am". However, the person persisted, questioning the authenticity of my role as a parent. I gently took her hand and asked her to touch me, emphasising that I, too, am real. We must learn to assert ourselves and prevent undue intrusion into our lives, as allowing others to treat us poorly is often a reflection of how we permit it.

Addressing the trauma associated with abandonment is another crucial aspect of adoption. Should adoptive parents disclose the truth about their child's adoption? Secrecy surrounding adoption raises ethical concerns. Children should be informed from an early age, gradually incorporating the truth into their daily lives. It is not a single event to be scheduled but an ongoing dialogue based on trust, love and a sense of security. Parents who withhold the truth from their children deny them the opportunity to experience true security. I firmly believe in the resilience of children and the positive impact of being honest with them.

-- Courtesy Dawn

Guerilla gardening



Zarrar Khuuro

There are those who complain, and then there are those who take action ... and the residents of Kenya's Kericho county fall squarely into the latter category. Kenyan roads are poorly maintained; in the rural areas it's common to see roads that have more potholes than they do tarmac. Even when 'repairs' take place, they usually amount to sand or earth being filled in these craters, a half-hearted patchwork job that doesn't last long.

Fed up, residents of Kericho County decided to make use of these potholes by planting banana trees in them, thus turning a virtually unnavigable road into a virtually un-navigable banana-tree studded road.

The exasperated roads and transport secretary Kipchumba Murkomen sent out a passionate appeal to the locals to stop their activities and asked for patience as the government was committed to improving the roads. In response, Kenyans reminded him that his party had campaigned on the slogan 'We can't eat roads', which de-prioritised spending on infrastructure and so he was in no position to complain if the people had decided to turn roads into avenues for food production.

This rather innovative and fairly practical method of protest is by no means limited to Kenya; Bryan Raymond, a resident of Fort Myers, Florida, was so tired of fixing the many recurring potholes on his street that he decided to draw the city authorities' attention by planting a ba-

nana tree in the latest fissure. While this naturally generated a lot of media attention, it's unclear whether it bore any fruit by leading to actual repairs being made.

For others, their foray into pothole farming started as a safety measure. Alarmed by a growing pothole on the side of the road that was big enough for a child to fall into, New Orleans resident Ronnie Mackay decided to fill it with potting soil. Then an idea sprouted in his head: why not plant a few watermelon and corn seeds too? This attracted the attention of neighbours who pitched in to help. One local costume designer even made a miniature scarecrow who is perched above a traffic cone. And so, a pothole became a fun project for an entire neighbourhood.

Ron Finley, the 'urban gangsta gardener' of south-central Los Angeles, has taken guerrilla gardening, as it's known, to another level. South-central LA is known not just for its poverty and high crime rate but, as Finley points out, for being a 'food desert': an area with limited or no access to fresh foods. There are plenty of liquor stores and fast and packaged processed food in the stores, notes Finley, but it's sneaky impossible to find fresh fruit and vegetables. The result is obesity, malnutrition and a higher rate of easily preventable diet-related illnesses than in most other areas. So Finley decided to plant a 'food forest' outside his home on a 45-metre by 3m stretch of overgrown land between the road and the footpath. Inviting volunteer gardeners to come and help tend the crops and fruit trees, Finley's forest became a neighbourhood attraction and joint project. Given that the land is owned by the city, Finley was asked to remove the forest, but media attention and online petitions, along with some grassroots organising,

forced the administration to not only give in but to support his plans to create more such forests — from which people in the neighbourhood are free to harvest — on empty lots across the city, and even in homeless shelters, where the residents help out by maintaining the gardens and, in return, get to eat fresh food. Now, he runs the Ron Finley project 'teaching communities how to transform food deserts into food sanctuaries, and teaching individuals how to regenerate their lands into creative business models'. Like he says: "Growing your own food is like printing your own money."

But it's not just about food and finances, it's also about building resilient, cohesive communities. In Finley's gardens, we see a model that isn't just practical but also therapeutic and educational, especially for children.

Similarly, the concept of urban community gardening is picking up pace around the world and, on a recent visit to Canada, I got to see this project up close: small plots of unused city land are gardened collectively by a group of people from the local community, who work on shared or individual plots growing fruits, vegetable, flowers or whatever strikes their fancy. There are now such gardens in many Canadian and American cities, varying in size and complexity — from simple plants in wooden crates, to sprawling gardens. Even rooftops are being employed in dense urban settings where vacant land simply isn't available. The Covid pandemic and Ukraine war have reminded us how fragile global supply chains are and how critical food security is; perhaps the urban areas of Pakistan could benefit from similar projects ... if only we can somehow keep the land mafia at bay. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Finance Bill 2023: Senate proposes 55 recommendations



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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Monday proposed 55 recommendations related to Finance Bill 2023 and gave 31 recommendations regarding the public sector development program.

The recommendations on the Finance Bill, 2023 would be forwarded to National Assembly which would decide whether or not these recommendations are to be incorporated into the Money Bill.

In the session of the upper house of the parliament on Monday, Senator

Saleem Mandviwala, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, presented the Senate's budget recommendations. The Senate recommended to National Assembly that tax of 12 percent of the sale on retailers and brands who are registered with FBR should be maintained, instead of increasing it to 15 percent.

For filers, it was proposed that tax on credit card transactions should be increased from 1% to 5%, and for non-filers and 2% to 10% for non-filers to be maintained at previous

rates. Under the laptop scheme, mandatory technical training should be provided to those who purchase laptops so that they can earn income through online businesses. It has been proposed to gradually impose taxes on the real estate and agricultural sectors. Government institutions working in loss should be audited, and reform action should be taken against institutions like Pakistan Steel Mills, which have been incurring heavy losses for years. Income-

generating industries should be given tax exemptions and provided with gas supply. It has been proposed to establish tax-free zones for foreign direct investment and rationalize the subsidy mechanism for seeds, fertilizers, solar energy devices, and essential food items.

The Senate proposed to ensure the availability of all items at discounted prices in utility stores, allocate funds for the National Development Volunteer Program in the 2023-24 budget.

PCJCCI keen to boost Pakistan's dairy sector with China's help

LAHORE (APP): Cooperation between China and Pakistan on dairy industry and multifarious demands for high-quality dairy products in China would provide a contemporary path of development for Pakistan's domestic dairy sector. Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki stated this in a think-tank session, held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Monday. He said that Pakistan was among the world's top five largest milk producers with over 60 million tonnes of milk pro-

duction each year. Such ventures and exports could definitely add value to Pakistan's economy.

He added that China learned that Pakistan was the most important exporter and producer of dairy products in South Asia. "Chinese technologies are low-priced, and if we adopt the techniques and technology, used by China, the country can flourish in this industry," he suggested.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong shared his views by saying, "We are willing to explore more about Pakistani dairy

industry to see if we have the opportunity to be part of it." From 2011 to 2023, China's dairy imports rose at a compound annual growth of 12.3 percent, and the demand was still expanding. Milk powder, liquid milk, high value-added dairy products such as whey, cheese, butter and cream were also in high demand in the Chinese market, he added. PCJCCI Vice President Hamza Khalid said that currently China's dairy imports mainly come from New Zealand (40.44 per cent), the Netherlands (17.15pc) and Australia (7.38pc).

Dar chairs meeting of CCoIGCT

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 Power Mr. Khuram Dastagir Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Pasha, Attorney General of Pakistan,

Secretary Finance, Secretary Maritime Affairs, Secretary Law & Justice, and other senior officers attended the meeting.

The CCoIGCT considered summary of Ministry of Maritime Affairs about the management of operations of Pakistan International Container Terminal (PICT) and was informed that Abu Dhabi Ports (ADP) owned by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has shown interest in operating the Container Terminal.



RAWALPINDE: President Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Saqib Rafique addressing during ceremony regarding "Chances of Trade in Gilgit"

Dams play important role in agricultural development: Fazl

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker provincial minister for irrigation, Haji Fazl Elahi on Monday said that dams play an important role in the agricultural development of any country,

while the agriculture sector is affected due to the lack of an excellent irrigation system, which results in shortage of food items.

After the completion of the Remodelling of Warsak Canal project, the water flow in the Warsak canals will increase up to 1250 cusecs.

The flow of seven hundred cusecs of water will increase with this project. Most of the areas of Peshawar and Nowshera are irrigated

from the canals coming out of Warsak Dam.

Unfortunately, a lot of our water is being wasted.

He expressed these views during his visits to various ongoing projects of the Irrigation Department in the Khyber and Mohmand districts.

During the visit, Chief Engineer South Yasin Khan, Project Director Remodelling of Warsak Canal Roshul Mohsin, Superintendent Engineer Batoor Zaman Khan and relevant officials of the Irrigation Department were present.

Minister Irrigation visited the pump house of Warsak Canal in Jamrud where he inspected various parts of

the pump house and inquired about their functions.

On this occasion Project Director Remodelling of Warsak Canal System Roshul Mohsin said during the briefing that the total number of pumps in the pump house is five of which four are in use while one pump is on standby, work is going on for the upgradation of the grade station in the pump house, which will be completed soon.

Meanwhile, minister Haji Fazl Elahi reviewed the work on the tunnel under the Remodelling of Warsak Canal project in Malaguri where the Chinese company is doing development work.

Seafood exports increase by 17.13% to \$456 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 17.13 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The country earned \$456.668 million from seafood exports during July-May (2022-23) against the exports of US \$389.873 million in July-May (2021-22), showing growth of 17.13 percent, PBS reported.

In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 32.65 percent going up from 148,354 metric tons last year to 196,785 metric tons in the first eleven months of last year.

On a year-on-year basis, seafood exports increased by 25.06 percent to \$50.578 million in May 2023 as compared to exports of \$40.444 million during April 2022.

In terms of quantity, the exports witnessed a 32.20 percent increase going up from 16,578 metric tons last year to 22,081 metric tons this year.

Gold prices decline by Rs.1,000 to Rs220,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs.220,700 on Monday against its sale at Rs.221,700 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.858 to Rs189,214 from Rs.190,072 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.173,447 from Rs.174,232, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Yousaf dismissed from LCCI Executive body

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has dismissed Muhammad Yousaf Shah from the Executive Committee for not renewing the membership within the time stipulated by law, according to the LCCI spokesman here on Monday.

He explained that Muhammad Yousaf Shah failed to renew the membership of his company Al Yousaf Enterprises within the stipulated time period due to which he was no longer a member of the Lahore Chamber and at the same time, his eligibility as a member of the Executive Committee also ended. The

decision would be applicable from March 31, 2023.

"It should be noted that in the LCCI, the registration and membership is obtained by a company or business concern, not by any individual man. On the basis of that company, etc., any individual becomes a member of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry and accordingly he is elected as Executive Committee Member, President, Senior Vice President or Vice President through the election process. If a person does not complete the first basic task i.e. renewal of the company, etc.

Flood 2022: Roadmap for reconstruction, rehabilitation 'almost devised': Dar informs NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Monday informed the National Assembly that a comprehensive roadmap to carry out reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the flood-affected areas had almost been devised.

"Immediate relief work has already been done throughout the country with the disbursement of Rs25000 per family through the BISP programme. Almost Rs100 billion have already been spent in addition to the assistance extended by NDMA in kind," the minister said on the floor of the National Assembly while responding to the concerns of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) lawmaker Dr Nafisa Shah.

The finance minister

said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet had recently approved Rs12 billion to replenish the stock of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), keeping in view the predicted threats of the monsoon and the cyclone.

Following the widespread destruction caused by the heavy rains and floods, Ishaq Dar 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 that suggested the economic and physical losses stood at around \$30.3 billion.

He said funds amount-

ing 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.

In the General Donors Conference, the minister said less than \$400 million were received while the pledges were made for bearing 50 per cent financing for the reconstruction and rehabilitation work.

He said a committee, comprising the Sindh Chief Minister, and federal ministers including Khurshid Ahmed Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman, was holding meetings and the roadmap in this regard had almost been devised.

"It (the reconstruction & rehabilitation) will be like a 4-5 year medium-term development plan.



LAHORE: Former Speaker Punjab Assembly Rana Muhammad Iqbal meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman.

KP Governor takes notice of excessive load shedding of gas, electricity

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Monday summoned the meeting of Wapda and Suigas authorities at Governor House Peshawar after people complaints about excessive load shedding of these services and issued a letter to their high-ups to attend it on Tuesday.

The governor directed the Chief Executive of PESCO and the General Manager of SNGPL to come to Governor's House along with concerned staff on Tuesday.

He said people's complaints were being received over several hours of load shedding and the unavailability of gas in Peshawar City and its adjoining areas was a matter of great concern.

Matters related to demand and consumption of electricity and gas besides periods of load shedding and consumer problems would come under discussion during the meeting.

The governor reiterated that he would make efforts to provide relief to masses during hot weather from load shedding.

PML-N is the last ray of hope: Shaista

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Divisional president of PML-N women's wing Hazara Jadoon Dr. Shaista Jadoon Monday said that Pakistan League-N is the only ray of hope and will overcome the crises and make the country stable.

She expressed these views while talking to a delegation of PML-N women workers delegation at her residence.

Dr. Shaista further said that after the elections, the party will be reorganized and more active, making Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif the party president and Maryam Nawaz chief organizer is a commendable step.

She further stated that Hazara Division has always been the stronghold of the Muslim League-N and it will also remain a hub of the party, in other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province the PML-N is being made active.

While directing the women workers the president said that they should spread the manifesto of their leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to everyone.

Govt provides relief to masses by cutting expenditures: Abbasi

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi Monday said his government after coming into power provided relief to the masses by controlling the price of essential commodities and cutting expenditures.

"In 2018 when we handed over the federal government to PTI wheat flour price was 980 rupees while a year ago when PDM took charge wheat flour price was 2300 rupees and today once again the price is even 50 rupees less than the price of 2022," said the minister.

He was addressing a public gathering here at Abbottabad after the inaugu-

ration of the Sui gas provision project worth 3.8 million rupees. Murtaza Abbasi said the federal government has also approved a huge amount of 800 million rupees for the reconstruction of the Karakoram Highway from Haripur to Mansehra which was badly damaged during the past few years and the then government did not pay any attention to this important road.

He stated that PTI lead government was the real enemy of the people of Hazara division particularly Abbottabad as during 2018 PML-N government allocated 500 million rupees in funds for the construction of the Abbottabad Interchange which was cancelled.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Amir Mir along with Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer addressing a Press conference regarding Punjab's budget at the Civil Secretariat

ANF seizes over 41 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations in different areas of the country managed to recover over 41 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

It informed that in an operation near Faizabad in Islamabad 140 intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused resident of Mardan. In another operation near Thokar Niaz Baig Lahore, ANF

recovered 14.4 kg opium and 15.6 kg charras from the secret cavities of a vehicle while an accused resident of Gujranwala was also arrested. In the third operation at Multan International Airport, 1821 grams charras were recovered from trolley bag of an Abu Dhabi bound passenger, resident of Bannu. The spokesman informed that in the fourth operation, ANF foiled two bids to smuggle drugs from Jiwani to Karachi and recovered 4075 grams weed.

Delegation of Diamer visits Baltistan region

GILGIT (APP): In a bid to promote inter-region harmony and exchange of ideas, a delegation from district Diamer was hosted by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) during the visit to the Baltistan region.

The delegation, consisting of religious clerics, community leaders, journalists, and representatives from various sectors, embarked on this journey to gain insights into the successful devel-

opment initiatives of different districts in Baltistan.

The visit, organized by AKRSP, aimed to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experiences between the two regions, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation.

The delegation from Diamer was particularly interested in understanding the strategies employed by the Baltistan region in promoting sustainable development and community well-being.

CS GB vows to reform education landscape of Pakistan

GILGIT (APP): Chief Secretary (CS) Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Muihudeen Wani Monday vowed to reform the education landscape of Pakistan.

The CS GB in an official statement to media here in Gilgit, said, the GB Government and Allah Waley Trust launched the free School Meals Program in the city of Skardu.

He added CEO Allah Waley Trust Shahid Lone and I personally inaugurated the unique initiative. Within two months, we will have extended the program to 30 public schools across Skardu.

"Evidence reveals that free school meal programs have increased school enrollment and child health, and drastically reduced school dropout rates around the world" CS GB said.

CM inspects PIC to review facilities

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi paid a visit to the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) to assess the medical facilities being provided to the cardiac patients.

He spoke to patients and their attendants in the emergency wards to gather information about the available medical services, with a specific focus on the availability of bypass and angiography facilities.

During his inspection, Mohsin Naqvi took note of the shortage of angioplasty guiding catheters at the PIC and directed the health secretary to ensure their availability.

The CM also inspected the primary angiography facilities for cardiac patients and observed the arrangements made for maintaining cleanliness. He acknowledged the dedicated efforts of doctors and paramedics who continue to provide exemplary service despite the increased demand.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed his commitment to further enhancing the treatment facilities and mentioned that the health secretary had been directed to address the shortage of angioplasty guiding catheters in the ICU.



PESHAWAR: Rescue I122 worker using water gun to douse fire in a cargo godown near Ring road.

International News

Xi says China, US 'made progress' in Blinken visit

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said the United States and China had "made progress" on a number of issues on Monday as he hosted US State Secretary Antony Blinken for talks in Beijing.

Blinken's visit is the highest-level trip by a US official to China in nearly five years with ties severely strained between the world's two largest economies. Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, met Blinken at the capital's Great Hall of the People just after 4:30pm (0830 GMT), Chinese state media and US

officials said.

"The Chinese side has made our position clear and the two sides have agreed to follow through the common understandings US President Joe Biden and I had reached in Bali," Xi told the top US diplomat.

"Two sides have also made progress and reached agreement on some specific issues", he added, without elaborating. "I hope that Secretary Blinken, through this visit, can make positive contributions to stabilising China-US relations," he added.

The meeting, which lasted just over half an

hour, came after Blinken held more than 10 hours of talks over two days with other top officials.

At the ornate Diaoyutai State Guesthouse earlier on Monday, Blinken and China's foreign policy supremo Wang Yi offered polite smiles before talks with their aides, who unlike their bosses wore masks in line with lingering Covid-19 protocols.

Away from the cameras, Wang told Blinken that his trip "comes at a critical juncture in China-US relations", according to state broadcaster CCTV.



US State Secretary Antony Blinken (L) shakes hands with China's President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Five Palestinians killed as Israel deploys helicopters in West Bank

WEST BANK: Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank killed five Palestinians including a militant on Monday, in a raid that saw seven Israeli security personnel wounded and rare helicopter fire.

The sound of gunfire was heard across Jenin as wounded Palestinians continued to arrive by ambulance at the northern West Bank city's Ibn Sina hospital in the early afternoon, an AFP journalist said.

Crowds gathered outside Jenin government hospital, as the funerals of those killed in 11 hours of fighting began.

The Palestinian health ministry said five people had been killed and at least

91 others were wounded in the violence.

It named four of those killed: 15-year-old Ahmed Saqer, Khaled Assassa, 21, Qais Jabareen, 21, Ahmad Daraghme, 19, and Qassam Abu Saria, 29. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed Abu Saria as a fighter for the militant group. Among the injured was Palestinian journalist Hazem Nasser, who was hospitalised with a gunshot wound, according to the Palestinian journalists syndicate.

Jenin's deputy governor, Kamal Abu al-Rub, told AFP the Israeli forces had launched the raid at around 4:00am (0100 GMT). "The army stormed the (Jenin refugee) camp and

the city after the dawn prayer in large numbers, and there was intense gunfire," he said.

An AFP journalist at the scene said Israeli forces withdrew from Jenin at around 15:10 (1210 GMT).

The Israeli army said an armoured vehicle had been hit by a "very unusual and dramatic" explosive device at around 7:10am (0410 GMT), during "routine activity" to arrest two "wanted suspects" — one affiliated with the movement Hamas and the other with the Islamic Jihad.

"We had five Israeli border police guys wounded, and two soldiers also lightly wounded," army spokesman Richard Hecht said.

UN chief urges donors to step up aid response for Sudan

GENEVA: U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed on Monday for countries to step up aid pledges for Sudan, where a conflict between rival military factions has forced some 2.2 million people from their homes and sparked a major humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations says about \$3 billion is needed this year for humanitarian relief inside Sudan and for refugees fleeing the country, only a fraction of which has

been funded.

"Without strong international support, Sudan could quickly become a locus of lawlessness, radiating insecurity across the region," Guterres told a fundraising conference hosted by Germany, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and the United Nations. "I appeal to you all today to provide funding to deliver lifesaving humanitarian aid and support to people living in the most difficult and dangerous conditions," Guterres said.



People board a truck as they leave Khartoum, Sudan.

Taliban's treatment of women could be 'gender apartheid' - UN expert

GENEVA: A United Nations expert said on Monday that the Taliban's treatment of Afghan women and girls could amount to gender apartheid as their rights continue to be gravely infringed by the country's de facto authorities.

"Grave, systematic and institutionalised discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid," U.N. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, told the

Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The U.N. defines gender apartheid as "economic and social sexual discrimination against individuals because of their gender or sex."

"We have pointed to the need for more exploration of gender apartheid, which is not currently an international crime, but could become so," Bennett told reporters on the sidelines of the Council.

"It appears if one applies the definition of apartheid, which at the moment is for race, to the situation in Afghanistan and use sex instead of race.

Over 10,000 migrants reach UK in small boats this year

LONDON: The number of people arriving in the UK in small boats has reached over 10,000 since the start of the year, UK government figures showed on Sunday.

The provisional total covering the period up to Saturday stands at 10,139, according to data released by the interior ministry, the Home Office.

The figure is down by over 1,000 on that from the same time last year, when there had been

more than 11,300 crossings by June 17.

Last Sunday saw the highest number of crossings on a single day so far this year, with 549 people making the perilous journey. Crossings have picked up in recent days as a result of a hot spell, with a further 486 arriving on Friday and 374 on Saturday.

Britain's Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has repeatedly pledged to "stop the boats" and made the issue one of his highest profile priorities.

Cyclone leaves 13 dead in Brazil

SAO LEOPOLDO: A cyclone which tore through southern Brazil has killed at least 13 people and forced thousands from their homes, authorities said on Sunday.

Torrential rain and strong winds on Thursday and Friday caused damage in dozens of towns in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, including its capital Porto Alegre — the latest in a string of weather-related disasters to hit South America's biggest country.



An explosive device left by Palestinians, detonates during an Israeli army raid in Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

Russia to stay in touch with African peace mission, some ideas workable - Kremlin

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday that Russia would continue to talk to a group of African countries seeking to mediate in the conflict with Ukraine, notably at a Russia-Africa summit next month, and that some of their ideas were workable.

President Vladimir Putin on Saturday gave the seven-country African delegation that had come to see him in St Petersburg a list of reasons why he believed

many of their proposals were misguided, pouring cold water on a plan already largely dismissed by Kyiv.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday that talks with the delegation would continue nonetheless as some of its suggestions could in theory be implemented. He did not say which proposals he was referring to.

"In general, the dialogue with the Africans will continue," said Peskov.

The UAE and Qatar reopen embassies as Gulf Arab relations improve after a yearslong rift

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and Qatar announced the reopening of their embassies on Monday following a yearslong rift.

The two countries issued statements saying the Qatari Embassy in Abu Dhabi and a Qatari Consulate in Dubai, as well as an Emirati Embassy in Qatar's capital, Doha, had resumed operations.

President Dr. Arif Alvi says: Pakistan's commitment to welfare, voluntary repatriation of refugees remains steadfast

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan's unwavering resolve and commitment to the welfare and voluntary repatriation of refugees remained steadfast.

"It is remarkable that, even after forty years, there have been no untoward incidents or frictions between the refugees and the host communities, exemplifying the harmonious coexistence and mutual respect that prevails," the president said in his message on World Refugees Day annually observed on June 20.

He said the Day reminded of the immense contributions of the government and people of Pakistan in hosting millions of Afghan refugees over the past four decades.

He said Pakistan's unparalleled humanitarian efforts in providing refuge to such a large number of displaced individuals, despite limited resources, served as

testament to the country's spirit of brotherhood and compassion.

"This day, observed annually on June 20, brings into focus the hardships endured by refugees and emphasizes our commitment towards supporting them during these challenging times," he remarked.

The president said that Pakistan continued to host one of the largest refugee populations in the world. The people and the government of Pakistan opened their arms to Afghan refugees based solely on the principles of humanity and solidarity, and extended support despite the challenges posed by meagre resources, he added.

He said that Pakistan initially received financial and burden-sharing support from the international community during the early years of hosting Afghan refugees, such assistance has waned over time.

On its part, he said, Pakistan had extended all possible support to refugees. He said Pakistan's policies ensured their access to education and healthcare, and to have their bank accounts, and other opportunities, enabling them to rebuild their lives with dignity.

Furthermore, he said Pakistan continued to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian agencies to provide essential assistance and protection to refugees residing within its borders.

President Alvi said that in order to equip Afghan refugees with the knowledge and skills, Pakistan had implemented comprehensive educational programs, ensuring that refugee children have access to quality schooling.

He extended heartfelt

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ISLAMABAD: As a token of appreciation and to thank the people and Government of Azerbaijan for hosting PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation last week, the Prime Minister is holding hand of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H.E. Khazar Farhadov during a ceremony.

Caretaker Punjab govt presents Rs 1719.3 billion four-month budget

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab government Monday presented Rs 1719.3 billion budget for first four months of Financial Year 2023-24 as per its mandate under Article 126 of the Constitution of Pakistan, which says that the caretaker government may be authorised expenditures for a period not exceeding four months.

Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir and Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer shared the main features of the four-month provincial budget with the media here at Civil Secretariat.

Amir Mir said, "Today, the caretaker cabinet of Punjab has approved the government expenditure and revenue for four months under Article 126 of the Constitution." He said that total outlay of the budget would be Rs 1719.3 billion for four months from July to October, 2023. He explained that Punjab would receive Rs 881 billion tax receipts from federal government and its own contribution would be Rs 194 billion, while no new taxes have been imposed for the above mentioned period of

next financial year. Development expenditures allocations stand at Rs 325 billion, he said and added that 4800 projects were in progress in the province, out of which 2500 projects would be completed in the next four months.

Amir Mir said that Education and Health sectors would be given Rs 195.1 billion and Rs 183.7 billion, respectively, adding that budget for both the sectors had been increased by 31 per cent.

For the first time in the history of Punjab, he mentioned, a Journalist Endowment Fund amounting to Rs 1 billion had been established that would definitely ensure well-being of the journalist community across the province.

The caretaker information minister said that an amount of Rs 721 billion would be spent on salaries and pensions. There would be a 30 per cent ad hoc relief allowance on basic salary of the government employees, and a five per cent increase in pension, while pensioners above 80 years of age would be given 20 per cent increase in their pension,

he added. He said that the Punjab government owed Rs 600 billion to various banks on account of wheat procurement and Rs 250 million mark-up was being paid daily in this regard. This debt could go up to Rs 1100 billion by end of 2023 and Rs 2000 billion by end of 2025, therefore, the caretaker chief minister had started the process of paying off the debt of Rs 600 billion with the approval of the cabinet and it would be paid in next four months.

Caretaker Provincial Industries Minister SM Tanveer said the budget was people-friendly and no new taxes had been imposed. Punjab abolished sales tax on Information Technology (IT) related businesses, and this would definitely lead to a boom in IT sector and enhance its exports. It has also been decided to build IT Parks in the Lahore Knowledge Park, and Rs 10 billion has been allocated for the IT sector for four months.

He said that Rs 70 billion has been earmarked for targeted social protection to provide relief to the poor people.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla Chairing the PAC subcommittee meeting in Parliament House.

PTI is fully prepared to contest election: Asad

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI leader Asad Umar has said it is mentioned in the constitution election should be held. "It is laid down in the constitution should be held. PTI is fully prepared to contest election. Our party is ready to participate in election whenever they are announced. To a question from a journalist on the occasion of his appearance in District and Sessions Court Islamabad that he will contest election on PTI ticket or on the ticket of some other party, he said if ticket is awarded to him he will contest election at every cost.

Ambiguity was left in Asad Umar reply that ticket means ticket of PTI or from some party other than PTI. He held it is enshrined in the constitution that election should take place. Our party is ready whenever elections are announced. Be it AJK election or Karachi mayor's election or reservations are there on all. All parties have expressed reservations.

He went on to say if the election commission does not pave the way for transparent election then what problems were faced in the past will be faced in future as well. People will say after election that rigging has been committed.

Asad Umar appeared in the district and sessions court Islamabad in connection with case registered against him in Margalla police station.

The court ordered hearing will take place in respect of PTI chairman cases in Judicial Complex (JC) and you should also appear there.

The court directed Asad Umar and other accused persons to appear in JC.

AIOU's academic council approves new matric tech program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Monday unanimously approved the new programs/courses of BS, MS/MPhil, and PhD.

The decision was taken during a joint meeting of the 49th Academic Planning and Development/Research and Educational Technology Committee (APD/RET) and 65th Academic Council and of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) held yesterday.

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood chaired the meeting, Registrar, Raja Umar Yunus organizing and supported the meeting.

The department heads, principal officers, and external members attended as well.

The meeting approved providing two re-appear chances to the students, i.e., in case of failure in any subject, the students will be provided two chances of examination.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood directed that the failed students will be given 6 weeks' time for re-enrollment in the examination. The meeting also approved the change of title of certain courses.

The meeting provided an exemption in the quiz component to the students of the spring/autumn 2022 semester in the revised assessment policy and approved the launch of the Matric Tech program.

The meeting unanimously declared the courses of 'civilization, culture, language and literature' of all provinces as an integral part of the BS programs.

MNAs appreciate budgetary measures, seek motorways for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Members of the National Assembly on Monday appreciated the government for proposing significant relief measures for the common man and allocating unprecedented development funds in the Federal Budget 2023-24.

Participating in the budget debate in the Lower House of the Parliament, they sought development projects especially the missing facilities of motorways for the Balochistan province to end the sense of deprivation of its people.

Pakistan Tehree-e-Insaf's Ms Asiya Azeem, while strongly condemning the May 9 riots, demanded that no leniency should be given to the culprits involved in the heinous act. She also expressed deep grief over the boat accident in which scores of Pakistanis lost their lives.

She said Pakistan had been borrowing massively for the last 75 years as the national economy remained dependent on foreign loans. "We cannot achieve economic stability till date," she added. She said inward foreign remittances also witnessed sharp decrease last year.

Asiya Azeem said a meager amount of Rs 5 billion was earmarked for women in the budget, who were 51 per cent of the country's population.

She suggested that a separate ministry for women should be set up and lauded the government for announcing tax exemption for businesswomen.

The PTI MNA also appreciated the government for enhancing salaries and pensions of the employees, however, urged for taking steps to control inflation which had surged to 38 percent. Minister of State for Power Division Muhammad Hashmi Notezai, while expressing grief over the boat tragedy, said the people had to resort to illegal ways to reach the European countries for better job opportunities and due to increasing unemployment tendency in the country.

He said Balochistan was blessed with many natural resources, but the local people were not getting any benefits from them. Their livelihood largely depended on agriculture and border trade as there was no industry in the province, he added.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the Pakistan Flag flying half mast on PM Secretariat, as Federal Government announces bereaved for today on the sad incident of the drown refugee boat from Libya to Italy, in which hundreds of Pakistanis are dead.

Pakistan's economy to touch \$1 trillion by year 2035: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said that the size of Pakistan's economy would be expected to touch \$1 trillion by the year 2035 as the country's economy would become one of the largest in the world.

Addressing 'Master Card Funded Care Ignite Project' ceremony held here, the minister said that the country's economy had the potential to become a major economy in the world by 2035. Ahsan Iqbal hoped that domestic exports could reach \$100 billion in the next five years

ICCPO pays surprise visit to Shahzad Town police station

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has undertaken a surprise visit to the Shahzad Town police station, as part of the ongoing efforts to enhance police personnel and public facilities.

During the visit, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan reviewed the existing facilities and issued directives for immediate improvements. Upon inspection, it was observed that the cleanliness and maintenance of the Shahzad Town police station fell below the expected standards.

Consequently, the officer in charge of the police station has been suspended and a new officer has been appointed to oversee the necessary reforms. The newly appointed officer has been tasked with ensuring proper cleanliness and maintenance of the station, including the meticulous upkeep of office records and residential barracks.

In addition to addressing the cleanliness concerns, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan emphasized the

importance of maintaining strong community relations. The new officer in charge has been instructed to foster better communication with the local community, engage with dignitaries and collaborate with the dedicated staff deployed at the police station to effectively reduce crime in the area.

During the visit, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan also urged senior police officers to prioritize the resolution of pending cases by actively engaging the reconciliation committee. He emphasized the need to address the concerns of the citizens promptly and handle all matters with the utmost professionalism and morality. Recognizing the vital role played by the police personnel, ICCPO directed the senior officers to ensure the provision of high-quality food and improved residential facilities for the police officials.

Furthermore, he urged the authorities to address the water supply issue, ensuring regular access to clean water for the police personnel stationed at Shahzad Town Police Station.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Special Committee on Affected Employees Mr. Qadir Khan Mandokhail chairing committee meeting at Parliament Lodges.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference along with Leader of Pakistan People Party Nadeem Afzal Chan at PPP Secretariat in Federal Capital.

Faisal Kundi terms holding elections in time crucial for political stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) spokesperson and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Monday termed holding elections in time as crucial for political stability in Pakistan.

In a press conference along with PPP leader, Nadeem Afzal Chan here, Faisal Kundi said that the people of Karachi gave a full mandate to the Pakistan People's Party in the local body elections.

He said that his party was trying its best to achieve success in the upcoming elections. "We are ready to contest general elections and have started our campaign", he added.

Faisal Kundi emphasized that all allies should go to the elections which are expected to be held by October.

He said that the delegation of the PPP in a meeting with the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif presented reservations on the budget. "The PPP delegation will meet

Parliamentary Delegation lauds Green Development

ISLAMABAD (Online): A Parliamentary Delegation visited the Karot Hydro-power Project to commemorate its 1st Anniversary and celebrate the 10 years of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the 10 Years of BRI. The Delegation was led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman Pakistan-China Institute, Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director Pakistan-China Institute, also accompanied the delegation. This was the first of its kind Cross Party Parliamentary delegation to have visited the Karot Hydro-power Project which included Senator Waleed Iqbal, Senator Taj Haider, Senator Sadia Abbasi, Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan, Senator Rukhsana Zuberi, Mohammed Khan Dahan, MNA, Senator Pir Sabir Shah, and Senator Muhammad Asad Ali Khan Junejo. Moreover, journalists, bloggers, and students were also a part of this delegation.

The SAPM said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, funds were given to all MPs except those belonging to the Pakistan People's Party.

About the return of former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, Faisal Kundi said that PML-N has to decide when Nawaz Sharif will come.

He said that the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is benefiting nine million poor families through providing them financial assistance.

The PPP spokesperson said that complaints regarding BISP funds have been received from all over Pakistan. He said that investigations were being carried out to address the complaints of those having difficulties in getting funds. Kundi stated that the quarterly payments under Benazir Kafalat program were being issued with a 25 percent increase. The SAPM also expressed his grief over the death of more than 100 Pakistanis in a boat accident in Greece.



ISLAMABAD: Information Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party Balochistan Sardar Sarbaland Khan Jogezi meeting with Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi

Coordination cell set up at Interior Ministry for Greece boat victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Interior on Monday set up a coordination cell in its control room to provide updates and information regarding the victims of the tragic boat incident in Greece.

According to an Interior Ministry notification, the decision was taken on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The coordination cell's responsibilities encompass several crucial tasks. It will conduct initial screenings, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), to verify the information provided by relatives of the passengers on the ill-fated boat.

Jogezi meets Sajid Turi in Islamabad

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Information Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party Balochistan Sardar Sarbaland Khan Jogezi met Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi on Monday in Islamabad.

Malik Mustafa Kakar, a member of the Provincial Executive Committee was also present at the meeting.

In the meeting, the political situation and party affairs and the problems faced by the workers in Balochistan in particular, and the provision of employment abroad to the people of Balochistan were also discussed.