

# Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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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.

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

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



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan People's Party calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari exchanging views with Senior Leaders of PPP during meeting held in Islamabad.

## PM, PPP leaders discuss prevailing political situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday here held a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party and had a detailed discussion on the current political situation in the country.

Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Shah, Advisor to the PM on Kashmir and Gilgit-

Balistan Affairs Qamar uz Zaman Kaira, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Senator Nisar Khuro were part of the PPP delegation.

Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar and Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal also attended the meeting.

## Tariff differential subsidy of Rs.171 billion for Karachiites on cards: Khurram

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Power, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, on Friday, said that government will earmark Rs.171 billion as Tariff Differential Subsidy (TDS) in new financial year to provide relief to citizens of Karachi.

The minister while addressing a press conference here said that consumers of K-Electric would get a significant relief in electricity tariff under the TDS,

a targeted subsidy aimed at providing protection to masses against increasing cost of electricity generation.

Moreover, Rs.151 billion were allocated in the budget 2023-24 for other parts of the country including Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and merged ex-FATA districts, he informed adding that IMF conditionality would not affect TDS as it was a targeted subsidy.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Power Engineer Khurram Dastgir, addressing a Press Conference at K-Electric Head office at DHA.

## 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 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.

Indian troops 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.

On the other hand, Indian troops continued their cordon and search operations in different areas, including Makhyala and Bainch villages of Poonch and Rajouri districts.



KARACHI: Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman emir Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi addressing to protesters.

## Cyclone Biparjoy averted, life in coastal belt inching towards normalcy: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah Friday commended all provincial government departments, particularly the essential services, and the police for working hard and dedicatedly in view of Cyclonic Biparjoy and said that the Sindh government had taken effective measures to protect life and property of the people living along the coastal belt.

He also thanked welfare organizations for extending a helping hand to the government in dealing with the situation.

The chief minister also appreciated the cooperation of the people living along the coastal belt and in dangerous buildings in Karachi for vacating their houses. "I believe it is quite painful to vacate homes, but it was a question of security and safety of the people, therefore they were requested for the purpose," he said adding that they understood the situation and cooperated.

The chief minister commended all the institutions of the provincial government for their hard work and dedication and expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army, Navy, Rangers, and Maritime Security for their cooperation with his government.

He hoped that Murtaza Wahab would resolve the issues of Karachiites on priority basis.

The newly elected Mayor Murtaza Wahab thanked the Governor for the best wishes.

## 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 sovereignty 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 beyond US and China, also include 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 Pakistan 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.

## All of Imran allegations against US are false: State Dept

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has called on Pakistan to allow journalists to do their work freely as free and independent media is "vital" in a democratic society.

In a news briefing in Washington on Thursday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the US expects that journalists covering events in Pakistan should be permitted to do their work, stressing a free and independent press is "vital".

In response to a question, Matthew Miller said, "We generally urge all governments to respect the role of journalists and media. We believe the press performs a critical function in democratic societies."

During the meeting, Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated his intention to initiate BRT projects across the province, aiming to provide improved, cost-effective, and comfortable travel facilities to the people. Sharjeel Inam Memon mentioned that there is a growing demand from the residents of all districts in Sindh to establish a service similar to the People's Bus Service, the Sindh Government plans to procure additional vehicles to enhance the public transportation facilities and cater to the needs of the people.

## 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..

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.

On the other hand, Indian troops continued their cordon and search operations in different areas, including Makhyala and Bainch villages of Poonch and Rajouri districts.

## 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 act 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 to 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.

## CS directs for implementing 'Right to Information' act

KARACHI: Chief Secretary (CS) Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput presided an important meeting here on Friday regarding the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The meeting was attended by Advocate General Sindh, Muhammad Hassan Akbar, Secretary Information Nadeem-ur-Rahman Memon, Chief Information Commissioner Syed Javed Ali, Secretary Law, Secretary Information Technology, and other officials.

The meeting was briefed on the progress of various departments of Sindh regarding access to information under the law. It was highlighted that essential/required information had not been uploaded on the respective department's website.

The chief secretary expressed dissatisfaction with departments failing to comply with the law, stating that all provincial departments, their subordinate offices, and autonomous bodies should fully adhere to the RTI law.

The meeting was held in the presence of various officials from different departments.

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## K-Electric scales down power tariff by paisas 05 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): NEPRA has scaled down power tariff of K-Electric by paisas 05 per unit.

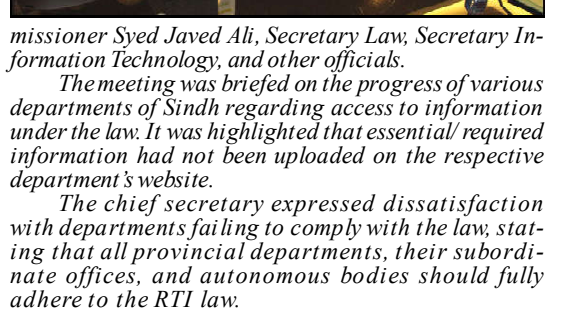
The reduction has been made under monthly fuel charges adjustment for the month of April. A notification in this regard has been issued.

K-Electric had filed application seeking increase in power tariff by paisas 49 per unit.

NEPRA had conducted public hearing on May 30, 2023 on FCA.

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KARACHI: Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman emir Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi addressing to protesters.

## 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 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, sugar 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 Jampur 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 Yury 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.

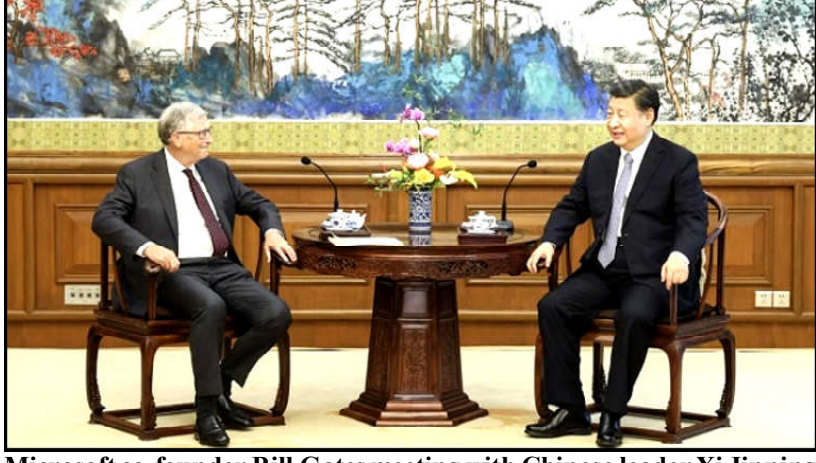
## Palestinian leader Abbas ends China trip after backing Beijing's crackdown on Muslim minorities

**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 emphasized 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.

President Alvi appreciated the AIEF for promoting AI in Pakistan in partnership with local universities, besides urging them to widen the outreach and scope of their work.



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

## 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 approval 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.

## Shazia Marri terms BISP model of social protection for developing world

BERLIN (INP): Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Ms. Shazia Marri has termed the BISP a model of social protection providing financial assistance to nine million women heads of households under Benazir Kafaalat.

Ms Marri informed that in addition to Benazir Kafaalat, under Benazir Nashunama, 710 thousand lactating mothers and their children under two years of age are being supplied with food supplements to overcome malnutrition among them.

While speaking during a panel discussion at the closing session of the "Global Forum on Adaptive Social Protection: Protecting lives and livelihoods in times of crisis" in Berlin, Germany on Friday, the Chairperson BISP said that since its inception in 2008, the Programme had greatly contributed towards uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the improvised and economically marginalized segments of the society, particularly the women.

The BISP is an ideal model of social protection that could be emulated in other parts of the world as well, mainly in the developing nations, she expressed.

Shazia Marri expressed gratitude to the German Government, specifically Minister Schulz, and other partners, including the World Bank and German Development Partner GIZ, for hosting an event on such an important subject.

She acknowledged Pakistan's vulnerability to climate hazards, citing the examples of last year's devastating floods and the on-going threat of a cyclone BIPARJOY targeting Pakistan and neighboring India.



Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif joined hands and waved to the participants of the Central General Council meeting of PML-N.

## 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.

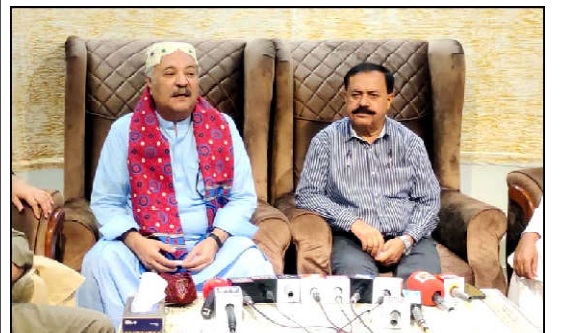
The Senate today passed "The Elections Amendment Bill 2023".

## Budget 2023-24: Lawmakers demand more funds for water infrastructure development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Friday demanded allocation of more funds for construction of new water reservoirs in the financial year 2023-24 to meet water and energy requirements of the country. Participating in the National Assembly debate on the federal budget, they highlighted key points of the fiscal plan tabled before the House for achieving economic stability and the growth targets.

Muhammad Afzal Khokhar of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) praised Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for presenting a balanced budget that prioritized the needs of the common man and farmers.

He also acknowledged the government's efforts in improving the road infrastructure across the country and supporting the much needed reforms in the agriculture sector, considered backbone of the national economy. Khokhar commended the government's decision to increase salaries and pensions of government employees and provide laptops to students, enabling them to acquire modern skills needed to get education matching the international market requirement.



LARKANA: Political Secretary to Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Jameel Ahmed Soomro addresses to media persons during press conference, at Larkana press club.

## Defending champions Wapda, Islamabad reach final of National Women's Basketball championship

KARACHI (APP): The two semi-finals played in the ongoing National Women's Basketball Championship at Siddique Memon Sports Complex Gulshan Iqbal here Friday have been decided as the defending champions Wapda and Islamabad reached final of the championship. The national championship is being held under the auspices of Karachi Basketball Association and under the patronage of Karachi Commissioner Karachi Mohamud Iqbal Memon.

Islamabad Division defeated Karachi Green 34-30. Asma 13 points, Omnia 9, and Momina 8 points were the main scorers for Islamabad while Rida Noor 14 points, Hareem Zuberi 9 and Yamuna Sohani scored 2 points for Karachi Green. In the second semi-final of the championship, the defending champion Wapda won the honor of making to the grand final by defeating the Lahore Division team by 70-20.

On behalf of WAPDA, Kainat was on the rampage in the courts and scored as many as 29 points. She was well-assisted by Sahrish 10 points and Amina 7 points while on behalf of Lahore team, the scorers were Faryal 5 points, Feroza 4 and Hadiqa scored 2 points.



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.

## Govt says flexible on FY24 budget, ready to reach 'amicable solution' with IMF

KARACHI (Online): Responding to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) reservations over the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24) budget tabled in the National Assembly last week, the government expressed willingness on Friday to show flexibility on the matter and said it remained engaged with the international money lender to reach an "amicable solution".

"We are not 'doctrinaire' about any element of the FY24 budget and are keenly engaged with the IMF to reach an amicable solution," the finance ministry said in a statement, adding the government was "fully committed" and "keen" to at least complete the ninth review of a \$6 billion IMF programme, which has been stalled since October.

The IMF has made the decision of releasing at least some of the \$2.5 billion pending disbursement under the 2019 Extended Fund Facility (EFF) that will expire at the end of this

month conditional on multiple factors, including the government satisfying it with regards to the budget for the coming fiscal year.

The IMF's resident representative for Pakistan, Esther Perez Ruiz, said in a late-night statement on Wednesday that the lender had raised several issues in the FY24 budget but was ready to work with Pakistan to refine the budget ahead of its passage.

Ruiz said a new tax amnesty scheme proposed by the government in the budget set a "damaging precedent" and ran against the programme's conditionality, the FY24 budget "misses an opportunity to broaden the tax base in a more progressive way, and the long list of new tax expenditures reduces further the fairness of the tax system and undercuts the resources needed for greater support for vulnerable BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) recipients and development spending".

## FIA arrests officer over corruption charges

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested an officer of Federal Govt. Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) over charges of corruption.

According to a news release on Friday, the FIA's Anti Corruption Circle (ACC) Karachi on June 14<sup>th</sup>, received a written complaint against an Assistant Director of FGEHA Garden office, Karachi namely Shoaib that the said officer was involved in demanding illegal gratification/bribe from all customers who contacted him for the transfer of plots/flat or other property matters.

## Speaker not issuing production order: PTI member SA

KARACHI (Online): PTI member of Sindh Assembly (SA) and UC chairman Firdous Shamim Naqvi has said speaker SA is not issuing his production order while he is in jail since one month. He said this in a statement issued here Friday.

He held "I am only voice of my party at present. All others have been disappeared. I want to talk on budget in assembly."

As per constitution one person can retain only one seat among national assembly, provincial assembly and Senate seats. The constitution is silent over retaining UC Chairman seat along with MNA and MPA seats.

He said that officer of election commission on my stance said that if I cast vote then they will defeat me as MPA.

## Karachi exams to resume today as cyclone Biparjoy weakens

KARACHI (INP): Karachi administration on Friday allowed the resumption of academic examinations from tomorrow as cyclone Biparjoy weakened into a "severe cyclonic storm" after hitting India's Gujarat coast. In a notification, Karachi Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Memon ordered the resumption of examinations and other education-related activities from June 17 (Saturday). "Due to reduction in the severity of cyclone, the threat of cyclonic danger for Karachi division has reduced." "It is therefore, informed that all educational activities including examinations may be resumed in all educational institutions of Karachi Division by tomorrow i.e. 17.06.2023."

## Evacuated people to be sent back to their homes from June 19: CS

KARACHI (APP): A four-member delegation led by Resident Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations Juhel Hameis called on Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr. Mohammad Sohail Rajput here Friday and discussed various issues including response to the Cyclone Biparjoy and rehabilitation of the 2022 flood-affectedes.

The chief secretary stated that by the grace of Allah Almighty, Sindh was not directly affected by the coastal storm.

The Cyclone is being monitored since the first day and the Chief Minister of Sindh immediately visited the coastal areas in view of the approaching storm by issuing necessary instructions, he said.

He further mentioned that as soon as alerts were received about the storm, the government started shifting people of vulnerable coastal areas to safe places to ensure the safety of their lives and property. The Sindh government successfully relocated more than 82,000 individuals from the coastal belt, he told and added, the government of Sindh is providing food and other facilities to 50,000 people in 81 camps, including 5,000 families in Malir, 17,050 families in Sujawal, 23,000 families in Badin, and 5,000 individuals in a camp in Thatta.

## Zarif Iqbal Khero assigned additional charge of Secretary Irrigation Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Zarf Iqbal Khero, Chief Engineer (Civil/BS-20) Irrigation Development, Region II, Hyderabad was assigned on Friday additional charge of the Secretary Irrigation Sindh during leave period of Suhail Ahmed Qureshi.

According to the notification issued by the Chief Secretary Sindh, Zarif Khero will hold the additional charge of the post of provincial Secretary in addition to his own duties.



ISLAMABAD: A three-member delegation, led by Mr. Masafumi Harano, the Asia Head of Suzuki Motors, calls on the Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar, at his chamber in.

## Commissioner inspects ongoing construction work of Storm Drain

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Muhammad Abbas Baloch on Friday visited the newly constructed storm Rain Drain meant for de-watering rain water accumulating in city areas and inspected the ongoing construction work scheduled to be completed by July 15, 2023.

Commissioner instructed officials concerned to finalize the work of Storm Drain at the earliest as the weather department has forecast for monsoon rains.

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## Police arrest four injured 'car lifters' after encounter

KARACHI (INP): Karachi police arrested four alleged car lifters in injured condition after an exchange of gunfire in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 13 area of the metropolis, on Friday.

According to the details, a specialized police team, led by Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Anti Vehicle Lifting Cell (AVLC) Abdul Rahim Shirazi, intercepted a car in which all four suspects were trying to escape, leading to an exchange of gunfire between the police and the alleged robbers.

## Policeman martyred, robber killed in firefight

KARACHI (INP): During a police encounter an alleged criminal was killed, while a policeman embraced martyrdom after crossfire between some criminals and a police party in Memon Goth area of Karachi, police confirmed on Friday.

According to media reports, five policemen riding two motorcycles were on the routine patrolling when they witnessed some robbers looting citizens, police tried to apprehend them. The suspects opened fire on policemen and a gun-battle ensued eventually.



KARACHI: People are filling their water cans from public tap as they facing shortage of drinking water in their area, at Lyari in Karachi.



ISLAMABAD: Country Director World Bank for Pakistan, Najib Benhassine calling on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.

## Ambassador hosts reception for Pakistan's Special Olympics WG squad

KARACHI (APP): Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Faisal hosted a welcome reception at the Pakistan House, Berlin, for the Pakistani squad of Special Olympics World Games 2023, said a news release received here on Friday.

The delegation, comprising 54 male and 33 female athletes, alongside their coaches and support officials, was given a heart-warming welcome by the officers and staff of the Embassy. Prominent members of the community were also invited to encourage the young privileged athletes aspiring to bag success in the event.

Pakistani athletes are participating in 11 different sports, including athletics, badminton, basketball, Bocce, cycling, hockey, power lifting, swimming, tennis and table tennis.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador, Dr. Mohammad Faisal, stated that "I feel very proud to see you all with shining eyes, hopeful hearts and firm determination to represent Pakistan."

He further added that, "I would also want to congratulate the team management, Ronak Lakhani, Yasmin Hyder and all the coaches and affiliated personnel who enabled our privileged guests reach this point with adequate training and the aim to raise the flag high." He said that this indeed was a very happy moment for the nation, to see its privileged children participate in an international event and reiterated that the Embassy would render every possible support to the Special Olympics Team during their stay in Berlin.