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To secure IMF funding NA passes Finance Bill 2023 with outlay of Rs14.48tr

Government to raise further Rs215 billion in new tax; It will also cut Rs85 billion in spending; No double-pension for government employees of grade 17-22: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Sunday passed the Finance Bill 2023-24 with certain amendments in the proposed budgetary measures and the total outlay of Rs 14.48 trillion to achieve macroeconomic stability and the set target of a 3.5 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate.

The Finance Bill, moved by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, was passed with majority vote after clause-by-clause reading. The House echoed with desk thumping as the House passed the budget.

The passage of the Finance Bill has successfully brought to an end the bud-

getary process started on June, 9 with the budget speech of the finance minister at the National Assembly.

The bill now would go to the President for assent who will sign it into a law, and effective from July 1, 2023.

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf put all the amendments proposed by lawmakers Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, Saira Bano, Nisar Cheema, Zahra Wadood Fatimi, Nawab Sher Waseer, Asiya Azeem, which were rejected with a majority vote; except Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali's amendment, which was included in the

bill by the Assembly's approval.

Consequently, the amendment proposed by MQM member Salahuddin was also rejected by the House.

In the light of Senate recommendations, the National Assembly also approved the amendments proposed in the Finance Bill 2023-24 by the Finance Minister.

The bill, presented in the House on June 9 by the Finance minister for consideration, got the approval of the National Assembly with certain changes in the figures related to revenue targets and other matters in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing concluding ceremony of Professional Hockey League for boys and girls jointly organized by Prime Minister Youth Program and Higher Education Commission.

Life-time disqualification hanging sword went away from Nawaz Shareef

New election bill empowers ECP to unilaterally announce and delay polls

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hanging sword of life-time disqualification over Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Supremo Nawaz Shareef went away as National Assembly (NA) passed "Election act amendment 2017" bill by consensus.

Election Commission of Pakistan will announce general election schedule and will also be able to change it.

Finance minister Ishaq Dar presented more amendments in "Election Act Amendment Bill".

National Assembly session held under the chairmanship of speaker Ayaz Sadiq. Election Act 2017 amendment bill passed in session unanimously.

Section 57 of the bill was amended in NA session. Election Commission now will announce election schedule and date and can amend

schedule also.

According to proposed bill, punishment duration is not decided in those crimes will have maximum of five years disqualification. Bill also said qualification and disqualification method and tenure under act 232 be given in same way as it was given in section 62 and 63. This act's section will be applicable on where method and period of disqualification is not given.

Convicted person will remain disqualified for five year from the day of verdict issued by Supreme Court, High Court or any other court.

It is said in bill that punishment of disqualification under article 62 clause 1(F) bill not be more than five years.

Related person will be able to contest election of parliament or provincial assembly.

Mayor vows to resolve long-standing problems of Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): Mayor of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (HMC) Kashif Ali Shoro has said he desired to resolve the long-standing problems of the citizens for at least the last 3 decades.

He was talking to a delegation of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI), led by its President Muhammad Farooq Shaikhani, at the Mayor's office here on Sunday. Shoro said he enjoyed the full support of Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP's) Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, C0-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari, Faryal Talpur and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

He expressed hope that the corporation would

not face any shortage of funds. He said that the business community of Hyderabad was the major stakeholder of the city and their role in increasing revenue collection in Hyderabad was also commendable.

He assured that his administration would take into account the opinions of the businessmen in all their decisions.

The Mayor observed that the agriculture sector in Hyderabad was the backbone of the district's economy, adding that the sector needed more governmental support for further progress. The HCSTSI's President congratulated the Mayor on his assumption of the office and said being a son of Hyderabad he was supposed to be well familiar with the city's issues.

Load shedding duration increases to 8 to 10 hours

ISLAMABAD (Online): Load shedding duration across the country crossed eight to ten hours as electricity short fall reached to 6598 Mega Watt (MW).

According to power division sources total electricity is 20402MW and the demand is 27000 MW.

Hydropower plant is producing 6200MW, Government thermal power plant producing 563MW electricity and production of private electricity production house is 9000MW whereas wind power plant production is 1245MW.

Electricity house of solar panel are producing 100MW and nuclear power plant is producing 3164MW electricity.

BGuas is producing 130MW electricity.

Sanjrani becomes interim President, notification

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Arif Alvi embarked to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj.

In the absence of President, Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani became interim president.

Sadiq Sanjrani will fulfil the responsibilities of President.

Cabinet division has made notification public on Sunday.

Sadiq Sanjrani took office in Quetta.

Lightning kills eight in Narowal, Sheikhupura districts

NAROWAL / SHEIKHUPURA (INP): At least eight people were killed and three others injured when lightning struck different areas of Narowal and Sheikhupura districts on Sunday.

According to details, during heavy rain followed by strong wind gusts, light struck Ratanpur, Changuwali, Qangoi, Panjpur and Ratikhand areas of teshil Shakargarh and Zafarwal of Narowal.



US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome speaks at an event in Karachi

US not influencing Pakistan on ties with China, says envoy Blome

KARACHI (INP): Ambassador Donald Blome has denied that the United States is pressuring Pakistan to choose between the US and China.

He was speaking at an interactive session on "US-Pakistan Relations: Present and Future" organised by the Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) here.

Ambassador Blome opined that trade among partners was key towards economic prosperity. The trade must also be equitable and our message to China is to go forward with fair trade terms and Pakistan should demand the same from its economic relationships, he added.

He said that for the last four decades, many policy makers in Washington have viewed Pakistan with the lens of US engagement in Afghanistan.

More recently, some

commentators try to frame the US relationship with Pakistan in perspective of China or India or Russia, he said and added that it should stand on its own.

The US engagement with Pakistan remained very strong, he continued.

The ambassador saw Pakistan's economic future bright as an engine of a larger regional economy, connecting South and Central Asia.

He hinted at potential of an improved economic relationship with India.

He said that on a regional level the US would like to reaffirm its commitment to partner with Pakistan to eliminate terrorism, countering emerging terrorist threats and addressing the roots of instability in this region.

He said that more than 2,000 Pakistani officers have gone on US-funded military education and training programmes

and Pakistan is among the top two countries in the world for participation in US military exchanges.

Ambassador Blome said the International Monetary Fund is an independent institution that works within its policy framework, but the US wants to see Pakistan's programme with the IMF a success.

He identified the economic issue as a major problem of Pakistan, saying that Washington is keen to see resolution of this problem.

He said the trade ties between Pakistan and the US had been growing with the passage of time, recalling that the US had donated 80 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to Pakistan during the pandemic.

He expressed the hope that the ties between the two countries would further flourish.

Hyderabad Business forum elects its new office bearers

HYDERABAD (APP): A meeting of the office bearers of Hyderabad Business forum held here under chairmanship of its Chairman Mohsin Memon.

Meeting was attended by Senior Vice Chairman Zia-u-Din Qureshi, Vice Chairman Khalid Khanzada, General Secretary Fayaz Khan Awan, Additional General Secretary Shehroze Shaikh, Chairman Admin affairs committee Zulfikar Ali chohan, Members core committee Haji Muhammad Asif Qureshi and Abdul Haque Shaikh.

On this occasion names of newly elected office bearers of Hyderabad Business forum taluka city were announced including patron in-chief Haji hameed Qureshi, Patron Anwer Kundan.

Eight killed, 39 other injured in road mishap

NAWABSHAH (APP): Eight people were killed and 39 others were injured in a road accident near Nawabshah in Shaheed Benazirabad district.

The horrific accident occurred when two buses collided near Baloachpur stop in the town of Daur near Nawabshah on Sunday morning.

According to a police spokesman, the accident occurred due to overspeeding.

As a result, eight people were killed on the spot while dozens of others, including women and children suffered injuries.

The injured were shifted to the Taluka Hospital Daur and People's Medical University Hospital for medical assistance.

Police said a bus was travelling from Karachi to Jhang, whereas the other was going to Punjab from Karachi.

The cause of the accident is an aid to overspeeding and negligence.

Info Minister criticizes previous govt for bulldozing their signed agreement with IMF

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Sunday that it was strange that those who ruined the national economy were crying over signs of restoration of agreement signed by themselves with International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a statement, the minister said that on May 9, they burned the country, attacked military and private properties, desecrated the memorials of martyrs and now they were preparing to damage the economic interests of the country again.

"Arsonsits, conspira-

questions should be asked to those who were crying over the agreement and why did they sign the agreement with the IMF. She said it was ironic that those who were shouting about the agreement, themselves had signed the agreement with the IMF.

"Not only did they violate and suspend this agreement, but they conspired to make the country default", she added.

The minister said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his tenure had stabilized the country's economy, but "the foreign agent" shook the foundations of the economy and the country



tors and enemies of the country have started crying again as they heard the news that the agreement with the IMF is being restored", she maintained.

Marriyum said that the previous regime signed the IMF agreement on strict terms, violated it and then suspended the agreement, then hatched conspiracies against the country and the agreement.

The minister said that

had to seek the IMF's support.

"Nawaz Sharif is the only leader whose government completed the IMF program and also put the country on the path of development", she remarked.

Taking a jibe on Imran Khan, she said the person who used to claim that he would prefer to die instead of seeking IMF assistance, why did he knock the door of the IMF.

Khawaja Asif opposes Chairman Senate Salaries, Allowance, Privileges Bill

Says no bar for ECP to hold next elections in October

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Sunday urged the House not to support the Chairman Senate Salaries, Allowance and Privileges Bill passed by the Senate recently as the country could not afford such incentives in the prevailing economic situation.

Speaking in the National Assembly after passage of federal budget for fiscal year 2023-24, the minister said, he has great respect for senators and the Senate as he had started his political career from the Senate. However, the people and business community are in immense difficulties due to the prevailing financial crisis, he said.

He said the salary of

MNA stood at Rs 168,000 per month which was lower than a federal secretary. He said such privilege in the current financial circumstance could not be afforded. Lauding the Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and his entire finance teams, he said that a balanced budget was presented despite of critical situation.

He expressed the hope that a new era of economic stability would start soon. The minister also clarified that neither the government was bearing expenditure nor giving any special facility for members of the National Assembly for performing Hajj. Even ordinary people were also part of the special flight to carry pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development, Sajid Hussain Turi applauding the decision of Pakistan Army for opening of coal mines in Kurram.

Protecting youth form using drugs our social responsibility: Mukesh

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department Mukesh Kumar Chawla on Sunday said that it was our collective social responsibility to stop the youth from using drugs. He said that all stakeholders must work together against this curse and discourage drug-peddlers.

He stated this while speaking as the chief guest at a certificates and shields distribution ceremony among the officers and staff of the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department for their performance against drug peddlers at a local

hotel, according to a communiqué here.

He said that the Excise Department had achieved more than 100 percent tax targets and had taken vigorous action against drug-peddlers in the province. Secretary Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department Sindh Atif Rehman Khan, Director Generals Waheed Sheikh, Aurangzeb Panhwar, all Divisional Directors and other officers were also present on this occasion. Mukesh Kumar Chawla said that drugs were the poison and it was their primary responsibility to stop the youth from using it.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Legal questions

When the Supreme Court decided to take up multiple petitions against the court martial of civilians, there had been much excitement over the inclusion of the senior puisne judge, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, in the nine-member bench originally formed to hear the matter.

It had been a long-running complaint of critics of the current chief justice that he had actively excluded Justice Isa from important benches. Therefore, after his 'surprise' nomination to the bench, many were looking forward to hearing Justice Isa's thoughts on the matter; more so as the honourable justice had, just a day earlier, been confirmed as the next chief justice of Pakistan. Instead, both Justice Isa and the next senior-most judge, Justice Tariq Masood, chose to abruptly disassociate themselves from the proceedings. Granted that they may have had their reasons not to sit on the bench, but it would seem that, in this case, they missed the forest for the trees.

The decision to court-martial civilians is no frivolous matter. It merits a detailed review under the laws of the land, preferably by as many of the best legal minds the country has in its service as possible. The incoming chief justice's differences with the incumbent on various administrative matters of the court are well documented. They need not have become a reason for two senior-most judges to sit this case out. The state has argued against any debate or discussion over the trials of civilians under military laws, even shutting down attempts to question the grave implications of this practice.

The petitioners were not wrong when they pleaded with Justice Isa to reconsider, arguing that they had already risked much to bring the matter to court. Considering that he has not recused himself, he should find a way to still weigh in on the matter.

Lastly, a word to some of our elected lawmakers, who lately seem inclined to see a conspiracy in everything the Supreme Court does. It was unbecoming of two cabinet ministers to launch into ugly tirades against the superior judiciary on the floor of the National Assembly simply for taking up the relevant petitions. Perhaps they needed a reminder that all citizens of Pakistan enjoy the right to seek legal recourse whenever they feel their fundamental rights are being threatened. It is up to the judiciary to decide, based on its merits, which petition is to be heard and which is to be set aside.

There is little point, therefore, of fomenting controversy over whether or not the Supreme Court should hear this case. Instead, it would be best if both critics and proponents of military courts decide to test the strength of their arguments before the court. This need not turn into another public dispute between the judiciary and legislature.

A pressing need



Muna Khan

While I don't tire of writing about journalism, recently, I have been wondering whether I will witness its demise and if there will be takers for my news media literacy classes — 10 years from now. The fear was exacerbated after reading this year's digital news report by the Reuters Institute: "Audiences say they pay more attention to celebrities, influencers, and social media personalities than journalists in networks like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat." However, news organisations and journalists are still central to the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

While Facebook remains a top used platform, it has shifted away from news and faces tough competition from TikTok, "which reaches 44 per cent of 18-24s across markets and 20pc for news". Trust in the media was down by 2pc from the year before. It's no surprise that consumption of traditional media is down "in most markets", but the number of people who say they avoid the news has risen to 36pc across markets.

The only positive takeaway was that public media organisations had the highest trust in the Global North — because they "likely see them as important personally and for society" — but younger viewers are not consuming it. "These findings suggest that maintaining the breadth of public service reach remains critical for future legitimacy and especially with younger groups," the report says.

For journalism to remain relevant, news

organisations need to find genuine, new ways to connect with younger audiences. And I don't mean copy/pasting their content on TikTok. It requires an understanding of the technological changes taking place in how audiences consume information and figuring out what issues younger audiences care about. Pro tip: it's climate change, not change of leadership in XYZ parties.

Organisations also have to figure out how to attract this generation into the fold. When I began working in the mid-1990s, journalism was considered a worthy pursuit. Today, the field offers low wages, uncertainty and too often people end up doing tasks on the job they did not sign up for. They're made to chase clicks over public service. Some try to challenge these goals in their small ways, while others give in, knowing this is the only way to keep their jobs. Others quit, and it's almost always folks who had innovative ideas to solve issues; be it audience engagement, or creating meaningful stories that matter to readers.

One way to make journalism a worthy pursuit is to teach people about the journalists who made it such. My work in audio — interviewing journalists about their experiences working under various forms of press censorship — is a small attempt at doing that. I believe it can help people unaware of the country's history of civil resistance, understand this moment better. Why, for example, is there no visible collective resistance to curbs to press freedom? There's much to learn from personal narratives like Ghazi Salahuddin's, who shared why he courted arrest to protest the trials of journalists during Gen Zia's rule. Why don't we see similar collective resistance?

I'm hoping I can convince like-minded journalists and/or donors to build a press museum similar to the Newseum in Washington, D.C. Nearly 10 million visited the museum in the 11 years it was open — and it charged a \$25 fee, unlike the free museums in the vicinity, which shows people were interested in learning about the news ecosystem. Some of the artifacts exhibited at Newseum included the front page of newspapers from history, starting from 1493 to the papers of the day. It also had a memorial for journalists who died on the job. Visitors could also practise journalism by re-reading the news through a teleprompter to better understand how the news works. Incidentally, the TDF Magni-fiscie-nce Centre in Ka-rachi also has this opportunity; I've seen how children are excited to participate — it may inspire them to pursue journalism, or influencing, as the case may be now. While the Newseum was never able to break even, it does not mean such an idea is unfeasible in Pakistan. There are plenty of examples of successful public-private partnerships that can provide inspiration for a press museum. The people behind such a venture need to be press freedom advocates; they have to believe that the public must have an understanding of what that means, what it entails, what the challenges are. The besieged state of Pakistan's press requires interventions from all stakeholders, and while a press museum won't solve the crises, its creation will serve as a reminder of the battles fought by advocates to preserve press freedom. It may also reinvigorate a commitment from media owners to do the same — educate their audience about the threats a muzzled media poses to their civil liberties. —Courtsey Dawn



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Narendra Modi has come a long way from the time he was denied a US visa for his role in the Gujarat pogrom. Times have changed. He is now the prime minister of a country that the US wants to build as a counterweight to rising China. The US has honoured him, with his state visit and address to the US Congress. It believes India can serve as Washington's ally in its competition with China. But while India has welcomed its growing ties with the US, it appears that it is not looking for any alliance with it and wants to keep its options open.

The Indian leadership appreciates that the US is still the most eminent military and economic power, and that India has much to gain in terms of defence deals and technologies. Indian military capabilities have already been bolstered by bilateral agreements allowing the use of each other's military logistics (LEMOA), compatibility of encrypted communication equipment (COMCASA), and exchange of geospatial intelligence (BECA). During Modi's recent visit to Washington, the US agreed to sell armed drones and manufacture GE engines in India.

Yet, India is not prepared to sacrifice its long-time ties with Russia. India did not condemn Russia for its aggression against Ukraine, and also started buying Russian oil, which helped Russia redress the deleterious impact of Western sanctions. Likewise, India

Bonhomie?

wants to deal with China on its own terms and not on behalf of the US, despite serious India-China border issues. India has also maintained its trade and economic relations with China and cooperates closely with China on BRICS, SCO, AIIB and other forums.

For its part, the US recognises there are limits to what India can, or would, do to counter China or Russia. Yet, it is continuing to invest in India as the country is central to America's plans to situate an arc of containment against China, with due support from Australia, Japan and some other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

So, are both countries misreading each other? Can the high-flying visit of an Indian prime minister to Washington address the mismatch of mutual expectations?

There are two broad foundations for the close partnership that India and the US are seeking to establish: geopolitical interests in the Indo-Pacific region, and shared democratic values. On both counts, there are issues that place limits on what can be achieved. While shared geopolitical objectives essentially revolve around China, India is not inclined to be categorised as a 'US ally'. Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has often talked about 'strategic autonomy'. Indian journalist Barkha Dutt in her Washington Post article says, "Sorry, America, India will never be your ally". She argues: "In a multipolar world, India will look to be a pole, not an exclusive partner." As for shared democratic values, there are growing concerns in America on the weakening of democracy in India and violence against religious minorities. The State Department's 2022 report on international religious freedom has documented violence by law-enforcement authorities against re-

ligious minorities in multiple states. American scholar Daniel Markey has argued in a recent essay in Foreign Affairs that India-US relations are not based on shared values of democracy but on convenience and interests. Dozens of US lawmakers have written a letter to President Joe Biden, drawing his attention to the "troubling signs" in India of shrinking political space and the rise of religious intolerance.

An interesting perspective has been fielded by Indian journalist Raja Mohan, who describes the Modi visit as a "fundamental turning point" in India-US ties. His argument is that the convergence is not about containing China, but creating a new multipolar Asia. While there is no doubt that Asia, as indeed the rest of the world, is fast becoming multipolar, the Modi visit, from the US perspective, seems to be centred on US objectives in the Indo-Pacific, including "empowering the QUAD" and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Markey argued in his interview with Karan Thapar that US cooperation with India should be limited to those technologies that can enable India to defend itself against China.

Intriguingly, the joint statement after Modi's visit does not explicitly mention China or Russia, but makes a negative reference to Pakistan in the context of cross-border terrorism even though Pakistan fought against terrorism and actually achieved results. The US knows well that fighting terrorism is a joint responsibility of the international community, and should not have signed on to this reference, which is a violation of the norms of bilateralism. India's continuing targeting of Pakistan is unfortunate and a bad omen for peace and stability in South Asia. —Courtsey Dawn

Commerce News

Pak-China collaborate to promote Pakistan pharma development

BEIJING (APP): China has equalized or surpassed the developed nations' pharma standards over a period of time.

"With 30 years of experience in cooperation with China, our progress is accompanied by the dividend of the development of China's pharmaceutical industry," highlighted Waheed Ahmed, Chief Executive of Shaigan Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd at the CPHI & PMEC China.

"As Asia leading pharmaceutical show for trading, knowledge sharing and networking, CPHI & PMEC China spans all

industry sectors along the pharmaceutical supply chain including APIs, excipients, finished dosage, natural extracts, biopharma & CDMOs, animal health & feed, medical supplies, etc," China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Waheed, who has been attending the expo since 1995, noted, "CPHI China is becoming more and more informative due to the major R&D work being carried out in China. China, Pakistan's largest trading partner and the largest producer of API attaches importance to investing in chemical labs and training scientists."

"China's key technologies are developing rapidly, and the quality of pharmaceutical and mechanical products is reliable," he explained. "This time I am exploring future technologies and newly developed products, especially in biosimilars and new drug delivery systems," Waheed mentioned.

"Meeting my over 15 collaborative partners who are all old friends at the expo and witnessing their growth is always a pleasure and an opportunity to tap new business ranges."

Government urged for encouraging furniture Industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday urged the government to encourage investments and create a favorable business environment for furniture manufacturers. He said the furniture industry in the country can be successfully promoted and positioned as a competitive player in

the global market with effective marketing with the right combination of factors, including export potential, design and innovation, technology adoption, and skill development. Chairing the PFC executive committee meeting, he said Pakistan has a skilled labor force and a rich heritage of craftsmanship in furniture making.

Cantt Boards advise taxpayers to pay taxes by June 28

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment Boards have advised the taxpayers to pay their property taxes, conservancy taxes, and water charges for the current year by June 28 and receive a 10 percent discount. The property owners failing to pay the taxes and other charges by the deadline would be facing monetary penalties. According to an RCB spokesman, "The board have sent all the outstanding bills to its taxpayers."



LAHORE: Caretaker Minister of Livestock and Dairy Development Ibrahim Hassan Murad in a photo with a delegation of Chinese livestock experts under the leadership of Vice President Royal Group of China Mr. Teng Cuijin.

Murtaza Abbasi says: Establishment of HESCO to be game changer for development of Hazara

HAVELIAN (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi Sunday inaugurated the Sui gas provision project in the villages of Batolni, Mujahath, Termuchia, Slawala and Sirila of Tehsil Havelian with an estimated cost of 548.982 million.

While addressing a huge public gathering in the village of Batolni Murta, he said that this initiative was

aimed to provide affordable access to natural gas to the rural communities in the region, heralding a new era of progress and development. Murtaza Javed Abbasi expressed his delight over the approval of the board of directors for Hazara Electric Supply Company (HESCO) and emphasized that the establishment of this company would

effectively eliminate the long-standing deprivation faced by the people of Hazara.

"Today, we have taken a significant step towards the advancement of Hazara", this multimillion project undertaken by the PML-N and Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif will prove to be a game-changer for the region, the minister declared.

Promotion of agro-based industry stressed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday stressed the urgent need for the promotion of an agro-based industry that's of immense importance to the country's economy. He said the agro-based industry is crucial for ensuring food security in Pakistan. With a growing population, it is essential to have a robust agricultural sector that can produce an adequate quantity of food.

of progressive farmers led Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed, he said a strong and vibrant agro-based industry is crucial for sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and overall development, says a press release.

Govt transfers Rs.3billion to railway account for Salaries of June

FAISALABAD (Online): Federal minister of Railway Saad Rafique personnel interest and timely action to pay the salaries of month of June on the demand of 'Pakistan Railway Prem Union' government transferred the amount of 3 billion Pkr to railway ministry account. Salaries has also been transferred to salaries accounts of Railway employees.

Efforts afoot to expand tax network, growth rate: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Economic and Energy Affairs Bilal Azhar Kayani on Saturday said the incumbent government under the leadership of PM Shehbaz Sharif, has taken extensive measures to expand the tax network and growth rate.

An amount of 466 billion rupees has been allocated for BISP to help under privilege groups of people, he said while talking to a private television channel. The government in the current budget has also increased

the allocation for BISP to facilitate maximum beneficiaries, he informed.

He said the Pakistan Muslim League-N, with the help of coalition partners, had protected the country from falling into the default line.

He blamed Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) government for the current economic situation, saying that it had created mistrust with IMF. He said the government was making all-out efforts to dispel the impression created by the PTI chief during his tenure.



QUETTA: A vendor arrange the fresh vegetables to attract customers.

ICCI for further strengthening trade ties with Japan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Sunday urged the need for further strengthening bilateral and economic relations between Pakistan and Japan to attain sustainable growth and development in the country.

Japan is the third largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$4,940.9 billion and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Japan has a history, he said this while talking to Economic Minister designated for Japan, Dr Irfan Abbas Shah during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Zafar said that there are many possibilities for further

improving trade relations between the two countries, adding that there are vast opportunities for Japanese investors to invest in different sectors of the national economy including dairy and automobile.

He said that the role of the embassy is very important to promote and develop diplomatic, trade and economic relations between both countries. President ICCI urged the need to impart skill training to youth to fulfill the increasing labor demand of Japanese markets and urged the government to take SMEDA and other concerned institutions into confidence and form a comprehensive policy in this regard.



RAWALPINDI: All Pakistan Mobile Phones Association are shouting slogans during protest in the favor of their demands at Sadr area in City.

CM seeks plan to improve livestock, dairy development

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has sought a plan to bring improvements in livestock and dairy development across Punjab.

He was presiding over a meeting at the CM Office in which steps to increase livestock production along with increasing livestock exports were reviewed.

It was decided during the meeting to take steps on an emergency basis for the promotion of meat and poultry industry in Punjab. Caretaker CM while directing to formulate a comprehensive policy with regard to meat export stated that obstacles in the promotion of beef, mutton and poultry industry will be removed.

It was principally decided during the meeting to declare Bahawalpur division as "Meat

Division" of Punjab. The CM was informed that huge foreign exchange can be earned with the export of meat and poultry in Punjab. Latest modus operandis of semen protection, farm management and vaccinations are essential to adopt. Halal certification of livestock production and traceability is a mandatory step for exports. Punjab province has the capability to export livestock and dairy products to Saudi Arabia and China.

Poultry industry will have to be driven towards latest mechanisation.

Fawad Mukhtar, Naveed Iqbal and Professor Talat Naseer Pasha gave a briefing and put forth their recommendations. Provincial Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad, Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning & Development, Secretary Local

Government, Secretary Finance and concerned officials attended the meeting. Renowned businessman Syed Yawar Ali participated in the meeting via video link.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed his deep sense of sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives due to falling down of a skylight in Narowal. Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi has expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolence with the heirs of the deceased. Mohsin Naqvi prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the deceased persons in eternal peace and grant fortitude to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity. Caretaker CM directed the administration to provide best treatment facilities to the injured persons.



PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of North Waziristan led by Chief of Waziristan Malik Nasrullah meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

PPP always strives for ensuring political stability: Tasneem

SARGODHA (APP): State Minister for Production and Industries Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi said on Sunday Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had always strived to ensure political stability and democracy in the country.

Addressing a gathering here, he said all political parties were sitting together despite ideological differences for the sake of country's economic and political stability and strengthening democracy. The coalition government came to power after removal of former prime minister Imran Khan

through a constitutional way to mitigate the sufferings of people amid inflation, unemployment and poverty, Tasneem said.

About sufferings of those affected by floods last year, Qureshi said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto effectively voiced the miseries of 33 million people of Pakistan at the international forums, who were affected due to devastating floods. As a result, Pakistan received financial assistance of \$9 billion for the flood affected people's rehabilitation, he added.

Development works halted by PTI in KP restarted by PML-N govt: Amir Muqam

SWAT (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam here on Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League (N) strongly believed in the country's uniform development process and had restarted work on projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Swat after it was halted by the PTI government.

Addressing a public gathering after the inauguration of the Passport Office at Khwazakhela in Upper Swat, Engr Amir Muqam said that the work on the gas projects was started by PMLN Govt in 2017 at

Swat which had been halted by the previous PTI government, thus making great injustice with people.

He said the PML-N has restarted work on all halted gas projects in Swat to provide the much-needed relief to the people.

During the government of former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, he said that passport offices were established in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that establishing five new passport offices at Pathan Lower Kohistan, Chakdara Lower Dir, Sheringal

Upper Dir, Shergarh Mardan and Khawzakhela Swat was another gift of PML-N government for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Engr Amir Muqam said that political opponents could not mislead the people of Swat anymore as these elements were completely failed to address their problems during nine years long rule of PTI. He said that Khwazakhela road, gas projects at Charbagh, Manglawar and Nawaz Sharif Kidney Hospital Swat were completed by the PML-N govt benefiting millions of people.



KARACHI: A man washing the sacrificial animal in connection with the upcoming Eid ul Azha.

7 dead, 1235 injured in road accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least seven people were killed while 1235 injured in 1235 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Of whom, 638 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 597 victims with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue medical teams.

Analysis showed that 599 drivers, 65 underage drivers, 153 pedestrians, and 490 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. Statistics show that 284 road accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 273 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 80 in Faisalabad with 81 victims and at third Multan with 70 road accidents and 72 victims. According to the data, 1028 motorbikes, 80 auto-rickshaws, 114 motorcars, 29 vans, 18 buses, 17 trucks.

Ombudsman office provides relief to 23 complainants

LAHORE (APP): The Ombudsman Punjab office provided relief of Rs 64.3 million to 23 complainants from various districts by issuing orders to provincial government departments.

In a press statement issued here on Sunday, a spokesman for the provincial ombudsman office said the office successfully resolved the longstanding matter of a family pension for a widow Ms Shaheena, residing in a secluded village within the Kohat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. After the decision, Ms Shaheena received her remaining pension dues of Rs 182,695 from district accounts office Sargodha.

Furthermore, Ms Najma Mazhar, the

plaintiff from Mandi Bahauddin, has been duly compensated for her deceased husband's employment dues through the intervention of the ombudsman's office.

Additionally, her daughter, Ms Mehreen Saba, has also been appointed as a junior clerk in a government department in grade-11, in adherence to Rule 17-A of the Punjab Civil Servants (Appointment & Conditions of Service) Rules, 1974, the spokesman said.

Moreover, the spokesman emphasized the commendable efforts undertaken by various district administrations in response to public complaints received by the ombudsman's office.

Dead body found along with motorway

WAH CANTT (APP): The dead body of a man under a bridge was found along with Islamabad-Peshawar motorway (M-1) near Passwal in the jurisdiction of Taxila Police Station on Sunday. The police spokesman said that some passerby spotted the body of a man lying under a bridge and informed the police who shifted the body to THQ Hospital Taxila for autopsy. During the preliminary medical examination, it was revealed that the man was strangled to death and later his body was thrown there to conceal the crime. The deceased were identified as Meer Gull-a native of Landikotil-KP.

Driving licence issuance process made easy: IGP

LAHORE (Online): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar Sunday said that driving licence issuance process in Punjab had been made simplified and made easy.

In a press release issued here, he said every Pakistani citizen, who owned a national identity card, could now easily get a licence from any licensing centre in Punjab, and get renewed his/her driving licence from any district of Punjab on its expiry in all districts of the

province. He said a citizen from any region of Pakistan, who had obtained a learner's permit, could appear for the driving test in the district of his job.

He said for the first time in the history of Pakistan, now driving licences had been issued to 62 transgender.

"Transgenders are also being imparted training at driving schools of Punjab Police," he said and added that the number of driving schools had been increased from 32 to 64 across Punjab.

ANP condemns increased target killing incidents in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP) has expressed concern over the increase of target killing and terrorist attacks incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and demanded immediate action against those involved in such crime.

The killing of Manmohan Singh in Peshawar is very alarming and condemnable, Provincial President ANP

Amil Wali Khan said in a statement issued here Sunday. Dayal Singh was killed in Ramadan, how long these unknown persons will remain unknown, Amil Wali Khan questioned.

The attacks on members of the minority community in a city like Peshawar gives an impression that Peshawar is not safe, Amil Wali Khan said and added.

International News

Russia says China backs its efforts to stabilize the country after mercenary rebellion

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Russia said on Sunday that China threw its support behind President Vladimir Putin's efforts to stabilize the country after an aborted rebellion against the Kremlin by an army of mercenaries.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said China declared support for the leadership in Moscow during a previously unannounced trip to Beijing by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko.

"The Chinese side expressed support for the efforts of the leadership of

the Russian Federation to stabilize the situation in the country in connection with the events of June 24, and reaffirmed its interest in strengthening the unity and further prosperity of Russia," the Russian statement said.

Rudenko met with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang to discuss "international and regional issues of common concern," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on its website.

Rudenko's visit came just a day after Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of private mercenary army Wagner

Group, ordered his troops to march on Moscow in the greatest challenge to Putin's more than two decades in power. Prigozhin later on Saturday reached a deal with the Kremlin to go into exile.

It was unclear whether Rudenko's visit to China was in response to the rebellion.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement late Sunday that the uprising was "Russia's internal affair."

"As a friendly neighbor and comprehensive strategic partner in the new

era, China supports Russia in maintaining national stability and achieving development and prosperity," it said, without explicitly referencing Russia's leadership.

China and Russia, while not formal allies, have maintained close ties throughout Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, which China has refused to condemn.

The United States and other Western powers have urged Beijing not to supply Russia with arms that could be used in the Ukraine conflict.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with US and Indian technology executives during a trip to the United States.



Police cordon off the Gröna Lund amusement park in Stockholm.

Afghan supreme leader claims women 'saved from oppression' by Taliban

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Afghanistan's supreme leader claimed on Sunday that the country's women were being saved from "traditional oppressions" by the adoption of Islamic governance and their status as "free and dignified human beings" restored. In a statement marking this week's Eidul Azha holiday, Hibatullah Akhundzada — who rarely appears in public and rules by decree from the

Taliban's birthplace in Kandahar — said steps had been taken to provide women with a "comfortable and prosperous life according to Islamic Shariah".

The United Nations expressed "deep concern" last week that women were being deprived of their rights under Afghanistan's Taliban government and warned of systematic gender apartheid. Since returning to power in August 2021.

Two people died and 12 were hurt in a shooting at a street party that was promoted on social media

Monitoring Desk
SAGINAW: A 51-year-old woman and a 19-year-old man were slain and a dozen others wounded during a shooting at a large street party in Michigan that was promoted on social media.

The shooting occurred around midnight Saturday in Saginaw, about 102 miles (164 kilometers) northwest of Detroit, state police said.

US firms pump money in India as Biden eyes geopolitical goals

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Amazon and Google are the latest companies to announce massive investment plans in India amid US President Joe Biden's efforts to "send a message to China" by cementing India's position as a close ally. Amazon said on Friday it will take its investments in India to \$26 billion by 2030, adding \$6.5bn in new planned investments in an announcement made after Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the United States.

Though Jassy gave no

breakdown, the announcement follows Amazon's cloud computing unit Amazon Web Services saying last month it will invest INR1.06tr in the country by the end of 2030.

The e-commerce giant's announced investment during Modi's trip adds to other companies, including US semiconductor toolmaker Applied Materials and memory chip firm Micron Technology, which have made commitments during the Indian premier's state visit.

US Secretary of State Blinken says Russia turmoil could take months to play out

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The unprecedented challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin by Wagner fighters has exposed fresh "cracks" in the strength of his leadership that may take weeks or months to play out, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday.

"I don't think we've seen the final act," Blinken said on ABC News, in one of a series of interviews after an aborted mutiny by forces led by Yevgeny

Prigozhin. Blinken said tensions that sparked the action had been rising for months and the turmoil could affect Moscow's military capabilities in Ukraine.

"We've seen more cracks emerge in the Russian facade. It is too soon to tell exactly where they go, and when they get there. But certainly, we have all sorts of new questions that Putin is going to have to address in the weeks and months ahead," Blinken told NBC's "Meet the Press" program.

Blinken described

the turmoil as an "internal matter" for Putin.

"Our focus is resolutely and relentlessly on Ukraine, making sure that it has what it needs to defend itself and to take back territory that Russia seized," Blinken said.

U.S. officials expect to learn more in coming days and weeks about the events that unfolded in Russia, including details of the deal with Prigozhin mediated by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko that led Wagner fighters to return to their bases.

N.Korea vice foreign minister supports Russian leadership over mutiny-KCNA

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea's vice foreign minister in a meeting with the Russian ambassador on Sunday said he supported any decision by the Russian leadership to deal with a recent mutiny, North Korean state media reported.

Im Chon Il, the vice foreign minister, "expressed

firm belief that the recent armed rebellion in Russia would be successfully put down in conformity with the aspiration and will of the Russian people," state KCNA news agency said.

Heavily armed Russian mercenaries who advanced most of the way to Moscow this weekend halted their approach.

Russian jets said to step up strikes on Syrian rebel enclave

Monitoring Desk
AMMAN: Russian jets bombed villages and towns near the northwestern Syrian city of Idlib on Sunday, killing at least nine civilians and wounding dozens in a major flare-up of violence in the country's last opposition stronghold, witnesses and rescuers said. War planes flying at high altitude, which tracking centres said were Russian Sukhoi jets.

At International African American Museum opening, a reclaiming of sacred ground for enslaved kin

Monitoring Desk
CHARLESTON: When the International African American Museum opens to the public Tuesday in South Carolina, it becomes a new site of homecoming and pilgrimage for descendants of enslaved Africans whose arrival in the Western Hemisphere begins on the docks of the Lowcountry coast. Overlooking the old wharf in Charleston at which nearly half

of the enslaved population first entered North America, the 150,000-square-foot (14,000-square-meter) museum houses exhibits and artifacts exploring how African Americans' labor, perseverance, resistance and cultures shaped the Carolinas, the nation and the world.

It also includes a genealogy research center to help families trace their ancestors' journey from the point of arrival on the land.

Largest Hajj pilgrimage in history' begins in Saudi Arabia

MAKKAH (Online): Vast crowds of robed Muslim pilgrims walked solemn circles around the Kaaba, the black cube at Makkah's Grand Mosque, on Sunday as the biggest Hajj pilgrimage in several years began in the heat of the Saudi summer. Islam's holiest site is expected to host more than two million worshippers from 160 countries during the annual rites that could break attendance records, with 1.6 million foreigners already there by late Friday.

"This year, we will witness the largest Hajj pilgrimage in history," if things go according to plan, predicted an official with the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah.

"The numbers will exceed 2.5 million pilgrims," added the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak with the press.

The Haj began early on Sunday with the "tawaf" — the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in black cloth with gold trimmings that millions of Muslims pray towards every day. "I am living the most beautiful days of my life,"

said Abdel-Azim, a 65-year-old Egyptian, as he performed the ritual. "The dream has come true," added the retiree, who had saved up for 20 years to pay the \$6,000 fee to take part. The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means.

A series of rites are completed over four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday night, pilgrims will start moving to Mina, about five kilometres (three miles) from the Grand Mosque, ahead of the Haj's climax at Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) is believed to have delivered his final sermon.

Mina, the world's largest tent city, readied to receive the influx of pilgrims on Sunday, with food supplies brought in and security forces deployed around the area.

Outside the Grand Mosque, thousands prayed on colorful carpets that adorned the pavement, with male pilgrims wearing simple white robes.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme in a group photo with the delegation of Yemen's Social Fund for Development.



KARACHI: Activists of Christen Protection Council holds protest in the favor of their demands outside Press Club in Provincial Capital.

Budget process in NA witnesses active participation of lawmakers

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a highly productive 51st session, the National Assembly (NA) successfully approved the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Commencing on March 27, the session witnessed the presentation of the Finance Bill, 2023 on June 9, 2023, sparking a thorough and engaging debate on the budget.

The House, after incorporating numerous recommendations from the Senate, passed the Finance Bill, 2023, alongside the adoption of four resolutions addressing significant issues.

The formal budget debate commenced on June 12, with the Leader of the Opposition initiating discussions on the federal budget in accordance with parliamentary tradition.

According to the data compiled through the website of NA and observation of proceedings, a substantial number of lawmakers actively participated in the debate, with around 86 out of 174 NA members lending their voices to the discussions—a significant increase compared to previous years.

It is noteworthy that the incumbent 15th NA comprises 174 members, excluding the Speaker, who plays an impartial role as the custodian of the 342-member House.

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Pakistan, Japan to hold 13th round of political consultations on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The thirteenth round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Japan will be held on Tuesday in Tokyo, Japan.

The twelfth round of these consultations between the two countries was held in 2020 in Islamabad.

The Pakistan side will be led by Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, while, Shigeo Yamada, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan will lead the Japanese side.

During consultations, both sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, including political, trade, economic, connectivity, science & technology, cultural and people-to-people relations - in order to strengthen the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Japan.

These consultations will foster closer cooperation for the mutual benefit of the people of Pakistan and Japan.

Pak-Kazakh BPC in Astana to review entire spectrum of bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Second Round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan on June 26 in which the two sides would review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations.

Additional Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia) Syed Ahsan Raza Shah will lead Pakistan side while Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kanat Tumstey will lead the Kazakh side, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Sunday.

"During consultations both sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations in political, trade, economic, connectivity, science & technology, cultural and people to people relations to strengthen the deep-rooted fraternal ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan with a view to foster closer cooperation for the mutual benefit of their people," the spokesperson added. The inaugural session of the BPC between Pakistan and Kazakhstan was held on February 28, 2020 in Islamabad.



HYDERABAD: Employees of Bayer Healthcare Pakistan are holding protest demonstration against forced resignations, at Hyderabad press club.

NA approves 15 excess demands for grants for FY 2021-22

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Sunday approved 15 excess demands for grants for the fiscal year 2021-22 after voice voting in the House.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar presented these supplementary demands for grants which were approved after voting.

The demands were in respect of the Intelligence Bureau; Airports Security Force; Pakistan Post Office Department; Federal Government Educational Institutions in Cantonments and Garisons; Defence Services; Housing and Works division; other expenditure of Interior division, Combined Civil Armed Forces; Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan division; Law and Justice Division, National Accountability Bureau; Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development division; Planning, Development and Special Initiatives division; States and Frontier Regions division and Federal miscellaneous Investments & other Loans and Advances.

He said the lesson he (Imran Khan) imparted to his party activists, and the planning he done, resulted in attacks on memorials of martyrs and military installations and the defense assets, saying that political workers were incited by their leader to attack the state and its institutions.

Kh Asif said what happened on May 9, no one should doubt that its mastermind, planner and its creator was the PTI chairman alone. He said that during the last 14 months, this person (Imran Khan) did not even once ask to meet or sit down with politicians to solve the national problems. He only expressed his desire to talk to the military leadership.

Addressing a dinner reception, given in his honour by members of the Cantt Board Sialkot, he regretted that it was former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman who challenged the state writ and the state institutions. He said the state is like a mother to its citizens, but this person ended that relationship in lust for power.

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Govt contacts Interpol to bring back Ex-Chairman NAB, 2 others

ISLAMABAD (Online): Expanding the scope of investigation in "Broadsheet Case" federal govt has contacted Interpol to bring back three people including former chairman NAB Naveed Hassan.

These people are alleged of \$28 million illegal payment.

Scope of investigation of broadsheet case was expanded after the approval of federal cabinet. Letter has been written to Interpol regard hand over former Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and two other people.

Federal government will bring back these people via Interpol.

NAB's former position holder woman is also wanted in this case.

Federal Investigation Agency will carry this case to logical conclusion.

Only Imran responsible for all May 9 tragic incidents: Kh Asif

SIALKOT (APP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the mastermind, planner and inventor of the May-9 incident was only Imran Khan.

Addressing a dinner reception, given in his honour by members of the Cantt Board Sialkot, he regretted that it was former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman who challenged the state writ and the state institutions. He said the state is like a mother to its citizens, but this person ended that relationship in lust for power.

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Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, the minister emphasized the need to ascertain the desires of the people of FATA through a referendum.

Minister Mehmood highlighted that although progress has been observed in the FATA areas, it is crucial to obtain firsthand information about the issues faced by the local population.

He urged government officials to personally visit the area and assess the ground realities to gain a comprehensive understanding.

Regarding the ongoing discussions about appointments within Pakistan Post, the minister clarified that the matter is currently under review by the committee.

He assured the House that details of the findings will be shared once the committee concludes its deliberations.

He emphasized the need to avoid exploiting this issue for political gain and highlighted discrepancies in the appointment of division personnel.



KARACHI: Members of Sindh Health Employees Action Committee are holding protest demonstration against Babar Awan, outside Jang Press in Karachi.

Talha personally pays 14,350 Saudi Riyals for Hajj expenses

MAKKAH MUKARMA (APP): Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Talha Mahmood has personally covered the expenses for his visits to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.

"Talha Mahmood, personally paid an amount of 14,350 Saudi riyals to the Accounts Officer at Pakistan House from his own expenses," said the spokesman Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony in a statement.

Giving details of the expenses he said an amount of 10,000 riyals was allocated for accommodation, while transportation expenses accounted for 4,200 riyals in Makkah and 150 riyals in Madinah.

The minister under the official Hajj scheme of the government, is currently in Makkah for Hajj.

Personally, he has covered the costs of the additional expenses.

As an ordinary pilgrim, Talha Mahmood personally finances all the expenses. The minister explicitly stated that he will neither engage in nor permit free Hajj.

If Europe can unite why can't Asia region as it's now or never: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) and Convener National SDGs taskforce Romina Khurshid Alam has said that if Europe can unite why can't Asia region. It's now or it's never as Asia is facing multifaceted challenges like climate change.

"We need to not only strengthen rather stand with each other," the SAPM underlined.

She was speaking as Chief Guest at an international dialogue jointly hosted by the Asian Institute of Eco-Civilization R & D, Schiller Institute USA/Germany and BRIX Institute, Sweden organised International Forum on Xinjiang Modernisation from Global Perspective held here.

SAPM, Romina Khurshid Alam in her remarks said the friendship between China and Pakistan is very close to the heart of every Pakistani. "China believes in peace and practically demonstrated it as it has been visible in Saudi-Iran ties, Afghanistan and for Pakistan China always supported and stood beside in testing times," she added.

Romina said China always come up with sustainable solutions to every crisis in the world which was very important. "It's high time for each one of us to more talk about the capacity build-up and knowledge sharing that will help exchange best practices for resolving pressing issues."

The SAPM mentioned that economic development was the only solution to all Asian countries and it was the need for the region to come up with a consortium.

Asad Mehmood calls for review of FATA merger

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communication, Asad Mehmood, on Sunday urged the government to thoroughly review the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in light of the ongoing challenges faced by the region.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, the minister emphasized the need to ascertain the desires of the people of FATA through a referendum.

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Post has successfully overcome financial deficits and received international recognition for its accomplishments.

Minister Mehmood also emphasized the expansion of road networks and motorways throughout the country, resulting in improved connectivity for the citizens.

The Minister revealed that approximately 50 new projects have been included in the current Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), showcasing the government's commitment to national development.

He said that if it is proven that an individual from one division has been appointed to another division, as claimed by a Member of the National Assembly, he would resign from his position.

Proudly highlighting the achievements of the Pakistan Post, the minister emphasized the organization's remarkable progress under the diligent efforts of its officers.

Notably, Pakistan Post has successfully overcome financial deficits and received international recognition for its accomplishments.

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HYDERABAD: Basic Human Rights Organization Leader, Advocate Sibat-ul-Hassan addresses to media persons during press conference, at Hyderabad press club.

27-men AJK Cabinet sworn in

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Newly-appointed 27-member Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet sworn in on Thursday.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultana Mahmood Chaudhry administered oath to the newly inducted ministers at a special ceremony held in the State metropolis.

The oath taking ceremony, hosted at the New Prime Minister's House, was attended, among others, by Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, Speaker Legislative Assembly Javed Ayub, Sardar Amir Altaf, Azhar Sadiq, Nisar Ansar Abadali, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Muhammad Akmal Sargala, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Faheem Akhtar Rabani, Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Javed Butt, Muhammad Asim Sharif, Chaudhry Amir Yasin, Qasim Majeed, and Zia Qamar.



BERLIN: Safer Abid of Pakistan posing for photograph who won the gold medal in the 10km Time-Trial Race of the cycling event of the 16th Special Olympic World Games.

economic and bilateral ties with China, he said.

Afghan Minister said, "China's role in bringing peace to KSA and Iran is remarkable. It's also significant in bringing peace and stability to Central Asian Republics." Many countries are interested to use the Chinese model of economic development, he added.

China has not interfered in the internal affairs of the Afghan people and contributed to the economic development of Afghanistan, he said, adding, "Good economic relations between the two countries of China and Afghanistan can benefit both the nations as Chinese can invest in road development, mining, culture and education sectors. "Afghanistan will not allow any attempt to harm China's interest in Afghanistan.

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The foreign policy of the Chinese government respects the integrity of all the countries that's why many countries are more interested in establishing global peace and security provided multiple solutions to nations for better growth, improved peace and stability.

In his welcome address, the Deputy Minister of Economy Afghanistan, Dr Abdul Latif Nazari said China's role is beneficial for the entire region as its role has been to prevent the destruction of global peace through its strategic development design established to avoid conflict, ensure cooperation and mutually beneficial development. Nazari underlined that China wanted to unite all regional organisations like Africa Union, ASEAN and Arab League.

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