

# Independent

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## PM says: Political stability, key to economic strength, development, prosperity

Government had met all the conditions of the IMF and hoped that the programme would resume anytime very soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that political stability was highly important to achieve economic strength, attract investment, and ensure development and prosperity in the country. "Until there is no political stability, there would not be any economic stability as both are inter-linked with each other," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the rehabilitation and widening of the Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road (previously known as IJ Principal Road).

Shehbaz Sharif said in a situation where there was political instability in the country, the political opponents were hatching

conspiracies everywhere, spreading false propaganda and misleading the nation; nobody would be ready to invest in the country.

Putting the responsibility of current economic crisis on the previous government, the prime minister said it breached its own agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) due to which the confidence of the Fund in Pakistan shattered and it was now hesitant to resume its agreement.

However, he said the current government had met all the conditions of the IMF and hoped that the programme would resume anytime very soon. PM Shehbaz resolved

that "under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, we all together would bring the country out of all crises and make it a stable and developed Pakistan."

He said the previous government had ignored development projects and the progress on reconstruction of IIP Road was also going on at a snail's pace. However, he said current government made it possible to complete it in the stipulated time.

Appreciating the team responsible for the project to complete it on time, the prime minister said the project, previously known as IJ Principal Road, had now been named after Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haidar).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates 7th Avenue Interchange on Srinagar Highway.

## Hopes Governor to limit security measures as well: CM writes official memo to CS on security measures during VVIP movement

Bizenjo calls for using alternative means of security monitoring during VVIP movement; directs to make security arrangements appropriate during movement of ministers, members assembly, CS and IGP

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has directed the Chief Secretary to use alternative means of security monitoring during the VVIP movement. He also directed to make the security arrangements during the movement of provincial ministers, members of assembly, Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police appropriate so as to ensure smooth flow of traffic and the general public is not suffered. He has also expressed the hope that the Governor Balochistan would also

limit the security arrangements during his movement in view of the public interest. This and similar other directives and observances made by the Chief Minister in an official memo to the Chief Secretary, Abdul Aziz Uqaili.

In his official letter, the Chief Minister observed that extra arrangements of security are made during the VVIP movement. Not only the traffic is affected due to the additional security arrangements, but the citizens also face hardships, he observed adding that it is often seen that during VVIP move-

ment, ambulances and fire brigade vehicles are also struck in rush during the VVIP movement.

It was mentioned that the Chief Minister has already limited the security arrangements during his movement. And it is hoped that the Governor would also limit the security arrangements during his movement.

It was directed to the Chief Secretary to issue necessary directives to all the concerned departments in this regard stressing that public convenience must be upheld during the VVIP movement anyway.

## Ahsan Iqbal says 18 mega uplift projects completed in Gwadar in record three months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the consistent efforts of the federal government, fruition of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects can be seen as from 2022-till date around 637,124 metric ton of cargoes landed at the deep seaport of Gwadar which is manifold high compared to 166,207 metric tons arrived during 2018-2021.

This was disclosed by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday while chairing a meeting to review progress of projects in Gwadar, a news release said issued here on Wednesday.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the officials of all the relevant ministries, provincial representatives of Balochistan and Chairman Gwadar Port Authority (GPA). Maritime Affairs Advisor (Planning Commission)

Jawad Akhtar Khokhar gave a detailed presentation over the projects.

The meeting noted that since the incumbent government came into power in April 2022, the CEPC has been revived which remained neglected during the tenure of the previous government.

All major projects under CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, Distribution of 2000 Boat engines to fishermen of Gwadar, Khuzdar-Panjgur Transmission line (via Nag-Basima) which connect Markran with National Grid, New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China-Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project, Gwadar Free Zone, and Gwadar Port would become a shining pearl in the region.

## JCP recommends elevation of PHC Chief Justice as SC judge

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Wednesday unanimously approved the nomination of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Musarrat Hilali as judge Supreme Court of Pakistan.

A meeting of the JCP was held here under the chairmanship of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial to consider the elevation of Justice Musarrat Hilali to the apex court. Justice Hilali's name would now be sent to the Parliamentary Committee on Judges Appointment for approval.

The JCP is responsible for approving the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and five high courts of the country. The chief justice of Pakistan also heads the commission as its chairman.

The body comprises four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, a former judge, federal law minister, the attorney general for Pakistan and a senior advocate nominated by the Pakistan Bar Council.

The provincial and Islamabad bar councils each nominate a representative as a JCP member.

According to Article 175-A of the constitution, the JCP, after confirmation, will propose the names to parliamentary committees for appointment of judges in superior courts.

## BHC refrains GoB from providing official vehicles on ownership basis to ministers, MPs, others

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has refrained the Government of Balochistan from providing and allotting official vehicles on ownership basis to the provincial ministers, members of provincial assembly, opposition leader, Deputy Speaker, chairman of the standing committees, Advisors to the Chief Minister and parliamentary secretaries.

The order was passed by the division bench headed by the Chief Justice BHC, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan on a constitutional petition here on Wednesday.

The petitioner Bayazid Khan Kharotih had challenged the allotment / providing official vehicles on ownership basis to the provincial ministers, members of provincial assembly and other government functionaries.

The ground in the petition was that same would be an unnecessary burden on the public exchequer and will also cause inconvenience to the future incumbents.

The court issued notice to the Secretary Balochistan provincial assembly, Chief Secretary, Secretary S&GAD as well as to the learned AAG.

In the meantime, the Secretary Balochistan Assembly, Chief Secretary and Secretary S&GAD were restrained from further proceedings with the plan for providing official vehicles on ownership basis till the next date of hearing, June 22, 2023.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chairman Balochistan Public Service Commission Abdul Salik Khan meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Biparjoy cyclone may hit Ketu Bandar at 1100 hours today

PM directs relocation of over 50,000 people from coastal areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said the very severe cyclonic storm BIPARJOY of Category-3 landfall was predicted to take place at around 1100 hours on Thursday which was earlier forecast in the evening of June 15th due to the evolving nature of the cyclone.

Addressing a joint news conference flanked by Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, the federal minister for climate change briefed the media persons on the latest situation of the Tropical Cyclone BIPARJOY.

Senator Rehman said the intensity of the cyclone

was to increase amid nearing the shore of Ketu Bandar and Indian Gujarat while embracing its landfall. "We are trying to evacuate masses to safer places and it's the only remedy related to cyclones in the world. The accompanied activities along with the cyclone can put people's lives at risk," she added.

The Minister added that it was the second media briefing at the NDMA and was aimed at providing important updates to the masses through the media.

BIPARJOY, she said had achieved the intensity of a very severe cyclonic storm of Category-3 which was massive after the cyclone that hit the country's coastline after 1999.

"The radius of the cy-

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman briefs media persons about Cyclone Biparjoy during a press conference at NDMA.

## Langu praises CM's role for filling vacant posts in week

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langu on Wednesday appreciated the orders of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo to fill the vacant posts within a week by the concerned secretaries.

He said that the Chief Minister had represented the people of the province in a powerful way, while the biggest problem of the people of Balochistan was unemployment. The people of Balochistan must be given jobs so that they could serve the nation, he said. He said that we were determined and the government had also decided that no concessions would be made on the delay of em-

ployees and in this context, no interruption would be tolerated in the employment issue.

More employment will be provided to the people before the tenure of the existing government ends, he noted.

Meanwhile, the provincial home minister praised the good initiative of the Chief Minister and said that the removal of the ban on the sale of Iranian petrol by the Chief Minister was a very good move.

Mir Ziaullah Langu directed the administration to follow the instructions of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and open the Iranian petrol business for the interest of local people.

## PM arrives in Baku on two-day official visit

BAKU (APP): At the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday arrived here on a two-day official visit to Azerbaijan.

Upon his arrival, the prime minister was warmly welcomed by First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Yagub Eyubov, Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

It is the maiden visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Azerbaijan after assuming his office.

## Shell Petroleum to sell stake in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Shell Pakistan said on Wednesday that parent Shell had notified it of the group's intent to sell its shareholding in the business.

Shell Petroleum Company (SPCo), the immediate parent company, owns 77 per cent of the local operations, which suffered losses in 2022 due to exchange rates, the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting to review the progress of projects in Gwadar.

## Cyclone bipolar threat & precautions: Transport service suspended on Karachi route & coastal highway till June 17

### Independent Report

QUETTA: In view of the cyclone bipolar threat, the Provincial Transport Department has banned the movement of all kind of transports on Karachi route from Quetta and different other parts of the province.

All kind of transport service including buses, coaches, mazda and mini buses have been suspended from Quetta to Karachi, Khuzdar to Karachi, Bela to Karachi, Chaman to Karachi, Pishin to Karachi from June 15 to 17, 2023.

According to an announcement made by the Secretary Provincial Transport Authority on

Wednesday, there are chances of cyclone, heavy rains and storm following the bipolar joy. Therefore, all the transporters and owners of other vehicles have been directed to avoid plying the public transport in the given dates so that no financial and human loss is caused to them.

It was also warned that strict legal action would be taken against those violating the orders in this regard. This includes the impounding of the vehicle and cancellation and suspension of the route permits. In this regard, no regret would be accepted, it was further announced.

## Four terrorists killed in encounter at Pak-Afghan Border: CTD

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has claimed to have killed four terrorists in an operation at Pak-Afghan border, Chaman on Wednesday. According to the spokesman of CTD, the terrorists were gunned down during an exchange of fire took place at the Pak-Afghan border.

During the course of operation, weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists, the spokesman CTD maintained. According to the spokesman, the terrorists were involved in the target killing of police and facilitators of the miscreants accused in attack at the camp of security forces in Killa Saifullah.

## WB approves \$200 million aid for Pakistan

WASHINGTON (Online): World Bank (WB) Executive Board has accorded approval to provide aid of 200 million dollars to Pakistan.

This aid will be spent in rehabilitation works in flood affected areas in KP.

## Opposition leaders & MPs voice concern over non-completion & slow pace of work of projects

CM directed to remove all hurdles coming in way of smooth completion of development projects, says Imran Gichki

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The leader of Opposition in Balochistan Assembly, Malik Sikandar Khan Advocate and other members of the assembly have expressed deep concern over non-completion of the development

projects and slow pace of work on certain other schemes of the energy and water supply sectors in their respective election constituencies.

They have urged the concerned high ups to expedite the pace of work on the development schemes.

They were in attendance at the meeting with the concerned high ups of the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), WASA and other concerned high ups.

The MPs who were present in the meeting were included: Malik Naseer

Ahmed Shahwani, Akhtar Hussain Langove, Mir Akbar Mengal, Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, Mir Zahid Reki and Mir Younas Aziz Zehri.

The high ups in attendance were: Principal Sec-

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: On the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan, Opposition leader Malik Sikandar Advocate, MPs, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Imran Gichki and others attending to review issues regarding QESCO and PHE and their solution



Babar Azam tops major batting chart in ICC WTC

Sports Desk LAHORE: Babar faced tough competition from some of the world's finest batters, but his remarkable performance throughout the championship pushed him forward on the charts. In a closely contested race of skills, Pakistan's skipper, Babar Azam, rose as the standout batter in the recently concluded World Test Championship (WTC) 2021-2023.

Cases in military courts to be proceeded as per int'l conventions: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said cases in military courts would be proceeded in accordance with the international conventions. Talking to journalists here at the Supreme Court, the minister said the accused would have the right for a fair trial in military court.



QUETTA: Different delegations meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Biparjoy cyclone may....

Continued from page 1 clone appears to be greater than the previous one of 1999," the minister said. Senator Rehman added that there was confusion prevailing among the masses whereas the government would like to give this assurance to the masses that Pakistan Army, Rangers, Five Corps, district administrations, provincial and district disaster management authorities (PDMA and DDMA respectively) and others were working together whereas the NDMA was leading the coordinated effort.



BAKU: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Baku on a two-day official visit to Azerbaijan. First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Yagub Eyubov, Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee received the Prime Minister the airport

Shell Petroleum... Continued from page 1

pee, and overdue receivables. "...the Board of Directors of Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL), in a meeting of its board held on June 14, 2023, have been notified by SPCo of its intent to sell its shareholding in SPL." SPL said in a notice to the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

Shahbaz believes more funds needed to put hockey back on track

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former skipper Olympian Shahbaz Ahmed Snr on Wednesday lauded the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) for issuing a special grant to the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for ensuring Pakistan team's participation in the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy but proposed that more funds should be injected on a yearly basis to put the national game back on track.

IHC issues contempt of court notice to Agha Hassan Baloch

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued show cause notice of contempt of court to federal minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch. The case against appointment of acting DG Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Ghulam Farooq came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by Justice Babar Sattar Wednesday.

Opposition leaders & MPs....

Continued from page 1 retary to Chief Minister, Imran Gichki, Chief Executive Officer of QESCO, Abdul Karim Jamali, MD WASA, Hamid Latif Rana besides other high ups.

Sultan expresses concern over fast deteriorating situation in IIOJK

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has expressed grave concern over the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, a statement issued here on Wednesday said.

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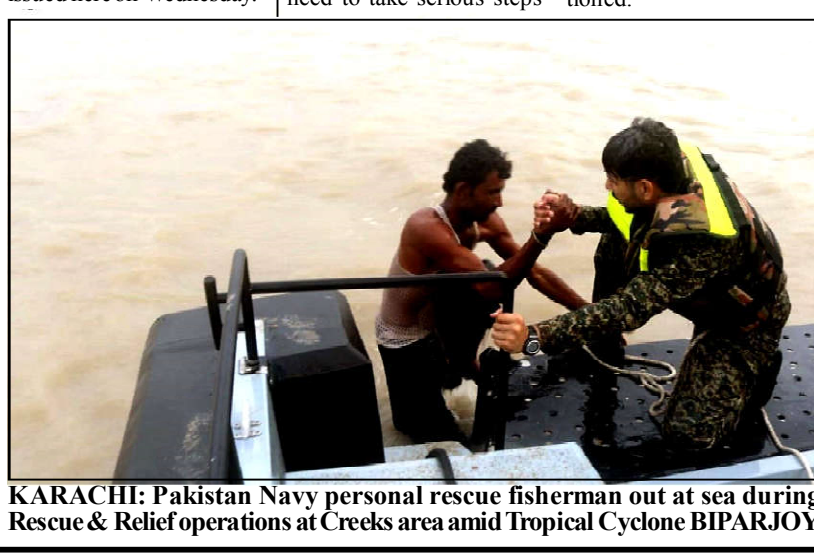
Table with 5 columns: Sl# Name, CNIC, DISTRICT, AMOUNT/CLASS. Lists names and details for various classes and amounts.

NDMA conducts National Monsoon Coordination Conference with key stakeholders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik has presided National Monsoon Coordination Conference and outlined discussion areas for the conference.

Opposition leaders & MPs....

Continued from page 1 for resolving the related issues. They on the occasion presented list of the development schemes urging the concerned authorities to take necessary measures for accelerating works on them.



KARACHI: Pakistan Navy personal rescue fisherman out at sea during Rescue & Relief operations at Creeks area amid Tropical Cyclone BIPARJOY



## May 9 rioters being dealt as per country's constitution and laws: HR Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): He expressed concerns about the defamation of Pakistan by its adversaries through social media. The minister stressed that Pakistan was fully aware of the challenges faced by minority groups.

Speaking here in National Assembly, the minister defended Pakistan's stance on human rights, stating that no one should deliver lecture to the country on this matter. He emphasized that Pakistan was effectively dealing with the attackers from the May 9 incident in accordance with the country's constitution and laws.

Furthermore, he highlighted that the National Commission for Human Rights had not received any complaints regarding the mistreatment of women in prisons.

He expressed concerns about the defamation of Pakistan by its adversaries through social media. The minister stressed that Pakistan was fully aware of the challenges faced by minority groups.

He accused the neighboring country of interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and fueling religious animosity. The minister noted a decrease in targeted sectarian killings in Quetta following the arrest of Kulbhushan, indicating a potential connection.

Addressing historical events, Riaz Hussain Pirzada alleged that India had deliberately sparked the fire in Karachi during Pakistan's creation when the resolution about Kashmir was moved in the United Nations Security Council.

He asserted that the people of Pakistan including the minority commu-

nity have their high values and traditions that should be respected, including the celebration of Eid, Diwali and Holi.

The minister strongly refuted the accusation of disrespecting women in prisons, categorically stating that such incidents have never occurred. He said that courts should hear the cases of common people instead of adopting the practice of closing doors during court proceedings. As a commitment to justice, the Ministry of Human Rights will bear the fees associated with minor crimes cases, he said and affirmed that helping the poor was not just a duty but a solemn oath the government has taken.

As part of efforts to support the minority community, Minister Pirzada announced that funds would be provided through the Benazir Income Support Program.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif laid the foundation stone of the construction of 11th Avenue.

## Ahsan for empowering local governments to achieve SDGs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning and Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to allocating substantial funds for infrastructure development, education, environmental conservation, social development, and other key areas.

Addressing the 'National Conference on Empowered Local Governments—Moving Forward to Accelerate the Implementation of SDGs Agenda 2030', the minister highlighted the government's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and emphasized the need for a comprehensive roadmap

for addressing the country's development needs while maximizing the value of limited public resources.

The conference provided a platform for discussions and deliberations on strengthening local governance and advancing sustainable development.

The event brought together government representatives, civil society organizations and international partners to work collectively towards achieving the SDGs.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister stressed the importance of collaboration, partnership and coordination with all stakeholders, particularly at the local level, to effectively

work towards SDGs' implementation and realization.

He acknowledged the significant role of local governments in achieving sustainable development and called for empowering them through decentralization. He emphasized that local governments should be given the necessary functions and powers to address public problems, promote democracy and ensure effective governance.

The minister urged all stakeholders to advocate for empowering local governments to strengthen the democratic system in the country to achieve social prosperity and sustainable economic development.

## Sherry informs NA Effective tracking of Biparjoy continues with all safety measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Sherry Rehman on Wednesday informed the National Assembly the government was ensuring effective monitoring of the tropical cyclone Biparjoy, moving with full intensity and likely to hit the coastline of Pakistan and India on Thursday.

"All tracking institutions of Pakistan including PMD and Suparco are working round the clock with international satellites, especially of Bangkok, as it is inching towards Pakistan and India's coastline with intensity. Tomorrow it is expected if it remains as per the expected trajectory, which stood correct so far," she said while briefing the House about the cyclone's movement and the precautionary measures taken by the government.

She said it could affect the coastal areas of Karachi with landfalls and gusty winds, and going away from Balochistan its 'intense hit' was expected at the KT Bundar Khaas. "Currently it is moving at the speed of around 140-50 kilometer per hour. Its center has much speed and density."

The minister said the Sindh government had timely issued the advisory well before the time, following which voluntary and mandatory areas were being evacuated as per safety measures, which had almost been completed.

"Now it's (cyclone) all focus is in Sindh, however, parts of Balochistan will also be affected but with gusty winds and rains. There will be its brunt in Badin, Thatta, Sajawal and Malir areas of Sindh."

Sherry Rehman said the Sindh government has so far set up around 75 relief camps and evacuated more than 62,000 people at safer places where clean drinking water, food and medical facilities were being ensured.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani visits PIMS Hospital OPD.

## Govt to complete its tenure: Sharmila

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party Senior Leader Sharmila Faruqi Wednesday said that the current government would complete its tenure and elections would be held on schedule. Talking to PTV news channel, she said that the former PTI government destroyed the country's economy and we were now suffering what it sowed in four years.

She said that economic stability was not possible in a country without political stability. The aim of the Paki-

stan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership was to stay in government only by violating the constitution and attacking state institutions.

She also hailed that the budget 2023-24 presented by the incumbent government can be considered a balanced one.

The government has set some long-term plans for the economic revival, she said, adding, the need of the hour was to improve trade relations with neighbour countries where Bilawal Bhutto plays an important role.

## Thrilling 3-day sports event for law enforcers ends

ISLAMABAD: A three-day sports event aimed at showcasing the spirit of sportsmanship among law enforcement agencies came to a successful close at the Police Headquarters in Islamabad. The event witnessed tough competition and camaraderie among teams representing various organizations.

The concluding ceremony, graced by the presence of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Capital City Police Officer, acknowledged the exceptional efforts exhibited by the participating teams throughout the tournament.

The event saw the active involvement of teams from Islamabad Capital Police, National Highways Authority, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Frontier Constabulary, and the Ministry of Interior, who enthusiastically competed in volleyball, football, and cricket matches.

In a thrilling finale, CDA clashed with the Frontier Constabulary, resulting in an exhilarating showdown. Ultimately, the Frontier Constabulary emerged as the victors, showcasing their exceptional skills and teamwork.

## Patron in Chief of Pakistan Sweet Homes Zamarud Khan addressing during a seminar on World Blood Donor Day at PIMS Hospital.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting on SDGs Goal ZERO HUNGER - Food Security and Nutrition.

## Benazir Kafaalat program to cover 9.3 million families in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (INP): As many as 9.3 million families will be provided quarterly assistance of Rs. 8,750 under the Benazir Kafaalat Programme during the Fiscal Year 2023-24.

The Benazir Kafaalat scheme is being executed by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which is a flagship programme of the present government.

According to an official source, the quarterly stipend of the Benazir Kafalat programme has been increased from Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 8,750. While the amount will be increased further considering the inflation rate.

Similarly, the number of beneficiaries has increased from 7.6 million in the past year to 9.3 million families in the coming year.

A total of Rs. 364 billion has been allocated for the Kafaalat programme which is aimed at financially empowering women by providing them with financial assistance.

The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) programme also known as the "Benazir Kafaalat Programme" is the core programme of BISP and was initiated in the year 2008.

Since its inception, the Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer programme in Pakistan's history.

The short-term objective of the programme was to cushion against the negative effects of slow economic growth, food crisis and inflation on the poor, particularly women.

## Water inflow in major rivers jump to 295,700 cusecs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water inflow in all major rivers has significantly increased due to the surge in temperature and Wednesday it stood at 295,700 cusecs against the outflow of 226,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), water inflow in the River Indus at Tarbela has jumped to 129,200 cusecs against the outflow of 85,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1441.82 feet and was 43.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet.

Similarly, water inflow in River Jhelum at Mangla dam was recorded as 57,900 cusecs against the outflow of 33,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1140.70 feet, which was 90.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

## IHC adjourns PTI chief's appeal against Toshakhana trial

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of a petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq against the Toshakhana criminal case by the trial court and shifting it to another one, till Thursday.

IHC's Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by the former prime minister.

At the outset of hearing, the petitioner's counsel Khawaja Harris argued that the trial court judge had not recorded the objections raised by the defence, observing that the court would view the same at the time of recording the evidence.

Harris said the complaint in the Toshakhana case was not lodged by the competent authority as the complainant could not show any authority letter of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in that regard.

## Malik pledges to serve nation as SAPM Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jawad Sohrab Malik expressed his unwavering resolve to do his utmost to serve the nation in his new capacity as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior.

In a tweet, he said, "May Allah Almighty help me to serve the nation with humility and righteousness." He also expressed gratitude for the privilege and honor of serving the people, vowing to earn their confidence through dedicated efforts.

SAPM on Interior, Jawad Sohrab Malik, a London-qualified lawyer, earned his law degree from the University of Cardiff before shifting his focus

entirely to his business ventures. His primary goal was to modernize and bring innovation to the industry.

Hailing from a prominent and esteemed business and political family in Pakistan, Sohrab Malik is the nephew of Mohammed Mian Soomro. Soomro has held various significant positions in the country, including Governor of Sindh, Chairman of the Senate, Prime Minister and President of Pakistan, as well as Minister for Privatization. Through his philanthropic organization, the Sohrab Foundation, Jawad Malik has dedicated himself to serving the nation by providing relief to the most vulnerable segments.

## IHC summons Fawad, his guarantor

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday summoned former federal minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and his guarantor in person in a case regarding inciting public against the state institutions.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the case wherein Fawad did not appear before the court despite summon notices.

The court was told that the summon notice to Fawad Chaudhry could not be executed. The court instructed the staff to serve the notices at both addresses of Fawad in Lahore and Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Seemee Zedi, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and members of the committee are being briefed during their visit to Farash Town, Islamabad managed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Australian Aid.

## DG urges stakeholders to come forward for balanced population growth

ISLAMABAD (INP): Director General (DG) of the Population Programme Wing Dr Sabina Durrani on Wednesday urged all the stakeholders of society to come forward and contribute to sensitizing the public about the negative implications of overpopulation which was not only affecting human health but also burdening the economy of the country for achieving a balanced population

growth. Talking to the PTV news channel, she expressed her serious concern about overpopulation and said, "Population growth is a looming crisis in Pakistan now which is growing day by day and we are facing the impacts of population growth in all walks of life."

"The stakeholders of the society should collectively work for effective long-term policies to control the population."

## Lawyer ends cross-exam in Sara Inam case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The defence lawyer in Sara Inam murder case on Wednesday concluded his cross-examination with two prosecution witnesses before the trial court.

District and Session Judge Ata Rabbani heard the case with regard to murder of a Canadian national by her husband Shahnawaz Amir. Defence lawyer Basharratullah Advocate, during the hearing, conducted cross examination with prosecution witnesses.

## SSP Operations/ Investigation Securing the life and property of citizens is utmost priority

ISLAMABAD: SSP Operations/ Investigation Malik Jameel Zafar chaired a meeting and reviewed the performance of the Investigation units. He directed



the officers to further improve their performance and expedite the disposal of cases, a police public relation officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the SSP Operations/ Investigations chaired a meeting with the officers of Homicide Investigation Unit (HIU), Incharge police stations Saddar Zone and reviewed the performance of all the units and issued instructions to the officers to further improve the perfor-

manances. Speaking on the occasion, the SSP Operations/ Investigation warned the officers that no laxity towards the safety and security of citizens would be

tolerated and strict disciplinary action would be initiated against officials showing negligence towards their official duty. He further directed all officers to arrest offenders involved in heinous crimes, especially those involved in murder and dacoity cases and increase the ratio of challan of cases and recoveries.

The SSP Operations/ Investigation asked police officials to accomplish all their responsibilities in a professional manner. He also directed the concerned officials to submit challans of pending cases.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik presiding over National Monsoon Preparation conference-2023.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Thursday June 15, 2023

**Tedious declarations**

Monday's National Assembly session was not the civilian leadership's finest hour. In fact, the proceedings inside the house of representatives offered ample evidence of why the political class in general is held in such contempt, and why the public so readily embraces narratives that undermine democracy. The session was the first one after the federal budget had been presented, an occasion normally used to debate the various proposals in this critical financial plan. Certainly, there have been times when such a discussion has been reduced to a formality — that was the case last year, for example, when there was only a lame-duck opposition in the Lower House following the PTI legislators' en masse resignations. This year too, despite the dire economic crisis engulfing Pakistan, only two lawmakers took part in the budget debate. Instead of proving themselves even halfway equal to the job they have been elected for, almost all the lawmakers present devoted their energies elsewhere, making clear their disconnect with the bread-and-butter issues that affect the general public.

And so, reducing the budget to a footnote, the Lower House proceeded to adopt a resolution calling upon the government to immediately initiate proceedings under the Pakistan Army Act against those involved in vandalism of military installations on May 9. Moved by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, the resolution does not name Imran Khan or his party, the PTI, but says there was evidence proving the involvement of "a political party and its chief" in the violent protest "which caused irreparable loss to the state and its institutions". No one can disagree on the need for those involved in the disturbances that day to be brought to justice. But for the minister to use his position and the occasion to vociferously make the demand for such accountability, that too in non-civilian forums, appears unnecessary and out of proportion. Mr Asif, however, is not alone. It is a manifestation of the politicians' skewed priorities — arguably even more pronounced in the wake of the events of May 9 — that many politicians tend towards such exaggerated gestures to demonstrate their allegiance to the security arm of the state. The civilian leadership must get its act together, work to strengthen democratic institutions, and set its priorities straight. That is a more reliable way to ensure political survival, rather than tedious and fulsome proclamations repeated ad nauseam.

**Zahid Hussain**

While boasting that the country has not defaulted, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar revealed that the government was negotiating the restructuring of external debts. This leaves us wondering about his chest-thumping claim that Pakistan is not insolvent. As expected, Dar's budgetary speech was full of bluster. The country is marching on the path of progress, he claimed. He presented a populist budget during one of the most serious economic crises the country has ever faced. The budget did not reflect the impending economic collapse. In a post-budgetary TV interview, he attributed the IMF's tough stance to geopolitics. He is still not willing to admit his own follies, which have widened the trust deficit with the lending agency.

Most economists agree that the expansionary budget, with no indication of tightening the belt, would make it much more difficult to get the IMF loan released. It's a budget presented by a government which has barely two months of constitutional life left. But Dar is still living in cloud cuckoo land. His belief in a voodoo economy seems unshakable, pushing the country to the brink.

He huffed and puffed over a recent remark made by renowned economist and Princeton professor Atif Mian who compared the prevailing Pakistani situation to that in Sri Lanka and Ghana, two countries that defaulted. One wonders what the rescheduling of debt repayment really means. We may not have formally defaulted but are certainly close to it. The real issue is whether we are prepared to tackle the tough times ahead. It becomes harder when one is not even willing to accept the reality.

We have several examples of countries which have faced similar or even worse financial crises but were able to turn their predicament into an opportunity by first accepting the

reality and then taking tough reform measures to completely turn around their faltering economies. For instance, India dealt with a dire situation in 1991 when the country was only weeks away from defaulting on its external balance-of-payments commitments, with its foreign exchange reserves falling to less than \$1.2 billion.

Its plight worsened, with the IMF suspending its loan programme. The World Bank also discontinued its assistance. To avoid defaulting, the government took various steps, including pledging a substantial portion of its gold reserves to the Bank of England and the Union Bank of Switzerland as collateral so that it could secure foreign exchange to meet its debt obligations.

It's worth remembering the budget speech made by India's then finance minister Manmohan Singh in 1991: "I do not minimise the difficulties that lie ahead in the long and arduous journey on which we have embarked. But as Victor Hugo once said, 'no power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come'."

While warning about the challenges ahead, he also

sounded confident about turning around the Indian economy with tough but necessary reform measures. India never looked back from there and the reforms undertaken by the then Indian government ultimately led to its emergence as the world's third largest economy. The continuity of policy, despite a change of government, has also been critical to India's march forward. We, too, could have turned the present crisis into an opportunity. But it is not going to happen. Unfortunately, the government neither has the will nor the capacity to undertake the tough reform measures required to stabilise the economy and prevent the country from defaulting. While India brought in a renowned economist to steer the country out of crisis, we have an accountant at the helm whose only credentials for the job is his being related to the powerful ruling family.

The country must contend with stagflation, with a rapidly falling economic growth rate and runaway inflation. Increasing unemployment has created very serious economic and social problems. Taking

hard decisions are avoided because of political reasons, thus jeopardising the country's future. Dar's boasting that the country has not defaulted exemplifies the farce that is being played out in the name of economic management.

While Dar may not be entirely responsible for the current state of the economy, his incompetent handling of the crisis has certainly contributed to its decline. Atif Mian has warned that the Pakistani economy is in a "tailspin, going from crisis to catastrophe and now the system is becoming unhinged".

In a recent series of tweets, Atif Mian, who was ranked by the IMF as one of the 25 top young economists in the world, aptly summed up the PDM government's mismanagement: "It removed CB [central bank] governor with no plan in mind, started infighting against its own FM [finance minister], and ultimately replaced him with a close relative of the PM — competence be damned," he wrote.

With the ongoing political chaos and reckless power game adding to the economic instability, there is

no logic to the budget's taking a populist approach. Moreover, there are also questions about the revenue targets set in the budget. Most economists agree that the targets are unrealistic. The juggling with figures, at which the finance minister is past master, will push the country deeper into the crisis. The country needs bold decisions, and not hollow rhetoric.

Dar says there is a Plan B ready to prevent default if the agreement with the IMF doesn't come through. Interestingly, no one even in government seems to know about this secret plan. The finance minister is mistaken if he thinks that he can get money from friendly countries. No country is willing to dole out free money.

Even if it happens, it will give the country only brief respite and would not resolve the basic structural problem needed to take the economy forward. It is apparent the government and particularly its finance minister have no idea of where the country is heading. People have lost confidence in the system and it is hard to restore it with hollow promises. Time is running out. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Who will protect the protectors?****Khawaja Khalid Farooq**

In the face of increasing threats posed by terrorism, bomb disposal units around the world play a critical role in ensuring public safety. Among these units, the Quetta Bomb Disposal Unit in Pakistan stands out for its exceptional leader the late 'Commander' Abdul Razzaq. However, it also highlights the perils that this critical part of law-enforcement and protection of citizens faces — death of resources and even basic protection and logistics.

Commander Razzaq exemplified the true spirit of a leader, fearlessly tackling life-threatening situations with composure and confidence. His unwavering commitment to the safety of his team and people was unparalleled. His skills and expertise played a pivotal

role in successfully neutralizing numerous explosive devices across Quetta and its surrounding areas. His ability to analyze complex bomb structures and implement precise disposal techniques saved countless lives and minimized the damage caused by terrorist acts.

Working mostly without basic protection like a bomb suit most times because of the dearth of equipment, Razzaq displayed unparalleled bravery and selflessness. It is said that he sometimes scoffed at wearing a suit as this hampered him from properly taking on the explosive devices planted.

On a fateful day in 2016, Razzaq received intelligence about a highly sophisticated explosive device planted by a terrorist group in a crowded market. Fully aware of the risks involved, Razzaq along with his team embarked on a perilous mission to neutralize the bomb and prevent a potential catastrophe. It is said that this device was planned specifically with the motive to target him, and when he reached the spot, it was detonated remotely, resulting in the 'shahadat' (martyrdom) of Razzaq and a colleague.

Fast forward to 2023, I am talking to bomb disposal unit (BDU) officials and an expert who had recently been undertaking an appraisal of capacity of such units, and I am flabbergasted. The original complement of Razzaq's highly trained team has dwindled; many have left, and some have embraced shahadat, following in his footsteps. The Quetta bomb disposal service, the ones who actually defuse bombs, are a minute number.

Bomb disposal duties are among the most critical and dangerous tasks performed by specialized personnel. The successful execution of these duties relies heavily on the availability and utilization of appropriate equipment. Bomb disposal has evolved significantly over the years, especially with the increased complexity and sophistication of explosive devices.

In the past, bomb disposal was often performed manually, relying on physical techniques and minimal equipment. However, as threats have become more intricate and dangerous, the need for specialized equipment has become para-

mount, and it is uncommon in the West to see BDUs without protective gear.

One of the primary reasons for the necessity of equipment in bomb disposal duties is to ensure the safety of the personnel involved. The equipment provides a layer of protection against potential threats, minimizing the risk to bomb disposal experts. Personal protective gear, such as bomb suits, helmets, and gloves, is designed to shield against shrapnel, shockwaves, and other hazards associated with explosive devices. Without these essential items, the lives of bomb disposal experts are unnecessarily endangered.

Unfortunately, this is common in our country, especially in Balochistan which faces the brunt of these terrorist-designed explosive devices. There are a few suits available, and sometimes they are available with the wrong department. BDUs — which actually undertake refusal duties at bomb sites — are un-equipped with bomb suits, which are lying in civil defence repositories and gathering dust.

Whether its inadequate resource allocation

or bad management or just sheer negligence, the impact is on the people in the front line like Razzaq. Even when suits are made available somehow for BDUs, IEDs crop up in some far-flung area of Balochistan to which the BDU specialists are rushed to, without logistics to transport heavy gear.

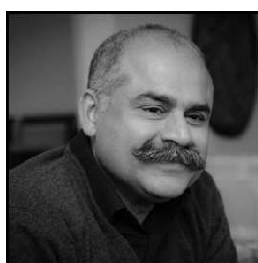
Another crucial aspect of bomb disposal duties is the accurate detection and identification of explosive devices. Advanced equipment such as bomb detectors, X-ray machines, and chemical analyzers plays a vital role in identifying potential threats and understanding their composition. These tools enable bomb disposal experts to gather crucial information without physically interacting with the explosive, reducing the risk of accidental detonation. Furthermore, technological advancements have led to the development of portable and handheld devices, making the detection process more efficient and convenient.

BDUs in Quetta struggle with antiquated equipment, lack of repair funds and expertise to repair malfunctioning equipment. Armed with the knowledge gained through

their experiences, they try to minimize the risks and carry on with whatever they have, but the risks with this approach are apparent.

In situations where the direct interaction with explosive devices is too risky, remote handling and disposal techniques become indispensable. Equipment such as bomb disposal robots and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) equipped with cameras, manipulator arms, and cutting tools allow experts to handle, neutralize, and dispose of bombs from a safe distance. This remote capability minimizes the potential harm to bomb disposal personnel and maximizes the efficiency of the operation. Additionally, advancements in robotics and drone technology continue to expand the capabilities of these tools, enabling bomb disposal experts to tackle increasingly complex scenarios.

Here always, we are behind in everything. It is not uncommon to see BDU personnel defusing bombs with nothing much but bare hands, or using dilapidated, improvised repaired equipment. -- Courtesy TheNews

**IPP redux****Shahzad Sharjeel**

The concept of outsourcing has been around for a while. Outsourcing to service providers has been the norm for manufacturers, especially under the globalisation mantra where finance and human resources know no boundaries. American and European automobile and cellular phone manufacturers have shifted most production to China — the same China they accuse of political repression and human rights violations — because it offers cheap labour and subsidised utilities to industry. Concerns about Chinese labour laws and weak environmental protection are forgotten so long as it gives the manufacturers a competitive edge.

Similarly, processing payrolls or medical and legal data entry from all over the world happens in Bangalore and Chennai because these places have invested in human resources and technological development. Just imagine. The worst type of xenophobes here get their 'Sharia-compliant' profits calculated in the land of Shiva in the Indian south. Money is progressive; it has no religion.

The outsourcing of intellect or the appropriation of others' inventions while denigrating them as 'heretics' and condemning them to eternal hell has been perfected by oily theocracies. Dare to point out the hypocrisy of the arrangement and you are reminded of the West's crimes of imperialism and slave trade that form the basis of their fortunes. While benefiting from all

the scientific development of the 'godless' and 'soulless' West, the God-fearing and spiritual holy men in our neck of the woods are quick to point out the 'moral turpitude' of materialistic, modern societies. The objectification of women and the breakdown of the family unit are cited as sure signs of decline. It matters little that a spokesperson of a recently dethroned party presenting itself as the standard bearer of spiritual purity, not too long ago publicly insisted that the vernacular translation of 'prostitute' be used as a synonym for 'widow' because of some archaic and convoluted usage in a particular region.

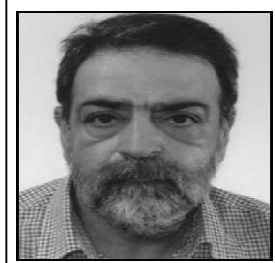
This same party's leader hit upon the bright idea of outsourcing corruption. It appeared flawless till he got his vendors arrested. This is how it works: allow the wheeling-dealing types to use the 'charismatic leader' to mint money so long as a chunk of it is spent on maintaining his clean-as-a-whistle aura, dirty-rich lifestyle, and equally dirty politics. Get caught with your hand in the cookie jar and the leader will drop you like a hot brick. The sugar and cougar brigade goes to jail while the leader looks for the next ATM.

Back to inventions or lack thereof; the so-called scientists here obsess about making genies produce electricity, become public intellectuals, or fake fat budgets for fake projects to get foreign inventions licensed to their families. Another lot specialises in tracing every scientific invention to the Muslim scientists of yore to prove that all progress is beholden to us. Yet another very elite group of researchers spends all its time proving every technological breakthrough under the sun as having at least one member belonging to some

Pakistani ethnicity among the thousands-strong team of gofers behind the invention.

We have also had no qualms about not just crowdfunding and appropriating the most sensitive and potentially lethal technology but open-sourcing it to the larger detriment of mankind. Some insist on continuing in this vein till the Kohinoor comes 'home'. How interesting that things come full circle even in subjects seemingly poles apart — from offshore accounting to customer care call centres in Chennai to the celebrated Mountain of Light diamond's origins in the Golconda mines of southern India. Amidst all this East-West controversy, the prospects of South-South cooperation can open up vistas where 'going south' need not necessarily mean a downward trend. This leaves the northern hemisphere sticking out like a sore thumb — at least in some people's imaginations — as the hub of conspiracies and the nub of regime-change plots. Outsource the blame for poor economic management to the IFIs, and the power play between components of the state to foreign conspiracies. As for the fourth estate, the least said the better. It is tethered to estate agents.

A few decades back, we tried outsourcing the country's power production to the IPPs. A new conglomerate has been launched in the 'power' sector, this time referred to as Independent Power Purchasers. The regulators better determine the unit cost and capacity charge wisely and in the public interest this time, lest the new IPP gets embroiled in the same old battles with the 'oily and gassy regulatory authority' and the 'nation transformation company'. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Italian trendsetter****Mahir Ali**

Well before global politics featured the likes of Trump, Bolsonaro, Orban, Erdogan, Imran Khan, Modi or even Netanyahu, there was Silvio Berlusconi, the slick and smarmy business magnate who was first elected prime minister of Italy in 1994, just months after founding his political party, Forza Italia.

That government lasted less than a year, and some dismissed him as a flash in the pizza pan, but when he returned to power in 2001, it was at the helm of the first postwar Italian government that was able to serve out a five-year term. Small wonder, then, that admirers and detractors alike have been describing Berlusconi's demise on Monday as the end of an era. But, like some of the political obituaries that greeted the end of his first and second stints as PM, that assessment may be premature.

He returned in that role for a third time in 2008, but then was barred from holding political office for several years after he resigned in 2011, and by the time he returned to the fray in 2018, the ground had shifted. The octogenarian found himself being treated as a relic on a playfield he had landscaped by aiding the far right's ascent into the conservative mainstream. Giorgia Meloni had served a decade earlier as a junior minister in Berlusconi's last administration. Since last year, when he was re-elected to the senate, his Forza Italia has been a minor partner in Meloni's governing coalition.

Berlusconi acknowledged as much in a 2019 speech: "It was us who

legitimised and constitutionalised the Lega [the former Northern League] and the fascists [the Meloni-led Brothers of Italy]."

Back in 1996, in a profile of the Italian leader, the American writer and journalist Alexander Stille noted: "Imagine if a real-estate mogul along the lines of Donald Trump also owned CBS, NBC, the Fox network, Paramount Pictures, Newsweek, Random House, Condé Nast, The Los Angeles Times, HBO, the Dallas Cowboys, Walmart stores, Aetna insurance, Loews Theatres and Fidelity Investments and had the political clout of Bill Clinton or Newt Gingrich, and you get an idea of the long shadow Mr Berlusconi casts in Italian life."

Unlike Trump, Berlusconi started from scratch, building up first a real estate empire — the sources of his funding remain obscure — and then a commercial TV network that brought American soap operas and "reality" shows featuring semi-clad women to Italian audiences accustomed to more drab presentations. He invested his rapidly increasing wealth in a couple of national newspapers and a vast array of magazines, as well as AC Milan.

So he was hardly unknown by the time he went into politics 30 years ago, after Italy's party political structure began to collapse under the weight of a wide range of corruption investigations. That structure had effectively been in place since the immediate postwar era, when the CIA intervened to make sure that the Italian Communist Party did not win any elections. The Christian Democrats were the main beneficiaries, with the Socialists playing second fiddle. It was a Socialist prime minister, however, who became a crucial patron for Berlusconi in the 1980s; Bettino Craxi eventually fled Italy to a villa in Tun-

sia, in order to escape the consequences of his shenanigans while in power.

Italians were fed up, and expected to lean leftwards, by the time Forza Italia emerged. Berlusconi was motivated to a considerable extent by the desire to protect his still expanding empire, and offered himself up to voters as a solution to Italy's woes on the strength of his personality, rather than any coherent political programme.

That may not have been an entirely original leadership attribute, but it was relatively a novelty in Western democracies and, notwithstanding the occasional backlash, appears now to have been more or less normalised. Berlusconi's final term may have laid bare his economic incompetence in the face of the global financial crisis and European debt woes, but he's much more likely to be remembered for the level of sleaze he unapologetically introduced into politics, and a penchant for making sexist or racist remarks that he invariably dismissed as 'jokes'. Even a reported predilection for sex with underage girls caused an insufficient alarm among the Italian public.

Berlusconi saw himself as a celebrity role model for all Italian men, and even for world leaders — and, sadly, he wasn't wrong in some respects. He ignored constant conflicts of interest, and thrived on narcissism — with facelifts, hair implants and an unnatural tangerine glow enabling him, at least in his own mind, to disguise the fact that he was born when Benito Mussolini still ruled Italy. His enduring legacy what Stille summed up this week as a kind of postmodern, "content-less politics", which, one might add, serves the neoliberal status quo as an invaluable distraction. -- Courtesy Dawn





**PESHAWAR:** Head of Delegation International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Nicolas Lambert meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Minister says: Improving medical facilities in public hospitals top priority

**Independent Report**  
SIALKOT: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Dr. Jamal Nasir has said that improving medical facilities in government hospitals was the top priority and the problems of district, tehsil level and primary health centers would be resolved at earliest.

Cases will be reviewed for approval of development projects, posts of doctors and medical staff in government hospitals of district Sialkot.

He expressed these views while talking to media here on Wednesday

during his visit to various areas of Sialkot district. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health expressed satisfaction over the performance of the District Health Authority and appreciated the Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan and the District Health Management Team for their effective supervision.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Dr. Rehan, Principal Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Medical College Sialkot Dr. Abdul Sattar and MS Dr. Ilyas were also present.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Provincial

Health Minister also visited Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital Sialkot and Civil Hospital Sambrial.

He inspected the emergency ward, surgical ward, lab and issued instructions to improve the facilities.

Dr. Jamal Nasir directed to issue notices to the laboratory supervisors both hospitals for not maintaining quality control standards in the lab.

He directed that the patients should be prescribed the medicines available in the hospital stores, and attention should be paid to improve the quality of the tests.

## ANF seizes over 161 kg drugs in six operations

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations conducted across the country managed to net four accused and recovered over 161 kg drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in an operation near Gujranwala Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 93.6 kg charas concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle and arrested two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber.

In another operation near Kuchlak bypass Quetta, ANF seized 50 kg heroin concealed in a dry rainy nullah.

In third operation conducted near 'Jarhoi Zakha Khail' area, eight kg

charras concealed in plastic bags was seized.

The spokesman informed that in fourth operation in Mianwali, ANF managed to recover 1.2 kg opium and 40 grams charras from the possession of a motorcyclist resident of Bhakkar.

In the fifth operation conducted at Pakistan International Container Terminal, Karachi, ANF recovered five kg Ice drug concealed in decoration pieces. The container was booked for Australia by a Peshawar-based private company.

In the sixth operation conducted at Pak-Afghan Border area in Chaman, ANF recovered four kg suspicious material from the possession of an

## Two killed, one injured in road accident

**FAISALABAD (APP):** Two persons were killed, while another sustained serious injuries in a road mishap in the area of Chak Jhumra police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Wednesday that a speeding dumper truck hit a motorcycle near Nallaywala bridge late Tuesday night.

Consequently, Saqlain Ejaz (22) and Mani Abdul Ghafoor (25) residents of Chak 75-RB Lohkay received serious injuries and died on the spot, whereas 18-year-old Ahmad Khalid was shifted to Allied Hospital in critical condition. The police took the bodies into custody and started investigation for arrest of the accused truck driver.

## QWP calls for early announcement of NFC Award

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Provincial chairman, Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao has called for an early announcement of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award with the increased share of small provinces.

He expressed these views while addressing a joining ceremony at village Sherpao on Wednesday.

On this occasion, the leading workers of PTI Union Council Lower Behram Haji Gul, Mohammad Zareen, Saleem Khan, Juma Gul, Waseemullah, Zahid Khan, Muhibullah, Khan Gulab, Farhad Khan, Isa Khan, Osman Khan, Saheb Noor and Khanzada Haji along with their families and

associates announced to join Qaumi Watan Party.

Sikandar Sherpao said due to the incompetence of the previous rulers, the province is the victim of financial instability and the economic crisis is looming here. The policies of the previous government have not only affected the people and economy of the province but rather have also increased backwardness to an extent.

He said that keeping in view the current situation the federal government should not only hand over the net profit on electricity net to the province, rather also take steps to increase the shares of small provinces by ensuring the early holding of the NFC.

## Eight dengue cases reported this year

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** As many as eight dengue-positive cases had been reported in the Rawalpindi district this year, but there was a need to remain vigilant to control the spread of the fatal disease as the prevailing weather was suitable for breeding larvae.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood told APP, that

four patients were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital, three to the Holy Family Hospital, and one to the Shifa International Hospital.

Giving details of the punitive actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered 107 FIRs, sealed 62 premises.



**PESHAWAR:** People receiving vaccination at a Haj center in Peshawar, Hayatabad.

## SM Tanveer reviews Mines and Mineral Dept performance

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer chaired a meeting to review the organizational structure, performance, and future regulations of the Mines and Mineral Department here at Civil Secretariat on Wednesday.

Excise Minister Bilal Afzal, DG Mines Raja Mansoor and others also attended the meeting.

Secretary Babar Aman Babar briefed the meeting about department's performance and informed about the ongoing reforms, process of improvements in mining, and measures taken to increase revenue.

During the meeting, SM Tanveer highlighted the accomplishments of the Mines and Mineral Department and stated that it had successfully achieved Rs 12 billion revenue target for the current fiscal year. However, he added that by

implementing an effective system of penalties and rewards within the department, it could aim even bigger revenue target up to Rs 40 billion per annum. He said that Pakistan had abundant mineral resources and called for building a robust economy by harnessing them, adding that the department must promote the use of modern technology to fully utilize minerals wealth, besides adopting innovative approach beyond traditional methods to achieve its objectives.

Meanwhile, Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC), following the provincial minister's directives, resolved all promotion cases and the recently promoted employees have expressed their gratitude to the minister and their Managing Director.

SM Tanveer advised PSIC employees to carry out their duties with diligence and commitment.



**LAHORE:** Students of Kinnaird College for Women taking keen interest in Textile Exhibition at Al-Hamra Art Gallery.

## Minister visits relief camps in different areas of Badin

**BADIN (APP):** Sindh Minister for Universities Board and Environment Muhammad Ismail Raho along with Deputy Commissioner Badin Agha Shah Nawaz Khan and MPA Haji Taj Malah on Wednesday visited different relief camps including Serani and Bhugra Memon and inquired about facilities being provided to people.

The Provincial Minister on the occasion distributed food among people accommodated in relief camps. He said that the Sindh Government on the

directives of Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari was providing basic facilities to people living in relief camps.

He further said that elected representatives of this area will be present around the clock to serve destitute people.

Deputy Commissioner Agha Shah Nawaz giving a briefing said that food, drinking water, and all health facilities were provided to all relief camps while the availability of Doctors and Paramedical staff was also ensured.

## Thalassemia suffering children Donating blood is a great act of kindness

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, donated blood for Thalassemia patients in blood camp organized by Sundas Foundation on the occasion of World Blood Donors Day here at Governor House Lahore today. Apart from Governor Punjab, the staff of Governor House and general public also donated blood. President Sundus Foundation Mohammad Yasin Khan, Medical Director Sundus Foundation Dr. Adnan Gilani, Sundus Foundation staff, blood donor students

and others were present on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that donating blood for innocent children suffering from thalassemia is a great act of kindness. He said that serving people suffering from life-threatening diseases is no less than worship. He said that it is the responsibility of all of us to bring a smile on the faces of such people. He further said that we should donate blood for this good cause. He said that due to blood donations millions of

patients get new lives every year. Governor Punjab said that donating blood is harmless for a healthy person, while it saves the life of some one.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Sundus Foundation is doing great work for Thalassemia and Hemophilia patients. He further said that Awareness should be raised among the people to prevent thalassemia. He said that the media should also play a positive role in creating awareness among the people regarding donating blood.



**LAHORE:** Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman donating blood during blood donation camp organized by Sundas Foundation on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day at Governor House.

## Property dispute claims lives of four cousins in Bara

**PESHAWAR (APP):** At least four people were killed when they were fired at by the assailants over an issue related to the ownership of a land piece in Soor Dhand area of Bara tehsil in Khyber district, police informed on Wednesday. Local police said the incident occurred during late night hours in Fort Slob area of Soor Dhand, Bara where assailants shot dead four cousins over a property dispute. Those killed were identified as Hazrat Ullah, son of Qayyum Khan, Ziarat Gul, son of Sardar Khan, Abdul Malik, son of Saida Khan and Mubin Afridi of Malak Din Khel.

Police shifted the bodies to Dogra Hospital for medico legal procedure and started investigation into the incident after collecting evidence from the crime scene.

## 113 newly elected LG representatives take oath

**NAWABSHAH (APP):** One hundred thirteen newly elected representatives of Local Government took the oath of office here Wednesday. Assistant Commissioner Nawabshah Ali Sher Jamali administered oath at Darbar Hall of Deputy Commissioner Secretariat.

Those who took oath include 10 candidates of Town Municipal Committee HM Khoja, 9 of Union Committees of Town Municipal Committee Old Nawabshah of Municipal Corporation Nawabshah and specified candidates of 5 union councils of tehsil Nawabshah. Those administered oaths include women, youth and minority members. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Ali Sher Jamali and District Election Commissioner Pervez Ahmed Kalwar congratulated the newly elected members on specified seats and expressed the hope that the members would work with dedication.

## LHC sets aside notification of Lahore Master Plan 2050

**LAHORE (APP):** The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday set aside the notification of Lahore Master Plan 2050.

The court ordered Lahore Development Authority to revise the plan and submit the same to the Urban Unit for review. The court also ordered Urban Unit to submit its report after reviewing the revised plan.

Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders while hearing petitions filed by Mian Abdul Rehman and others challenging the Lahore Master Plan 2050.

During the proceedings, a consultant of Urban Unit appeared before the court in

response to court directions and apprised that important points were ignored in Master Plan 2050 and it was approved without adopting proper legal procedure. It is pertinent to mention here that the court had already suspended the operation of the Lahore Master Plan 2050. The petitioners had challenged the Lahore Master Plan 2050, saying that the agriculture area of the city had been converted into an urban area without any justification. They expressed apprehension that under the plan, thousands of trees would be cut and it would cause catastrophic environmental damage.

## IPO-Pakistan launches e-filing of IP applications

**LAHORE (APP):** Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) in collaboration with Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) launched e-filing system to receive Intellectual Property (IP) applications from the stakeholders in a ceremony held here at Arfa Karim Software Technology Park on Wednesday. IPO Director General Shazia Adnan and PITB Chairman Faisal Yousaf announced the GO-LIVE system of online IP applications filing, the cost and time of trademark applications would decrease substantially thus benefiting the applicants.

## PPP changed results after election: Hafiz

**KARACHI (Online):** JI Karachi Amir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has said such election where people are not allowed to come should be nullified. "We have won election in 9 towns and 4 towns have been snatched from us. We are in majority. Chairman and vice chairman are with us," he said this while addressing a press conference here Wednesday. He claimed PPP changed results after

election. We don't want that elected representatives of people are deprived of election through sale or purchase of votes.

We don't want to move to court against mayor election. We offer PPP to accept the result.

We will work for development of Karachi, he said adding 4 towns have been snatched from us and we will bring back them.



**HYDERABAD:** People filling their pots with clean water from Filter plant at Latifabad.



**MUZAFFERABAD:** Deserving People holding food packets on their heads as leaving after receiving under the banner of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum NGO at Boys Degree College at Naserabad area of the A.J.K.

## Feroz Shah says: Caretaker govt to continue working till general elections

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Caretaker Minister for Information Feroz Jamal Shah on Wednesday said that everything was clearly mentioned in the constitution regarding the period of a caretaker government and the present government would continue its constitutional responsibilities till general elections. "We have the constitutional mandate to look after the provincial affairs till the general elections," he said, adding that it was the responsibility of the President of Pakistan and Governor KP to decide the election date.

He said that the Election Commission had already notified October 26 as the election date and the caretaker government would fulfill its responsibilities till that date. "We have no intentions to keep occupying the seats," Feroz clarified.

He said the caretaker Chief Minister (CM) and provincial finance minister were a "blessing in disguise for KP" as both played an active role in taking the rights and arrears of the province from the Federation.

He said both the CM and finance minister held extensive discussions on all the issues of the province with the federation at various meetings and on different occasions and finally got the practical results. He expressed gratitude to Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for listening to the problems of the KP and giving instructions to the relevant departments.

Feroz said, "The prime minister always showed great love and support for the province." He also condemned May 9 and 10 vandalism and arson and recalled that he personally took the injured of an attack on Radio Pakistan.

## Rally held in favor of Pak Army

**LARKANA (APP):** Pakistan Patriotic Movement Zindabad Organization Larkana here on Wednesday took out a rally to express solidarity with the Pakistan Army.

The rally which started from Daragh Qaim Shah Bukhari, concluded at Larkana Press Club after passing through Bunder Road, Pakistan Chowk and Jinnah Bagh Chowk. The rally was led by Central Chairman of the Organization Liaquat Abro and was participated by Nazir Alim Younis Ali Abro, Raja Munir Jatoi Abdul Karim Jatoi and others.

The participants of the rally were holding placards, national flags and banners, chanting slogans in favor of the Pak Army and the country. Addressing on the occasion, the leaders of the Organization said that the workers of a political party organized a protest in Punjab and KPK. As part of the conspiracy, stones were pelted at the soldiers of the Pakistan Army and government buildings besides burning the vehicles.



## France provides Euro 180m for NTDC transmission lines, grid stations projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): France has provided Euro 180 million soft loan to Pakistan for financing the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) transmission lines and grid stations projects located in Vehari, Aarifwala and Sialkot. Federal Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs Dr Kazim Niaz, Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey and Philippe Steinmetz, Country Director of the French Development Agency (AFD), signed the Credit Facility Agreement, said a press release issued here Wednesday. This loan will support the NTDC in its transmission mandate to provide reliable and efficient power supply in major cities of Punjab. The funding will also help enhance the transmission of efficient power distribution in Pakistan. Such benefits will contribute to improving affordability and scaling up the energy supply. Since most of the power generation in the

country is through the hydel sources, hence the projects will help mitigate impacts of climate change through transmission of green energy, in line with the policies of the Government of Pakistan and its commitment to fight climate change. It is also part of the pledge and commitments announced by France at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Geneva on January 9, 2023. The Republic of

France, through the French Development Agency, is providing technical and financial support in several sectors such as energy, water and sanitation, urban development, and cultural heritage. The French loan will support NTDC in the components of the projects including: Construction of a new 220KV substation and 50km of new 220kV transmission lines to be connected to it in Aarifwala, which will be connected to the MEPCO grid.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on Civil Aviation issues, at Finance Division.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kazim Niaz, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, H.E. Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France, and Mr. Philippe Steinmetz, Country Director, French Development Agency (AFD), signs the Credit Facility Agreement worth €180 million to finance the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC).

## Alashabi says: Banking, trade routes, removing policy barriers can increase direct trade

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen, Muhammad Motaahar Alashabi on Wednesday emphasized the need to bolster the trade volume and value between Pakistan and Yemen while simultaneously enhancing their trading capacities. During his visit to Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) here, he was of the view that banking channel, trade routes and removing policy barriers could increase the direct bilateral trade between Yemen and Pakistan. Alashabi also commended the city of Lahore for its stature as a bustling metropolis and a

thriving market. Recognizing Pakistan as a significant market, he acknowledged the existing direct and indirect trade channels that Yemen maintained via Jeddah, Muscat, and Dubai. He also spoke about the impact of conflict in Yemen over the years, and exuded hope in overcoming these challenges and restoring stability. Yemen Ambassador underlined the shared values between Yemen and Pakistan and revealed his personal affinity for the country, having resided in Pakistan for over a decade and ensuring his children received their education from esteemed Pakistani institutions.

## PCJCCI for effective measures to tackle climate change

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Wednesday called for taking effective measures to cope with the climatic challenges. Sharing his views on climate change in a meeting held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Wednesday, the joint chamber's President Moazzam Ghurki said that despite contributing less than one percent of global emissions, Pakistan was among the top 10 countries most affected by the climatic impacts in the past

two decades. He added that Pakistan's agriculture-based economy was sensitive to climate-related shocks, and disasters could exacerbate the water security challenges. PCJCCI President said that according to the official post-disaster needs assessment (PDMA) 2022, the damages and losses were USD 14.9 billion and USD 15.3 billion respectively, with roughly 33 million people affected, of which 8 million were displaced. Preliminary estimates suggested that as a direct consequence of these floods.

## Ambassador Tugio says: Indonesia trying to start direct flights from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio Tugio on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Indonesia should work together to increase trade links to the D8 market. He said that Indonesia is trying to start direct flights with Pakistan and negotiations are going with the Civil Aviation Authority in this regard. "It is expected that

by December of this year, direct air connectivity will be established between the two great countries of the Muslim world," he said. He expressed these views during a meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other officials, said a press release issued here. By setting up an Indonesian warehouse in

Gwadar, it wants to gain access to Pakistan and Central Asia. There are vast opportunities for improvement of trade relations and investment between the two countries, he said. Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ASEAN is a huge market for Pakistan, but despite all its efforts.



FAISALABAD: UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan visiting after inaugurates goat, bull and camel festival arranged by Faculty of Animal Husbandry (FAH), UAF and the International Goat and Bull Association at UAF Stadium.

## Dar for supporting Aviation Sector

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday committed to support the Aviation Sector and directed to take pertinent measures to resume flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to the US, UK and the Europe at the earliest. The minister chaired a meeting on Civil Aviation issues, which was also attended by the Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, Federal Minister for Law & Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa and Mansoor Usman Awan Attorney General of Pakistan.

The Secretary Aviation, Secretary Law and Justice DG CAA, DG ASF, and senior officers from Finance and Aviation attended the meeting, said a press release. The secretary Aviation briefed the Chair on the issues being faced by the aviation sector pertaining to regulation, service provision, security, and enhancement of state capacity in aviation. The meeting discussed pragmatic options to resolve the issues without affecting the service provision and to raise the standards of aviation in Pakistan to match the international practices. The meeting also discussed legal and financial hurdles being faced by the aviation sector in this regard and deliberated upon the prospects and opportunities available. Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar appreciated the measures and efforts being taken for improving standards of aviation in the country and committed to support the aviation sector.

## Senate body on Finance reviews proposed changes in Customs Tariff

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, led by Chairman Committee, Senator Saleem Mandviwala, conducted a comprehensive review of the proposed changes in the first schedule to the Customs Act, 1969 (Pakistan Customs Tariff). The meeting took place on Wednesday at the Parliament House, where senior officials from the National Tariff Commission (NTC), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and Ministry of Commerce presented their insights regarding the rationale behind the proposed amendments. During the meeting, a clause-by-clause review of

the proposals and changes in customs duties for various items and raw materials was conducted. Chairman Senator Saleem Mandviwala emphasized the importance of ensuring that any relief or concessions provided to businesses in terms of duties should be passed on to the customers through a decrease in prices. He also stressed the need for a complete picture to be presented regarding the sales tax and income tax concession, if any extended to these businesses. Expressing his views on regulatory duties, Senator Mandviwala highlighted that they should not be utilized as a revenue-generating measure.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a gas carrier "Kitiom-M" is expected to take berth at Oil Terminal on Wednesday & another containership, Cosco America is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday. A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, oil tanker Demeter and bulk cargo carrier Butinah sailed out to sea on Wednesday (today) morning on Wednesday. A cargo Volume of 51,679 tonnes, comprising 51,679 tonnes imports Cargo exclusively, was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairman Reforms and Reduces Mobilization Committee Ashfaq Yousuf Tola addressing to the post budget session at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

## Ayesha says: Technical meeting with IMF to determine future of Pakistan's programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ayesha Ghous Pasha on Wednesday said that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar had a virtual conversation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief Nathan Porter, and the IMF Executive Board might meet at any time today. Earlier, the technical meeting with the IMF, the things would get clear about future of the programme, she said while talking to media persons after attending the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue here. She said that the committee had told the Fund that the purpose of the budget was to bring economic growth. The minister said in the meeting, the financial team would try to convince

## Gas supply to CNG stations suspended in KP: Notification

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGL) on Wednesday has notified that the gas supply to all CNG stations across the province would remain suspended till June 16 due to cyclonic storm "BIPARJOY" over the east-central Arabian Sea which had affected arrival of LNG shipment. A notification issued here said that the gas supply has been suspended due to sudden depletion of system pack and on account of acute shortage of gas supplies, adding that gas supply would be immediately restored as and when optimum system pack is maintained. It said that the optimum system pack could be maintained till June 16 therefore the CNG sector was requested to extend cooperation till achievement of healthy system pack. Meanwhile, Chairman All Pakistan CNG Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Govt. giving consideration to promote agro-based economy: Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for National Food Security, Tariq Bashir Cheema on Wednesday said the government is giving consideration to the promotion of agro-based economy. Participating in the general discussion on the budget for the year 2023-24, he recognized the crucial role of the agricultural sector in the country's economy and said that its importance cannot be denied. Cheema highlighted the significant increase in wheat production during

the current season, leading to a bumper crop. He further mentioned that Pakistan was also an exporter of rice and anticipates a similarly robust rice crop. These achievements underscore the potential of the agricultural sector to contribute to the nation's prosperity. Furthermore, the minister addressed the pressing issue of energy in agriculture by sharing that the current budget includes allocations for the solarization of tubewells. A meeting, presided over by

the Prime Minister will discuss the allocation of funds for this initiative across different provinces, including the conversion of tube-wells, he added. Cheema acknowledged the efforts made by the Sindh government in assisting farmers affected by devastating floods last year. However, he expressed his intention to request further assistance from the government of Sindh to address the challenges faced by the remaining flood-affected areas.

## Rupee gains 79 paises against US Dollar in interbank

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday strengthened by 79 paises against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 287.18 against the previous day's closing of Rs 287.97. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 292 and Rs 295 respectively. The price of the Euro went down by Rs1.03 to close at Rs 310.15 against the last day's closing of Rs 311.18, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 2.05, whereas an increase of Rs 0.89 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 362.72 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 361.83. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal depreciated by 21 paises each to close at Rs 78.19 and Rs 76.57 respectively.



LAHORE: DG IPO Shazia Adnan, MO Commerce Government of Pakistan addressing the opening ceremony of E-filing of IPO Pakistan at PITB Arfa Karim Tower.

## Irfan Sheikh says: FPCCI is disappointed at maintaining status quo in policy rate

KARACHI: President FPCCI - country's apex body on trade & industry - has expressed his profound disappointment over maintaining status quo in key policy rate by the State Bank of Pakistan in its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting and keeping it unchanged at 21 percent. The country needs proactive policymaking to ward off the impending total economic collapse; and, not maintaining the status quo - as maintaining status quo is the easiest route for policymakers, he added. Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh stressed that the policymakers must be aware that commercial banks are not lending to the private sector for less than 24 percent, thanks to 21 percent key policy rate in the country. Therefore,

access to finance is non-existent for the industry in the country - for all practical purposes of affordability and repayment capabilities at that rate. It is pertinent to note that inflation in Pakistan is evidently deep-rooted and it mainly stems from substantial exchange rate depreciation; unprecedented hike in international commodity prices; multiple rounds of hikes in energy tariffs and other forced measures by the IMF. Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh explained that despite the progressive and major hikes in the policy rates by 1,125 basis points from 9.75 percent to 21 percent over the last five quarters, general inflation remained stubbornly high and further surged to 38 percent in a manifestation of an utter failure of the monetary policy.

## Help give life another chance PTCL group mobilizes blood donation drive

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunications and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) undertook a massive blood donation campaign at its headquarters in connection with 'World Blood Donor Day'. The initiative stems from PTCL Group's sustained commitment to creating shared value and giving back to society. The blood donation drive has been organized as part of PTCL Group's CSR strategy, which spanned over two days. Top management, senior executives and employees, along with tenants of PTCL Group Tower came forward to donate blood with full enthusiasm. The

Group collaborated with the Fatimid Foundation for this initiative, said a news release. World Blood Donor Day is primarily celebrated to raise awareness regarding the importance of healthy blood and its donation as a gift of life to those in pressing need. PTCL Group stands as one of the key proponents of blood donations in the country that encourages people to come forward and donate blood to save lives. On the initiative, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL Group, Atif Raza, said, "Realizing the importance of life, we engage in various social corporate responsibility initiatives to generate shared good for our people."



with 'World Blood Donor Day'. The initiative stems from PTCL Group's sustained commitment to creating shared value and giving back to society. The blood donation drive has been organized as part of PTCL Group's CSR strategy, which spanned over two days. Top management, senior executives and employees, along with tenants of PTCL Group Tower came forward to donate blood with full enthusiasm. The



# Xi hails establishment of 'China-Palestine strategic' ties

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that his country was establishing "strategic" relations with Palestinians ahead of talks with leader Mahmoud Abbas in Beijing.

Abbas will be in the Chinese capital until Friday, Beijing has said, on his fifth official visit to the world's second-largest economy.

"Facing a century of global changes and new developments to the situation in the Middle East, China is ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the Palestinian side," said Xi during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People.

"Today, we will jointly announce the estab-

lishment of a China-Palestine strategic partnership, which will be an important milestone in the history of bilateral relations," added Xi. Abbas arrived in Beijing on Monday to hold talks with top Chinese leaders including President Xi and Premier Li Qiang.

The two sides are using the opportunity to discuss ways to advance relations and resolve longstanding challenges to the Palestinian-Israeli relationship. Beijing has sought to boost its ties in the Middle East, challenging US influence — efforts that have sparked unease in Washington.

During a regular press briefing last week, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin called long-time Palestinian leader

Abbas an "old and good friend of the Chinese people".

Last December, President Xi visited Saudi Arabia on an Arab outreach trip that also saw him meet with Abbas and pledge to "work for an early, just and durable solution to the Palestinian issue".

Beijing has since positioned itself as a mediator in the Middle East, brokering the restoration of ties in March between Iran and Saudi Arabia — rivals in a region where the United States has for decades been the main powerbroker.

But finding a lasting solution to Israeli-Palestinian tensions may prove more elusive, as peace negotiations between the two sides have been stalled since 2014.



China's President Xi Jinping (C) and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attend a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

# Kuwait strikes \$367 million deal to acquire Turkish-made combat drones

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Kuwait reached an agreement worth \$367 million with Turkish drone giant Baykar to purchase its increasingly sought-after TB2 combat drones, the Kuwaiti army said.

The drone, Bayraktar TB2, boasts unmanned aerial vehicles that can carry lightweight, laser-guided bombs, and fly for up to 27 hours at a time, which, according to the company, was "a record," it had set while testing the drone in Kuwait in 2019.

The announcement, on Tuesday, would set Kuwait to become the 28th country to procure the TB2 drones.

Demand for the drones has surged due to their suc-

cessful deployment in conflict zones such as Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

Kuwaiti Air Force operations chief brigadier, General Fahad Al-Dosari, said in a video posted on their Twitter account that the drone fleet can support the navy and coast guard, as well as monitor maritime and land borders. He said the drones can also "carry out reconnaissance and targeted missions" in addition to supporting search and rescue efforts.

Baykar and the Kuwaiti government did not say how many drones were purchased or when they would be delivered. Both could not be immediately reached for comment.

The drones' priced un-

der \$2 million each according to estimates? are produced by Baykar Defense company, which belongs to the family of Selcuk Bayraktar, the son-in-law of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Bayraktar is the company's chief technical officer. The TB2 has been credited with helping tip the balance of conflicts in Libya, as well as to Turkey's ally Azerbaijan in fighting with Armenian-backed forces in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2020. It has also enabled Ukraine to mount a stiff defense of its cities, carrying out attacks against Russian forces with an effectiveness that surprised many Western military experts and triggered a rush among nations to procure the unmanned craft.

# Belarus starts taking delivery of Russian nuclear weapons

**Monitoring Desk**  
MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said his country has started taking delivery of Russian tactical nuclear weapons, some of which he said were three times more powerful than the atomic bombs the US dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The deployment is Moscow's first move of such warheads - shorter-range less powerful nuclear weapons that could potentially be used on the battlefield - outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

"We have missiles and bombs that we have received from Russia," Lukashenko said in an interview with the Rossiya-1 Russian state TV channel which was posted on the

Belarusian Belta state news agency's Telegram channel.

"The bombs are three times more powerful than those (dropped on) Hiroshima and Nagasaki," he said, speaking on a road in a forest clearing with military vehicles parked nearby and some kind of military storage facility visible in the background. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that Russia, which will retain control of the tactical nuclear weapons, would start deploying them in Belarus after special storage facilities to house them were made ready. The Russian leader announced in March he had agreed to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, pointing to the US deployment of such weapons in a host of European countries over many decades.



Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri casts his vote as parliament gathers to elect a president at the parliament building in downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

# Lebanon's crisis deepens as presidential vote collapses

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: The powerful Hezbollah group and its allies thwarted a bid by their rivals to elect a top IMF official as Lebanon's president on Wednesday, sharpening sectarian tensions and further dimming prospects for preventing a collapse of the state. Four years since Lebanon went into a financial meltdown that marks its worst crisis since the 1975-90 civil war, parliament failed for a 12th time to elect someone to fill the post reserved for a Maronite Christian under the country's sectarian system.

The standoff has opened a fresh sectarian fault line, pitting the Iran-backed, heavily armed Shi'ite Muslim Hezbollah against Christian factions including its own ally, Gebran Bassil, who en-

dorsed IMF official Jihad Azour for president.

Neither Azour nor Hezbollah-backed candidate Suleiman Frangieh came close to winning the 86 votes needed to win in a first round vote. Azour, the IMF's Middle East Director and an ex-finance minister, won the support of 59 of 128 lawmakers.

Hezbollah and its allies then withdrew from the session, denying the two-thirds quorum required for a second vote in which 65 votes are enough for victory. Shi'ite Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, did not schedule a new session. It leaves Lebanon with no immediate way of filling a post vacant since the term of the Hezbollah-allied President Michel Aoun ended in October.

# Donald Trump arrested, pleads 'not guilty'

**Monitoring Desk**  
MIAMI: Former US president Donald Trump was arrested at the federal courthouse in Florida on Tuesday, and pleaded not guilty to federal criminal charges that he unlawfully kept national security documents when he left office and lied to officials who sought to recover them, CNN reported.

Deputy marshals booked the former president and took his fingerprints, while his aide and co-defendant, Walt Nauta was also arrested, fingerprinted and processed.

Trump's plea, entered before US Magistrate Judge Jonathan Goodman in a federal court in Miami, sets up a legal battle likely to play out over coming months as he campaigns to win back the presidency in a November 2024 election.

The hearing was closed to cameras and live broadcasts.

# 9 killed in latest clash between ethnic groups in India's Manipur: police

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: At least nine people have been killed in the latest clashes between members of rival ethnic groups in India's northeastern state of Manipur, police said on Wednesday, as security forces pressed on with a hunt for illegal weapons.

Violence between members of the Kuki ethnic group, who mostly live in the hills, and Meiteis, the

dominant community in the low lands, erupted on May 3, sparked by resentment over economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education reserved for hill people.

At least 80 people have been killed and more than 40,000 have been displaced in the state on the Myanmar border that is governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party.

# U.N. nuclear chief delays visit to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: U.N. nuclear chief Rafael Grossi has delayed a planned trip to Ukraine's Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant until it is safer to travel, a senior Ukrainian government official said on Wednesday.

Grossi had been expected to visit the facility on Wednesday following talks in Kyiv on Tuesday.



Cyprus President Nicos Christodoulides, second right, former Cyprus President Nikos Anastasiades and President of AUB, Fadlo R. Khuri stand around a plaque, near to the American University of Beirut building under construction, in the western coastal city of Paphos, Cyprus

# American University of Beirut president says Cyprus campus key to institution's global outreach

**Monitoring Desk**  
NICOSIA: Cyprus bested 15 other countries as the most suitable to host the American University of Beirut's first overseas campus, the president of the world-renowned institution said. It's part of the university's expansion plan that was initiated in 2018 but was expedited following the catastrophic Beirut port explosion in August 2020.

President Fadlo R. Khuri told The Associated Press in an emailed statement Wednesday that Cyprus came out on top because of a string of comparative advantages including European Union membership, a high degree of academic freedom, political and economic stability and close proximity to Lebanon. Khuri was on hand last week in Cyprus' southeastern coastal town of Paphos for a foundation stone-laying ceremony of the 158-year-old university's twin campus that will be called American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo. Khuri said the university's westward expansion was less about Lebanon's deep-rooted instability that threatens the country with collapse and more with its vision to extend.

# Two students among three stabbed to death in UK

**Monitoring Desk**  
NOTTINGHAM: Three people, including two students, were found dead and a van tried to mow down three others in Nottingham, central England, on Tuesday, in incidents the authorities believe are linked.

Nottingham's centre was cordoned off, with a heavy police presence, including armed officers following the events that left residents shaken.

Police said a 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder but they were not looking for anyone else in connection with the incidents.

# Hospital doctors in England stage 72-hour walkout

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Hospital doctors in England began a new 72-hour strike over pay on Wednesday, prompting warnings from health officials of huge disruption to patients and services.

The latest walk-out by junior doctors - those below consultant level - starts at 7:00 am (0600 GMT) and is set to last until Saturday.

The British Medical Association's Junior Doctors Committee say medics have seen a 26 percent pay cut in real terms in the last 15 years, as salaries have failed to keep pace with soaring inflation.

# UK police seek motive for Nottingham murders

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: British police were questioning a man on suspicion of murder on Wednesday as they sought the motive for a stabbing and van attack in the central English city of Nottingham which had left three people dead and another critical.

Two 19-year-olds, a man and a woman who were university students, were found dead on a city centre street with stab wounds after police were alerted at about 4 am (0300 GMT) on Tuesday. Another 50-year-old man then also found dead with knife wounds on a road about two miles away.

A van, stolen from the 50-year-old victim, was then driven at three people,

leaving one critically injured in hospital.

After the vehicle was stopped, police used a stun gun to arrest a 31-year-old man, and say they are not looking for any other suspects.

Counter-terrorism officers are helping with the investigation, but Nottinghamshire Police's Chief Constable Kate Meynell said they were keeping an open mind as to what happened. The BBC reported that the suspect was believed to be a migrant of West African origin with a history of mental health issues.

"We are still in the early stages of the investigation and need to determine the motives behind these attacks."

# Turkiye won't back Swedish Nato bid unless it stops anti-Turkish protests: Erdogan

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: Sweden should not expect a change of attitude from Ankara on its Nato membership bid at the Western alliance's summit next month unless it prevents anti-Turkiye protests in Stockholm, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying on Wednesday.

Turkiye cannot approach Sweden's Nato bid positively while "terrorists" were protesting in Stockholm, and Turkiye's position would be made clear once again in talks with Swedish officials in Ankara on Wednesday, Erdogan was quoted as telling reporters on a flight returning from Azerbaijan on Tuesday.

Erdogan made his comments before officials from Turkiye, Sweden, Finland and Nato met on Wednesday in Ankara for talks to try to overcome Turkish objections that have delayed Sweden's NATO membership bid.

In March, Turkiye ratified Finland's bid for

membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but still objects to Sweden joining the alliance, as does Hungary.

In justifying its objections to Swedish membership, Turkiye has accused harbouring members of Kurdish militant groups it considers to be terrorists.

Sweden said it has upheld its part of a deal struck with Turkiye in Madrid aimed at addressing Ankara's security concerns, including bringing in a new anti-terrorism law this month. It says it follows national and international law on extraditions.

Turkish-Swedish tensions were most recently fuelled by an anti-Turkiye and anti-Nato protest in Stockholm last month, when the flag of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group, outlawed in Turkiye as well as in the European Union, was projected on to the parliament building.

# South Korea sues rival North Korea for blowing up joint liaison office in 2020

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: South Korea filed a 44.7 billion won (\$35 million) damage suit against North Korea on Wednesday for blowing up a joint liaison office just north of their border in 2020, which highlighted a revival of tensions between the rivals following the collapse of larger nuclear talks between the U.S. and North Korea.

The symbolic lawsuit filed with the Seoul Central District Court comes amid a prolonged freeze in diplomacy and growing concerns over North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs. South Korea had until this Friday to claim damages, when a three-year statute of limitations over the incident would expire.

Koo Byoungsam, spokesperson for Seoul's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, described the North's detonation of

the building as an unlawful and violent act that breached previous agreements between the countries and "fundamentally damaged the foundation of mutual respect and trust."

There's no clear way for South Korea to force North Korea to pay if it is found liable for damages. Koo said the lawsuit, the first ever filed by South Korea's government against North Korea's government, was aimed at beating the statute of limitations and preserving South Korea's legal right to compensation.

In June 2020, North Korea used explosives to blow up the South Korean-built liaison office in the North Korean border town of Kaesong after criticizing South Korea's failure to stop North Korean defectors from flying anti-North propaganda leaflets across the border using balloons.

# Hong Kong protest anthem's online presence fades as govt seeks total ban

**Monitoring Desk**  
HONG KONG: Various versions of the pro-democracy protest anthem "Glory to Hong Kong" were unavailable on Apple's iTunes Store, Spotify, Facebook and Instagram's Reels on Wednesday after the government sought an injunction banning the song outright.

A Reuters search for the song's Chinese title on Apple's iTunes Store and a search for the song's English title on Facebook and Instagram's Reels only showed a Taiwanese version of the song by Taiwanese rock band The Chairman.

The song was the unofficial anthem of Hong Kong's 2019 sometime street protests. Various versions of the song released by the creator "ThomasDGX & HongKongers" on Spotify were no longer available.

The injunction application comes after "Glory to Hong Kong" was played mistakenly at several international events, including a Rugby Sevens game and an ice hockey competition.

The song was banned

in schools in 2020 after China imposed a national security law on the financial hub cracking down on dissent.

The city's leader, John Lee, said in a regular government press conference on Tuesday that the song was "not compatible with the national interest".

"Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has a duty and obligation to safeguard national security, and we should do it proactively and also preventively," Lee said.

The head of Amnesty International's China team, Sarah Brooks, said in a statement that "a song is not a threat to national security, and national security may not be used as an excuse to deny people the right to express different political views".

Hong Kong returned from British to Chinese rule in 1997 with the guarantee its freedoms, including freedom of speech, would be protected under a "one country, two systems" formula. Critics of the national security law say those freedoms have eroded fast.



Hospital doctors in England stage 72-hour walkout



## Economic revival: Khawaja Asif for getting rid of sick organizations, stopping tax evasion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday stressed the need for getting rid of sick organizations and taking effective measures to stop the billions of rupees tax evasion, causing a constant dent to the national economy.

Participating in the National Assembly debate for the budget 2023-24, he said giving the life-support and keep-pumping the financial resources to the deadwoods was the 'crime against the state,' being committed since long.

He said the incumbent government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, tried to give 'beyond the possibility' relief to the common man despite the severe financial

challenges, and in his view it remained successful to some extent.

The minister highlighted financial hardships of the public due to prevailing economic situation in the country and increased inflation. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar tried his best to 'possible the impossible' within the limited resources but there was dire need to strengthen the national economy with corrective measures.

He said the government had to pay a huge interest amount against the loans which was higher than the 'federal receipts.'

Khawaja Asif said the government would have to get rid of the sick organization, citing examples of two such departments [without taking their names] of

which debt was over Rs 1000 billion but they were being carried forward for reasons beyond understanding. Their early disposal would be better for the country, he added.

"Billions of rupees are being spent on such organizations sick to keep them alive and pumping the dead ones whose survival is impossible. It is a crime against the state," he said, adding the CEO and COO of the departments, supposed to alleviate poverty from the country, were getting Rs 300,000-350,000 monthly salaries while holding their positions intact on stay orders of the courts.

The minister said revenue collection was the major source of the country's income.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

## Only 5% given benefit, 95% given no benefit in budget: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N leader and federal minister Mian Javed Latif has said which is the hand that does not allow to arrest facilitators of May 9 incidents.

No sector has been given the facility in the budget but no one is talking. 95 percent have not been given any benefit in budget and only 5 percent have been given benefit.

He said this while expressing his views in National Assembly (NA) Wednesday.

Dr Yasmin Rashid was involved in May 9 incident but she was acquitted. Pervez Elahi will be acquitted. Imran Khan will be acquitted then we will talk on it.

See the judges are doing what with Pakistan, he added.

He said no one is owning budget today and nor any one is criticizing it who they know they have left what.

He remarked 35 percent increase in salaries is insufficient.

People are thinking is our defence in safe hands. IMF is saying money will not be given without political stability. Is IMF not politicking. It is interfering in internal affairs of Pakistan. US president was arrested for the reason that he concealed state files and took them away with him. They are conspiring to bail out the man who attacked Pakistan.

## PPP committed to serve people in country

QUETTA (APP): President of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Balochistan Women's Wing and former provincial minister Ghazala Gola and General Secretary Zareena Zehri on Wednesday said that the PPP was committed to serving people in the country.

They said this while talking to a delegation of women who met here. Both leaders said that whenever the Pakistan Peoples Party come into power, it had served the masses.

Ghazala Gola said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project was owed to the PPP and its completion would usher in a new era of development and prosperity in the country.

She said that former President Asif Ali Zardari gave provincial autonomy to small provinces and provided employment opportunities to the educated youth of Balochistan under the initiative of Balochistan Rights.

Ghazal said that the future belongs to the PPP and it would win the upcoming general elections with a thumping majority.

She said that women were the backbone of the country and steps should be taken to utilize their potential.

General Secretary Zareena Zehri said that due to the wrong economic policies of the Imran Khan government, the country was facing a worse economic situation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi presiding over a Webinar organized by Asian Ombudsman Association

## Talha announces successful impact of Hajj Portal in resolving pilgrims' issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood held a press conference on Wednesday to discuss the positive impact of the Hajj portal on pilgrims in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

He emphasized the portal's significance in addressing various issues faced by pilgrims during their sacred journey.

Senator Talha highlighted his personal commitment to facilitating direct communication with pilgrims by employing a team of information technology experts at his own

expense.

This team had developed a state-of-the-art Hajj portal, enabling pilgrims to lodge complaints and providing the minister with a platform to monitor and promptly address their concerns.

In addition, the minister informed the audience that the ministry had established complaint centers in Makkah and Madinah to further assist in resolving pilgrims' issues.

He assured everyone that the ministry was dedicated to ensuring the provision of maximum facilities and would continue to strive for the success of the Hajj operation.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf addressing the participants of National Conference-Local Democracy Moving Forward for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Pakistan

## NA Speaker says: Accelerating SDGs implementation crucial for sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf, emphasized the significance of focusing on the policies, processes, and challenges related to the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan and assured full support from parliament to facilitate the legislative processes for achieving the SDGs Agenda 2030.

Speaking at the National Conference titled "Empowered Local Governments-Moving Forward to Accelerate the Implementation of Agenda 2030" organized by Lead for SDGs in Islamabad, the Speaker highlighted the need to accelerate SDGs

implementation in the country. He acknowledged the substantial progress made by Pakistan in defining national strategies, development plans, and institutional reforms to achieve the SDGs. The Speaker commended the efforts of the SDGs Task Force, led by Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, emphasizing the pivotal role of localizing SDGs for the socio-economic development of the country.

He assured support from parliamentarians at all levels, including the National, Provincial, and local governments, to facilitate the legislative processes for achieving the SDGs Agenda 2030. Furthermore, the speaker emphasized the crucial role of local govern-

ments in achieving the SDGs by implementing and monitoring sustainable policies at the grassroots level. Local governments possess a deep understanding of local needs, resources, and challenges, enabling them to address unique development issues within their jurisdictions. The speaker stressed the importance of integrating SDGs into local development plans and strategies to contribute to the global agenda while ensuring measurable and impactful progress at the community level. Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Convener of the SDGs Task Force, reaffirmed the commitment of the SDGs Secretariat to localize the SDGs.

## Marriyum says: Artists asset of nation who play key role in promoting national culture, identity

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that artists were national asset who play a key role in promoting national culture and developing national identity.

She expressed these views in a meeting with film, stage and television artists here.

"Encouragement of creative thinking is indispensable for the growth of the society," the minister remarked.

In the budget of the

next fiscal year, Rs. 2 billion had been allocated for the film finance fund while Rs. 1 billion for the health insurance of artists, she said, adding that revival and development of the film industry was the "top priority of the government".

The minister said that promoting the positive image and true identity of Pakistan around the world was the need of the hour.

Films are an important means of highlighting a country's culture, history, values, heritage and tourism sector, she added.

## All Pak mobile phone traders' association delegation visits PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation representing the All Pakistan Mobile Phone Traders Association led by General Secretary (GS) Munir Baig Mirza visited Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Headquarters, in Islamabad today. The delegation met with Chairman PTA, Major General @ Hafeez Ur Rehman, and discussed matters related to the business interests of mobile phone traders, particularly in relation to mobile devices, applicable FBR duties.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Provincial President Pakistan Paramedical Association Abdul Salam Zehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Blood Donor Day observed focusing on dire need for maximum donations

QUETTA: The World Blood Donor Day was observed in the provincial metropolis as elsewhere in the country and world on Wednesday. Marking the Blood Donor Day, blood donation camps were organized while a seminar and awareness walk was also held in the metropolis.

The main blood donation camp was set up by the Fatimid Foundation at the Institute of Nephro-Urology.

A number of volunteers turned up at the camp to donate their blood for thalassemia and other patients suffering from blood diseases.

A seminar was also held at the Institute. Moreover, an awareness walk was also arranged there in which the Fatimid Foundation's provincial head and trustee, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi, other doctors, medical staff and volunteers participated.

Similarly, blood camp was also set up at the Pashtoonkhan Blood Bank. A rally marking the day was also taken out and blood camp was arranged by the Baloch Blood Bank in the city.

## Kiran declares PPP as best political choice for women

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)'s Secretary Information Women Wing Balochistan and Focal Person of the Federal Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, Human Development Kiran Baloch said that the best choice in politics for the women of Balochistan was the PPP's politics.

She, in a statement, on Wednesday said Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto are the best examples for those women who wished to join politics.

## ECC allows PPL to execute proposed framework agreement with SOCAR

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Wednesday after a detailed discussion allowed Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) to execute the proposed framework agreement with the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) Trading.

The ECC, which met here with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue

Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in chair, considered a summary of the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) regarding the framework agreement between Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) and State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), said a press release. The committee directed the Ministry of Petroleum to determine the country's need for LNG at least three months in advance on a rolling basis.

## Salute martyrs for their sacrifices, families for their patience: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday condoled with the family members of the Pakistan Army soldiers who embraced martyrdom for the country.

He saluted the martyrs and their families on their passion for sacrifice. He also paid tributes to the martyrs for sacrificing their lives for the sake of the country's security.

He telephoned the family members of the soldiers who were martyred in Miran Shah on June 9.

The president talked to the family members of

Subedar Asghar Shaheed, Sepoy Naseem Shaheed, and Muhammad Zaman Shaheed.

He also telephoned the family members of Sepoy Saqib ur Rehman who embraced martyrdom in Haider Khel on May 31.

Paying tributes to the services and sacrifices of the martyrs for their country, President Alvi thanked the families of the martyrs on behalf of the nation.

He also prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in paradise.

## PTI purposefully deploys violence as policy: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said keeping in view the facts that had been established so far, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) under its chief purposefully deployed violence as a policy.

Responding to a tweet of the PTI chairman, the prime minister in his tweet said if there was someone who deserved the title of modern-day Joseph Goebbels, chief propagandist for the German Nazi Party, was none other than Imran Khan. "He is certainly perfecting the art of lying."

"How convenient of IK to forget how he incited his cult followers to violence over a span of one year! He called the Army and intelligence leadership names, exploited the people's emotions through slogans of 'Haqqeeqi Azadi' and use of religious symbols and even administered the oath of 'Jihad' to them," he said. He said as the state symbols and military installations came under attack at the hands of his goons, he (the PTI chief) refused to condemn violence, what to speak of urging the arsonists to stand down.



ISLAMABAD: Convener MQM and MNA Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## PDM led govt striving to provide facilities to people: Agha Mehmood

QUETTA (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Housing and Works Member National Assembly (MNA) Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Balochistan General Secretary Maulana Agha Mehmood Shah on Wednesday said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led government believed in the development and prosperity of people in the country. Talking to APP, he said the federal government was striving to provide facilities including health, education, clean drinking water and others to public in the state.

He claimed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not provide any kind of funds to the MNAs of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam during the 3-and-a-half-year tenure.

He said that in the budget of 2022, funds of Rs. 50 crore have been given for development projects under which new tube-wells were installed to provide clean water drinking facilities to

around 23 villages in Kalat, Mastung district and Tehsil Mangchar which has solved the long-standing problem of the people of the area.

He said that earlier the children and women were forced to bring water from far away in the areas of Lahar, Tura, Skilko, Kohang, Shekhri, Katili, Hasan Lahu, Pindran, Bencha in Kalat district. In the same way, water supply was installed in the areas of Mastung district Kardgaap, Dasht, village Zehngit, Ganjadori, village Karsur, village Muhammad Hassani, Esplanji, Kund Imrani, Anjiri while tehsil Mangchar, Johana, Karchap, Baramzai, Sardar. Kot also started supplying clean water to the people by installing water supply to the people. Development works have also been done in respective areas including Marab, Kili Saloli Lakhoria, Adar Toba, Jhad Tarasani, Kili, Khayarzi and other areas of Surab district.



QUETTA: A delegation of Panjgur Press Club led by its President Umar Majid meeting with Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Imran Gichki

## APCA Balochistan demands GoB to implement on federal budget with letter and spirit

QUETTA: The President All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) Balochistan, Dad Muhammad Baloch has demanded of the provincial government to implement on the federal budget with true letter and spirit regarding raise in salaries of the provincial government employees.

In a demand made here on Wednesday, the provincial President of APCA also demanded of the Government of Balochistan to make 35 percent increase in the salaries of government employees and 30 percent in the pensions of retired employees in next provincial budget for year 2023-24.

Dad Muhammad Baloch also demanded of the provincial government to pay the 10 percent DRA allowance announced in 2021 in the next financial

year's budget giving needed relief to the employees.

He said that although the increase of 35 percent made in salaries of the federal government employees is not enough, but still they consider it quite better for them, thus demand of the provincial government to follow the decision.

He warned that strong protest campaign would be launched if the demand of APCA was not met immediately.

He also announced to hold a protest public meeting to press the provincial government for acceptance of demands on June 15 (today).

He pointed out that the government employees are facing severe financial issues due to the unprecedented inflation. As a result, it has become very difficult for them to make their both ends meet, he maintained.



GWADAR: On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Izzat Nazir Baloch, Tehsildar Ormara Noor Khan Baloch inspecting preparation of relief works in wake of Biparjoy cyclone