

Independent

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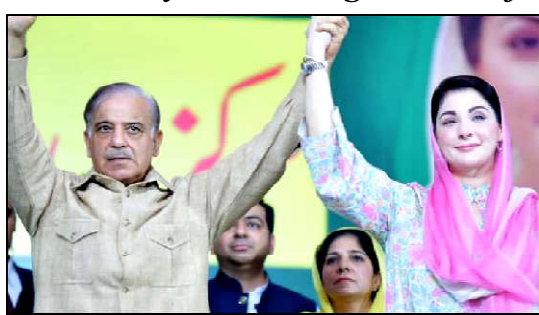
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Shahbaz elected PML-N President unopposed Nawaz Sharif to return to lead Pakistan on road to progress & prosperity : PM

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

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

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



He lauded Maryam Nawaz for courageously leading the party all across Pakistan, despite all the difficulties that came in her way. He said sixty percent of the population of the country were youth and Pakistan Muslim League (N)

needed young leaders for the future. He appreciated workers of the party for standing by PML(N) despite going through hardships in jails and facing difficulties, adding similarly party leadership also stood their ground and faced oppression and suffering with courage and determination. He said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was working hard to steer the country's economy out of the present difficulties. Those who were unduly criticizing Ishaq Dar had no place in the party, he added. The prime minister

said the government fulfilled all conditions of International Monetary Fund to meet financial needs of the country. He reminded that the PML(N) spent its political capital for the sake of the State at a time when inflation was high and international commodity prices skyrocketed. Despite difficult economic conditions, common man was given relief in the budget and salaries were raised by 35 percent and pensions by 17 percent, he noted adding Pakistani nation was brave and would

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif exchanging views with a delegation of PML-N leadership from Balochistan during meeting held in Islamabad.

Senate approves bill allowing ECP to announce election dates

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate took a significant step towards electoral reforms as it approved the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 in a session held on Friday. The Bill, presented by Minister of State for Law and Justice Senator Shahadat Awan, aimed at amending the Election Act 2017. He said that the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 sought to bring about

changes in the current electoral framework and processes, with the primary objective of enhancing transparency and fairness in the electoral system. He informed that the Bill would now progress to the National Assembly for further review and approval before it could be enacted into law. Shahadat said the approval of the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 by the Senate represented a sig-

nificant milestone in the country's journey towards electoral reforms. The government and Opposition will now engage in further deliberations and discussions in the National Assembly, ensuring a thorough examination of the proposed amendments, he said adding that the ultimate aim was to strengthen democratic practices and ensure the conduct of free

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

FM Bilawal emphasises imaginative, multidimensional foreign policy for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday emphasised that Pakistan's foreign policy must be imaginative and multidimensional considering the rapidly transforming geopolitical landscaping across the globe. The foreign minister, addressing a ceremony to observe the 50th Foundation Day of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad here, said after assuming office in April last year, the country faced serious challenges on the diplomatic fronts. However, the government pursued a foreign policy aimed at addressing the national challenges, im-

proving access to goods and services, preserving sovereign decision making and promoting multilateralism and international law. He said addressing the country's domestic issues required quick rebuilding of ties, restoring trust with key capitals, and reinvigorating extensive engagement with traditional partners. The foreign minister said that Pakistan was committed to forging good relations with all major powers, which beyond US and China, also include Europe, Russia, Japan and ASEAN. He said Pakistan reinforced and deepened the partnership with Saudi

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

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

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

CM requests to increase 33 seats for three medical colleges of Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has requested the Federal Minister for Health, Abdul Qadir Patel and President Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) Islamabad, Professor Dr Rizwan Taj to make an increase in the medical seats in three medical colleges of the province for the academic session 2022-2023.

The requests for the increase in seats of the medical colleges including Loralai Medical College, Jhalawan Medical Colleges and Makran Medical Colleges have been made by the Chief Minister in two separate letters to the Federal Minister Health and President PMDC. It has been requested to increase 33 seats i.e., 11 each for all the three medical colleges of the province. According to the official memorandum, the initiative of approval of increase in 33 additional seats in the medical colleges as per the decision of provincial cabinet would be appreciated.

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked the respondents are talking about expanding the scope of review but they are not telling grounds. He further observed the real question in case is this the scope of review can be expanded till what extent. He gave these remarks while presiding over a 3-member bench of SC during the hearing of Punjab election and review of judgment and order act case here Friday.



QUETTA: Former Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Syed Matuallah Agha meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Dues of NFC Award & PPL not received yet: Despite financial crunch, next FY's budget of Balochistan to be public-friendly: Farah

GoB spokesperson says World Bank's officials' team arriving in province in July; talks to be held for assistance in development projects, human resource instead of loans

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QUETTA: The spokesperson, Government of Balochistan, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah has categorically stated that despite the financial crunch, it is utmost endeavour of the provincial government to make the next financial year budget of the province public friendly. The GoB spokesperson said that a team of officials of the World Bank is arriving in Balochistan next month. She said that we would be talking to the WB team on the human resource development in Balochistan. In addition to this, we would also be seeking their (WB) cooperation for development projects instead of mere loans in different sectors.

This and similar other details were shared by the GoB spokesperson, Farah Azeem Shah while speaking on Friday.

Customs Intelligence recovers smuggled cigarettes of worth over Rs. 300 million

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QUETTA: In a major crackdown against the smugglers of cigarettes, the Customs Intelligence recovered huge quantity of smuggled foreign cigarettes in the country on Friday. The Customs Intelligence sources informed that the smuggled cigarettes of worth over Rs. 300 million were recovered during the crackdown. Only from Balochistan, 4.28 million cigarettes were seized during the crackdown against the smuggled cigarettes. The worth of seized cigarettes is around Rs. 114 million, the sources informed adding that the crackdown would remain continued in future as well.

Govt to give professional training, laptops to Balochistan's youth: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday termed talented youth a "real asset" to Balochistan said the federal government would work on strengthening their professional capacity. He said the youth in Balochistan would be given professional training in diverse areas and laptops would be distributed among them. He was talking to an eight-member delegation of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) from Balochistan led by Jafar Khan Mandokhel. The other delegates included Jamal Shah Kakar, Sardar Yaqoob Nasir, Agha Shah Zeb Durrani, Amir Afzal Mandokhel, Chaudhry Naeem, Nasser Achakzai, and Zaheer Khan. PM Sharif said the progress of Pakistan was linked with the development of Balochistan. The government, he said, was working on priority over the development projects in Balochistan under the umbrella of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Govt taking measures to boost border trade: Traders can play important role in revival of decaying economy, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the traders' community can play important role in revival of otherwise decaying economy of the country. Traders on one hand contribute millions of rupees in the public exchequer on account of the tax, while provide vast opportunities of employments on the other hand. Therefore, it is responsibility of the government to ensure complete protection and provision of necessary facilities for the traders and industrialists. These views were expressed by the Governor while speaking to a delegation comprising traders of the province led by central president of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran, Ajmal Baloch who called on him here at the Governor House on Friday. During the course of meeting, the traders apprised the issues being faced by the traders in movement and transportation of the goods in the province. They particularly referred to the complaints against the government officials in this regard. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that the government has already reduced the number of check posts in different areas of the province just to remove the apprehensions of the traders and industrialists. However, he would speak to the concerned federal and provincial high ups for improving the situation further.



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor Information Mitha Khan Kakar and Spokesperson Government of Balochistan Farah Azeem Shah addressing a Press conference

Advisor to CM for Information says: Land revenue record being made digital; facilitation centers being opened in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Advisor to Chief Minister for Information, Mitha Khan Kakar has stated that the land revenue record is being made digital all over the province, and in this regard, facilitation centers are also being opened to facilitate the masses about the related issues. Mitha Khan Kakar was addressing a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Friday afternoon. The spokesperson to Government of Balochistan, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah was also accompanied with the Advisor for Information. Mr. Kakar maintained that the land revenue management system has been introduced as per the vision of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo. He said that it is vision

of the Chief Minister to provide digital facilities to the general public at the facilitation centers to be set up in all districts of the province. He mentioned that the registries and land settlement record would be computerized on instructions of the Chief Minister. The digitalization of land revenue record would contribute in economic development of the province, he believed. He said that at least 3,000 youngsters would be provided scholarships by the Google under an agreement with the government. He mentioned that primarily, the number of scholarships where were to be awarded to youth were just 1,000, but on insistence of the Chief Minister, the number of scholarships were increased to 3,000.

Biparjoy cyclone starts weakening

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) "BIPARJOY" over the northeast Arabian Sea after crossing the Indian Gujarat coast (near Jakhau port) has weakened into a Severe Cyclonic Storm (SCS). According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the SCD lies near Latitude 23.8°N and Longitude 69.4°E at a distance of 200km east-southeast of Keju Bandar, 180km southeast of Thatta and 270km east of Karachi. The associated maximum sustained surface winds are 80-100 Km/hour. Very rough sea conditions over Northeast Arabian Sea prevail with wave heights of 10-12 feet.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili presiding over meeting of Board of Directors of Balochistan Public Procurement Authority



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango cutting ribbon to inaugurate a Departmental Store at BAmall

Provincial Minister for Home commends: Modern shopping Center of best standards inaugurated in Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has stated that a modern shopping Center of high quality and best standards has been inaugurated in Quetta city. With this inauguration, the common men would also be getting opportunities of business, maintained by the Provincial Minister while speaking on occasion of the launching of the shopping Center at airport road here on Friday. Also present on the occasion were the senator Naseebullah Bazai, inspector General of police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, DIG police, Ghulam Azfar Mahesar, Abdullah Hameed Gul and other high ups and dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, Mir Ziaullah said that he is pleased to be part of the launching ceremony of the shopping mall.

Asad Gilani assumes charge as Nadra chairman

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



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



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

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

Asks CDA chairman to ensure fast execution of development projects

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

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

ongoing uplift projects in Islamabad Friday.

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

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

The PM said chairman CDA should himself monitor the work on devel-

opment projects besides ensuring the standard and quality of the work. Special focus be placed on landscaping of development projects. International standard be kept in view during landscaping of the projects, he added.

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

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



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need for mainstreaming the differently-abled children in society and providing them better educational facilities. She expressed these views in a meeting with Dr Fauzia Khan, a US-based expert on the education of special children, and the representatives of World Health Organization, a regulatory authority of private educational institutions and the Directorate of Special Education.

Samina Alvi stressed

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

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

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

She urged the Pakistani teachers to benefit from international stan-

dards of special education training.

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

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

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

Sikh community seeks probe as Khalistan leader mysteriously dies in UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sikh community in the United Kingdom has called for a "full investigation" into the death of Avtar Singh Khanda, a Khalistan Movement leader who mysteriously died in Birmingham.

Avtar Singh Khanda had led the protests at the Indian High Commission in London earlier this year when the Indian flag was pulled down by the Khalistan activists.

Cellphone videos posted on social media showed protesters climbing the building and taking down the Indian flag. Avtar Singh Khanda was seen leading the protest in the videos.

India had registered a strong protest over the incident, saying, "The UK government's indifference to Indian diplomats and personnel was 'unacceptable'."

According to the media reports, Avtar Singh Khanda was admitted to a Birmingham hospital after

Court testifies IO in murder case

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Friday testified the investigation officer against accused allegedly involved in killing his daughter and throwing the body at a metro station.

Additional Session Judge Adnan Rasool heard the said murder case. Investigation Officer Fakhir Abbas, recording his statement, said that the police had recovered the body of the victim girl Saliha Fatima in November 2021 from under construction G-II Metro Station. He said that he took the samples of the dead body along with other officers at crime scene and shifted the body to PIMS for autopsy. He said that the deceased girl was 11 to 12 year old. The investigation officer informed the court that the father of the victim girl Muhammad Wajid came to the police station after some days and identified the body in PIMS. He said that he felt doubts due to the contradiction in statements of the accused and police took him to Lahore Lab for DNA matching.

British Council Pakistan, FDE launches schools connect programme

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

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

This initiative aims to address the challenges faced by Pakistan in achieving high-quality and inclusive education, particularly in the areas of teaching, school leadership, inclusion of marginalized children, and curriculum effective-

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

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

Addressing a press conference in National Press Club (NPC) flanked by Advisor to Prime Minister (PM) on National Heritage and Culture Division Engr Amir Muqam, and TIP Founder Shahgee Gul Afridi, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister said it was the happiest, most delightful, and wonderful day as TIP has joined PML-N under the leadership of Shahgee Gul Afridi.

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

PTI dies political death in May 09 incidents: Firdous Ashiq Awan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) leader Firdous Ashiq Awan has said PTI died political death in May 9 incidents and new party IPP took birth.

He said this in a statement issued here Friday.

He went on to say "I remained away from politics for two years. I did not want to stand with the narrative party and chairman of party were pursuing."

I stood with him like rock till the time he targeted the political rivals but I had

to sit on side when he diverted his guns to armed forces. There is political and economic instability and hatred against each other in the country, she held.

In the May 9 incidents the monuments of the martyrs were desecrated. In politics decisions are taken under the norms of give and take and prevailing situation, she said.

She underlined we have open invitation to all our doors are open to the affectees of PTI.



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

British Council Pakistan, FDE launches schools connect programme

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Dan Jørgensen on Friday described his meetings with Pakistani leadership as highly productive and fruitful.

Following the witnessing of the signing ceremony of two projects including Increasing Communities Resilience to Climate Change and Unlocking Pathways to support the implementation of carbon markets in Pakistan, he spoke to the media and expressed satisfaction with his discussions with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

and Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman.

The first project was signed with Agha Khan Foundation, heralding a new era of resilience in northern Pakistan. Over the next two years, a groundbreaking project will be implemented, encompassing a range of innovative measures designed to enhance disaster response, strengthen infrastructure, and promote sustainable practices.

This transformative initiative will witness the formation of community-based disaster risk response teams and committees, ensuring that local communi-

ties are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively respond to emergencies. The project's scope extends beyond disaster management, as it envisions a comprehensive habitat plan for ten villages in the picturesque Kalash Valley.

In close collaboration with government and civil society stakeholders, this plan will pave the way for sustainable development, balancing the needs of the communities with the preservation of natural resources.

A key focus of the initiative is promoting climate-forward natural resource

management through nature-based solutions.

This will include the installation and upgrading of irrigation infrastructure, harnessing solar power for lift irrigation, empowering communities to establish passive solar greenhouses, and providing training to local farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices. By embracing these solutions, communities will be able to adapt to the changing climate and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

The second project was signed with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).



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

Pak officer receives award of Trafficking in Persons Prevention

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zaeher Ahmed, a Pakistani law enforcement officer, was presented with the prestigious Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Hero award by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in ceremony in Washington, DC.

This annual award brings international attention to the fight against human trafficking. Officer Ahmed was recognized for his efforts in guiding the Government of Pakistan's implementation of anti-trafficking in persons reforms, his leadership in capacity building, and his training initiatives said a news release issued by the embassy.

These efforts were instrumental in Pakistan's promotion from TIP Tier 2 Watchlist to Tier 2 in 2022.

Zaeher Ahmed is a former director of the Federal Investigative Agency's Anti-Human Smuggling Unit and is passionate about stopping human trafficking in all its forms.

IHC summons police officials in cop murder case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday summoned the Superintendent of Police Industrial Area and Deputy Superintendent of Police I-9 in a case pertaining to burning of a vehicle which was taken in the custody from the jurisdiction of Banigala Police Station in the murder case of a constable.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the case wherein the petitioner's counsel Imran Abbasi Advocate alleged that the said vehicle was in the Banigala Police Station but it was burnt at the I-9 Police Station and a political party was charged for the incident.

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

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

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

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

mitigate sufferings of the flood-affected people of the province.

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

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

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

Global aspiring pilgrims pack Masjid e Haram for pre-Hajj Juma prayer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aspiring Hajj pilgrims from around the world, including 70,000 Pakistanis, packed the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the area surrounding the Kaaba for the Juma prayer preceding the Hajj of 2023.

APP correspondent reported from Makkah that the atmosphere was filled with reverence and tears, showcasing the beauty of human diversity and the timeless power of faith.

Aspiring pilgrims have also gathered in the surrounding areas of Haram Sharif, forming lines to offer their prayers, while the holy sanctuary remained filled with pilgrims from beginning to end.

This remarkable hajj gathering leaves a deep and

lasting impact, highlighting the significance of this sacred event.

In the early Friday morning, the Grand Mosque in Makkah was already filled, resulting in an estimated gathering of over one million pilgrims who offered prayers in the surroundings of the Kaaba.

The well-trained Pakistani Haram Guides proudly stand at various exit points, such as the Ajyad and Gaza exits of Haram Sharif, assisting Pakistani pilgrims in reaching their respective residences via buses.

With their distinctive green caps and vests, they offer diligent guidance to ensure a smooth journey for the pilgrims after Friday prayers.

Delegation of minorities community visits CPO Islamabad, meets ICCPO

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

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

One of the key initia-

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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Budget concerns

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

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

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

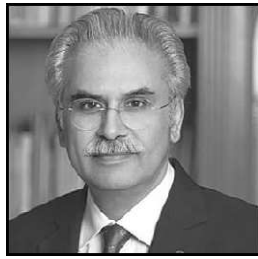
Moody's has also warned that Pakistan's failure to restart its \$6.7bn bailout programme with the IMF is pushing the country closer to defaulting. "There are increasing risks that Pakistan may be unable to complete the IMF programme," a Moody's analyst was quoted as saying. Without an IMF programme,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

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

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

Some argue that cooperating with the Fund could give the government another chance to put its fiscal house in order to conclude the review before the expiry of the programme. Pakistan's current crisis is driven mainly by external debt obligations. Hence, strict import controls have failed to improve foreign exchange reserves.

What the government needs to understand is that falling reserves, uncertainty around the IMF programme and policy inaction is adding to the crisis. Unless the IMF is on board, our debt distress will only increase.



Zafar Mirza

Recently, in an academic session with students abroad, I was discussing human effectiveness and leadership. Subliminal disturbance about the events back home led me to dwell on correlating the popularity of leaders and their effectiveness. Having considered many examples from history, the group concluded that popularity cannot necessarily be equated with effective leadership.

There have been many popular leaders who were very ineffective and turned out to be even destructive. On the other hand, there have also been many effective leaders who were relatively less known and unsung but who made a major, positive impact on history in terms of shaping the future of their societies.

Two sequential ex-

amples of leaders from mid-20th-century Germany are very instructive in this regard: Adolf Hitler and Konrad Adenauer. One was extremely charismatic and popular but a destroyer; the other was a wise statesman with a vision and a nation builder, but people hardly know of him.

Hitler took up the agenda of restoring Germany's lost pride after its defeat in World War I and through his mercurial personality and emotional oratory mobilised Germans and turned them into Nazis. He tried to take power through a failed coup attempt in 1923, was arrested. He made fiery speeches in court where some judges developed sympathy for him. He was released much before the completion of his jail term, and mobilised against the Jews and for pan-Germanism.

Konrad Adenauer was the lord mayor of Cologne in 1933 when Hitler was riding the popular wave to power. From the beginning, he was courageous enough to openly oppose Hitler and his party. As mayor of Cologne, he ordered the removal of swastika flags from bridges and public

buildings and refused to greet Hitler when he arrived in Cologne on an election campaign. A week after Hitler took over as chancellor, Adenauer was removed as mayor. For the next 10 years or so, he survived arrests and Nazi hunts. After the 'unconditional surrender' of Germany and occupation by the Allies, he took upon himself the responsibility of restoring the dignity of his crushed country and bringing Germany back into the comity of nations as a responsible state. This was a Herculean job. Along with others, he founded the Christian Democratic Union in 1945 and became its first chairman, organising the party across the country. As a Catholic, he strongly believed in Christian morality and developed his leadership on moral principles. As a very hardworking leader, he was determined to take Germany out of the abyss. Eventually, he was elected as the first post-World War II chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Imagine his challenges: bringing internal coherence and confidence to his people who had been defeated in two world wars;

rebuilding the image of Germany after the barbaric genocide of Jews; dealing with four super powerful occupying forces; dealing with the Soviet communist forces that had already divided Berlin. The economy was in tatters and the world didn't want Germany to regain its strength after twice experiencing its expansionist ambitions.

For the next 15 years as chancellor, Adenauer put his head down and bit by bit rebuilt his country — its economy, its people and its image. Through his unrelenting work ethic, clear vision and political skill, he inspired confidence internally and in the outside world. He realised that a united Europe was essential in the long run for Germany, so he laid the foundations of what today is the European Union (EU). To deal with the communism threat knocking at his door during the Cold War years, he played a key role in strengthening what we know today as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato). He never accepted the division of Berlin, despite the erection of the wall, and laid the foundations of reunifi-

cation. The wall eventually came down in 1989.

Today, Germany is Europe's largest and the world's fourth largest economy. German technology is the gold standard. It is a welfare state which takes care of its people in every sense of the word. Germany's political system and its institutions are strong and it has a central role in the EU.

A hard test of effective leaders lies in how their vision is dealt with by future leaders. In Konrad Adenauer's case, this is how Angela Merkel, another Christian Democrat leader, remembered him on his 50th death anniversary, "... who, with foresight and skill, gave our country a perspective and stability after the failure of the Weimar Republic and horrors of National Socialism. We bow to Konrad Adenauer with gratitude. We also take his merit as an obligation for our tasks in a confusing, difficult world. In view of what Konrad Adenauer and his contemporaries have achieved, we should have the courage to continue this work". -- Courtesy Dawn

And then there is delusion



Raouf Hasan

It is mind-boggling to see how deeply infatuated the state and its institutions are with the task of rendering Imran Khan and PTI irrelevant. The longer it takes them to do it because of setbacks they experience along the way, the more desperate and delusional they seem to get.

Even the perilous economic situation, the looming default and lack of progress at any level for a possible reprieve, recedes into insignificance in comparison with pushing Project Khan to its desired but disastrous fruition.

They may be equipped with a stock of potent implements to help them accomplish the task, but the path appears increasingly strewn with thorns and potholes as they move on. It was bound to be because an undertaking

against the natural flow of time draws powerful forces from the opposite direction which is exactly what is being experienced in the current instance. The going is getting tougher as is their desperation to keep moving on, nevertheless.

One may agree with Khan or not, but one must not hesitate to acknowledge that disputes and differences in the political domain can only be tackled and resolved by using political weaponry. Nothing else will work — particularly in a country where institutions of the state may have been weakened, even compromised, but they are still there and becoming increasingly restless in the face of unrelenting criticism about their (lack of) performance. The most important of these institutions is the judiciary which carries the burden of an inglorious past and demeaning coinages like the doctrine of necessity which legitimised dictatorships.

Fearing remedial intervention, which is its constitutional right and duty, the judiciary has been subjected mercilessly to venomous propaganda and its judges maligned

and humiliated in the public domain by stalwarts of the ruling coalition. This pressure has been palpable which has reflected in some of its judgments, or absence thereof, but the assault goes on relentlessly lest this key pillar of the state wakes up to fulfilling its long-awaited constitutional responsibilities.

The defence minister's statements recently were like plugging the last nail in the coffin of the institution. The pressure thus mounted will be unbearable and is likely to further impair the working and delivery of a key state organ. But this has been the objective ever since the launch of an unprecedented vituperative campaign against the judiciary and its judges: to render it dysfunctional. This is exactly what it has become, scared of even handing out judgments which should have come as a matter of routine.

All other institutions have already succumbed to the relentless pressure they have been subjected to and, in the process, appropriately reduced to doing the illegal bidding of their unconstitutional

masters.

In executing their favourite project, the government's priorities appear painfully out of sync. With the country teetering on the brink of default, unemployment rising with inflation having jumped to the highest ever level of 38 per cent, education and health systems on the verge of collapse, corruption having penetrated every sector of state operations beginning at the top, and with every indicator painting a dismal picture, the government's focus remains unwaveringly on its bid to eliminate Khan. It is as if their thinking faculties, if they are still left with any, refuse to function beyond the precincts of this self-defeating infatuation.

Hope has long been gone and despondency has taken over. The future wears a bleak look as all able people take to leaving the country in droves. Such is the level of desperation that it begs for some celestial intervention to regenerate a feeling that we are still breathing. One has a numbing sensation building inside which is impossible to manage. Where are we headed?

Does anyone really care?

What are the options left to ponder the struggle for survival? When the state apparatus would like you to believe that thieves have a right to be custodians of the exchequer and criminals should dictate the justice system; when good people feel afraid amidst an environment infested with ugliness and outlaws reign supreme; when crime festers and innocent life in fear; when divisions are augmented, and homogeneity becomes scarce.

And when today is a torture and tomorrow a mirage; when security of life and property depends on ingratiating outlaws; when goodness is squeezed and wickedness sets the rules; when humanity goes into slumber and the animal within stalks; when dark becomes ascendant and light is incarcerated; when animals wear a human apparel and be on the prowl; when survival becomes a painful and humiliating struggle and death beckons; and when hope recedes and despondency takes over.

This is no exaggeration. This is a reality that

stares people in the face every morning they get up and every evening they try to close their eyes. These thoughts are a perennial presence. They would not leave them. Immersed in the murkiness of times, everyone is stretched to the limit just trying to keep their equilibrium. But this unending and seemingly unrewarding struggle is consuming them in no uncertain terms as they become increasingly enfeebled, thus easy victims for the forces of evil.

Much that one may pretend to be infallible, a streak of imperfection is built into all of us. It cannot be otherwise. We are all liable to make mistakes. It is only human.

It would be wise to recognise our shortcomings and shun our delusional partaking. Remaining beholden to pre-conceived strategies can prove to be damagingly counterproductive. This is a path we should avoid treading. Let wisdom and sanity chisel our future. Let hope shine across the horizon, a prospect Faiz emblazoned with his inimitable words. -- Courtesy TheNews

Disaster tourism?



Zubeida Mustafa

In an emergency, the best and the worst in human nature comes out for all to see. Unfortunately, the scenes witnessed on Wednesday and Thursday in Karachi's Seaview area were shocking. They did not reflect well on the psyche of Karachiites. People made their way in huge numbers to the beach to "enjoy" the sight of Mother Nature unleashing her wrath. All this happened as the administration and disaster management authorities issued warnings of the dire impact that Cyclone Biparjoy would have. Karachi may not have been directly in the line of the cyclone's wrath, but the public's attitude left much to be desired anyway. Anticipating the public's tendency not to obey orders, Section 144 had been imposed and the police stationed on the spot. Yet nothing could stop the adventure-seekers out to have some fun.

The people did exactly what the authorities expected they would. How should one describe this cavalier behaviour? Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman aptly termed it 'disaster tourism', while appealing to the people not to expose themselves to the danger. I will simply describe it as the height of stupidity and selfishness — after all the warnings had been issued. The episode has left me wondering why our people behave in this bizarre manner. We still have to recover from last year's catastrophic floods that left Sindh devastated. What is worse, the province is even

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

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

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

tered beyond repair by the raging wind and waves.

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

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

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

The same is the case in all walks of life. Few believe what is first announced. Even the mayor's election in Karachi — a stormy affair itself — on the day the cyclone was to make landfall produced a familiar uncertainty and lack of credibility.

Such nonchalance and carelessness on the part of the public and lack of governmental credibility are a tragedy for society at large. Will anything now restore our faith in this country? - Courtesy Dawn

Wheat for all



Tabinda Ashraf Shahid

Food insecurity in Pakistan has aggravated sharply over the past few years, the inevitable outcome of persistent political instability and declining economic health. With one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, poverty, and vulnerability to climate change, Pakistan's after the 2012 floods indicated that even after a whole year only 15pc of the affected population consumed nutritionally adequate food — meat, lentils and fruit along with the staple wheat. According to LRA-2013, food insecurity in Balochistan was the highest at 47pc, followed by Sindh at 41pc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Baligh asks medical students to equip contemporary knowledge of their field

Independent Report
BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that advanced research in the health and education sectors is very important in this modern time. Addressing the seventh annual convocation of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College as the chief guest here Friday, he said that medical graduates should use technology to acquire contemporary knowledge of their respective fields. He urged the students to see for themselves in which eras of Pakistan's history the highest GDP growth rate was observed. He said that mega-development projects were completed in

Bahawalpur during the era of the Pakistan Muslim League (N). He told that a 400-bed Sir Sadiq Mohammad Khan Abbasi Hospital (Civil Hospital), Drug testing laboratory, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Government Sadiq Women University, and other educational institutions were established in Bahawalpur during the period of Pakistan Muslim League (N) government. During this period, he added the construction of the Home Economics College building started which is completed now. Engr Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that approval was taken for the establishment of

Bahawalpur Institute of Science and Technology in 2018 and the federal government has now allocated the budget for the institute in the coming fiscal year. The Governor condemned the incident of May 9 and said that Nishan-e-Haider was awarded only to those who sacrificed their lives for the defense of the country and they deserved all the respect and honor. He paid rich tribute to the services of Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi in the fields of health and education and termed them valuable. During the convocation, two hundred medical graduates were awarded degrees. Student Ramsha Talat



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

Murad lauds govt depts, security agencies for working hard to face cyclonic storm

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah commended all the provincial government departments, particularly the essential services and the police for working hard with dedication in view of the cyclonic storm and said that the Sindh government had taken effective measures to protect the lives and properties of the people living along the coastal belt as it work wholeheartedly and this kind of teamwork was unprecedented. In a statement issued here from CM House on Friday, Murad Ali Shah said that in view of the cyclone, the Sindh government took effective precautionary measures but with the grace of God,

the cyclonic storm had been averted and life in the coastal belt was inching towards normalcy. The CM commended all the institutions of the provincial government for their hard work and dedication and expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army, Navy, Rangers and Maritime Security for their cooperation with his government. He also thanked the welfare organizations for extending a helping hand to the government in dealing with the situation. The chief minister also appreciated the cooperation of the people living along the coastal belt and in dangerous buildings in Karachi for vacating their houses. I believe it is quite

painful to vacate homes, but it was a question of security and safety of the people, therefore they were requested for the purpose," he said and added they understood the situation and cooperated, he added. In the end, the chief minister thanked the Meteorological Department for issuing timely alerts to keep the government and the people of the province abreast for taking precautionary measures well in time. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that it was good teamwork demonstrated by all the concerned departments and the institutions to face the cyclonic storm, otherwise, such coordinated efforts have hardly been witnessed in the past.

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

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Friday said that provision of quality education was the top priority of the government and no compromise would be made on the supremacy of merit and learning in the educational institutions. He was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of the Peshawar Model Softer project of the Peshawar Model Educational Institute during his visit to the City University of Science and Technology, Peshawar. Provincial ministers Adnan Jilil, Saboor Sethi, Gayoor Sethi and Secretary Higher Education were present on the occasion. While appreciating

the owners and administration of the City University and its allied education institutions for the provision of quality education at a minimum fee to people, the Governor said that the promotion of quality education was the top priority of the government and no compromise would be made on quality education and supremacy of merit. He said there was a need for solid thinking if the performance of the government education institutions was not improved despite resources provided by the Government. He said the country can make rapid progress and achieve economic growth by providing quality education to children.



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

Sajida Ahmed says: Overseas Pakistanis angry because of current government's policies

Independent Report
MULTAN: Sajida Ahmed, chairperson of the Pakistan Alliance (PA) has said in her statement that the Pakistanis abroad do not have any confidence in the current government. They are busy. Their own leaders are not willing to bring their money to Pakistan and they are threatening overseas Pakistanis, illegal cases are being filed against their relatives in the country. Instead of investing, overseas Pakistanis are already there. They have also started selling their properties and have emptied the Roshan digital account. In a country where the money and houses of the economically ill people are not protected in the name of law. Court orders have no value, their honors are not protected. If they are

reluctant to invest in such a country then why will any foreign countries invest. One million people have left the country in a year. Until overseas Pakistanis are given the right to vote, until the occupation mafia. Their houses, lands and plots are not protected. Unless the police structure and justice system in Pakistan are improved, it is not possible to win the trust of people abroad. They have become conscious by staying in the countries where they are staying away from the ignorance of Pakistan, where there is law, governance and human rights.



BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Engineer Baligh-ur-Rehman along with Vice Chancellor, Engr. Prof Dr. Athar Mehboob giving a commemorative shield to Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Prime Minister's Adviser on youth Affairs, on the occasion of Talent Hunt Youth Sports League Volleyball Provincial League (Man) ceremony organized by Prime Minister's Youth Program and Higher Education Commission at the Islamia University Bahawalpur.

Interim ministers review progress of development projects of Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Interim Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer and Interim Provincial Minister for Communications, Construction and Excise and Taxation Bilal Afzal presided over a high-level meeting held at Commissioner Office Bahawalpur. In the meeting, Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtesham Anwar briefed the provincial ministers about the ongoing

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



LAHORE: Additional Secretary Shrines Rana Shahid Saleem addressing main ceremony-Bhag Akhand Paatg Sahib to observe Martyrdom Day of Guru Arjun Dev Jee at Gurdawara Dera Sahib.

KMC to build fire station at Karachi University

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation will build a fire station on the premises of the University of Karachi. The KMC would also train the KU staff so that they along with the fire brigade department could be able to respond to the emergency without any difficulty, he expressed these views by the KMC Administration Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rehman at the MoU signing ceremony at the Council Room of the KU Vice Chancellor Secretariat here on Friday. He said that the

population of the city and infrastructure is increasing regularly but we do not have a large number of fire departments in the metropolis and this fire station would be helpful to quickly react against any unfortunate incident that happens not in the KU but also in the nearby localities. He visited the KU to sign the memorandum of standing for handing over an ambulance, a fire engine, one coaster, and three mobile vans to the University of Karachi. The KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi and the KMC Administrator.

Police constable shot dead by unknown outlaws

RAJANPUR (APP): A police constable was shot dead by unknown outlaws at Dajal road in Jampur city on Friday. According to police sources, Shakeel Ahmed was going on duty when some unknown outlaws started firing on him. Resultantly, he sustained bullet injuries and died on the spot, however, the criminals managed to escape from the scene. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ghazi Khan, Capt (ret'd) Sajjad Hassan Khan while taking notice of the incident, directed District Police Officer (DPO) Rajanpur Capt (ret'd) Dost Muhammad to reach the crime scene at the earliest and ensure early arrest of the criminals. He said that the criminals involved in the crime would be arrested soon and added that all possible resources would be utilized to provide justice to the family of bereaved constable.

Speaker not issuing my production order: PTI member SA
KARACHI (Online): PTI member of Sindh Assembly (SA) and UC chairman Firdous Shamim Naqvi has said speaker SA is not issuing his production order while he is in jail since one month. He said this in a statement issued here Friday. He held "I am only voice of my party at present. All others have been disappeared. I want to talk on budget in assembly. As per constitution one person can retain only one seat among national assembly, provincial assembly and Senate seats. The constitution is silent over retaining UC Chairman seat along with MNA and MPA seats.

CJ PHC chairs 11th provincial justice committee meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musarrat Hilali on Friday chaired the 11th Provincial Justice Committee (PJC) meeting at the PJC Secretariat, PHC here. The committee reviewed the implementation status of the decisions taken in the previous meeting and the chair expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the decisions. A press release issued here on Friday said that directions were issued to departments regarding decisions partially implemented. The Committee was informed that land at Hayatabad had been earmarked and possessed by the Home Department where after the release of funds by the concerned department, a state-of-the-

art Forensic Science Laboratory would be established in a phase-wise manner. The Offenders' Management System and data integration of Justice Sector Stakeholders were also on the agenda. The Committee was apprised that a Technical Working Group (TWG) was constituted in this regard where after deliberations and meetings, certain recommendations were made regarding data entry of all the documents in the public domain by the Police Department. It was said that the IT Wing of the Peshawar High Court would ensure the introduction of the feature of accessibility of data to the presiding officers of the courts and it would work on introducing modules of police, prosecution.

PFA DG visits Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) will give a free-of-cost nutrition counseling and nutrition guide kit to 39,279 Hajj pilgrims, who will travel from Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan to Saudi Arabia through more than 131 flights. This was stated by PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar while visiting the Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk (HNGD), set up at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore. He said the purpose of providing the nutrition kit is to protect the pilgrims from health problems while performing the Hajj. The nutrition guide kit provides dietary guidelines to prevent various diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, breathing problems and skin diseases. The director general said that a first-ever nutrition program for Hajj pilgrims had been launched with the collaboration.



LAHORE: Activists of Civil Society holds awareness rally outside the Press Club to Mark International Domestic Workers Day, in Provincial Capital.

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

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed sessions judges and special courts of Punjab province to complete the identification parade within 48 hours in respect of persons accused in May 9 incidents. The court maintained the process of identification parade is very important for any accused. The present identification parade process is very futile. Delay in identification parade renders all the process dubious. Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh of LHC issued 13-page decision on the petition filed by a citizen Muhammad Ramzan Friday. It has been said in the decision that registrar should send copy of

decision to all sessions judges and IG Punjab. The decision said that delay in identification parade is violation of fundamental rights, respect and fair trial. The constitutional courts are responsible for protection of constitution. The constitutional courts need to review steps of administration. Decision said international laws on human rights have expressed reservations over arrest before trial. It has been further said in the decision the petitioner is in jail since May 25 in connection with identification parade. It has been said in the decision the workers resorted to vandalism and riots on May 09 and caused damage to state buildings.

PTI affiliated NCs chairmen, councilors quit party

PESHAWAR (APP): Neighbourhood Councils (NCs) chairmen and councilors on Friday quit Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), condemning May 9 vandalism, and announced to join Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Addressing a news conference here at Peshawar Press Club (PPC), they said that they were elected on tickets of PTI as they were interested to serve the people of Peshawar city and later after the end of the party government at federal and provincial levels remained part and parcel of the agitation politics. But, after the violent incidents of May 9-10, they couldn't remain within the fold of PTI. They said, "The manner under which the building of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Peshawar.

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

KARACHI (APP): A four-member delegation led by Resident Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs at the United Nations Julien Harnais called on Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr. Mohammad Sohail Rajput here Friday and discussed various issues including response to the Cyclone Biparjoy and rehabilitation of the 2022 flood-affectedes. The chief secretary stated that by the grace of Allah Almighty, Sindh was not directly affected by the coastal storm. The Cyclone is being monitored since the first day and the Chief Minister of Sindh immediately visited the coastal areas in view of the approaching storm by issuing necessary instructions, he said. He further mentioned that as soon as alerts were received about the storm, the government started shifting people of vulnerable coastal areas to safe places to ensure the safety of their lives and

property. The Sindh government successfully relocated more than 82,000 individuals from the coastal belt, he told and added, the government of Sindh is providing food and other facilities to 50,000 people in 81 camps, including 5,000 families in Malir, 17,050 families in Sujawal, 23,000 families in Badin, and 5,000 individuals in a camp in Thatta. The Chief Secretary also mentioned that after the reduction in the impact of the storm, the affected individuals would be sent back to their homes starting from Monday, and the provincial government would provide one week's ration to them. He further said that in the wake of the coastal storm, the Pakistan Army, Police and Rangers provided significant assistance in the process of relocating people to safe places, and the district administration was fully supported.



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



LAHORE: Workers of Masiha Millat Party holds protest in the favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Finance on Friday said the coalition government was fully committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and keen to at least complete the 9th review as it had already taken many difficult and politically costly decisions in that context.

Responding to the statement of IMF's Resident Representative Ms Esther Perez, the Finance Ministry spokesperson said negotiations with the Fund were going on, however, it would be appropriate to clarify "our position" on some specific issues raised in the press statement.

He said the 9th IMF review was conducted in early February 2023 and the government completed all technical issues at a fast pace. The only outstanding

issue was of external financing "which, we understand, was amicably resolved in the prime minister's telephonic call of May 19, 2023, with the Managing Director (MD) of IMF".

The spokesperson said the budget for the financial year 2023-24 was never a part of the 9th Review, however, "in line with the prime minister's commitment to the IMF MD, we shared the budget numbers with the IMF Mission and we are continuously engaged with them even on the budget".

On the specific issues raised by Ms Esther Perez, he said as far as the broadening of the tax base was concerned, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had added 1,161,000 new tax payers i.e. 26.38% to its tax base in the last 11 months.

"This is an on-going exercise and will continue," he said, adding 0.6% advance adjustable withholding tax on cash withdrawals over Rs 50,000 was another big step in that direction.

Besides, he said, the tax-exemptions that had been announced in the budget were "triggers" of growth in the real sectors of economy. "This is the sustainable path to provide employment and livelihood to the common citizen. In any case, the amount is fairly small."

On the Benazir Income Support Programme's (BISP) allocation, the spokesperson said the poor initiatives in the budget were not limited to the BISP beneficiaries whose budget in any case had been increased from Rs 400 to Rs 450 billion.



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

Tariff differential subsidy of Rs.171 billion for Karachi'ites on cards: Khurram Dastgir

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

The minister while addressing a press conference here said that consumers of K-Electric would get a significant relief in electricity tariff under the TDS, a targeted subsidy aimed at providing protection to masses against increasing cost of electricity generation.

Moreover, Rs.151 billion were allocated in the budget 2023-24 for other parts of the country including Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir

and merged ex-FATA districts, he informed adding that IMF conditionalities would not affect TDS as it was a targeted subsidy.

The minister while spelling out strategy for dealing with any potential emergency situation due to cyclonic storm Biparjoy said that on directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif a comprehensive strategy was formulated at national level for ensuring safety of people and supply of electricity in vulnerable areas. Under the national endeavour, over 2000 personnel from different power distribution companies including GEPCO, LESCO, MEPCO and SEPCO were deployed in Southeastern districts of

Sindh on emergency basis along with vehicles and necessary equipment, he informed. Sindh government has extended the fullest cooperation in the regard and a close coordination was being maintained among all the stakeholders while technical teams deployed at generation plants and grid stations were on high alert for ensuring electricity supply, the minister said. The cyclone has landed and its severity has been decreasing gradually while supply of electricity was continue as per routine in the most of the areas, Khurram Dastgir said adding that there was no load shedding for 70 percent domestic consumers and industry at the moment.

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

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

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

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

The DPP with the support of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) took special steps to upgrade 15

more mills as per the Guidance Document prescribed by the Russian Federation for compliance with the requirements for rice exports.

Efforts were put in this direction to ensure these establishments were in conformity with the SPS requirements of Russia and make them able to export rice through improvement in quality and quantity of rice. Now, 19 rice enterprises from Pakistan can export rice to the Russian Federation. This was a big achievement of the Government of Pakistan which brings good news especially, for the rice farmers of Punjab and Sindh, as its ultimate beneficiaries.

Moreover, Pakistan being an agrarian economy, can also look for enhancing exports in other domains as well by improving quality standards as per global markets. This agreement opens a gateway to further exports to international markets given the quality standards remain sound.



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



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

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

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

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

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) ratcheted up efforts to promote the comprehensive development of 6G on June 4 at PT Expo China. The ministry said 6G will almost certainly lead the Chinese economy to a much higher level, and open up a brand-new cyber landscape.

China has rolled out the world's largest and also most advanced 5G network. New forms of industrial internet integration are flourishing. The information and communication industry has effectively driven the transformation of the real economy, according to MIIT.

"Yes, 6G will be commercially available around 2030 in China, and 3GPP (an international organization on telecom technology development) is expected to start 6G standardization in 2025. As the day is drawing near, 6G R&D has reached a key breakthrough period now."

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

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Shipping activity at Port Qasim

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

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

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

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Real estate sector growth vital for economic uplift

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

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

efforts of both organizations helped to solve the issues and problems confronted by the business community, said a press release.

He said the current body of the ICCI was also taking measures to serve the interest of business community and address their issues, adding that it had taken many steps during the last 8 months, including representation of the chamber in CDA Board.

PSX loses 67.87 points

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

A total of 156,023,085 shares were traded during the day as compared to 149,676,270 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3.746 billion against Rs.3.606 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 323 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 108 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 24,009,338 shares at Rs.13.53 per share; K-Electric Ltd. with 17,821,031 shares at Rs.1.64 per share and Hasco Petrol with 16,293,500 shares at Rs.5.84 per share.

Weekly inflation increases by 0.20 pc

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

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 255.17 points as compared to 254.67 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 34.96 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

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KARACHI: Fisherman start fishing at Ketu Bander after cyclone Biparjoy has now reduced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

K-Electric had filed application seeking increase in power tariff by paisas 49 per unit. NEPRA had conducted public hearing on May 30, 2023 on FCA. The FCA for the month of April will be charged less by Rs 3.98 per unit as compared to March.

According to NEPRA this will not be applicable to lifeline consumers. domestic consumers consuming electricity upto 300 units, agriculture consumers and Electric vehicle charging stations.

Punjab govt promoting solar system to resolve energy crisis: Minister

MULTAN (APP): Punjab government is working actively to promote solar energy in the wake of energy crisis in the province by allowing a factory to produce 5 megawatt (MW) electricity through solar system which was one MW previously.

Caretaker provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce, Skills Development and Energy, MS Iqbal expressed these views while talking to the members of executive committee of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) here on Friday.

He observed that the industries in Punjab were faced with numerous problems for which the govt was exhausting all resources to solve these issues. The minister regretted that when Excise and Taxation Department closes a factory, no one likes the decision adding that the Department should speak to industrilists who are ready to pay taxes like



QUETTA: Vendor selling apricots (Khurmani) at Pishin Stop.

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public organizations. Shutting down of factories due to energy and other issues is a serious matter for which the provincial govt is talking to the federal govt, he said and added that a plant running on RLNG in Jhang was producing 1240 MW electricity and the government was taking steps to provide electricity to the industry through it.

The minister mentioned a number of other issues including the imposition of 17 percent tax on animal feed by the federal govt, corporate farming, agriculture etc.

He noted that the tax would add miseries for already under crisis industry, adding that it may create problems for livestock too and the provincial govt was requesting the federal govt for its reversal.

President MCCI Mian Rashid Iqbal in his welcome address, shed light on various issues being faced by the industrialists.



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

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,700

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,700 and was sold at Rs 223,400 on Friday against its sale at Rs 220,700 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,315 to Rs 191,530 from Rs 189,215 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 175,569 from Rs 173,447. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs 100 to close at Rs 2650 and tenger silver also increased by Rs 85.73 to close at Rs 2,271.94. The price of gold in the international market increased by US\$ 36 to \$1965 against its sale at \$1929, the association reported.

Sacrificial animals' prices skyrocket with Eidul Azha just 2 weeks away

LAHORE (APP): With Eidul Azha just two weeks away, the prices of sacrificial animals, especially goats and sheep, have increased manifold. Most makeshift sacrificial animals' markets in the provincial metropolis, including the Shahpur Kanjan, the largest one in Lahore, became functional on Friday, attracting a considerable number of potential buyers. However, most of visitors were seen returning without purchasing any animals, as the prices of sacrificial animals, what they say, were skyrocketing. The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) specified 10 sites for establishment of

makeshift cattle markets and sales points this year, and divided the city into seven zones for the purpose. Traders and cattle breeders, while responding to a survey, carried out by APP, said that major factors of skyrocketing of prices of sacrificial animals were because of high transportation and animal feeding costs, and the loss of livestock during the last year's floods. The high prices of sacrificial animals have affected the low-income and salaried class the most. According to the survey, most people are giving preference to collective sacrifice due to high prices of sacrificial animals.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House.

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

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

Macron and the prince sat down for a one-to-one working lunch at the Elysee presidential palace. The French presidency said the talks would focus on bilateral relations between the two countries and on regional stability issues, especially after long-time rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran restored diplomatic ties earlier this year.

France is a major weapons and defense supplier to Gulf nations. The leaders also are preparing for a global summit next week "aimed at bringing together private and public funding" to fight poverty,

support climate transition and protect biodiversity, the French presidency said. The event is expected to gather over 50 heads of states and governments as well as many NGOs and prominent climate activists.

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

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

In the time since, Prince Mohammed has sought to portray Saudi

Arabia as a possible mediator amid Russia's war on Ukraine and has used its position as the dominant member of the OPEC+ oil cartel to try and boost global energy prices. The prince also seeks to build megaprojects across the kingdom to create new jobs for Saudi Arabia's youthful population.

However, challenges and international suspicions remain. Saudi Arabia remains mired in its yearslong war with Yemen. Executions in Saudi Arabia, one of the world's top executioners, have spiked after the coronavirus pandemic.

A top French official, speaking anonymously in accordance with the presidency's customary practices, said France wants to convince Saudi Arabia to engage with Russia on a plan to end the war while preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



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

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

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

"I often say the founda-

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

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



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

U.N. human rights chief urges clamp-down on people smugglers after shipwreck

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called on Friday for countries to clamp down on people smugglers and human traffickers after at least 78 migrants were killed in a shipwreck off the coast of Greece.

Witness accounts suggested between 400 and 750 people had packed a fishing boat that capsized and sank early on Wednesday morning about 50 miles (80 km) from the southern coastal town of Pylos.

"What happened on Wednesday underscores the need to investigate people smugglers and human traffickers and ensure they are brought to justice," Jeremy Laurence, U.N. Human Rights Office spokesperson, told report-

ers in Geneva. "The High Commissioner reiterated his call to states to open up more regular migration channels and enhance responsibility sharing, ensure arrangements for the safe and timely disembarkation of all people rescued at sea, and the establishment of independent monitoring and oversight of migration related policies and practices."

Dimitris Chaliotis, a Hellenic Red Cross volunteer who was part of the rescue operations, said that most migrants were from Libya and Syria. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster 104 survivors and 78 people who drowned were brought to shore by Greek authorities, but nothing has been found since.

Qatar emir holds Baghdad talks with Iraq PM

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq signed several gas and infrastructure deals with Qatar on Thursday as it welcomed the Gulf state's emir to Baghdad as part of its push to secure foreign investment in reconstruction.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani was welcomed by Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani at the airport, images broadcast on Iraqi media showed.

Relations between the two countries saw a long period of tension under ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, before easing up over the past decade.

Despite Iraq's immense oil and gas reserves, about one third of the population lives in poverty, and the government is seeking out regional partners to rebuild its war-battered roads, schools and hospitals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

UNICEF calls for better protection for Sudan's children trapped in 'unrelenting nightmare'

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: The conflict in Sudan has killed over 330 children and left 13 million more in dire need of humanitarian assistance, UNICEF said Friday, calling on the country's warring factions to better protect vulnerable young people.

For two months, Sudan's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamden Dagalo, have been locked in a deadly power struggle.

The fighting has killed more than 958 civilians, according to Sudan's Doctors' Syndicate, which only tracks civilian casualties. The true death toll is likely much higher.

"Children are trapped in an unrelenting nightmare, bearing the heaviest burden of a violent crisis they had no hand in creating - caught in the crossfire, injured, abused, displaced and subjected to disease and malnutrition," said Mandeeq O'Brien, UNICEF's Representative in Sudan, in a

report issued Friday. According to the United Nations' latest figures, the eight weeks of fighting have displaced more than 2 million people across the country, with lawlessness and ethnic violence intensifying across the Darfur region.

It wasn't immediately clear how UNICEF accounted for the 13 million children. There are roughly 21 million children in Sudan, which had a population of over 45 million before the conflict broke out.

Last week, the International Committee of the Red Cross rescued 297 children from an orphanage in Khartoum.

The operation came after 71 children had died from hunger and illness in the facility since mid-April.

In West Darfur province, "at least 14,836 children under five are expected to be severely malnourished," UNICEF said. For weeks, the restive province has been under a near-complete communications blackout.

UN Palestinian refugee agency resumes West Bank services after strike

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The U.N. Palestinian refugee agency said on Friday it had resumed delivering services in the West Bank after a month-long strike that affected thousands.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said its teams across the West Bank were preparing the agency's facilities to return to their regular activities as early as possible next week. It said resumed education and health services were its priority.

"As soon as the preparations are complete, UNRWA facilities will be open for services, some as soon as tomorrow," it said in a statement.

Established in 1949 following the first Arab-Israeli war, the agency provides public services including schools, primary healthcare and humanitarian aid in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.



The nuclear-powered submarine USS Michigan approaches a naval base in Busan, South Korea.

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

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have agreed that the Russian leader will visit Turkey "soon", Interfax cited a Kremlin aide as saying on Friday.

The visit would be Putin's first to a NATO country since he ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Putin has only rarely travelled outside Russia since the beginning of full-scale hostilities.

"There is an invitation from the President of Turkey. Putin and Erdogan

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

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

Turkey has refused to join its Western allies in imposing economic sanctions on Russia, but has also supplied arms to Ukraine and called for its sovereignty to be respected.

World breaks average temperature record for early June

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Average global temperatures at the start of June were the warmest the European Union's climate monitoring unit has ever recorded for the period, trouncing previous records by a "substantial margin", it said on Thursday. The news comes as the El Niño climate phenomenon has officially arrived, raising fears of extreme weather and more temperature records.

"The world has just experienced its warmest early June on record, following a month of May that was less than 0.1 degrees Celsius cooler than the warmest May on record."

Thailand seeking to re-engage Myanmar junta with ASEAN meeting

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: Thailand's caretaker government is proposing to "fully re-engage" Myanmar's military rulers and has invited ASEAN foreign ministers to an informal meeting on Sunday in an effort to jump-start a stalled peace plan, according to a letter seen by Reuters and sources aware of the invitation.

The proposal was made in a June 14 letter to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) counterparts from Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, which was seen by Reuters on Friday and confirmed by three sources with knowledge of

the planned meeting. ASEAN has barred Myanmar's ruling generals from its high-level meetings over its failure to honour its agreement, known as the "5-point consensus", which included calls for an immediate end of hostilities, dialogue between all parties and the granting of full humanitarian access. ASEAN chair Indonesia has declined to attend the meeting, according to three sources. Indonesia's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to request for comment. The foreign ministry in Thailand, which is expected to have a new government by August following an election last month, declined to comment.

Nine arrested for human smuggling after Greece migrant ship disaster

Monitoring Desk
KALAMATA: Nine Egyptians have been arrested on suspicion of being people smugglers after the migrant boat disaster off Greece that claimed at least 78 lives, a port source told AFP Thursday.

Among the detainees is the captain of the overloaded and dilapidated vessel, the source said.

The source said the fishing boat left Egypt empty before taking on the migrants at the Libyan port city of Tobruk and heading towards Italy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A US nuclear-powered sub arrives in South Korea, a day after North Korea resumes its missile tests

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: The United States deployed a nuclear-powered submarine capable of carrying about 150 Tomahawk missiles to South Korea on Friday, a day after North Korea resumed missile tests in protest of the U.S.-South Korean live-fire drills.

The USS Michigan's arrival in South Korea, the first of its kind in six years, is part of a recent bilateral agreement on enhancing "regular visibility" of U.S. strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear program, according to South Korean officials.

With the deployment of the USS Michigan, the U.S. and South Korean navies are to conduct drills on boosting their special operation capabilities and joint ability to cope with

growing North Korean nuclear threats, the South Korean Defense Ministry said in a statement.

It said the U.S. submarine arrived at the southeastern port city of Busan but didn't say how long it would stay in South Korean waters.

The USS Michigan is one of the biggest submarines in the world. The Ohio-class guided-missile submarine can be armed with 150 Tomahawk missiles with a range of about 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) and is capable of launching special forces missions, according to the South Korean statement.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries have been expanding their exercises in reaction to North Korea's provocative run of missile tests since last year.

Cleanup begins after tornadoes hit in Texas and Florida, killing 4 and destroying homes

Monitoring Desk
PERRYTON: Cleanup efforts continued Friday morning after severe storms spawned tornadoes that left at least four dead, three in Texas and one in Florida, destroyed hundreds of homes, tossed vehicles into buildings and left hundreds of thousands without electricity.

In Perryton in the Texas Panhandle, Ochiltree County Sheriff Terry Bouchard said three people were killed when the tornado struck Thursday afternoon.

Another person died Thursday night in the Florida Panhandle when at least one confirmed tornado cut through Escambia County, toppling a tree onto a home, county spokesperson Andie Gibson told the Pensacola News Journal. Of the homes searched so far in Perryton, all but one occupant had been accounted for, so the main priority was going back over the area and the debris field to find that person, Perryton Fire Chief Paul Dutcher said on NBC's "Today" show.

Dutcher estimated that 150 to 200 homes in the community had been destroyed and said that in the downtown area, many storefronts were totally wiped off and buildings had collapsed or partially collapsed.

"You keep hearing people say, 'We'll rebuild' and 'We'll be back,'" he said. "And we will. That's the hope we have." But the biggest concern for now is trying to help the families of those who were killed carry on, Dutcher said. "It is such a tragedy," Dutcher said. "All the stuff behind me, it can all be rebuilt, but those lives that we've lost is really the tragedy of everything," the fire chief said while standing in front of a collapsed building and a pile of bricks and other debris covered the ground, partially burying a truck.

Sheriff Bouchard urged residents to remain home if possible as cleanup efforts continued in the town of more than 8,000 about 115 miles (185 kilometers) northeast of Amarillo, just south of the Oklahoma line.



Police secures the area at the crash scene near Carberry, Manitoba, Canada.

President for AI-based solutions to business, industrial problems

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday urged Pakistan's business and industrial sectors to adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based solutions for solving their problems and boosting their efficiency and productivity. The president, talking to a delegation from Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF), at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that exponential advancements in information technology had created new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in various fields such as health, education, business and industry, and

Pakistan's IT companies should adopt a global outlook to fully benefit from them. Chairman Soliton Investment Fund, Dr Mansoor Ali Khan, Founder and CEO of Soliton Group, Dr Fauzia Khan, representative of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, and senior officials of the government attended the meeting. Talking to the delegation, the president underlined the need for Pakistan's IT companies to develop win-win partnerships with academia and industries at both the local and international levels. He added that robust

and mutually beneficial partnerships among academia and industry stakeholders would help achieve key economic and technological milestones. President Alvi emphasised the need for promoting skills-based education in Pakistan, besides equipping the youth with employable skills through online courses and short-term associate degree programs. He said that he had been constantly urging the stakeholders to produce more skilled graduates, invest in emerging technologies, make fast decisions

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



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



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

Senator Qadir assures collective steps for economic development of country

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Abdul Qadir on Friday said that collective measures would be taken for economic development of the country. With the arrival of Russian crude oil and gas, where Pakistan's energy needs will be met, the pressure on the economy will also be reduced to some extent, he added. In a statement issued here, he said that Pakistan had paid for cheap crude oil from Russia in Chinese currency, which was a significant change in the country's policy of export payments dominated by the US dollar. In principle, the way for China to trade crude oil in Chinese currency is open, he said adding that the benefit of oil should be reached to the public. After refining Russian oil, petroleum products should be cheaper by 35 to 40 rupees, he added. He said that the IMF has declared the levy of 50 rupees on petroleum prod-

ucts as insufficient and there was a fear of increasing the charge by 10 rupees. He said that Pakistan needed to free itself from the clutches of the IMF, so far, an agreement had been signed with Russia for the purchase of 100,000 tons of oil and this oil was to be brought to Pakistan in two ships. For the first time in the 75 years history of Pakistan, a Russian crude oil ship has reached Pakistan, the second ship will also arrive Pakistan by next week, he noted. He said that European countries should also be discussed to set up LNG plants in Pakistan and the TAPI gas pipeline agreement was also a major development. The Senator said that it was also very gratifying that the revolving credit of the country's gas has been cleared, after the crude oil, the first shipment of LNG from Russia has reached Pakistan through Torkham border.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday inaugurated the launching of the first-ever Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR-23) to be held from July 12-14. The event was attended by government officials, representatives from international partners, humanitarian organizations, academia, media and members of private sector, a news release said. The PEDRR-23 is part of NDMA's efforts to raise awareness of disaster risk reduction and to build resilience to disasters in Pakistan. It will showcase the latest technologies and innovations in disaster risk reduction and will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to network and share best practices. The expo would constitute academic conferences, seminars, exhibitions and various youth competitions to ensure maximum participation.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday informed the Senate that Pakistan is a responsible state and no one can dare to cast ill eyes on atomic and other assets of the country. Speaking in the Senate in response to points raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, the minister said that no member of the federal cabinet was taking salaries and very minimum perks were being given to them. Only 1800 CC car and petrol at par with federal secretary was being given to them. Earlier resuming debate on the budget, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed said that International Monetary Fund (IMF) wanted to default Pakistan and creating hurdles in disbursement of \$ 1 billion tranche. Such tactics were being adopted

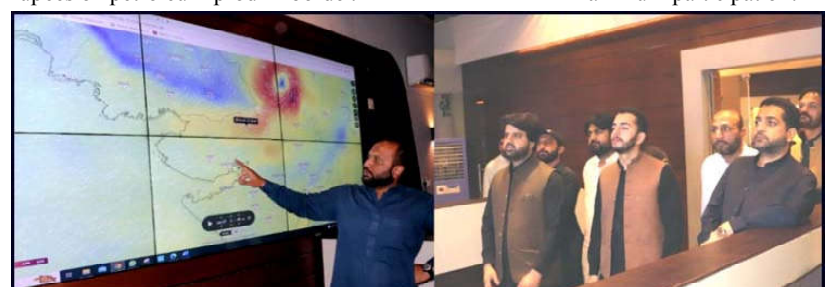
to snatch atomic bomb facility of Pakistan, he added. He suggested that elimination of elite and protocol culture besides curbing various 'mafias' were mandatory to address the key challenges to the national economy. He criticized the government for not giving any concrete plan for debt retiring, controlling inflation, civil and police reforms. He said that the national debt has surged to record Rs 60,000 billion and the budget lacked any concrete plan to address this grave issue. He demanded that a commission should be formed to investigate who had borrowed these hefty loans and where it had been spent. He said inflation has also touched to 38 per cent which was even more than Sri Lanka.

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate was informed on Friday that Pakistan is a responsible country, our defence assets are in safe hands. Replying to the questions raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan during debate on the next year's budget, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said we have the capacity to defend our motherland. He said under the austerity measures, no member of the cabinet is taking salary. Taking part in the discussion, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan said that the share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National Finance Com-

mission should be given well in time as it is directly linked with the lives of the people. He asked to exempt erstwhile FATA from taxes for more ten years. Rana Maqbool said the latest oil deal with Russia will definitely help improve the economy. The Senate today passed "The Elections Amendment Bill 2023". The Bill which was moved by the Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan contains amendments in the Elections Act 2017. Talking about the Bill, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said that under this bill, the Election Commission of Pakistan

will now be able to announce the dates for the general elections. Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani while supporting the bill said that the bill is tantamount to protecting the future generations of Pakistan. The House also passed unanimously "The Members of the Senate Salaries and Allowances Bill 2023". It was moved by Senator Kauda Babar. Senator Irfan Siddiqui paid tribute to the Chairman Senate for delivering a speech in Urdu at the Russian Parliament saying that such great practices should be continued in the future.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango being briefed about cyclone biparjoy during his visit to PDMA control room

UN Residential Coordinator visits District Headquarter Hospital Gandawah

QUETTA: The Residential Coordinator of United Nations, Julius Harness visited the District Headquarter Hospital Gandawah on Friday. On the occasion, a meeting was held under the chair of Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magsi, Muhammad Ramzan Palal, and attended by UNOCHA's Dr. Zaheer Ahmed, Ms. Rehana Khilji, WFP's Shaahk Riaz as well as the representatives of UNICEF, WHO and other

concerned officials. The Deputy Commissioner on the occasion briefed about the devastated flood and rains last year as well as the process of relief and rehabilitation launched afterwards by the provincial government in collaboration with the welfare organisations besides other related matters. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Palal informed that the infrastructure of Jhal Magsi had been destroyed due to the devastations caused by the flood.

Departmental action taken against acting SP Barkhan; demoted as Inspector

QUETTA: The Police command of Balochistan has taken departmental action against the acting Superintendent of Police Barkhan, Noor Muhammad Bariach in the tragic case of Barkhan. According to the police sources, Noor Muhammad Bariach, actually the DSP but serving as acting SP Barkhan at the time of Barkhan tragic incident, has been demoted as Inspector of Police. The departmental action has been taken against DSP Noor Muhammad

Barich, posted as acting SP Barkhan, on the basis of inquiry report of the Barkhan tragic case in which three bodies were found from a well in Barkhan. A video had also gone viral on the social media regarding the case. As per the report, Noor Muhammad Bariach had not taken any action despite the fact that a video had gone viral about the incident. Noor Muhammad Bariach had not taken any action describing the incident contrary to the facts, the inquiry report mentioned.



QUETTA: Members of Young Nurses Association Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against not getting scholarship from 14 months.

Pak Army secures 2nd position in Intl Pace Sticking Competition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army has secured second position in International Pace Sticking Competition 2023 while rendering exemplary performance at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK. The annual Pace Sticking competition held at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was aimed to test the quality of mixed drills that had come to close in the UK. A total of 16 countries participated in the Competition where five drill sergeants from Pakistan Army participated in the closing ceremony, the official sources told APP.

Toshakhana Case: PTI chairman files written reply in NAB

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI chairman has not appeared on being summoned for NAB inquiry in Toshakhana case but he has filed reply in NAB through his counsel Barrister Gauhar. The NAB jurisdiction was challenged in Toshakhana inquiry. According to sources chairman PTI while challenging the NAB jurisdiction through his written reply in Toshakhana inquiry case said as per law cases less than Rs 500 million don't fall in the jurisdiction of NAB. Determining the cost of Toshakhana gifts is job of cabinet division. Imran Khan said in his written reply today I cannot appear and if NAB summons I will appear on June 19. It was further said in the reply Chairman PTI did not get determine cost of gifts in the capacity of prime minister.

BYA delegation visits Jinnah House to express solidarity with Armed Forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Balochistan Youth Association (BYA), which visited the Jinnah House Lahore on Friday to express solidarity with the Armed Forces, condemned the May 9th incidents. The BYA delegation members, in a joint statement, said, "We are representing the entire Balochistan in the wake of the May 9 tragedy. We have come to the Jinnah House to express solidarity with our Pakistani brothers and the Army." They expressed their resentment on the vandalism and violence on May 9 and expressed their heartfelt grief over the destruction and damage caused to

the house of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "Those who vandalized and misbehaved on May 9 should receive the same punishments as terrorists because the conspiracy and sabotage to weaken military institutions is anti-patriotism and sedition," they added. "Desecrating the mosque and the National Flag at the Jinnah House is tantamount to promoting the enemy's objectives, rather becoming its tool," the BYA delegation maintained. They demanded that those who had vandalized the memorials of martyrs and tried to tarnish the country's image internationally.



QUETTA: ANP Provincial President, Asghar Khan Achakzai expresses his solidarity with Members of Balochistan Government Teachers Association during their hunger strike for acceptance of their demands, outside Balochistan Assembly.

Balochistan budget to reflect people's aspiration: Samina Zehri

QUETTA (APP): Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has said that the Balochistan government has taken the province out of difficult situations and put it on the path of development. Despite all the difficulties, the provincial government led by Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo has allocated a budget for each region on the basis of equality, she said. In a statement issued here on Friday, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the proposed budget would be people-friendly which would truly reflect the aspirations of the people of Balochistan. She said, the Balochistan government will complete its constitutional term.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the Balochistan budget would be very balanced and people-friendly, which was good for Balochistan. It will open new avenues of development for the people and employment opportunities will be created, she said. She further said that in the budget, development projects worth billions of rupees had been laid in every district of Balochistan, which would bring Balochistan at par with other provinces in development. A new era of social development will begin in the province, the credit of which goes to the government of the Chief Minister. Senator Zehri said that in these circumstances, a better budget could not be presented for Balochistan.

Bilawal, UK foreign secy discuss bilateral ties, climate finance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, James Cleverly telephoned Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and discussed issues of mutual interest. FM Bilawal in his statement on twitter handle account said that he was pleased to receive the phone call from his British counterpart, with whom he discussed bilateral ties. He mentioned that the conversation focused on the urgent need for mitigation measures to combat climate change and natural disasters. The critical role of international financial institutions in climate financing and reconstruction in disaster-hit areas also came under discussion.

PM, PPP leaders discuss prevailing political situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday here held a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party and had a detailed discussion on the current political situation in the country. Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Shah, Advisor to the PM on Kashmir and Gilgit-

Baltistan Affairs Qamar uz Zaman Kaira, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Senator Nisar Khuro were part of the PPP delegation. Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar and Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the PPP leadership appreciated the prime minister for announcing measures for public welfare in the budget despite difficult economic conditions.



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

Rasheed raises concerns over transparency in upcoming general polls

RAWALPIND (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Friday raised concerns over transparency in upcoming general elections as he sensed foul play in Karachi mayor elections. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said time will tell the PPP what it has lost by staying away from Jamaat-e-Islami mere for the mayor's seat.

President PPP Balochistan women wing greets Murtaza

QUETTA (APP): President of Pakistan People's Party Balochistan Women's Wing and former Provincial Minister Ghazala Gola and General Secretary Zareena Zehri have congratulated Murtaza Wahab on being elected as Mayor Karachi. In a statement issued here on Friday, PPP Balochistan women wing leaders said Murtaza Wahab is the son of Karachi who will represent all sections of Karachi. "Murtaza Wahab has

a huge majority in the mayor's elections held in Karachi," they said and hoped that Murtaza Wahab will play an active role in the construction and development of Karachi. The PPP leaders noted that it has been proved today that Karachi does not belong to any one party and everyone has to work together for its development. They also congratulated the elected mayors and deputy mayors of other cities of Sindh.

US Senate confirms first Muslim woman federal judge

WASHINGTON (APP): Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, a Bangladeshi-American lawyer, was confirmed Thursday by the U.S. Senate, making her the first Muslim woman on the federal bench. Choudhury, 47, was confirmed in a 50-49 vote, with Senator Joe Manchin, the only Democrat to vote against her confirmation. She will serve the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn. She is the second Muslim to be confirmed to the federal bench after Zahid Quraishi, a Pakistani-American, in 2021. Before being nominated to the bench by President Joe Biden in January 2022, Nusrat Jahan spent her entire legal career with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a non-profit organization founded in 1920 "to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to every person" by the U.S. Constitution. She was most recently the legal director of the ACLU of Illinois.

Acting President PTI Quetta calls for re-election on party's vacant positions

QUETTA: The acting President Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Quetta, Malik Hannan Khan Bazai has called for holding re-election on the positions of the party fallen vacant in the province like other parts of the country after 9th May. He was addressing the joint meeting of Joint Action Committee of the party here on Friday. He said that various positions have fallen vacant after resignations tendered by the

office bearers all over the country and so in Balochistan. Therefore, it is need of the hour to reorganise the party and make it more effective with consensus. He underlined the need to elect the president and general secretary of PTI Quetta district on the basis of merit, ideology and performance. He mentioned that he has already sent a letter to the acting General Secretary of Quetta to call meeting of the district office bearers for the election.



QUETTA: Activists of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are holding protest demonstration against rigging in mayoral election in Karachi, at Quetta Press Club.