

# Independent

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## PM Shehbaz orders inquiry, crackdown on human traffickers

Announces day of mourning over death of Pakistanis in Greece shipwreck incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday announced the observance of a day of mourning on June 19 over the death of Pakistani nationals who lost their lives after a ship carrying migrants sank off the coast of Greece on June 14. "Tomorrow, the national flag will fly on half-mast and special prayers will be offered for the deceased," PM Office Media Wing said in a press statement issued in the Urdu language. Moreover, according to another notification of the PM Office, the prime minister has constituted a high-level four-member committee to conduct an inquiry into the tragic incident.

"In an unfortunate incident on 14th June, 2023, a boat carrying migrants capsized off the coast of Greece resulting in the deaths of Pakistani/AJK nationals along with other nationals. The number of casualties are being still ascertained. The prime minister, while expressing his grief over the incident and also taking a serious note of it, has been pleased to constitute an inquiry committee," the notification said.

The committee will be headed by its chairman Director National Police Bureau Ehsan Sadiq and Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Africa) Javed Ahmad Umrani, DIG Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Police Region Poonch Sardar Zaheer Ahmad and Joint Secretary Interior Division, FIA Faisal Nisar Ch. as its members.

The inquiry committee would submit its report within one week.

According to the notification, the inquiry committee would ascertain facts of the Greece boat tragedy, identify loopholes and lapses in the legal/enforcement mechanism in Pakistan that exposed precious human lives to the vagaries of human trafficking in this particular case and similar incidents in the past.

The committee is tasked to analyze similar past incidents and action taken so far and to take stock of the existing legal

framework, enforcement measures (in the country) and international coordination to prevent, control and punish human smuggling and to prepare short-and long-term recommendations (including legislation, enforcement measures, awareness campaigns and improvement of national and international coordination) to apprehend agents, facilitators, masterminds, rackets and for the eradication of the menace of human trafficking.

Online adds: Chief secretary Azad Jammu and Kashmir had also tasked a focal person to contact Pakistan embassy and Greek authorities in Greece regard

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QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Mir Naseebullah Marri and MPA Nasrullah Zarey giving away notification of upgradation to President Government Teachers Association Habibur Rehman Mardanzai



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting addressing the NASFF's high achievers who are leaving for Australia to participate in the National Amateur Film Festival Award.

## Info Minister terms screen tourism as best way to propagate Pak narrative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said that the revival and expansion of Pakistan's film industry were vital to project the national narrative through screen tourism. "Screen tourism presents an opportunity to spread the narrative of Pakistan, as seen in the successful examples of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran,

where budding film industries have thrived," she said while addressing 25 high achievers of the National Amateur Film Festival Award bound to leave for Australia on Monday. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has sponsored these 25 students one-year training in New York Academy, Australia.

The government was to promote Pakistan's narrative, focusing on heritage,

youth engagement, and tourism through screen tourism, she maintained.

The minister said it was high time to invest in Pakistan's entertainment industry, which currently enjoyed tax exemptions. "Over the next decade, I foresee a revival of the industry that will allow it to compete with neighbouring countries and even interna

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## Chief Minister says Provision of platforms to provide opportunities to youth our Govt.'s priority

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has stated that it is our government's priority to provide platforms to our youth for bringing them at par with the youth of other provinces.

This was stated by the Chief Minister in a tweet on his social media account, Twitter on the eve of National Youth Summit began on Sunday at Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) here.

The Chief Minister said that our younger generation is our precious as-

set. He said that our objective is to aware our youngsters about the challenges of present era.

He added that holding of the first National Youth Summit is part of the government initiatives in this regard.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo also said that the government is determined to empower the youngsters and utilise their potential for the prosperous future of the province and country.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the efforts of all the organisers of Youth Summit and said that they deserve appreciation on this.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Haji Muhammad Khan Lehri and Secretary Irrigation Abdul Fateh Bhanger being briefed by XEN Nadeem Ahmed Dehwar regarding rehabilitation work of canal and repair and renovation of basic structure

## Infrastructure of Balochistan severely damaged due to last year's floods: Lehri

Independent Report

QUETTA: Provincial Irrigation Minister Haji Mir Muhammad Khan Lehri said, "the infrastructure of Balochistan has been severely damaged due to last year's floods, for which the Balochistan government is taking steps for rehabilitation and construction in a coordinated manner."

He said this while inspecting the construction and repair work of the maintenance canal and related in-

rastructure in Hana Orak, a suburb of the Quetta district.

Provincial Irrigation Secretary Abdul Fateh Bhanger was also present with him on this occasion. Provincial Minister and Secretary, XEN Irrigation Quetta Division, Nadeem Ahmed Dehwar, while giving a briefing about the project, said, "The project is estimated to cost more than 170 million rupees,

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## Govt teachers call off 12-day long hunger strike as notification of demands issued

Independent Report

QUETTA: The government teachers called off their protest and hunger strike as their demands were finally met here on Sunday.

The Provincial Minister for Education, Mir Naseebullah Marri along with the Minister Finance, Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai reached the protest and hunger strike camp set up outside the provincial assembly building.

They met the govern-

ment teachers on protest and handed over the notification regarding demands made by them earlier. They said that demands of the government teachers regarding up-gradation have been met. After that, the government teachers announced to end their hunger strike and protest. It may be mentioned here that the government teachers had been observing strike for last 12 days outside the provincial assembly.

## Deficit may exceed from Rs. 150 billion: Balochistan's budget for next Fiscal Year to be presented in BA session today

Sum of Rs. 5.8 billion likely to be allocated for Health Card Programme; allocation of Rs. 2.7 billion proposed for provision of medicines in govt hospitals; Rs. 2 & 1 billion proposed for Balochistan Education Endowment Fund & Balochistan Awami Endowment Fund respectively

Independent Report

QUETTA: The next financial year's budget of Balochistan for 2023-24 is scheduled to be presented today (Monday) in the special budget session convened by the Governor, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

The Provincial Minister for Finance, Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai would present the budget for the next financial year for necessary preparations have already been made. According to the sources, the Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo-led provincial coa-

lition government has faced an uphill task to prepare the next financial year's budget just because of the financial constraints.

The sources informed that the provincial government has not received the arrears under NFC Award

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## Budget approved with allies consensus: Ahsan Iqbal

PML-N decides to address PPP concerns on budget

ISLAMABAD (INP): Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal shooting down the concerns of ally party PPP about federal budget for fiscal year 2023-24, clarified that the budget was approved by the consensus of the allies.

Ahsan Iqbal said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif always included allies in his decisions.

Ahsan said when the PMLN government came into power along with it allies, there were two ways in front of the PMLN leadership, saving politics or the state, and the PMLN choose the latter

option. He alleged that 'change' of 2018 has become a nightmare for Pakistan. "Terrorism was eradicated from Pakistan under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif but the journey of progress from Pakistan was ended under conspiracy. PML-N gave CPEC as a gift to the country but a clumsy, inexperienced worker was given a certificate of trustworthiness," he said.

Planning minister said "inexperienced worker" was made the country's prime minister and that person had not planned a single project in four years stint in power.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch addressing during the book launching ceremony organized by Baloch Students Organization (PAJAR).

## Pakistan activating 'Plan-B' as stalemate with IMF talks persists

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Shehbaz government is reportedly moving ahead with the 'Plan B' (The arrangement referred to by both Finance Minister Ishaqdar and his deputy dr Aysha Gahus pasha on several occasions) under which it is requesting the friendly nations to plug the up to \$4 billion financial gap as the negotiations with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) aren't going nowhere.

June 30, the government believes it can meet all the financial needs, sources say, if the countries like China, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia agree for additional deposits.

Earlier, Dar had said after presenting the 2023-24 budget that the government was working on a Plan B if the IMF did not release the pending loan.

He had, however, avoided explaining or shar

With the IMF programme set to expire on

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## Boat capsized incident: Day of mourning to be observed in Balochistan today

Independent Reporter

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to observe today (Monday) as the day of mourning on the tragic incident of a boat carrying migrants capsized off the coast of Greece.

According to an official notification issued here on Sunday, the National flag would fly at half-past throughout the province today.

It was mentioned that the boat capsized off the coast of Greece had resulted in the deaths of several Pakistani citizens.

## BLF Commander Nawaz Rind killed outside Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (Online): Nawaz Ali Rind, the commander of the banned militant outfit Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), was killed in an internal fight outside Pakistan.

Rind, who belonged to Awaran district of Balochistan and a leading BLF member since 2014, was involved in several attacks on security forces. He was killed mysteriously at a neighbouring country.

After Gulzar Imam alias Shamba's arrest, there has been a split in the militant groups operating in Balochistan.



QUETTA: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Ishaq Jamali, Spokesman of Balochistan Chief Minister, Babar Yousafzai and Coordinator of Chief Minister for Youth Affairs addressing participants of 1st National Youth Summit in province

## Governor Balochistan says Sustainable peace can provide strong basis to economic growth and prosperity

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the strong basis can be provided to the economic development and prosperity by establishing sustainable peace.

The Governor was speaking to the officials of district administration of Ziarat at the Governor House Ziarat on Sunday.

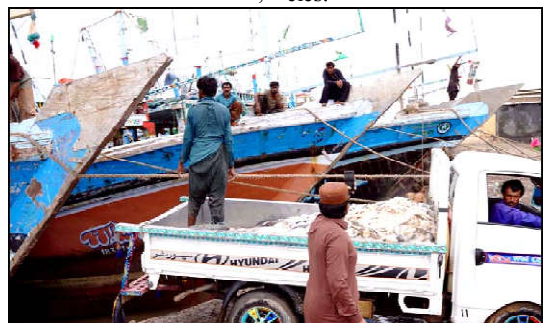
The Governor was briefed about the overall law and order situation of Ziarat and the ongoing development projects in the district.

Also present on the occasion were the Deputy Commissioner Ziarat, Shabbir Ahmed Badini,

Principal secretary to Governor, Abdul Nasir Khan Dotani, District Police officer, Akhtar Muhammad Achakzai and Assistant Commissioner Abdullah bin Arif. The Governor on the occasion appreciated the district administration and the people of Ziarat for establishing peace in the district.

He expressed his satisfaction over ensuring protection of life and prosperity of the masses and establishing sustainable peace in Ziarat.

He said that lot of impoverishment has been made in the district following public friendly steps of the law enforcement agencies.



THATTA: Fishermen are anchoring on shore as they are returning to their homes after fishing at Keti Bandar Beach after removed ban on fishing on subsided of Cyclone Biporjoy, in Thatta.

## First three-day National Youth Summit begins at BUIITEMS

Independent Report

QUETTA: The first-ever three-day National Youth Summit commenced at the Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) here on Sunday.

The National Youth Summit encompasses the youth from all over the country representing different provinces.

Mostly the youngsters participating in the summit are the students from different universities and higher educational institutions of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh besides Balochistan.

The Secretary Youth Affairs and Sports, Muhammad Ishaq Jamali and other senior officials addressed the Youth Summit.

They highlighted the salient features and objectives behind the Youth Summit.

Secretary Youth and Sports Ishaq Jamali welcomed the participants of National Youth Summit and hoped that they would learn a lot from the event.

He said that they would be able to learn about the issues and challenges ahead. It would be a great learning for them indeed, he observed. The basic objective behind conducting the National Youth Summit is to create awareness among the youth about development and future challenges.

The summit is also aimed at providing a platform to the youngsters for resolving the issues.

The Youth Summit would remain continued till Tuesday.

## Zenab Mansoor determined to complete Seven Summits mission to inspire Pak women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's US-based women climber Zenab Mansoor, who successfully attempted Mount Everest last month, said on Sunday that she was committed to ascending Seven Summits, the seven highest peaks in seven continents.

"I've the incredible fortune to climb the highest peaks in five continents. These include Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus in Europe, Denali in North America, Vinson in Antarctica and Everest in Asia. I am hoping to complete the list with Aconcagua in South America and Carstenz Pyramid in Oceania/Australia by the end of this year or early 2024", Zenab told APP on Sunday.

A pediatric ICU physician, Zenab moved to USA in 2008 to pursue her career in medicine. Currently, she resides in Seattle, Washington. On May 17, she reached atop Everest (8,849-metre), the world's highest peak, located in Nepal.

"That was an incredible moment for me as I got to raise my country's flag on the highest point on the planet."

"My journey to the top of the world was achieved that day but my

love for climbing began in my childhood, as I had always felt a sense of awe and wonder when visiting the northern areas of Pakistan and dreamt of scaling high peaks of the world.

"That childhood dream was shelved for many years as I pursued a very demanding career in medicine.

"Then in 2013, I heard about Pakistani woman mountaineer, Samina Baig, who had summited Everest and thus, become the first ever Pakistani female to do so. Her trailblazing achievement reignited the fire in me and she has been a source of inspiration ever since," she added.

However, it took several more years to Zenab to start realizing her dream. "In December 2016, a devastating family tragedy left me feeling heartbroken and despondent," Zenab said while referring to a PIA plane crash, near Havelian area of Abbottabad wherein she lost her younger brother, the 26-year-old co-pilot Ahmed Mansoor Janjua. All 47 people on board had died in the incident. "To help me cope with the grief, I decided to take a trip to Tanzania and Mount Kilimanjaro became my first climb. At 5,895 meters, it is the highest

point in Africa. It was a grueling climb, but watching the sunrise over the clouds from the top of the mountain was a site I will not forget. The feeling of reaching the summit was indescribable, and it fueled my desire to climb higher and more challenging peaks," she said.

According to Zenab, on her return from Kilimanjaro, she signed up for a mountaineering class and successfully summited two popular climbing spots for budding mountaineers in the US, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier, located in Washington.

"Acquiring these necessary skills allowed me to set my sights on higher and tougher altitudes. I set myself the goal of climbing the Seven Summits. At the time, I was living in Boston where even small training hills were at least 2-3 hours away. At this juncture, mountaineering was not just a hobby but had become a lifestyle. It was a way to train, stay in shape, explore, and connect with nature all while doing something that I was so passionate about.

Zenab said to achieve her target she regularly challenged herself on more challenging routes in hard to reach places. "In the last

few years I've done ice climbing in the beautiful Cordillera Blanca in Peru, visited the Atacama desert in Chile to climb Ojos del Salado and rock climbed in the French Alps and some other mountains in USA and South America.

"Climbing mountains in not just about reaching the summit; it's about pushing yourself to the limits, overcoming obstacles whether physical or mental, and learning to rely on your strength and determination to achieve your goals.

For me, each climb has been a unique experience and challenge and a beautiful opportunity to learn about myself and the people around me. This has been a defining aspect of my life. The journey has been challenging, but the rewards have been immense."

Zenab said she was planning to continue her passion and inspire other Pakistani females to climb as well. You don't have to be a professional mountaineer to pursue this beautiful sport.

In the years to come, it is my hope that this sport will be more accessible. I would love the opportunity to inspire and work with aspiring Pakistani female climbers," she added.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Education Mir Naseebullah Mari addressing to the protesters at hunger strike camp of Government Teachers Association outside Balochistan Assembly in Provincial Capital.

### Maryam grieved over Greece boat sinking incident

LAHORE (APP): Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz has expressed grief over loss of lives of Pakistanis due to sinking of a boat in Greece.

Maryam Nawaz while extending sympathies with the bereaved families, has welcomed decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to observe Monday (today) as day of mourning.

## Does freedom of expression insulting millions of Muslims?

By Masoma Raisani

In today's world when someone mentions Islam, how do you portrayed Islam? Does the general public think that Islam means Peace, humanity, justice, peaceful path or do they think its freedom to go to hell, Terrorism? After the 9/11 plan, the Islamophobia and war on terror started. Millions of Muslims were targeted around the world. The news channels and newspapers started agenda to portray Islam as a terror and dangerous. Did you know which images they select to place in front of newspapers, magazines etc?

Expression sometimes creates problems, conveying an opinion is the right of every human being but think about those opinions which go against any community or religion. Free hate speech whether through cartoons or Movies can hurt others.

It is clear that concept of free speech is secular, modern, and Western, this principle itself is not. The

Quran also confirms people's right to believe in and to profess different truths without forcing them on others. It also cautions moderation in the face of abuse, unbelief, and verbal attacks, and forbids scorning another religion's deity. The Quran comes to these positions because it promotes religious and racial diversity.

According to Aljazeera on Freedom of speech and Islamism separatism, The Quran doesn't give permission to Muslims to mock other peoples God and religion in case they retaliate by mocking ours.

Spreading hate is not freedom, freedom must be given to those speeches which spread peace. Many Islamic speeches, videos, knowledge, and documentaries like The arrival has been deleted by YouTube. YouTube is part of social media where other religions also disseminate their speeches, but when Islamic knowledge hits Millions of views, the YouTube owners remove it.

According to Studies, shows that exposure to news

portraying Muslims as terrorists is positively related with support for public policies that harm Muslims internally and internationally; this effect was fully mediated by perceptions of Muslims as aggressive.

Through Movies and cartoons, the Arabs were portrayed as bad and fools, the stereotyping of Arabs in movies projected as a villain like Ali baba cartoon, the mad man of dessert. The stereotyping is becoming visible and we are growing with it.

This fuels stereotypes and irrational fears which leads to conflict and war.

These hate speeches and stereotypes must be ended. When hate speeches and war will be converted into peace? Targeting each other through hate speeches is not the solution.

The media is not for targeting but for supporting people who fight against hate speech. Boost positive images and messages of tolerance. Free speech must not be misused to silence minorities, and suppress religious beliefs.



QUETTA: Former Speaker Balochistan Assembly Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani is distributing certificates to the participants in the business expo of Islamic University.

### Info Minister terms...

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tional markets," she said adding that the high achievers had the potential to make a significant impact in this field.

The minister recalled that Pakistan's film industry faced a significant setback between 1970 and 2000, causing its growth to stagnate. However, since 2000, the industry has experienced a boost, although its progress has been hindered by the absence of cinemas and affordability issues, which limited access for the general public, she maintained. The minister said the government introduced a film policy in 2017 to address these challenges.

She said that extensive research and consultations with relevant stakeholders and experts were conducted to develop this comprehensive policy. Lessons, she added, were learned from countries with flourishing film industries or successful revivals, providing valuable insights.

Mariyum Aurangzeb said that incentives for the film industry were included in the 2018 budget, and after coming into power again last year, the coalition government established a dedicated film division in the ministry.

The film sector currently enjoyed zero taxation, with income tax exemptions for individuals and production houses. Import of equipment for film and drama production had also been tax exempted, she said. The minister disclosed that the corporate entities providing funds for film production can claim CSR tax credits

from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), making it a significant incentive.

Furthermore, she said, the government has approved a film finance fund with an initial allocation of Rs 2 billion. This fund, operated through the Film Council, will support budding producers in the production of films, television dramas, and documentaries.

The minister said for making entertainment accessible to the general public, cinema income has been exempted from taxation for the first ten years, especially for those cinemas offering affordable ticket prices. She maintained that an excellent example of the cinema industry's revival was the monumental success of the new version of Maula Jatt movie. This version, not seen by those who made the original movie a hit, generated substantial business overseas in multiplex cinemas.

She said by taking advantage of this framework, young students and professionals, equipped with valuable skill sets, can tap into the immense potential of the film industry.

Mariyum said that universities like NUST, Iqra and LUMS as well as schools and colleges, offer film production and drama as degree courses, fostering a talent pool for the industry. The revitalized PTV academy, equipped with modern studios, will be open to schools and colleges, allowing the youth to gain knowledge and experience in film production, she remarked.

### Pakistan activating...

Continued from page 1

ing any details, saying, "Plan-B is always there". He stated that the features of the plan could not be talked about in public and again reiterated that Pakistan would not default.

Separately, the finance minister had also said that those behind the running the "Reimagining Pakistan" movement should stop frightening the people with the notion that the country would soon default, just hours after Miftah Ismail claimed that the budget was not sustainable.

About geopolitics, Dar had told the Senate Standing Committee on Finance that external forces were attempting to undermine Pakistan's economic stability by forcing it into a situation similar to that of Sri Lanka and subsequently negotiating with the IMF.

He made it clear that Pakistan would not bow down to the IMF's demands of the IMF, which has raised objections to the country's budget proposals for the next financial year.

Pakistan was a sovereign country and would not accept everything the IMF demanded, but rather aim to achieve the country's economic targets and priorities, he added.

The suggestion that Pakistan has activated the Plan B comes as Associated Press in a latest report says the UN is stepping up the criticism of IMF and World Bank for benefiting the rich nations.

## PM thumbs up national athletes competing in Germany's Special Olympics World Games

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his best wishes to the 87-member delegation of the country's differently-abled athletes who are taking part in the Special Olympics World Games 2023 being held in Germany from June 17 to June 25.

"I am confident that our special and privileged athletes will use the mega opportunity to bring laurels to the motherland through their talent and determination," the prime minister posted on his Twitter handle.

He further said that in a delegation of 87 members

consisting of both male and female sportspeople, Pakistan has a strong representation in the global event.

"Now is the time to reap the fruit of hard work they put in while preparing for 11 games," he added.

The prime minister said that the delegation have the prayers of the whole nation with them.

From June 17-25, 2023, Berlin, Germany will host 7,000 Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners from approximately 190 countries to compete in 26 sports. The athletes will be supported by more than 3,000 coaches and 20,000 volunteers.

### PM Shehbaz orders inquiry...

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ing the latest information over the casualties and injuries.

According to the latest media reports, at least 78 people died after an overcrowded vessel went down on Wednesday.

A total of 104 passengers were rescued and sent to Kalamata, Greece.

The people rescued so far included 43 Egyptian nationals, 47 Syrian nationals, 12 Pakistani nationals, and two Palestinians, the Hellenic Coast Guard were quoted by international media outlets. Eight of those rescued were minors.

Earlier, the FIA formed a four-member committee to probe the Greece boat tragedy. The FIA's move came after the National Assembly took up the Greece boat tragedy and Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf asked the government to take firm action against the human smugglers as over 290 Pakistanis are feared dead in a shipwreck in south of Greece. During a session of the assembly, the chair expressed concern over the death of migrants including those from Pakistan in the boat accident. He said the government should take notice of the incident, saying the human smuggling was a grave crime.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office said a total of 12 Pakistanis were identified among the survivors of the capsized boat off the coast of Greece, but so far the number and identity of Pakistani nationals among the deceased was not yet verified. FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in a press statement, said the Pakistan Mission in Greece under the leadership of Ambassador Aamar Aftab remained in contact with the local authorities for identification and recovery of Pakistani nationals among the deceased and providing relief to the survivors.

in FIA anti-human trafficking section. The email address and phone numbers of committee members have also been shared and the people have also been advised to share information in this regard whose names would be kept anonymous.

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### Infrastructure of Balochistan...

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which is located at the confluence of Hana River, and works on various projects in this project."

Various small schemes including flood channel lining, regulation gate repair, fall structure, construction of diversion dam and flood protection dam, construction of more than 10 small new check dams, flood protection wall, and about 70 percent have been completed, he added.

The overall development work of the project and while congratulating the entire team expressed his determination that the construction of this project will help prevent wastage of precious flood water and also prevent flooding of the population, he praised.

In this situation, there

will be a success in saving valuable financial and life loss, on the other hand, it will be possible to promote tourism by better storing this water in Hana Jail, a recreational place so that in the coming days, this water will be available for drinking and will also be put to use, he said.

While adding that the damage caused to the population due to monsoon rains and other floods caused by the construction of this project may be redressed. The Provincial Irrigation Minister was accompanied by SDO Quetta 1 Khurshid Ahmed Bangalzai, SDO Quetta 2 Tariq Sarwar Pindarani, SDO Quetta 3 Munawar Khan Tareen, SDO Quetta 4 Shehryar Aftab and other technical staff.

## Bilawal striving to develop good relations with all countries: Tasneem

SARGODHA (APP): Minister of State for Production and Industries Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi has said that the country is reaping the benefits of solid efforts of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for good relations with all world countries.

The recent agreements with Russia were a result of a wise policy of Bilawal Bhutto, he said while talking to APP here on Sunday.

The state minister said Pakistan People's Party had always pursued the policy of friendly relations with all world nations on the basis of equality. He said the deal struck by Pakistan with Russia for crude oil import would help the government pass on finan-

cial relief to masses, who had been bearing the brunt of inflation, stemming from the previous government's flawed economic policies.

Tasneem Qureshi said: "It is for the first time in the country's history that crude oil from Russia has arrived in Pakistan. I want to say to my political opponents that Russian oil has reached Pakistan, which will benefit the people; so at least congratulate the nation today," he regretted that the previous government always misled people on almost all issues.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, in fact, did not manage to get any oil deal with Rus-

sia, which was also confirmed by the Russian government officials. He said Pakistan had imported 100,000 tons of oil from Russia initially with plans to gradually increase the quantity over time as the country would meet its quarterly oil requirements through utilisation of Russian oil.

The state minister said the previous government made baseless claims, suggesting that the PTI government's attempt to import oil from Russia led to its alleged removal. He said the government intended to ink a \$10 billion contract before the end of its tenure, so a new oil refinery could be established in Pakistan.



KARACHI: People use a crane to lift a young bull from the roof of a building for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, at Nazimabad in Karachi.

### Balochistan's budget for next...

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However, according to the sources, the total volume of the province's budget is likely to be Rs. 700 billion or around so. In the budget, the estimate of the income in next financial year budget has been made as Rs. 529.32 billion. With this, the total deficit of the budget may increase to around Rs. 150 billion, the sources informed.

It was also learnt that development expenditures in the budget are expected to be around Rs. 200 billion.

The estimate of income from the province's own resources is expected as over Rs. 60 billion while the province is likely to get Rs. 413 billion through the divisible pool under NFC Award and other sources.

It is proposed to create over 5,000 new vacancies in the provincial government departments. Moreover, 30 percent raise is also

expected in the salaries of provincial government employees in the next financial year budget, the sources informed.

In the budget, Rs. 90 billion has been proposed for education sector with Rs. 60 billion for law and order and Rs. 50 billion for the health sector, the sources revealed.

Similarly, sum of Rs. 5.8 billion is likely to be allocated for Health Card Programme. The allocation of Rs. 2.7 billion is proposed for provision of medicines in govt hospitals of the province while Rs. 2 & 1 billion have been proposed for Balochistan Education Endowment Fund & Balochistan Awami Endowment Fund respectively.

In addition to this, the allocation of Rs. 1 billion has been proposed for the food security in the next financial year's budget.



LAHORE: A large number of the people are bathing in canal to cool off during high temperature in Provincial Capital



ISLAMABAD: A large numbers of vehicles stuck in traffic jam during arrival at Shadara picnic point during hot weather, in the Federal Capital.

## Optimistic distance walker anticipates refund of partially used Hajj dues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Usman Arshad, the determined distance walker who covered over 5,400 km on foot from Okara to Makkah, remains hopeful of reclaiming his deposited Rs 1.12 million for unused hajj services, reflecting his unwavering optimism that inspires others with the transformative power of hope and justice.

In an interview with APP, Usman, a student of BS Mass Communication at the University of Okara, expressed his gratitude towards the Pakistan Hajj Mission for assisting him in obtaining a Hajj visa.

He mentioned that he had commenced his journey before the official issuance of the Hajj visa had commenced, and due to Hajj Mission's support, he was able to embark on his sacred pilgrimage, even though he initially held only an Umrah visa.

He mentioned that he was instructed to submit an

amount of Rs 1.12 million as hajj dues, even though he did not utilize various services included in the government scheme hajj package. Following the payment, he is currently residing in a building allocated by the Pakistan Hajj Mission and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

Upon returning to Pakistan, he intends to claim a refund of the air ticket cost, which amounts to Rs 250,000 and other services he did not use.

He plans to justify this refund request by stating that he utilized the accommodation and transportation services provided by the government Hajj scheme for pilgrims in Makkah, but did not utilize these services during his stay in Madinah.

Usman Arshad remains optimistic about receiving a refund for the amount he deposited, considering that he was charged

for hajj services that he did not avail of during his pilgrimage. 25-year-old Usman shared his remarkable tale of embarking on an extraordinary journey with just a modest rucksack, an umbrella, and a reliable pair of trekking shoes. Guided by his unwavering determination, he traversed numerous nations until he ultimately reached the revered city of Makkah.

Demonstrating unparalleled determination and unwavering devotion, Usman crossed multiple countries, including Iran, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, until he received a heartfelt welcome from the Pakistan Hajj Mission.

Throughout his incredible expedition, he shared that he incurred expenses totaling 850,000 and maintained an impressive daily walking range of 35 to 60 kilometers.

The idea of walking to Makkah first sparked in Usman's mind back in 2021.

## College teachers call for equal treatment in earned leave entitlement

ISLAMABAD (APP): As summer vacation sets in and school teachers and their students embark on a well-deserved break, college teachers continue their teaching duties.

The teachers teaching the BS classes during summer vacation and doing other assignments in colleges have voiced their concerns regarding the disparity in "earned leave".

They said it was the practice of education department that the teachers who remained present during summer vacation were granted earned leave for 48 days but unfortunately they were not granted earned leave for the last two years which is unfair. While other government servants are granted 48 days of earned leave annually, college teachers are only allowed 10 days, raising con-

cerns of injustice and the potential for future leave encashment issues upon retirement.

College teachers who teach during this period argue that their continuous work during summer vacation makes them deserving of the same earned leave benefits as other government servants.

A disgruntled Associate Professor at H-8 College, who has diligently served during the summer vacation for the past two years, while talking to APP expressed disappointment, stating, "I remained present throughout the summer vacation, fulfilling my teaching responsibilities, yet my earned leave was not credited for 48 days. This disparity could lead to difficulties in availing leave encashment upon my retirement, which feels unjust."

## 14 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons with ammunition recovered

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police apprehended 18 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directives, the Aabpara police

team arrested an accused namely Sultan Masih involved in drug peddling and recovered 1110 gram heroin from his possession. The Bani Gala police team arrested an accused namely Taimur involved in selling liquor and recovered 05 bottles liquor from his possession. Likewise, the Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Yasir Abbas Shah involved in drug peddling and recovered 95 gram heroin from his possession. The Golra Sharif police team arrested an accused namely Shamsad involved in drug peddling and recovered 121 gram Ice.



ISLAMABAD: Women are buying pots from venter at Weekly Sunday Market at Sector H-9 in Federal Capital.

## Students urge govt to include AIOU in PM laptop scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Monday demanded the government to include the varsity in the Prime Minister Laptop scheme so that its students, especially Ph.D and Mphil are facilitated to carry on their higher studies.

They were of the view that being the largest public sector university with higher ranks, AIOU was not included in the PM laptop scheme. As per the Impact Ranking 2023 of the Times Higher Education, Allama Iqbal Open University was

ranked first among 66 public and private universities in Pakistan while it is ranked 25th among 1304 universities worldwide.

The students term the non-inclusion decision as totally unjust as it would have affect on hundreds of students particularly Ph.D and Mphil in various disciplines who were carrying forward their education as per other public sector universities. "AIOU is the only university in Pakistan which was included in the top 25 universities of the world," said Ambreen Iqbal an Mphil scholar.

## Islamabad Capital Police to take strict action against route violators

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police has decided to take stern action against public service vehicles involved in non-completion of routes, misbehavior with passengers and overloading, a police public relations officer said.

He said that strict action will be taken against those transporters violating traffic routes. The purpose is to provide better traffic

facilities to the citizens," said CTO Islamabad Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer while reviewing the special report submitted by the special squads constituted for checking of route completions by the public service vehicles.

According to details Islamabad capital police is utilizing all resources to facilitate the general public and not only issuing traffic violation tickets to the public service vehicles for overcharging, misbehaving and incompleting of routes. Zonal DSP's were also directed to take stern action against PSV's drivers who were found repeatedly involved in the same violations.

## BISP to release 4th quarterly tranche of Rs 9k for FY-2022-23 today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will release the 4th quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafalaat cash assistance from June 19 (Monday). The fourth quarterly tranche will be Rs 9000/- after a 25 percent increase, which was announced by the federal government early this year.

In addition to Benazir Kafalaat cash assistance, Benazir Taleemi Wazaif

through Campsites is to facilitate the beneficiaries and ensure transparency. Provision of payment through ATMs of HBL and Bank Alfalah would not be available, nor will any payment be made at the POS outside the campsite established by the BISP.

About Rs. 81 billion will be disbursed among 9 million beneficiaries' families of Benazir Kafalaat cash assistance.

## Empowering youth—a way forward to prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Talented youth and ample prospering opportunities for them provide a basis for any nation's prosperity and the welfare of its people especially in a country like Pakistan where youth forms a bulk of the populace. Since Nature has bestowed mankind with magnificent bounties like wisdom, courage and aspiration to conquer the universe, prudent leaderships across the globe fully employ these capabilities of their youth.

But when the leadership is self-centred thriving on a populous agenda, it detracts them from the actual path leaving them clueless about their future. The last PTI government provides a glaring example of this phenomenon as its cosmetic youth welfare programs could not provide the desired benefit.

Contrarily, the present government embarked on a historic initia-

tive of reviving the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan scheme wherein youth, transgender and special persons aged between 21-45 years will be able to apply for loans of up to Rs 7.5 million from 15 designated Commercial, Islamic and SME banks to set up their own businesses with allocating 25% quota for women.

"Through youth and agriculture loan program, the government aims to reduce unemployment by providing financial assistance and guidance to talented Pakistanis," stated Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Telling about the implementation of this program, she said, since Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated this loan scheme on January 24, 2023, an amount of Rs 22 billion had been disbursed

## PM's national innovation award competition underway

ISLAMABAD (APP): 50 winners will be awarded a cash prize of rupees up to 2 million.

Organized by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and executed by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), the National Innovation Award serves as a groundbreaking initiative that aims to foster creativity, encourage entrepreneurship, and provide unprecedented opportunities to the youth of Pakistan. This government-funded program offers equity-free grants, enabling young innovators to transform their ideas into tangible realities.

The competition fea-

tures a diverse range of participants, including students, professionals, and budding entrepreneurs, who have come together to present their groundbreaking ideas and projects.

With the expert jury comprising renowned field experts from various thematic areas and industries, the candidates are putting their best foot forward in hopes of securing victory and gaining recognition for their innovative contributions.

One of the distinguishing aspects of this pitching competition is its accessibility, as it accommodates both physical and online

pitching.

This approach ensures that talented individuals from all corners of Pakistan can participate, regardless of their geographical location. The inclusion of online pitching enables a broader range of ideas to be heard and encourages a more diverse pool of talent to come forward.

NUST, Islamabad has been abuzz with excitement and innovation since the competition began. Alongside the participants and esteemed jury members, officials from the HEC are present to witness the brilliant pitches and the transformative potential they hold.



ISLAMABAD: Woman displaying traditional stuff on her stall during the Saqafati Mela promoting Pakistani culture providing entertainment to public at Lok Virsa.

## Shandur Polo festival to be started on July 7

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-day Shandur Polo Festival 2023 would be held from July 7 to 9 to entertain the participants coming from various parts of the country at large.

Shandur Polo Festival is an amazing festival celebrated by the tribes of Gilgit and Chitral in the northern parts of the country, said a news release received here on Sunday.

The tribes from the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral meet at the Shandur pass every summer.

## NH&MP devises strategy to control accidents in Kallar Kahar salt range

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) has devised a strategy for controlling accidents in the Kallar Kahar salt range area.

"In order to prevent accidents, the strategy of passing the buses from Kallar Kahar in the form of a convoy has been decided," DIG (Motorway North Zone) Muhammad Yusuf Malik said in a statement.

He said that NH&MP has formulated a strategy to protect the precious lives

of public service transport, especially passengers and staff of passenger buses and other traffic on the Islamabad-Lahore Motorway. He said that for the purpose of road safety, it has been decided that buses travelling from Islamabad to Lahore will be issued time cards at predetermined safe places on the motorway and strict monitoring will be done with the help of speed-checking cameras and police patrolling officers at the Salt Range.

## Custodial torture, arbitrary detentions by troops regular feature in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Extrajudicial killings, custodial torture and arbitrary detentions by Indian troops have become a regular feature in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

A report released by Kashmir Media Service on Sunday deplored that Kashmiris continue to live in dire situations created by over one million Indian troops and reel under brutal Indian military occupation.

It said human rights violations in the occupied territory have witnessed an

unprecedented spike since the abrogation of Article 370, adding the RSS-backed Indian government has set new records of rights violations since 5 August 2019 when Modi-led fascist Indian government repealed Kashmir's special status and imposed military siege.

The report said the Modi regime has turned Kashmir into a giant open-air prison, denying even basic human rights to its residents. Common man in IIOJK is caught in daily cordons, raids, searches, repression and torture, it lamented.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Children are playing and enjoying bathing at Shadara picnic point during hot weather, in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Children are playing and enjoying bathing at Shadara picnic point during hot weather, in the Federal Capital.

## Empowering youth—a way forward to prosperity

calculated on an enrollment basis in each degree program as she also mentioned the distribution of half a million laptops by the PML-N government during its 2013-2018 tenure to equip qualified youth with the latest technologies.

According to Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in addition to laptop scheme, the government has also allocated Rs five billion under the Prime Minister Youth Skills Program (PMYSP) to train a force of skilled workers who would not only be able to earn a respectable living but also contribute to national progress.

These programs are hoped to provide youth opportunities to employ themselves as well as lessen jobs pressure in state-owned institutions.

"Such initiatives are a blessing for us as hundred of thousands qualified people were unable to get

so far among the youth.

"The agriculture-based loan would help youth benefit from innovation and the latest technology used agriculture sector to bring it at par with international standards," Shaza Fatima Khawaja explained.

Informing about another initiative of youth empowerment, she mentioned the Premier's announcement to provide laptops to talented students under PM's Laptop Scheme (Phase-III). "We will be providing 100,000 high-quality latest laptops to talented students studying in public sector universities across the country purely on merit."

She said the government has allocated Rs 10 billion for this scheme in budget 2023-24 and students of all degree programs including BS (16 Years), MS/MPhil (18 Years) and PhD can benefit from this scheme.

Laptops' share will be

jobs in desired fields," said Salman Ali, who has been looking for a job after completing his Mechanical Engineering degree.

"We hope, this would enable people like me to earn a dignified livelihood besides promoting entrepreneurship in the country," he added.

For Khalid Anwar, an agriculture expert, youth empowerment schemes would mould the interest of youth towards the agriculture sector. "Our agriculture sector has a lot of potential and such initiatives will turn things around in terms of enhanced productivity and addressing food security issues."

Arifa Fatima, who is already running a stitching business said Pakistani youth have vast entrepreneurial potential and the provision of business loans on simple terms and with lesser markup would encourage them and help start new businesses.

## Undoing the past

The PDM coalition government seems to be preparing for the next general elections with some last-minute measures to 'level the playing field', so to speak. It has recently introduced legislation that will allow politicians handed a lifetime disqualification from holding public office to return to the political arena, and also to 'restore' to the ECP the sole power to announce and amend election schedules.

The latter seems to be a bid to preclude any legal challenges that may arise over any further tinkering with election timelines. The proposed amendment will allow the ECP to unilaterally decide when elections are to be held once they become due.

While this may have passed much scrutiny in simpler times the present context has complicated matters: the move seems aimed at providing legal cover to the ECP for its failure to hold elections to various assemblies within constitutionally stipulated timeframes.

The other proposal, to limit disqualifications under Article 62(1)(f) to five years instead of a lifetime, is likely to draw even more controversy because critics will invariably see it as 'person-specific'. In particular, it will directly benefit PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif and the newly minted Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party's patron, Jahangir Tareen.

But, as the government has generously pointed out, the rule change will also apply to PTI chairman Imran Khan, who is the latest to have the disqualification sword hanging over his head. While the timing of this legislation is indeed unpropitious, the historical context must be considered.

The Supreme Court had been roundly criticised for ruling, in 2018, that an Article 62(1)(f) disqualification is for life. The article sets a rather nebulous standard for lawmakers, and the apex court's strict interpretation of it was widely seen as just a means to keep a thrice-elected prime minister out of the running from any future political contest on the basis of a rather weak conviction in the Panama Papers case.

That said, the manner in which the Supreme Court's earlier decision is being undone is problematic. Laws that are passed without following the legislative process — ie, after robust debate and due consideration by both the government and opposition benches — remain vulnerable to future challenges and, therefore, lack durability. Parliament should be seen to be representative of the people, not just a party or group of parties, nor any individual.

Had these two proposals been discussed and debated with opposition parties, had the government helped their critics understand how its proposed legislation would benefit the political process, and had the government been transparent about the drafting of the laws, perhaps the objections raised would not have arisen. Parliament cannot be used only as a rubber stamp — it must be meaningfully invested in all legislation that passes through its two Houses.



**Muhammad Amir Rana**

The prevailing political and economic instability in the country offers perfect conditions for terrorist networks to grow and strengthen themselves. As persisting political turmoil dominates the mainstream discourse, terrorist groups are busy restructuring their networks.

Last week, the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) announced new formations, indicating that the group has been gaining strength. Now, it is spreading its wings and establishing new chapters in the country's religiously and ethnically vulnerable regions. It is a strategy of the terrorist group to hit the softest parts of the country to make the challenges of security and national cohesion more complex.

A major source of differences in TTP ranks is linked with the distribution

of offices and resources. According to media reports, TTP Swat's Mufti Barjan was injured in a clash in January last year, whereas Muslim Yar was killed. In another internal clash in May last year, some key commanders of the TTP Swat chapter were killed, including Usman, Bilal, Janat Gul and Hazratullah. In the same month last year, Tehreek-i-Taliban Bajaur's ameer Gohar was killed, and Zubar alias Kala was killed in June 2022. Similarly, militant commanders Badshah Khan and Rosham, along with four others, were killed in September last year. In October 2022, TTP Balochistan's commander Bismillah alias Pehalwan was killed. Such incidents of infighting have been taking place recently also, including in Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, it is not clear if the Afghan Taliban have played any role in resolving the TTP commanders' internal disputes and unifying them. Al Qaeda had done this job several times in the past.

Meanwhile, the TTP's efforts of absorbing new groups continues. The banned group claimed last

month through a statement that another group of Pakistani militants from North Waziristan and led by commander Yasir Dawar had joined the group by pledging allegiance to the TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud. At least four new groups reportedly announced their merger with the TTP in March 2023. This latest merger of the Yasir Dawar group takes the count of such mergers with the TTP since July 2020 to 28.

The expansion of the TTP network has multiple implications. The southern area of Punjab was already facing militancy challenges. Extremist groups of different shades have been operating there. During the recent operation in the katcha area of Punjab, security forces found evidence of the presence of TTP militants there.

However, it was the northern Punjab formation that surprised but since its inception, north Punjab has always remained a priority for the TTP. The location of the federal capital is one reason for this, but Lal Masjid, too, played a significant role in the formation of the TTP, and military operations against the mili-

tants in the mosque had triggered a wave of suicide attacks in the federal capital and surrounding districts. The mosque still inspires the TTP and Al Qaeda associates, and the name of the north Punjab chapter also contains the alias of 'Ghazi' to show its affiliation with Lal Masjid. Rawalpindi remained affected by terrorist attacks even during relatively peaceful times from 2017 to 2022. Many TTP factions, including the Bali and Haji groups, remained focused on the outskirts of Islamabad. The reason was Lal Masjid; Abdul Rasheed Ghazi was killed during the military operation there. He has become an iconic figure for the TTP and like-minded groups. Ghazi was buried in south Punjab.

A new TTP formation in Balochistan is a significant development as the group's growing influence in the province has remained under the radar for the last few months. The TTP footprint in Baloch regions was traced when a local Baloch jihadist group, led by Mazar Baloch from Makran, Balochistan, joined the TTP. Later, two other groups from Kalat and Quetta joined the TTP, led

by Akram Baloch and Asim Baloch. Though it is unclear how many members or militants each of these groups has, it should still be a worrisome development for the security forces and the government. It indicates that the group has been consistently adding to its strength, which will undoubtedly enhance its operational capabilities in the areas where these newly merged groups are based.

The security forces are conducting successful operations against the TTP in and out of Quetta and the Pakhtun belt. However, expanding the group in areas already affected by the Baloch insurgency will make their task more complex. It is the TTP's declared policy to encroach on Baloch regions as the group believes that the area is ripe for new recruitment, mainly from the youth of religious institutions, who have political and ideological reasons for not joining the Baloch insurgents. Though reports often emerge about a probable nexus between the Baloch insurgents and the TTP, more evidence is needed to support this observation. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Cyclones in our lives



**Ghazi Salahuddin**

For almost the entire week, so many of us had anxiously waited for the threatened arrival of a cyclone. Since there was an element of unpredictability about how it would behave, the ebb and flow of suspense and apprehension had gripped the entire coastline of Sindh.

During this period, the entire administrative machinery and the disaster management system had gone into high gear. Even though it was not deemed to be in the eye of the storm, Karachi itself became very nervous. The cyclone was named Biparjoy, a Bengali word for 'disaster'. It could be a derivative of the Urdu expression 'biphar jana' — to erupt and get out of control.

Anyhow, there have been a lot of twists and turns in the exciting story of

Biparjoy and it should be possible to illustrate it with personal experiences and anecdotes, mainly because I live in Karachi and not too far from the sea. As the week began, Biparjoy was turning into an extremely severe cyclonic storm. It was formed, early this month, over the east-central Arabian Sea and it finally made landfall near the India-Pakistan border, in the area between India's Gujarat and Pakistan's Keti Bandar.

But I do not want to concentrate too much on this meteorological phenomenon, though it kept us engaged throughout the week. There were striking visuals of angry waves lashing poor coastal settlements and colourful charts of the changing weather conditions.

This coverage also provided us some welcome relief from the political gibberish that has inundated our news channels. You may find it intriguing that even when the political weather has changed, the jaw-jaw we hear in talk shows somehow appears to be the same as before. Is it because the panelists remain the same and have not learnt to change their views

even when facts on the ground have changed? Besides, it is easy to turn one's attention from Biparjoy because the cyclone itself changed its path and was considerably weakened. We had just a mild taste of another secret weapon released by the unseen and indecipherable forces of climate change. What we remember of the floods in Sindh last year would make us shudder with dread about what may have happened along the coast in southern Sindh.

So, after this brief reference to Biparjoy, we may attend to the threat posed by another rising storm or cyclone that we know as the federal budget. It is very much like a dark cloud hovering on the horizon and constantly changing its formation. I am not able to read the signs and will not go into details but there are certain headlines that amount to grim warnings about the economic prospects of this country.

An analyst of the Moody's has been quoted as saying that "there are increasing risks that Pakistan may be unable to complete the IMF programme." Does this mean that Pakistan is moving closer to defaulting? It is not for me to make any sense of what it would entail if Pakistan defaults on its debts.

In this respect, the standard allusion is to Sri Lanka — and I have argued in this space that Sri Lanka, in terms of its human capital and social cohesion, is not a good example for what can happen to Pakistan. Our country is already in an advanced state of disorder and its citizens are trapped in a kind of social wilderness.

Economic observers have expressed alarm that the IMF has gone public in its criticism of the budget. It has said that the Pakistan government has missed an opportunity to broaden the tax base and reduce tax expenditures, stressing that the terms of tax amnesty are against the programme conditionality of the fund.

Naturally, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the spokespersons of the government have rejected this criticism and given their explanations. Dar has also blamed 'geopolitical' for this problem with the IMF. The finance ministry has clarified that the budget document is not part of the pending ninth

review that has been delayed since November last year.

Economist Khurram Husain has warned that "Pakistan is facing a stark prospect of potential default or even a larger balance of payments crisis in the 12 months ahead."

Now, in tandem with the economic storm is this rising political tsunami that has swept away so many defences of the PTI — the party held responsible for the events of May 9. There is surely a hint of irony in why I am invoking the concept of tsunami in the present circumstances. We remember that PTI leader Imran Khan had promised to raise the high waves of revolt with his tsunami for 'tabdeeli'. You could say that he has done that in an inverted sense. A tsunami it certainly is, caused by the seismic shift of May 9.

We have seen how Biparjoy was monitored, step by step. Can we have a similar surveillance of the economic and political hurricanes that are storming the lives of ordinary citizens in Pakistan so that every movement, everywhere is recorded

and made public? Incidentally, in Biparjoy's case, there was a plan to build defences and protect people from any damage that the cyclone could cause. There was detailed advice for those residing in harm's way. So, what measures should be taken to empower the victims of the economic and political storms and help them in protecting themselves?

Let me conclude with the advice given by a person in high authority to a citizen who claimed to have suffered gravely. According to a report published on Thursday, an advocate tried to present his case in the Supreme Court, before a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial on Wednesday, complaining that he had been abducted by unknown persons and freed after a week.

Chief Justice Bandial was reported to have observed that, to quote the report, "Pakistan is passing through a transition and everyone must show courage, fortitude and patience to come out of this situation, especially the economic conditions." -- Courtesy TheNews

## The whole scoop



**Muna Khan**

On a few people's recommendations I watched the Netflix show Scoop about an Indian journalist Jagruti Pathak's quest for front page stories and how, in that chase, she gets embroiled in the murder of another journalist. The person reporting stories suddenly becomes the story. It's a fascinating show that sheds light on the connections between the media, law enforcement and criminal gangs. And it's based on Jigna Vora's memoir Behind Bars in Byculla, about her time in prison, charged for the murder of journalist Jyotirmoy Dey in 2011. She was acquitted in 2018.

Scoop is not just about Pathak's incarceration and her fight to clear her name. It tells the story of a female crime reporter navigating a very male-dominated space in which she must deal with their aspersions on her character and ethical practices. Pathak has worked hard to reach her position and enjoys the full support of her editor. She deals with jealous colleagues and police officers playing politics in a bid to broker their own deals.

Is Pathak a hero for trying to get to the truth or a ruthless reporter seeking glory for that front page story? Must she be one or the other?

While the TV series shines a spotlight on the media industry, journalistic practices and relationships between the government (advertisers) and media companies, I thought it also aptly showed journalists' personal lives. Too often one doesn't realise how

their work impact families and relationships.

Scoop first came to my attention on social media because users were sharing a still from the show wherein the paper's editor cites weather to illustrate objectivity. The quote actually came from Jonathan Fraser, a journalist and professor at Sheffield University: "If someone says it's raining, and another person says it's dry, it's not your job to quote them both. Your job is to look out the [expensive] window and find out which is true." Many people sharing this quote said "this is journalism must be" or "tell facts as they are". The trouble is, often people don't like facts.

Facts, for journalists, are like spices for chefs — an essential part of their craft. Journalists use them to make arguments, substantiate claims and also hold the powerful to account. Sadly, selling wild claims as facts has turned into a profitable business for which there are many eager buyers — the case of partisan YouTubers earning in the hundreds and thousands selling unsubstantiated claims is a prime example of how journalists' role has been misunderstood.

Journalists are meant to play by the rules of the game but these rules assume politicians would "stay within the guardrails of truth" wrote the Australian editor Lenore Taylor in the Guardian in 2020. And we've seen, all over the world, how it's difficult to play by those rules "if the politicians themselves aren't in any way constrained by facts — if they lie, contradict themselves or simply make things up, or if their calculated tactic is to spend or subvert civic dialogue rather than participate in it". It's so easy to say 'fake news' to an opposing opinion or one not suited to your reality. I won't be surprised if

'fake reality' becomes a term given that TV channels all over the world seem only too happy to air 'alternative facts'. There are consequences of this and the pandemic is one example of how leadership that put aside its divisions and chose to create policies based on scientific evidence fared better than others. At one point when then president Donald Trump was calling Covid the 'China virus' the mortality rate, measured as deaths per 100,000 citizens, was 54.18. Over in the UK when prime minister Boris Johnson was shaking hands with coronavirus patients to downplay the fear, that figure was 62.4. The rates came down when policymakers turned to evidence, not science fiction.

Facts save lives. They have an essential role to play in news consuming audience's everyday decision-making — whether in choosing how to prepare for the cyclone or where to reposition their trust at election time. If journalists demand evidence-based information, not hyperbole, from politicians, I believe the audience's trust in the media will see a rise. Placing a group of ill-qualified analysts or party spokespersons to pass as a diverse panel is not journalism. Reporting a political leader's conferences without contextualising is not journalism.

So if a minister says the country is not going to default and an opposition leader says it is, your job is not to report what they said but to look out the window, smile in the knowledge that you've done your homework — based on evidence — and are ready to ask the tough questions. Perhaps it bears reminding that journalism is hard work and one that requires employing all tools of verification to get to the truth. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Civil service reform



**Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

In the heart of Vienna lies a flourishing Pakistani restaurant that caters to thousands of tourists and locals. The owner has credited much of the restaurant's success to an enabling business environment. For instance, while his restaurant is regularly and rigorously inspected by government officials, there is no expectation of or demand for bribes. One wonders what motivates Austrian government functionaries to do their job effectively and honestly. Is there a lesson we could learn from international best practices?

An Institutional Reforms Cell (2018-2021) with Dr Ishaq Husain at its helm examined this question. It noted that, besides law and order, the essential role of any government is to create an enabling environment for commerce and industry. This requires an efficient civil service, physical infrastructure and rule of law. The IRC observed that in Pakistan's case, the government is "weak and expansive", cumbersome, centralised and inefficient.

Greater devolution of power, authority and resources to grassroots levels of government also contributes to the provision of efficient public service delivery, provided there is, inter alia, a competent bureaucracy. China's stellar economic performance, for instance, is attributed to a "meritocratic bureaucracy" and focused leadership. In our case, the IRC noted that civil servants were

"badly motivated" and "unresponsive" to public needs. It formulated proposals for reform, which were only partly implemented. Several other attempts to reform the civil services have suffered a similar fate. Committees and task forces are formed, reports are finalised, but not implemented.

The last major civil service reform took place in 1973 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto changed the categorisation of civil servants from Class I, II, III and IV to a new structure based on pay grades 1-22. The 1973 reforms sought to end the elite culture and false sense of superiority that civil servants seemed to have assumed. Eminent titles like the Civil Service of Pakistan were abolished, and instead, a Common Training Programme for 13 occupational groups was introduced.

But these reforms had a downside. They withdrew constitutional guarantee for service security, leading to frequent transfers of civil servants on political grounds and undermining rule-based governance and policy continuity. Salaries were also compressed. Over time, the best and brightest started avoiding the civil service, and "mediocre and pliable" civil servants began to run government offices and institutions. Politicisation and mediocrity have severely impaired the government's capacity to create a congenial business environment or render efficient public service delivery.

Gen Musharraf's National Reconstruction Bureau tinkered with some aspects of the civil service, ostensibly to "reconstruct" local governments, but many of the measures became controversial and were later reversed. Clearly, a reform package should cover the "whole value chain" of human resource policies. The IRC rightly observed that recruitment methods

and intake had outlived their utility; specialisation and technical expertise were marginalised, and performance had no link with remuneration. Internal accountability mechanisms had become weak.

To address this, the IRC proposed an 'All-Pakistan National Executive Service' for senior management positions, and the introduction of four specialised cadres under it for economic management, technical, social sector management, and general management. Another sound proposal was to reduce the hierarchy of each ministry and department from five to three — deputy secretary, joint secretary, secretary — in order to infuse efficiency.

Central to civil service reforms is the system of recruitment of candidates for the central superior services by the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC). The process of recruitment is long and tedious and benefits rote learners more than critical thinkers. In the CSS results for 2022, out of the 20,262 candidates who appeared in the written examination, only 393 passed. The FPSC should consider open, transparent, technology-based methods, which are now being applied across the world, to recruit civil servants who are critical thinkers, tech-savvy and can relate to the growing needs of the people. Alternatively, the system of centralised recruitment through FPSC should be done away with, leaving recruitment, performance evaluation and promotion to each service to encourage specialisation and efficiency. An honest, competent and efficient bureaucracy is the 'steel structure' that can help Pakistan secure a stable and prosperous future. Implementing civil service reforms should be a high priority if we want economic security and rule-based governance for our people. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Measures taking to develop underprivileged, neglected districts in KP: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali, on Sunday said that steps are being taken to bring underprivileged and neglected districts on par with developed areas of the province.

The Malakand Division, particularly the district Dir, is blessed with natural beauty, and promoting tourism in the region will create employment opportunities for the local population.

In this regard, it is crucial for local officials and youth to play their role in promoting tourist activities.

Governor Haji

Ghulam Ali expressed these views during a meeting here at Governor House with a 28-member delegation, consisting of elected chairpersons, councilors, and representatives from political parties, including the Peoples Party of Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami, and Awami National Party.

The delegation, led by Chairman Maulana Ashfaq Hanafi, apprised the Governor of various issues related to the Dir district and highlighted the challenges faced by local municipalities. Governor Haji Ghulam Ali assured the delegation of his full cooperation in finding solutions to their problems.

He said that the provincial government is committed to ensure equal development in all urban and rural areas of the province.

Furthermore, the federal government is also providing assistance to expedite the development process.

The Governor said that local representatives are closest to the people and, therefore, funds have been allocated in the budget for elected municipal representatives to initiate developmental projects at the grassroots level.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali urged the elected representatives from all districts.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali talking to 28-member delegation, consisting of elected chairpersons, councilors, and representatives from political parties.

## KP CM finalizes proposals of expenditures for development

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting in which he finalised proposals regarding the proposed expenditures both of current and development sides during the first four months of the upcoming financial year.

The proposed expenditures would be presented to the caretaker provincial cabinet for authorisation. Besides caretaker cabinet members Hamid Shah and Himayatullah Khan, the meeting was also attended by Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Secretary Finance, Muhammad Ayaz and other relevant high ups.

The meeting was given detailed briefing

about various aspects of the current and development expenditures to be incurred during the first four months of the fiscal year 2023-24.

The meeting also finalised various proposals regarding austerity measures with the aim to create maximum fiscal space for development.

These proposed measures would also be presented to the caretaker cabinet for final approval.

The proposals contain short term, mid term and long term measures to create more and more fiscal space.

For this purpose, a special meeting of the provincial caretaker cabinet would be held on 20<sup>th</sup> instant, it was decided in the meeting.

Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that proposed expenditures for the first four months of the upcoming financial year.

## CM for opening portion of Malir expressway by Dec

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah during his visit to the under-construction Malir Expressway directed the local government department to speed up the work so that one portion of the project from Korangi or Quaidabad could be opened by December.

The Chief Minister along with provincial minister Sharjeel Memon, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Special Assistant Syed Qasim Naveed, and Deputy Mayor Salman Murad visited 39.4 km under-construction Malir Expressway from Korangi to Kathore.

Commissioner

Karachi Iqbal Memon, Secretary LG Najam Shah, PD Niaz Soomro and Special Secretary Finance Asad Zamin were present at the Site.

The Malir Expressway project facility was being developed on the left bank of the Malir River to establish 'Access Controlled High-Speed Expressway'.

It would have a six-lane with three-meter side shoulders dual carriageway. The expressway way had been designed for 100kph speed on the expressway and 50kph on its interchanges.

The starting point of

the project was Korangi Road, before Jam Sadiq Bridge, it would have an interchange for Jam Sadiq Bridge at KPT Flyover. It would cover Korangi, Shah Faisal Colony (Quaidabad), and would end at Kathore.

The project Director of the Expressway Niaz Soomro while briefing the Chief Minister said that there were two parts/packages of the Expressway project- Jam Sadiq to Quaidabad where the progress of the work had been recorded at around 38 percent.

On the other package from Quaidabad to Kathore 15 percent progress had been achieved.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah along with others being briefed by officials about construction work of Malir Expressway road under the supervision of local government department, during his inspection visit in Karachi.

## Sajida Ahmed says: Death of youths after boat capsized in Greece is heartbreaking incident

**Independent Report**  
MULTAN: Chairperson, Stability of Pakistan Ethad Foundation, Sajida Ahmed deeply regretted the loss of a large number of precious human lives in the tragic accident in

pieces of someone's liver/heart.

In the constitution of Pakistan, it has been done to the people, but unfortunately the state is completely unable to fulfill its most important and basic responsibility. Later, they are falling into the abyss of unemployment and then they turn to Europe through secret and dangerous routes in search of employment. It is the capitalist system, the ruling elite and the state.

These thieves, hypocrites and traitors have made the country in such a state that every young person is forced to go abroad and work in another country. The decks of the boat are shown crowded with people.

He said that the correct number of people on board the boat was 750, in which there were about three and a half hundred people belonging to Pakistan.



Greece and said that the death of 298 Pakistani youths due to the capsizing of a boat in Greece is a very heartbreaking incident. This is a sign of extreme poverty, severe unemployment in the country. The former, current governments and the elite are responsible for this. The FIR of more than 298 youths is registered in Allah's court against these upper classes. These were

## Relief Department taking steps to combat dengue fever: Secretary

PESHAWAR (APP): The Relief, Rehabilitation, and Settlement Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking steps to combat dengue fever in collaboration with local and international organizations under the Provincial Dengue Control Action Plan.

As part of this effort, the international organization Médecins du Monde (MDM) on Sunday provided 3,900 mosquito nets and 2,950 health kits to the Relief Department of KP.

Abdul Basit, Secretary of the Relief, Rehabilitation, and Settlement Department,

KP said that sessions on dengue prevention have been conducted in 560 schools, 241 colleges, and 9 universities so far.

He said that the relief supplies would be distributed in high-risk areas identified by the Relief Department.

The distribution will be carried out through the Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence Agencies.

Secretary Abdul Basit emphasized the significance of MDM assistance, stating that these efforts are of utmost importance as the public is affected by dengue every year.



KARACHI: A large number of citizens are gathering to enjoy their holiday during pleasant evening of summer season, at Seaview Beach in Karachi.

## Electoral rolls to be frozen after July 13: DEC

MIRPURKHAS (APP): District Election Commissioner (DEC) Mirpurkhas Khalid Hussain has urged the people to get their votes registered before July 13 as the electoral rolls will be frozen after the date.

In a statement on Sunday, DEC asked the people of Mirpurkhas to register, transfer and validate their votes before July 13 and can contact the district Election Commission office Mirpurkhas.

In this regard, especially women, transgender and persons with disability are requested to check their votes through SMS by sending their National Identity Card number to 8300, if any kind of correction is required they can contact the office of the District Election Commissioner Mirpurkhas.

Youngster shot dead by unknown outlaws

KHANEWAL (APP): A youngster was shot dead by unknown outlaws at Village 42/10-R on Sunday.

According to police sources, Imran Khan s/o Musa Khan resident of Village 42/10-R in premises of Sadar police station was standing outside his house when unknown armed outlaws shot him dead. The criminals also managed to escape from the scene.

Taking notice of the incident, the District Police Officer (DPO) Rana Omer Farooq directed officers concerned to arrest the criminals as early as possible.

The forensic team have collected the evidences from the crime scene and started search operation in the area after registration of the case, police sources added.



LAHORE: Chairperson Almarah Foundation Mrs. Sofia Warriach, Pakistani Singer Abrar ul Haq and Dy. Inspector General of police Mehboob Lilla cutting ribbon during the completion of 100 kids and inauguration the 5th house of Almarah Foundation.

## PML-N steers out country of difficulties: Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam on Sunday said that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the country was steered out of difficulties; otherwise, the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had plunged the nation into chaos.

Addressing at Shakes district Khyber after Alhaj Shaji Gul joining PML-N, Amir Muqam said that during Imran Khan's government, the prices of all commodities, including essential items were out of control but when PML-N came into power, the economic situation was stabilized. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif effectively managed the prices of essential items, resulting in a noticeable decrease, and during Ramadan, free flour was distributed among the poor and needy. Amir Muqam highlighted that it was the PML-N government that brought reforms in the tribal areas and incorporated tribal districts into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa based on the demands of the local population and elected representatives.

He assured that the future governments, both in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and at the federal level, would be formed by the Pakistan Muslim League, ensuring the welfare of tribal communities and undertaking developmental projects in the region.



HYDERABAD: Women residents of New Saeedabad are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Hyderabad press club.

## Forests preservation, growth mandatory to mitigate climate change impacts

PESHAWAR (APP): Where climate change issue is affecting the whole world, its impacts in Pakistan are also increasing by each passing year as according to a study Pakistan is among the list of countries vulnerable to climate change if timely measures are not taken.

As many other measures are necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change, the most important one is to grow more trees besides controlling deforestation.

No doubt, there are many other challenges being faced by the country but this issue requires special attention of the current governments, both central and provincial.

Keeping in view the gravity of the issue, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

government has taken numerous measures for sustainable growth and preservation of forest resources of the province by ensuring careful utilization and protection of forest lands.

"Considering forests a rich potential of the province, the government is giving due consideration to its protection and sustainable growth through different measures including setting up of enclosures, protection from fire, prohibition in cutting of trees and safety from livestock grazing," informed Ibrahim Khan, Senior Officer of the KP Forest Department.

Taking to APP, Ibrahim Khan said all the departments concerned had been taken on board for preempting fire incidents in

## One minor burnt to death

ATTOCK (APP): One minor burnt to death while over two dozen huts of Afghan families burnt to ashes in Nartoppa village near Chach motorway interchange in the limits of Hazro town of Attock on Sunday, police and rescue sources said. According to sources, an Afghan family was making food at its hut when all of the sudden LPG stove burst. The 4 years old Abdulah who was sleeping in the haunt could not be saved and burnt to death while two dozen huts turned in to ashes when the Rescue-1122 fire tenders reached at the site and extinguished the fire. Valuable worth thousands of rupees of the families were also burnt in the fire.

## IGP releases Rs 11.1 mln for 18 officials' treatment

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has released more than Rs 11.1 million to 18 officials of the police force for their treatment.

According to police spokesperson here on Sunday, traffic warden Mohsin Javed was given Rs 18,30,000 for his son's cochlear implant. Constable Amir Shahzad was given Rs 1 million for the treatment of liver cancer. Constable driver Mukhtar Ahmed was given Rs 1 million for the treatment of his son's kidneys.

Traffic Warden Munir Afzal was given Rs 1

million for his wife's breast cancer treatment. Azmat Abbas, a retired constable of Kasur, was given Rs 1 million for kidney transplant. Bahawalpur Inspector Muhammad Afzal's wife was given Rs 1 million for cancer treatment.

ASI Mahboob Aslam of Special Branch was given Rs 0.7 million for the treatment of his daughter. Constable Ghulam Abbas Klasi's wife was given Rs 0.5 million for kidney treatment expenses.

The rest of the money was given to officers and officials based on the requests received from different districts.



HYDERABAD: Members of Sindhi Awami Forum are holding protest demonstration against unrest law and order situation in city, held at Hyderabad press club.

## AJK cabinet reviews supplementary budget for fiscal year 2022-23

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) cabinet on Sunday reviewed the supplementary budget for the fiscal year 2022-23.

The AJK Cabinet met at Jammu Kashmir house in the federalmetropolis on Sunday with Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq in the chair.

AJK Secretary Finance Ismatullah Shah, on the occasion, presented the figures of the supplementary budget for the financial year 2022-23 before the cabinet.

The Cabinet also reviewed the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee constituted with reference to supplementary grants.

While deferring the demands of some departments in light of the recommendations put forth by the committee, the cabinet approved the rest of the demands to be presented in the AJK State Legislative Assembly.

The Finance Secretary has been directed to present the demands approved by the cabinet in the Legislative Assembly. The cabinet also approved an ordinance for better management of government buildings.

Under this ordinance, better management and maintenance of state-owned buildings within and outside the state would be possible. In this regard, the Prime Minister also formed a committee under the chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary. The committee has been asked to submit a report within a month regarding the illegal use of the state-owned buildings inside and outside Azad Kashmir.

The cabinet also approved the proposed ordinance seeking a complete ban on deforestation. As per the ordinance, five-year imprisonment has been fixed for those involved in the illicit trade of tree

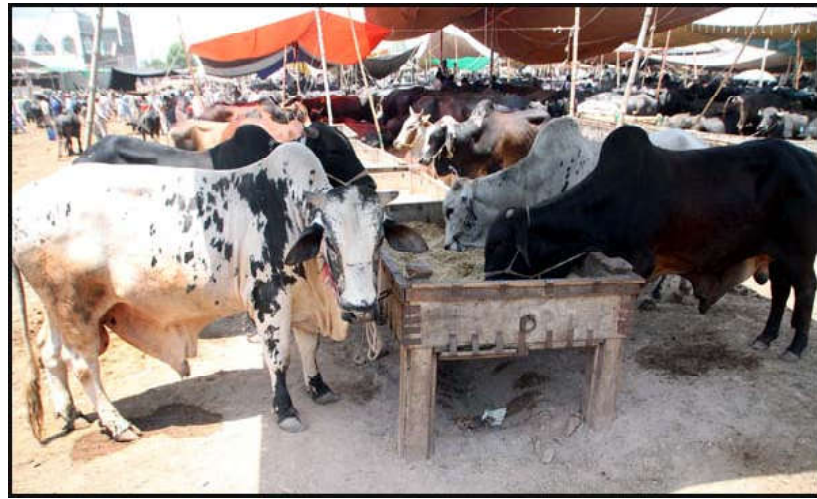
cutting in the forests. Moreover, the fine limit for illegal tree cutting has been increased to eleven times.

Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq told the cabinet members that the release of more funds from the federal government was expected during the financial year.

The cabinet decided to open an account under the title of "Mad-e-Amanat" in which development/additional funds received from the federal government not being spent before the end of the financial year could be deposited.

Accountant General Azad Kashmir has been directed to take the necessary action in that regard.

The cabinet, while expressing a sense of shock over the Greece boat disaster, announced a one-day mourning to mourn the death of innocent people who lost their lives in the tragic incident.



**PESHAWAR:** Sacrificial animals wait for their buyers at a makeshift sacrificial animals cattle market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, located on Ring road in Peshawar.

## Murtaza inaugurates Sui gas provision project for village Phalkot Galyat

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Sunday inaugurated the Sui gas provision project in village Phalkot Galyat that would be completed with the cost of Rs 11 million.

While addressing a public gathering on the occasion, he said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had neglected the people of the Hazara division during its four-year tenure.

Murtaza Abbasi said that PTI had the worst four years of rule in the history of Pakistan and they don't have any developmental project to present. In contrast, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has initiated several projects worth billions of rupees for the people of Hazara.

The PTI government has increased inflation day by day during its

government while our prices have reduced the prices of petrol, diesel, and flour, adding he said.

The minister said that despite the conspiracies against Pakistan Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif is standing firmly against them and will rescue the country from the crisis, during every tenure of PML-N the country has always progressed rapidly.

It was further mentioned that our manifesto is dedicated to serving the people, and this process will continue.

On this occasion, former MPA Sardar Aurangzib Nalootha, Zulfaqar Javed Abbasi, Malak Mohabbat Awan, Malak Faisal, Sardar Asif, and others addressed and stated that Murtaza Javed Abbasi has brought historical development work in one year in the region and there is no match for it.

## PSX snaps two-week winning streak on economic uncertainty

KARACHI (TLTP): Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) snapped a two-week winning streak owing to the uncertainty about International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, growing political noise, failure of the federal budget to meet investors' expectations and several other developments, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index dropping by 602.9 points to close the week in the red.

The KSE-100 Index fell -1.44 percent from 41,904.2 points to 41,301.3 last week after gaining 551.22 points (+1.33 percent) and 388.44

points (+0.95 percent) in the preceding weeks. Among other indices, the KSE All Share Index slipped by 333.04 points (-1.18 percent) last week to 27,920.66 points from 28,253.7 points, while KMI All Share Islamic Index fell by 202.21 points (-0.97 percent) to 20,487.75 points from 20,688.96 points on a week-on-week basis.

The PSX remained bearish and lacklustre throughout the week, closing all the five sessions in the red, as investors took the new budget deviating from the context of the IMF loan programme.

## Gold prices drop by Rs5,550 per tola for third week

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gold prices in the country eased by Rs5,550 (-2.44 percent) per tola last week, falling for the third straight week, while gold prices in the international bullion markets edged lower by 0.13 percent after rising for two consecutive weeks.

The gold rate in Pakistan for a single tola of 24-karat on a week-on-week (WoW) basis fell to Rs221,700 from Rs227,250, according to the data provided by All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the gold rate for 10 grams of 24-karat dipped to Rs190,070 from Rs194,830 on WoW basis, showing a decrease of Rs4,760. Likewise, the gold rate for 10 grams of 22-karat fell to Rs174,230 from Rs178,600.

As far as Pakistan rupee-US dollar parity is concerned, as gold is valued in USD.

## Farmers Day organised in Sialkot

SIALKOT (APP): Under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture (Extension), the Farmers Day was organised at a marriage hall in Daska regarding cultivation of paddy.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Daska Faisal Ahmed was the chief guest at the ceremony.

Assistant Director of Agriculture (Extension) Dr Irshad Ahmed, Senior Research Scientist Dr. Muhammad Tahir Awan, Dr. Arshad Makhdoom, representative of Fauji Fertilizer Dr. Tahir Naem and other experts addressed farmers.

They informed the participants about modern research, proportionate use of fertilizers.



**MULTAN:** Members of All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Multan press club.

## Indonesian envoy stresses on product diversification to raise bilateral trade benefits

ISLAMABAD (APP): The diversification of products and robust market research to identify new business sectors would be the key for the Pakistani business community to gain maximum benefits from the bilateral trade relationship between Indonesia and Pakistan.

This was stated by Ambassador of Indonesia Adam M. Tugio while interacting with top CEOs at a "Dialogue on Indonesia-Pakistan Trade Relationship" organized by CEO Club Pakistan, said a news release issued here Sunday.

Answering to various queries of leading business companies' chairpersons during an engaging session, Ambassador Tugio highlighted many opportunities to further enhance bilateral trade beyond raw materials and agricultural products. "Textiles, leathers and

pharmaceutical industries are the areas where business community of the two countries have the potential to team up in JV and produce items for the third country markets", the envoy said.

Responding to the prospects of FTA, the Indonesian envoy suggested the business community to identify more items where Pakistan has comparative advantage and consult with relevant authorities to include them in Trade in Goods Agreement (TIGA) as part of the review process to expand the PTA. He reminded the audience on the important location of Indonesia as hub for expanding trade to the wider area in Southeast Asia and suggested leapfrogging strategy to explore possibility of joining Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement which

represents 15 countries and 30 percent population of the world. "By joining RCEP, Pakistan would get easy access into a huge market of ASEAN and additional 5 partner countries with vast trade potential", added the envoy.

Discussing about mutual collaboration in IT sector, Ambassador Tugio said animation, health sector, business outsourcing new apps and other innovative ideas present lucrative prospects and are attractive areas of cooperation.

He informed that the Indonesian Embassy was working hard to promote educational linkages with universities in Pakistan and to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation with COMSTECH which would also be beneficial for pharmaceutical, herbal and halal industries. Earlier, the

## Govt striving to give maximum relief to the poor: SAPM Hamid

SARGODHA (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Gas and Petroleum Chaudhry Hamid Hameed said on Sunday Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led coalition government was making all-out efforts to provide maximum relief to the poor and deserving segments of society in its limited resources.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said the PML-N, during its previous tenure, launched significant uplift projects, eliminated terrorism, overcame power outage, revived economy and achieved other milestones for progress and prosperity of the country. He said that in 2013, before formation of the PML-N government, the country was facing severe economic challenges,

power outages, terrorism, and the international media was labelling Pakistan as most dangerous country in the world, but the PML-N, after coming to power, adopted comprehensive strategies to restore the country's image, eliminate terrorism, overcome power load-shedding and revive the economy of the country.

The minister said the PML-N government introduced a policy of 3Es: Energy sources and solutions, elimination of extremism and economic revival to put the country on road to development and progress, which was successfully achieved. He said over 11,000 megawatts of electricity was generated and added to the national grid only in four years, steering the country out of darkness.

## Rupee edges lower against dollar for third week

KARACHI (INP): Pakistani rupee fell for the third consecutive week against the US dollar in the interbank market, depreciating by 0.09 percent on a week-on-week basis.

According to the figures shared by the central bank, the rupee opened at 286.93 in the interbank market on Monday and closed at 287.19 on Friday, going down by 26 paisas against the greenback. During the preceding weeks, the local unit depreciated by 0.44 percent and 0.19 percent against the greenback in the interbank market.

During the current fiscal year 2022-23, Pakistani rupee has lost Rs81.30 against the US dollar in the interbank, while it plummeted by Rs60.86 against the greenback in the current year.



**HYDERABAD:** Workers busy in sorting the good quality mangoes from orchard for packing to deliver it to the fruit market at Tando jam.

## Special markets for sacrificial animals start attracting buyers

LAHORE (APP): Despite skyrocketing prices, people have started visiting makeshift and permanent animal markets to get the animals of their choice well before the Eid day, to provide their family members, especially children, to spend maximum time with these animals before they are slaughtered to fulfill the command of Allah Almighty.

On Sunday, a large number of people from provincial metropolis Lahore visited various animal markets including the one at Shahpur Kanjran, which is a permanent and largest such market in Lahore. Open areas, far from the hustle and bustle of the city, have been specified by the

provincial government for purchase and sale of the sacrificial animals. The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) has specified 10 sites for makeshift cattle markets and sale 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 behind skyrocketing prices of sacrificial animals were high transportation and animal feeding costs, and the loss of livestock in the floods last year. The high prices of sacrificial animals have affected the purchase power of low-income groups and salaried class the most.

According to the survey, most people are giving preference to collective sacrifice due to high prices of sacrificial animals. They said that in Lahore markets, this year around 30 to 35 per cent more prices of sacrificial animals were being demanded by the cattle owners.

A visit to different sale points also revealed that the price of a normal-size goat, sheep, or lamb ranges from Rs 65,000 to Rs 75,000, whereas a medium-size cow and calf ranged from Rs 140,000 to Rs 300,000. "Transporting animals from south Punjab to cities like Lahore, Rawalpindi or Faisalabad had become a pricey affair," Israr Gopang, a livestock breeder from

## Murtaza says: Industrial development will help in increase of export curtail imports

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood on Sunday visited Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

The minister also met with President FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and discussed ways and means to promote small and medium enterprises in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh urged the need of industrial development to attain rapid economic growth.

He said that industrial development will help in increase of export curtail imports and generate employment opportunities for the people.

He said that whenever we borrowed from the IMF, our GDP growth

decreased instead of increasing and also become a reason for other economic hardship.

He said that present century is the century of economy and economically strong nations will rule the world.

He said that it takes time for SMEs to quickly integrate and align with larger industrial units and urged the need of proper financing and facilities to SMEs.

President FPCCI also suggested to allocating special space for SMEs in special economic zones, besides providing skilled and technical education. He urged the government to ensure the provision of special facilities and interest-free loans to promote SMEs in rural areas to curb migration toward the major cities.



**QUETTA:** Vendor sells dry fruits to earn his livelihood for support his family, at a roadside stall located on Kelvin road in Quetta.

## Electricity-related problems being solved on priority: Khurram

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Engr Khurram Dasgir Khan has said that all electricity-related problems of people are being solved across the country on priority basis.

Accompanied by Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reforms Ahsan Iqbal, he was addressing the opening ceremony of the Construction Division Narowal, completed with Rs 170 million, here on Sunday. He said the inauguration of the division would not only provide

employment to people but also help end load-shedding and improve the supply system. "We have added 200-megawatt electricity to the system through coal projects," the minister added.

Khurram Dasgir said the journey of development, which remained stopped for four years of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, had restarted and it would continue after formation of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government for the next five years.



**CHINIOT:** Labourers busy in unloading maize from trolley at grain market.

## Bitcoin slips to \$26,512 in mixed trade

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The cryptocurrency market traded mixed on Sunday, with the market cap gaining 0.1 percent to reach \$1.11 trillion.

As of 1330 hours GMT, Bitcoin (BTC), the world's most valued token, slipped to \$26,512 with a minor decrease of 0.1 percent in the last 24 hours. The market capitalisation of the biggest crypto has reached \$514.5 billion with this decrease. Bitcoin has been 2.9 percent up in the past seven days.

Bitcoin has recovered since hitting a three-month low on Thursday. The filing of an application by

BlackRock for a crypto-backed exchange-traded fund has driven BTC's gain, effectively putting an end to its three-day losing streak.

These developments have unfolded amidst the US Securities and Exchange Commission's legal actions against Binance and Coinbase.

Similarly, Ether (ETH), the world's second-largest cryptocurrency by market capitalisation, slipped by 0.3 percent to reach \$1,735. With this decrease in price, the market capitalisation of ETH has reached \$208.7 billion.



**CHINIOT:** A farmer spreading fertilizer in a field.

# Putin warns NATO over being drawn into Ukraine war, says Russia has more nuclear weapons

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned there is a "serious danger" of NATO being drawn further into the Ukraine war if members of the alliance continue to supply military weaponry to Kyiv. "NATO, of course, is being drawn into the war in Ukraine, what are we talking here," Putin said at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday.

"The supplies of heavy military weaponry to Ukraine are ongoing, they are now looking into giving Ukraine the jets."

The comment appeared to be a reference to the F-16 fighter jets some members of the NATO alliance are making plans to supply Ukraine with.

NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was formed in the af-

term of World War II to defend Western nations from the Soviet Union and the alliance contains a mutual defense clause where an attack on any one member is considered an attack on all. While Ukraine is not a member of NATO, some NATO members have been supplying Kyiv with tanks, armored vehicles and other weaponry — prompting threats of retaliation from Russia.

German Leopard 2 tanks, British Challenger 2 tanks and American Bradley and Stryker vehicles are among the Western equipment that has been sent to Ukraine.

In late April, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that NATO allies and partners had delivered more than 1,500 vehicles and 230 tanks to the country.

During his speech in St. Petersburg, Putin said Russia had destroyed tanks "including Leopards" at the front lines.

"And if they are based abroad, but used in fighting we'll see how to hit them, and where we can hit those means that are used against us in fighting," Putin said.

"This is a serious danger of further drawing NATO into this military conflict," he added.

During his speech to the forum, Putin also suggested Russia's large number of nuclear weapons would "guarantee" its security — noting that Russia had more such weapons than NATO countries.

Russia has a total stockpile of around 6,250 nuclear warheads as of January 2021, according to the Arms Control Association.



President Joe Biden speaks at the Philadelphia International Airport in Philadelphia after an aerial tour of the Interstate 95 highway collapse.

# Biden strikes economic populist tone during campaign rally before exuberant union members

**Monitoring Desk**  
PHILADELPHIA: President Joe Biden delivered an unapologetically economic populist message Saturday during the first rally of his reelection campaign, telling an exuberant crowd of union members that his policies had created jobs and lifted the middle class. Now, he said, is the time for the wealthy to "pay their fair share" in taxes.

Biden spotlighted the sweeping climate, tax and health care package signed into law last year that cut the cost of prescription drugs and lowered insur-

ance premiums — pocketbook issues that advisers say will be the centerpiece of his argument for a second term.

"I'm looking forward to this campaign," Biden said to cries of "four more years!" before adding, "We've got a record to run on."

His choice of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania — and a friendly union audience — as his first official campaign stop reflected their crucial role in his reelection effort. The city was the site of his 2020 campaign headquarters and the state was one

of a handful that had voted for Republican Donald Trump in 2016 but flipped back to Democrats four years later.

Until the rally, Biden's primary reelection campaign activity had been fundraising as the campaign tries to amass an impressive fundraising haul before the year's second quarter concludes at the end of the month. The president raised money at a private home in Greenwich, Connecticut, on Friday and soon will hold fundraisers in California, Maryland, Illinois and New York.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, centre, and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, left, attend a weekly cabinet meeting in the prime minister's office in Jerusalem.

# Israel set to approve thousands of building permits in West Bank

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Israel's nationalist-religious government on Sunday tabled plans to approve thousands of building permits in the occupied West Bank, despite US pressure to halt settlement expansion that Washington sees as an obstacle to peace with Palestinians.

The plans for approval of 4,560 housing units in various areas of the West Bank were included on the agenda of Israel's Supreme Planning Council that meets next week, although only 1,332 are up for final approval, with the remainder still going through the preliminary clearance process.

"We will continue to develop the settlement of and strengthen the Israeli hold on the territory," said

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who also holds a defence portfolio that gives him a leading role in West Bank administration.

Most countries deem the settlements, built on land captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, as illegal. Their presence is one of the fundamental issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Palestinians seek to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as their capital. Peace talks that had been brokered by the United States have been frozen since 2014. Since entering office in January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition has approved the promotion of more than 7,000 new housing units, most deep in the West Bank.

# Heavy rains lash east Nepal; one dead, 25 missing

**Monitoring Desk**  
KATHMANDU: One person was killed and at least 25 others were missing in flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy rains that battered east Nepal, officials said on Sunday, the first known fatality since the annual rains began last week.

Heavy rains washed away a hydroelectric project under construction on the Hewa River in Sankhuwasabha district in eastern Nepal where 16 workers have gone missing, said Bimal Paudel, a government official.

"One body has been recovered while police are searching for the missing labourers," he said.

Nine people were also missing in flash floods and landslides in neighbouring Taplejung and Panchthar districts, bordering India in the east, officials said.

# Blinken starts rare China trip with hopes low for any breakthrough

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken began meetings in Beijing on Sunday, the first top American diplomat to visit China in five years, amid frosty bilateral ties and dim prospects for any breakthrough on the long list of disputes between the world's two largest economies.

Having postponed a February trip after a suspected Chinese spy balloon flew over US airspace, Blinken is the highest-ranking US government official

to visit China since President Joe Biden took office in January 2021.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang greeted Blinken and his group at the door to a villa in the grounds of Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guest House, as the two made small talk in English before shaking hands in front a Chinese and an American flag.

After heading into a meeting room, neither Blinken nor Qin made comments in front of reporters who were briefly allowed in.

# Philippine coast guard rescues 120 people as ferry catches fire

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: All 120 people onboard a ferry that caught fire at sea in central Philippines on Sunday have been rescued, the coastguard said. The M/V Esperanza Star, which was carrying 65 passengers and 55 officers and crew members, caught fire while sailing from Siquijor island in the south to nearby Bohol island, the coastguard said. Coast guard firefighters onboard another vessel used a water cannon and declared the fire out by around 0200 GMT, a spokesperson said.

# Sudan begins a cease-fire ahead of a pledging conference to raise funds for humanitarian assistance

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Sudan's warring parties began a cease-fire Sunday morning after two months of fighting pushed the African nation into chaos.

Residents in the capital, Khartoum, and its neighboring city of Omdurman reported "relative calm" in the first hours of the cease-fire Sunday morning, after fierce clashes were reported the previous day. The three-day truce came ahead of a pledging conference the U.N. and other nations will organize Monday to raise funds to cover Sudan's humanitarian needs. The U.N. says it received less than 16% of the \$2.57 billion required to help those in need in Sudan in 2023. Another \$470 million is needed to support refugees in the Horn of Africa region, it said.

The United States and Saudi Arabia, announced the cease-fire agreement Saturday. Both led concerted diplomatic efforts to stop the war over the past two months.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia said in a joint state-

ment that the military and its rival paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, agreed to halt fighting and "refrain from seeking military advantage during the ceasefire." Sudan plunged into chaos after months of worsening tensions between the rival generals exploded into open fighting, in mid-April, across the country with the capital, Khartoum and the western Darfur region bearing the brunt of the armed conflict.

The fighting turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlegrounds. More than 3,000 people lost their lives and over 6,000 others were wounded, according to Health Minister Haitham Mohammed Ibrahim. It forced more than 2.2 million people to flee their homes to safer areas inside Sudan and to neighboring nations. The cease-fire was the latest in a series of attempted truces, brokered by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, all of which failed to stop fighting, with the mediators blaming the two warring sides.

# Party expels Greek MP over racist remarks on shipwreck

**Monitoring Desk**  
ATHENS: A right-wing Greek parliamentarian was expelled on Saturday from the party of former prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who is seeking a second term at polls next weekend, for racist remarks after the mass drowning of migrants.

The Greek coastguard was continuing its search for survivors of the sinking of a boat carrying migrants that killed at least 78 people on Tuesday.

Hopes of finding survivors are fading "by the minute," according to officials.

The coastguard has so far rescued 104 people from the boat which rescuers said was carrying "hundreds" of migrants.

While condemning the "tragic" loss of life, including "children", Spiros Kriketos, a lawmaker in Mitsotakis's New Democracy (ND) party, said on Thursday that Greece "cannot tolerate more migrants".



Police fire tear gas as thousands in France protest against high-speed Lyon-Turin train.

# Evidence suggests Russia blew Kakhovka dam in Ukraine, reports NYT

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Evidence suggests this month's destruction of the huge Kakhovka dam in a Russian-controlled area of Ukraine resulted from an inside explosion set off by Russia, The New York Times said. Citing engineers and explosive experts, the newspaper said on Friday that its investigation found evidence suggesting an explosive charge in a passage way running through the dam's concrete base detonated, destroying the structure on June 6.

"The evidence clearly suggests the dam was crippled by an explosion set

off by the side that controls it: Russia," The Times said.

Separately, a team of international legal experts assisting Ukraine's prosecutors in their investigation said in preliminary findings on Friday it was "highly likely" the collapse in Ukraine's Kherson region was caused by explosives planted by Russians. The Kremlin accuses Kyiv of sabotaging the hydroelectric dam, which held a reservoir the size of the US Great Salt Lake, to cut off a key source of water for Crimea and distract attention from a "falling" counter-offensive against Russian forces.

# 2 arrested in India's UP after video of Muslim man being beaten, forced to chant Hindu slogans goes viral

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: The Indian police have arrested a pair of suspects in the Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh after a video of a Muslim man being beaten up and forced to chant Hindu slogans went viral on social media, according to media reports. In a report published today, India Today said the victim was "beaten up, harassed and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'" by three perpetrators on suspicion of mobile phone theft.

# Nearly 100 dead as Indian states swelter in heat

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: At least 98 people have died in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the last three days due to extreme heat, according to officials.

As parts of India have been witnessing severe heatwaves in the last few days with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius at many places, 54 people died in northern Uttar Pradesh and 44 people in eastern Bihar.

All 54 deaths in Uttar Pradesh were reported from one Ballia district, where at least 400 other people have been admitted to the district hospital for treatment.

Medical Superintendent Dr SK Yadav, confirming deaths, said a team from the state capital Lucknow

will be arriving to investigate the matter.

"They will see whether any other disease is responsible for these deaths. Most of these patients had other accompanying diseases like hypertension and diabetes," Yadav told Anadolu.

Ballia district recorded a maximum temperature of 43°C on Saturday. Another 44 people died in the eastern state of Bihar due to hot weather conditions. Out of 44 deaths, 35 people died in Patna city alone, according to broadcaster India Today. Nine people have died in other districts of the state.

Patna, the capital of Bihar, recorded a maximum temperature of 44.7°C on Friday.

# Lebanon's top Christian cleric slams failed attempt to elect a president

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Lebanon's top Maronite Christian cleric said on Sunday the country's constitution and democratic system had been violated in "cold blood" during a failed attempt to elect a new president last week, and warned that divisions in the nation had widened.

Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rai spoke in his first sermon since the Iran-backed Shi'ite group Hezbollah and its closest allies thwarted an attempt by factions including the main Christian parties to elect an IMF official as president.

# Uganda sends more troops to pursue attackers who killed 37 students

**Monitoring Desk**  
KAMPALA: Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni on Sunday ordered more troops to western Uganda where attackers from a group with links to Islamic State killed at least 37 secondary school students. Members of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed the students late on Friday at Lhubirira Secondary School in Mpondwe, near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Military and police said the attackers had also abducted six students and fled towards the Virunga National Park across the border. Their fate is unknown. Museveni said more soldiers had joined the pursuit in the area, which

includes Rwenzori Mountain, from where the ADF launched their insurgency against Museveni in the 1990s. "We are now sending more troops into the area south of Rwenzori Mountain," he said in a statement.

"Their action, the desperate, cowardly, terrorist action, therefore, will not save them. We are bringing new forces to the Uganda side as we continue the hunting on the Congo side."

On Saturday, privately owned NTV Uganda television said the death toll stood at 41, while the state-run New Vision newspaper said it was 42. New Vision said 39 of the dead were students, and some were killed when the attackers set off a bomb as they fled.

# Europeans scramble on air defence after decades of complacency

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: The intensity of the drone and missile war in Ukraine has laid bare gaps in European states' air defences that experts say will be difficult, time-consuming and costly to plug.

Anti-air systems will likely have a starring role at the Paris Air Show starting on Monday, predicts Richard Aboulafia, managing director of AeroDynamic Advisory.

"You're going to see a lot of talk about production capacity for missiles. The market for missiles is easily the fastest growing segment of the industry and yet the manufacturers simply can't keep up," Aboulafia told AFP.

Western countries had enjoyed total mastery of the skies since the end of the Cold War and largely dropped the powerful defences once designed to protect NATO forces from Soviet aircraft.

France got rid of eight of its nine anti-aircraft artillery regiments, MPs flagged up in a recent report.

But NATO countries have been turning to air defence again in recent years as more states have acquired cruise missiles, short-range ballistic missiles and drones, said Mark Cancian, a retired US marine colonel who is a senior adviser at the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

"They started it, but basically didn't get too far," Cancian told AFP.

"In another five years, I think there'll be a lot more out there, but that doesn't help Ukraine right now," he added.

With anti-air systems and the missiles they fire lacking, the West is struggling to respond to Ukraine's pleas for supply — whether for short- or long-range defences.

Berlin plans to spend five billion euros on anti-air from a 100-billion-euro (\$110 billion) fund for rebuilding its armed forces in the coming years, with the same amount budgeted in Paris for the period to 2030.

# Germany resists Malian junta demand for immediate exit of troops

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Germany said on Sunday a request by Mali's military junta for the United Nations peacekeeping force to leave the country "without delay" is politically motivated and Berlin still aims for an orderly withdrawal of its troops by May 2024. Mali's interim military authorities made the request on Friday, citing a "crisis of confidence" between Malian authorities and the decade-long U.N. mission known as MINUSMA, which has struggled to protect civilians and its own troops.

The unexpected demand sparked immediate fears of further chaos in Mali, which voted on Sunday in a referendum on changing the constitution intended to pave the way to elections and a return to civilian rule.

Berlin has deployed some 1,000 troops to Mali, most near the northern town of Gao where their

main task is to gather reconnaissance for the 13,000-strong MINUSMA.

The withdrawal demand marked a major turning point for the West African country, which has struggled to stem an Islamist insurgency that took root following an uprising in 2012. MINUSMA was deployed by the U.N. Security Council in 2013 to support foreign and local efforts to restore stability.

Frustrations over the growing insecurity spurred two coups in 2020 and 2021 and the ruling junta has been increasingly at loggerheads with MINUSMA and other international allies including France. Security Council members must adopt a resolution to extend MINUSMA's mandate by June 30. A resolution requires at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain or France to pass.

# Swiss referendum set to back global minimum corporate tax, climate goals

**Monitoring Desk**  
ZURICH: Swiss voters looked set to approve proposals to introduce a global minimum tax on businesses and a climate law that aims to cut fossil fuel use and reach zero emissions by 2050, projections by public broadcaster SRF showed on Sunday.

The projections, based on counted votes, showed 88% of those who voted in Sunday's national referendum backed raising the country's business tax to the 15% global minimum rate from current average minimum of 11%, while 55% supported the climate law.

The results of the vote were expected later on Sunday.

In 2021, Switzerland joined almost 140 countries that signed up to an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) deal to set a minimum tax rate for big companies, a move aimed at limiting the practice of shifting profits to low tax countries.

Even with the increase Switzerland will still have

one of the lowest corporate tax levels in the world, and the proposal, estimated to bring 2.5 billion Swiss francs (\$2.80 billion) per year in additional revenue, has been backed by business groups, most political parties, and the general public.

The climate law, brought back in a modified form after it was rejected in 2021 as too costly, has stirred up more debate with those campaigning against it gaining traction in recent weeks.

Proponents say the law is the minimum the wealthy country needs to do to prove its commitment to fighting climate change while opponents from the right wing People's Party say it will jeopardise energy security.

The projections from Sunday's referendum also suggested voter approval for an extension of some provisions of the country's emergency COVID-19 law, required under Switzerland's system of direct democracy, where legislation is put to the public vote.



Plane leaves Yemen capital for Saudi, first since 2016.

# PDM resumes journey of development, stopped after 2018 rigged elections: Asad

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Asad Mahmood on Sunday said the journey of development has been resumed which was stopped after 2018 rigged elections.

He stated this while addressing a public gathering after inauguration of multi mega development projects worth Rs 5.65 billion by Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman here in a private marriage hall.

The federal minister said the mega projects were being initiated for the region under the National Highways Authority (NHA) and it was a message to the people of area that the development journey has been started, adding, the Dera Ismail Khan would be made a developed and prosperous city.

He said "a foreign agent was imposed in 2018 election to stop development process of Pakistan."

He said the founder of

Motorways Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had initiated Hakla-Dera section of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. He said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government did not believe in the politics of victimization rather it was pursuing the agenda of development.

He said those who went missing after losing the government were trying to mislead the people and trying to get credit of different development projects of Dera Ismail Khan. "You could not mislead this nation," he added.

The project of Agriculture University of Dera was also on credit of PDM government which was announced by Nawaz Sharif.

When the foreign agent was imposed on this country, the projects including Hakla-Dera Motorway, Yarik Grid station were in the completion phases but the PTI tried to

get credit of these projects.

"Today, we started work on Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway," he said.

The planners of the conspiracy have run away and the beneficiaries went missing from the scene, he said and added that the beneficiaries should have to face the nation as they halted the journey of development.

He vowed that all the development projects initiated by the PDM government would be completed in stipulated time period.

He paid tribute to the workers of his party, saying, they faced difficulties but always stood by their leadership.

Earlier, JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman inaugurated rehabilitation work on two lanes 18-km long Qureshi Moor to Naivela road, two lane road from Muryali to Qureshi Moor and then to Ramak worth Rs 2.65 billion, two lane road from Mufti Mahmood Chowk to Qureshi Moor on Dera Bypass worth Rs 3 billion.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi addressing a press conference at Begumpura.

# PML-N always preferred state over politics: Ahsan

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has always preferred state over politics, and recently saved the country from bankruptcy after forming a coalition government in centre last year.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of Construction Division Narowal, along with Federal Minister for Energy Engr Khuram Dastgir Khan here on Sunday. He said the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government put the development gear in reverse and destroyed the country.

Ahsan Iqbal said that an incompetent person was

made the prime minister of a nuclear power Pakistan by giving him the certificate of 'Sadiq' and 'Ameen'. He said that in the past, instead of development projects, seeds of hatred were sown and only revenge actions were taken. He said that through the political of uncertainty, Imran Khan tried to destroy the national economy.

The federal minister said "we are responsible politicians; we have a national government, and we are serving people with national spirit, while Imran Niazi created a situation of anarchy". He said "we played our role, we saved Pakistan from bankruptcy in one-year rule and launched development programmes for the country".

The PML-N senior leader said "our allies are united, and they prepared a budget for the entire nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif". He said Shehbaz Sharif was taking all decisions through consensus among all coalition partners. He said the prime minister had always consulted the ruling coalition parties before making any crucial and national decision.

Ahsan Iqbal said the federal government distributed a huge amount among the flood victims through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). He said that the incumbent government was resuming all development projects which had been put on the back burner by the previous PTI government.

# Ashrafi urges political dialogue for stability in country

LAHORE (APP): Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East and Central Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi called upon political parties on Sunday to hold dialogue for restoring stability and peace in the country.

Addressing a press conference at Baitul Aman here, he said investors were ready to come to Pakistan, but they wanted peace in the country. He said it was good that Pakistan's relations with Russia and other countries were improving. He said the supremacy of the law required everyone to avoid playing with the Constitution. The ulama of the country did not approve of political fights, he added.

Expressing his grief over the loss of human lives in a boat, which capsized near Greece, he said peace would have to be restored in Pakistan if the youth were to be stopped from

leaving the country for some job opportunities in other countries. He demanded the prime minister and the interior minister should take action against those involved in sending Pakistani citizens abroad illegally. He also appealed the chief justice of Pakistan to take suo moto notice of such events. He also expressed condolences to those who lost their lives in a bus accident near Kallar Kahar.

He said protests continued in the country throughout the year, but what happened on May 9 was first incident of its kind. "Does anyone in anger ever insult their martyrs," he questioned. He said the Army Act was not a new law and it had been in exercise for years, adding that punishments were given under the Army Act during Imran's government also. However, he added, all those not involved in any vandalism on May 9 should be released.



ZIARAT: Provincial Minister for Sports and Culture Abdul Khaliq Hazara inaugurating Cultural Mela organized by Culture & Youth Affairs at Ziarat Residency

# During the 10-day crackdown Customs Intelligence seizes smuggled cigarettes worth Rs 303 million

KARACHI. According to the instructions of Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad and on the orders of Director General Customs Intelligence Faiz Ahmad Chadhar, the crackdown against cigarette smugglers was intensified. Customs Intelligence has seized smuggled cigarettes worth Rs 303 million during nationwide operations in the last ten days.

The largest operation was carried out in Balochistan, where Customs Intelligence seized 4,280,000 cigarettes of foreign brands worth Rs 114.2 million. While in Sindh province, as a result of eight operations, 1,420,700 cigarettes of top brands worth Rs. 69.7 million were confiscated. Similarly, during intelligence-based operations in Punjab, the Customs Intelligence team recovered 1,294,000 smuggled cigarettes worth Rs 75.3 million. Similarly, PK Customs Intelligence seized

1,155,000 smuggled cigarettes worth Rs 43.9 million.

A total of 8,149,700 smuggled cigarettes worth 303 million have been seized by the Customs Intelligence during the last ten days. This brings the total number of seizures of smuggled cigarettes by Customs Intelligence to 33,994,850 in the current financial year 2022-23 with a value of 1,324 million.

Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad and Director General Customs Intelligence Faiz Ahmad Chadhar while appreciating the efforts of Customs Intelligence Quetta, Karachi, Multan, Gwadar, Hyderabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar, expressed the fact that despite the shortage of human resources and logistics, Customs Intelligence is effectively making efforts to combat smuggling in general and smuggling of contraband cigarettes in particular.

# CTD arrests 'terrorist' in DG Khan

LAHORE (APP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab, during an operation in Dera Ghazi Khan, arrested an alleged terrorist, who's a member of a banned outfit.

According to the spokesman, the CTD DG Khan received information from a reliable source that an active member of proscribed organisation, Baloch Liberation Army, Muhammad Rashid Bashmani, was present in the area and was sharing controversial content against the government and the law-enforcement agencies through the social media.

A team of CTD police station Sadar reached the spot and arrested the terrorist, the spokesman said and added that the police also registered a case against the terrorist and started investigation.

He said in case of any information related to terrorism, people might report on the helpline of CTD Punjab on 0800-11111.

# Body found in Pishin

QUETTA (APP): The mutilated body of an unidentified person was recovered from Yaro Bostan Road of Pishin district on Sunday, Levies Force officials said.

No identity of body ascertained so far. In-charge Levies Agha Mohammad said adding that the body of the deceased was seized on the information of local residents. Later, the body was shifted to Quetta mortuary. Further probe is underway.

# Soccer player Shumaila held in connection with Jinnah House attack

LAHORE (Online): Police arrested soccer player Shumaila Sattar in connection with Jinnah House attack on May 9, police sources told media on Sunday. The footballer's name was included in the list of geo-fencing. She was found in sabotage act outside the Jinnah House. A police team raided her house, took her into custody and shifted her to a jail after seeking judicial remand.

# PkMAP Muslim Bagh Regional Unit meets; hundreds participate

Independent Report QUETTA: The historic conference of the Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Muslim Bagh Shar regional unit was held at the Essa Hall, Muslim Bagh on Sunday.

While the conference was presided over by the party's provincial president, Abdul Qahar Wadhan, hundreds of the delegates belonging to the party participated in the conference.

Prominent among other participants were the central Secretary General of PkMAP, Abdul Rahim

# Over 100 suicides incidents in Indian Army

NEW DELHI (Online): Indian Army is facing suicide after each three days and over 100 suicides are occurring in every year. Most of the incidents occurred in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). According to details more than 3300 army personnel do suicide in various incidents. In only last five year, more than 800 Indian army personnel ended their life as they were tired of their officers behaviour. On January 23, 2023 colonel Khanna hanged himself to death with roof fan. While on January 09, 2023 Lt colonel Nanshan gun downed his wife and suicided.

# Our desires & endeavor is to decorate each & every child with ornament of education

## Governor visits Al-Hijra Residential School & College

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar has stated that it is our endeavor and desire that each and every child of the province is decorated with the ornament of education.

He exhorted on the teachers of the Al-Hijra Residential School and College to pay attention on the character building and morality of the students so that they may become useful citizens of the society.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation of the Al-Hijra Residential School and College who called on him under leadership of its Principal, Shabbir Ahmed, at the Governor

House Ziarat on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that it our good fortune that major portion of our population consists of the youth. Therefore, it is necessary for us to utilize the hidden potential and energy of our new generation in the best interest of the country and nation, adding the Governor stressed.

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar on the occasion also appreciated performance of the Al-Hijra School and College and insisted that heavy responsibilities rest with the teachers of the province to play their role in materializing the dream of educated and developed Balochistan.

# Elections should be held as per constitution: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Qamar Zaman Kaira Sunday said that the general elections in the country should be held according to the Constitution and not on the will and whims of a single party as PPP believes in democratic norms. "Any political party achieved people's mandate in free and transparent election would have all the right to form government and address the country's problems", he said while talking to a Private news channel.

PPP has strong roots in masses that would win the general elections and complete the mission of former prime ministers Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and

Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, he added. He said the PPP believes in services to people, not abusive politics, adding, PPP is not fighting against any political party but against poverty and inflation. PPP government had always worked for poor people and downtrodden segments of the society, he added. Replying a question, he said the blame of rigging is unacceptable as the party's success in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) by-election reflected the AJK's people's fully support for the party.

To another question, he replied party would win the upcoming general elections with thumping majority with the support of its committed workers.

# Rana Tanveer says: Imran played with country's interests

SHEIKHUPURA (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain has said that Pakistan did not need any enemy in the presence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, as he had been playing with the country's interests continuously.

He was talking to the media after inaugurating Sui gas supply to Manj Road Noorpura here on Sunday. He said Pakistan was on the verge of bankruptcy when the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition government took over the country through a no-confidence move against

Imran Khan. The minister claimed that Imran Khan looted the national kitty ruthlessly and caused irreparable damage to the country, adding that the PTI chief broke all records of obtaining the foreign loans. Rana Tanveer said Imran Khan dubbed others as 'dacoits and thieves', but his crony Farah Gogi looted the national wealth with great impunity and shifted it abroad. The minister said that Pakistanis posed confidence in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in 2013 when the coalition government took over the country through a no-confidence move against



QUETTA: Member of Civil Society hold a protest in favour of their demands in front of Quetta Press Club.

# Terrorist commander among three killed in Dara Adam Khel IBO

ISLAMABAD (APP): The security forces in a successful intelligence based operation on Sunday killed the most wanted terrorist commander Zafar alias Zafari and two of his group members in Dara Adam Khel.

According to the security sources, on the night of June 16th and 17th, security forces in a highly planned intelligence-based operation killed a most wanted Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorist commander Zafar Khan alias Zafari son of Ghulam Siddique in Dara Adam Khel whereas two of his members identified as Hasan Khan son of Mohammad Imran (Resident of Bazi Khel, Dara Adam Khel) and Anas alias Ali (Resident of Nangarhar Afghanistan) were sent to hell.

The intelligence agencies and security forces hunt down terrorists by adopting unconventional opera-

tional procedures based on corroborated intelligence.

The slain terrorist Zafari was a resident of village Malan in Dara Adam Khel and reached Peshawar from Nangarhar province of Afghanistan on 22nd May 2023.

Terrorist Zafari was also a former member of Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA) and was involved in 26 grenade attacks in Pakistan.

Commander Zafari was involved in dozens of terrorist attacks against security forces, coal contractors, businessmen and influential people and so far had stolen more than Rs 100 million in extortion and kidnapping for ransom.

The slain terrorist Hasan Khan was an expert in sniping and grenade attacks and was a part of Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan from 2019 to 2021 and lost Nangar province of Afghanistan several times.



QUETTA: MPASana Baloch inaugurating business expo in Al-Hamd Islamic University

# Fazal inaugurates multiple mega development projects worth Rs 5.65 billion

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday inaugurated multiple mega development projects worth Rs 5.65 billion for Dera Ismail Khan region.

The JUI-F chief unveiled the plaques of different mega development projects in a ceremony held here in a private marriage hall which was also attended by Federal Minister for Communication Asad Mahmood, Caretaker Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative Department Abdul Haleem Khan Qasuria, JUI-F District Ameer Maulana Lutfur Rehman, Maulana Ubaid, Sami Ullaha Alizai and other local leadership of the party.

Addressing a gathering on this occasion, Fazl said "I am feeling happy that the journey of development which was stopped in 2018 through a foreign agenda was resumed in the country".

Fazl said he knows about the planners and beneficiaries of 2018 rigged elections. Most of the beneficiaries become absconders.

# 1,300 pilgrims from more than 90 countries to perform Hajj this year

RIYADH (APP): Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has given instructions that 1,300 pilgrims from more than 90 countries are allowed to perform Hajj this year (1444-AH), at their expense, as part of the Custodian of the two holy mosques Hajj Guests Program, which is supervised and implemented annually by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Call and Guidance.

According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the Minister of Islamic Affairs, Call and Guidance, General Supervisor of the Custodian of the two holy mosques Hajj Guests Program Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Ai-Sheikh thanked the Custodian of the two holy mosques and HRH the Crown Prince for their generosity and keenness to see Muslims perform the rituals of Islam, and for assisting those who wish to perform Hajj and can only do that at the expense of the Custodian of the two holy mosques.



LORALAI: Provincial Minister for Industry & Trade Haji Muhammad Khan Toor Utmankhail talking with people at Abdul Rahim Khan Club