

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vol: XXIV No. 303, Zil Hajj 04, 1444 AH Friday June 23, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

PM calls on int'l community to ensure fair, judicious distribution of resources

It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is painful for the rest of the body as well

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday called on the international community to come up with a plan for fair, equitable and judicious distribution of resources to ensure sustainable peace and harmony in the world.

Speaking here at the summit for a "New Global Financing Pact", he said North had made progress and they would look forward to implementing its experiences in Pakistan, for providing jobs and livelihoods and for promoting industry and agriculture by learning from its model of success.

"It must be remembered that if South is in trouble the world can't move ahead. We are like one body and if one limb of the body is in trouble it is painful for the rest of the body as well."

He said the international financial institutions agreed to give loans for help of millions of people, but it would have burdened Pakistan, further exacerbating the already precarious financial situation.

Shahbaz Sharif said he took the United Nations Secretary General to the flood affected areas where city after city was sunk. Thousands of women gave birth to children in the camps set up for the flood affectees, he recalled, adding in far flung areas, the government had to provide food, medicine, water and education at temporary camps.

He said his government had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars from its own scarce resources to give financial assistance to the flood affectees all over the country.

"We are very grateful to friendly countries across the globe for the valuable and timely contribution," he added.

He said the international financial institutions agreed to give loans for help of millions of people, but it would have burdened Pakistan, further exacerbating the already precarious financial situation.

Shahbaz Sharif said he took the United Nations Secretary General to the flood affected areas where city after city was sunk. Thousands of women gave birth to children in the camps set up for the flood affectees, he recalled, adding in far flung areas, the government had to provide food, medicine, water and education at temporary camps.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the International Conference on Health Research organized by Rehman Medical Institute.

Higher education imperative for country's sustainable development: President

PESHAWAR (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Thursday said the promotion of higher education was imperative for sustainable progress and development, and stressed on universities to use technology in order to increase the number of graduates for the ultimate benefit of the country.

The president expressed these views during a high-level meeting here at the Governor House, which discussed problems related to the higher education sector and universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and his cabinet members, chief secretary and inspector general of police attended the meet-

ing. President Alvi said higher education was a very important sector and the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should increase the number of graduates with the help of technology for the country's prosperity and development.

The universities should enhance the number of online courses, besides initiating more shifts for producing quality skilled vocational and technical manpower, which was imperative for sustainable economic and industrial growth and socioeconomic development.

He advised the universities to hire the services of grant specialists for addressing their financial issues.



QUETTA: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghani, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice (Retd) Abdul Hameed Baloch and others addressing a reception hosted by lawyers

4th phase of LG polls completes with voting on reserved seats of district councils

Independent Report

QUETTA: The fourth phase of local government (LG) elections was completed with the voting process conducted for election on the reserved seats of 31 district councils in Balochistan on Thursday.

The elections on reserved seats of 31 district councils were held in 31 districts of the province as the candidates in other four districts had already been elected unopposed.

The process of polling started at 08:00 AM, which remain continued till 05:00 PM without any break.

In all 1001 candidates were in the competition run for 430 seats reserved for women, peasant, workers and non-Muslims in 31

districts of the province. The polling process remained peaceful throughout the day as no untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the province.

With this, fourth phase of the local government elections has been completed, stated the Provincial Election Commissioner, Sharifullah in a statement issued here.

According to him, the polling process was completed peacefully and no untoward incident was reported during the voting.

He thanked the provincial government, district returning officers, returning officers, election commission staff, law enforcement agencies and media on cooperation in the voting process.

Asif urges judiciary to work within its ambit

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday the judiciary had already interfered in the domain of parliament and must be stopped from doing so.

Addressing a session of the National Assembly chaired by Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, the minister said the matter of the trial of civilians in military courts had been taken to the Supreme Court and during the previous regime, 24 or 25 people were sentenced by military courts.

He said the SC bench had split and the result would come in a day or two. He said those who had raised the issue had political interests, adding that the petitioners had reservations with their respective parties.



FRANCE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Shaif addresses the round table discussion "Innovating with instruments and financing to address new vulnerabilities" at Summit for New Global Financing Pact being held in France.

We want solution of issues, says BNP chief: No one challenging writ of govt to be spared at all, asserts Zia Langove

Sardar Akhtar Mengal insists it's govt.'s responsibility to resolve issues by meeting dwellers of areas and inquiring about issues; Zia directs IGP & other concerned high ups to take stern action against those involved in extortion

Independent Report

QUETTA: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP) and Member National Assembly, Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove have come to an understanding to resolve the issues including those related to tribals ones through mutual talks.

While the Provincial Minister for Home Mir Ziaullah Langove stressed that we would have to find solution of the issues through talks and adopt a way out of the problems in future, Sardar Akhtar Mengal insisted that we want solution of the issues. Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the tribal areas

have their own traditions. He stressed the need to hold meetings with dwellers of the areas and ask them about their issues and affairs.

The BNP chief maintained that it is responsibility of the government to resolve the issues.

Mir Ziaullah Langove was in interaction with Sardar Akhtar Mengal during his visit to Wadh area of Khuzdar on Thursday.

Mir Ziaullah Langove reached Wadh to meet personally to Sardar Akhtar Mengal over the tribal and other issues.

Also accompanied with him were the members of provincial Assembly, Mir Zabid Ali Reki and Mir Younas Aziz Zehri, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and Commis-

sioner Kalat Division, Dawood Khilji.

Moreover, present in the meeting were also the Member of Assembly of BNP, Mir Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo, Sardar Asad Mengal, religious leaders and other tribal notables.

Inspector General of Police and Commissioner Kalat Division briefed the participants about the overall situation.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Ziaullah Langove said that a committee headed by IGP would be constituted. He also directed to make coordination with all concerned on daily basis. He said that we would restore the government's writ at every cost, and no one challenging the writ would be spared.



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif separately meeting with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President of France Emmanuel Macron and President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during New Global Financing Pact Summit

PM, IMF MD discuss ongoing programme, bilateral cooperation

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Managing Director International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva met Thursday on the sidelines of New Global Financial Pact Summit here and exchanged views on the ongoing programme and cooperation between Pakistan and the IMF.

Recalling their recent telephone conversation on May 27, Shehbaz Sharif apprised Georgieva of Pakistan's economic outlook.

The prime minister outlined the steps taken by the government for economic growth and stability.

He underscored that all

Governor urges moderate & enlightened segments of society to promote democratic norms

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has urged the moderate and enlightened segments of the society to promote democratic behaviours in the society and play wholehearted role in upholding the human dignity.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation comprising the representatives of different bar associations who called on him

at the Governor House on Thursday.

The member of Pakistan Bar Association, Munir Kakar led the delegation.

During the course of meeting, the overall law and order situation, implementation on the rights and authorities of the masses and prospects of the sustainable development and prosperity were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, there's a key role of

lawyers in ensuring justice to the masses.

He said that heavy responsibility rests with the lawyers for implementing the public rights.

He said that a lawyer has the capability to play one's part in stopping the irregularities in any department and ending the social evils.

Meanwhile, the provincial head of UNHCR also called on the Governor here the same day.



QUETTA: Representatives of different Bar Associations led by Member of Pakistan Bar Association Munir Kakar meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

SC seeks details of arrested accused of May 9 riots

Justices Isa, Tariq recuse themselves; seven-member bench hears petitions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday sought complete details of accused arrested in connection with the May 9 riots and instructed respondents to submit written comments in the petitions against trial of civilian offenders in military courts.

A seven-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhter, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Muzahir Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik heard the case.

Earlier, a nine-member bench was dissolved after Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood recused to hear the case.

It should be told that how many people had been arrested and where the women prisoners were being kept, he added.

The CJP observed that every accused should be given an opportunity to defend himself through their counsel, but the lawyers were also being arrested and harassed, which was intolerable.

AGP Mansoor Awan said harassing any lawyer was an illegal act.

The chief justice re

hearing, CJP Bandial asked Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan to produce the correct details of people who had been arrested as the bench wanted to conclude the case as soon as possible.

It should be told that how many people had been arrested and where the women prisoners were being kept, he added.

The CJP observed that every accused should be given an opportunity to defend himself through their counsel, but the lawyers were also being arrested and harassed, which was intolerable.

AGP Mansoor Awan said harassing any lawyer was an illegal act.

The chief justice re

At the outset of the

Continued on page 2



WADH: President Balochistan National Party, MNA Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal receiving Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango upon arrival in Wadh

CM lauds jirga resolving tribal conflict in Wadh

Independent Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudous Bizenjo has expressed his satisfaction about the progress in resolving the tribal conflict in Wadh Tehsil of Khuzdar District. The Chief Minister has said that the settlement of disputes through mutual discussion and negotiation are the long-standing and strong traditions of our tribal society.

"The parties will show patience and tolerance", he hoped.

The chief minister maintained it is a matter of satisfaction that the political tribal and religious elders of the area are also playing their role in this regard, while the members of the provincial assembly Zabard Riki Ahmed Nawaz Baloch

Akhtar Hussain Longo Yunus Aziz Zehri former provincial minister Sardar Muhammad Aslam Bizenjo tribal elders and scholars. Sincere efforts for a peaceful resolution of the dispute are commendable, along with this, Commissioner Kalat and Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar are also taking steps to remove the obstacles in the resolution of the long-standing dispute.

The Chief Minister said that the government is ready to play its full role for the peaceful settlement of the tribal conflict. "The tribal disputes are obstacles in the establishment of peace and the parties and the people of the region always suffer from tribal conflicts." Chief minister highlighted.



QUETTA: Secretary Information Muhammad Hamza Shaqqaat and DGPR Kamran Asad meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali

Wadh tribal conflict echoed in BA's budget session

Independent Report

QUETTA: The lingering tribal conflict was echoed in the budget session of Balochistan Assembly when members of the assembly from opposition and treasury benches spoke about it on Thursday.

The budget session was resumed after gap of two days with Speaker Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali in the chair.

Soon after start of the session, the BNP Member of assembly, Akbar Mengal pointed out on a point of order that law and order situation is critical in Wadh. He alleged that some elements in Wadh are enjoying the government's patronage.

Akbar Mengal further charged that we are not being provided security, but others are provided the same.

He on the occasion demanded of the house to take notice of making pri-

vate militia in Wadh.

Speaking on the point or order, the Provincial Minister for Communications, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran said that three is tension between two tribes in Khuzdar, which is a conspiracy to spoil the otherwise law and order in the province.

Sardar Khetran mentioned that the Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove, Inspector General of Frontier Corps and Inspector General of Police are in Wadh to resolve the issues.

He also said that the present government honours all the towering personalities and considers its duty to protect each and every person.

It may be mentioned here that Mir Ziaullah Langove had reached Wadh on Thursday morning to speak to BNP chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal and other concerned over the tribal issues there.

Pakistan rejects peace talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday rejected holding peace talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan due to its involvement in killing civilians and security personnel in the country.

"Pakistan will not negotiate with individuals who are responsible for the killing of Pakistani civilians and law enforcement officials," the Foreign Office spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing, referring to an earlier statement of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch was responding to queries regarding the statement of the spokesman for Afghanistan's Taliban government, Zabihullah Mujahid who offered mediation between the Pakistan government and TTP.

On the life loss of Pakistanis in the capsized boat off the coast of Greece, she said 12 Pakistani nationals were among the 104 survivors, who were in good

physical condition.

The spokesperson said the Greek authorities had recovered 84 bodies, however, the number and identification of Pakistani nationals among the deceased and missing was unconfirmed at the moment. Relevant authorities have started collecting DNA samples from the families of those suspected to be on board.

She said Pakistan's ambassador Aamir Aftab and his team at the mission in Greece were working round the clock for the recovery and identification of Pakistani nationals.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has spoken to his Greek counterpart to discuss arrangements for the recovery of the bodies, and providing relief to the survivors, she added.

The FO spokesperson said FM Bilawal Bhutto would undertake a two-days official visit to Japan from July 2 at the invita-

tion of the Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi.

In Tokyo, the foreign minister will hold substantive talks with his counterpart and discuss bilateral trade and investment, cooperation in science and technology, education, information technology, culture, and human resource development.

The two sides will also discuss important regional and global developments and cooperation and dialogue in multilateral forums.

The spokesperson announced that Pakistan and Kazakhstan would hold the second round of Bilateral Political Consultations on June 26 in Astana, Kazakhstan. Additional Foreign Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia) Ambassador Syed Ahsan Raza Shah will lead the Pakistan delegation while the Kazakh side will be led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Kanat Tumyst.

The two sides will re-

view the entire spectrum of bilateral relations in political, trade, economic, connectivity, science and technology, and cultural and people-to-people relations.

The FO spokesperson said thousands of people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were spending a homeless life and were unable to return to their homeland. "India must bring an end to the climate of fear and persecution in IIOJK and bring peace in the lives of the Kashmiri people," she said.

The spokesperson said Pakistan would continue to extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Chief Minister KP, Muhammad Azam Khan, and members of the provincial cabinet, at Governor House.

London moot puts spotlight on Kashmiri half-widows, political prisoners

LONDON (INP): Institutionalizing cause of Kashmiri half-widows and political prisoners is need of the hour, speakers contended at a conference inside British parliament. Addressing the conference "Kashmiri half widows and political prisoners" at British parliament, speakers from cross section of people urged the international community, especially the UK government, to play their part to bring relief to Kashmiris.

Hosted by Fahim Kayani, president of Tehreek-e-Kashmir (TeK) UK, the conference was chaired by Paul Bristow MP which discussed the situation in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Parliamentarians, professionals, academicians, practitioners, journalists, British Kashmiris, allies and other participants from overseas discussed the highly militarized situation in IIOJK.

The conference expressed "its solidarity with the Kashmiri people suffering unprecedented abuse of human rights and supports their struggle for a just cause which is right to self-deter-

mination" as enshrined in various resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council, from time to time.

According to a TeK UK statement, the speakers specially urged the international community to act fast against settler colonialism under which more than three million Indians, mostly non-Muslims, are being settled in IIOJK to artificially change demography of the UN-designated disputed region which is blatant violation of Geneva Conventions.

British lawmakers including Rebecca Roseanne Long-Bailey MP, Paulette Hamilton MP, Jack Edgar Breerton MP, Lord Qurban Hussain, Jess Phillips MP, Matt Rodda MP, Muhammad Yasin MP attended the conference.

Habibur Rehman Aftab, director KIRC and Dr Saliha Uysal from Istanbul made specific proposals as how to seek end to illegal arrest of Kashmiris and improve situation of Kashmiri half-widows.

Ch Ghafarat Shahid, Rehana Ali, Ch Ikramul Haq, Ch Muhammad Aziz and others also participated in the discussions.



NASEERABAD: The ballot casting process is underway at polling station during Union Council Election held in Naserabad.

PM, IMF MD discuss...

Continued from page 1
prior actions for the 9th review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) had been completed and the Government of Pakistan was fully committed to fulfilling its obligations as agreed with the IMF.

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the funds allocated under the IMF's EFF would be released as soon as possible. This would help strengthen Pakistan's ongoing efforts towards economic stabilisation, and bring relief to its people.

The IMF managing director shared her institution's perspective on

the ongoing review process. The meeting provided a useful opportunity to take stock of the progress in that context.

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi and Pakistan's Ambassador to France, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad attended the meeting.

SC seeks details of...

Continued from page 1
Justice Afridi questioned whether anyone had challenged the law under which the trial would be run in military courts, and the cases of how many persons had been referred for court martial and under which law they were being awarded sentences.

Justice Ayesha Malik asked the lawyers to tell about military rules and the Army Act and that how the cases could be shifted to military courts when the Army Act could not be applied on civilians.

Justice Mazhar Naqvi noted that only ATCs were authorized to hear the cases regarding the May 9 incidents.

Latif Khosa Advocate claimed that around 4,000 people had been arrested across the country on May 10 and no case was registered against them under the Army Act.

They wanted their trials should be run in ATCs, he added.



QUETTA: A delegation of traders led by President Central Anjuman-e-Tajirun Abdul Rahim Kakar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Chairperson SPEF distributes ration among deserving families

One can get nearness to God by including others in one's happiness and by helping the deserving: Sajda

MULTAN (PR): Chairperson, Stability of Pakistan Ethnad Foundation, Sajida Ahmed distributed ration to thousands of deserving families in the villages of Multan, including daily use items of twenty kilos of flour, five kilos of ghee, five kilos of sugar, five kilos of rice, five kilos of pulses.

On this occasion, Sajida Ahmed while talking to the media and local residents said that at this time every person in the country is worried about some problem or the other, through this charity, it is possible for the poor families in the current period of inflation.

They are trying to provide relief to the extent possible. He said that by the grace of Allah, like every year, this year too I was able to help thousands of poor families. Sajida Ahmed said that Allah's pleasure can be obtained by helping deserving people, especially widows and disabled people. He said that if the government wants time, it can distribute the flour with dignity.

What is the way to undermine the self-respect of

people by putting them in queues? Stahkan Pakistan Ethnad Foundation is an example in front of everyone.

Choose those who consider you as your own family and treat you as you treat your own family. If there is a needy among the relatives and he gives charity to someone else, then Allah Almighty will not accept his charity and Allah Almighty will not even look at him with mercy on the Day of Judgment. The right of the poor has precedence over the poor of other cities.

The same order should be followed in distributing the ration so that the reward of charity is also given as well as the reward of mercy. And the mission and service is for the class, who cannot afford to buy this ration, by working day and night, this ration reaches its completion and becomes, in which orphans, widows, destitute, bankrupt and deserving are entrusted on a priority basis. And it is delivered in such a way that the self-respect of any believer is not hurt or offended.

KP Governor, CM call on President

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan called on President Dr Arif Alvi here at the Governor House on Thursday.

Overall law and order situation in the province, besides administrative, financial and development affairs, especially of the merged tribal districts came under discussion during the meeting.

Difficulties and problems confronted by tribal people after the merger and the measures taken for their resolution under the law and the Constitution were also discussed.

During the meeting, matters related to financial and administrative issues of the KP's public sector universities also figured in the discussion.

Electricity shortfall exceeds 6000MW across country

ISLAMABAD (Online): The electricity shortfall has exceeded 6000 megawatts across country.

The duration of electricity load shedding has reached to 10 hours.

According to sources of Power Division, the shortfall of electricity is 6160 megawatts.

The overall production of electricity is 20540 megawatts and 26700 megawatt is required.

According to sources of Power Division, government thermal power plants are producing 570 megawatt electricity and hydro-power generates 8000 megawatt electricity.

The production of electricity of power houses of private sectors is 7300 megawatt. The production of electricity by wind power plants is 1200 megawatt. The production of electricity by solar power plants is 120 megawatts.

The production of electricity by Nuclear power plants is 3200 megawatts.

According to sources of Power Division, load shedding is being done for 10 hours across the country.

Shortage of water Railway workers protest outside Sibi railway station

Independent Report
SIBI: Hundreds of railway workers protested outside the Sibi railway station in scorching heat against the shortage of water. The employees who have been working on daily wages for six months and the railway employees who are serving on future wages can not even sacrifice on Eid ul Adha without their salaries.

According to the Central Joint Secretary of the Railway Workers Union, hundreds of employees of the Railway Workers Union have been protesting for six months against the shortage of water and non-payment of salaries in the railway colonies. A protest demonstration was held in front of railway station Sibi against the non-payment of salaries.

In the rally and demonstration, Zonal President

Sohail Akhtar, Vice President Muhammad Anwar, Sukkur Division President Abdul Hakeem Safar Khan, Sawal Khan, Muhammad Hashim, Muhammad Rashid, Abdullah Bhutto, Muhammad Bukhs and hundreds of workers participated. The participants were holding placards on which the demands were written. The employees of Sibi are performing their duties faithfully even in 49 centigrade. It is apity that our salaries have been stopped for the past several months.

They are supporting themselves and their children by taking loans. He is forced to take water from far away and use it for drinking at home, while hundreds of employees of TLA, who provide services daily, have been deprived of their salaries for six months now, they expressed.



HUB: View of worst traffic jam on Hub River alternate route, showing the negligence of concerned authority in Hub.

Special Olympic World Games: Usman, Zainab win gold, Haider clinches silver medals

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan's Usman Qamar and Zainab Ali Raza won gold medals in the cycling event of the 16th Special Olympic World Games.

According to a communication here on Thursday, Usman Qamar completed the time trial 2km race in 5 minutes and 2.12 seconds while Zainab Ali Raza completed the distance of 2 km in 6 minutes 49.29 seconds. So far, Usman Qamar has won 2 gold medals in the Special Olympic World Games.

Zainab, who hails from Lahore, has been training for the event for the last two years at Baghe Jinnah. Her coach is Maham Tariq, who worked hard on her. Zainab's parents have been supporting her in her efforts

on the sports front.

She is extremely happy after winning the Gold medal for the country and attributed it to the hard work of her coach Maham Tariq and the support of her parents.

Pakistan's Muhammad Safer Abid Rizvi completed the 25 km race distance in 53 minutes 34.85 seconds and won the silver medal.

In the 83kg weight class category of the powerlifting event, Pakistan's Haider Ahmed won silver in the squat of 83 weight class category of powerlifting event, bronze in the bench press, bronze in the deadlift and silver medal in combined weight with overall weight

lifting of 250 kg.

Pakistan's Maria Manzoor won silver in the bench press of the 69 weight class category and a bronze medal in combined weight. Sana of Pakistan came fourth with 1 minute 26.82 in the quarter-finals of the athletics 400 meters race.

In badminton, Bangladesh beat Pakistan by 21-18 and 21-15 while Macao defeated China by 21-17 and 21-15.

In the field hockey mixed event, Pakistan defeated Paraguay 5-0.

In the second match, Pakistan defeated Bulgaria 5-4 and qualified for the semi-finals.

In the women's basketball event, Bulgaria won by 21 points against Pakistan's

IHC stops EC from giving final decision in contempt of EC case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has restrained Election Commission (EC) from giving final decision with regard to contempt of EC case.

The court while issuing notices to the respondents has sought reply in the first week of July.

The court issued notice to secretary EC on the petition filed by Fawad Chaudhry against show cause notice of EC.

The plea seeking suspension of contempt of EC proceedings against Fawad Chaudhry was rejected. The court remarked that EC should continue its proceedings but it should not take any final decision.

A single bench of IHC led by Chief Justice (CJ) Amir Farooq issued the written order.

According to counsel for Fawad Chaudhry Chief Election Commissioner and competent commissioner are empowered to initiate proceedings.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov calls on Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Pir Khalid Sultan expresses grief over Greek tragedy

SIBI (INP): Member of the Islamic Ideological Council and Central Nazim of Jamaat Ahle Sunnat Pakistan, Sahibzada Pir Muhammad Khalid Sultan-Ul-Qadri expressed grief and sorrow over the Greek tragedy and said that his heart cried with blood due to such incidents.

The death of those who travelled to other countries in search of employment were equal partners in the difficult times of the families. The government has taken concrete steps against those who were sent out of the country illegally on a priority basis. He expressed these

thoughts while talking to the news agency INP.

The member of the Islamic Ideological Council and the central moderator of Jamaat Ahle Sunnat Pakistan Sahibzada Pir Muhammad Khalid Sultan-Ul-Qadri has said, "We are deeply saddened by the tragedy in Greece, such events are no less than a tragedy. The heart cries tears of blood due to the death of young people who went to the other country in search of employment."

The federal government should take concrete and effective measures to prevent such actions and take strict action against such people.

درخواستیں منسلب ہیں

محکمہ بلوچستان کے ماتحت ملحق وزارت کے مختلف ادارہ محکمہ ہومل ڈسٹرکٹ ہیڈ کوارٹر جہلم، وزارت ماسوائے مقامی مرکز حکومت میں کریٹک 01 کی درجہ اولیٰ خالی عوامی سہولت کے لیے کیلئے وزارت کے نوکری اجلاس امیدواروں سے درخواستیں منسلب ہیں درخواستیں منسلب کرانے کی آخری تاریخ 31 جولائی، 2023 ہوگی جو درج ذیل وزارت میں ہوگی شہرہ راج کے بعد کوئی درخواست منسلب نہیں کی جائے گی۔

نمبر	نام عوامی سہولت	اسکیل	تعداد	تعمینی قابلیت	تفصیلی نامی امیدوار
1-	اداریاتی کیمپ (گریڈ 09)	01	01	ICS/F/A/IF/SC	مقامی ہاتھتھ وزارت
2-	ڈپٹی کمیشن (گریڈ 09)	01	01	RHC	پونڈ
3-	ای سی بی کمیشن (مکمل) (گریڈ 09)	01	01	سی ای سی بی	ڈی ایچ او اسپتال وزارت
4-	انکچر سٹنٹ (گریڈ 09)	02	01	RHC	انچرگ
5-	ڈیپٹی کمیشن (گریڈ 08)	01	01	THQ	ہتھتھ خولڈن
6-	ای سی بی کمیشن (گریڈ 05)	09	01	01	کیم 01، 2-جرمی 01، 3-کول 01، 4-پاوتر 01، 5-ملک 01، 6-پوٹر 01، 7-کاؤ 01، 8-سپاہی 02
7-	سٹور کیمپ (گریڈ 05)	01	01	THQ	ہتھتھ خولڈن
8-	وائی (گریڈ 02)	09	01	DHQ	ہتھتھ وزارت 02
				RHC	01
				RH	01
				RHC	01
				RHC	03

ضلعی ناظم صحت

زیارات

PRQ No. 4478/22-06-2023

www.dpr.gob.pk @dpr_gob dpr.gob @dprbalochistan

Chairman Senate inaugurates State-of-the-Art Data Center, Digital Broadcasting System

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, along with Senators and officials of the Senate Secretariat, today, unveiled the technologically advanced Data Center and Digital Broadcasting System of the Senate of Pakistan. The inauguration ceremony took place today, showcasing the Senate's commitment to embracing digital transformation and enhancing its operations for the benefit of the nation.

Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani while expressing his profound satisfaction at the successful implementation of these digital initiatives, underscored the Senate's dedication to adopt innovative technologies for the optimisation, operational efficiency and strengthening the democratic processes. The Chairman Senate commended the collaborative efforts of the IT team of the Senate and other branches/officials involved in realizing this significant milestone.

The newly established Data Center is

equipped with cutting-edge digital infrastructure, providing a secure and robust platform to manage and store essential information. The Chairman Senate, in his vision for a more efficient and transparent legislative process, emphasized the importance of this state-of-the-art facility. With enhanced data management capabilities, the Data Center will streamline the Senate's internal operations, bolster decision-making processes, and contribute to effective governance.

The Director General of Information Technology (DG IT), Lt Col (Retd) Asim Raza presented a comprehensive briefing to the Chairman Senate, shedding light on the seamless functioning of the newly established centers. The DG IT highlighted the advanced technological features and capabilities of the Data Center, emphasizing its ability to handle data volumes, ensuring data integrity, and provision of high level cybersecurity.

Furthermore, the Digital Broadcasting System unveiled, will revolutionize

the dissemination of legislative proceedings and other important Senate activities to the masses. By leveraging state-of-the-art broadcasting technologies, this system will enable seamless transmission of live sessions, and other significant events to the public. The Digital Broadcasting System reinforces the Senate's commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity by ensuring wider access to parliamentary affairs and facilitating citizens' engagement with their elected representatives. The inauguration of the Data Center and Digital Broadcasting Center marks a significant leap towards embracing digital transformation and trends. These state-of-the-art facilities will not only enhance the efficiency of the Senate's internal operations, but also facilitate greater public engagement and transparency. The Senate remains steadfast in its commitment to uphold democratic values, harnessing the technology, and serving the people of Pakistan with utmost dedication.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani inaugurating the newly established broadcasting room in the Senate at Parliament House.

Nawaz is not coming for election campaign but for election movement, Javed

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif has said, Nawaz Sharif is not coming for election campaign but for election movement.

No commission will be made on whatsapp in the presence of Qazi Faez Isa. People involved in the events of 9th and 10th cannot be exempted.

PTI workers were brainwashed.

Miscreants have targeted the state institutions on 9th May.

The planning of Imran Khan has failed badly.

Nawaz Sharif had installed plants of electricity in his tenure and eradicated the load shedding of electricity.

People still hope Nawaz Sharif will come and steer the country out of darkness.

Nawaz Sharif had given the CPEC to Pakistan but unfortunately PTI government had stopped this program.

What treatment was

meted out to the man who brought CPEC was witnessed by the entire nation.

A fifteen-year-old child does not know that CPEC was a game changer.

There was unemployment and instability in 2013 Nawaz Sharif had finished the unemployment.

Nawaz Sharif had brought inflation down to 4% during his tenure and established industry in the country. He has said that PML-N will succeed in Sindh election. Nawaz Sharif is expected to take the country out of this vortex. People gave 2/3rd majority to Nawaz Sharif and made the country invincible. He further said that Nawaz Sharif will come and bring prosperity.

The honor of vote is not just casting vote but accepting the results is honoring the vote.

Javed Latif has said that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif we will get Pakistan where there will be no inflation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Javed Latif addressing an important press conference.

COMSTech, University of Nizwa sign MoU to boost scientific collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the Chancellor of the University of Nizwa, Prof. Ahmed Al-Rawahi, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Chancellor's office in the University of Nizwa in Oman, in order to strengthen scientific collaboration. The officials of COMSTech, the Embassy of Pakistan in Oman, and the University of Nizwa also participated in the MoU signing ceremony. Prof. Choudhary also held a meeting with the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nizwa, said a message received here.

He discussed multilateral cooperation, reverse linkages and exchange of faculty, researchers and stu-

dents.

Prof. Choudhary also visited the labs and different departments of the university and appreciated the highly productive role being played by the University of Nizwa in the Middle East and the Muslim world by promoting quality education. COMSTech and the University of Nizwa have agreed to promote and strengthen cooperation, provide a platform for collaborative activities in the relevant fields of mutual interest, and encourage mobility and cooperation such as sharing experiences and best practices, development of methodologies, and mobility of experts. Both the institutions agreed that whenever possible and mutually beneficial, they will develop and implement joint educational and scientific programs.

IHC summons details of cases registered against Sheikh Rashid

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned details of the cases registered against former federal minister Sheikh Rashid.

The court while issuing notice to IG Islamabad and SHO Kohsar police sought reply till June 27.

The petition filed by Sheikh Rashid came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri Thursday.

Sardar Abdul Razzaq advocate counsel for Sheikh Rashid appeared in the court.

He argued the servants were subjected to torture during raid on Sheikh Rashid home. Police took away two vehicles from Sheikh Rashid home during the raid.

Sheikh Rashid requested the court through his petition to provide him details of the cases registered against him. Protective bail be approved and orders be issued for registration of cases against police men involved in raid on his home.

H-8 college students explore National Book Fair

ISLAMABAD (APP): Students of BS English at Islamabad Model Post-graduate College H-8 embarked on an enriching journey as they visited the Book Fair organized by the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD).

Accompanied by their esteemed teachers, Prof. Danish Yaseen and Prof. Munir Fayyaz, the students delved into the world of literature and exhibited an unwavering passion for books.

The students' keen interest in the vast array of books showcased at the fair was evident as they eagerly explored the different stalls, browsing through a wide variety of genres and literary works.

Recognizing the value of books as trusted companions, the students immersed themselves in the realm of knowledge and imagination.

Dr Rashid Hameed, the Director General of the NLPD, warmly welcomed the students, expressing his delight at their visit.

He provided a brief introduction to the department, highlighting its dedication to promoting language and literature in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Ahsan Iqbal and Chinese Ambassador for Pakistan H.E. Ms. Pang Chunxue press the button to perform Curtain-Raiser Event Celebrating 10 Years of CPEC at Auditorium Ministry PD&SI.

Curtain raiser event held to mark 10-year celebrations of CPEC

ISLAMABAD (Online): To mark the 10-year celebrations of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and upcoming 12th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), a curtain raiser event was held on Thursday at the Planning Ministry.

The event was attended by Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Secretary Planning Commission, Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Chief Economic of Pakistan, who is also Executive Director of the CPEC, Dr Nadeem Javaid, Chinese Charge d' Affairs to Pakistan, Ms. Pang Chunxue, Chinese state owned enterprises and representatives from various ministries.

The CPEC enters a significant milestone as it celebrates a decade of remarkable achievements in fostering economic growth, in infrastructure development, and regional connectivity. Under the 10-year celebrations, several events are being conducted by the CPEC Secretariat in collaboration with the Planning Ministry which include international Conference, academic sessions, cultural shows and others across the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that this year marks the successful decade of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) & its flag-

ship CPEC project.

The Minister said that when China launched its transcontinental enterprise BRI, it chose Pakistan for its flagship project named CPEC. Over the decade, the two countries have developed strong bonds in diverse fields and call themselves "iron brothers", said the Planning Minister who was declared Mr CPEC by the Chinese authorities in May this year when he visited China.

Mega projects worth billions of rupees have been completed in one year which indicates the commitment of the incumbent government under the vision of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, said Ahsan Iqbal.

Pakistan Navy Ship Tippu Sultan visits Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD (APP): The newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) TIPPU SULTAN visited Colombo, Sri Lanka during return passage to Pakistan.

The visit of PN Ship is aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing interoperability and exploring new vistas of cooperation between the two navies. Upon arrival at the port of Colombo, the ship was warmly welcomed by officials from Sri Lankan Navy and Pakistan High Commission, a Pakistan

Navy news release said.

During the port visit, Commanding Officer PNS TIPPU SULTAN held meetings with Sri Lankan naval leadership and Matters of mutual interest, Navy-to-Navy collaboration and PN contribution towards regional peace and maritime security were discussed.

The Commanding Officer conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Sri Lanka general

and the host navy in particular. Senior civilian and military leadership including the Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament, and foreign ambassadors posted in Sri Lanka also visited PNS TIPPU SULTAN.

The ship was also opened for visitors and a large number of Pakistani diaspora, locals and Sri Lanka Navy personnel visited the ship. Later, PNS TIPPU SULTAN participated in Passage Exercise with Sri Lankan Navy Ship.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri and Minister of State Faisal Karim Kundi cutting cake on 70th birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at BISP Headquarters. Parliamentary Secretary Naveed Aamer Jeeva also present on the occasion.

HEC's notification against Holi celebrations in varsities withdrawn

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Ishaq Hussain on Thursday informed the National Assembly that the notification of Higher Education Commission (HEC) against organizing 'Holi' celebrations in universities had been withdrawn.

Responding to points of order raised by Ramesh Lal and Kesoo Mal Kheeral Das in the House, the minister said he took a serious notice of the notification, which had been withdrawn early in the morning. The HEC should not write such a letter, as per the Quaid-e-Azam's saying and the Constitution, the followers of every religion were free in Pakistan and they could perform their religious rituals, he added.

The minister said in India, Muslims were not allowed to offer Eid prayers but non-Muslims in Pakistan enjoyed complete freedom.

Earlier, Rameesh Lal and Kesoo Mal, in their points of order, had highlighted the HEC's notification against Holi celebrations in the universities and called for its withdrawal.

Air University students delegation visits Safe City Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Air University students visited Safe City Islamabad. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Director Technical and Deputy Director Technical Safe City, who provided comprehensive insights into the state-of-the-art centralized system, command and control center, and technologically advanced surveillance cameras employed by Safe City Islamabad.

Under the special instructions of the Capital Police Officer (CPO) Safe City, the visit aimed to highlight the effectiveness and importance of Safe City Islamabad in ensuring public safety and security.

During the meeting, the student delegation also interacted with the CPO

Islamabad Project.

CPO Safe City emphasized the pivotal role played by the project in various sectors, including the Police Operations and Monitoring Center, Emergency Control Center, Dispatch Control Center, e-Challan System, and the "Pukar-15" Helpline.

The cutting-edge surveillance cameras installed throughout the city have proven instrumental in enhancing security measures, preventing crime, and safeguarding the lives and property of the citizens, he added.

He said that safe city Islamabad's modern technology-enabled cameras are playing a crucial role in the city's security, crime prevention and protection of citizens' lives and property.

Ideal democracy linked with constitutional supremacy: Marri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri on Thursday said that the role of all institutions was well defined in the Constitution adding that ideal democracy in the country was linked with constitutional supremacy.

Taking part in the budget debate in the National Assembly, she said that the disbursement of fund under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was not a charity rather, it was the right of the people. Shazia Marri said the government has to take responsibility in difficult situation due to poor economic policies of past regime.

She said that the budget of BISP had been significantly increased as now social security had become an important issue in the country.

The children enrollment in school has jumped to 7.4 million from 3.7 million registering an increase

of 210 percent due to Benazir Bhutto Shaheed education scholarship. The government has set enrollment target of 9.2 million, she added.

She went on to say that the assembly was dissolved unconstitutionally and the prime minister was ousted through adopting constitutional procedure. The coalition parties united for survival and stability of the country, she said and added that it was not for the first time that many parties were on same page for the stability of the country. She said that earlier, PPP and PML-N inked charter of democracy for strengthening of democracy.

The minister said that all amendments incorporated in the constitution by the military dictator Zia ul Haq were changed with consensus of all political parties. We will continue our struggle to strengthen democracy in the country, she added.

The children enrollment in school has jumped to 7.4 million from 3.7 million registering an increase



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque in a meeting with Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani.

Law minister briefs Nawaz Sharif on new legislation in London

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has given indication to return to Pakistan soon after the law regarding life time disqualification is implemented.

Sources said Law minister Azam Nazir Tarar has held three meetings with Nawaz Sharif in London.

Law minister gave briefing to Nawaz Sharif about legal points with reference to his return to Pakistan.

Law minister told Nawaz Sharif his life time disqualification will end after enactment of new legis-

lation in the parliament. Senate has passed this bill and it will soon be passed from National Assembly. There will be no hindrance on the way of your return to Pakistan after this law.

Nawaz Sharif expressed satisfaction over enactment of this legislation in parliament.

Sources said Nawaz Sharif kept on talking about injustices of judiciary done to him in the past.

Nawaz Sharif indicated to return Pakistan soon after implementation of law during the meeting.

Hearing of bail before arrest plea of Qureshi, Asad Umar till today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has adjourned till Friday hearing of bail before arrest plea of PTI leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar.

Both PTI leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar returned being prevented from entering into IHC.

IHC had ordered Shah

Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar to appear, therefore, these two leaders reached IHC.

It is pertinent to mention here that bail pleas of Asad Umar and Shah Mehmood Qureshi were dismissed two days before. Following the dismissal of their bail pleas these two fled by sitting in their vehicles.



H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan called on Federal Minister for Defence Production Muhammad Israr Iareen in Islamabad.

Fitness expert urges beginners to prioritize technique, balanced diet

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gyms serve multiple purposes, including weight loss and muscle gain, but newcomers should focus solely on weightlifting while neglecting proper nutrition. Talking to APP here on Thursday, Fitness Trainer Arsalan Mansoor highlighted that the key to successful weight loss lies in consuming a diet that is low in calories and carbohydrates whereas, individuals looking to gain muscle mass should increase their caloric intake.

Arsalan underscored the various benefits of gym training, which include fitness improvement, obesity reduction, and cardiovascular health maintenance. He recommended that individuals aiming for weight loss adhere to a diet ranging from 1500 to 1800 calories, whereas those seeking weight gain should consume approximately 3000 to 3500 calories, with an em-

phasis on high protein and moderate carbohydrate intake.

He cautioned against relying solely on internet advice, emphasizing that consulting a qualified fitness trainer is irreplaceable.

While discussing the topic of quick results, Arsalan warned against engaging in anabolic activities, as they can be harmful. He advised individuals to avoid such practices and instead consult a trainer for guidance on the proper use of food supplements when their dietary intake is insufficient. Arsalan particularly emphasized the significance of beginners focusing on maintaining proper form and angle during exercises, as heavy weightlifting without proper technique can lead to injuries. In response to a question, Arsalan suggested that cardio exercises are most effective when performed in the morning on an empty stomach.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday June 23, 2023

Pipe dreams

Our sinking economy has been assigned a new crew, but what does this new crew know about navigating a catastrophic storm? Clearly, very little. The plan it has come up with is little better than asking the ship's band to play a new tune while the storm outside rages on.

Though the new Special Investment Facilitation Council sounds great in theory, it cannot achieve its goals by simply offering a secure bubble for foreign investors to operate in. After all, any business that wishes to operate in the country needs to be organically embedded in its larger economy in order to thrive.

The SIFC has to promise a fundamental change in the way business is done in this country. Unfortunately, as the PDM government's unimaginative budget for the next fiscal year has signalled, there seems to be little appetite for actually setting our house in order before inviting foreign investors into it. This, primarily, is what makes its plan appear outlandish rather than revolutionary.

For perspective: Pakistan received foreign direct investment inflows of only about \$1.3bn in the 11-month period from July 2022 to May 2023. This represented an almost 21pc decline in FDI compared to the previous year.

In the same period, foreign investors were prevented from receiving the profits and dividends from their investments outside the country. At least \$1bn in profits were blocked by the government from being repatriated in this period.

This limitation had to be placed because the government was running out of foreign exchange due to a sustained drop in exports and remittances received from overseas Pakistanis.

In other words, foreign investors were made to suffer over policy failures that were entirely the government's own. Now, the same decision-makers responsible for that fiasco would like to sell 'preferential access' to the Pakistani state to foreign investors. How many will take them seriously?

"The immediate task [for the SIFC] is to increase foreign direct investment to \$5bn," the prime minister said in a Tuesday tweet. That is well more than thrice the level of annual FDI expected to be recorded by the end of the outgoing fiscal year.

One would expect the country to become at least three times better for doing business if it wishes to attract three times more investment, yet Islamabad's priorities have lately seemed to be something else entirely.

Our senators this week moved legislation that will give current and former Senate chairpersons outlandish new perks in addition to the ones they already enjoy.

These perks will come at the expense of the nation's rapidly depleting resources. How safe would any foreign investor feel sinking their money into a country which doesn't seem to respect the limitations of its own reality? That is the key point to ponder.

**Aijaz A. Nizamani**

Pakistan's budget proposal for 2023-24 is being debated in the National Assembly and is expected to be approved. As usual, the budget, with an outlay of Rs14.6 trillion, relies heavily on borrowing and involves debt repayment of Rs7.3tr from a tax collection target of Rs9.2tr. What is our asset base against a high national debt of nearly Rs60tr? Sadly, we have hardly anything to show against this mountain of debt.

The war in Ukraine and global inflation have shown how important it is to have national food security. What does the budget have for food security in the short and long run? Unfortunately, it is business as usual, with a band-aid approach to a crumbling infrastructure, worsened by

climate change, as seen in the case of the rains last year in Sindh and KP.

Though agriculture is a provincial subject, food security has a national mandate, as seen in the plethora of agriculture research institutions at the federal level. The budget has assigned an aggregated target of Rs2,250 billion to the banks. It has allocated Rs30bn for converting 50,000 electricity/diesel-run tube wells to solar. It has also provided some tax exemptions for seed import. Notably, in last year's budget, this target had been set at Rs1,850bn. Invariably, all governments put a premium on agriculture in the budget document (which is not the case for industry), and that is a welcome gesture.

However, one must also be critical. Economic output contracted in 2022-23 and credit disbursement to the private sector fell by 98pc, with the new disbursement being as low as Rs28bn. This involves the entire private sector, including manufacturing and services. Compared to that, banks were reporting almost full achievement of the agricultural credit target of Rs1,850bn

and the government was "comfortable enough" to set the target of Rs2,250bn for the year 2023-24!

Finance is to business as air is to lungs; our policymakers must realise the importance of commercial and competitive sources of finance for agriculture, which has great significance for our national food security. First, they have to accept that the current formal (largely the banking sector) mechanism of financing is not working and has to be thought afresh. The finance minister while discussing financial matters with SMEs (this would include rural food processors) announced that the government was taking a hit of 20pc credit loss in order to facilitate bank finance for SMEs. One former finance minister said that it was not in the banks' DNA to extend credit to companies in Pakistan. The government and central bank have to think beyond banks to extend private-sector financing to businesses, including agriculture, in Pakistan.

Peer-to-peer lending is an option but government regulations in the form of SRO436 (2022) is a hopeless policy, according to

which an individual cannot borrow more than Rs1 million in a peer-to-peer lending arrangement and has to be funded by at least two individuals. This means an individual cannot lend more than Rs500,000, thus defeating the purpose. Hundreds of millions are invested by a single arthi or private moneylender to farmers. Reflective of this, policy options should have opened up more avenues of financing and increased competition, resulting in reduced cost of capital for farmers. Regrettably, our farmers are completely unaware of policy tools devised by babus who have no idea how the real market operates. The credit interest rate support for 50,000 tube wells' conversion to solar would certainly help farmers but the benefit would largely be confined to Punjab. Eighty per cent of the groundwater in the province is fresh. Compared to that, Sindh has far too few tube wells as 80pc of its groundwater is saline. This budgetary support also rests on the false assumption that groundwater is inexhaustible, and that making it cheaper to extract would have no implications for future availability.

Agriculture in this country needs private-sector investment for its canal and drainage infrastructure in an age of frightening climate change. It would have been far more effective had the central food security ministry, in consultation with the provincial departments of agriculture, irrigation and forests, come up with a hybrid approach to water conservation investments which would have resulted in making several Tarbela dam-level water quantities available for early Kharif and Rabi crop.

Canals are government structures and as per the Provincial Irrigation Drainage Authorities Act of 1997 can and should be handed over to farmer organisations. In an era when 80pc of tax collection is used for debt-servicing, the government has to think of bringing in farmers and the private sector to invest in canals. The books show there is simply no other way. Similarly, watercourses, which are the last leg of the irrigation system and that actually bring irrigation water to the farms, are community structures. They usually serve 15 to 30 farmers with a command area of 300 to 500 acres. It

would have been far more effective if Sindh had the option of interest-rate assistance for watercourse lining funded by banks, as is the case in individual tube well conversions to solar. So despite the enhanced numbers for agriculture in the budget for 2023-24 we cannot expect any transformation of the farm sector in the foreseeable future. The most important lesson that policymakers must learn is that farm commodity prices should not be suppressed, which is invariably the case for all produce that comes from the farms. Such price suppression has far more severe implications for rural producers. Better means can be found to support both the rural and urban poor to secure food through government food stamps, rather than suppressing farm commodity produce prices.

We all saw in the recent boat tragedy near Greece what happens when poor youth in the rural areas are pushed to the margins. The rural sector does not require any favours; all it demands is a level-playing field with functional infrastructure and competitive sources of finance. -- Courtesy Dawn

On the watch**Kamila Hyat**

We need to keep looking over our shoulders at events across our border. Across our western border, things are looking grimmer and grimmer for women, for whom secondary education has already been banned.

There are also other curbs in place and travel for women is increasingly restricted under the setup by the Taliban government, which took power immediately after the US withdrawal from the country in 2021. As girls drop out of schools and underground schools open up for them through the few NGOs and humanitarian workers still left the country, Pakistan needs to keep a careful watch on its own borders and notably its own former tribal areas.

There are indications that in a mimicry of the Taliban in Afghanistan, in-

fluence could seep in across the border and people here could reconsider education for girls in a country where the literacy rate for women is already amongst the lowest in the world and well behind that of other South Asian countries.

We need to remember that Pakistan has gone through a long period of repression, first of all under military leader Ziaul Haq who took steps to undermine their position in society by introducing the inhumane Hudood Ordinance and introducing other laws which lower their status in society. He also imposed 'dupattas' for women appearing on PTV as newscasters and in all other roles including television dramas.

We have not quite recovered from the impact of this effort to put women in a different category and to undermine them. The influence has been doubled in areas which are adjacent to Afghanistan and for these reasons we need to be careful that we do not return to a time as was the case before when women had fewer legal rights in society and almost no public space that they could occupy on an equal footing.

To look at this in its

full context, we also need to recall that under various leaders, and notably Ziaul Haq, Pakistan changed dramatically. The folk music and dance which was an integral part of our culture and which appeared on PTV as well as 'live' in villages and hamlets began to disappear and be replaced by music in more religious overtures. We in fact, killed a grassroots level culture of music and notably of dance, which is still seen in many households as something which should be forbidden to all and notably to girls. This notion of humanity, and this idea of what was right and wrong, was deliberately altered in our society.

While ensuring we do not allow this in our country to go the same way as Afghanistan, we also need to be careful to watch out against any kind of inhumanity against the Afghans in our country. Even today, there are millions of them, including some who first crossed the border in the very late 1970s or early 1980s. We must not be unfair to this group or to other Afghans in the country and must grant them protections and rights that they deserve. This includes the

right to an ID card and to other facilities which are given to all citizens of Pakistan. Trying to drive out Afghans will serve no purpose and only make life more difficult for those who face very real issues in their homelands and could even be driven straight into the caves of death.

But our most urgent need is to empower women, notably in KP and the former FATA areas. These, of course, now form a part of KP and come under its laws. Schooling for girls has to be ensured and laws that make it imperative for girls to receive at least 10 or 12 years schooling must come into effect. Only if we do so can we ensure a continued growth for women and an equal status for them in society. We must also provide opportunities for women to take up any career of their choice and to avoid the kind of vilification that they have faced, say, under the PTI, which used women as pawns in their political game, putting up pictures of them on Twitter feeds and vilifying them in spoken words and speeches over and over again. This does not help the cause of women and certainly does not prove

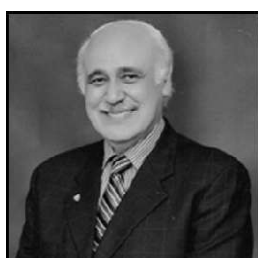
that the PTI as it once existed was a liberal party willing to give equal space to women. We can see from multiple examples that quite the contrary was true.

We also need to play a role in trying to stabilize Afghanistan. After all, it is a part of the region we live in. And regions are important, especially in today's world, where geopolitics has changed quite dramatically. To do so, we need to talk to the Taliban leaders of Afghanistan and go a little beyond simply talking about security concerns or the issue of movement across the border. We also need to ensure that Afghan society is a space in which all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity or belief, can live lives as citizens. And remember that this will be fundamentally important to our own country and its development as well. If we fail in this, we will have in many ways failed our own country.

In the past we have seen the culture from Afghanistan flow over into Pakistan. Of course, it was partly a part of the policies used by military dictators at the time, especially in the 1980s. We need to help Af-

ghanistan develop as a democracy if this is to be prevented and a different outlook ensured for our own. The task is, of course, one which requires help from nations across the world. The US is far less interested in Afghanistan and in Pakistan than it was in previous times. It is difficult to say that the same is true of India, which once had enormous influence in Kabul, especially with the government of the former leader Ashraf Ghani. But some kind of bloc needs to be created, possibly with Central Asian nations, to keep Afghanistan on the right path and most important of all to ensure that its women have rights as equal citizens and can continue the progress they had begun to make over the last 20 years with women rising to top positions in politics and in other fields.

If this does not happen, Afghanistan will be left far behind the rest of the world. And the danger is that it could drag us down further as well, placing us even lower on the report cards which monitor development in each country compared to where we stand at the present time. -- Courtesy TheNews

Sterile charters**F.S. Aijazuddin**

Life is cyclical—what goes around, comes around. The ancients believed that in a full lifetime, if you are born rich, you will suffer poverty but die rich. If you are born poor, you may see riches but die poor.

Pakistan was born poor — Jinnah's "moth-eaten country" rescued at birth by the intervention of M.K. Gandhi who forced Nehru's government to release the Rs55 crores due to it. A lifetime later, Pakistan is still poor, with about \$4 billion to its name and external debt and liabilities of \$126bn. To whom does it owe all this money?

One US analyst has categorised its creditors into: multilateral debt, Paris Club debt, private and commercial loans, and Chinese debt.

Multilateral creditors include the World Bank (\$18bn), the Asian Development Bank (\$15bn) and the IMF (\$7.6bn). Smaller amounts are owed to the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Interest on these is concessional and the burden of repayment spread over 18 to 30 years, which explains why repayments of \$4.5bn for the year to multilateral creditors represented a fifth of the total debt repayment. A second category — Paris Club debt — is owed to 22 creditor countries — Japan, Germany, France and the US. It amounts to \$8.5bn, repayable over 40 years with 1pc interest rate.

To private debtors, we owe \$7.8bn in the form of Eurobonds and Sukuk bonds, and to commercial lenders — mostly Chinese

financial institutions — another \$7bn. Commercial loans are short-term and carry biting rates of interest.

Our obligations to the Chinese are high — or than the Himalayas. We owe China about \$27bn. Of this, \$10bn is bilateral debt, \$6.2bn provided by the Chinese government — to Pakistani public-sector enterprises, and \$7bn Chinese commercial loans.

In 2024-25, it is estimated that Pakistan's debt repayment and servicing alone will be about \$24.6bn. In 2025-26, the debt-servicing burden will be no easier to bear. It is predicted at approximately \$23bn.

"Where did all this money go?" is a question many Pakistanis who are still waiting to vote can ask, with justification. There is no new Mangla or a second Tarbela. No bullet trains hurtle across our dehydrated landscape. We are nuclear but remain starved of conventional power. We have insufficient schools, too few universities, inadequate hospitals and medical facilities, and stagnant job creation.

Some remember with nostalgia the days when saner governments used the Planning Commission as a tool to regulate equitable development across the country. Five-year plans were declarations of national priorities, and each annual development programme tried to balance federal and provincial demands with available resources, foreign and local.

These plans and programmes were like the Ten Commandments — only as good as those who abided by them. Some rulers were tempted to bypass such fiscal discipline. In 1969, soon after martial law had been declared, Air Marshal Nur Khan (then deputy chief martial law administrator) called on Mr Qamar-ur-Islam (then the powerful secretary, Planning Commission). Nur Khan asked him for an economic plan. "Do

you want a short-term one or a long-term one?" the sage bureaucrat replied. "What is the difference?" the DCMLA retorted testily. "Depends on how long you intend to stay in power."

Not surprisingly, later governments found the constraints of the Planning Commission irksome. In India, Prime Minister Modi (for different reasons but with the same intent) dissolved the Indian Planning Commission in 2015, replacing it with NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India).

In Islamabad, the Planning Commission exists as a ministry. It functions, but in name, miming fiscal control. The ministry crunches numbers but with all the bite of a toothless geriatric.

Where is the power of the PC-1 form without which no project could be considered for inclusion in the government's budgetary system? Where is the authority of the Central Development Working Party, a filter that preceded submission of justifiable projects to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council?

In 2006, a Charter of Democracy was signed by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. It envisaged political harmony and reconciliation, yielding a strong democratic system. That charter, though not dead, is buried. The latest mantra by their successors is a 'charter of economy'. Can a coalition of 13 disparate political parties be expected to agree on a common list of economic priorities? They cannot even agree on an election date that will decide their future. Meanwhile, a beleaguered Imran Khan is made to bide his time in forced isolation. He plots revenge. He may find more productive solace in the retort of the defeated royalist to Cromwell's supporters during the English Civil War: "Now that you have done with us, go fight amongst yourselves!" --

Bonn climate talks**Aisha Khan**

The 58th session of the Subsidiary for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SB58) of the United Nations Framework Convention held in Bonn concluded in mid-June. Every year the Bonn meetings represent the last big milestone culminating at the year-end annual Conference of Parties. These meetings are also used to focus diplomatic attention and build champions and alliances that can rally around a shared vision of an ambitious package of outcomes.

The end of the Bonn talks, with agenda agreement on SB58 in extremis on last day, mostly on procedural decisions, reflects more than just negotiators reaching the limits of political mandates. The lack of agreement on agenda set the tone of low trust and fragmented outcomes. The delay in agenda agreement also had a negative spill-over into other negotiations and created a disconnect between negotiations and the reality of the escalating climate crisis. The lack of good faith in engagement and vacuum created by the absence of strong leadership highlights challenges that could mar negotiations at COP28. Far from shifting to high-ambition territory, the meeting was not successful in producing a package of comprehensive outcomes that is balanced across thematic areas.

In the backdrop of this uncompromising mood and core political differences, it is very important that stall-

ing areas such as adaptation, loss and damage and finance are taken up by champion parties to help shift from current positions and find common ground for unlocking upward movement at COP28.

The UAE can play a role by providing greater clarity on its COP vision and how it plans to deliver. The state of play on the Global Stocktake (GST) will make it difficult to develop a coherent vision without political agreement on sticky issues. Bonn ended with a significant consensus gap that needs to narrow on vision and pathways for a satisfactory outcome in Dubai. Political-level diplomacy will be needed especially on fossil fuel transition language, finance outcomes, adaptation, loss and damage and the overall GST package to facilitate dialogue across the diplomatic calendar.

The next steps in adaptation finance will require greater clarity on the roadmap as well as on other components such as adaptation conversations in the New Collective Quantified Goal, finance targets and indicators in the Global Goal on Adaptation framework, and adaptation in the global finance reform agenda including Bridgetown Agenda. Finance remains central to the agenda. It was contentious in Bonn and is likely to emerge as a fault line across discussions on mitigation, GST, just transition as well as loss and damage. Pledges and signals sent through upcoming moments like the summit in Paris and UNSG, the GCF Replenishment Conference in Bonn and annual meetings in Marrakech in October as well as in discussions taking place in Bangkok and Geneva can help in building trust and moving towards negotiated outcomes.

There was growing concern about the effectiveness of the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage

Punjab cabinet meeting rejects proposal to tax 5-acre farmers

Independent Report
LAHORE: The 18th provincial cabinet meeting, presided over by the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, was held in the walled city. During the session, the proposal to impose agricultural income tax on owners of 5-acre lands was rejected. Additionally, the cabinet decided to maintain the stamp duty rate at one percent and approved amendments to the First Schedule of the Stamp Act 1899. Amendments to the Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012 were also ap-

proved, abolishing all taxes and duties on IT business, education, and training in Punjab. Furthermore, the cabinet approved the extension of contracts for employees of the hepatitis and infection control program, as well as the provincial TB control program. A significant decision was made to restore historical buildings and ancient gates across Punjab, including Lahore. The restoration of the 12 ancient gates of Lahore to their original grandeur was entrusted to the Director-

General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority, by the CM. DG WCLA provided a briefing on the restoration of historical buildings and expressed gratitude to the chief minister and the cabinet for their support, which was appreciated by the cabinet. The cabinet also approved the renewal of the agreement regarding new issues and the scope of the Punjab Health Facilities Management Company. Various matters related to the Universal Health Insurance Program in Punjab

were also approved. Additionally, the extension of contracts for 605 employees of the Directorate General of Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education was approved. In terms of vehicle registration fees, a one percent reduction was approved for vehicles ranging from 1500cc to 2000cc in Punjab, aligning them with the fees in Islamabad. Regarding mining, the cabinet approved the revision of royalty rates for limestone and argillaceous clay in large-scale mining operations.



PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the Higher Education Sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Governor House.

Murad orders preparation of PC-1 of Safe City project

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the Safe City Project would not only be the installation of sensitive close circuit cameras, but it would also be a complete IT package empowered with artificial intelligence.

This he said while presiding over a meeting of the Safe City Authority at CM House here Thursday. The meeting was attended by Minister IT Taimur Talpur, Special Assistant to CM Tanzila, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary LG Najam Shah, DG Sindh Safe City Authority Aijaz Shaikh, MPA Nida khuhro, MPA Mahmood Alam Jamote and other concerned

officers. The DG Sindh Safe City Authority (SSCA) briefed the chief minister that the NRTC had done a good job for the development of the city project. Under the project, 10,000 cameras would be installed in the red zone area in the first phase with a modern Command and Control center, he added. The CM was told that the CCTV system would have the latest cameras. The network would have a dual power system - which means solar and electricity. The Chief Minister said that the safe city system installed in other cities of the country has various maintenance and operational problems. "I want you (SSCA) to resolve all

those issues at the designing stage," he said and added that the concerned firms supplying equipment for the system should be involved through a contract to maintain and operate the system. Murad Ali Shah said that the vision of developing a safe city system was to enhance the security of lives and property of the citizens of the province by employing smart technology and equipping Police with modern surveillance and law enforcement capability. He added that the technology-based initiative would enhance security and boost economic development by attracting local and foreign investment. "I want the purpose to be achieved for all intents and purposes," he said.

Governor Baligh says: Islam is complete code of life which teaches us love, peace & tolerance

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, today attended a seminar on promoting tolerance and harmony at Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore as a special guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Islam is a complete code of life which teaches us love, peace and tolerance. He said that we should take guidance from principles of Islam. Governor Punjab said that all of us should strive to create a society that is free from intolerance and hatred. He said that teachers can play an important role in promoting tolerance and harmony. He added that the teachers should pay special attention to character building of the students. He further said that in order to de-

velop tolerance in the society, it is important to keep an eye on one's own shortcomings and see the virtues of others. He said that it is also very important to understand the point of view of others. Governor Punjab said that people who create hatred and despair in the society should be discouraged. He further said that there is a need to promote positive attitudes in the society. DPI Colleges Dr. Ansar Azhar said that the series of seminars for promoting tolerance and tolerance in the society were being held all over Punjab. He expressed the hope that it would yield positive result. DPI Colleges Punjab Dr. Syed Anwar Azhar, Director Colleges Lahore Division Dr. Zahid Mian, Principal College Dr. Nighat Naeed, former MPA Ms. Salma Butt and Muzamal Mahmood and large number of female students.



RAWALPINDI: Senator Walid Iqbal, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights and members of the committee are being briefed during their visit at Central Jail Adiala, Rawalpindi.

PPP believes in practical steps rather than promises: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that his party believed in practical steps rather than just promises.

In a statement issued here, the state minister said another promise made with the people of Paroa has been fulfilled and a NADRA office in the Tehsil will start functioning from tomorrow. He said the residents

of Tehsil Paroa will have the facility of NADRA at their doorstep for which they had to come to Dera Ismail Khan.

The establishment of the NADRA office in Paroa was a long-standing demand of the locals, which has been fulfilled, he said.

Faisal Kundi said this office was supposed to start working last month but due to some difficulties and hurdles, it was delayed. However, he said, with the efforts of the PPP, the problems have ended and the NADRA office is going to start working from Friday.

5 Patwaris dismissed, 11 suspended on various grounds

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar has sacked five patwaris and the services of eleven (11) others have been put under suspension for tampering with revenue records, non-depositing of taxes, corruption and causing suffering to the public and subverting official orders.

According to a press release issued here on Thursday, a case against one Tehsildar, two Naib Tehsildars and a Gurdawar had been sent to the provincial government for further action. Similarly, disciplinary action would also be initiated against the suspended patwaris.

Minister visits WASA disposal station

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir has visited Disposal Station of Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) in Dawood Nagar here on Thursday and reviewed arrangements to deal with flood emergency.

He said that Rs.600 million had been spent on Dawood Chowk Disposal Station to facilitate 200,000 people of this area with trouble free sewerage disposal facilities.

He directed the staff of disposal station to make generator sound proof in addition to shifting it near gate of the station.

He also issued necessary directions to plant sapling at available space in the disposal station.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ali Anan Qamar, former provincial minister Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Managing Director WASA Khalid Raza Khan and others were also present on the occasion.

NADRA office to start working in Tehsil Purwa from Friday

PESHAWAR (APP): State Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Secretary Information PPP, Faisal Karim Kundi has said that NADRA office, a long standing demand of people, would start working in Tehsil Purwa, D I Khan from Friday.

In a message issued on Thursday, he said that people party believed in service to masses and added NADRA office was a manifestation of strong commitment of party towards people's welfare.

Jinnah House attack: ATC dismisses bail petitions of 197 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday dismissed post-arrest bail petitions of 197 accused, including fashion designer Khadija Shah, a daughter of ex-advisor to chief minister Punjab Salman Shah, Sanam Javed, Aalia Hamza, Tayyaba Raja and others, in Jinnah House (corps commander's house in Lahore) attack case.

However, the court granted post-arrest bail to 33 accused, Maryam Mazari, Ayesha Masood, Huma Saeed, Maria Khan, Farhat Farooq and others,

and directed them to submit surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for availing the relief.

ATC Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar announced the reserved verdict on bail petitions of 230 accused. A day earlier, the court had reserved the verdict after hearing detailed arguments of the parties.

In final arguments, the defence counsel argued before the court that their clients did not have any link with the case and they were implicated with mala fide intention.

ATC rejects bail plea of PTI Khadija in Askari tower attack case

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has rejected bail plea of PTI member Khadija Shah in Askari Tower attack case.

The bail after arrest plea of Khadija Shah came up for hearing before Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar of ATC Thursday. The court rejected the bail plea after hearing the arguments.

Gulberg Police Lahore have registered case against Khadija Shah, daughter of former finance minister Suleman Shah.

Sindh govt launches mobile app for Peoples Bus Service

KARACHI (INP): In a significant move aimed at enhancing commuter convenience, Sindh Transport Minister, Sharjeel Memon, officially introduced a mobile application for the Peoples Bus Service on Thursday.

Addressing the launching ceremony held in Karachi, Sharjeel Memon stated that the primary objective behind the app's launch is to provide ease and comfort to the city's commuters. Improving the transportation system across Sindh, with a particular focus on Karachi, is of utmost importance to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

Minister Memon ex-

pressed, "The Sindh Government empathizes with the travel difficulties faced by the people and seeks to alleviate their suffering." The minister further revealed that the bus service has been integrated into an online system, offering a range of features to benefit users. These include:

Direct complaint registration to the concerned authorities, facilitating prompt resolution of issues. Online booking services, route information, fare details, and other pertinent information accessible to users.

Implementation of an Intelligent Transport System to monitor and manage bus operations effectively.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses during inauguration ceremony of the Peoples Bus Service Mobile Application, held at local hotel in Karachi.

Dr. Jamal directs to expedite anti-dengue surveillance

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Wednesday directed the relevant officials to expedite anti-dengue surveillance to combat dengue.

Presiding over a meeting along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha to review anti-dengue arrangements, the minister directed the relevant officials to implement anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in letter and spirit.

He directed all the relevant departments to utilize all resources to eliminate dengue mosquitoes, as the prevailing weather was suitable for breeding larvae. Dr Jamal directed the concerned to remove stagnant water in graveyards and other public places to stop

mosquitoes from breeding after rain and submerged water and warned that no negligence would be tolerated in any arrangements.

He asked the district administration to arrange seminars and walks for creating awareness against dengue and check the hotspots regularly. On the occasion, the health officials briefed the meeting that ten dengue-positive cases had been reported in the Rawalpindi district this year, while there were around 150 positive hotspots in the Rawalpindi district. The officials further briefed that 150 FIRs while 24 people had been arrested over the violations of the SOPs in the district. Similarly, the meeting was briefed that there were 1,667 hotspots in district Jehlum and 173 FIRs had been registered against the violators.

US Consul General visits flood hit area of Rajanpur

RAJANPUR (APP): US Consul General, Lahore Consulate, William K. Makaneole on Thursday visited a flood-hit village of Tahsil Rojhan Mazari, district Rajanpur, where he talked to the people for some time and witnessed how they were doing life in challenging circumstances.

The US Consul General met with all the flood-hit people of Balachani village and had a frank conversation with them on how they were doing life in odd circumstances. He also enquired about their socio-economic conditions and witnessed their mud brick houses, and took a keen interest in their cattle heads.

Upon arrival at Balachani village, the US Consul General was received by Sardar Dost Ali Khan Mazari who presented him traditional 'Ajrak' and Sindhi cap. District government officials gave him detailed briefing on the devastation caused by floods triggered by torrential rains in south Punjab.

Earlier, William K. Makaneole met with Deputy Commissioner Rajanpur Dr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan Baloch at his office. The DC gave him a briefing on socio-economic aspects of life in Rajanpur, culture, heritage, law and order situation and the development projects under execution there. DC also briefed him on hill torrents that often cause flooding.

The US Consul General also visited an exhibition of traditional items and embroidered clothes where deputy director social welfare Shazia Nawaz gave him a briefing on products and skilled workforce involved in their preparation. Later, the US Consul General also visited the mausoleum of renowned Sufi saint and poet Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Fareed in Kot Mithan where he laid 'Chadar' on the grave of the Sufi poet and offered Fateha. He was received by ADCG Sifatullah Khan, AC Amir Khan Jalbani, Khawaja Rawal Moin Koreja, CEO education.

Naqvi says: IG Usman is not going anywhere

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has categorically dismissed the rumors regarding the transfer of IG Police Dr Usman Anwar. He emphatically stated that the speculations surrounding Usman Anwar's transfer are entirely baseless, as he has been performing his responsibilities with utmost excellence.

Addressing the media at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology, the chief minister affirmed that there are no plans to transfer the IG Punjab.

He reassured that Usman Anwar is diligently carrying out his duties and enjoys his full support. The CM further emphasized that IG Usman Anwar is firmly committed to his position and will continue to serve in his current role. When questioned about his recent interactions, CM Mohsin Naqvi clarified that he had not met with any individuals in the past few days.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Muhammad Balighur Rehman, today attended a seminar on promoting tolerance and harmony at Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore as a special guest.

Making Karachi clean among priorities: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that making the city clean was one of the provincial government's priorities, and has instructed the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board to work with all the energy and available resources to clean the city.

He said this while making a surprise visit to different areas of the city on Thursday. PPP South District General Secretary Karamullah Waqasi, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board officers were also present on the occasion.

Mayor Karachi inspected the cleanliness of the roads and talked to the staff engaged in cleaning work there, he said that we have to serve the city with hard work and dedication, he said that if the citizens are concerned about cleanliness and have any complaints, they can register on 1128 so that action can be taken.

He said the way the citizens of Karachi have expressed their trust in the People's Party and us, we will not let them down in any way and will spare no effort in serving the city.

He said that arrangements are in progress for Eid-ul-Azha, trenches are being made at many places in connection with removal of offal operation.

He said that it is a big operation and millions of citizens sacrifice animals on Eid-ul-Azha. Mayor Karachi said that complaint centers will be set up in every district so that citizens could register their complaints. He said that along with Eid-ul-Azha, the staff of cleaning the drains is also going on because the monsoon season is about to start and the Meteorological Department has predicted that Karachi is likely to have more rains than the previous years, so we have to make arrangements in this regard.



LARKANA: Newly elected Mayor of Karachi Murtaza Wahab along with Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad Baloch talking to media persons at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

UNFPA launches State of World Population Report 2023 in Sindh

KARACHI (INP): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Pakistan on Thursday launched the UNFPA's global flagship report, the 2023 State of World Population (SWOP), in Karachi.

The report, titled '8 Billion Lives. Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices', presenting the latest trends about population growth or decline, fertility rates, reproductive health, family planning, and migration around the globe was earlier launched globally.

The launch in Sindh was held at SZABIST, with Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Minister for Population and Health as the Chief Guest. The event was also attended by senior officials of the Government of Sindh, Consul Generals of different countries, the President for SZABIST Shahnaz Wazir Ali, heads of

national and international organisations, development experts, researchers, SZABIST faculties and students. The SWOP urges controlling bodies to address demographic concerns and family planning must not be used as a means for achieving fertility targets but as a tool for empowering individuals particularly the women to enable them to choose if, when, and how many children they want to have. With an average annual growth rate of 2.41 percent in Sindh, the total current population is 56.3 million (2022), estimated to grow to 95.7 million by 2050, the report estimated adding that Pakistan will be among the eight countries to account for half of the projected global population growth by 2050, along with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, the Philippines and the USA.



LAHORE: Chief Secretary Punjab presides over the Secretaries Conference at Civil Secretariat.

Japan provides ¥ 315m for Human Resource Development Scholarship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Japan on Thursday announced grant aid worth 315 million Japanese Yen (around 2.25 million USD) for the Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) program in Pakistan.

ITO Takeshi, Charge d' Affaires ad interim of Japan to Pakistan and Muhammad Humair Karim, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the Exchange of Notes on this program at the ceremony,

said a news release. The grant agreement for the aforementioned program was also signed between Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs and KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office.

JDS is designed to support the social and economic development of the country by providing government officials with the opportunity to obtain

Master's or Doctoral degree in Japan with aims to enhance their knowledge in public administration and to strengthen the relationship between Japan and Pakistan. The participants of JDS program engaging in the formulation and implementation of such policies will be enrolled at the partner universities in Japan and are expected to acquire further knowledge in their field while learning about Japanese culture and traditions.

Since 2018 when JDS

was launched in Pakistan, 31 government officials have successfully completed their degrees while 35 are currently pursuing their academic goals in Japan. Further, 18 officials will be dispatched to Japan in the middle of the year 2023.

This occasion celebrates the signing of the sixth batch of the program in Pakistan. For this batch, the maximum number of slots for JDS participants in Pakistan is 17 seats for the Master's degree.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT).



ISLAMABAD: Joint Secretary (Japan), Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, EAD, and Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative JICA signs the Grant Agreement regarding the Human Resource Development Scholarship Program (JDS) for the year 2023 at Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Sustainable agri development is govt's top priority: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Energy, Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skill Development SM Ishaq Khan has said that sustainable agricultural development is the top priority of the government and an action plan committee will be constituted to identify causes of decrease in citrus exports.

Presiding over a meeting on citrus at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Thursday, he said that citrus exports have decreased from 210 million dollars to 100 million dollars. Therefore, a citrus action plan committee is being constituted.

Vice Chancellor UAF Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan will lead the committee that would present recommendations in 20 days to address the citrus challenges, he added.

The minister further said that like citrus, development action plans would be devised for edible oil,

soybean, wheat, rice and other commodities.

He said that prosperity and poverty alleviation is directly linked with agriculture sector. Therefore, the agriculture experts, academia, industry and policy makers should concentrate to make joint efforts to achieve food security in the country.

He said, "Although Pakistan is an agricultural country, yet we have to spend billions of rupees on import of edible oil every year." Hence, the agriculture scientists should come up with viable solutions for this challenge.

He said, "Our agricultural institutions are making great efforts to meet agricultural needs of ever-growing population."

He said that Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan had made research and recommendations in 1992 by keeping in view the problem of decline in citrus production, but the policy makers did not act upon it seriously.

Exports increase by 22.13pc to Rs.8.187trln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 22.13 percent during the past seven months of the current fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Thursday.

Exports from July 2022 to May 2023 were recorded at Rs. 6,187,511 million as against Rs. 5,066,143 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 22.13 percent according to provisional data released by PBS.

On year-on-year basis, exports from the country during January 2023 amounted to Rs. 628,037 million as against Rs. 512,962 million during May 2022, showing growth of 22.43 percent.

On month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 3.15 percent when compared to the exports of Rs. 608,863 million in April 2023.

Main commodities of exports during May 2023

were knitwear (Rs. 94,969 million), ready made garments (Rs. 76,422 million), bed wear (Rs. 57,521 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 49,865 million), rice other than basmati (Rs. 32,197 million), cotton yarn (Rs. 28,650 million), towels (Rs. 24,975 million), rice basmati (Rs. 19,074 million), fish & fish preparations (Rs. 14,439 million) and made-up articles excluding towels and bedwear (Rs. 14,367 million).

On the other hand, imports from July 2022 to May 2023 were recorded at Rs. 12,327,431 million as against Rs. 12,667,725 million during the corresponding period of last year showing a decrease of 2.69 percent.

During the month of May 2023 imports into Pakistan amounted to Rs. 1,235,475 million as against Rs. 854,112 million in April, 2023 and Rs. 1,321,609 million during May, 2022 showing an increase of 44.65 percent over April, 2023 but a decrease of 6.52 percent over May, 2022.

Dar chairs CCoIGCT meeting

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Inter-Governmental Commercial Transactions (CCoIGCT), today.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of State for Petroleum Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Attorney General of Pakistan, Secretary Finance, Secretary Maritime Affairs, Secretary Law & Justice, and other senior officers attended the meeting.

The CCoIGCT considered summary of Ministry of Maritime Affairs regarding recommendations of the negotiation committee on the commercial agreement to be signed between KPT and AD Ports UAE. It was informed that negotiation committee constituted by CCoIGCT, held its meetings on 19th, 20th and 21st June, 2023 under the chairmanship of the Minister for Maritime Affairs and negotiated the commercial agreement for acquiring operation, maintenance and development rights of the Container Terminal by the AD Ports UAE.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach \$ 8.86bln

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 8,863.8 million while reserves held by the central bank reached US\$ 3,536.9 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank decreased by US\$ 482 million to US\$ 3,536.9 million due to external debt repayment in the week ended on June 16, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,326.9 million, it added.

The SBP spokesperson informed that SBP has received US\$ 300 million proceeds of GoP commercial loan during the current week but those inflows were not included in the report under review.

USF meeting discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Universal Service Fund (USF) Board of Directors meeting held here on Wednesday to discuss connectivity expansion in Pakistan. The 85th meeting was chaired by Secretary Information Technology and Chairman USF Board, Navid A. Shaikh, said a press release. The board members were joined by the newly appointed members, who bring a wealth of expertise and diverse perspectives to the organization.

Among the newly appointed board members are Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunica-

tion Authority (PTA), Hatem Bamatraf, CEO of PTCL (Nominee of Fixed line licensees), Wang Hua, CEO of Zong (Nominee of mobile cellular licensees), and Independent Members/ Directors Sofia Saeed, Ayla Majid, and Muhammad Yousuf. Muhammad Omar Malik, Member-Telecom, MoITT, as well as other board members and USF management, were also in attendance. The USF, under the leadership and vision of the Minister of IT and Telecommunication, is proud to announce a significant achievement with the appointment of two distinguished female members.

Murtaza assures ICCI for establishment of industrial park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood Thursday said that government would cooperate for the establishment of an industrial park in Islamabad.

He expressed these views while addressing the reception ceremony organized in his honour by the Islamabad Chamber, said a press release issued here.

Syed Murtaza said despite resources, the reason for Pakistan's problems is the lack of continuity in policies.

"We need to correct our direction, the government has taken many steps for industrial development

to bring economic stability through an increase in exports," he added.

The minister said that the government has presented a budget in difficult circumstances, which includes measures to facilitate the business environment and speed up the industry.

"The sustainable solution to Pakistan's economic problems is only in increasing exports, unless there is an increase in manufacturing at the local level, the dream of a large increase in exports cannot be fulfilled," he added.

Syed Murtaza said that "The situation we are facing today is the result of the wrong policies of the last 75 years. Countries

develop by making their own policies, unfortunately, we adopted import policies and discouraged manufacturing. Our SME sector has not been able to develop as it should have. As a minister, I am trying my best to adopt policies that will benefit the economy. Our exports are 30 billion dollars while imports are 80 billion dollars annually, there is no shortage of anything in this country. Only vision is needed. The government and the opposition should leave their personal egos behind and come on the same page for the country. Economic policies should be formulated not for five years, but for 25 years.

Through tourism, the world can be turned towards Pak: Irfan Sheikh

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President of FPCCI has said that the immediate solution to Pakistan's economic improvement and increase in foreign exchange reserves is the promotion of tourism. It is an open secret that many countries of the world are now paying special attention towards the improvement of facilities to attract local and international tourists.

He said that better results can be achieved by Tourism will show the beautiful face of Pakistan to the international community and will invite them to see the land of treasures and enjoy traditional hospitality.

President FPCCI stressed that the tourism sector is the only quick way to earn foreign exchange. He expressed these views while addressing the Blue Economy Conference organized by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the FPCCI

Capital Office. He further stated that Pakistan has been blessed with natural beauty by Allah, along with a long and amazing coastal line, there

are also such places beautiful places in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Azad Kashmir which are waiting for government attention.

He said that the tourism sector will stimulate economic development by generating income, employment, investment and exports, when tourists come to the country, not only local people will get business opportunities but it will also create employment



providing facilities in the tourism sector and the world can be turned towards Pakistan which will pave the way for future foreign investment in Pakistan.

opportunities. The Federal and Provincial governments have to pay special attention to some areas such as direct tourism flights.

China, Pakistan joining hands to introduce more high-yielding crop varieties

ISLAMABAD (INP): China, Pakistan joining hands to introduce more high-yielding crop varieties to Pakistan, according to China Economic Net (CEN). On the testing field of Multan, chili, sorghum, cotton, and soybeans are growing exuberantly on a trial basis. "For the first time in our testing field, we grow jalapeno, or Mexican chili pepper. From each acre, we yield over 2.5 tons of dried jalapeno, far exceeding the local average of less than 1.5 tons", Mr. Xi Jianlong, Manager of China-pakistan agricultural cooperation project from China Machinery Engineering Corporation, the sponsor of the testing field, told

China Economic Net. Exceptional high yield is also realized with sorghum for brewing purpose, which is also being cultivated on trial base for the first time. Grain from one ear, after being dried, weighs over 470 grams, at least five folds of the local variety.

"Early sowing, moderate temperature, and cutting-edge technologies contribute to the expected high harvest", Mr. Xi Jianlong said. Such trial bases can also be found in Sahiwal and the vicinity of Lahore. With an aim to select superior strains, fine varieties will be promoted on a large scale after the trial planting, as has already done with chili.

Festivals of Pakistan, China sign of cultural values: APCOYF

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation (APCOYF) Aasma Ismail Butt Thursday said the festivals of Pakistan and China are a sign of their cultural values and the platform of Federation was active in highlighting the culture of both countries.

She said this on the occasion of "Dragon Boat Festival" held at a local hotel, a news release said.

In the festival Li Yue Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, Cai Dafu Member China's Embassy in Pakistan, La Jielian President Overseas Chinese Association of Pakistan, Shujaat Ali, Chairman

of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation, Muhammad Nasir Khan President Chinese Association Rawalpindi Pakistan, President Abdul Qayyum Overseas Chinese Association Gilgit-Baltistan including Pakistan and Chinese large number of community participated as guests. Calvin Hsiung was the host on this occasion.

Li Yue said that the support of cultural values helps to win the hearts of people.

There are similarities in the culture of Pakistan and China, which will further strengthen the friendship between the two countries.

China's telecom industry expands steadily in first five months

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's telecommunication industry logged steady expansion in the first five months of this year, buoyed by emerging businesses, official data showed.

The combined business revenue of firms in the sector totaled 712.5 billion yuan (about 99.24 billion U.S. dollars), up 6.8 percent year on year, according to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Of the total, emerging sectors such as internet data centers, big data, cloud computing and the Internet of Things saw their revenues rise 20.2 percent year on year, enabling the telecom business revenue to increase by 3.8 percentage points, the ministry said.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Maersk Bostan, Ikan Parang, Sea Harvest and SC-Hong Kong carrying Containers, Steel Coil, Palm oil and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Multipurpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively. Meanwhile two more ships, Kaifan and Opera with 31,287 tonnes of Gas oil and 3,359 tonnes of Chemicals are also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of 9 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Al-Areesh, MSC Madeleine, Maersk Hartford and Maersk Bostan sailed out to sea.



QUETTA: Central Anjuman-e-Ijran Dulkandaran District Qilla Abdullah Chaman President, Haji Jamal Shah Achakzai addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Shahzad highlights potential to achieve food autarky, save foreign exchange

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik emphasized that Pakistan has the potential to achieve food autarky by utilizing 18 million hectares of arable land and saving a significant amount of foreign exchange.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Momin Ali, he said last year \$14.5 billion were spent on agriculture-related imports to avert food insecurity, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

He welcomed the substantial allocation for the promotion of the agriculture sector in the federal and provincial budgets however expressed reservations over the lack of setting aside sufficient funds for conducting modern research by plant breeders of public and private sectors.

He pointed out that 93 new seed varieties were introduced in neighbouring

countries last year and cotton's seed was pest free.

"Government must encourage plant breeders by offering a lucrative package of incentives for evolving the best quality high yielding pest-free seeds of rice, cotton and wheat," he added.

He said in this regard, the private sector has taken the initiative as Guard Agriculture Research and Services has announced three cash awards of rupees 10 million each for developing new seeds of rice, cotton and wheat to boost agriculture production across the country. Shahzad Ali Malik said cultivating barren land can lead to increased agricultural output, which can contribute to food security and reduce the dependence on imports.

This could have positive effects on the economy by increasing the availability of food and reducing the trade deficit, he added.



KARACHI: Sacrificial animals brought for sale ahead of Eid-ul-Azha at Super Highway Cattle Market.

Export of sport goods increases 12.75% to US 370.532 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of sport goods from the country witnessed an increase of 12.75 percent during the eleven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the export of corresponding months of last year.

The country exported sport goods worth US\$ 370.532 million during July-May (2022-23) as opposed to the export of US\$ 328.632 million during July-May (2021-22), showing growth of 12.75 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

(PBS). Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 28.19 percent, surging from US\$ 169.634 million last year to US\$ 217.451 million during the current year.

The gloves exports, however, dropped by 11.29 percent by going down from US\$ 69,759 million last year to US\$ 61,886 million during the current year, the PBS data revealed.

Likewise, the exports of all other sports goods rose by 2.19 percent to US\$ 91,196 million from US\$ 89,239 million last year.



LAHORE: Members of All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking, in Lahore.

US to ease visas for skilled Indian workers as Modi visits

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The Biden administration will make it easier for Indians to live and work in the United States, using this week's state visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help some skilled workers enter or remain in the country, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The State Department could announce as soon as Thursday that a small number of Indians and other foreign workers on H-1B visas will be able to renew those visas in the US, without having to travel abroad, one of the sources said, part of a pilot program that could be expanded in coming years.

Indian citizens are by far the most active users of the US H-1B program and made up 73 per cent of the nearly 442,000 H-1B work-

ers in fiscal year 2022. "We all recognize that mobility of our people is a huge asset to us," said another US official.

"And so our goal is to approach that in a sort of multifaceted way. The State Department already has been working very hard to find creative ways to make changes to things."

A State Department spokesperson declined to comment on questions about which visa types would qualify or the timing of the pilot launch. Plans for a pilot program were first reported by Bloomberg Law in February.

"The pilot would begin with a small number of cases with the intention to scale the initiative over the following one to two years," the spokesperson said while declining to define small.

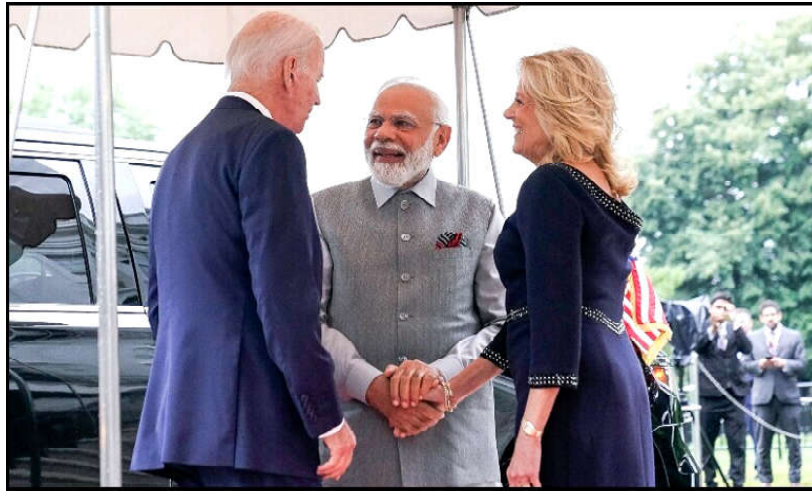
The steps could

change and are not finalised until they are announced. The White House declined to comment.

Each year, the US government makes 65,000 H-1B visas available to companies seeking skilled foreign workers and 20,000 visas for workers with advanced degrees. The visas last for three years and can be renewed for another three years.

The companies using the most H-1B workers in recent years include the Indian-based Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services as well as Amazon, Alphabet and Meta in the US, according to US government data.

The ability for some of the temporary foreign workers to renew visas in the US would free up resources for visa interviews in consulates abroad, the spokesperson said.



US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden welcome Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to the White House in Washington.

Restaurant explosion kills 31 in northwest China

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: At least 31 people were killed when an explosion caused by a gas leak ripped through a restaurant in the northwestern Chinese city of Yinchuan, state media said Thursday. The blast occurred on the eve of the three-day Dragon Boat Festival holiday, when many in China go out and socialise with friends.

Footage on state broadcaster CCTV showed more than a dozen firefighters working at the site as smoke poured out of a gaping hole in the restaurant's facade.

Shards of glass and other debris littered the darkened street, which is also home to a number of other eateries and entertainment

venues. Nine people including the restaurant's owner, shareholders and staff were held by police following the explosion, CCTV said, adding that "their assets have been frozen". "A leak of liquefied petroleum gas... caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant," state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist Party committee.

Seven more people were receiving medical treatment, the agency said, with one of them in a "critical condition".

Two others suffered severe burns, two had minor injuries and two had scratches caused by flying glass, Xinhua said.

High school students and retirees were among the casualties, many of whom died due to suffocation likely caused by smoke inhalation, state-backed media outlet The Paper said, citing anonymous officials involved in the rescue effort. The explosion at about 8:40pm (12:40pm GMT) on Wednesday took place at the Fuyang Barbecue Restaurant in a residential area of downtown Yinchuan, the capital of the Ningxia autonomous region.

Chinese President Xi Jinping "demanded all-out efforts in treating the wounded and the strengthening of safety supervision and management in key industries and fields to effectively protect people's lives and property".

UAE leader welcomes Iranian foreign minister in latest softening of Persian Gulf tensions

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: The president of the United Arab Emirates met with Iran's visiting foreign minister on Thursday in the latest sign of improving relations between Arab Gulf countries and the Islamic Republic.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have long harbored suspicions about Iran because of its nuclear program and support for militant groups across the region, and have cultivated close defense ties with the US. But in recent months they have charted a more inde-

pendent path, reaching out to US adversaries as Washington increasingly focuses on Russia and China.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "discussed the importance of building on positive developments to benefit the people of the region and enhance regional stability and prosperity," the UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported.

Iranian state TV said the two met for 90 minutes and discussed further cooperation in different fields.

Fighting surges in Sudan's capital as three-day ceasefire expires

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Heavy clashes broke out between rival military factions in several parts of Sudan's capital on Wednesday as a 72-hour ceasefire that saw several reports of violations expired, witnesses said.

Shortly before the truce ended at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) fighting was reported in all three of the cities that make up the wider capital around the confluence of the Nile: Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman.



Smoke billows from the rubble of a building in Paris.

Mali rebels warn UN peacekeeping departure will kill peace deal

Monitoring Desk
BAMAKO: The departure of a United Nations peacekeeping mission from Mali will strike a "fatal blow" to a peace accord and threaten stability across the region, a coalition of armed groups in the north of the country has warned. Mali's junta on Friday asked the peacekeeping force, known as MINUSMA, to leave "without delay", a demand that followed years of fraying relations between the U.N. and Bamako's military leadership.

"The departure of MINUSMA without a credible alternative would constitute a threat to security in Mali and the whole region," the coalition, called the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD), said in a statement on Wednesday.

A spokesman for the junta did not respond to a request for comment.

It is not clear if or when MINUSMA will leave. The force has been in the West African country since 2013 after a Tuareg-led separatist insurgency was hijacked by Islamist groups that have gone on to kill thousands of people and control large parts of the north and centre.

UK probes report of varsities working with Iran

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's government said on Wednesday it was investigating allegations that UK universities have collaborated with Iran on drones and other sensitive technology despite a legal ban. With Russia accused of unleashing Iranian-made attack drones in Ukraine, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was grilled in parliament about the report by the Jewish Chronicle newspaper earlier this month.

"We take all allegations of breaches of export controls seriously and my understanding is that officials in the Department for Business and Trade are currently now investigating the allegations made in the recent press article cited."

Amazon accused of 'duping millions' of consumers

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Federal Trade Commission on Wednesday accused Amazon.com of enrolling millions of consumers into its paid subscription Amazon Prime service without their consent and making it hard for them to cancel, the agency's latest action against the e-commerce giant in recent weeks.

The FTC sued Amazon in federal court in Seattle, alleging that the company has "knowingly duped millions of consumers into unknowingly enrolling in Amazon Prime".

In a statement, Amazon called the FTC's claims "false on the facts and the law".

Macron would be inappropriate guest at BRICS summit, says Russia

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: French President Emmanuel Macron would be an inappropriate guest at the BRICS summit, the RIA news agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Thursday, criticising countries whose policies Russia considers hostile.

The BRICS group of emerging economies, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is due to hold a summit in Johannesburg in August.

Asked about Macron's reported desire to attend the summit, Ryabkov said: "Clearly, leaders of states that pursue such a hostile and unacceptable policy towards us, discussing with

such emphasis and conviction that Russia should be isolated on the international stage, and share the common NATO line on inflicting a so-called strategic defeat on us - such a leader is an inappropriate BRICS guest. "And we are not hiding this approach of ours, we have told our colleagues from South Africa.

We expect that our point of view will be fully accepted," Ryabkov was quoted as saying. South Africa is currently mulling its legal options if Russian President Vladimir Putin decides to attend the BRICS summit because the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March issued an arrest warrant for Putin over the Ukraine conflict.

Yellen says it's critical to maintain U.S.-China ties after Biden's dictator remarks

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday that it's "critical" the U.S. and China maintain a relationship so they can "work together" on global challenges, coming just after President Joe Biden's remarks calling Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "dictator" drew condemnation from Beijing.

Speaking at a news conference in Paris, Yellen said that "with respect to the comments, I think President Biden and I both believe it's critical to maintain communication... to clear up misperceptions, miscalculations. We need to work together where possible."

"But we have disagreements, and we are also forthright in recognizing we do have disagreements," she added. Yellen has recently advocated for improving relations between the U.S. and China, arguing cooperation is needed for the sake of maintaining global stability.

Biden's remarks at a fundraiser Tuesday, when

he also said China had "real economic difficulties," opened a new rift just after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing. The trip sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low.

China delivered a formal protest of Biden's remarks on Thursday, with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng telling senior White House and State officials that Washington "should take earnest actions to undo the negative impact" of what Biden said or "bear all the consequences," a Chinese embassy spokesperson said in a statement.

"With the latest irresponsible remarks about China's political system and its top leader, people cannot help but question the sincerity of the U.S. side" in seeking to stabilize relations, the statement said. "The Chinese government and people do not accept any political provocation against China's top leader and will resolutely respond."

Indonesia moves site of ASEAN military drills away from South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Indonesia has changed where it will host ASEAN's first-ever joint military exercise to a location away from the South China Sea where several countries including China have overlapping territorial claims, its military said on Thursday. The non-combat drills for members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were originally set to take place in the southernmost waters of the South China Sea, which are also claimed by Beijing.

But the September 18-25 exercise will now be moved out of the strategic waterway altogether to the South Natuna Sea in Indonesian waters, said military spokesperson Julius Widjojono. "This exercise is focused not on combat, so it is best suited for the south that is in direct contact with the people," he said, adding the drills will

be held in and around Batam island at the mouth of the Malacca Strait.

ASEAN's unity has for years been tested by a rivalry between the United States and China that is being played out in the South China Sea, a conduit for about \$3.5 trillion of annual ship-borne trade. Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia have competing claims with Beijing, which asserts sovereignty over vast stretches of ocean that include parts of Indonesia's exclusive economic zone.

China claims sovereignty over the area via an expansive "nine-dash line" based on its historic maps, which an international arbitration court in 2016 ruled had no legal basis.

ASEAN has been pushing to complete a long-awaited maritime code of conduct with China, and several of its members have had run-ins with Beijing in recent months.

Supreme Court rules against Navajo Nation in Colorado River water rights case

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The Supreme Court ruled against the Navajo Nation on Thursday in a dispute involving water from the drought-stricken Colorado River.

States that draw water from the river — Arizona, Nevada and Colorado — and water districts in California that are also involved in the case had urged the court to decide for them, which the justices did in a 5-4 ruling. Colorado had argued that siding with the Navajo Nation would undermine existing agreements and disrupt the management of the river.

The Biden administration had said that if the court were to come down in favor of the Navajo Nation, the federal government could face lawsuits from many other tribes.

Lawyers for the Navajo Nation had characterized the tribe's request as modest, saying they simply were seeking an assessment of the tribe's water needs and a plan to meet them.

The facts of the case go back to treaties that the

tribe and the federal government signed in 1849 and 1868. The second treaty established the reservation as the tribe's "permanent home" — a promise the Navajo Nation says includes a sufficient supply of water. In 2003 the tribe sued the federal government, arguing it had failed to consider or protect the Navajo Nation's water rights to the lower portion of the Colorado River.

Writing for a majority made up of conservative justices, Justice Brett Kavanaugh explained that "the Navajos contend that the treaty requires the United States to take affirmative steps to secure water for the Navajos — for example, by assessing the Tribe's water needs, developing a plan to secure the needed water, and potentially building pipelines, pumps, wells, or other water infrastructure."

But, Kavanaugh said, "In light of the treaty's text and history, we conclude that the treaty does not require the United States to take those affirmative steps."



Firefighters put out fire after an explosion at a restaurant in Yinchuan, China killed at least 31 people, officials said.

US Coast Guard ship sailed through Taiwan Strait a day after Blinken's China visit

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: A U.S. Coast Guard ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken completed a trip to Beijing during which he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, in a move that Chinese authorities called "public hype."

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Stratton conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" on June 20 through waters where "high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said in a statement Thursday.

"The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," it added.

China often maintains

that the strait, which separates Taiwan and mainland China, is part of its exclusive economic zone, while the U.S. and its allies regularly sail through and fly over the passage to emphasize their contention that the waters are international.

"Stratton's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows," the Navy's statement said.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said the ship sailed through the strait from south to north and that the military had monitored the surrounding waters and airspace and concluded that the situation was "normal."

New Zealand PM disagrees with Biden, says Xi Jinping not a 'dictator'

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, ahead of his official trip to China at end of this month, said on Thursday he did not agree with U.S. President Joe Biden's remark that Chinese leader Xi Jinping was a dictator.

"No, and the form of government that China has is a matter for the Chinese people," Hipkins told reporters. Asked by a reporter whether the Chinese people had a say in the form of government, Hipkins said: "if they wanted to change their system of government, then that would be a matter for them." Hipkins is scheduled to visit China from June 25 to 30, leading a trade delegation that includes some of New Zealand's biggest companies.

4 badly injured as Paris blast destroys two buildings

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: An explosion of unknown origin that ripped through a building in a historic area in central Paris on Wednesday injured 24 people, including four seriously, officials said.

The blast was followed by a major fire which caused one building, housing a fashion school, to collapse, as well as an adjacent building, emergency services said.

Some 70 fire trucks and 230 firefighters were battling the blaze which was contained by the early evening. Nine doctors were also at the scene. The fire service said there had been "an explosion" which had "caused the collapse of two buildings".

Several witnesses said at the scene they had heard "a giant explosion".

Windows as far as 400 metres (440 yards) away were shattered, reporters said. The "violent" fire which broke out after the explosion has now been "contained".

Yemen's warring sides, Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia, exchange 64 bodies of their fallen troops

Monitoring Desk
SANAA: Yemen's warring sides have exchanged 64 bodies of their fallen, local media and tribal leaders said. The handover between the country's Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia marked the latest in reconciliation efforts amid Yemen's yearslong conflict.

The rare exchange took place on Wednesday near the Saudi border town of Nahran, according to the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV and three tribal leaders. All three tribesmen spoke on condition of anonymity fearing reprisals.

The TV reported that remains of 58 rebels were handed over by Riyadh, while the Iran-backed Shiite rebels handed over the bodies of six Saudi soldiers. There was no immediate comment from the kingdom on the exchange.

The handover marked the third exchange of bodies between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia since the war began, al-Masirah TV

said. The two sides have also exchanged prisoners in organized swaps brokered by the United Nations.

Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014 when the Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and removed the internationally recognized government from the capital of Sanaa, forcing it first to the south, then into exile in Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year to try and restore the government to power. In time, the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The war has devastated Yemen, already the Arab poorest country, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. More than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, have been killed. In recent months, Saudi and Houthi officials have repeatedly met for talks aimed at a negotiated settlement to the conflict.



Fighting surges in Sudan's capital as three-day ceasefire expires



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Parliamentary Secretary Bushra Rind and MPAs Nasrullah Khan Zarey, Mir Akbar Mengal and Zeenat Shahwani expressing their views on provincial budget FY 2023-24

PM appreciates Macron for convening New Global Financing Pact Summit

Pak, Egypt agree to strengthen cooperation in multiple fields; PM Emphasizes resources mobilization to address issue of climate change during meeting with John Kerry

PARIS (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the New Global Financing Pact Summit being held in Paris, France.

The Prime Minister appreciated President Macron for convening the New Global Financing Pact Summit. He also thanked the French President for inviting him to the Summit and for his warm hospitality.

Speaking on this occasion, Shehbaz Sharif hailed the French President's bold step towards a system, based on financial justice with developing countries. He said the developing countries are facing problems of non-availability of resources, burden of interest for debt payments and

slow development.

The Prime Minister said under the new Global Financing Pact, help of the indebted developing countries is the need of the hour so that the people of these countries can get relief. He said devastating effects of climate change have added the hardship to already troubled developing countries. Shehbaz Sharif praised the French President saying that he made a significant effort to create global consensus on an important issue.

On this occasion, the French President thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending the New Global Financing Pact Summit in France. During the meeting, the two leaders also agreed to remain engaged on issues of mutual interest.

Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi here wherein the two leaders agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in multiple fields. The prime minister said that the establishment of Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 held in Sharm El-Sheikh was an important development. He said the Loss and Damage Fund had laid the basis for an important milestone at the global level.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met United States' Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry on the sidelines of New Global Financing Pact Summit in France. During the meeting, the Prime Minister appreciated the priorities of John Kerry and the US government on the issue of climate.

Govt earmarks Rs 25b to educate drop-out children: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the government had earmarked Rs 25 billion for imparting elementary education to drop-out children in the country.

Addressing the Pakistan Learning Conference 2023, he expressed confidence that investing in early childhood education would lead to a significant reduction in dropout rates and enable children to fully utilise their inherent potential.

Ahsan Iqbal underscored that intellectual growth in the early period of children was an essential requisite for their later success and for leveraging the

impending available opportunities in their lives.

"The children who receive early childhood education experience lower failure rates, exhibit better academic performance, and are more likely to pursue higher education," he added.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that investing in early childhood education was an investment in the nation's development and future, as the growth and prosperity of a nation depended on the quality of education provided during the crucial phase.

The survival and progress of nations in the modern era were not determined solely by military might but by the quality of their education systems.

Khurram Dastgir says No work done on CPEC during previous anti poor, anti CPEC PTI govt

GUJRANWALA (Online): Federal minister Khurram Dastgir while dubbing former PTI government anti poor and anti CPEC has said anti poor and anti CPEC government remained in power for four years.

"No work was done on CPEC during the previous government. The effects of anti development government have been counteracted, he said while talking to media men here Thursday.

He pointed out that Chinese company will make investment to the tune of 3.5 billion dollars in Pakistan.

The Chinese investment will lead to promote nuclear sector. Nuclear power plant will be based on modern technology.

This will be the largest plant for nuclear electricity in Pakistan, he held. Nuclear power plant will generate cheaper electricity. This plant will be beneficial for promotion of nuclear technology in the country. We are working to enhance further power production. Relations with China have improved in a year, he remarked.

Solar system will be established with the establishment of solar industry in the country.

Master Plan for reconstruction, rehabilitation of flood-affected areas by July 15: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced finalizing a Master Plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas by July 15.

"It has been agreed [by the special committee formed by the PM] that the Ministry of Planning sit together after the budget [passage] and finalize the \$16.3 billion Master Plan of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas tentatively by July 15," he made this announcement on floor of the National Assembly.

He said the government had allocated sufficient funds in the budget to execute projects of urgent nature in flood-affected areas.

The minister said immediate rescue and relief work had been done throughout the country with disbursement of

Rs 80 billion through the BISP programme, adding almost Rs100 billion had already been spent in addition to the assistance extended by National Disaster Management Authority in kind.

On urgent basis, he said the relief goods had been taken from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) store, and the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet recently approved Rs12 billion to replenish its stock, keeping in view the predicted threats of the monsoon and the cyclone.

He said a comprehensive report had been prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, following the widespread destruction caused by the heavy rains and floods in 2022.

The report calculated that Pakistan collectively suffered over \$30 billion in economic and physical loss.

He said funds amounting to \$16.3 billion were required to execute the physical work like repair of damaged houses and infrastructure, under the '4RF' strategy i.e. resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The estimate was for the projects to be completed in 4 to 5 years, he added.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari witnessing MoU Signing Ceremony between KPT & UAE during the inauguration ceremony of Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited.

Pak-UAE joint venture Karachi Gateway Terminal inaugurated

KARACHI (APP): Limited (KGTL), a joint venture of UAE's Abu Dhabi Port Group and Karachi Port Trust to improve infrastructure and facilities at one of the major ports of Pakistan was unveiled on Thursday.

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori inaugurated the Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited by unveiling the plaque in a ceremony held here at Karachi Port Trust. An agreement and memorandum of understanding were also signed between Abu Dhabi Ports Group and Karachi Port Trust at the occasion.

The 50-year concession agreement would attract a much-needed investment of over \$2 billion to expand and modernize shipment facilities, and establish special economic zone and rail connectivity between KPT and Port Qasim. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ADPG Captain Juma Shamsi and Chairman KPT Syed Sayedain Raza signed the agreement in presence of Federal Minister of Maritime Affairs Faisal Sabzwari, Chief Minister (CM) of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, United Arab Emirates (UAE's) Minister for Energy and Infrastructure Suhail Mohamed Al

Mazrouei, Investment and foreign trade Minister Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Ambassador Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook al Maktoum, Consul General in Karachi Bakheet Ateq AlRemethi.

Diplomats, elected representatives, and higher officials were also present.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Sindh said, "Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited will help modernizing the terminal with the induction of state-of-the-art facilities. He lauded the UAE's investment in key port operations would also help in stabilizing Pakistan's economy."



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director International Monetary Fund.

Balochistan govt to distribute 1,000 tractors among farmers

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government has decided to expand the 'Balochistan Green Tractor Programme' to distribute 1,000 more locally produced tractors among the small farmers of the province in the fiscal year 2023-24. In the first phase, the government has awarded 500 tractors to the small farmers of the province on subsidized rate, the provincial minister for agriculture and cooperation, Mir Asadullah Baloch said while talking to APP.

The recovery will be made in a period of seven years, every beneficiary has

to pay monthly installments, the minister informed. He further said that the latest technologies would be introduced to enhance the productivity of agriculture in the province.

The Balochistan government had provided seeds of worth Rs 2.2 billion to increase production which ultimately benefited the farmers, he said.

He said that the provincial government has already constructed 400 tunnels aimed at enhancing the production of off-season vegetables and fruits in the province through tunnel farming.

Responsible journalism need of hour: DC Kalat

KALAT: Deputy Commissioner Qalat Munir Ahmad Durani said, "Responsible journalism is the need of the hour. Media representatives should realize their social responsibilities and play a positive role in social development."

The role of the journalist community is very important for identifying the problems faced by the people and solving them.

Sibi, surrounding areas in trip of intense heat

SIBI: Sibi and its surrounding areas are in the grip of intense heat. People and animals wait for the rain.

According to the details, in Sibi city and its surroundings, the sun was shining, due to which the intensity of heat increased. Special measures have been taken by the Ministry of Health to prevent and treat heatstroke.

Due to the intense heat, markets and streets are deserted from noon.



WADH: Mir Shafiq-ur-Rehman Mengal talking with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langgo, MPA Zaid Reki and Sardar Aslam Bizenjo are also present

Govt's responsibility to protect minorities: Hindu, trader community led by Akhtar Mengal meet Zia Langove

QUETTA: A delegation of Hindu minority and traders community of Wadh area met the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove in Wadh, Khuzdar on Thursday.

The senior politician and President of Balochistan National Party, Sardar Akhtar Mengal led the delegation.

Also present in the meeting were the former Provincial Minister, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo and Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh. During the course of meeting, the issues being faced by the Hindu and traders communities were discussed.

Mir Ziaullah Langove said that it is responsibility of the government to protect the life and property of the minorities and traders community.

He on the occasion directed the IGP and other concerned quarters to find solution to all the issues being faced by the traders.

Elections held on special seats of District Council Lasbela

By Aziz Yousafzai

UTHAL: Elections were held on the special seats for farmers, labour and women of District Council Lasbela. Jam Group's nominated candidate for the special seat of Labour was Chief Tribal Sardar Ghulam Farooq Sheikh and the nominated candidate of Lasbela Awami Ittehad Abdul Wahid.

Three special trains to be run on eve of Eidul Azha

QUETTA: The Pakistan Railways has decided to run three special trains in the country on the eve of Eidul Azha.

According to the schedule, Eid special would depart from Quetta to Peshawar on June 26.

The second Eid train would run from Karachi to Lahore on June 27.

The third train would be run from Lahore to Karachi after Eid on July 3, informed the Railway sources.

Each Eid special train would consist of 10 passenger coaches.

All the necessary arrangements have been made for the Eid special trains.

Ending tribal disputes our collective duty, Zia tells Shafiq Mengal

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langue has stressed that it is our collective duty to end tribal disputes in the province. He particularly referred to the ongoing dispute and tension in Wadh area of Khuzdar, Mir Ziaullah Langue said that it is our endeavour to bring an

end to the prevailing tension. The Minister wasn't speaking to the tribal elder Mir Shafiqur Rehman Mengal whom he called on in Khuzdar. Also present on the occasion were the Mir Zaid Ali Reki, Sardar Aslam Bizenjo, Sardar Nasrullah Nasoli, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other high ups.



LAHORE: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of War Gaming Simulator held at Pakistan Navy War College.

GoB's grant cheque of Rs. 2 mln handed over to Gwadar Press Club

QUETTA: The cheque of grant of Rs. 2 million issued by the provincial government has been handed over to the office bearers of Gwadar Press Club at Gwadar on Thursday. The Assistant Director Public Relations Department, Gwadar, Wahab Ishaq Baloch handed over the cheque of Rs. 20 lakh amount to the President of Gwadar Press Club, Noor Mohsin, its Vice President, Javed Ahmed and General Secretary, Suleman Hashim at the press club. Speaking on the occasion, Wahab Baloch said that the present

government not only strongly believes in welfare of the media persons, but is also taking solid steps in this regard. He also mentioned that every possible steps are also being taken for resolving the issues being faced by the press clubs and the persons associated with media in the province.

In this regard, the grant of Rs. 2 million is being provided to the press clubs in the province and handing over cheque to Gwadar Press club is part of this initiative, Assistant Director Public Relations Gwadar mentioned.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Sardar Saleh Muhammad Bhotani, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Sardar Safaraz Domki and Senator Manzoor Khan Kakar holding a meeting

Army distributes essential items among students

CHAGAI: Pakistan Army has provided electric coolers, sports equipment and uniforms, books and other essential items for Government High School and Girls Middle School Shadi Shef Chagai.

Sports equipment, uniforms, electric coolers and other essential items were distributed to the students of Government High School and Girls Middle School Shadi Shef.

On this occasion, the political and tribal leaders of the area, Malik Dilmarad Muhammad Hosni, Chairman Muhammad Murad Muhammad, Mir Abdul Jabbar Muhammad Hosni, Mir Salahuddin Muhammad Hosni, Haji Muhammad Fazal Muhammad Hosni, Counselor Sardar Aminullah Muhammad Hosni and Maulvi Hafeezullah Muhammad Hosni and other dignitaries were present.

While doing so, they said, "Pakistan Army is

taking steps to improve law and order in Chagai as well as to solve the long-standing problems of the area. Providing facilities in schools and sports equipment for athletes will solve the long-standing problems of students.

They added, "Pakistan Army is taking all possible steps for public welfare in Chagai while the provision of facilities to students and sportsmen will promote positive activities in the area."

Pakistan Army, civil administration and local authorities are taking steps to provide facilities in the schools so that the students of the schools would study in a better environment, they apprised.

On this occasion, political and tribal leader Malik Dalmarad Muhammad Hosni said, "Pakistan Army is taking steps to improve peace and order in Chagai as well as for the welfare of the people in the flood situation."

Over 20 professional beggars captured

QUETTA: The Quetta district administration has launched crackdown against the professional beggars here in the metropolis on Thursday.

During the crackdown, over 20 beggars were apprehended and handed over to the officials of Social Welfare Department.

The beggars were captured during crackdown on Prince road, Manan chowk, Toghi road, railway station, and other areas.

Balochistan govt allocates Rs 2 billion for skill development programme

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government has allocated two billion rupees for the skill development programme in the budget 2023-24 to impart technical skills to the youth in reputed vocational institutions of the country in order to produce quality technical human resources.

Talking to APP, an official of the Balochistan government said the huge allocation was aimed to impart technical skills among youth to get good employ-

ment opportunities under CPEC projects and also tap jobs in global labour markets. The government was also working to strengthen the technical and vocational education system in the province to fulfil current-day requirements, he added.

Under the plan to initiate a vocational training programme, youngsters would be trained in more than 18 trades in a short period of three years in order to produce quality technical human resources.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani chairing meeting of the Special Committee on Balochistan at Parliament House.