

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd: XXIV No. 305, Zil Hajj 06, 1444 AH Sunday June 25, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addresses the Federal Budget 2023-24 winding up debate in the National Assembly

Govt agrees to impose Rs. 215bn new taxes to clinch IMF deal

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar says new taxes will not burden poor and middle segments of society; Overall budget deficit will come down with cushion of Rs300bn; Announces a number of pension reforms to streamline system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday informed the National Assembly that Pakistan had agreed on Rs 215 billion taxes after three-day parleys with the officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to complete the 9th review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), pending due to the country's external financing gap.

"As a result of the talks with IMF, for the fiscal year 2023-24, the final taxes of only Rs 215 have been agreed, ensuring that it will not burden the poor and middle segments of the society," he said while winding-up general discussion on the budget for the year 2023-24.

Similarly, he said Pakistan would bring down the running expenditure by Rs 85 billion, which would have no impact on the proposed development budget, the raise in salaries and pensions of the federal government employees.

He said Pakistan held talks with the IMF with complete sincerity and assured the House that once the things with the international lender were settled; all details would be made public by placing the agreement on the official website

of the Ministry of Finance. Resultantly, he said the proposed tax collection target of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had been increased from Rs 9200 billion to Rs 9415 billion, with the provincial share going up from Rs5276 billion to Rs 5390 billion, the federal government total expenditure estimate from Rs 14460 billion to Rs 14480 billion and pension estimate from Rs 761 billion to Rs 801 billion.

Continued on page 2

PM strongly condemns blast: One police cop martyred; another injured in Turbat suicide attack

Minister Home seeks report from the concerned quarters



Independent Report
QUETTA: One police constable was killed while a lady constable was injured in a suicide bomb blast in Turbat area of Kech district on Saturday.

According to the reports reaching here, a police vehicle was on patrolling at the commissioner road Turbat when a female suicide bomber approached and hit it.

The police constable namely Niaz was killed while a lady police constable was injured in the explosion.

Soon after the blast, the police, FC and administration reached the spot and the body of deceased constable and injured lady sepy were shifted to the district headquarter hospital Turbat.

The whole area was cordoned off and investigations were started.

Meanwhile the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has condemned the blast in Turbat area of Kech. According to an official hand out issued here on Saturday, the Provincial Minister for Home sought report from the concerned quarters.

He said that the designs of terrorism being made at behest of the foreign forces were foiled. He paid tributes to the law enforcement agencies which are sacrificing their lives to make the people safer.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday condemned suicide attack on police personnel in Turbat.

In a message, he sympathised with the families of the martyred policemen and consoled with them.

Nefarious designs of terrorists can't be succeeded, asserts Chief Minister

Independent Report

QUETTA: Strongly condemning the Turbat bomb blast, the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has categorically stated the nefarious designs of terrorists would not be succeeded at all.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Saturday, the Chief Minister expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of a police constable and injuring of a lady personal in the suicide blast occurred in Turbat on Saturday afternoon.

The Chief Minister also said that the motives behind terrorism is to stop

the development process and demoralize the security forces, but we would not let the designs of terrorists succeed.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo maintained that we would ensure welfare of the masses and remove the backwardness of the province by continuing the development process.

He said that the morale and resolve of the security forces can't be downed. He also said that the people of Makran would foil the designs of anti-development elements.

Moreover, the Chief Minister expressed sympathy with the bereaved family of martyr police cop.

Court acquits Nawaz Sharif in plot allotment reference

LAHORE (APP): An accountability court on Saturday acquitted ex-prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a plot allotment reference.

Accountability Court Judge Rao Abdul Jabbar announced the short order while deciding different objection applications, filed by Yousaf Abbas and other relatives of Nawaz Sharif, against auction of assets owned by the former prime minister.

In his final arguments, the petitioners' counsel argued that the court declared Nawaz Sharif as absconder over non-appearance in the matter and ordered to auction his properties. He submitted that rights of his clients would also be affected if the properties of the former premier were auctioned.



PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Managing Director International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva before departing for London.

PM resolves to complete IMF loan programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva in Paris on Friday and reiterated the resolve of Pakistan to complete the loan programme with the financial institution.

The PM met the IMF chief before leaving for London. It was his third meeting with the IMF chief, on the margins of the summit of world leaders on a new financing pact.

He appreciated the Managing Director IMF for taking into consideration the economic realities of Pakistan.

He said, "Pakistan is determined to fulfill all its commitments."

He said Pakistan valued the assistance of the world in coming out of its severe economic challenges.

The floods in Pakistan further increased the economic difficulties but despite that, the government gave relief to its people, he noted.

He said it was the right of the people of Pakistan to receive relief as economic challenges caused a lot of unbearable pain to people.

"We want a balance between relief to the people and economic reality," he said adding bringing the economy back on the path of growth was imperative for meeting the targets set

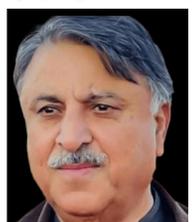
Greed of money ended difference between forbidden & permissible, maintains Governor Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has regretfully pointed out that our society has trapped in the clump of greed and selfishness just because of the lust of money and wealth.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, the Governor said that the greed of money has interpenetrated to such extent that the people have just forgotten to make difference between the forbidden and permissible as well as between fair and unfair.

He said that at the moment, all of our brilliant traditions and values have also been faded due to the lust or greed of the money.

Moreover, the fewer personalities who other-



wise used to play effective role in maintaining social bonds and providing guidance to the youth and promoting national realization among them have also been diminishing with passage of time.

The Governor said that individualism is increased to such extent that even the educated people also personal interest and selfishness instead of the

collectiveness. He said that such a sorrowful situation is that majority of the people holding the important portfolios and enjoying high positions don't avoid from putting the interest of country and nation at stake even just for the vested personal interest.

He said that while the trends of cheap fame and priggery was also present in the past, but in the present era, it has reached at extreme due to the influx of social media.

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar stressed that we can bring improvement in the society by following the footsteps of our towering political elders, who always did social and public service and took interest in the collective matters.



KARACHI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) General Sahir Shamsad Mirza addressing Commissioning parade of cadets of 119th Midshipmen and 27th Short Service Commission was held at Pakistan Naval Academy

Commissioning parade of cadets held at Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Commissioning parade of cadets of 119th Midshipmen and 27th Short Service Commission was held at Pakistan Naval Academy in Karachi today. According to the ISPR, Cadets from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were also among the passed-out cadets.

During the event, the Sword of Honour was awarded to Midshipman Muhammad Mustafa, Quaid-i-Azam Gold Medal

was awarded to Lt Badar Ali, Officer Cadet Sanaullah Safer was awarded CJCSC Gold Medal. Officer Cadet Abdul Rahman Jaza S Alharthi from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was awarded Chief of Naval Staff Gold Medal.

The CJCS General Sahir Shamsad Mirza was the chief guest on the occasion. He was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

Amir Muqam survives unhurt in Shangla terrorist attack

SHANGLA (INP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam survived unhurt in terrorist attack on him in Martung area of district Shangla of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday.

According to details, Amir Muqam was targeted by the militants during a visit to his hometown for the inauguration of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office.

An exchange of fire took place between the assailants and the police after the attackers after which they fled the scene.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Engr. Zamrak Khan Achakzai presenting Balochistan Finance Bill in the Balochistan Assembly

Repeated interpretation of law gives rise to conflicts

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has said repeated interpretation of law gives rise to conflicts.

"Repeated interpretation of law gives rise to conflicts. The experts should end conflicts through interpretation of law", he said this while addressing a ceremony here Saturday.

He went on to say "two interpretations of one law create problems. If it is misread despite interpreta-

tion then questions arise. Law allows people about foreign currency accounts. If there is uncertainty then decisions are taken for short period.

He held government needs to forge better contacts.

He remarked judges are not available in market easily. They have to appear in several examinations. Burden on courts increases because of

Continued on page 2

Debate on Balochistan's budget for next FY 2023-24 continues

Mir Asadullah Baloch says praising budget of province not possible for him; Parliamentary Secretary Khalil George praises budget, terms public friendly; Deputy Speaker directs to hand over Sariab road extension project to C&W

Independent Report
QUETTA: The debate on budget of Balochistan for the next financial year 2023-24 remained continued in the session of provincial assembly on Saturday as it met with the deputy Speaker, Sardar Babar Musakhail in the chair.

It may be mentioned here that the yesterday's budget session was adjourned due to the quorum issue.

While resuming debate on the budget, the Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Asadullah Baloch said that the budget of Rs. 750 volume is not enough, and it is very less as per the requirements of the modern world.

He said that it is not possible for him to praise the budget.

Asadullah Baloch criticized the federal government for not doing "anything" for the compensation

of orchards and crops damaged during the floods last year all over the province.

He said that the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif announced Rs. 10 billion. But nothing has been given to the province out of Rs. 10 billion, he alleged adding that it is nothing but an insult of the people of province.

Participating in debate, the Parliamentary Secretary

Continued on page 2

Heat wave gripped Quetta valley, other parts

Independent Report

QUETTA: The severe heat wave has gripped the Quetta valley and various other parts of Balochistan province. The maximum temperature has reached 40 degree Celsius in Quetta and surrounding areas of the metropolis, record high in the summer season during June.

According to the Met office, the maximum temperature is being recorded at 40 degree for last three days in the valley.

Moreover, different parts of Balochistan are also in the grip of severe hot weather where the maximum temperature is being recorded at 47 and plus. In Kharan, the maximum temperature was recorded as 50 degree on Saturday while it reached at 51 degree on Friday.

Other areas of the province including Nokundi, Turbat, Sibi also remained hot. With this, the normal routine life has been affected badly forcing the people to stay inside their homes. The Met office has predicted that the heat wave would continue to prevail during next 24 hours in the province.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers, Parliamentary Secretary and MPs expressing their views on budget 2023-24

Unprovoked cross-LoC Indian firing martyrs two civilians

RAWALPINDI (INP): Two civilian have embraced shahadat and one has been critically injured in an indiscriminate fire from Indian Army onto a group of shepherds in Sattwal Sector.

According to a statement by the ISPR, Indian Army, in a display of its usual inhumane approach towards innocent Kashmiris, opened fire on civilians at 1155 today. Shaheeds include

Obaid Qayyum son of Muhammad Qayyum (Age 22 years) and Muhammad Qasim S/o Muhammad Din (Age 55 years). Both of them are resident of village Bara Dari Tetrinote, Tehsil Hajira District Poonch.

The statement further said driven by a newfound geo-political patronage, Indian forces have embarked on a plan to take innocent lives to satiate their false narratives and concocted allegations.



PESHAWAR: View of damages after gas cylinder blast occurred at residential building while rescue operation and investigation is underway, at Kohat Road in Peshawar

NA approves 97 demands for grants having no cut motions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Saturday approved 97 demands for grants worth Rs. 6,282,098,312,000 having no cut motions on them after voice voting in the House.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar presented these demands for grants which were approved after voting. The demands for grants approved by the House were in respect of Aviation division, Airports Security Force, Prime Minister's Office, Civil Services Academy, Climate Change and Environmental Coordination division, Commerce division, Defence division, Federal Government Educational Institutions in Cantonnments and Garrisons, Defence Services, Defence Production division, Economic Affairs division, Miscellaneous expenditure of Economic Affairs division, Federal Education and Professional Training division, Higher Education Commission (HEC), National Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyyin Authority, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), National Heritage and Culture division,

Finance division, other expenditure of Finance division, Controller General of Accounts, Superannuation Allowances and Pensions, Grants, Subsidies and Miscellaneous Expenditure, Revenue division.

Likewise, other demands were related to Federal Board of Revenue, Foreign Affairs Division, Foreign Missions, Housing and Works division, Human Rights Division, National Commission for Human Rights, Industries and Production division, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Secretariat, Information Technology and Telecommunication division, Combined Civil Armed Forces, National Counter Terrorism Authority, Inter-provincial Coordination division, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan division, Law and Justice division, Federal Judicial Academy, Federal Shariat Court, Council Of Islamic Ideology, National Accountability Bureau, District judiciary, Islamabad Capital Territory, Maritime Affairs division, National Assembly, the Senate, National Food Security and Research division, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, National Health

Services, Regulations and Coordination division, Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development division, Parliamentary Affairs division, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives division, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Privatization division, Railways division, Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony division, Science and Technology division, States and Frontier Regions division, Water Resources division, Federal Miscellaneous Investments and other Loans and Advances.

Moreover, the House approved the development expenditures of the Aviation division, Board of Investment, Special Technology Zones Authority, Establishment division, SUPARCO, Climate Change and Environmental Coordination division, Commerce division, Defence division, Defence Production division, Federal Education and Professional Training division, HEC, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), National Heritage and Culture division and Finance division.

PM asks overseas Pakistanis to be wary of propoganda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said overseas Pakistanis should be wary of malicious propoganda and the use of disinformation to tarnish the image of Pakistan and the state institutions.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter on Saturday, he said, "I was greatly pleased to meet and interact with the members of our expatriate community in France. Overseas Pakistanis are making vital contributions to their adopted countries all over the world. We, in Pakistan, celebrate and are proud of their achievements as proud sons & daughters of the soil. They feel passionately for their motherland."

"I explained to them the circumstances in which the coalition gov-

Three children killed, parents injured due gas leakage

PESHAWAR (APP): Three children were killed and their parents were injured due to a gas leak explosion at Kohat road, said Rescue 1122 on Saturday.

The incident took place on Kohat Road, Dora Chowk, Street No. 4. As a result of the incident, the roof of the house was collapsed.

Rescue 1122 responded to the emergency, provided medical assistance and police and locals also conducted a search operation to retrieve them from the debris.

The injured individuals have been identified as Shahzad and his wife, who were shifted to a nearby hospital.

Kundi seeks joint role of Judiciary, Parliament for restoration of public confidence in judicial system

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said the swift and transparent justice system leads a country towards progress and development.

He stated this while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the High Court Bar Association, Dera held here in a private marriage hall wherein he also administered the oath of the newly elected cabinet of the association including its President Malik Hidayat Ullah Malana and General Secretary Waqar Alam.

The state minister said, "A transparent judicial system leads the nations towards development." He said the Judiciary and the Parliament had to play a joint role in the restoration of public confidence in the judicial system.

Faisal Kundi, who is also Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), said that his party always remained a supporter of a

strong and stable judicial system having public confidence in it.

He was of the view that today the country needs a swift and transparent justice system, adding, the judiciary in the world was rapidly moving forward with the help of innovation and technology and the same pattern should be followed in Pakistan.

He said the role and unity of the judiciary and the Parliament was important, adding, the PPP has always strengthened the bar and the bench as it was a must for the country's development.

Kundi said "The lawyers and judges of our soil played an important role in the country's history and we should be proud of them." He expressed the hope that the new lawyers would also follow their footprints. He said the lawyers and the politicians would have to play a joint role in the restoration of public confidence in the judicial system.

He opined that the immediate transparent elec-

tions were obligatory for the improvement in the economic condition of the country, adding, it was the responsibility of the political leadership to bring out the country from crisis.

Commenting on the ongoing worst electricity load shedding in Dera Ismail Khan, he said it was his request to the current chief of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) who belongs to Dera Ismail Khan to spend a few days in this area to witness the difficulties being faced by the people of his area. He said the PESCO chief must take steps to end the suffering of the citizens.

He said the theft and other complaints were not possible without the conviction of WAPDA officials, but the cruelty being done to the citizens of Dera Ismail Khan by WAPDA was regrettable and needs to be reformed. He said the lawyer community should also have played a role in fixing the problems of Dera Ismail Khan and different departments.



QUETTA: Players take part in football match during final match of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Football Tournament organized by Shaheed Talib Agha Foundation

Miftah Ismail resigns from all PML-N positions

KARACHI (INP): Miftah Ismail, the General Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Sindh and a former finance minister, has announced his resignation from all posts within the party.

Ismail conveyed his decision through a resignation letter addressed to Ahsan Iqbal, the central secretary general of PML-N.

Miftah Ismail has been vocal against the prevailing governance system in the country and has even criticized his own party ever since his ouster as finance minister last year.

Repeated interpretation....

Continued from page 1 cause of non formation of tribunal. Whosoever is regulator should form one tribunal. Services tribunals have already been formed in the matters related to service.

Private business in the country needs encouragement and support, he said adding growth in business promotes economic development.

We need better regulatory system. There is need to keep in view dignity of commercial institutions.

He held NAB needs to take action against such housing state which has no land. There is need to simplify regulations for people. There is need to improve the performance of high courts. Burden will have to be lessened on high courts.

Rule of law is talked about in Supreme Court (SC), he observed. We exercise our powers cautiously in courts.

We see law in the perspective of constitution while sitting in the courts, he underlined.

Is our law helpful or otherwise in providing opportunities for business, he added. Development of the country is possible only due to opportunities for business and industrial development. Therefore business friendly steps are necessary.

Every sector is demanding subsidy and subsidy is provided by government, he observed. SC can see only that the subsidy is indiscriminate or otherwise. We decide only under legal facts.

He remarked tax and custom duty is levied but people don't know about it. Government should run the matters in consultation with business community.

267 rescuers passing out parade held at ESA

Independent Report

LAHORE: The Passing out Parade of 267 Rescuers trained for different tehsils of Punjab was held at Emergency Services Academy Lahore here on Saturday. Provincial Minister for Industries Commerce, Energy and Skills Development, SM Tanveer graced the ceremony as the Chief Guest.

The Secretary Emergency Services Department, Dr Rizwan Naseer and senior officials of the Punjab Government, Emergency Services Department & Emergency Services Academy also attended the ceremony. A large number of rescuers, their parents and families also witnessed the passing out parade.

In his welcoming address, Secretary ESD Dr Rizwan Naseer took the oath from 267 passing-out rescuers, and congratulated them on successful completion of their professional training, and becoming a part of this live-saving emergency service. At this occasion, Dr Rizwan Naseer also highlighted the performance of Emergency Services Department, challenges, achievements, and transformation of services for provision services to the citizens on their doorsteps. He also shared journey of the service since its

inception to the latest achievement of getting UN-INSARAG certification. Dr. Rizwan Naseer also briefed about the performance of Emergency Services, which includes rescued over 12.7 million victims of emergencies since its inception in October 2004, the Fire Rescue Service has also responded to over 213122 fire emergencies and saved losses worth over Rs. 623 billion with professional firefighting on modern lines. The Emergency Services Academy has trained over 24000 emergency personnel for all provinces of Pakistan since its inception and academy is assisting in the training of other countries i.e. Tajikistan, Syria, and Sri Lanka.

Speaking on the occasion "Provincial Minister said, what a proud moment and despite the heat, I am not feeling hot, I am a witness of your work, you guys have worked on my area in a fire emergency, your performance is excellent". Provincial Minister congratulated the passed-out rescuers, their families & instructors of Emergency Services Academy and said the role of Rescue 1122 in providing a sense of safety to the society is self-explanatory.



HYDERABAD: Camels are being selling at a make-shift sacrificial animals cattle market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha

Govt agrees to impose Rs. 215bn....

Continued from page 1

in running expenditures). Finance Minister Ishaq Dar expressed gratitude to members of the National Assembly, coalition partners, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz Ahmed for giving valuable suggestions to improve the federal budget.

He also acknowledged the role of the NA and Senate Standing Committee for Finance and Revenue, and the Senate for giving input to finalize the budget and subsequently strengthening the national economy.

Highlighting the prevailing economic conditions, he explained that in December last the import restrictions were imposed to ensure timely external payments and address the country's debt situation.

However, now considering the impact on traders, businesspersons, and industries, the government had decided to lift all import restrictions following a circular issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), adding the decision was aimed at redressing the issues faced by traders and business communities, contributing to the foreign exchange reserves.

"Yesterday evening, the SBP issued a circular to lift all restrictions on import, which has now come into effect. This decision will resolve the issues faced by traders, businesspersons, and industries, and it will also contribute to an increase in foreign exchange reserves."

In a recent development, the minister said the government had incorporated changes to the super tax system, increasing the slabs and introducing new tax rates based on recommendations.

Introduced last year, Ishaq Dar said the super tax structure had been made more progressive and for effective enforcement of the 10 per cent tax, the income tax slab had been increased from Rs 300 million to Rs 500 million.

Similarly, he said the tax ratio had been made progressive, like 1-4% and 6, 8 and 10%, which was earlier straight 10%, using the 'progressive canon of taxation'.

The purpose of the super tax is to target individuals with higher incomes and ensure a fair contribution to the country's economy. Furthermore, in an effort to document the economy, non-filers will be subjected to a 0.6% withholding tax on cash withdrawals from banks.

"It is an important step towards documentation of the national economy and bringing the maximum number of taxpayers on the net," he said.

Addressing concerns raised by the lawmakers, the finance minister acknowledged opposition to the tax on bonus shares.

Historically, companies have rewarded their shareholders through cash dividends and bonus shares, while cash dividends were subject to a 15% tax, and there was no tax on bonus shares. However, as part of the federal

budget for the new fiscal year, the government has proposed a 10% tax on bonus shares and 15% on cash dividends. "The tax on bonus shares will not be paid by the companies but the shareholders," he added.

"These measures aim to promote equity and ensure that individuals and companies contribute their fair share to national development."

In an effort to address excessive electricity consumption and promote energy conservation, the government imposed an additional duty on fans that consumed excessive electricity.

On recommendations of the stakeholders, he said the government has revised the timeline for tax implementation and provided a relaxation period of six months, allowing manufacturers sufficient time to comply with it. The proposed tax on fans would now be implemented from January 1, 2024, instead of the previously scheduled date of July 1, 2023.

In an effort to resolve tax-related disputes, the finance minister expressed regret over the existence of tax-related cases worth Rs 3.2 trillion at various levels. To tackle this issue, the government has decided to strengthen the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committees (ADRCs).

A committee headed by a retired judge from the High Court or Supreme Court, along with representation from tax authorities and taxpayers would be established to swiftly resolve tax-related cases, given the current backlog of more

than 62,000 cases pending in different courts.

Ishaq Dar said the budget focused on public welfare and combating inflation, with a strong emphasis on addressing the needs of the common man and curbing excessive spending.

A significant allocation of Rs 24 billion had been made for essential food items in utility stores for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023.

For the fiscal year 2023-24, he said, a Rs 5 billion Ramadan package and a Rs 30 billion Prime Minister's package, utilizing scorecards, had been introduced to further support public welfare initiatives.

He said the Benazir Income Support Programme was aimed at providing financial assistance to low-income individuals and had received an increased budget allocation of Rs 466 billion for the upcoming fiscal year, considering recommendations of the lawmakers.

"The government takes pride in the performance of the armed forces and prioritizes defense. As recommended by the Senate, funds will be released in a timely manner to fulfill all the requirements of the Pakistani armed forces," he added.

In light of climate change concerns, he said the federal government had allocated Rs 30 billion and planned to collaborate with provinces to formulate better policies.

Other measures included an increase in the minimum pension fixing it at Rs12,000 and a minimum

monthly wage from Rs 25,000 to Rs 32,000 within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

He said the deposit limit of the Pensioners Benefit Account had been suggested to increase from Rs5 million to Rs 7.5 million.

The minister said the government had passed on the maximum benefit of the reduced petroleum prices in the international market to the consumers and it would continue with the same spirit in the coming days.

To encourage overseas Pakistanis to send maximum foreign remittances to the country, the minister said the government had devised a scheme amounting to Rs 80 billion to reward them and extend maximum facilities.

He said sufficient funds had been allocated for the development of merged districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said funds amounting to Rs30 billion had been earmarked for the conversion of agricultural tube wells to solar energy, following the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said the government intended to implement the Contributory Biometric Fund for federal employees, ensuring that government employees from grades 17 to 22 were eligible for only one pension, besides outlining certain provisions for pension allowances.

TENDER NOTICE

The Balochistan Civil Services Academy invites bids from eligible Bidders for Procurement of Refreshment and Lunch Items as follows: Closing Date & Time: 4th July 2023 10.00am

S.#	Name of Items	Call Deposit
1.	Procurement of Food Items (Total Items Count: 12)	05%
	TSE-222306340541-P2	

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014 Open framework agreement without rates vide notification No.B-PPRA/1-31/2020/650-63 dated 02 June, 2020 Rule 2 (1) Sub-Rule (c) (ii) Rule 9 (b) (i) to (vii). Eligibility of Bidders: (a) The bidder must have completed 03 assignments of similar nature and complexity Rs.3,000,000 of work in last 3 years. Turnover of at least PKR 4.5 million, in last three years showing financial capacity of the firm. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is permissible. Submission of required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during Financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as ineligible and non-responsive. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of 5% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed. (The NIT & Bidding Document can also be downloaded from www.bppra.org.pk under TSE No. TSE-222306340541-P2) Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage one Envelope Bidding Procedure Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 4th July 2023 during office hours on working days. Last Date of bid submission: The tender must be submitted latest by 4th July, 2023 till 10:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on the same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:00PM. Address: BALOCHISTAN CIVIL SERVICES ACADEMY, (BCSA), QUETTA Western Bypass Rural Development Training Complex. Phone no. 0819204452 Email: bcsgov@gmail.com

Dy. Director (Admin. & Finance)
Balochistan Civil Services Academy
(BCSA) Quetta
PRQ No.4494/24-6-2023
www.dpe.gov.pk @dpr_gob @dpr_gob @dpr_gob



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Social Development Fund (SDF) of Yemen in a visit wrap-up meeting with Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmed. Ambassador of Yemen to Pakistan Mohammad Matahar Alashbi also accompanied the delegation.

Yemen's SDF delegation visits Pak to study BISP

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Social Welfare Fund (SDF) of Yemen is on a five-day visit to Pakistan to study the Social Protection Model of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which is serving the most challenged and marginalized segments of society, particularly the women.

On the conclusion of the visit, the Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmed held a wrap-up session with the visiting delegation.

The Ambassador of Yemen, Mr. Mohammad Matahar Alashbi also accompanied the delegation during the wrap-up meeting.

Secretary BISP while addressing the delegation, said that such study visits help both sides to share experiences and ideas and learn from each other.

He informed the visiting delegates that the day they arrived in Pakistan, disbursement of Benazir Kafalat tranche was also stated by Benazir Income Support Programme.

The Secretary informed the delegation that Rs. 81 billion are being disbursed to 9 million deserving families in a quarterly tranche which is in itself a daunting task.

The Secretary BISP further said that Pakistan and Yemen are two brotherly countries and enjoy close cordial relationship.



ISLAMABAD: Women are filling water bottles from Filtration Plant along the Railway Road, as after increasing temperature people are also facing the problem of water in City.

Shahzad excuses from appearing in NAB in person

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Accountability advisor Shahzad Akbar has once again regretted to appear before NAB in person.

He said "now I don't live in Pakistan. I am British citizen. I am facing life threats, therefore, I cannot share my UK address".

I have already written letters three time extending offer to record my statement through video link. I have shown my willingness to record my statement in Pakistan embassy.

He further said in reply I am still ready to record my statement through video link. I don't live in Pakistan now. I am resident of UK legally. My addresses in Pakistan are no more my addresses. I have come to know from media about NAB notices. I am

facing life threats. I cannot share my address in UK. NAB should e-mail it whatever notice it has to send.

Shahzad Akbar mentioned about raid on his brother home and his kidnapping in his reply.

He further said in his reply NCA has never sent money to Pakistan. NCA has said in press release it is a civil settlement and it is not an offence. Investigation into one hyde park place is already underway in NAB. He stated Hassan Nawaz had purchased one hyde park at the cost of 10.5 million pounds in 2007 and he sold it at the cost of 42 million pounds in 2016.

During Mian Nawaz Sharif premiership this was sold forcibly at higher cost. NAB should ascertain about its status and tell.

Over Rs 41.37 trillion charged expenditure presented in NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Saturday presented in the National Assembly over Rs.41.37 trillion charged expenditure included in demands for grants and appropriations for the financial year ending June 30, 2024. Charged expense included Rs. 28,898,039,594,000 for repayment of domestic debt, Rs.6,430,305,002,000 for Servicing of Domestic Debt, Rs.4,398,067,501,000 for Foreign Loans Repayment, Rs.872,218,501,000 for Servicing of Foreign Debt, Rs.46,690,000,000 for Repayment of Short Term Foreign Credits, Rs.658,644,140,000 for

External Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government.

Similarly, these expense included Rs.4,017,000,000 for Superannuation Allowance and Pensions, Rs. 26,400,000,000 for Grants, Subsidies and Miscellaneous Expenditure, Rs.10,000,000 for Pakistan Post Office Department, Rs.50,000,000 for Foreign Mission, Rs.369,105,000 for Law and Justice Division, Rs.4,000,787,000 for National Assembly, Rs.3,281,840,000 for Senate, Rs.596,646,000 for Staff, Household and Allowance of the President (public), Rs.812,380,000 for Staff, Household.



ISLAMABAD: A throng of people purchasing ice from a roadside vendor during a scorching weather in the twin cities.

Journalism an important pillar of democracy: Uzbek Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Oybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, has said that Journalism was an important pillar of democracy as it provided a platform for citizens to share their views, uncover the truth and hold the powerful accountable.

Journalists play a vital role in society as a source of news and information, he said adding that they help educate people about the world and help people understand their place in society and ongoing events. He said that on June 27, 1906, in Tashkent, the first ever Central Asia Uzbek newspaper was published under the title "TARAQQI".

The Ambassador expressed these views while addressing a ceremony to celebrate the Day of Journalism in Uzbekistan held at the Uzbekistan Embassy here Saturday. Managing Director of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Muhammad Asim Khichi was the chief guest at the event.

Explaining the bilateral relations, the Ambassador said that Pak-Uzbekistan friendship had reached new heights. It is high time for diplomats and journalists to further cement brotherly relations and establish re-connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Highlighting the economic cooperation, the Ambassador said that bilat-

eral trade volume between the two countries had reached over 250 million dollars by the end of 2022 and both sides focused on exploring more avenues of trade and investments in different sectors.

He said that the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Inter-governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (IGC) was held on February 24 this year in Tashkent. The Envoy further informed that the Road Map agreement to increase bilateral trade up to \$1 billion was signed during the IGC meeting, and the next step would be the signing of the Road Map on Industrial cooperation.

He added that the Transit Trade and Preferential Trade Agreements, effective in March of this year, allowed a higher bilateral trade than the previous year.

Talking about the constitution of Uzbekistan, the envoy said that the renewed constitution of Uzbekistan's people opened new horizons for bilateral and multilateral interaction.

He said that the renewed basic law united the society around the idea of building a new Uzbekistan. Explaining the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, he said that his country pursued a peaceful foreign policy aimed at developing bilateral and multilateral relations with states and in-

ternational organizations.

"Global and regional cooperation processes have reached a new level. My President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's international initiatives have received broad support from the international community. The foreign policy of the New Uzbekistan has led to fundamental changes in the political atmosphere in Central Asia and to the recognition of close inter-connectivity with South Asia and interdependence at the sub-regional and global levels".

He said that Presidential elections in Uzbekistan would be held on July 9 this year.

Managing Director of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Muhammad Asim Khichi, the chief guest of the event, while addressing the audience, said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoyed cordial and brotherly relations based on common faith, shared history and deep-rooted historical and cultural linkages.

He said that to enhance bilateral relations between both countries, the people-to-people exchanges were significant as it would connect the people and provide an opportunity to understand each others' culture. Moreover, journalists can play a vital role in highlighting the countries' bilateral relations and economic development, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their work at Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed Road as it is a surprising for people that after inauguration by PM, they uproot the newly constructed road for making underpass for Eidgah road, which is a question mark on the performance of concern authority.

NA speaker refers 'highlighted issues' to concerned committees for discussion, resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ahsraf on Saturday referred all the highlighted issues to the concerned committee for further discussion and deliberation.

The speaker emphasized that the outcomes of these discussions must be shared with the House. One of the issues brought forward was raised by Minister for Narcotics

Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti, who drew attention to the problem of gas load-shedding in the Balochistan province. Additionally, Bugti highlighted the increased gas bills faced by residents of the province.

The concerned committee, composed of members from various parties, will now analyze and deliberate on these matters. The objective is to arrive at

viable solutions and recommendations that address the concerns and interests of the members and the public they represent.

The referral of these issues to the concerns committee reflects the commitment of the National Assembly to address the grievances of its members and work towards resolving pertinent challenges faced by the citizens of Balochistan.

Very hot, humid weather expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD (Online): Very hot and humid weather is expected in most parts of the country, while dust raising and gusty winds are likely over plain areas during the next twelve hours.

However, dust-thunderstorm and rain are expected in Northeast Punjab, Islamabad, Potohar region, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, North/East Balochistan and Kashmir.

Temperature of some major cities recorded this morning: Islamabad and Karachi thirty-one degree centigrade, Lahore and Peshawar thirty-three, Quetta twenty-five, Gilgit eighteen, Murree twenty, Muzaffarabad twenty-four degree centigrade.

Chitrali speaks in NA Matter of historical corruption in KP postal service, be handed over to FIA

ISLAMABAD (Online): JI MNA Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali has said in National Assembly (NA) historical corruption has been committed in KP postal service and the matter should be handed over to FIA.

He said this while speaking in NA Saturday. He held no one is there to ask about this corruption.

He claimed bribe is being taken ranging between Rs 8 lac to 14 lac. Why the minister for postal service is not asking about it. No one is asking from those

who have taken bribe. This matter be handed over to FIA. He stated man from Malakand Peshawar has been appointed in Chitral. This is bringing bad name to religious parties. This should be investigated.

NA speaker asked Shahida Akhtar Ali to investigate the matter. Shahida Akhtar Ali said communication minister will give reply in this regard.

He demanded Allama Iqbal University be included in Prime Minister Program. Madaris students be also included therein.

Shazia Marri says: PPP always strives for ensuring political stability, democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri Saturday said that Pakistan people's Party had been always striving for ensuring political stability and democracy in the country.

Addressing a presser along with the Senator Rubina Khalid here, the federal minister said that all the political parties were sitting together, despite ideological differences, for the sake of the country's economic and political stability and strengthening democracy".

The coalition government came into power, after the removal of former Prime Minister through a constitutional way, to address the suffering of people amid inflation, unemployment and poverty due to the ineffective policies of the previous government, Shazia Marri said.

About the sufferings of those affected due to the floods last year, Shazia

Marri said that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto have effectively voiced the miseries of the 33 million people affected due to devastating floods at international forums. As a result of this, Pakistan received financial assistance of nine billion dollars for the flood affected people's rehabilitation, she told.

Referring to the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto's recent speech in

National Assembly, Shazia Marri dispelled the impression of any strife between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party and said Bilawal Bhutto has explained that the basic issue was the funds for the flood victims. Bilawal Bhutto has reiterated the commitments regarding rehabilitation of the flood-affected people during his speech, she said and added, Bilawal Bhutto in his speech highlighted the way a fascist leader.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Oybek Arif Usmanov talking with media persons during press conference at Uzbekistan Embassy in Federal Capital.

Javed says: PML-N not interested in delaying elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif Saturday said that his party was not interested in delaying elections after the completion of the constitutional period.

Talking to a private news channel, he said elections would be conducted on time and date.

"In the upcoming budget, the government will allocate funds for elections, security arrangements for polling stations and ensure the availability of equipment for obtaining transparent results," he added.

Commenting on support from coalition partners in the general elections of 2023, he said that the seat adjustment formula would be applied to winning the next elections.

He claimed that PML-N had good working relationships with coalition partners including Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Huge rush at cattle markets amid attraction of children

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the sale of sacrificial animals all over the country's makeshift cattle markets are gearing up where enthusiastic buyers especially youngsters are taking a keen interest in buying some unique names and heavy-weight animals.

According to a private news channel, despite prices, most people have been visiting animal markets to get the animals of their choice well before Eid day, to provide their family members, especially children, to spend maximum time with these animals before they are slaughtered to fulfill the command of Allah Almighty. Children are enjoying the best time while enjoying at the cattle market, said a citizen. For the attraction of buyers, sacrificial animals are being decorated with colorful garlands, sterling bands, embellished belts and crowns. All kind of heavy weight and various unusual name animals including cows, bulls, camels, goats, lambs are becoming part of cattle markets across the country.

Chinese scientific experts visit Pak for increased cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): A team of Chinese experts headed by Prof. Dr. Jiang Tong of Nanjing University of Information Sciences and Technology (NUIST) along with his team and Dr Salman Atif of National University of Sciences and Technology Pakistan (NUST) called on

Chairman Water Environment Forum Pakistan, former federal minister and Senator, Nisar A. Memon here on Saturday.

Prof. Jiang briefed Senator Memon of Chinese scientific collaboration with scientific and academic institutions of Pakistan specifically with NUST under an MoU signed between NUST and NUST to foster collaboration in scientific research and student and faculty exchanges, a news release said.

The Senator was pleased to learn of Chinese delegation expanding its collaboration with other universities such as: Quaid-

e-Zam University, University of Peshawar, Bacha Khan University Charsadda, COMSATS University Islamabad as well as institutions like: National Agricultural Research Centre and Pakistan Meteorological Department.

Senator Memon appreciated the much-needed collaboration in joint scientific research and was impressed that efforts must be expedited to meet the continued climate change challenges and shortages in Indus River Basin.

He congratulated NUST and NUST for winning United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chinese National Science Foundation (NSFC) project to serve Pakistan. Prof. Jiang assured that while the project teams were working, they plan to meet next in China in November 2023 to accelerate the project.

NA acknowledges int'l support in Pak fight against climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Saturday unanimously recognized and expressed gratitude for the contributions of international and civil society organizations, business the Pakistani diaspora in tackling the issues of related to climate change.

In a resolution moved by Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Romina Khurshid Alam appreciated the assistance in rehabilitating vulnerable communities affected by climate-induced disasters.

The House highlighted the urgent need for global cooperation to combat climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. It acknowledged that extreme weather events, such as the 2022 flood, have disproportionately impacted vulnerable communities, placing a significant burden on women and children and exacerbating existing climate issues.

Emphasizing the importance of collective action, the House underscored the significance of protecting and uplifting these marginalized segments of society in the face of climate-related crises.

Islamic Relief Worldwide and the United Nations (UN) were specifically recognized and deeply appreciated for their vital role in guiding Pakistan's climate action. Their initiatives have facilitated the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, improved disaster risk management systems, and promoted sustainable livelihoods. Encouraging the government of Pakistan to strengthen collaboration with international organizations, the House emphasized the potential benefits of leveraging their expertise and resources to enhance the country's climate change mitigation policies and disaster risk reduction strategies. It also called upon the international organizations to continue supporting Pakistan's efforts in tackling climate change through knowledge sharing. The House further acknowledged the invaluable contributions of Pakistani philanthropists both abroad and within Pakistan towards national economic growth.



ISLAMABAD: People are wondering with their sacrificial animals during rain as sudden rain makes people smile in twin Cities.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Sunday June 25, 2023

Modi goes to D.C.

In the aftermath of the 2002 anti-Muslim Gujarat pogrom, Narendra Modi, who was chief minister of the state at the time, was denied entry into the US. This state of affairs persisted for nearly a decade.

Now, as India's prime minister, he is the toast of Washington, as his just-concluded state visit to the US showed. Indeed, time, geopolitics and realpolitik heal all 'wounds', and morality can quickly be dispensed with when needed in international relations.

There was much backslapping and grandiose praise for Mr Modi at his American lovefest. President Joe Biden termed ties with India as "one of the defining relationships of the 21st century", while the Indian PM was given a rockstar reception as he addressed Congress.

However, a handful of members of the Democratic Party's progressive wing boycotted the address, citing Mr Modi's horrendous track record on human rights, while prominent press freedom groups collectively highlighted media restrictions in India. The reasons why the US is courting India are obvious. These are times of seismic shifts in geopolitics, with alliances changing as Asia emerges as the economic engine of the world. The US is keen to tap India's massive market; agreements worth billions of dollars, including defence contracts, were signed during Mr Modi's visit. As economies across the developed world stagnate, India's growth rate is stable.

Moreover, for the past several decades, the West, particularly the US, is keen to prop up India as an economic and military rival to China, while Washington is also trying hard to wean New Delhi away from Moscow. Yet in this rush to woo India, America's, and specifically the Democratic Party's, commitments to human rights, are quietly being put aside. When a reporter asked Mr Modi about human rights, he replied that in India, "there is absolutely no discrimination". This contention is as laughable as it is tragic.

Millions of India's Muslims, as well as other minorities, would beg to differ. Under Mr Modi's rule, the BJP has unleashed a vicious brand of political Hindutva to reduce Muslims to second-class status and make them perennial untouchables in the rashtra, while the treatment of Kashmiris by the 'world's biggest democracy' is an affront to democratic values.

Considering the BJP's hateful rhetoric, the Indo-American joint statement released during the visit, which lectured Pakistan to do more in order to control militancy, rings hollow.

While Pakistan has had a problem with militancy, the critique would have carried more weight had the Biden administration also brought up India's deplorable treatment of its Muslims, and its long subjugation of Kashmir.

Clearly, for the West, lessons on human rights are reserved for enemies and weaker states, while for more powerful foreign partners, rights abuses are no barrier when it comes to promoting national interests.



Pervez Hoodbhoy

On Monday, the national flag flew half-mast to mourn the hundreds of Pakistanis resting in their watery graves under the Mediterranean. In lieu of roughly \$7,500 apiece paid to trafficking agents, the ill-fated ones had hoped to start a new life in Europe.

Like cattle, the Pakistanis were herded under the deck of the Adrianna, a decrepit fishing trawler overloaded with Egyptians, Afghans, and Palestinians on the upper deck. When it went down, Pakistanis had the lowest survival chance — just a dozen of some 300 survived.

The drama after every such event is being duly played out. FIA reports arresting a dozen suspected human smugglers and has broadcast photos of some with handcuffs. Big deal! If

the traffickers haven't yet restarted work, they surely will after Eid. Soon, an immigrant-weary Europe will forget the Greek coastguard's unconscionably tardy, half-hearted attempt to rescue the distressed trawler.

Meanwhile, the world was transfixed by a complex joint US-Canadian-French rescue mission to find Titan, a missing submersible vessel.

Operated by a pilot, the four ultra-wealthy curiosity-seekers on board had paid \$250,000 apiece for taking a voyeuristic peek at the Titanic's resting place. Among them were two British-Pakistanis. Until its tragic doom was finally confirmed, news channels ran the oxygen countdown clock in successive news bulletins.

One can fault the sensationalist Western media for breathless moment-by-moment coverage of the tiny submersible, while a much larger human tragedy was only routinely reported. On the other hand, now is a good moment for Pakistanis to reflect on the existence of two very different Pakistanis.

Separated not by ge-

ography but by wealth and opportunity, the two have little contact or knowledge of the other. Misconceptions thrive, including the drivers behind life-risking migrations. If we are to ever understand this, then we must be prepared to accept the critical role played by social mores and mindsets.

In his path-breaking book (2011) titled Masculinity, Sexuality, and Illegal Immigration — Human Smuggling from Pakistan to Europe, Ali Nobil Ahmad, a Pakistani who now heads a project on international migration in Nairobi, finds the pull of deep-seated psychological forces no less important than the push of economic forces. His research of 15 years ago remains solidly relevant today.

After interviewing dozens of young immigrant men from lower middle class backgrounds, Ahmad concluded that lure of adventure and libidinal frustration drives migration of even relatively economically secure ones.

Risking life and limb, they strive to escape a conservative society where every form of contact with women — other than a fam-

ily-arranged marriage — is forbidden. A faraway world beckons wherein pleasures of the flesh are tauntingly visible through advertising and general openness.

Fearing their sons will fall prey to the wiles of western women, parents often marry them off before departure. Indeed on the doomed trawler were young men from Gujrat, Sialkot, and Mandi Bahauddin. Local TV and social media is filled with images of weeping newly wed wives and crying babies.

From time to time, I encounter fine young men desperately seeking exit. I do not have the heart to tell them they have no chance of doing well. For them, schooling meant blind moralisation — and that too of heavy doses of religion.

Their knowledge deficit and conservative values thus sets them apart. The burqa issue resounds throughout Europe and unassimilable immigrants have become increasingly unwelcome. Many are quietly left to drown before they reach the shores.

And now, for the other Pakistan. My last month's lec-

ture tour across the US provided me fascinating glimpses of an entirely different genre of Pakistani immigrants — the ultra-wealthy. Whereas wealth-by-stealth is the norm in Pakistan, many who are US-based create genuinely new products and count among the richest of America's rich. Several measure their net wealth in fractions of a billion dollars. A few have crossed whole number limits.

Luck, of course, was on their side. None was born in a home where food was ever short or had to travel by public transport. With one exception, all went to private 'O'-'A'-level schools and then sought education overseas. Well settled there, they are liberal minded and eat and drink and marry by choice. America has no mini-Bradforths or mini-Birmingham.

At the lower end of this super scale are mostly medical doctors. Though trained at Pakistan's elite medical universities, they experienced shock and awe when confronted by high professionalism in the US hospital system.

The best ones sur-

vived — and then thrived — and made their fortunes by starting health-related businesses. In general, they are not technically innovative. But one NED mechanical engineering graduate I met effectively leveraged the 200-year-old field of thermodynamics to create a novel heat exchanger leading to a rapidly growing company.

At the highest end are the billion-crossers. Most live in Silicon Valley and combine high engineering skills with business acumen. Person X, a Lahori of progressive bent, created a super-fast semiconductor chip that laid the basis for several major companies and nearly drove Intel out of business. Person Y, who I knew as an engineering student at MIT from 50 years ago, died recently after revolutionising computer vision. Person Z, much younger, is doing the same in cybersecurity and cloud computing. But one question perpetually recurs. India and Pakistan are both deeply unequal, largely impoverished countries. Yet, why are there so few Silicon Valley type Pakistanis but so many Indians? — Courtesy Dawn

The dollar-yuan rivalry



Dr Imran Khalid

This month Pakistan departed from its long-standing reliance on the US dollar for export payments, as it utilized the Chinese currency 'yuan' to pay for its inaugural government-to-government purchase of 100,000 tons of Russian crude oil. This marks Pakistan's first international transactions in yuan. Similarly, Argentina's Secretary of State for Trade Matias Tombolini has announced on social media that his country has settled transactions worth a staggering \$2.721 billion with China, using the Chinese yuan as the main instrument of transaction. Interestingly, 19 per cent of Argentina's imports were settled in yuan in the months of April and May, and Tombolini asserts that this strategic shift will fortify their foreign exchange

reserves and enhance their control over the economic landscape.

Consequently, on April 26, the government of Argentina announced the adoption of the yuan for settling trade in Chinese-imported goods, symbolizing a potent blow to the dollar's dominance. The emergence of parallel currencies in international trade has fuelled the on-going heated debate on 'de-dollarization', with recent events providing additional ammunition to those critical of US dominance.

These two examples serve as poignant reminders of the growing trend towards alternative currencies and the potential erosion of the US dollar's hegemonic status. As countries like Pakistan and Argentina embrace non-dollar payment systems in major transactions, the allure of diversification and reduced reliance on the American currency becomes all the more apparent. The global financial landscape is undergoing a subtle but significant transformation, one that challenges the long-standing supremacy of the US dollar.

Recently, in a significant development, China

and Brazil unveiled a momentous agreement to conduct trade using their domestic currencies — the Chinese yuan and the Brazilian real. This move underscores this new shift in trade links between the two economic powerhouses, with China holding the position of Brazil's largest trading partner, as bilateral trade soared to a remarkable \$150 billion in 2022. Also, China's renminbi has secured a prominent place as Brazil's second-largest international reserve currency. This strategic shift amplifies the expanding role of the renminbi/yuan on the global stage.

China's recent decision to maintain its imports of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from GCC countries, while conducting trade settlements in the yuan, has amplified this trend. The country carried out its inaugural cross-border settlement in yuan for LNG sourced from the UAE on March 28. This trend of exploring alternative currencies to reduce dependence on the dollar is gaining momentum, with transnational and regional organizations like BRICS and ASEAN actively considering such measures.

The momentum of BRICS currencies is already very swift and enticing many countries to join the club. Additionally, Brazil and Argentina have proposed the establishment of a shared currency known as the sur to bolster regional trade and financial interactions.

These developments highlight two parallel phenomena: erosion of the US dollar's dominance and emergence of parallel currencies, particularly the Chinese yuan. The dollar's dominance over the global economy has been a topic of discussion since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the introduction of the euro by the European Union in 1999. The 2008-2009 financial crisis and its aftermath only heightened concerns about the sustainability of the dollar's power. These fears have manifested in a trend towards de-dollarization, which has accelerated in recent years. Central banks around the world held less than 59 per cent of their foreign exchange reserves in dollars in the final quarter of 2022, down from 70 per cent in 2000.

While the euro's share of global reserves has only

modestly increased, from 18 per cent to just under 20 per cent, the Chinese renminbi (RMB/yuan) has rapidly gained traction during the same period — despite accounting for less than 3.0 per cent of global reserve currency holdings. Last year, in an effort to exert pressure on Russia, the US deployed a series of punitive measures, including freezing a substantial \$300 billion of Russia's foreign currency reserves and ousting major Russian banks from SWIFT, the international interbank messaging service.

However, these actions — rightly dubbed as the 'weaponization' of the dollar — inadvertently paved the way for the rise of alternative financial infrastructures spearheaded by Russia and China. In response, these countries have taken it upon themselves to establish their parallel financial systems, posing a formidable challenge to the global dominance of the US dollar.

The year-long Ukraine-Russia conflict has had profound repercussions, triggering significant transformations in the realms of economics, geopolitics and culture on a

global scale. Yet, the most notable consequence has been the push towards a multipolar world, shifting away from the concentration of economic power within a singular hegemonic force. This trend, propelling a more diverse and balanced global power structure, is gathering momentum and exhibiting no signs of abatement.

The surge in the value of the dollar in recent years has sent shockwaves across the globe, causing widespread repercussions for nations worldwide. Among the most significant effects is the burden it places on countries with dollar-denominated debt, as the strengthening currency makes repayment increasingly costly. The fluctuations in the dollar's value have disturbed the financial equation across the globe, with its current standing at an astonishing 10 per cent higher since the onset of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022, and a staggering 30 per cent higher than a decade ago. This trajectory has instilled caution in smaller economies, leading them to seek refuge in alternative currencies and fostering regional trade alliances. — Courtesy TheNews

Time bomb



Adrian A. Husain

Politics the world over fascinates, as it does in Pakistan, partly because of the close view it offers of human behaviour. From this angle, May and June in Pakistan were especially interesting.

May marked a moment of transition when, after an expedient crack-down by the government, a half-baked ideology was supposedly laid to rest.

Within less than a month, however, restraint, on the government's part, suddenly gave way to intransigence. What had started as a simple crack-down became overkill. While the threat of military trials loomed, scores of PTI members were arbitrarily arrested amid tales of custodial torture.

What we have been witnessing is a fairly glaring example of brutalisation at the highest level in the country. Nobody stands exonerated. Human nature and the complex structures of power are to blame.

It should be added, for the record, that there was no overflow of humanity in evidence during Imran Khan's tenure as prime minister of the country either.

It is comforting that human rights groups are always there to stand up and be counted, besides pro bono volunteers from the legal fraternity who are ever ready to correct the balance.

Another apparently irresolvable issue is that of undue concern for the self; of the political animal, rather than for his given locus of activity. The mere

tokenism that our political leaders deploy in relation to the common good, for instance, is all too apparent.

After the year-long trauma we had to suffer at the hands of the PTI chief, who was ready to demolish our world to satisfy his hunger for power, it is just a little unnerving to see the somewhat jejune election fever — in anticipation of the electoral kill — already underway.

It is worth remembering that, just as he had left behind a figurative mine in the guise of a petrol subsidy for the PDM to deal with after his ouster as prime minister, the crafty PTI chief has also planted a small time bomb for the next incumbent to manage.

It seems that few have paused to consider the precise implications of Imran Khan's insidious mantra for change. What he offered to the demoralised people of the country was, indeed, change; though, curiously, not change as an actuality so much as an idea — his own patented, utopian variety.

He went so far as to promise them what they had never dared to imagine: a comprehensive unravelling of the status quo. Sadly for them, they took his word for it and were ready to follow him, regardless of results, to the ends of the earth.

This inevitably meant that — all other considerations aside — the brand of change had come to the fore of our world and was not going to go away. The message to our rulers was — and is — clear.

It was that, whatever it took, change, economic as well as social, had to come — quickly — to Pakistan. This suggested that radical political readjustments were going to be necessary from the point of view of individual leaders in the ruling coalition.

They are all doubtless aware that Imran Khan is a skilled adman who has made

the best of his mental resources by picking up on the various fads of the day including — and in particular — the commonly known fact of the power of social media in the political realm.

That enabled him, during the last year, to develop and sell various personal brands, such as, more prominently, the 'messiah'. It is interesting that he was, paradoxically, more powerful, as a result, outside government than in.

His opponents now face a sizeable dilemma, relating necessarily to a status quo they evidently cherish. Short of performing miracles — subsequent to an agreement with the IMF and in the teeth of the cost of debt servicing — much is expected of them.

They must reckon with the fact that paying lip service to change will not do. The common man will no longer be fobbed off with placebos. His demand is simple — a meaningfully and substantially better life.

Whereas in the heyday of the PML-N, the 'Asian Tiger' and national growth were the buzz, it seems that, in view of the country's present economic plight, a better balance between micro- and macro-economics might be more appropriate.

In the PPP camp too, with its faintly compromised angle on progress and modernity, some form of ideological renewal will — especially in the absence of the charisma of a Benazir — be necessary.

The populist brand is beginning to wear just slightly thin. It will no longer be enough to trot out the tired 'roti, kapra, makan' slogan and hope to usher in credible change.

In any case, it appears that, even in defeat, the former cricket star has, ironically, won out by setting the bar impossibly high, leaving his opponents little choice but to try to meet it.

After the floods



Zubeida Mustafa

Ten months after Sindh was struck by the floods of 2022, many parts of the province still lie devastated. Don't our rulers care for their people? Or is it that they don't understand what development really means?

It is generally believed that development involves pouring huge amounts into building infrastructure that may not even be practical or serve the purpose it is designed for. The community being a partner and a participant in development is something alien to most people.

Naween Mangi, the head of the Ali Hasan Mangi Memorial Trust in Khairo Dero (Larkana), learnt through her own experience that this kind of development does not work. Returning home after completing her higher education abroad, she was distressed by the abject poverty in her province and the ill-conceived notions of alleviating poverty through charity.

Naween's ambition was to draw up a model for 'development with dignity'. This, she realised, was possible only if the model was suited to indigenous conditions and the local population's mindset. After 15 years of hard work, punctuated by successes and failures, a model appears to be emerging. Paradoxically, the floods and their aftermath have hastened this process.

There are four basic principles that the Trust adopted. First, uphold the self-esteem and dignity of the people. That is why

they have to pay something for what they receive. Secondly, ostentation should be shunned and wastage avoided to keep costs low and affordable for the poorest of the poor. Thirdly, the needs and priorities of the community should be anticipated so that they are met incrementally as the occasion arises. Finally, all this should create a sense of ownership in the community. This is essential if a project is to be durable and the community responsible for its maintenance.

By 2022, the AHMMT had moved ahead in several ways. A house-building programme had been put in place and the toilet and solar panels projects enabled house owners to upgrade their dwellings. The beneficiaries were the people of Khairo Dero, and also families in 300 surrounding villages. A health and population programme and a community school along with a girls' tailoring skills training project were introduced. Farmers were empowered through an assistance programme that gave them tractors to plough their land at a low rate. Thus far, 107 farmers have benefited from this facility.

When the floods came in August 2022, work had to be done once the initial shock was over.

Knowing that shelter was the first priority of the people, rebuilding the houses was given immediate attention. Within a week, the project manager, Ramz Ali, set out to survey the damage and plan the rebuilding programme. All the houses affected by the rain and floods have now been repaired or rebuilt, to the relief of 1,050 families in 132 villages. Nothing, it seems, was wasted. What could be recovered from the debris, such as iron bars and bricks, was put to good use. The Trust may have provided the needed material and the services of 10 masons, but

the other costs and the manual labour were the people's contribution.

Other post-flood challenges followed and have been met. Inflation (40 per cent in the rural areas) was taken care of by the Sasto Dukan that offered staple food at subsidised rates. Ramz conducted a survey to identify the worst affected — 75 daily wage earners — who were issued ration cards.

Another challenge — crime — was met by creating community police comprising 10 trained men equipped with batons, torches and walkie talkies to patrol the entry/exit points during the night. The people of Khairo Dero could sleep again in peace.

Sanitation? The floods aggravated it. The open storm-water drainage, supposedly our solution to this problem, has compounded it. The Trust responded by creating a clean-up crew of seven workers whose responsibility was to keep the open drains free of the garbage that clogs them and adds to flooding when it rains.

This is true development. The inhabitants of Khairo Dero share the costs of what is spent on them so that they can hold their heads high. They are confident and have learnt how to solve their own problems. Above all, the women are now coming out to share the responsibilities they can undertake.

There are six women working in the Trust's office where there were none a few years ago. Above all, a new spirit of accord prevails since infighting in the community a few years ago had brought them to the verge of bloodshed and ripped the community apart. Then, sanity prevailed. The women played a key role in restraining the men. This would not have been possible without Naween Mangi's sensible leadership. — Courtesy Dawn



PESHAWAR: Residents of Mathra are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding in their area, held at Peshawar press club.

CM reviews proposals to increase oil producing fields cultivation

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over a meeting at CM Office in which proposals to increase cultivation of oil producing fields were reviewed. It was decided during the meeting to launch a vigorous campaign to increase under cultivation area of fields so as to decrease import bill of canola, sunflower and other oil producing fields.

Mohsin Naqvi ordered a continued campaign against fake and adulterated agricultural medicines across the province. He directed that commissioners in their relevant divisions should conduct monitoring

of ongoing campaigns against fake pesticides. It was agreed during the meeting to formulate an effective strategy to increase production instead of under cultivation area of wheat.

The proposal to grant further subsidy on agricultural machinery so as to increase the production of wheat, cotton and other fields was reviewed. The agricultural experts stressed upon cultivation of fields through a drill machine to increase production. It was decided during the meeting to launch IT based Cotton Crop Management Programme in the province. The meeting was informed that database of farmers would be completed during current month across the province. Services of approximately 2,000 internec agricultural graduates would be availed for cotton campaign advisory service across the province. Satellite image of cotton field would be acquired with the assistance of SUPARCO. The farmers would be ensured provision of substantial agricultural income across the province.

The CM exhorted that all stakeholders would have to make vigorous endeavours in order to attain cotton production target under any circumstance. He said that it was necessary to ascertain agricultural priorities by keeping in view exigencies of future. The agricultural experts while expressing their views stated that in order to yield a good crop it was essential to have a quality seed and right quantity of cultivation.

DG Strategic Project Major General Shahid Nazir, Caretaker Minister SM Tanvir, renowned businessman and Head of APTMA Gohar Ejaz, Fawad Mukhtar, Chief Secretary, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Secretary Agriculture and Agricultural Experts participated in the meeting.

Dutch envoy attends ceremony marking 75 years of relations with Pak

LAHORE (APP): Netherlands Ambassador in Pakistan Henny da Vries cut a cake to mark 75 years of relations of her country with Pakistan at a ceremony, held here at the National Hockey Stadium.

According to a press release issued here on Saturday, the ambassador also attended the signing ceremony for a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the SBP Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy and Almarah Foundation, an orphanage, under which more than 100 children, in the age group of 3 to 9 years, would be imparted hockey training during the next 10 years.

Hockey Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Chairperson Almarah Foundation Sophia Warraich, and DIG Police Mehboob Aslam Lillah, welcomed the guests at the hockey stadium.

Former IGP Punjab Tahir Raza, Olympians Shahbaz Senior, Khalid Bashir, philanthropists and a large number of hockey players and enthusiasts attended the event.

Ambassador Henny da Vries said Netherlands and Pakistan enjoyed strong diplomatic relations and she would work to further strengthen bilateral trade and relations.

Development, people welfare top agenda of PMLN: Engr Amir

SHANGLA (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam Saturday said that the development of Pakistan and people's welfare was the top agenda of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and his party after winning the upcoming election would change the destiny of masses of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Addressing a big public gathering at Martung after the inauguration of the NADRA Office here, Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan had made rapid progress and achieved

heights of prosperity during the government of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and expressed the hope that the people of KP would vote PMLN into power for their socioeconomic development.

He said, "PML-N has strong roots in the masses and due to its pro-people welfare and Pakistan's policies, senior and popular politicians were joining it to put the country forward on the road to economic prosperity under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif."

Engr Amir Muqam

said, "Former member National Assembly (NA) Shahjee Gul Afridi along with four other parliamentarians have joined PMLN and has reposed full confidence in the policies of PML-N leadership."

Engr Amir Muqam while congratulating the people of Martung on the inauguration of the NADRA office said that he would make efforts to establish its offices in other tehsils of Shingla to facilitate its people.

He said, "The people of KP including Shingla are ready for political change and would vote PMLN into power for the resolution of their problems."



GILGIT: Youngsters taking bath in water pond to get relief from the hot weather in city.



HYDERABAD: Mayor Hyderabad Kashif Shoro addressing to press conference at Mayor Office.

Kashmiris brace for celebrating Eid with fullest religious zeal

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Jammu and Kashmir state people dwelling both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) are all set to celebrate Eid ul Azha likely on June 29 with traditional religious zeal and fervor as the moon of the 10th of the holy month of Zilhaj has been sighted by now.

In the continuation of the renewal of the religious, historic and invincible bondage with Pakistan, the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the LoC and the rest of the world will celebrate Eid ul Azha simultaneously with the scheduled observance of the festival in Pakistan on June 29 with traditional religious enthusiasm and devotion. On the occasion, they will renew their resolve to continue acting upon and upholding the teachings of Islam, the top AJK govt. sources told APP on Saturday.

The day will dawn with special prayers in the mosques for the stability, integrity, unity and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah, progress and prosperity of Pakistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir, early liberation of all occupied Muslim homelands including Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir State and for the early success of the Kashmir freedom movement.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, special Eid ul Azha congregations will be held at all small and major cities and towns of all ten districts of the liberated territory.

Man killed in road accident

SARGODHA (APP): A man was killed and two others injured in a motor-bike-truck collision near here in Shah Nikdur police precincts, on Saturday.

According to Rescue 1122, the accident occurred due to negligence of both drivers.

The deceased was identified as Altaf, 35, resident of Sobhaga, while the injured including Saleem, 33, and Muneer, 18, were shifted to nearby hospital by Rescuers.

Workshop on digital literacy to empower young women, girls held

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins, in partnership with Aurat Foundation and with support from UN Women, organized a two-day training workshop on digital literacy here on Saturday.

The workshop aimed to empower young women and girls in the digital sphere and enhance their understanding of women's rights.

Participants from various districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Peshawar, Kohat, Swat, Mardan, Khyber, Kurram, and Bajaur, attended the intensive program.

The training focused on equipping the participants with essential skills to effectively utilize social media platforms. It aimed to raise awareness about women's rights and shed light on the legal frameworks available for women's protection and the procedures to access justice.

Two persons shot dead over enmity

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two persons were shot dead by unidentified armed outlaws at the main gate of District Kachehry on Saturday morning.

According to police spokesman, Noor Muhammad and Muhammad Hussain, residents of Kabirwala of district Khanewal were entering the district Kachehry.

All of a sudden, unidentified armed outlaws reached on a motorcycle and a car reached there and started firing on them.

Resultantly, they both died on the spot while the criminals managed to escape from the scene.

Promote 'Financial Education' GB govt partners with Karandaaz Pakistan and NIBAF

GILGIT (APP): The Government of GB is proud to announce a groundbreaking collaboration with Karandaaz Pakistan, a prominent organization funded by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, and the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF), said a press release issued by the GB Information Department on Saturday.

"The collaboration aims to promote financial education and equip the youth of GB with essential financial skills for a prosperous future."

It further said, "Karandaaz Pakistan has generously financed the development of 'Financial Literacy' content in partnership with NIBAF. This content will be incorporated into the training curriculum for Master Trainers, who will subsequently impart this vital knowledge to students across GB."



KARACHI: View of site after fire eruption in a clothes shop and warehouse due to unknown reasons after a fire broken out incident as the people and fire brigade officials are busy in extinguishing fire, located on Tariq road area.

Pakpattan police arrest 264 accused, recover Rs 5.5mln weapons

LAHORE (APP): The Pakpattan police arrested 264 accused and recovered weapons worth more than Rs 5.5 million in the last two months.

The police registered 264 cases against the arrested accused in all police stations across the districts, while the recovered illegal weapons included rifles, 40 guns and 216 pistols, said a handout issued here on Saturday.

During the crackdown, Sadar Arifwala police arrested 48 accused and registered 48 cases against them during the last two months, besides recovering two Kalashnikovs, two rifles,

16 guns and 28 pistols. Among the arrested accused were Ramzan, Muslim, Amjad, Azmat, Asif, Saleem, Afzal, Abbas, Shabbir, Naveed and Tanveer.

Qaboola police station arrested 32 accused including Munir, Afzal, Fayyaz, Azhar, Javed, Nadeem, Ramzan and Wajid besides registering 32 cases against them. One Kalashnikov, one rifle, 25 pistols and other weapons were recovered from the accused.

City Arifwala police station, after registering 28 cases, arrested 28 accused including Aslam, Shakeel, Jahanzeb, Khalid, Afaq, Mashuq, Ali Raza, Latif

and others besides recovering three rifles and 31 pistols from them.

Sadar Pakpattan police arrested 25 accused including Ahmad, Asif, Ali Akbar, Shafiq, Riaz, Bilal, Adnan, Sarwar, Amir and others and recovered 23 pistols and two guns from them.

Malika Hans police station arrested 22 accused besides registering 22 cases during last two months.

Rangshah police station arrested 21 accused Arslan, Imran, Akhtar, Shahbaz, Abid, Nazir, Javed, Nazir, Mazhar and others besides recovering 16 pistols and five guns from them.

Punjab govt appeal plea against acquittal Dr Yasmin fixed for hearing

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has fixed for hearing Punjab government appeal plea against acquittal of PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid in Jinnah House case.

A two members bench of LHC presided over by Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi will hear the appeal on June 26.

Punjab government has taken stance in its appeal plea that Anti Terrorism Court discharged Dr Yasmin Rashid from the case contrary to law.

Registrar office issued cause list.

The court has sought record from police.

Minister promises angiography machines for hospitals

SIALKOT (APP): Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr Javed Akram has said that angiography machine will be provided at Allama Iqbal Memorial Teaching Hospital (AIMH) on priority basis.

He was talking to the media during his visit to the hospital late at night. He said that DHQ Hospital administration has been instructed to keep air conditioners functional in wards and to provide medicines to patients from the hospital.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Adnan Mehmood Awan, Principal Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Medical College

(KMSMC) Dr. Abdul Sattar, Medical Superintendent (MS) Allama Iqbal Memorial Teaching Hospital (AIMH) Hospital Dr. Ilyas, Deputy Director Public Relations Syed Hamad Raza Bukhari were also present. Dr. Javed Akram made a detailed visit to the emergency and cardiology centers and also examined the patients under treatment.

He said that he took immediate notice of the breakdown of some air conditioners and monitors in the wards and directed that the AC and medical equipment should be repaired immediately.



MULTAN: Lawyers participating in a candlelight vigil in memory of the victims of Greece boat during a ceremony organized by the people's Lawyers forum at the District Bar.

PDMA takes precautionary measures to deal with upcoming monsoon

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner Muhammad Zubair on Saturday chaired an emergent meeting in which a mechanism has been prepared to deal with upcoming torrential rains and floods as a precautionary measure.

The Monsoon rains will start on June 25.

Representatives of the irrigation department, Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP), Cantonment Board Peshawar, Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) and the administrative officers of the municipal institutions participated in the meeting to deal with the situation in view of the torrential rains

from the night of June 25.

A report will be sent to the Commissioner in 48 hours, the meeting decided.

Besides, an operation will be started on an emergency basis to eliminate the encroachments around the rivers, Irrigation Department, WSSP, PDA and Orders have been issued to the municipal bodies to ensure the availability of heavy machinery so that relief can be provided in case of any emergency.

The meeting issued instructions to speed up work on the Under-construction Rivers and waterways passing through the city.

Unbridled sacrificial bull kills boy in Karachi

KARACHI (Online): In a heart-wrenching incident, a sacrificial bull went out of control in a Karachi area and dragged a minor boy who later lost his life.

The tragic incident took place when 12-year-old Ibrahim had taken out his sacrificial animal for a round. In the shocking video of the incident that can be seen on social media, the boy was dragged by the mighty bull for a kilometre while being tied with the out of control animal.

Several people can be seen chasing the animal and the boy.

ANF recovers 94 kg drugs; arrests 11 accused including two women

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 94 kg of drugs and arrested 11 accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that in an operation near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, ANF recovered 4.5 kg heroin concealed in a motorcycle. ANF also arrested an accused resident of Sargodha.

In another operation near Hafizabad Road, Gujranwala, 9.6 kg opium

and 24.4 kg charras were recovered from the possession of a drug smuggler, resident of Gujranwala.

In third operation conducted near M-2, Saleem Interchange, 18 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of four drug pushers including two women, residents of Rawalpindi.

The spokesman further informed that in an operation at DHL Office in Kot Lakhpat Lahore, 830 grams heroin concealed in dress T-shirts was recovered from a parcel being sent to Doha.

Two injured in gas cylinder blast

PESHAWAR (APP): Two persons were injured in a gas cylinder blast here on Saturday, police said.

The blast occurred at the residence of Shahzad Khan in the limit of Bhana Mari police station. As result of the intensity of the blast, the roof of the house caved in, injuring his wife and another person.

The rescue operation was started by relief agencies for the retrieval of other family members.

CM GB appeal plea against HEC in alleged fake degree case: Court seeks arguments

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad Sessions Court has sought arguments on July 10 on appeal plea filed by Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Khalid Khurshid against Higher Education Commission (HEC) in alleged fake degree case.

The appeal plea filed by CM GB Khalid Khurshid against HEC in alleged fake degree case came up for hearing before judge Zeba Chaudhry of District and Sessions court Islamabad.

The counsel for the petitioner Khalid Khurshid did not appear in the court.

Junior lawyer to Qazi Adil, counsel for CM GB appeared in the court and said senior counsel will not be able to appear in the court being pre-occupied. Therefore, the hearing be adjourned.

The court while accepting the plea adjourned the hearing till July 10. The court summoned the arguments on next hearing.



KARACHI: People are traveling on boat into seawater to enjoying pleasant evening and cooling themselves, during a hot day of summer season, nearby the China Creek in Karachi.

President directs SNGPL to rectify gas bill, apologize to consumer

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) to rectify the gas bill of a consumer and apologize to him as he had been wrongly billed for two solar geysers at his residence whereas only one geyser had been installed by the contractor. The contractor had wrongfully mentioned the installation of two geysers in forms, provided his own contact number to manipulate the verification process, submitted the documents to the SNGPL office, and absconded after committing fraud.

"It is shameful that the management is ignoring corruption within SNGPL and harassing the members of the public. Rather than

investigating its contractor, SNGPL is further burdening the public because of its incompetence and connivance by defending its illegal action. An inquiry must be done and persons involved be brought to justice", ordered the President while rejecting a representation filed by SNGPL against a decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. As per the details, Mr Tahir Hussain (the complainant) had lodged a complaint with Wafaqi Mohtasib stating that an SNGPL official installed one solar geyser in his house and told him that the payment for the geyser would be claimed in instalments in bills. SNGPL, however, issued him the bill with two solar geysers. He visited

the office where he was told that, as per documents, two geysers were installed at his residence. He was informed by the SNGPL's Supervisor that the contractor (Mr Shafiqat), who had installed the geyser, had absconded after committing fraud. He contacted the Police who did not intervene in the matter saying that it was an internal issue of the Sui Gas staff and the contractor. Feeling aggrieved, he approached Mohtasib who directed SNGPL to take corrective measures for the rectification of maladministration and correct the bill amount in line with the prescribed procedure. SNGPL, then, filed a representation with the President.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their work at Fruit and Vegetables Market during high temperature to earn daily wages for the livelihood of their families.

Forum stresses more trade among SAARC countries

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Lahore President Momin Ali Malik has stressed the need for enhancing trade among South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries in high growth sectors including information technology, manufacturing, energy, tourism and agribusiness.

Talking to APP here on Saturday, he regretted that trade among the South Asian nations was declining every year. He said there had been rapid economic growth in the region, but unfortunately it confronted a range of complex issues and barriers to trade that limited cross-border regional trade. "Contrary to this, we see increased integration in other regional blocks," he said, arguing that intra-regional trade was over 40 per cent in NAFTA (North

American Free Trade Agreement), 68 per cent in EU (European Union), and 27 per cent in ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). Their economic integration was directly linked to their GDP per capita, higher productivity, lower poverty, and unemployment, he added.

Malik stressed the need for studying the successes achieved by other regions, and adopting their strategies of regional identity and solidarity to ensure speedy economic growth and people's prosperity in the SAARC region as well.

He said that according to a notification, issued by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Pakistan government would help create job opportunities for unemployed youth in the country.

LCCI welcomes politicians' response to Charter of Economy initiative

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Saturday welcomed the positive gesture of politicians for the Charter of Economy initiative.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar told the media that it was the result of LCCI's untiring efforts. "It is good omen that the LCCI suggestion for Charter of Economy seriously," he added.

He said that he had urged the politicians at every forum including Senate of Pakistan that the political parties should set aside their differences and sign a Charter of Economy for revival of national economy. He said the

Lahore Chamber had also worked out a Charter of Economy and shared it with the political parties for the sake of economy. He vouch that the Lahore Chamber would extend all possible cooperation for this cause.

Kashif Anwar said that a comprehensive Charter of Economy would attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and promote local investment as key drivers of economic recovery.

He said that the Charter of Economy should encompass a range of strategic measures, including policies to enhance the ease of doing business, establish investor-friendly regulations.

Maash cultivation must start immediately

FAISALABAD (APP): The agricultural experts have advised farmers to start cultivation of Maash immediately and complete it by end of July to get bumper yield.

A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Saturday that Maash pulses were used largely in Pakistan because it was a rich source of proteins, iron and other minerals.

The farmers should cultivate approved varieties of Maash over maximum space of their lands because its production would not only play a pivotal role in catering to domestic food requirements but it would also be helpful in mitigating financial constraints of the growers, he added.

He said that agriculture department had devised a strategy to convince and motivate the farmers so that they could cultivate Maash crops over maximum space.

Commissioner inaugurates Kissan bazaar in Bhakkar

SARGODHA (APP): Commissioner Sargodha Division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti inaugurated the Kissan bazaar at Jhang Mor, here at Bhakkar on Saturday.

According to the special instructions of the Punjab government, he said that government was paying Special attention on cotton cultivation because it is a profitable crop which is in demand by foreign countries and it can make the farmers economically stable. He said that cotton was cultivated on 180,000 acres in Sargodha division this year and requires cultivation target had been achieved.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying sacrificial animals to attract customers at I-15 sector Cattle Market in connection with upcoming Eid ul Azha.

IT exports to touch \$ 15 bln in next three years: Amin ul Haque

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology, Syed Amin ul Haque on Saturday expressed the hope that IT related exports would reach to \$ 15 billion per annum from the existing \$ 2.6 billion in next three years if the current facilitation extended by the government was continued.

Speaking in the National Assembly here, the minister said IT export was \$ 1.4 billion in fiscal year 2019-20, \$ 2.1 billion in 2020-21 which jumped to \$ 2.6 billion till May,

2023. He said that the IT industry's confidence was being restored due to the Prime Minister's keen interest in taxation and industry-related matters.

The Minister enlighten about the ongoing projects said objective of these to provide broadband services in under served areas and outlined steps taken to promote the IT and Telecom industry over the past five years.

He highlighted that the IT industry witnessed a remarkable 28% increase in exports in May 2023,

attributing this positive development to the government's efforts.

The minister said the government formulated mobile phone manufacturing policy and today 28 companies were working in Pakistan under the vision of smart phone for all. It would help promote E-banking, E-Commerce, E-agriculture and E-Education etc, he added. He said made in Pakistan products were also being promoted adding that broad-band consumers witnessed significant increase.

Pak HC to Rwanda, foreign ministry delegation visit SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Pakistan's High Commissioner to Rwanda Naemullah Khan, along with a delegation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), here on Saturday.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir and Vice President Amir Majeed Sheikh welcomed the guests.

During a meeting, the SCCI president emphasised the need to further increase trade volume between the two countries. He said the current trade volume between the two countries was very small, which the business communities of

both countries could increase through mutual trade efforts.

Ghafoor Malik suggested a few measures for expansion of trade between the two countries, saying both countries should facilitate single-country trade exhibitions and encourage frequent exchanges of trade delegations; the Rwanda businesses should be encouraged to explore joint venture possibilities in Pakistan, and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) should be signed to find new ways of cooperation between the trade bodies of the two countries.

He said Sialkot city was manufacturing surgical instruments.

Balance of loans in Shanghai up 8.8% at end of May

SHANGHAI (Xinhua/APP): The balance of loans in Shanghai, including all currencies, stood at 10.83 trillion yuan (about 1.51 trillion U.S. dollars) at the end of May, up 8.8 per cent year on year, official data showed. The balance of loans in Chinese yuan rose 10.8 per cent year on year to 10.18 trillion yuan at the end of last month, according to the People's Bank of China Shanghai Head Office. The balance of loans in foreign currencies reached 91 billion U.S. dollars at the end of May, down 20.3 per cent year on year. At the end of last month, the balance of Shanghai's deposits climbed 7 per cent on a yearly basis.



MULTAN: Labourer busy in filling Corn kernel in the bags after drying at his workplace.

China's postal industry registers stable growth in January-May

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's postal industry witnessed stable growth in both business revenue and parcel volume in the first five months of this year, official data showed.

The sector raked in 596.39 billion yuan (about 83.07 billion U.S. dollars) in business revenue during the period, 12.2 per cent higher compared to a year ago, according to the State Post Bureau. In May alone, the business revenue totaled 123.19 billion yuan, up by 12.2 per cent.

Some 60.28 billion parcels were delivered in the January-May period, increasing 14.3 per cent year on year. The figure was 13.48 billion last month, up by 16.5 per cent.

The expansion of the postal industry was in part driven by robust online shopping and sent a positive signal that the country's consumption is steadily recovering. In the first five months, online goods sales increased 11.8 per cent from a year earlier to 4.81 trillion yuan.

Cutlery association members visits Woman chamber

SIALKOT (APP): A Pakistan Cutlery & Stainless Utensils Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PCSUMA) visited Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Sialkot for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing ceremony. Both the organizations signed the MoU to enhance partnership that would be designed to build the institutional capacity of agencies involved in Women Entrepreneurs.

ICCI welcomes Zardari's proposal for Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Saturday welcomed the statement of former president and co-chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari regarding the Charter of Economy among all political parties to overcome the economic challenges, which was faced by the country.

The business community of the federal capital strongly supports this proposal, he said in a statement received here.

He further said that the his (former president's) address to the business community in Lahore was a reflection of the true understanding of the economic problems faced by the country.

He said that his suggestion to give the most important ministries related to the economy to the people associated with the business community was also a step towards solving economic problems.

He said that his suggestion of cotton cultivation in Jhal Magasi area of Balochistan can be a milestone for achieving quality production as well

as development of the province. He said that lack of long-term planning and in continuity in policies were the main reason of the economic problems that were faced by the country today.

The former president offered the business community that he was ready to strike a deal with all political parties on the issue of economy, which was highly commendable Initiative, he remarked.

He said that the Pakistan People's Party was the largest political party in Pakistan and the second largest party in the current coalition government and urged all other parties to positively respond the offer for turning around the national economy. Ahsan Zafar said that a grand national dialogue on the issue of economy was the needs time and the Islamabad Chamber being the representative chamber of the federal capital and the country, was ready to play its full role to organize such debates and dialogue.

He said that the former president's vision regarding regional connectivity was commendable.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor loading dry fodder for sacrificial animals as per demand of customers ahead of Eidul Adha.

Mayor directs Replacement of old gas pipeline, 100 KV in Gulbahar No. 5

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali directed the replacement of an old gas pipeline and the installation of 100KV or replacement of 25 KV in order to overcome the overloading of electricity in Gulbahar No. 5.

Haji Zubair Ali on arrival at Afridi Ghari Gulbahar No. 5, where the Peshawar Goods Carrier Association organized a program regarding the solution to their problems.

President of Ittehad Alaima Gulbahar Sheikh Al Hadith Hazrat Maulana Abdul Sattar Marwat Sahib, Advisor to Chief Minister (CM) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Malik Maher Elahi, Chairman of Tehsil Pishatkara Haroon Safat, Chairman Imran Naveed were also present. Mayor Peshawar, and officers of Capital Metropolitan also participated in the program. Addressing the event, Mayor announced the replacement of 25 KV transformers with 100 KV and issued instructions to the relevant authorities to provide 100 KV transformers within 24 hours. Along with this, at the request of the Goods

Carrier Association, the Mayor of Peshawar issued orders for the installation of street lights in all the small and big streets of the area within 24 hours to reduce street crimes.

he also issued orders for the replacement of gas pipelines and issued instructions to the gas authorities in that regard.

Moreover, Peshawar Goods Carrier Association requested the Mayor of Peshawar the repair the base road and the cleaning of the main drain sewer line. Mayor Peshawar immediately issued instructions to WSSP regarding the main drain sewerage line system and its cleaning and in that regard issued orders to send a special team the next day.

Regarding the repair of the road, Haji Zubair Ali said, "He will send a team of officers to conduct a survey and work on this road will be started after Eid-ul-Adha." Haji Zubair Ali assured to have a meeting with customs and FBR officials, finally, Peshawar Goods Carrier Association thanked Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali for listening to their demand and taking steps for its early solutions.



MULTAN: Labourer busy in crushing bricks into pieces during construction work.

2,800 farmers to be imparted training for olive grafting, plantation

LAHORE (APP): The federal government has launched a plan to train 2800 farmers and workers through 47 different programmes for early completion over 1.2 million olive sapling plantation across the country.

The initiative has been taken in a bid to strengthen efforts to enhance production of domestic edible oil and reducing reliance on the imported commodity, sources in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MFSR) told APP on Saturday.

Olive plantation is

being carried out over 8,900 acres across the country, besides conducting a campaign on wild olive grafting across four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to attain oil for local consumption, added the sources.

Dr. Hassan Tariq, National Project Director Olive Cultivation Programme, told APP that the government was striving to bring specific regions in the country under olive cultivation and earlier, over 5 million sapling have been planted

across the country.

"We have a large area of land suitable for growing olive trees, and Pakistan has been producing olive oil since 2010 with the help of countries such as Spain and Italy. Currently, we are producing around 1,500 tons of olive oil and 830 tons of table olives per year, all of which are consumed domestically," he added.

Olive Project Manager Khaity Technologies Pakistan Azeem Tariq told APP that with the cooperation of all stakeholders, the government had launched a

massive drive to complete plantation of over 1.2 million olive saplings, which has been started since last spring tree plantation season, and is continuing across country.

The drive would help strengthen efforts to produce edible oil to meet needs for domestic consumption, he added while replying to a query.

Barani Agriculture Research Institute's Senior Agricultural Scientist and Farm Manager Dr Azhar said that the government had devised a five-year plan to turn the Potohar region into an 'Olive

Valley'. Under the project, the federal government would provide 200,000 free olive plants to selected farmers in Attock, Chakwal, Khushab, Jhelum, and other districts, he added.

He said that the project would tap the potential of olive industry in the country, adding the continued growth of olive industry would help contribute significantly to the national economy and promote socioeconomic development, reduce poverty and create employment opportunities in the country.



GUJRANWALA: Vendor sells vegetables to earn his livelihood as the customers are not willing to buy vegetable due to price hike at Vegetable Market in Gujranwala.

Putin vows to crush 'armed mutiny' after Russian mercenary boss tries to oust top brass

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed to crush what he called an armed mutiny after rebellious mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said on Saturday he had taken control of a southern city as part of an attempt to oust the military leadership.

The dramatic turn, with many details unclear, looked like the biggest domestic crisis Putin has faced since he ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine - which he called a "special military operation" - in February last year.

Mutinuous Russian mercenary chief says he and his men won't turn themselves in

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Mutinous Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said on Saturday that he and his men would not turn themselves in on the orders of President Vladimir Putin. Putin had earlier vowed to crush what he called an armed mutiny after Prigozhin's private army seized control of a southern city as part of an attempt to oust the military leadership.

"The president makes a deep mistake when he talks about treason. We are patriots of our motherland, we fought and are fighting for it," Prigozhin said in an audio message.

In a televised address, Putin said that "excessive ambitions and vested interests have led to treason", and called the mutiny a "stab in the back".

"It is a blow to Russia, to our people. And our actions to defend the Fatherland against such a threat will be harsh."

"All those who deliberately stepped on the path of betrayal, who prepared an armed insurrection, who took the path of blackmail and terrorist methods, will suffer inevitable punishment, will answer both to the law and to our people."



World leaders and finance bosses attend the closing session of the New Global Financial Pact Summit in Paris, France.



Fighters of Wagner private mercenary group stand guard in a street near the headquarters of the Southern Military District in the city of Rostov-on-Don, Russia.

Turkey's Erdogan urges Russia's Putin to act with common sense

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: President Tayyip Erdogan spoke by telephone with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Saturday and urged him to act with common sense, the Turkish presidency said, after Russian mercenary fighters began an armed mutiny overnight.

Putin, who described the Wagner Group's actions as "treason" in an emergency televised address, said anyone who had taken up arms against the Russian military would be punished.

Erdogan was among the first leaders to hold a phone call with Putin after his speech on Saturday.

The Turkish presidency said the two discussed recent developments in Russia and Erdogan told Putin that Turkey was ready to do its part to help bring about a peaceful resolution.

"It was stressed during the call that no one should take it upon themselves to take action in the face of the situation in Russia," it added.

Taliban letter reinforces bar on women aid workers

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Taliban authorities in Kandahar province ordered female aid workers this week to stop work on a refugee project, according to an official letter, reinforcing rules against women working despite exemptions sought by some organisations. The letter between departments of the ministry for refugees in Kandahar, the Taliban's historical heartland, said aid agencies had been in violation of the orders in work related to refugees in Spin Boldak, a town near the border with Pakistan.

The letter was confirmed by a spokesman for the provincial governor.

"All partner organisations that are working with the Department of Refugees and Repatriation of Spin Boldak ... should ask their female colleagues not to come to their work and stay at home until further notice," the letter said.

A spokesperson for the United Nations humanitarian coordination office said the body was aware of the instruction and seeking clarity.

UK says Russian state now facing greatest challenge of recent times

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's defence ministry said on Saturday that the Russian state was facing its greatest security challenge of recent times, following what it said appeared to be a move by Wagner Group mercenaries towards Moscow. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an emergency televised address on Saturday that an "armed mutiny" by the Wagner Group was treason, and that anyone who had taken up arms against the Russian military would be punished.

"Over the coming

hours, the loyalty of Russia's security forces, and especially the Russian National Guard, will be key to how this crisis plays out," Britain's defence ministry said in a regular intelligence update. "This represents the most significant challenge to the Russian state in recent times," it added.

Britain said Wagner Group forces had crossed from Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine to Russia in at least two locations and had "almost certainly" occupied key security sites in Rostov-on-Don, including the headquarters which runs Russian military operations in Ukraine.

Cathay Pacific flight accident injures 11 in Hong Kong

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Eleven people were injured on Cathay Pacific's (0293 HK) flight CX880 at Hong Kong's international airport early on Saturday after the carrier aborted takeoff due to a technical issue, Cathay said in a statement.

The flight from Hong Kong to Los Angeles was carrying 17 crew and 293 passengers. It performed "an aborted takeoff following standard procedures after a technical issue was detected by the crew."

The injuries occurred during a precautionary evacuation back at the gate when passengers exited the aircraft using five-door escape slides, Cathay said.

"Nine of the eleven passengers who received treatment at hospitals have been discharged," it said. "Our colleagues will continue to provide support to the two hospitalised passengers and their families."

Cathay said it sincerely apologised for the disruption to customers.

Around 40 missing in Italy migrant boat shipwreck: UN

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Around 40 people are missing after a migrant boat capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa, the UN said on Friday. The shipwreck took place on Thursday and at least one newborn baby is among those missing, said UNHCR representative to Italy Chiara Caroletti.

The vessel left from Sfax in Tunisia and was carrying 46 migrants from Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the UN migration agency IOM. The boat capsized in strong winds and high waves, he said. "Some survivors were taken to Lampedusa and others

were brought back to Tunisia".

"Among those missing were seven women and a minor. The survivors are all adult men", he added. "We have noticed more arrivals of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa than Tunisians" via the Tunisian route since November, he said.

He explained this was due to people from sub-Saharan Africa fleeing discrimination in Tunisia. "It is unacceptable to continue counting the dead at the gates of Europe", Caroletti wrote on Twitter. "A coordinated and shared rescue mechanism at sea between states is now also a matter of conscience."



Vessel Sfax in Tunisia and was carrying 46 migrants from Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast.

No evidence Covid created in Chinese lab: US intelligence

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The head of US intelligence said on Friday that there was no evidence that the Covid-19 virus was created in the Chinese government's Wuhan research lab.

In a declassified report, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said that they had no information backing recent claims that three scientists at the lab were some of the very first infected with Covid-19 and may have created the virus themselves.

Drawing on intelligence collected by various member agencies of the US intelligence community (IC), the ODNI report said some scientists at the Wuhan lab had done genetic engineering of coronaviruses similar to Covid-19.

But the US "has no information" indicating they had done such work on the specific Covid-19 virus, known as SARS-CoV-2, or on any "close progenitor, or a backbone virus that is closely related enough to have been the source of the pandemic."

The report, made for Congress and carrying an unclassified classification, came three months after lawmakers demanded a fuller explanation of US intelligence's information on the origins of the pandemic which erupted at the end of 2019.

Some lawmakers allege that the virus was created out of so-called gain-of-function genetic engineering research at Wuhan and that Beijing had covered up evidence to show it was a man-made disease.

Reiterating a conclusion announced in March, the ODNI report said "almost all" of its constituent agencies, which include the NSA, the CIA and the FBI, assess that Covid-19 was not genetically engineered and most believe as well it was not laboratory-adapted.

West 'pledges' \$200bn for climate fight

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Multilateral development banks like the World Bank are expected to find \$200 billion in extra firepower for low-income economies by taking on more risk, a move that may require wealthy nations to inject more cash, world leaders said.

The leaders, gathered at a summit in Paris to thrash out funding for the climate transition and post-Covid debt burdens of poor countries, said their plans would secure billions of dollars of matching investment from the private sector.

An overdue pledge of \$100bn in climate finance for developing nations was also now in sight, they said.

Many in attendance, however, said over the two-day summit that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were increasingly ill-suited for tackling the most pressing challenges and needed a broad revamp.

"We ... expect an overall increase of \$200bn of MDBs' lending capacity over the next ten years by optimising their balance sheets and taking more

West 'pledges' \$200bn for climate fight

risks," the summit's final statement obtained by Reuters said. "If these reforms are implemented, MDBs may need more capital," it added, recognising in a final summit document for the first time that wealthy nations may have to inject more cash.

The final summit document called for each dollar of lending by development banks to be matched by at least one dollar of private finance, which analysts said should help international institutions to leverage an additional \$100bn of private money in developing and emerging economies.

The announcements mark a scaling up of action from the development banks in the fight against climate change and set a direction for further change ahead of their annual meetings later in the year.

However, some climate activists were critical of the results.

"While the roadmap acknowledges the urgency for substantial financial resources to bolster climate action, it leans too heavily on private investments and ascribes an outsized role to

multilateral development banks," said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network International.

At the summit, the United States and China - long at odds on how to tackle debt restructurings for poor countries - sought to strike a more conciliatory tone after a landmark deal was reached on Thursday to restructure \$6.3bn in debt owed by Zambia, most of it to China.

"As the world's two largest economies, we have a responsibility to work together on global issues," Yellen said on a summit panel shared with Chinese Premier Li Qiang among other leaders.

However, differences remain. China - the world's largest bilateral creditor - has been pushing for lenders like the World Bank or the IMF to absorb some of the losses, which the institutions and Western countries oppose.

The summit statement said there was a "good likelihood" of finalising this year a \$100-billion climate finance pledge to developing countries.

Palestinian shooting attack in West Bank, settlers torch houses

Monitoring Desk
UMME SAFA: A Palestinian militant opened fire at an Israeli checkpoint in the occupied West Bank on Saturday before he was shot dead by forces at the scene, Israel's police said, and settlers set fire to homes in a nearby Palestinian village, residents said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed group associated with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party, claimed the gunman as a member. Official Palestinian news agency Wafa identified him as an 18-year-old from Kafir Aqab.

Police said a security guard was wounded in the attack and distributed a photo of an M-16 rifle they said was used by the gunman. A few hours later, Israeli settlers torched at least two houses in the Palestinian village Umm Safa near Ramallah, residents said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Israeli military

said one Israeli suspect had been arrested and that its forces used anti-riot measures to break up Palestinian stone throwing that erupted at the village.

Violence surged this week in the West Bank, where for over a year the military has conducted regular sweeps leading to repeated clashes with Palestinian fighters amid a spate of Palestinian street attacks on Israelis.

The past few days saw deadly clashes in the city of Jenin, a fatal Palestinian shooting attack near a settlement, attacks on Palestinian villages by settlers and a rare Israeli air strike in the West Bank against militants.

On Friday, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan encouraged more steps to restore calm in a call with his Israeli counterpart, the White House said, and expressed concerns about Israeli settler attacks on Palestinian villages.

Attorney General Merrick Garland announced US indicts 4 Chinese companies for trafficking fentanyl ingredients.



Attorney General Merrick Garland announced US indicts 4 Chinese companies for trafficking fentanyl ingredients.

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department announced Friday it has indicted four Chinese companies and eight Chinese individuals with trafficking in chemicals used in manufacturing fentanyl, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced Friday.

Two of the eight have been arrested as the US Justice Department intensifies its crackdown on the synthetic opioid responsible for hundreds of thousands of overdose deaths in the past decade.

It was the first time the United States has charged Chinese companies for trafficking fentanyl precursor chemicals inside the United States, rather than shipping them to Mexico, the origin of most of the fentanyl found in the country.

The announcement came just days after US Secretary of State

Morocco delays 'Abraham Accords' summit until after summer

Monitoring Desk
RABAT: Morocco will delay a summit it is hosting between Israel and Arab states that have signed "Abraham Accords" peace pacts, its foreign minister said on Friday, amid rising strife in the West Bank.

The decision to postpone the summit until after the summer comes after Israel decided to expand settlement-building in the occupied West Bank and after an Israeli raid on Jenin in which five people were killed.

Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourrita said the decision was partly over scheduling but also because of what he called "provocative and unilateral acts" that "undermine peace efforts in the region".

He condemned the Israeli army raid on Jenin, in the West Bank, and rejected Israel's decision to expand settlements in occupied territory where Palestinians want to establish an independent state.

Israel said its operation in Jenin was intended to arrest two Palestinians suspected of attacks. It announced the decision to build 1,000 new houses in the Eli settlement in the

West Bank in response to a Palestinian gun attack nearby.

Morocco is one of four Arab states - alongside the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan - that moved closer to Israel following a U.S.-driven diplomatic initiative in 2020.

Rabat boosted ties with Israel and agreed to move towards full diplomatic relations in return for U.S. recognition of its sovereignty over the territory of Western Sahara, which is claimed by an Algeria-backed independence movement. Morocco has said it wants to see the creation of a Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem as part of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The planned summit follows one held last year in Israel's Negev desert between Israel, Bahrain, Morocco, the UAE, United States and Egypt, which agreed to peace with Israel in 1979. Israel had previously announced that Morocco would host the forum in March, with Foreign Minister Eli Cohen saying other countries that do not have ties with Israel might also attend.

Taiwan says Chinese air force approached close to island's coast

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Eight Chinese warplanes crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line and approached close to the island's contiguous zone that is 24 nautical miles (44.4 km) off its coast on Saturday, the Taiwanese defence ministry said, in a further rise in tensions.

China's air force over the past three years has routinely flown into the air space around Taiwan. And since last August it has regularly sent jets across the strait's median line, which had previously served as an unofficial barrier. In March, Taiwan Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng warned that the island had to be on alert this year for a "sudden entry" by the Chinese military into areas close to its territory.

Blinken called South Korea to discuss China visit; North Korea warns of stronger response

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called key ally South Korea to discuss the results of his visit to China this month, South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Saturday.

Blinken told South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin he had an honest, practical and constructive dialogue with the Chinese side, and wanted to explain the results of his visit in as much detail as possible, a ministry statement said.

Blinken and Park decided to continue to communicate regarding relations with China and to urge Beijing to play a constructive role in North Korea's suspension of provocations and denuclearisation, the ministry said.

During the visit to China where Blinken met President Xi Jinping and other top officials, the two sides agreed to stabilise their intense rivalry so it does not veer into conflict, but failed to produce any breakthrough.

Chile official warns of 'worst front in a decade' after floods, evacuations

Monitoring Desk
SANTIAGO: Days of heavy rainfall have swollen Chile's rivers causing floods that blocked off roads and prompted evacuation in the center of the country, amid what has been described as the worst weather front in a decade. On Friday, residents of the capital Santiago were surprised by a large mass of brown water flowing down the bed of the Mapocho river, the city's main waterway, which has risen substantially with the recent heavy rains.

The flooding around the Mapocho river has also cut off routes leading towards the Pacific Ocean.

US indicts 4 Chinese companies for trafficking fentanyl ingredients

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department announced Friday it has indicted four Chinese companies and eight Chinese individuals with trafficking in chemicals used in manufacturing fentanyl, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced Friday.

Two of the eight have been arrested as the US Justice Department intensifies its crackdown on the synthetic opioid responsible for hundreds of thousands of overdose deaths in the past decade.

It was the first time the United States has charged Chinese companies for trafficking fentanyl precursor chemicals inside the United States, rather than shipping them to Mexico, the origin of most of the fentanyl found in the country.

The announcement came just days after US Secretary of State

Antony Blinken visited Beijing, where he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. "These companies and their employees knowingly conspired to manufacture deadly fentanyl for distribution in the United States," Garland said.

"Just one of these China-based chemical companies shipped more than 200 kilograms of fentanyl-related precursor chemicals to the US for the purpose of making 50 kilograms of fentanyl, a quantity that could contain enough deadly doses of fentanyl to kill 25 million Americans," said Garland.

Charged in three separate cases filed in federal court in New York were Hubei Amarvel Biotech, Anhui Rencheng Technology, Anhui Moker New Material Technology and Hefei GSK Trade.

Law Minister for keeping national interests supreme over political affiliations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has stressed upon overseas Pakistanis that national interests should be accorded priority over their political affiliations.

He said that the overseas Pakistanis were the precious asset of the country who had not only enhanced the country's prestige abroad but also always responded in difficult times.

The minister was talking to the Pakistani community members and other notables from different political parties at Pakistan Embassy in Washington DC. Pakistan Ambassador to the US Masood Khan and community leader Sajid Tarar were also present on the occasion, said a press release issued on Saturday.

Tarar said that unfortunately, certain elements with vested interests had launched a maligned propaganda abroad about Pakistan and the government to create fissures among the overseas Pakistanis community.

On one hand, he regretted that these elements were instigating the overseas Pakistanis to approach the foreign governments and legislators against their motherland while on the other, overseas Pakistanis were misguided about the missions and immigration process through self-conceived and false stories.

The law minister dispelled that the government of Pakistan had neither prepared any list nor any step had been taken in this regard and urged the overseas diaspora to quash such propaganda by approaching their relevant embassies and the national institutions.

"The overseas Pakistanis have been our identity with whom we enjoy everlasting relations. They are the real identity of Pakistan. So it is our collective responsibility to keep country's esteem high," the press release in Urdu language quoted the minister as saying.

The minister for law further said that the prime minister and the members of his cabinet shared the common sentiments for the overseas Pakistanis and acknowledged their services.

About May 9 vandalism, the minister said that the country's history was replete with the democratic struggle of two political parties but they always differentiated between the political striving and mischief making.

The minister said that the prime minister and the members of his cabinet shared the common sentiments for the overseas Pakistanis and acknowledged their services.



QUETTA: Former Ambassador Nawabzada, Mir Aminullah Raisani along with Peoples Party (PPP) Central Leader Syed Dawood Agha giving trophy to the captain of the Afghan team on the victory in the final match of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Football Tournament during award ceremony organized by Shaheed Talib Agha Foundation held in Quetta.

Not against CPEC or Gwadar development: Maulana Hidayat accuses provincial Govt of victimization

Provincial leader of JI and Haq Do Tehreek chief demands armed clash going on in Wadh area of Khuzdar should be stopped forthwith; Majid Johar be released

QUETTA: The provincial General Secretary, Jama'at-e-Islami Balochistan and head of Gwadar Haq Do Tehreek, Maulana Hidayatullah Rehman Baloch has accused the provincial government of victimizing him and other workers of Tehreek.

He said that fake cases have been registered against us, still we are appearing in the courts.

He said that we are not against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) or development of Gwadar at all, but we want development of Gwadar and that issues are resolved amicably.

Other provincial leaders of JI were also present on the occasion.

The Gwadar Haq Do Tehreek chief maintained the might was used against us while we were observing peaceful protest on December 26, 2022, several arrested and cases were lodged against them.

He regretfully pointed out that one of our active workers namely Majid Johar was also arrested there. He said that Majid is imprisoned for last 50 days. He demanded his immediate release. If Johar was not released immediately, then protest would be

lodge on June 26 in Gwadar, adding he announced.

He said that there has been bloodshed in the province in past. He particularly mentioned the armed tribal clash in Wadh area of Khuzdar.

He said that two armed groups are fighting against each other, and it should be stopped peacefully forthwith.

Referring to the province's next financial year's budget, Maulana Hidayatullah Rehman Baloch said that the budget was presented recently, but no big project was announced in the budget.



TURBAT: Assistant Director Information Department Kech Asif Ali Baloch presenting a cheque of grant of Rs. 20 lakh to General Secretary Turbat Press Club Majid Samad Baloch from Information Department Government of Balochistan.

CTD arrests terrorists linked to TTP, Al-Qaeda

LAHORE (NP): In a major operation prompted by security fears, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has nabbed nine terrorists belonging to outlawed Al-Qaeda and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) groups during an intelligence-based operation across Punjab.

A CTD spokesman informed media on Saturday that the terrorists were apprehended from Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan.

The CTD spokesman confirmed that the arrested militants were belonged to the TTP and Al-Qaeda.

He further said that the CTD personnel also seized explosive material, detonators, fuse and Rs152,800 cash from the possession of the terrorists. The CTD spokesman said the detained terrorists were identified as Naveed Khan, Khurram, Ghulam Hussain, Ghulam Abbas, Awais, Muhammad Said, Hussain, Ismael and Akhwan.

According to CTD officials, they have started interrogation of the terrorists after lodging seven cases against them.

He said that the terrorists had planned to sabotage across the province and wanted to target important installations and other religious places.

They said in total 153 combing operation were carried out during the current week, during which 7,751 people were questioned and dozens of suspects were arrested.

The officials claimed that the CTD is committed to make Punjab a safe province and vowed to uproot terrorism from the province. The spokesman said the CTD is diligently pursuing its goal of a safe Punjab and no stone will be left unturned in its efforts to bring terrorists and anti-state elements behind bars.

Just two days ago, the CTD had arrested four alleged TTP terrorists of banned outfits during operations in different areas of Punjab. According to the spokesman, the CTD Punjab conducted 27 intelligence based operations in different districts of the province to effectively deal with any untoward incident of terrorism, in which 27 suspected persons were interrogated and four alleged terrorists.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri addressing a press conference at PID media center.

No VVIP would make inauguration at all: Chief Minister directs DCs to inaugurate public projects completing by June 30

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has directed the Deputy Commissioners to inaugurate the public projects completing by June 30, 2023.

The directives were issued by the Chief Minister on the summary sent to him by the Planning and Development Department.

The Chief Minister also directed to start reaching the fruits of projects to the masses by formally inaugurating the development projects already completed.

He said that he wants to see all development projects operational by August this year.

He insisted that the people should be benefited from the projects completing through the public exchequer.

He asserted that no VVIP would make inauguration of the projects. He also directed that the inauguration of schools would be made by the students studying there.

Similarly, the inauguration of the hospitals would be made by the patients being treated there.

The inauguration of water school schemes and other projects would be made by the senior citizens of the respective areas, he directed further.

He once again directed to make inauguration of the green bus service by the male and female passengers traveling on the public transport.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister directed to hold the inaugural ceremonies with simplicity avoiding unnecessary expenditures on them.

Construction of Linda Bridge hangs in balance

From Aziz Yousafzai UTHAL: Linda Bridge Uthal, which was broken and swept away by the flood last year in Lasbela, has not been rebuilt even after a year has passed.

The Federal Government and the National Highway Authority have become silent spectators, the travellers are starving.

The main highway is repeatedly blocked due to rains and floods in Lasbela's hilly areas, which is causing agony for the passengers.

While in this regard, the federal government and the National Highway Authority also started playing the role of silent spectators.

According to the details, Linda Bridge, which was affected by a flood last year in Uthal is supposed to be completed in one year, but it has not been constructed yet and work is being done through alternative routes. As a result of which the national highway is repeatedly suspended for all kinds of traffic even with low-level flooding in the rains. Due to this passengers especially women, children, old, sick and disabled people have to face difficulties and torture and passengers wait for hours for the highway to open. The people have demanded from the Federal Minister of Communications.

Blood donation camp set up at Police Lines

Independent Report QUETTA: One-day blood camp was set up at the Police Lines here on Saturday. The blood camp was arranged by the Regional Blood Center (RBC) with cooperation of Balochistan Police.

Scores of police officers and jawans including the females donated the blood at the camp supervised by the RBC's management.

The Deputy Inspector General of Police Quetta, Ghulam Azfar Mahesar led the way. The spirit and selflessness of the police blood donors was appreciated.



QUETTA: Jammat-e-Islami (JI) Balochistan General Secretary, Maulana Hidayatullah Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference.

Sindh reported 56 rape cases, 37 honor killings in 4 months

KARACHI (INP): Sindh reported 56 cases of rape and 37 of so-called honor killings in the last four months.

According to a four-month report on violence against women and children, sexual violence, kidnapping, early marriage and child labor in Sindh by a non-governmental organization, there were 67 cases of sexual violence against children and 529 of abduction of women in Sindh in the period under review.

According to media reports, the Sustainable Social Development Organization reported the data in its report released on human trafficking, traffic in persons and child labor. The report further said that from January 1 to April 30, 771 cases of violence against women were reported and 142 cases of violence against children.

The Karachi central, Kemari and Hyderabad districts emerged as the hotspots for violence and crimes against women, as 63, 58 and 54 cases of violence against women were reported from there, respectively.

Out of the 142 cases of violence against children, Karachi South reported 21, Kemari 16 and Karachi West 13, emerging as the hotspot districts of this crime.

In the short period of four months, 119 cases of domestic violence and 41 of kidnapping of children were reported.

Local population has first right on natural resources: Shazia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Mari emphasized that the constitution and the directives of the Supreme Court explicitly stated that the first right to natural resources belonged to the local population.

Expressing concerns related to the utilization of natural resources in the National Assembly here Saturday, she highlighted the importance of abiding by the constitution and the orders issued by the Supreme Court.

She reiterated that these legal frameworks clearly define that the initial entitlement to natural resources rests with the local population.

The minister emphasized the significance of ensuring that the rights of the local communities are respected and protected. By adhering to the constitutional provisions and Supreme Court directives, equitable access and fair distribution of natural resources can be achieved, ultimately benefiting the people residing in the respective regions, she expressed.

She reiterated that the relevant districts in Sindh should be given priority in receiving gas, as the province or region with a gas well has the primary entitlement to its utilization, which ultimately benefits the people residing in that area.

Federal Minister for Water Resources, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, highlighted water-related issues pertaining to irrigation in the lower and border areas of Sindh.

Acknowledging the failure in addressing electricity load shedding, he drew attention to the significant 20 percent line losses in Sindh alone that require immediate attention.

Shah mentioned the existence of five grid stations in Sindh, each with a capacity of 66 kilowatts.

He noted that while the Rohri and Nara Canals were currently flowing at full capacity, there was a shortage of water in the lower and border areas.

He assured that water was being supplied to Balochistan according to its specific requirements.

Parvez gets bail in money laundering case

LAHORE (INP): The special court central on Saturday ordered release of former chief minister Parvez Elahi also the PTI president after accepting his bail in the money laundering case.

On Wednesday, the Federal Investigation Agency had arrested Elahi as soon as he came out of the prison after an anti-corruption court granted him bail in another case related to illegal recruitments.

Both the father and his son Moonis Elahi were booked a day earlier over alleged money laundering on the basis of the revelations made in the Panama Papers, which showed they were owners of businesses abroad. They are accused of committing fraud and resorting to money laundering, thus concealing billions of rupees in five Panamanian firms. Elahi allegedly purchased companies in Panama and there was an evidence of illegal transfer of money abroad.

Shaza accuses PTI leadership of promoting hate politics, misinformation campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership for promoting a politics of hate and confrontation.

Speaking in National Assembly, she accused them of launching a fake media campaign against their opponents.

She highlighted the alleged victimization tactics employed by the PTI and their dissemination of disinformation against political rivals.

She compared the previous government under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, noting the absence of power outages and a significant expansion of the road and motorway network during his tenure.

In contrast, she claimed that corruption had increased under the PTI government. Recognizing the potential of the country's youth, she emphasized that approximately 68 percent of Pakistan's population consists of individuals under the age of 30. She underscored the government's commitment to addressing the issues faced by young people and expressed their dedication to leading the youth towards significant improvements through various initiatives. She elaborated on the Prime Minister's Youth Program, which aimed to empower the youth through multiple initiatives such as the PM Youth Business.



QUETTA: Sacrificial animals are being selling at a roadside for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, at Koyla Phattak in Quetta.

Meeting of senior leaders of PML-N held

Independent Report QUETTA: A meeting of senior leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-N was held on Saturday at the residence of PML-N Balochistan Senior Vice President Nawab Salman Khan Khilji.

The meeting was attended by Muslim League (N) youth wing central senior vice president Jahangir Khan Kharuti, party leader Shabbir Rajpoot, Asad Mengal, Mir Zaman Lahri, Advocate Naeem Sikandar, Shama Shahzad and others.

Addressing the meeting, Senior Vice President of Muslim League (N) Nawab Salman Khan Khilji, Jahangir Kharuti, Shabbir Rajpoot, Asad Mengal, Mir Zaman Lahri, Advocate Naeem Sikandar, Shama Shahzad said that Muslim League (N) was a democratic and political party which we have always fought for democracy saying that no one would be allowed to establish a dictatorship in the party.

Pakistan Muslim League-N ideological workers have always sacrificed

for the party but under a thought out plan senior and old workers and colleagues of Muslim League (N) were being neglected in Balochistan, they said.

They said that there was severe disappointment among the workers of Muslim League (N) in Balochistan. Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and other central leaders should play their role to end the disappointment among the workers.

The speakers said that the general elections have come up but the party was inactive in Balochistan and the party will have to bear the loss saying that Balochistan Muslim League (N) will soon resume the process of joining and party officials and workers will play their role to make the party active.

He said that the party's provincial president Jafar Khan Mandukhel is respectable for us and he should also play his role for the party's activities by bringing along his old and senior colleagues.