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Sheikh Yusuf calls for Ummah's unity & cohesion in Hajj Sermon

Imam highlights the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH); Urges Muslims to observe Taqwa by obeying Allah's commands; Islam provides preventative measures to counter destructive intentions; Chanting "Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik, around three million Hujjaj performed Rukn-e-Azam of Hajj Waqoof-e-Arafah



MAKKAH: The Khateeb of Arafah Sheikh Dr Yusuf bin Muhammad bin Saeed delivering Hajj sermon at Arafat

ARAFAT (MAKKAH) (APP): Sheikh Yusuf bin Muhammad bin Saeed on Tuesday made a clarion call for the Muslim Ummah to forge unity and cohesion among their ranks to reap the benefits in this world and the Hereafter.

It would surely lead to salvation of the Ummah in addition to averting any discords or divisions, he said while addressing a diverse and mammoth gathering of the Muslims from around the world.

The Imam commenced

the Hajj Sermon here at Arafat: "All praise belongs to Allah, the Almighty, the One who bestows abundantly. He made unity a cause for salvation, and division a cause for punishment. He, the Absolutely Perfect, commanded that our ranks be united, and our word be one, as a cohesive alliance, and made forbidden everything that leads to discords and divisions."

Quoting the verses from the Holy Quran, he reaffirmed the main articles

of faith - the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

The Sermon highlighted the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), which emphasized unity, cooperation, and the prohibition of disputes and conflicts. It underscored the unifying role of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was commanded to convey the message of Allah and bring unity among his followers.

The Imam urged the Muslims to observe Taqwa (righteousness) by obeying Allah's commands and staying within the boundaries set by Him.

The Sermon emphasized that diverting any aspect of worship to entities other than Allah was totally prohibited. It highlighted the significance of Tawheed (worshipping Allah alone) for guidance, salvation, and a praiseworthy end.

The pillars of Islam, including the five daily prayers, obligatory Zakaat (charitable contribution), fasting during Ramadan, and performing Hajj, were emphasized as crucial aspects of worship.

The Sermon cited the Quranic verses and the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) to underscore their importance in the lives of Muslims.

It further stressed that linguistic, racial, and ethnic differences and divisions should not lead to any discord among the Muslims. Diversity in languages and colours was a sign from Allah and an opportunity for knowledge, he added citing Quranic verses.

The Sermon under-

scored that "Islam provides preventative measures and defensive strategies to counter destructive intentions and acts of sabotage, aimed at dividing communities."

The importance of referring back to the Quran and the Sunnah during disputes was highlighted, along with the necessity of good conduct, compassion, forgiveness, and patience.

The Imam urged the Muslims to strengthen social, familial and spiritual bonds and to uphold ties of kinship. He emphasized kindness and goodness towards relatives, neighbours, and the needy, while promoting cooperation in righteousness and Taqwa.

The Sermon also cautioned the Muslims against following rumours and disinformation that aimed to create divisions and disunity. The Imam concluded the Sermon reiterating the Islamic message of unity and cohesion, calling upon the Muslims to wholeheartedly embrace unity, practice tolerance, and reject divisions, while adhering to the teachings of Islam for a prosperous and harmonious society.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting in connection with the pre-monsoon rains during Eid days in Punjab.

Govt committed to improve economic condition of country: PM

Shehbaz hopeful of decision on IMF bailout package

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a telephonic conversation with Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva and discussed matters relating to the IMF programme with Pakistan.

During the talk, the prime minister expressed the hope that the consensus between Pakistan and the IMF on various points would lead to the Fund's decision to resume the programme in a couple of days.

In the context of her recent meeting with the prime minister in Paris, the IMF managing director acknowledged the efforts of the finance minister and his team for completing the programme.

PM Shehbaz reiterated his resolve to meet the targets of improving the country's economic situation with joint efforts.

Kristalina Georgieva praised PM Shehbaz's leadership role in his efforts

with respect to the IMF programme.

She said the IMF wanted an improved economic situation of Pakistan.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday ordered an inquiry and fix the responsibility on the officials concerned over their failure to overcome the flooding situation caused by recent rains in Lahore.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting to review the preparedness ahead of predicted rains in North Punjab, particularly Lahore, expressed his annoyance over the failure to make timely arrangements to drain the rainwater.

He instructed the provincial government and the district administration to fix the responsibility for poor water drainage, and immediately suspend the officials showing any negligence. He said the slackness of the relevant departments made the citizens suffer.

The prime minister instructed to ensure full preparedness in the wake of rains predicted in the next few days.

The administration should particularly remain alert during Eid-ul-Azha and formulate an emergency plan to deal with the possible situation caused by the rains, he added.

He said the issues related to the procurement of machinery for water drainage in the city should be resolved on an urgent basis.

He also directed the relevant authorities to carry out strict monitoring of hides collection across the province to keep the prescribed outfits away from the activity.

Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the administrations to make arrangements for sanitation as well as for the disposal of offals on Eid.

He said the special complaint centres and control rooms must work round the clock for public facilitation keeping in view the Eid-ul-Azha and monsoon season.

Some legal hurdles in prosecuting civilians in military courts: Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday noted that there were some legal hurdles in prosecuting civilians in military courts, but added that the government would be able to remove the same.

Replying to various questions regarding the May 9 mayhem and its consequences during an interview to a private TV channel, the defence minister passed these remarks as he praised the military for moving ahead with the accountability process and taking actions against the responsible persons.

Khawaja Asif also said that blocking social media platforms was always an

option and the government exercise the powers whenever required. His comments were in reference to the government stance that the PTI used social media as a tool to incite hatred and violence against the state institutions in the country.

The same argument was repeated by the defence minister who said use of social media platforms was instrumental in inciting people to resort to violence, leading to the attacks on military installations and other state assets on May 9. Khawaja Asif argued that the social media platforms were regulated in China and even in the developing world like Europe.

PML-N, PPP fail to resolve differences in Dubai meeting

ISLAMABAD (INP): The People's Party and the PML-N in their Dubai meeting failed to resolve most of the issues.

The leaders of the two parties are likely to sit again today to resolve differences. The PML-N and the PPP have agreed to resolve the issues between them with dialogue. PML-N top leader Nawaz Sharif and PPP leaders Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto have been in Dubai for talks over the election and other political issues.

People's Party sources have said that the issue of seat adjustment was not discussed with the PML-N leadership. "Former presi-

dent Asif Ali Zardari discussed the charter of economy with PML-N leaders," sources said.

The two sides also discussed the caretaker setup and future line of action in the meeting yesterday.

The PPP leaders also clarified the party's stance over general election adding that they want election in October or November, according to sources. The coalition partners in the PDM government also discussed on pre-date dissolution of the assemblies. The two sides have been at odds with regard to the timetable of the next general election after dissolution of assemblies in August.

2nd Russian crude oil ship docks at Karachi Port

KARACHI (INP): Another Russian ship carrying thousands of metric tons of crude oil docked at the Karachi Port on Tuesday morning. The Russian ship, named Clyde Noble, for now docked within limits of the Karachi Port. Bringing the tanker to the oil pier will begin as soon as the berthing plan is finalized. For the moment, the Russian vessel is docked at the outer anchorage. The second Russian cargo ship is reported to be carrying 55,000 metric tons of crude oil.

It was earlier reported that the second cargo, under the deal between Islamabad and Moscow, was slated to arrive on June 20; however, it was delayed by a week and the Karachi Port does not have the capacity to handle huge ships. A lack of space at the Pakistan Refinery Limited storage tanks was cited as another reason behind the delay.

PRL is the first domestic refinery to obtain crude oil from Russia under the government-led deal.

Six of a family killed as van falls into Bolan ditch

BOLAN (INP): Six members of a family, including women, were killed when a passenger van fell into a ditch in Bolan on Tuesday.

The accident took place at Panjara bridge in Bolan where a van got out of control and fell into the ditch. The van left Quetta for Sibi.

Two women were expired on the spot while five people including children were seriously injured after the accident.

The Levies Force and the rescue team reached the site and shifted the bodies and injured to Civil Hospital Dhadar. Four more people succumbed to their injuries at the hospital, taking the toll to six.

The deceased were said to be from the same family.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Syed Faisal Sabzwari addressing a ceremony to hand over letters to KPT employees for regularization of service under PM's Assistance Package.

Sabzwari distributes letters to 750 regularised employees of KPT

KARACHI (APP): Under Prime Minister's Assistance Package for employees, service of more than 750 contractual staffers of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) has been regularised.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Syed Faisal Sabzwari, on Tuesday, distributed letters to regularised KPT employees in a ceremony here that was attended by Chairman KPT Syed Syedain Raza Zaidi, trustees and leaders of CBA union and a large number of workers.

Syed Faisal Sabzwari addressing the occasion facilitated the employees and said that longstanding issues of KPT employees were resolved by the administration and years-old issues of employees includ-

ing regularisation of services, adjustment of increments, issuance of bonus and other demands of employees presented in charter of demand has been fulfilled.

The minister also announced a Rs 20000 Eid bonus for daily wage staffers of KPT at the occasion.

Now it was the responsibility of the employees as well officers of the trust to work with a renewed zeal and dedication for the growth of KPT, he urged adding that the government was endeavouring to make KPT not only a profit-making organisation but also an efficient entity and employees of the trust could play a pivotal role in the achievement of the objectives.

ATC extends interim bail of Imran Khan in May-9 vandalism cases

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in three different cases related to the May 9 riots, including Jinnah House attack case, till July 7.

ATC Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar conducted the proceedings on the bail petitions of the PTI chair-

man. Imran Khan along with his counsel also appeared during the proceedings and got his attendance marked.

The Sarwar Road police, Gulberg police and Shadman Town police had registered three different cases against PTI leaders and workers in connection with May 9 riots after the arrest of the party chairman.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

Trial of civilians in military courts:

How army authorities can arrest any person without charging him: CJP

AGP submits details of 102 arrested accused in SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has raised question how the army authorities can arrest any person without charging him.

The CJP further remarked lacuna lies in law. Leveling allegations against any one without evidence is futile and ridiculous. SC resolved in its 1975 decision that it will be decided on judicial side accused is who. The procedure on charging under army act is there in law. Still we are talking in air. What offences fall under 2D2. Assistance is required on it. It is interesting thing that what allegations have come to fore with regard to accused persons are not related to official secret act. It has been made clear in Liaquat Hussain case every case cannot be tried in military court. But relevance of case with army act should be proved.

He further remarked morale is most important thing for army. If morale is affected then enemy benefits from it. Lowering the morale of army officers is also offence. Army officers have spirit for rendering sacrifice for their country due to their high morale.

He remarked it should be known to every one on Eid occasion about persons who are under arrest. All should be given opportunity to talk to their family members on the occasion of Eid. Arrange the talks of the accused persons with their family members today. We will now meet after Eid.

The petitions against trial of civilians in military courts came up for hearing before a 6-member larger bench of SC presided over by CJP Tuesday.

On questioning from CJP if there is any issue of death sentence in the

present cases, Attorney General (AG) told death sentence can be awarded in the event of foreign contacts. No lawyer has been arrested so far.

There is information about one journalist is missing. Imran Riaz Khan is not in our custody. All out efforts are being made for his recovery. No trial has been started so far. It takes time too. The accused will be given opportunity to hire services of the lawyers.

On the onset of hearing President SC Bar Association told the court "I too want to give arguments for filing petition in this case."

The CJP remarked it is matter of delight that SC bar too is becoming respondent in this case. You should make preparations now. Later we will hear you. The court adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period.

US acknowledges Pak counter terrorism measures: State Dept

WASHINGTON (Online): US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller has said we acknowledge Pakistan has taken many steps against terrorism but we want Pakistan to continue to take steps to permanently disband all terrorist groups.

He said this while briefing the newsmen in Washington on Monday.

He said that US will continue to work with Pakistan to counter mutual terrorist threats, as we discussed during our March 2023 counter terrorism dia-

logue. He said that the people of Pakistan have suffered tremendously from terrorist attacks over the years and added that US remains committed to working with Pakistan to address the shared threat posed by terrorist groups throughout the region. Matthew Miller said that the US recognizes that Pakistan has taken some important steps to counter terrorist groups in line with the completion of its Financial Action Task Force (FATF) actions plans.



KARACHI: A view of the hustle and bustle of passengers at Cantt Railway Station as people are boarding into train for leaving to their native villages for celebrating Eid-ul-Adha with great Zeal.

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Checkmate?

Is it game over for Imran Khan and the PTI? That seems to have been the foremost question on most people's minds as the DG ISPR began addressing a sombre press conference late Monday afternoon.

Curiously, there was scant mention of Mr Khan and his party in the military spokesman's almost hour-and-a-half-long address, which was otherwise focused on the 'tragedy' of May 9. But while he may not have named names, there was little doubt whom the DG ISPR was addressing when he stated that the military believes that, currently, the 'single biggest threat' to Pakistan is from the "internal political instability" that has wracked the country over the past year or so.

He also described the events of May 9 as a planned conspiracy masterminded by people involved in "misleading the people for the past several months against the army and its leadership", making it clear whom the finger of blame is pointed at.

More concerning was his public acknowledgement that three army officers, including one lieutenant-general, had been stripped of their uniform over the events of May 9, and many more were facing accountability and/or disciplinary proceedings.

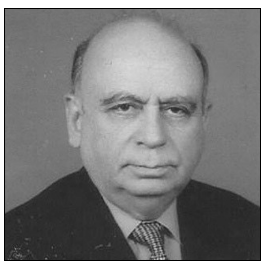
The DG went to great lengths to explain that the men were dismissed not because of their involvement or for being 'co-conspirators' in the events of May 9, but for procedural lapses and inadequacies of security arrangements in certain areas under their watch, which allowed vandals to run amok and damage military installations and properties on the day.

To some journalists, however, this seemed to conflict with the narrative that the armed forces had deliberately shown restraint that day by refusing to engage with the protesters.

The DG was repeatedly asked to clarify why three officers had to be let go for not engaging the protesters when the military itself wanted to show restraint, but his answer remained the same.

Importantly, by underlining that the military had penalised its own over the May 9 'tragedy', the DG ISPR seemed to make it clear that his institution believes it is time to make the civilian perpetrators pay. He defended suspects' trials by military courts, revealing that the court martial of 102 suspects was already underway.

"Those creating hurdles in the way of making this process reach its logical conclusion will be dealt with strictly," he warned. With the Supreme Court currently hearing a case challenging the legality of trying civilians under military courts, the implications of the warning seemed rather ominous. However, considering how many times the DG ISPR stressed the armed forces' deference to the Constitution and the state, it is hoped that the security establishment will take the legal challenges to military courts not as a provocation, but as a procedural hurdle that must be crossed.



Afzal Ali Shigri

Skardu, nestled in a beautiful corner of the country and surrounded by majestic mountains, has become a favoured destination of the rapidly growing tourism industry. The Pakistani government has projected Skardu as a paradise for tourists. However, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic found people confined to their homes.

As restrictions eased, in 2021, local tourists began to flock to Skardu in unprecedented numbers. Encouraged by this surge in domestic tourism, the government proudly announced Skardu's airport as being ready to cater to international flights.

The once-dormant tourism industry, stifled by the pandemic, found renewed hope and the government's efforts to

promote this hidden gem as a sought-after destination seemed to be paying off. To accommodate the increasing numbers, flights from three major cities were added, leading to a surge in unplanned investment in the tourism industry. Skardu's fragile and old infrastructure crumbled under the strain.

But despite the inconveniences, the influx of visitors continued to escalate. Businesses flourished, fuelling expectations that the trend would persist throughout the current year. However, both tourists and locals were in for a shock when the effects of climate change hit the region.

The winter season was longer than usual, keeping the streams frozen. Skardu's divisional headquarters faced an unprecedented water shortage, severely impacting hydropower generation. Consequently, the distribution of drinking water had to be rationed for the first time. It became evident that the government had failed to recognise the apparent growth in seasonal demand, resulting in immense hardship for the locals and despair among the visitors.

The sight of cherry blossoms bursting in every village, accompanied by the emergence of vibrant green leaves under the radiant sunshine and the gushing of crystal-clear water, would normally be a delightful treat for the eyes. The receding cold, coupled with mornings filled with birdsong, would typically transform Skardu valley into a surreal world — a scene from paradise. However, this year's experience was hardly heavenly — in fact, it a journey through hell.

Four hundred years ago, in the absence of her warrior husband Ali Sher Khan Anchan, raja of Skardu, who was busy expanding his rule in a challenging terrain and in the face of formidable local fighters, the rani Gul Khatoon, a Mughal princess, demonstrated remarkable engineering prowess. Her visionary mind conceived an engineering marvel that was executed to transform the high-level desert of Skardu valley into a lush green paradise. Her most notable accomplishment was the planning and construction of the Sadpara Dam and the canal system, which not only provided essential water for domes-

tic use but also for irrigation. Gul Khatoon's remarkable achievements stand as a testament to her intelligence, leadership qualities, and most importantly, genuine concern for the well-being of her subjects.

Gul Khatoon's commendable efforts in addressing what centuries later would prove to be Wapda's shortcomings underscore the incompetence of the present-day organisation. The unfortunate neglect of this remarkable region by Wapda's extensive engineering and bureaucratic machinery is a clear indictment of governance in the area, compounded by the indifference displayed by local political leaders, save for a few committed individuals.

In 2001, Wapda undertook the Sadpara Dam project with the aim of addressing the water supply issue in the region. The project encompassed four key elements: upgrading the existing dam, constructing power houses for energy generation, establishing an irrigation channel, and diverting the Shatung nullah to augment water supply. Descon Engineering was awarded the contract for the dam and powerhouse,

CCPG for the irrigation channel, and D-Baloch for the Shatung nullah diversion. During the project implementation, concerns were raised by IUCN and WWF regarding the potentially negative impact of the nullah diversion on the habitat of the brown bear population and the overall environment.

There have been unverified claims suggesting that the contractor in charge of the Shatung nullah project considered it financially feasible due to the limited working season. Surprisingly, the preservation of the habitat for a small population of brown bears took precedence over the well-being of the human inhabitants in Skardu.

Consequently, the project underwent secretive revisions, leading to the abandonment of the water supply diversion to the dam. This decision has left the local community with a dam that provides no additional energy or water supply, rendering the project futile. Billions of rupees have been wasted, exposing the valley to water scarcity and energy shortages. This situation is exacerbated by the increased frequency

of minor weather fluctuations caused by climate change.

Despite numerous applications, presentations and requests, the concerns of the locals have been ignored. The recent drought was the final blow, leading to widespread street protests. However, an imaginative local cleric Agha Baqir, inspired by the historical achievement of Gul Khatoon and the Balis in constructing the Sadpara Dam with their bare hands, realised that the locals could also take matters into their own hands. Agha Baqir's rallying cry has resonated with the people, and many volunteers have decided to join him in the initiative to manually divert the water from the Shatung stream.

This grassroots movement symbolises the determination and resilience of the people of Skardu. They have become determined to take charge of their own destiny and address the water supply issue. Through their collective efforts, they aim to dig channels and redirect the flow of water themselves, echoing the spirit of Gul Khatoon and the Balis. -- Courtesy Dawn

Women, words and the constitution



Mehnaz Akber Aziz

One of the landmark moments during the golden jubilee celebrations of the constitution of Pakistan was the realization that the time had come to foster inclusivity in its language. This idea took shape on the floor of the National Assembly, where I had the privilege of highlighting the presence of gender non-inclusive language in a draft legislation. The honourable speaker of the National Assembly, invoking Article 263 of the constitution, ruled that "words implying the masculine gender in the constitution shall be interpreted to encompass females as well."

Cowering behind the argument that traditional language has long been employed in constitutional and legal texts may seem convenient, but it is hardly compatible with evolving

gender roles and the fundamental concept of gender equality. Across numerous countries, a growing consciousness is emerging, advocating for the use of either gender-neutral or gender-inclusive language. This heightened awareness stems from the increased representation of women in democratic institutions and their presence at crucial decision-making tables within the realm of governance.

Owing to the contributions of feminist movements worldwide, tangible progress has been achieved in certain jurisdictions such as Sweden, Canada, Finland, and New Zealand, where legal texts are being authored in a different manner. In the United Kingdom and the European Parliament, the adoption of gender-inclusive language in laws, debates, and discussions has been duly recognized. Debates and discussions on this issue are expanding in many countries, reflecting a global shift towards greater inclusivity.

In Pakistan, in the third decade of the 21st century, we embarked on a historic initiative to reinterpret the constitution through women's perspective. The Federal Ministry of Law

and Justice joined forces with the Women Parliamentary Caucus, and two days of vigorous deliberations took place at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services. Meticulous background research conducted for this initiative revealed that, while the constitution of Pakistan acknowledges "We the people" in its preamble, its extensive text, spanning over 280 articles, schedules, and oaths, recognizes individuals and groups in various ways.

Chairing the session on "Language of the Constitution", I spoke with esteemed experts including veteran politicians and expert drafters on how masculinity in legal drafting of the constitution has curbed women's empowerment and the importance of gender neutrality whilst promulgating law.

Mr Farhatullah Babar elaborated on the importance of a 'word' itself — as it forms the basis of love, hate, war and peace. Therefore, discounting the significance of a word in defining circumstances, especially in terms of constitutional provisions, is not ideal for gender equality. It was described how the use of masculine language in a society

where patriarchy is deeply entrenched has inevitable and detrimental effects on the legal and social status of a Pakistani woman. As he aptly noted, removing masculine language has been a strenuous task and the exception provided in the General Clauses Act seems to be outdated in a time where the use of language is of utmost significance towards gender-based sensitivities.

The purpose of positive discrimination and affirmative action which is encompassed in Article 25 of the constitution as well, highlights the need for special efforts made by the state to equate women with men, as women have been at the receiving end of discrimination and have been back benched since the inception of gender itself.

As chair of the session, I emphasized the importance of women's representation in the Bar — as the nurseries of the legal fraternity — and imposing the policies of positive discrimination in an efficacious manner to achieve the desired result of gender equality. The session was successfully concluded upon resolution by Mr Jam Aslam, senior drafter, who

urged the parliamentarians in attendance to propose before the House for the use of only gender-neutral language. He further added that he too will only use gender-neutral terms in future drafting of legislation and the constitution.

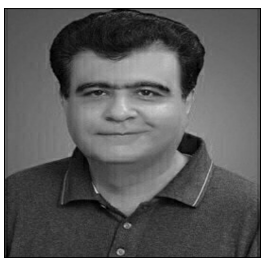
At present, the constitution employs the term 'people' 30 times and 'peoples' once, 'citizen' 27 times, 'citizens' 15 times, 'person' 236 times, 'human' three times, 'humane' once, 'family' 9 times, and 'individual' 10 times. It uses 'man' 14 times, 'men' zero times, 'woman' three times, 'women' 21 times, 'female' once, 'male' zero times, 'mother' 35 times, 'daughter' and 'son' two times each, 'widow' six times, 'spouse' three times, 'child' seven times, and 'children' five times. It employs 'he' 40+ times, 'his' 157 times, 'him' 44 times, and 'himself' seven times. 'She' and 'her' appear twice each, and 'herself' does not appear at all. 'Ombudsman' is mentioned once in the Federal Legislative List-1, 'chairman' 66 times, 'deputy chairman' 14 times, 'Qaumi Razakar' and 'lumberdar' once each.

What can be done to address this? Global best

practices guide us to either repeatedly mention the noun or, where unavoidable, use plural pronouns. If we choose to make this change in pursuit of gender parity and inclusivity, it will be necessary to amend the constitution. Until that historic moment arrives, the parliament may consider adopting a resolution to encourage the use of gender-inclusive language in future legal texts. In this regard, the General Clauses Act-1897 should be amended to incorporate gender-inclusive terminology.

The significance of adopting gender-inclusive language in the constitution and legal texts cannot be overstated, as language profoundly shapes our interpretations, aids in negotiating the meanings of governance, and helps us make sense of institutional frameworks. The terms we choose to use have a direct impact on how we think, perceive, and behave. Our communication and writing reflect our underlying assumptions about the world, including gender roles and relationships. Even the order in which words are placed in legal texts conveys our priorities. -- Courtesy TheNews

The next monarch



Dr Niaz Murtaza

The PTI is dead but its spirit will live long as the PPP and PML-N copy and often even exceed its autocratic ways. If the PTI's constitutional violation of a no-trust move lasted a week, PDM's on the KP polls is months old now.

I have long said they were the lesser evil vis-à-vis the PTI. But with the PTI dead, and given their current ways, they are now regarded as the main evil — on the civilian side of course. Yet, even many good anchors still focus daily on Imran Khan, as if he is our main evil.

Only an unlikely and undesirable mutiny by pro-Khan guys can resurrect the former prime minister soon. And May 9 was no mutiny; just a spoilt kid acting out against his leashing by parents who had adopted and spoilt a political orphan no end.

Fear of Khan keeps the establishment, the PPP and PML-N united. So strong is the concern, they are ready to eliminate him using any trick: fake terrorism cases in non-civilian courts, media gags and reverse engineering of PTI. That will end the fear but also the unity. What shape will politics take once these elements start dog-fights?

Will the establishment ditch the PPP and PML-N after using them to nix Khan and instal a long-term interim set-up, pulling the same trick the two played on PTI on provincial polls? It would be poetic justice. Dreamy analysts think a group of able angels is on stand-by to save

us in a technocratic set-up. But there is none.

The economic wizards being touted contributed to our mess via loose fiscal and monetary policies earlier. Democrats always prefer polls over such set-ups — but fair polls, and not the rigged ones we will have (much more than the 2018 ones) with the PTI decimated wrongly. So, do polls matter? One still wants polls, hoping the rigging ploys fail. Even the establishment may think twice about bringing in a technocratic set-up, as it will have to give it the same kind support it lent to the PTI.

But then, who will the monarch-makers crown from among the many feuding princes and princesses? With Shehbaz Sharif saying he will make way for Nawaz Sharif, will Noon still be OK for them? Thus, there is buzz about Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari being crowned soon. But his would be a crown of thorns, for the economic, political and external challenges after the polls will be too big for his raw hands to handle, just as his young mother couldn't handle the big mess from Zia's era right after his birth.

Thus, if Asif Zardari is astute, he should keep his son away from the throne for now to not burn his career so early.

Even the elder Zardari, Sharifs or Khan will do poorly given their ideas on display. Zardari says he read economics in jail and can take reserves to \$100 billion. Khan says this time his expatriate lovers will surely send the \$200bn they forgot last time.

The Sharifs and the establishment are selling another fake dream after CPEC — the Special Investment Facilitation Council. The idea is decades old: clementage of unsavoury states such as the US, China or Saudi Arabia, instead of attract-

ing private capital like Bangladesh or India.

They too short-change the poor but are at least not near default. While these Shaikh Chilli dreams cook in Islamabad, the reality in Pindi is clear — the brief pretence of eschewing politics is long gone.

The earnest 'duty' of fixing our huge woes will only deepen them. We are marching firmly on a circular bridge to nowhere as we have since 1947, except for a brief period from 2008 to 2018.

The PDM blew the chance to resume on that path by deferring polls after the no-trust move. Even now, fair polls are the way forward. Even if PTI wins, it would have to tackle the same huge issues and may do worse than the PDM is doing now, given its bad ties with Pindi and externally with all main allies and its infighting. Thus, it may not last long and get thrown out politically, perhaps for good.

But with Khan now made a hero by the crack-down and the stagflation, if pro-Khan officers (reputedly there are many just a few rungs down the ladder) become dominant in a few years, they may bring him back. Age is not on Khan's side. But Zimbabwe's mad Mugabe ruled in his 90s. Khan is much fitter physically, but perhaps not when it comes to clear thinking. The only small chance lies in the Zardaris and Sharifs putting their respective egos aside and sticking to running their parties, while appointing a competent cabinet as the Gandhis have done in Congress since Rajiv Gandhi's death to usher in India's path to progress. But pettiness and selfishness reign supreme in both houses, madness on top of those in Bangala and worse traits in Pindi. So, the chances of wisdom prevailing in any quarter are small. Thus are our chances of progress. -- Courtesy Dawn

Something in the air



Jamil Ahmad

Worldwide, millions of people are losing their health and lives by breathing polluted air. Toxic emissions from industry, transport and power generation (from fossil fuels and agriculture) are contaminating the environment, particularly in the developing countries.

Air pollution is the world's largest environmental health threat. A mixture of carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide carrying tiny droplets are major contributors of outdoor air pollution. Invisible to the naked eye, these tiny particles, commonly known as particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) are 30 times thinner than human hair and highly toxic. Methane emissions from solid waste, agricultural processes, cattle and other ruminants like sheep, horses and goats add to the lethal mix that causes severe health issues.

Lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, and other chronic respiratory problems are often caused by polluted air. A recent study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health revealed that exposure to fine particulate air pollutants may also increase the risk of developing dementia.

The air so essential for our life is now making us sick. Being a transboundary issue, there is no escape from bad air quality.

Globally, polluted air is responsible for 7m premature deaths, with 90 per cent of them occurring in low- and middle-income

countries according to the WHO. The heavy burden of disease and job loss is severely impacting the economies of and societies in developing countries, impeding growth and destroying homes.

In addition to human-induced pollution, gases and ash from volcanic eruptions and smoke from wildfires also contribute to air pollution.

When smoke from wildfires in Canada engulfed parts of the US East Coast earlier this month, Manhattan's iconic skyline nearly faded in a smoky haze, and the authorities advised citizens to stay indoors to avoid health risks. Soon after, London's mayor imposed a two-day "high pollution alert" as winds blew "existing pollutants from the continent towards London". These were short-lived aberrations in the otherwise clean air and blue skies of these two cities. Efforts by the city authorities to reduce pollution in most parts of the developed world are succeeding through policies and regulations on health and environmental standards, and are raising public awareness about the benefits of a clean environment.

In contrast, people living in cities across the Global South are forced to breathe poisonous air on a daily basis for long periods. Nearly 90pc of the Asia-Pacific region's 4.3bn people regularly inhale air considered unsafe by the WHO. Two-thirds of the 7m premature deaths attributed to air pollution occur in this region.

Economic losses attributed to air pollution are inflicting heavy costs on healthcare and development. In 2021, air pollution in South Asia was responsible for healthcare costs equivalent to 10.3pc of its GDP compared to 6.1pc of healthcare costs to global GDP, according to the World Bank.

Urban air pollution is

the worst in South Asia, home to a quarter of the world's population. Unsustainable urban sprawl, often at the expense of green cover, deprive the cities of natural air filters. The air in many cities in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh is counted among the world's most polluted. Vulnerable and marginalised communities often face higher exposure and are affected disproportionately.

Pakistan's urban air pollution is the most severe in the world. With the highest rate of urbanisation in the region, almost half of Pakistan's population is expected to live in cities by 2025. If air pollution is not controlled, it will expose more than 120m people to polluted air and impose heavy economic and social costs on the country.

Air pollution is not a stand-alone issue. It is intrinsically linked to climate change, biodiversity loss and other forms of pollution. One cannot be resolved without addressing the other.

Band-aid measures will only complicate the problem. A combination of cross-sectoral actions will be required to control air pollution especially in energy, transport and urban areas. Such targeted action must be supported by enabling policy frameworks and regulatory set-ups to monitor air quality in a systemic manner by involving the local authorities and civil society. To support policymaking, UNEP has compiled actions that governments can take on air quality and identified implementation and policy gaps. Pakistan has announced its first National Clean Air Policy which should be linked to time-bound targets of renewable energy, energy efficiency in industry, transport and infrastructure. For effective environmental action, it will also be desirable to design and implement provincial clean air strategies. -- Courtesy Dawn

Murtaza Mehmood says: Pakistan's development hinges on promotion, facilitation of SMEs

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Murtaza Mehmood said on Tuesday that Pakistan economic and industrial development hinged on promoting, incentivizing, financing and strengthening the SMEs, besides establishing one platform for their facilitation.

He stated this while addressing a ceremony regarding World Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Day organized by Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) here. On this occasion, SMEDA signed six Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with six public sector organizations including Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC), Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB), Messalaha International

Center for Arbitration and Dispute Resolution (MICADR), Urban Unit Government of the Punjab and Government of Gilgit Baltistan.

The Federal Minister cited that in other countries, a company that started in the backyard grew speedily and ultimately turned into a multi-billion global company but unfortunately in Pakistan, it was very hard for SMEs to survive. He added that the world had done a lot regarding SMEs and also micro businesses but Pakistan had not done enough as there was a lot it could have done. The SMEs in Pakistan faced too many issues especially regarding finances as there were too many bottle necks and hurdles in the bureaucracy and government, he said and mentioned that as federal minister, his focus was to get rid of these bottle

necks and facilitate SMEs, which could also be turned into a multi-national companies and 'this is our vision and focus.'

He was of the view that government should not be intervening and interfering but it should be facilitating, incentivizing and focusing on making policies. "I am very lucky to have a best SMEDA team and we worked together. Today, we have signed MoUs with public sector organizations," he maintained. The Federal Minister also appreciated the very important incentives introduced with regards to single window operation like MoU was signed between Punjab government and SMEDA. "I think, more has to be done when I see different organizations working on Pakistan's single window; they all are working on single window but actually there is no one platform for the single window."



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation, Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Minister explores meat export opportunities with American Consul General

LAHORE (INP): Provincial Minister for Livestock Ibrahim Hasan Murad met with American Consul General William K Makaneole at American Consulate General in Lahore to discuss meat export opportunities between the two countries.

He said the government was keen to expand meat exports to international markets.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral trade relations between the US and Pakistan in the livestock sector with a specific focus on meat exports.

Minister Murad and Consul General Makaneole reiterated their

commitment to fostering a strong trade relationship that would not only benefit the livestock industry but also contribute to the economic growth of Pakistan.

American Consul General William K Makaneole appreciated the efforts of the minister in fostering the livestock industry to international markets. He also expressed that US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome was also very eager to enhance trade between the two countries. The American Consul General assured Minister Ibrahim Murad of full support and cooperation for the livestock industry in Punjab.

Hundreds of interns to work as additional field assistants in cotton areas

MULTAN (APP): Secretary of Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel said on Monday that hundreds of interns would be deputed as additional field assistants in cotton-growing areas of South Punjab to extend guidelines to farmers under an Rs 150 million project.

Under this project of the Punjab agriculture department, the interns from agriculture departments of different universities would be paid Rs 20,000 per month, however, they would join the assignment from July 3, 2023, after completing training. Saqib Ali said while presiding over a meeting to speed up proceedings on Punjab

government's internship programmes, meant to strengthen on-field advisory services for flawless cotton crop management and enhanced production.

Vice Chancellor Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture Dr Asif Ali, Additional Secretary of Task Force South Punjab Imtiaz Ahmad Waraich, Dean Faculty Dr Shafiqat Saeed, focal persons of internship program from universities were present while divisional and district officials of the agriculture department joined the meeting online.

Interns would be deputed as additional field assistants by July 3.



MULTAN: Women farmers bus in seedling the rice crop in their field in the outskirts of the city.



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

Poultry output targets fixed at 2.363 million tons for fiscal year 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (Online): The government has set a target to produce about 2.363 million tons of poultry during fiscal year 2023-24 in order to fulfill the domestic requirements of poultry meat and other value added products. The poultry output during the 11 months of current fiscal year (2022-23) was recorded at 2.160 million metric tons as compared to its fixed targets, where as about 5.809 million tons of meat also produced in order to fulfill the local requirements of the commodity as well as for exporting to exploit existing potential of halal meat in global markets. Domestic output of meat in 11 months of last year was (2021-22) was recorded at 5.5 million tons as the government had set to produce about 5.5 million tons of meat during the year 2022-23, said an official in the Ministry of

National Food Security and Research. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that beef production targets for period under review were fixed at 2.630 million metric tons and mutton at 817,000 tons, adding that during out going fiscal year the local production of beef was recorded at 2.55 million tons as against the set targets of 2.54 million tons, where as about 799,000 metric tons of mutton also produced as compared to the set targets of 799,000 metric tons. He further informed that agriculture sector was envisaged to grow by 3.9% in the Annual Plan 2022-23 given a strong crop sector performance of the previous year. However, he said that during the period from June-August 2022, torrential rains and flash flooding led to an unprecedented disaster in various parts of the country.

PACRA reaffirms credit rating of PMIC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency (PACRA) has maintained the long-term and short-term entity ratings of Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC) at 'AA' (Double A) and 'A1+' (A One Plus) respectively.

The rating reflects a strong equity base, well-conceived business plans and strong ownership structure, a news release said.

The ratings denote a very low expectation of credit risk emanating from a very strong capacity for

timely payment of financial commitments which is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

PMIC, incorporated in 2016, is licensed to carry out investment finance services as a Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) under the NBFC Rules, 2003 and NBFC Regulations 2008.

The strong sponsors, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (49%), Karandaaz (38%) and KfW, a German development Bank (13%) strengthen the financial profile of PMIC.



LAHORE: Federal Minister of Industries & Production Syed Murtaza Mehmood witnessing the signing ceremony of MoU between SMEDA & Strategic Partners.

Business of knife sharpeners shine on Eidul Azha in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Besides the trade of sacrificial animals, the business of blacksmiths and knife sharpeners were also shined in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the joys occasion of Eidul Azha.

Eidul Azha has brought joy for people viz a viz blacksmiths, butchers and knives sharpeners whether trained or untrained arrived to get maximum profits at Peshawar.

As only a day left in Eid ul Azha celebrations, the blacksmiths and knife sharpeners of Peshawar and adjoining districts have received numerous orders to get maximum business, they were earning two times high.

Knife sharpeners and blacksmiths besides seasonal butchers whether trained or untrained, are deemed as rare commodities these days in Peshawar, who were receiving innumerable orders despite an exorbitant charges for their services.

At Firdus, Rati Bazar, Hayatabad, Gulbahar,

Boards etc. in Peshawar, special machines have been installed at various shops to sharpen knives, beef cutters, knives and meat cleavers along with selling Bar-B-Q instruments as part of an arrangements for Eid ul Azha.

The professional traders are attracting a number of customers due to their decorated handles and sharp-edged instruments.

Butchers' appliances sale including knives, cutters and stand blades etc, has also witnessed record increase.

The people are also repairing their old and damaged machetes, knives and other tools needed for cutting meat. Ordinary shopkeepers, professional and untrained blacksmiths and knife sharpeners belonging to far flung areas of KP are also being seen selling these tools in different areas including Gulbahar, Hastnagri, Karimpura, Cantonment areas, Tehkal, Latifabad, Ghareeb Abad, Hayatabad, Board and were earning two times high.

US, China, UK remained top three destinations of Pak exports in 11 months

ISLAMABAD (INP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the eleven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23), followed by China and the United Kingdom (UK).

Total exports to the US during July-May (2022-23) were recorded at US\$ 5481.385 million as opposed the exports of US\$ 6162.991 million during July-May (2021-22), showing a decline of 11.05 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 1891.949 million compared to the exports of US\$ 2544.418 million last year, showing a decrease of 25.64 percent.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 1806.385 million during the months under review against the exports of US\$ 2011.859 million during last year, showing a decline of 10.21 percent, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani

exports to Germany stood at US\$ 1488.461 million against US\$ 1574.850 million last year, showing a decrease of 5.48 percent while the exports to UAE were recorded at US\$ 1341.359 million opposed US\$ 1632.907 million last year.

During July-May (2022-23), the exports to Holland were recorded at US\$ 1324.959 million against US\$ 1341.035 million whereas the exports to Afghanistan stood at US\$ 478.342 million against US\$ 494.8585 million.

Rupee gains 71 paisas against US Dollar in interbank

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 71 paisas against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs285.99 against the previous day's closing of Rs 286.70.



LAHORE: Vendors displaying sacrificial animals to attract the customers in connection with upcoming Eid ul Adha at Sacrificial Animal Market.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 287.5 and Rs 290 respectively.

The price of the Euro went up by 71 paisas to close at Rs 312.93 against the last day's closing of Rs 312.22, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 1.99, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.05 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

IMF agreement inevitable for Pakistan: ICCI

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday said the International Monetary Funds (IMF) agreement was inevitable for a sustainable economic base in Pakistan.

However, the government would have to take decisions keeping in view the country's economic recovery, he said in statement.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said, "The business community believes that the IMF agreement is indispensable for the country and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has negotiated with the Fund as a real national leader and spokesman for the aspirations of the Pakistani nation. "He emerged as a true national hero by not compromising on national interests during the long period of negotiations, but it is our misfortune that at last he also had to accept the tough conditions of the

IMF to save the country economically," he added.

The ICCI president said the trust of friendly countries and international organizations would be restored by the IMF agreement. However, instead of burdening the people or the business community, the government should find a middle way.

To get out of the economic crisis, the government should formulate short, mid and long-term policies, he added. He said the business community had been supportive of the government's initiatives, which should adopt such measures to provide a conducive environment for business. He said the business community across the country, including the ICCI, had demanded reduction of the interest rate in the budget proposals, which was supported by the parliamentary committees and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, OOCL Le Havre, MSC Mundra, Lana and Milaha Ras Laffan carrying Containers and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Pakistan Gas Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Letizia, Maersk Columbus Yankul Silver and Al-Maha with Containers, Palm oil and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 09 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, MSC Mundra, Sadah Silver, Bochem Pegasos and Opera sailed out to sea on Tuesday morning on Tuesday and two more ships, Lana and Star Bovarius are expected to sail on today.

Cargo throughput of 160,017 tonnes, comprising 117,850 tonnes imports Cargo and 42,167 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,466 Containers (1,809 TEUs Imports and 1,837 TEUs export).



MULTAN: A laborer busy in spreading corn seeds for drying purpose in his field.

Tokyo stocks end down on unease over Russia

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended lower on Tuesday after global markets mostly retreated as US tech shares stumbled and a short-lived mutiny in Russia stoked unease on trading floors.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was down 0.49 percent, or 160.48 points, to end at 32,538.33, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.28 percent, or 6.36 points, to 2,253.81.

The dollar stood at 143.62 yen, against 143.50 yen in New York late Monday.

Falls in large tech shares weighed on major indices on Wall Street overnight. Shares of Google

parent Alphabet dropped 3.2 percent following a downgrade by UBS, while Tesla plunged 6.1 percent on a downgrade by Goldman Sachs. Worries related to advance by the Wagner mercenary force, which was called off before it reached Moscow, also held back share prices, according to analysts. The developments weighed on the sentiment of investors in Japan, where "uncertainty over the situation in Russia smouldered", Iwai Cosmo Securities said. "As the end of the month approaches, concerns over the tilt toward selling also dragged down the market," it said.

Punjab Governor says: Economic stability is vital to development of the country

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended the first Achievement Award Ceremony of Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce and Industry here today at Governor House Lahore as Chief Guest. Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce, SM Tanveer was also present in the ceremony.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that economic stability is vital to the development of the country.

He said that the incumbent government is utilizing all its resources to boost and revive the economy of the country. Governor Punjab said that the people associated with the commerce and industry are playing an important role in the economic development of the country. Governor Punjab said that the federal government has given relief

to all sections of the society including the business community in the recent budget.

He said that the promotion of technical and professional education is very important for the development of the country. Governor Punjab further said that as chancellor he has formed a consortium to strengthen the links between academia and industry in universities. He said that the government has increased the pace of work on CPEC projects, adding that CPEC project is creating employment opportunities for the local population.

Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer while speaking on the occasion said that holding the first achievement award of Rahim Yar Khan Chamber is a good initiative for the entrepreneurs.

He said that the role of business community in the economic development of the country is very

important. President Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Muhammad Iqbal Hafeez said that we have gathered here today to appreciate the services of those entrepreneurs who have played a significant role in the country's economy in various sectors.

On this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman distributed awards to the owners of the seed companies in recognition of their outstanding contribution in the entire Punjab Province. In the ceremony, Senior Vice President of Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce, Muhammad Ashfaq, Group Leader and former President Rahim Yar Khan Chamber, Abdul Rauf Mukhtar, Executive members, Muhammad Hafeez, Adil Sohail, Abdul Majeed Khan Korai, Mian Asif Mahmood, Mahmood Ahmad Chaudhry, Abdul Samad, former executive members Shafiq Hussain, Riyaz ur Rehman.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman addressing the first Achievement Award Ceremony of Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Governor House.

KP CM says: Targeting innocent minorities highly regrettable, condemnable

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of Peshawar based Sikh community called on the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here on Tuesday.

Headed by Sikh Community leader, Gopal Singh, the delegation comprised of the family members of the slain Sikh citizen Man Mohan Singh and the injured Sikh citizen Tarlok Singh who were targeted in Peshawar the other day.

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information & Minority Affairs Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Aqaf and Minority Affairs Dr. Asad Ali and other relevant authorities were also

present on the occasion. Talking to the delegation, the Chief Minister strongly condemned the killing of Man Mohan Singh, and expressed sympathies with the bereaved family and the Sikh community.

He said that targeting the innocent minorities was highly regrettable and condemnable adding that people of Sikh community are patriotic and peaceful citizens; and have long been contributing to national development.

The Chief Minister remarked that targeting the innocent minorities was aimed at spoiling the religious harmony and destabilizing the country; and elements behind such activities will never succeed in their nefarious designs. Azam Khan said

that the caretaker provincial government was taking all possible step to ensure the security of minority communities, and will continue to do so.

The Chief Minister directed the Inspector General of Police to sit with Sikh community leaders in order to get their inputs for devising an improved security plan for the community. He further directed the concerned authorities for necessary steps to install CCTV Cameras in the residential areas and business points of Sikh Community.

The delegation thanked the Chief Minister for issuing necessary directives to the concerned authorities to ensure their security and extending all possible support to the Sikh community.

Faisal Karim Kundi says BISP, a non political scheme, serving 9 million women across country

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was a non-political scheme under which about nine million deserving women were being benefitted across the country. Faisal Kundi, who is also the central information secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), stated this during a meeting with different delegations and party representatives here at the residence of PPP District President Malik Farhan Dhap in Paroa.

He said the poor voters of every party were being facilitated under this program. Kundi said that Rs 80.7 billion were being distributed among deserving people under Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) across the country.

He said the recent payment distribution process of BISP was being monitored by him, Federal Minister Shazia Marri and the BISP officials. Keeping in view the extreme weather conditions and the hardships being faced by the beneficiary women, the payments

were transferred to specific retailers from the payment centres, he added. Kundi said that 900,000 cards were blocked during the previous regime and we had promised the nation to restore them, adding, about 250,000 cards including 7,000 from Dera Ismail Khan had been restored to date. About 165,000 women from Dera Ismail Khan benefitted under BISP while 12,000 more have been registered from the area during a recent survey.

Kundi said that Dera Ismail Khan has been included in the districts of the pilot project under which the beneficiaries would be paid through banks by next month. Moreover, he said Rs 70 billion were given to the flood victims. He said a NADRA office had been opened in Paroa Tehsil despite the obstacles and now he had demanded the Interior Ministry to immediately establish the same facility in Paniala. "We inaugurated the rehabilitation work on Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) last month and issued instructions to the contractor to complete the work within one month."



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State, chairman for Prime Minister Task Force on Gandhara Tourism, Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani addressing a press conference at PID

ECNEC approves development projects worth Rs280b

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved the development projects worth Rs280 billion on the last working day of the current fiscal year.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar chaired the session of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) Tuesday and approved various development projects.

According to a press release, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Senator Nisar Khuhro, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers from Federal Ministries and Provincial departments participated in the meeting.

The ECNEC considered and approved a Project of Ministry of Water Resources titled "Umbrella PC-I of the Flood Protection Sector Project-III (FPSP-II)" at the updated

cost of Rs. 194,625.00 million including FEC of Rs. 10,862.94 million. The project is to be executed in all four provinces and GB and AJK as well.

The project is to be financed through Federal components, Provincial components, and donor financing. The main object of the project is the improvement of country-wide comprehensive flood management approaches on integrated and innovative basis by implementation of structural as well as non-structural interventions.

The ECNEC also considered and approved another project of Ministry of Water Resources to be executed by Irrigation Department Govt. of Sindh titled "Makhi Farash Link Canal Project (Chotiari Phase-II)" for Water Supply to Thar Coal in districts Sanghar and Umerkot at the raised cost of Rs. 12,087.489 million. The project has been prepared to carry 200 cusecs canal water for electricity generation and agro-industrial growth.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of Community Welfare Society led by Dr. Ghulam Rasool meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

ANF seizes 679.645 kg drugs; arrests 50 accused in 45 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 679.645 kg drugs and 4,800 kg suspected drugs worth US\$ 17.189 million internationally, arrested 50 accused including four women, and a foreigner and impounded 15 vehicles while conducting 45 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country last week.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 218.360 kg opium, 27.047 kg heroin, 405.289 kg hashish, 260 grams cocaine, 28.204 kg methamphetamine (Ice), 60 grams ecstasy tabs (140 Tabs) and 425 grams ketamine.

ANF Balochistan recovered 44.160 kg of drugs and 4,800 kg of suspected drugs in four operations while arresting

four accused involved in drug smuggling. The seized drugs comprised 1.160 kg opium and 43 kg Hashish.

ANF Punjab recovered 176.299 Kg of Drugs in 10 operations, arrested 13 accused including two women and impounded three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 105.600 kg opium, 20.517 kg heroin, 49.313 kg hashish, 260 grams cocaine and 609 grams Methamphetamine (Ice).

ANF KPK recovered 31.732 kg of drugs in 12 operations, arrested four accused including a foreigner and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 5.376 kg hashish and 26.356 kg Methamphetamine (Ice).

The spokesman informed that ANF Sindh recovered 229.964 kg of drugs in 11 operations.

CJP orders search of journalists Imran Riaz

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial ordered the AGP to search the senior journalist Imran Riaz Khan.

As per details, while hearing the proceeding on civilian trials in military courts the CJP to the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) to search and then recover him.

He made these remarks as the six-member bench of the Supreme Court Tuesday resumed hearing pleas against trials of civilians in the military courts.

The bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial comprises of Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayisha Malik.

Lightning, heavy downpour claims 5 lives in district Mansehra

MANSEHRA (APP): At least five persons and a number of livestock were killed in lightning and rain-related incidents in Mansehra district on Tuesday.

The first incident took place in Kas Khawari village of Siran Valley during late-night, the wall of Abdul Razaq's house was collapsed due to heavy downpour. Tragically, two siblings were buried under the debris and lost their lives on the spot while two others sustained critical injuries and were shifted to the hospital. The dead children were identified as Zafran, 12 years old, and Alishba, 8 years old.

In the second incident, lightning struck shepherds and their herd as they were heading towards the Chormali forest in Chattar Plain.

Envoy Munir highlights Kashmiris' freedom struggle in Eid message

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Munir Akram, has greeted the UN community and Muslim citizens on Eid-ul-Adha, while paying tributes to the "heroic" struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination.

In a message on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, which is being celebrated in the U.S. on June 28, he said, "On this auspicious occasion it is appropriate to manifest in accordance with the immutable principles of Islam, our support and solidarity for all those people confronted by misfortune and oppression; by war and pestilence; by exploitation and foreign occupation."

"May this Eid bring peace and prosperity to our heroic brothers and sisters in illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir who are making enormous sacrifices to secure their freedom and self-determination."

"On this Eid, let us also reaffirm our commitment to end global hunger and eliminate inequality, injustice & discrimination across the world."

"Eid Mubarak and all the blessings of the Almighty for you and your loved ones".



ISLAMABAD: A view of the hustle and bustle of passengers at Karachi Company Bus Stand as people are boarding into busses for leaving to their native villages for celebrating Eid-ul-Adha with great zeal.

SC rejects plea for early initiating proceedings on complaint against judge

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected the plea seeking court's order for initiating immediate proceedings on the complaint against judges in Judicial Council (JC).

A two-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan took up the case for hearing Tuesday. The petitioner had filed petition in SC for regulating proceedings in JC.

The court had reserved judgment on June 13 in connection with maintainability of the petition.

SC rejected the petition for continuing reference against former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar.

The petitioner had filed petition praying the court to issue orders for

Police to ensure comprehensive security measures during Eid

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: SSP Operations/Investigation Malik Jamil Zafar chaired a meeting to reinforce fool-proof security arrangements during the upcoming Eid-ul-Adha festivities.

The meeting focused on ensuring the safety of citizens, protecting public gatherings, mosques, Imambargahs, and main-

meeting to discuss proactive security measures. The attendees included SP Investigation, SP Traffic, SDPOs, DSP Property, In-charge Anti-Vehicle Lifting Unit and officer incharge police stations.

Recognizing the mass movement of citizens to their native town during this festive season, it was emphasized to establish street committees in respective

This collaborative effort will ensure enhanced security for residences and swift response to any potential threats.

Furthermore, stringent security protocols are to be implemented in all markets, highways, and shopping malls through effective patrolling. Police personnel are advised to remain vigilant, safeguarding the life and property of the gen-



taining law and order throughout the district. In adherence to the directives issued by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the SSP Operations/Investigation convened the

eral public, including approved cattle markets. Special attention will also be given to recreational areas, parks, and cemeteries to ensure a secure environment for everyone.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying sacrificial animals to attract the customers in connection with upcoming Eid ul Adha at Sacrificial animal Market.