

Independent

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Gwadar

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Parliament passes Election (Amendment) Bill 2023; empowering caretaker setup

Bill approved with majority the vote; Granting caretaker government power to take decisions regarding existing bilateral or multilateral agreements, projects

ISLAMABAD (INP): Despite opposition from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), a joint session of the Parliament approved amendments to the Election Act of 2017 on Wednesday.

The move enables the caretaker government to effectively take actions and make decisions concerning current bilateral or multilateral

agreements and projects. The Elections (Amendment) Bill 2023 aims to be moved by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi.

Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar, taking the floor, clarified that no new powers are being given to the caretaker government.

He said that amendments in Section 230 are aimed to ensure that the decisions already taken by the federal cabinet do not face any hiatus.

He said that the bill was presented with consensus, saying it was a sensitive bill and things would be explained about the proposed amendment in

Section 230 when the provision comes up for approval.

APP adds: The Joint sitting of Parliament on Wednesday passed much-awaited amendments in the Election (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which aimed to improve the election law and ensure smooth and transparent elections.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting.



Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili and Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh reach Gwadar

Foolproof security arrangements made for Muharrumul Haram: Zia

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has stated that foolproof security arrangements have been made by the provincial government for Muharrumul

ahead of the 7th Muharrumul Haram procession on Wednesday.

During the visit, he visited the route of 7th Muharrumul Haram procession and reviewed the security arrangements made there.

The SSP Operations Quetta, Zohaib Mohsin



Haram. The Minister Home was speaking on occasion of the visit of Quetta city about the security arrangements made for the procession of 7th Muharrumul Haram in the provincial metropolis.

Bilawal, Russian FM discuss bilateral coop. in multiple sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov of the Russian Federation on Wednesday and exchanged views on bilateral matters and growing cooperation in diverse areas.

its potential impact on disruption of global food supply chains, causing food inflation and food-security-related challenges, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored the need for concerted efforts to find viable solutions that would in particular, benefit developing countries, already under economic strain.

He expressed the hope that all parties involved in the BSGI would engage in constructive dialogue to revive the Initiative. In this regard, the Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's support for international efforts for restoring the deal by addressing the concerns of all sides.



QUETTA: Security officials stand high alert on route to avoid any untoward incident as security has been tightened during mourning procession of 7th Muharrumul-Haram

Governor Balochistan reaches Gwadar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar reached Gwadar city on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary, Abdul Aziz Uqaili and Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh were also accompanied by the Governor.

Upon arrival in Gwadar, the Commissioner Makran, Syed Faisal Agha, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Izzat Nazir Baloch welcomed the Governor at Gwadar Airport.

During the visit, the Governor was briefed about different development projects as well as the law and order situation in the port city.

NEPRA increases electricity price by Rs 1.88 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): NEPRA has approved increase in cost of electricity by RS 1.88 per unit for 1 month.

Additional RS 24 billion will be charged to people.

Chairman NEPRA said that why did they buy expensive electricity despite being cheap?

National wealth is being wasted despite having all resources. Who is responsible for so many destroyed towers?

All Quetta-Karachi Coaches Union announces strike from August 1

Independent Report QUETTA: The All Quetta-Karachi Coaches Union has announced to observe strike from August 1, 2023.

The decision to this effect was made in a meeting of the Union held on Wednesday.

According to the spokesman of Quetta-Karachi Union, passenger coaches would not be plied on the Quetta-Karachi route from August 1 against the alleged behavior of the Coast Guard. He charged that the transporters of Balochistan are allegedly mistreated and subjected to unfair treatment on the route, which is unwarranted.

Cabinet approves E-Safety, Personal Data Protection Bills 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved the E-Safety Bill 2023 (E-Safety Bill 2023) on the recommendation of the Ministry of Information Technology (IT) to protect user data and prevent illegal and illegal use of information systems.

Under this law, a comprehensive framework will be established to ensure the protection and unauthorized use of user data on all types of online services, online shopping, data provided to various companies, and social networking websites in Pakistan. After the approval of the bill, heinous crimes like online harassment, cyberbullying, and blackmail will be effectively prevented.

Economy on track of progress as default risk ebbs away: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said that the country's economy was on the course of progress as the risk of default had been averted, consequent to the efforts by the coalition parties.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Business Council here, said all the coalition parties cooperated in every decision of the government.

He said the government was keen to revive national economy through investment facilitation and business-friendly policies.

The prime minister said restoring the confidence

of investors and the business community was the greatest achievement. He said the government would miss no opportunity for economic recovery, restoration of confidence of international partners, investors and the business community.

He told the meeting that a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been established for foreign direct investment in Pakistan.

He acknowledged that the business community did not only provide employment opportunities in the country but also becomes a source of foreign exchange by enhancing exports.

BHC declares appointment of coordinators & spokespersons to CM, GoB illegal and void

No provision of Constitution or Rules provide for appointments; Directs all concerned to return office accommodation and facilities including govt. vehicles to GoB

Independent Report

QUETTA: The

Balochistan High Court (BHC) has declared the appointment of Coordinators and spokespersons to Chief Minister and Government of Balochistan as illegal, void and of no legal effect, and as such, restrained them from work with immediate effect.

The BHC also directed all the Coordinators and spokespersons to the Chief Minister and Government of Balochistan to immediately return the office accommodations and all the other facilities provided by the provincial government including the vehicles, if any, to the government.

The court directed the Secretary Services and General Administration Department to submit report in the above regard to the Registrar High Court for the perusal in Chambers.

The judgment was announced by the division bench of High Court headed by Chief Justice Mr. Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan on two constitutional petitions filed against appointment of the Coordinators and spokes-

man to Chief Minister and spokesperson to Government of Balochistan, here on Wednesday.

The lawyers Abdul Sadiq Khilji Advocate and Aster Mehak Advocate had filed the CPs in the High Court.

The court, in its judgment, stated that the appointment of Coordinators and spokespersons to CM and GoB by the respondent No. 1 means Chief Minister has financially burdened the province of Balochistan, which is already suffering from financial crises / deficit budget.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi chairing the Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy held at Naval Headquarters.

PM due to arrive in Gwadar today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is due to arrive in the port city of Gwadar today (Thursday).

The Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister Housing, Maulana Abdul Wasey, Federal Minister Communications and Postal Services, Maulana Asad Mehmood, Federal Minister Information, Ms. Maryam Aurangzaib and others are also expected to be accompanied with the Prime Minister during the Gwadar's visit.

Upon his arrival in Gwadar, the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar would welcome the Prime Minister along with other provincial higher authorities.

The Prime Minister would lay foundation stone and inaugurate different development projects in Gwadar. As per the schedule, Mr. Shehbaz Sharif would also distribute cheques among the fishermen in the port city.

Naval Chief stresses combat readiness to thwart any aggression against country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Wednesday emphasized on maintaining perpetual combat readiness to effectively thwart any aggression against Pakistan.

He stressed this while addressing the concluding session of Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy held at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the conference, participants assessed the evolving maritime situation

in the region and discussed a range of topics related to national security, geostrategic affairs, combat readiness and discussed various service policies. Readiness for disaster relief operations amid potential flood alerts during ongoing monsoon season in the country was also reviewed.

Naval Chief Admiral Amjad Niazi also directed all naval commands to be fully ready for humanitarian assistance during the ongoing monsoon season.

Iranian FM arrives Pakistan next week on two-day visit

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will come to an official visit of Pakistan next week, sources said on Wednesday.

Iran's foreign minister is expected to arrive in Pakistan for a two-day visit on August 03, diplomatic sources said.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will hold meetings with Pakistani officials on August 03 and 04.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto and Dr Amir-Abdollahian will hold formal talks during the Iranian foreign minister's visit, sources said.

Secy communications for early restoration of affected highways

QUETTA (APP): Federal Secretary Communications and Chairman National Highway Authority Captain Muhammad Khurram Agha directed for earlier restoration of traffic on affected portions of the roads affected by recent rains and floods in Balochistan.

He also desired to maintain close liaison with provincial and local authorities to tackle unpleasant situations in the province.

On the directive of Federal Minister for Communications Asad Mehmood, the NHA chairman has paid a detailed visit to Balochistan with the view to review the condition of motorways and national highways affected by recent heavy rains and subsequent

floods. NHA's officials based at Quetta gave a detailed briefing to Captain Muhammad Khurram Agha regarding flood-hit areas like Pinjar Bridge, Hub Bridge, Wangu, Qila Saifullah and Khuzdar in particular.

It was informed in a briefing that work under construction of Hub Bridge has been stopped till the release of flood water. Presently, traffic is plying through Hub Bypass and an alternate route between Hub City and Karachi Northern Bypass via Hub-Dureji Road.

It is to note that NHA's engineers, workers and machinery are heavily engaged to restore NHA's road network in Balochistan.



QUETTA: Federal Secretary Communications and Chairman NHA Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha is giving instructions to deal with the flood situation in Balochistan.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Wrong move

At a time when Pakistani democracy is facing an unprecedented existential crisis, legislation to improve service delivery for ordinary citizens would have gone a long way towards demonstrating that the country's leadership is serious about turning its fortunes around. Instead, the record for the past year shows that politicians seem to be preoccupied with their own troubles and power struggles.

The Contempt of Majlis-i-Shoora (Parliament) Bill on Monday became the latest piece of legislation to clear both Houses in record time, with normal procedures bypassed to hasten its enactment.

The proposed law, which seeks to impose criminal penalties on anyone for contempting parliament or parliamentarians, has been bluntly described by experts and observers as a 'weapon' that our lawmakers wish to wield in their ongoing stand-off against the Supreme Court.

The bill proposes that anyone who wilfully refuses to comply with an order passed by parliament or any of its committees be slapped with an imprisonment sentence of up to six months, or a fine of up to Rs 1m, or both.

A 'parliamentary contempt committee' comprising five members, of which three will be drawn from the Lower House and two from the Senate, is to determine if anyone is to be charged with contempt of parliament, hear the matter, and also issue a punishment if left unsatisfied.

In this, the law has been criticised, and rightfully so, for arrogating to parliament the power to act as judge, jury and executioner. Critics have pointed out that Article 66(3) of the Constitution, under which it has been proposed, directs that the matter of punishments in case of non-compliance with parliamentary directives be left to a court.

Further, the language of the law — especially how it defines contempt — is also vague and rather expansive, which makes it vulnerable to abuse. As an example, even journalists protecting their sources against a parliamentary order to name them may be charged with contempt under the law if a contempt committee so decides.

Despite all these warnings, parliament seems intent on having this bill enacted. Parliament and public representatives do deserve to be accorded due deference and respect, especially when discharging their duties. However, they cannot be handed quasi-judicial powers to enforce their writ.

Unless all members of the committee are trained legal experts as well, it is unlikely that the trials they hold will be in accordance with the universal standards of justice.

This has grave implications for constitutional rights, especially as there is a possibility of a criminal sentence at the end. The government must reconsider this move. It may tighten existing rules or legislate to ensure better compliance with parliamentary directives, but it must leave the determination and imposition of punishments to the courts.

Resketching Karachi



Masood Lohar

Amidst the changing winds of power and politics in Pakistan, Karachi witnesses its first ever mayor from the PPP. The young Murtaza Wahab, a born Karachiite, has to deliver on multiple fronts in addition to facing the earnest political rivalry in the shape of the Jamaat-i-Islami and the PTI's vote bank.

Karachi's municipal history is as old as the modern city's emergence as a key port after the British annexation of Sindh in 1843. Only a year after the establishment of the Municipal Commission in 1852, the latter was turned into the Karachi Municipal Committee. The first local government elections in Karachi were held on Nov 1, 1884.

Before it got converted to the Karachi Municipal Corporation in 1933, among many others Seth Harchand Rai Vishandas (1862-1928) and Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta (1886-1952) continued as elected presidents of the Karachi municipality. The former is known for his introduction of electricity to Karachi in 1913, which became common in the US not before 1920. This visionary step made Karachi 'The City of Lights'.

Unlike his predecessors a century ago, when Karachi was known as 'Queen of the East', Wahab is taking over a city rated as one of the world's least liveable cities by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Of 173 cities, Karachi stands at 169th, only a little ahead of war-torn Damascus and Tripoli.

Hosting 10 per cent of Pakistan's population and

two key seaports, Karachi urgently needs bold and innovative measures for environmental improvement, economic growth, and sociocultural progress.

The new mayor's journey surely can't follow the beaten track. A lot more innovation and out-of-the-box solutions are needed to bring this city back to normal, if not to its original glory.

Some key actions include the restoration of the Lyari and Malir rivers, the creation of wetlands for rainwater harvesting, and the conversion of inhabited islands into ecotourism hubs. Additionally, there is an urgent need to restore Karachi's key lagoons, Obhayo and Nai Nar, and declare areas like Turtle Beach protected zones.

Promoting urban forests, disaster-risk reduction measures, and coastal mangrove cover is critical for a more resilient city. Simultaneously, fostering economic opportunities for the youth and meeting their recreational needs are equally vital for Mayor Wahab's ambitious agenda.

Restoring the once-glorious Lyari and Malir rivers is an arduous task that demands immediate attention. Unchecked industrial pollution and untreated sewage have turned these rivers into toxic streams, posing severe environmental and health risks. Restoration efforts can capitalise on creating wetlands within the Lyari and Malir riverbeds, serving as natural reservoirs for rainwater harvesting, mitigating the impact of monsoon flooding, and replenishing the city's water resources.

Karachi's four inhabited islands, including Manora, hold great potential for ecotourism development. Collaborating with the native fishing community, Mayor Wahab can ensure that tourism initiatives respect ecological integrity while providing economic op-

portunities.

The Obhayo and Nai Nar lagoons are vital to Karachi's ecosystem but have suffered from neglect. Connecting Obhayo lagoon with the sea through an overhead bridge, rather than the current Mai Kolachi road, can facilitate the flow of cleaner water, preserving the mangroves and marine life. Similarly, restoring the Nai Nar lagoon at Sandspit will aid the natural cleaning and washing of the Keamari harbour during low and high tides, improving the overall coastal ecosystem.

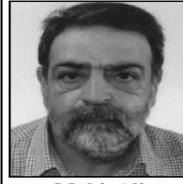
The Turtle Beach holds significant ecological importance as it serves as a nesting ground for the endangered green turtle. Ma-yor Murtaza Wahab can take decisive action by declaring this area a protected zone, implementing strict regulations on development, and promoting responsible tourism practices to safeguard the turtles' habitat.

Initiating a massive tree plantation campaign and creating urban forests will not only restore biodiversity but also provide recreational areas and cleaner air, addressing the lack of green spaces in Karachi.

Disaster-risk reduction measures, including improved infrastructure, early warning systems, and coastal mangrove cover, can enhance Karachi's resilience to natural calamities, like the recent near-miss Cyclone Biparjot. Leveraging Karachi's young population, Mayor Wahab can foster economic opportunities by reaching out to Commonwealth countries in need of human resources and providing job training and skill development programmes for unemployed youth.

Creating safe and vibrant recreational spaces will enhance residents' wellbeing and strengthen social bonds within the community. — Courtesy Dawn

Bangkok backslide



Mahir Ali

It did not come as much of a surprise when Pita Limjaroenrat was prevented from becoming the prime minister of Thailand earlier this month. After all, his potential problems on the path to power were widely discussed after his Move Forward party won the highest number of votes in the May elections.

Somewhat less expected was the party leader's suspension from parliament by the constitutional court, after it accepted a case challenging Pita's eligibility as a candidate. The disqualification charge relates to his alleged ownership of (inherited) shares in an effectively defunct media company. But that's just a technicality: the underlying reasons for the heavily military-flavoured Thai establishment's resistance to a Move Forward-led government are hardly a state secret.

The party's campaign agenda included vows to challenge both military involvement in politics and the dominant clout of monopolies in the economy, posing a twin threat to vested interests. Arguably an even bigger issue, though, was the questioning of royal absolutism and, more specifically, the absurdly anachronistic lese-majeste laws that punish even the mildest criticism of the monarchy. Just a couple of years ago, a former civil servant in her 60s was sentenced to 87 years in prison for posting audio clips on social media. It was reduced to 43 years after she pleaded guilty.

That's longer than Pita has been around. The

42-year-old's chances of becoming prime minister rested on securing a parliamentary majority, but while the elected Lower House proved willing to back him, he won only 13 out of a possible 249 votes in the unelected senate. The senators couldn't care less about the popular will because they are picked by the army — and any shift in the status quo could jeopardise their status.

What lies ahead for Thailand is unclear. Media reports suggest a likely alternative is property tycoon Srettha Thavisa, a luminary of the Pheu Thai party that entered into a coalition with Move Forward, but has a chequered history with the military, exemplified by the fate of its exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (toppled in 2006) and his sister Yingluck (thrown out in 2014).

The election result in May was portrayed in the Western media as a triumph for 'progressivism' — a concept that has become more nebulous of late. Pita evidently became interested in politics at school in New Zealand, and was enthused by the Obama presidential campaign while at Harvard. He claims to be an admirer of Uruguay's José Mujica, and recently told The New York Times he was reading Bernie Sanders' book 'It's OK to be Angry about Capitalism'.

None of that necessarily suggests an inclination to overturn the existing order: it seems the idea, at best, is to tweak it and to pull Thailand out of the dark ages. Reducing the political input of the monarchy and the military would be an achievement, and may set Thailand on a path where progressivism goes beyond the US-sponsored 'rules-based order' that Pita appears to favour. But it seems all aspects of modernity are anathema to the Thai military and the related 'stakeholders'.

In terms of its polity,

it's hard to discern how much better Thailand is than its neighbours Myanmar and Cambodia. Military rule is even more regular — and abrasive — in Myanmar, which is embroiled in a sporadic civil war after the army overthrew an allied political order. In Cambodia, Hun Sen, in power for nearly 40 years, further solidified his support last weekend by excluding adversaries through bans and imprisonment. He intends to emulate North Korea by passing the baton to his son, Hun Manet — a West Point graduate who might not measure up to the expectations of his Pentagon tutors.

Inevitably, coup-prone Thailand and Myanmar throw up parallels with Pakistan, not least in the context of the coalescence between feudalism and militarism, alongside obvious variations. Common ground can also be located in the resistance to various aspects of modernity and, of course, democracy. The latter, though, is also clearly ailing in nations where it was long considered the established norm, from India to the US, and across much of Europe.

Thailand could have gone a different way, but it seems the very idea of curbing the military and downgrading — let alone abolishing, which really ought to be the aim — the monarchy is a bridge too far for the dominant segments of the elite. As one Thai voter told AFP, "Why ask people to go to the polls? Why don't you just pick someone from your families to be the prime minister?"

It's a reasonable question, and not just for Thailand. But the show must go on, the democratic charade, even if the crown goes to the crown. The very concept of democracy is due for a reckoning. Where it might begin remains an open question. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Ahsan inaugurates historic 'FUTURE E-Commerce Operations Center'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday inaugurated a historic 'FUTURE E-Commerce Operations Center', calling upon the younger generation to embrace e-commerce and information technology as pivotal components of Pakistan's economic growth.

The event marks a significant milestone for Pakistan, as it celebrates the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and

showcases the country's remarkable progress over the years, a news release said. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister highlighted the essence of nation-building, emphasizing that unity and cooperation formed the bedrock of any successful nation. He drew attention to China's remarkable progress, attributing it to three fundamental pillars including political stability, policy continuity and peace.

"Political stability in China played a pivotal role in fostering an environment of peace, enabling the

nation to channel its efforts towards growth and prosperity," he said, stressing the importance of policy continuity, as it had been instrumental in sustaining China's progress over the years. He said no country could progress without a system that prioritized peace, stability and policy consistency.

Ahsan Iqbal made a crucial point that no matter how qualified and exceptional the individuals in government may be, "political uncertainty, turmoil, or divisive politics hinder a country's path to success."

Rs30b loans distributed under PMYB&ALS in five months: SAPM

KARACHI (NNI): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYB&ALS), the loans of 30 billion rupees were distributed during the last five months.

This was stated by her while addressing the ceremony held for the distribution of laptops and

cheques under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme and Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023, respectively at the Sindh Governor House. Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the business loan programme was initiated by former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in 2013. The loans amounting to Rs. 75 billion were distributed under the scheme in last 10 years, she added.

PSX stays bullish, gains 265 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 265.19 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing at 46,682.53 points against 46,417.34 points the previous trading day. A total of 429,515,564 shares were traded during the day as compared to 319,893,485 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14.137 billion against Rs 10.259 billion on the last trading day.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal cutting ribbon to inaugurate Hyper Future E-Commerce Operations Center.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan have trade potential of \$1 billion: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan have the potential of \$1 billion of bilateral trade for which the communication and interaction between both sides is pivotal.

He said this while addressing a seminar on the theme of "Small and Medium Enterprises and Women Entrepreneurs" organized by Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) along with the Founder President of IWCCI, Samina Fazil here.

The envoy said that the IWCCI and other local business chambers can play an important role in increasing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and in their cooperation with the business community of both sides.

Yerzhan Kistafin said that 47% contribution to the economy of Kazakhstan is currently from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which are growing day by day.

He said that women have a very important role in the economy of Kazakhstan, women entrepreneurs are the

owners of big brands in Kazakhstan, and there are a lot of women, especially in the textile, clothing, fashion and IT sectors.

The Ambassador said that the delegation of IWCCI under the leadership of Samina Fazil should visit the cities of Almaty, Astana and others to evaluate the business opportunities there so that they can have an idea about the local market and also both sides could establish business links.

Meanwhile, Yerzhan Kistafin said that Kazakhstan is currently the most attractive country for foreign investment.

PTCL implements robotic process automation for Digital Transformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the leading ICT services provider in Pakistan, has announced the implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in its Customer Care operations as a vital part of its digital transformation strategy.

The aim is to improve overall customer experience across all touch points. The initiative will help PTCL firmly align with the highest

global standards in digitalization and automation, reinforcing its position as the industry leader, said a news release issued here Wednesday. Commenting on the initiative, Ahmad Kamal, Group Chief Customer Care Officer at PTCL and Ufone 4G, said, "We are delighted to announce the implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance the customer journey."

Gold rates decline by Rs 2,400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,400 and was sold at Rs 224,100 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 224,500 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 2,058 to Rs 190,415 from Rs 192,473 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 174,547 from Rs. 176,433, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

ECC approves Rs985.43 for USC Ramzan Atta Scheme-2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Monday approved Rs985.43 million for Ministry of Industries and Production that were spent by Utility Stores Corporation (USC) under the Prime Minister's Free Atta Scheme during Ramzan in last financial year (2022-23).

The scheme was launched on March 18, 2023 and continued till April 16, 2023, according

to a press statement issued by the finance ministry adding the summary was moved by Ministry of Industries and Production.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar while among others it was attended by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood, Coordinator to the PM on Economy, Bilal Azhar Kayani, Federal Secretaries and some senior officers.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Jamal Beker Abdula calls on Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways, Khawaja Saad Rafique at Ministry of Aviation.

Traders warn nationwide protest against increase in electricity tariff

MULTAN (APP): The Chamber of Small Traders expressed concern on the recent increase in electricity tariff and warned of nationwide protest in case the electricity tariff was not reduced.

President Chamber of Small Traders south Punjab Chaudhary Tariq Kareem along with other traders held a press conference stating that the traders were unable to pay electricity bills.

He stated that the traders had to pay Rs 65/ unit of electricity. The office bearers lamented that peak hours had also been increased from 5 pm

to 11 pm. The government should make arrangements for the production of electricity through dams, solar systems and coal instead of fuel.

A number of taxes have been included in electricity bills, they stated.

The demand of the government to reduce electricity tariff at the earliest.

They also warned that the traders would hold nationwide protests. A meeting of traders will be convened in August in which representatives of traders organizations from across the country.



QUETTA: President Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry Haji Abdullah Achakzai presenting special shield to Provincial Minister for Finance and Chairman BFA Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai.

Naqvi reviews security arrangements to ensure public safety in Muharram

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has stated that comprehensive security arrangements have been made throughout Punjab to ensure public safety during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Processions and gatherings have been geotagged and all processions and gatherings are being supervised through CCTV cameras, he added.

He said that every effort is being made by the government to ensure peace and security during Muharram-ul-Haram, adding that mobile service would be temporarily suspended during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Chief Secretary, IG police and relevant security officials are monitoring the security situation, and all line departments are on high alert, he said.

Provincial ministers, administrative officers, and police officials are present in the field and will remain present to maintain a peaceful atmosphere through unity and cooperation, he added.

CM Mohsin Naqvi inspected the routes and reviewed security arrangements for gatherings and processions related to Muharram-ul-Haram by visiting Khaima-e-Saadaat, Lytton Road, and Taxali Road late night.

Citizens to get municipal services through single click: Amir Mir

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir on Wednesday said that the Punjab government decided to decentralize all municipal services for the convenience of citizens.

To achieve the goal, the local government department established a complaints management and information system where citizens could access services with just one click.

In a statement, the minister said that as part of this system, preparations have been completed to launch a helpline number 1198 through which citizens could register complaints and obtain information related to municipal services. Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi would soon inaugurate this system for awareness and handling of complaints about municipal services, he added.

Youth shot dead, body found in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): A youth was shot dead over financial dispute while body of another youth was recovered roadside in different areas of the city on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, Muhammad Ali of Defence-C Lahore sold his land to Rana Nasir at Kala Khatai road but accused refused to pay for the purchased after which the deceased got stay order from the court.

Over same dispute, culprit Rana Nasir gunned down Muhammad Ali and fled the scene.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inspecting the control room during on the eve of Muharram ul Haram during his visit to Razaq Police Station.

Azam directs effective measures for improvement of law and order in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Expressing concerns over recent incidents of terrorism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan here Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to take effective measures for improvement of the law and order situation in the province.

He was presiding over a high-level meeting about the law and order situation in KP. The meeting reviewed the overall security situation of the province. Information Minister Farooz Jamal, Chief Secretary, IGP KP and other senior officials attended.

The caretaker Chief Minister stressed the need for a special focus on security measures in sensitive districts and places during Muharram and said that special measures in that regard were inevitable for which all stakeholders need to play an effective role.

The caretaker Chief Minister held the sacrifices of security forces and police in high esteem.

for a special focus on security measures in sensitive districts and places during Muharram and said that special measures in that regard were inevitable for which all stakeholders need to play an effective role.

The caretaker Chief Minister held the sacrifices of security forces and police in high esteem.

Court orders to stop salary of IGP, others over not producing Parvez Elahi

LAHORE (APP): A special court (central) on Wednesday ordered accountant general Punjab to stop salary of Home secretary Punjab, inspector general of police (IGP) Punjab and inspector general of prisons Punjab over not producing former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi during the hearing of a money laundering case.

The court imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 each on the officers and also issued show cause notices to them for August 5.

Special Court Judge Bakht Fakhir Behzad conducted the proceedings of the money laundering case against Parvez Elahi and others.

Earlier, the court expressed displeasure over not producing Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and directed for producing him by 3.00pm.

The court observed that strict action would be taken if the court orders were not complied with.

As the court resumed proceedings at 3.00pm, DIG Operations Ali Nasir Rizvi, Deputy Superintendent Adiala Jail and other officials appeared.

Transformation process should be continued in parties: PPP

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Central Punjab Information Secretary Shehzad Saeed Cheema has said that the process of transformation in the political parties and organizations should be continued.

Addressing a meeting of the divisional information secretaries, here on Wednesday, he said that the first time, social activists had joined the party. He stressed to ensure effective information and political contacts as elections were close now. He said that the future strategy should be set to contest the upcoming elections.

Senator Mushtaq for steps to improve law & order in merged KP districts

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, representing Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) on Wednesday called for taking steps to improve law and order situation in merged districts of Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking at the joint session of the parliament, he stressed the Federal and provincial governments to take prompt and effective measures to restore peace and stability in the region.

The Senator's made the passionate appeal in the wake of tragic incident at Ali Mosque the other day, where terrorists targeted the place of worship, resulting in the martyrdom of Adnan Afridi, Additional SHO.

The loss of life, he said, underscored the immediate need for taking decisive action against the terrorist elements.

He said that the local community had also taken out peace marches to express their support to promptly resolve these issues.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, paid tribute to the sacrifices of the security forces in their relentless efforts to eliminate terrorism these areas.



KARACHI: View of closed Korangi Causeway road for traffic that was completely destroyed while security and rescue officials stand alert to avoid untoward incident after flood flowed in Korangi Drain River after heavy downpour of monsoon season, in Karachi.

'Education to usher era of progress, development in tribal region'

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Deputy Education Officer District Khyber Shahid Ali Khan and other officials participated in the meeting.

The provincial minister said that the caretaker government is taking practical steps for the promotion of education and besides the provision of facilities in educational institutions; scholarships are also being paid to both boys and girls students.

He expressed these views while discussing the education sector projects in merged districts during a meeting with Education Adviser Rahmat Salam Khattak.



KARACHI: A view of the massive traffic jam at Qayyumabad area due to the closure of the road because of the flooded conditions on Korangi road in Provincial Capital.

International News

New Chinese foreign minister Wang talks Ukraine in Turkey on first trip

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi discussed Ukraine with his Turkish counterpart in Ankara and met President Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday during his first foreign trip since being appointed, a Turkish foreign ministry source said.

China named Wang, a veteran diplomat, as its new foreign minister on Tuesday, removing former rising star Qin Gang after a one-month absence from duties barely half a year into the job. Discussions between Wang and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan included the latest situation in Ukraine as well as the global financial system, the Turkish foreign ministry source said.

Russia has expanded its air attacks on Ukrainian grain targets in recent days after quitting a 2022 deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey that had allowed the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain for the past year.

The United States and several European countries have urged China to use its influence over Russia to seek an end to the war in Ukraine. Earlier this year, China published a 12-point peace plan, calling for the protection of civilians and the sovereignty of all countries to be respected.

During his talks with Wang, Erdogan voiced hope that Turkey and China would intensify their cooperation as both countries play important roles in global and regional issues, Erdogan's office said in a statement released after the meeting.

Fidan and Wang also touched on the development of economic and trade relations between Turkey and China, the Turkish foreign ministry source said.

Their discussions included "harmonisation of the initiatives of (China's) Belt and Road and Middle Corridor", as well as nuclear energy, agriculture and civil aviation, the source added.



Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey.

African leaders arrive in Russia for summit as Kremlin seeks allies amid fighting in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
ST. PETERSBURG: Some African leaders arrived in Russia on Wednesday for a summit with President Vladimir Putin as the Kremlin seeks more allies amid the fighting in Ukraine.

Putin has billed the two-day summit that opens Thursday in St. Petersburg as a major event that would help bolster ties with a continent of 1.3 billion people that is increasingly assertive on the global stage.

On Wednesday, Putin met separately with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and said Russia will more than triple the number of Ethiopian students it hosts and cover their education costs.

Later in the day, Putin is set to hold talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Africa's 54 nations make up the largest voting bloc at the United Nations and have been more divided than any other region on General Assembly resolutions criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine.

It's the second Russia-Africa summit since 2019, and the number of heads of states attending shrank from 43 then to 17 now because of what the Kremlin described as a crude Western pressure to discourage African nations from attending it.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov deplored "unconcealed brazen interference by the U.S., France and other states through their diplomatic missions in African countries, and attempts to put pressure on the leadership of these countries in order to prevent their active participation in the forum."

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North Korea to welcome China and Russia with military display after pandemic isolation

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: After years of pandemic isolation, North Korea has invited its friends back this week, hosting senior Chinese and Russian delegations for 70th anniversary commemorations of the Korean War and the struggle against the United States and its allies.

The visiting dignitaries, which include Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chinese Communist Party Politburo member Li Hongzhong, are expected to be presented with one of North Korea's signature events: a massive military parade showcasing its latest weaponry.

Analysts say the spectacle will likely include the North's nuclear-tipped missiles banned by the United Nations Security Council, where Russia and China are permanent members.

The visits are the first known foreign delegations to visit North Korea since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and come as Pyongyang has looked to deepen its ties with Beijing and Moscow, finding common ground in their rivalries with Washington and the West. Thursday's holiday, in which North Korea celebrates what it sees as a victory over U.S.-led allied forces in the 1950-1953 Korean War, provides a chance for Pyongyang to highlight the Cold War days when North Korean troops fought with Chinese and Russian support.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits the Chinese People's Volunteer Army Martyrs' cemetery in this photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

China's sharp-tongued foreign minister is ousted, but his combative style is expected to continue

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's sharp-tongued foreign minister, Qin Gang, was something of an avatar for nationalist Communist Party leader and President Xi Jinping, warning of "conflict and confrontation" with the U.S., the stakes of which could be the "future of humanity." Now, Qin has been dismissed from office in the biggest political tumult to strike China in a decade.

Qin's departure was announced Tuesday after a month-long disappearance from public view, sparking rumors of personal scandals or friction within the top party echelons. He was absent from key meetings as the U.S. sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other officials to Beijing. It also comes during economic challenges and poor relations with the United States and other nations that China relies on for economic development but is also seeking to push aside in its drive to overcome the Western-led economic order.

West Africa recorded over 1,800 terrorist attack in first six months of 2023, regional official says

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: West Africa recorded over 1,800 terrorist attacks in the first six months of the year resulting in nearly 4,600 deaths with dire humanitarian consequences, and a top regional official said Tuesday that's just "a snippet of the horrendous impact of insecurity."

Omar Touray told the U.N. Security Council that half a million people in the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States known as ECOWAS are refugees and nearly 6.2 million are internally displaced. If there isn't an adequate international response to the 30 million people ECOWAS assesses need food right now, he said, the number of people in need will increase to 42 million by the end of next month. Touray, who is president of the ECOWAS Commission, singled out the following drivers of insecurity in the region: terrorism, armed rebellion.

US officials to meet Taliban representatives to discuss security, rights issues

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. officials will meet Taliban representatives and "technocratic professionals" from key Afghan ministries during a visit to Doha this week, the State Department said on Wednesday, adding they will discuss security, narcotics and women's rights. Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West and Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights Rina Amiri will travel to Astana.



Members of the Philippine Coast Guard remove a fallen tree from a road following the onslaught of Typhoon Doksuri in Buguey, Cagayan province, Philippines.

Indian government faces no-confidence vote over Manipur ethnic clashes

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's parliament authorised a no-confidence vote against Narendra Modi's government by an alliance of opposition parties, to force the prime minister to address in detail concerns about ethnic clashes in the northeastern state of Manipur. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a clear majority of 301 members in the 542-seat lower house of parliament, so the no-confidence vote will not affect its stability.

The opposition instead wants to trigger a debate about violence in the remote, BJP-ruled Manipur state, where more than 130 people have been killed and 60,000 displaced since it began in early May. Approving the opposition motion, lower house speaker Om Birla said he would soon decide when the debate and vote would take place.

Jakarta terms Taliban officials' visit 'informal'

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Representatives of Afghanistan's Taliban government travelled to Indonesia this month on an unofficial visit, the foreign ministry in Jakarta said on Tuesday, despite Kabul saying they held meetings with politicians in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

"My understanding is that they were in Jakarta informally for internal matters with the Afghanistan mission here."



ISLAMABAD: The Planning Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal launches "National Multi-sectoral Nutrition to Reduce Stunting & Other Forms of Malnutrition" worth Rs8.5 billion under Pakistan Nutrition Initiatives (PANI).

President Alvi calls for cementing Pak-Tunisia economic collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday emphasized the need for promoting greater economic collaborations with Tunisia to boost bilateral trade.

He, talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Tunisia, Javed Ahmed Umrani, who called on him, also called for increasing interactions and exchanges between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries.

He said that Pakistan greatly valued its historical and brotherly ties with Tunisia and both countries had commonality of views on various issues.

He asked the envoy to play his role in further strengthening bilateral relations with Tunisia by increasing cooperation in the

fields of education, culture, and defense.

President Alvi acknowledged Tunisia's vision for making OIC a substantive platform for advancing inter-faith harmony as well as cooperation in addressing international issues such as the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, Palestine and Islamophobia.

He also welcomed Tunisia's support to the resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of OIC at the UN Human Rights Council in July 2023 on "Countering Religious Hatred" in the wake of the incident of burning of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

The president asked the ambassador-designate to highlight at various fora the issues of Islamophobia as well as the mistreatment of minorities in India.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Tunisia, Mr. Javed Ahmed Umrani, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Dr Rubaba lauds role of media in reforming society

QUETTA (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Science and IT, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi on Wednesday said that journalists have performed their professional duties diligently and played the best role to reform society.

She expressed these views while talking to a delegation who called on her under the leadership of the senior vice president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Saleem Shahid.

While talking to the delegation, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said journalists played a very positive role in the last five years' parliamentary journey by adopting the attitude of encouraging the better work of the provincial government and criticizing the negligence.

"Over the years, a

cordial relationship between the provincial government and the press has been established, and it is hoped that this sustainable series of criticism for reform and guidance in a positive direction will continue in the future, she maintained. Earlier, Senior Program Officer Shirkat Gah Balochistan Seema Batool and Admin Officer Anwar Baloch met the parliamentary secretary and thanked her for supporting various steps for women's rights, including the Women Protection Bill.

Appreciating the efforts of Shirkat Gah for providing technical support and holding various advisory meetings, the parliamentary secretary said that the entire team fully supported the Commission on Status of Women in this important legislation.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem presiding over a meeting regarding financial affairs of Technical Education Departments.

Pakistan at 99th place among 121 countries on Global Hunger Index

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has dropped from 38.1 in 2006 to 26.1 in 2022 in the ranking on the Global Hunger Index (GHI-2022) and is at 99th place in the list of 121 countries.

According to the report, although Pakistan's ranking has improved, the hunger level is considered serious. Zero score indicates a country has no issue of hunger.

The report said 16.9 per cent population in Pakistan was undernourished. The death rate of children under the age of five years is 6.5 per cent and 7.1 per cent are wasted, while 37.6 per cent children under five are stunted.

ing the Pakistan government's ability to manage food scarcity.

The devastating floods destabilised Pakistan's rising inflation and poor economic situation. Pakistani government officials stated that the floods destroyed almost 80 per cent of crops. This staggering number has major ramifications for a country where an average household spends around 50 per cent of its income on food.

"The current edition of the GHI reveals that armed conflicts, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic are intensifying each other; as a result, up to 828 million people were forced to go hungry. As things stand, 46 countries will not even achieve a low level of hunger by 2030, much less eliminate hunger entirely.

Ahsan for collective efforts to tackle 'hyper malnutrition' challenge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed for collective efforts to tackle the confronted challenge what he called 'hyper malnutrition', affecting the physical and mental health of children.

"After last year's floods, the challenge of malnutrition is no longer malnutrition but it has become the challenge of hyper malnutrition as the flood-calamity hit the poorest of the poor," the minister was addressing the launching ceremony of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Programme to reduce stunting and other forms of malnutrition.

He said the federal government had launched this initiative which would be implemented in collaboration with all stakeholders including provinces, donors and active community.

Terming the nutrition-related issues 'alarming,' the minister said "Today is the age of knowledge revolution which requires creativity and innovation driven by cognitive skills. And it all depends on children's nutritional health."

Sharing some statistics, Ahsan Iqbal said around 40 per cent of children were having stunting growth-related issues, 80 per cent faced deficiency of calcium, zinc and iron, 60 per cent vitamin C and 25 per cent vitamin B, 64 per cent

cent faced insufficient protein problem, 75 Folate-deficiency and 30 per cent were getting excessive fat.

He emphasized to address the issue of malnutrition on a priority, warning that it could lead to affecting children's physical and mental health. The minister was of the view to engage professionals on at least a five-year contract to advance the social sector programmes; and get rid of typical bureaucratic hurdles. He expressed astonishment that Pakistan attained the nuclear capability despite opposition by the international community, but when the world was willing to help Pakistan in executing social sector programmes like health.

An advisory has already been issued for the citizens in view of the situation of Hub dam and rain emergency.

The general public particularly the villagers have been advised to remain away from the nullahs and streams as the Met office has already predicted more rains till July 30.

According to the alert issued by the Met department, there's a threat of flashflood in the streams and nullahs in Hub and adjoining areas.

The general public has also been advised to avoid unnecessary travel on the Quetta-Karachi highway.

According to the report, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said that the poliovirus on any side of the border was a threat to children everywhere.

Children's emotional stability also affects due to excessive use of phones: report

It has been demanded in report to ban smart phones in schools to send a message that technology does not matters more than an assistant to human's education.

UNESCO warned the effects of digital technology and stressed that positive effects of technology are exaggerated for learning and

economic benefits. Report said that every change cannot be declared development, every new thing is not always better.

According to international institute many revolutions are hidden in digital technology but along with that many risks are also being discussed. Same attention should be paid to education sector.

UNESCO director general Azoulay Audrey said technology use experiment should be to improve the students and teachers but it is needed to focus our attention on those who are learning its use. Online contacts cannot replace human relations. It is needed to make digital technology beneficial and safe from its disadvantages, said in report.

Referring international data report said that excessive use of smart phones, tablets or laptops.

ISLAMABAD (Online): United Nations demanded ban on use of smart phones in educational institutes so that children learning ability may increase and save them from online abuse.

UNESCO's (UN's institute of education, science, and culture) report contains evidence to prove that often use of mobile phones affects students educational performance.

Children's emotional stability also affects due to excessive use of phones: report

Will distribute a million laptops annually, if given mandate in next polls: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that if given a mandate in next general elections, his next government would distribute around one million laptops across the country annually as part of the vision to support the talented youth.

The prime minister, addressing a ceremony for the distribution of laptops and cheques for youth business loans, said with support from allies, a mechanism would be formulated – to be equally funded by centre and provinces – to distribute up to 1000,000 laptops across all provinces.

He said youths from across the country needed to be equipped with education and provided maximum resources for country's swift progress.

Mentioning the launch of the capital venture initiative for freelancers on Tuesday, he lauded the

youngsters' talent for developing the projects like converting banana peels into different products and drones for agricultural use.

He said it would be sheer injustice if the talented youths were not provided with the required resources as they were the guarantee for the country's prosperity.

He said the incumbent government was in the process of distributing 100,000 laptops announced for the fiscal 2022-23 while the provision for another 100,000 laptops had been made in the budget 2023-24 which would be distributed purely on merit, with-

out any nepotism. Prime Minister Shehbaz said the caretaker government should also ensure the merit in laptops' distribution keeping the excellence and enrollment in public sector universities as the only merit.

He said through hand-holding, the talented youths could bring in billions of dollars to the country within a short span of time which other industries could not do.

The prime minister also thanked the commercial banks for distributing Rs 30 billion among youth within a few months in the form of business loans.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes laptops among the high achievers of public sector universities of Sindh under PM's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023 at Governor House.

Sherry unveils country's 1st ever National Adaptation Plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday unveiled the country's first-ever National Adaptation Plan unanimously approved by the federal cabinet to enhance nation's resilience against adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

The minister flanked by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Syed Mujtaba Hussain briefed the media persons over the landmark

achievement that remained unaccomplished due to poor interest of the previous ministry.

The team under the leadership of Additional Secretary Mujtaba Hussain worked extensively to create first ever adaptation plan which was a home grown plan and had been prepared with the input of the line ministries and provincial ministries, she added. The minister informed that detailed consultations with all the provinces including the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB)

reportedly started in 2019 but she did not find any record of the document in the ministry.

She said the country needed adaptation and resilience as after 2022 floods the devastation and scale of the disaster underscored its significance for the future of the nation.

The minister alleged said the adaptation plan had

Chinese Defense Minister meets with PAF Chief

BEIJING (APP): Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu met with Chief of the Air Staff of the Pakistani Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber in Beijing.

Gen. Li Shangfu said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and iron-clad friends. Chinese President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the relations between China and Pakistan and has provided overall guidance for the growth of bilateral relations.

Qureshi says: PTI being kept away from Electoral Reforms Bill

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said PTI is being kept from Electoral Reforms Bill (ERB). "Maulana Fazlur Rehman is striving to forge alliance against PPP", he said this while talking to media men outside Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) here Wednesday.

He went on to say that the judge directed the prosecution to bring to fore evidence on previous hearing. ERB has become talk of the town now a days and we have reservations on it, he held. The allied parties of government have too reservations on this bill. Raza Rabbani too has expressed reservations on this bill.

PML-N in favor to conduct elections on time: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Wednesday said Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) was not in favor to delay elections. Talking to private news channel, he said PML-N was supporting to hold elections after completion of constitutional period adding that delaying elections would not be in favor of the country. Commenting on caretaker setup Kaira said Ishaq Dar was a most experienced politician.

7th Muharram procession taken out amid tough security in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): The mourning procession marking 7th Muharramul Haram was taken out in the provincial metropolis on Wednesday.

Strict security measures were adopted on occasion of the procession started from Imambargah Kalan located on Prince road.

Led by the President Balochistan Shia conference, Agha Jawad Rafie, the mourners were carrying the alam (flag) and tazias while passing through the roads and streets.

According to the Deputy Inspector General of Police, around 4,000

personnel of the police and other law enforcement agencies were deployed.

The shops and markets enroute of the procession were sealed and the roads and streets leading to the route of procession were closed.

The procession was monitored through the CCTV cameras installed on the route and different other parts of the metropolis.

Earlier, the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove also visited route of Muharram procession Quetta city and reviewed the security arrangements made there.



QUETTA: DG PDMA Jahanzeb Khan meeting with Deputy Commissioner Quetta Shehak Baloch

Civil society call for new charter of democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Civil society has emphasized the need for new charter of democracy in order to initiate dialogue and meaningful deliberation for the inclusion of all political parties and stakeholders in the democratic process.

The civil society tabled the proposal of strengthening democracy in the country during a National Dialogue on New Charter of Democracy organized by Pakistan Development Alliance Zia ur Rehman emphasized the cohesiveness of all political parties and said the dialogue between all political Pakistan could only pave the way for developing the country.

He said that all political parties should adopt proposed COD2.0 as their party manifesto.

Constitutional Expert Zafarullah Khan emphasized the importance of centrality of Parliament and demanded that constitutional supremacy should be accepted by all.

envisaged in the CoD-2006 to support civic education, study circles and training of future leaders and cadre through the political parties," he added.

He also stressed the political parties to ensure that all citizens irrespective of their gender, class, economic background and creed should be valued and equally involved in the affairs of the party.

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