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Hub

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the ceremony of Prime Minister's Initiatives on Women's Empowerment.

President says: Pakistan offers huge potential for Gandhara tourism with Buddha's message of peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said Pakistan offered the world a valuable window to Gandhara civilization with its unique blend of ancient history, and the Buddha's message of peace and compassion.

"In today's world where hatred is on the rise and increasing polarization is fueling conflicts, it's time to rediscover the role of cultural diplomacy to promote dialogue among civilizations," he said in his address here at the three-day Gandhara Symposium 2023.

The symposium titled 'Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan' was organized by Prime Minister's Task Force on

Gandhara Tourism, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), and the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event gathered monks and inter-faith experts from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, China, Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam with an objective to explore Pakistan's rich Buddhist legacy and create an enabling environment for Gandhara tourism.

President Alvi said Buddha's quest rekindles the spirit of inner reflection with a precept to abstain from taking lives of the living beings and caring for the environment.

He highlighted that the Gandhara civilization, which thrived in Pakistan centuries ago, could serve

as an informative place for the visitors from across the globe to explore exquisite Buddhist sites.

He urged collaborative efforts to raise awareness about the inclusive and multicultural nature of Gandhara civilization and help the society to absorb diversity of cultures.

The president welcomed the Buddhist monks in the country, hoping that their presence would relay a message of peace and cross-cultural harmony.

Minister of State, Chairman of the PM Task Force on Gandhara Tourism Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said the Gandhara civilization continued to mesmerize from all over the world and emphasized the need to preserve and revive the historic Buddhist relics.



QUETTA: Chairman Balochistan Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Jaz Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

No negligence to be tolerated on law & order: Governor annoyed over increasing incidents of killing & lawlessness

Says no negligence would be tolerated regarding law and order all over the province
Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has expressed anguish over the increasing incidents of killing and lawlessness all over the province especially in Quetta.

While speaking to different delegations at the Governor House on Tuesday, the Governor said that several incidents have been reported for some days in Quetta city, which is a matter of concern.

He exhorted all the law enforcement agencies and police stations to keep strict vigil on the criminal elements and drug sellers in and around Quetta city.

He asserted that no negligence would be tolerated regarding law and order all over the province.

IGP underlines need to establish exemplary ties between police and press

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh has underlined the need to establish exemplary relations between the police and press in the province.

The IGP has ordered all the field officers to ensure necessary access of the information to the press in the public interest.

This order was issued by the IGP Balochistan on

Sanjrani briefed on construction of 77km road from Dalbandin to Ziarat

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani was called on by Secretary Ministry of Communications / Chairman NHA and briefed him about the progress made on the construction of a 77 kilometer road from Dalbandin to Ziarat Balanosh, District Chagai, Balochistan.

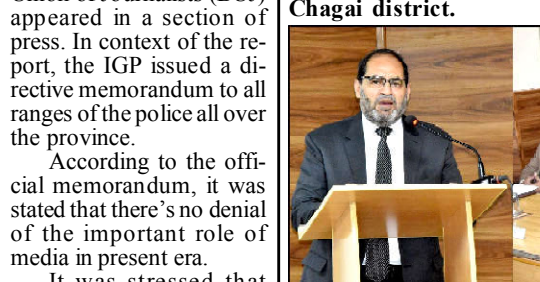
During the meeting, the Federal Secretary provided an update on the project, highlighting that the tendering process is set to commence in the coming days. He further disclosed that the work on this vital infrastructure project is scheduled to begin in August, with Chairman Senate taking part in the groundbreaking ceremony.

Sadiq Sanjrani expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by the National Highway Authority (NHA) in fulfilling the longstanding demand of the local people for improved road connectivity in the Chagai district.

Addressing a news conference, the minister said the PTI chairman created a fake narrative by waving the so-called cipher during his last address to a public gathering in Islamabad as prime minister just to give an impression that he was ousted from power as the result of

a regime change operation. Ironically, he was the only prime minister in the country's history who was removed from his office through a no-confidence motion, she added.

She said he created hype of the so-called conspiracy, based on the cipher, and blamed the former army chief for that at first place and eventually shifted its to acting Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. "Today, this person is pleading before the courts to halt the trial in the prohibited funding case and asserting that he did not know what was inside the closed envelop which had 190 million pounds and brought up before his cabinet for approval," she remarked.



QUETTA: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar speaking to the participants of first Midcareer Management Course (MCMC) in the Balochistan Civil Services Academy

If we have to eliminate begging bowl, we will have to stand on our own feet: PM

Stresses for creation of enabling equal opportunities for women empowerment

PESHAWAR (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said if we have to eliminate begging bowl we will have to stand on our own feet.

"We have not accepted IMF program willingly. If we have to eliminate begging bowl then we will have to stand on our own feet, PM said this while inaugurating first phase of FATA University in Peshawar Tuesday.

"I and other dignitaries go abroad on visits. When we are received there I see their faces. The faces of those who welcome us are saying we have come here to beg money from them, he remarked.

Despite all hardships we are distributing laptops among students, he said adding.

In the coming few years

Pakistan will be prosperous and developed country in the region, he hoped.

We have evolved comprehensive plan for the development of agriculture, IT and minerals. Today our neighboring country has surpassed us. For this we are at fault.

Today we will have to look into our mistakes. We have to decide either we have to keep our hand lofty or we have to roam with begging bowl, he observed.

There was time when our cotton export was more than India. We have to learn a lesson from the past. Country never turned prosperous with wailing mindset, he said.

We have to bring revolution in agriculture and national industries, he stated.

The process of distribution of lap tops was started

from Nawaz Sharif era. We will too distribute one lakh lap tops. No lap top will be given under favoritism. Lap tops will be given on the norms of merit only, he announced.

The name of FATA university is not appropriate as this is name of past, he said adding new name will be allocated in consultation with the elders.

Favoritism and corruption is currency in vogue today and it will be eliminated at every cost, he vowed. Favoritism has destroyed Pakistan and the corruption has undermined the roots of Pakistan. We have to annihilate poverty and unemployment.

APP adds: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed upon provision of equal opportunities to the

womenfolk as they consisted of half of the country's population and were playing varying roles at different strata of society.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of the 'Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment' which is being initiated at a total cost of Rs 10.4 billion.

The prime minister said that the country's womenfolk were an effective and energetic segment, playing effective roles in families and society as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

He observed that in the last 75 years, the required opportunities for the women empowerment were not sufficient and stressed upon making of further efforts for securing

women rights, including the inheritance rights and creation of opportunities in a conducive environment, so that they could contribute meaningfully and productively in society. "Look around the Muslims world and the West, the women have played their due role for the progress and prosperity of their respective nations," he added.

Lauding different prominent women personalities of the country, he said that they had served as great ambassadors of Pakistan in different capacities. The prime minister said that there was no dearth of talent in Pakistan as they were blessed with great minds, but there was a need to harness the true potential with creation of opportunities.

CM approves inquiry of Chaman Judicial lock up prisoners escaping

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has approved to conduct the inquiry into the incident of firing and escaping of prisoners from the Judicial lock up in Chaman.

According to an official hand out issued here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister approved inquiry of the matter on the summary sent by the Home and Tribal Affairs to him about the firing and escaping of prisoners from Judicial lock up, Chaman occurred on June 29, 2023, in view of sensitivity of the case.

The Home department had proposed to form a committee under leadership of Chairman, Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT).

The inquiry committee would submit its report to the Chief Minister to be based on the recommenda-

tions after complete scrutiny and determining the motives behind the incident.

It may be recalled that over a dozen high-risk prisoners had escaped from the Chaman judicial lock, causing a major security breach and prompting a swift response from local law enforcement agencies. The jailbreak occurred on early morning on June 20 during the period allotted for Eid prayers.

Armed with the crutches of disabled inmates, more than 15 prisoners overwhelmed the on-duty officers, managed to snatch an official Kalashnikov from a sentry posted at the main gate, and opened fire. In the ensuing chaos, one police officer was injured and has since been hospitalized. The prisoners then shot open the main gate's lock, enabling their escape. The group of escapees included more than 12 prisoners.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb inaugurating Rehabilitation of Radio Pakistan Peshawar building after the incident of 9th May.

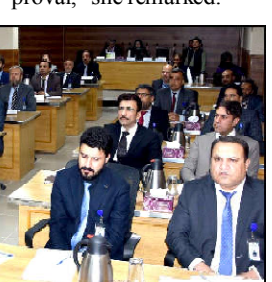
Once desperate for cipher's investigation, PTI chief now opposing probe into his own cases: Marriyum

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said once desperate for probe into the purported cipher related to the regime change, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was now vehemently opposing investigations into multiple cases, including the Toshakhana theft, foreign funding, and Al-Qadir Trust case.

Addressing a news conference, the minister said the PTI chairman created a fake narrative by waving the so-called cipher during his last address to a public gathering in Islamabad as prime minister just to give an impression that he was ousted from power as the result of

a regime change operation. Ironically, he was the only prime minister in the country's history who was removed from his office through a no-confidence motion, she added.

She said he created hype of the so-called conspiracy, based on the cipher, and blamed the former army chief for that at first place and eventually shifted its to acting Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. "Today, this person is pleading before the courts to halt the trial in the prohibited funding case and asserting that he did not know what was inside the closed envelop which had 190 million pounds and brought up before his cabinet for approval," she remarked.



QUETTA: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar speaking to the participants of first Midcareer Management Course (MCMC) in the Balochistan Civil Services Academy



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the International Gandhara Symposium 2023.

Pakistan rejects Israel's remarks regarding adoption of Universal Periodic Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has categorically rejected Israel's statement regarding the adoption of Pakistan's Universal Periodic Report.

Responding to media queries, she said the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday adopted Pakistan's Universal Periodic Report unanimously and Israel's politically motivated statement is fundamentally at variance with the otherwise positive tone of the session and the statements made by a vast majority of the countries.

The Spokesperson said several states and civil society organizations commended Pakistan on the progress achieved in promoting human rights.

She said given Israel's long history of oppression of Palestinians, Pakistan can certainly do without its advice on protecting Human Rights.

Zia Langove takes notice of firing incident at Pishin stop; seeks report

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has taken serious notice of the incident of firing at Pishin stop Quetta and sought a report from the concerned authorities about it.

The Minister Home also directed to take all steps for arrest of the accused involved in the incident. He said that there's no room of killing anyone in the province.

He prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed souls into its eternal peace.

He also prayed for the bereaved families. It may be mentioned here that two persons identified as the private employees of Federal Minister Israr Tareen were gunned down by unknown armed assailants on Pishin stop on Monday evening.

Pak, China agree to accelerate implementation on ML-I and SEZs

BEIJING (Online): Pakistan and China agreed to fast-track the implementation of ML-I and Special Economic Zones SEZs so that projects can be executed timely.

The agreement was reached between Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal and Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Mr Zheng Shanjie during a meeting held in Beijing on Tuesday.

The Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal is on a four-day official visit to China over the 10-year celebrations of CPEC. During his visit, he co-chaired a special Joint Cooperation Committee meetings (JCC) meeting with the Vice Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). Besides, several meetings were held with key Chinese officials which included Chairman NDRC and other key officials.

Both sides decided to hold regular meetings of the Joint Working Groups (JWGs) to review ongoing cooperation under the CPEC framework and work closely for the next phase which is much wider in scope and focuses more on industrialization, agriculture, Science & Technology and Socio-economic development.

During one to one meeting with Chairman NDRC, Mr Zheng Shanjie, the Planning Minister conveyed felicitations of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Chairman Zheng on assuming his new role and assured him of full support in smooth implementation of CPEC projects.

On the proposal of the Planning Minister, Chairman Zheng offered to share Chinese expertise and knowledge to enhance Pakistan's export earnings and accelerate Special Economic Zones SEZs development.

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CJP BHC Justice Naeem Akhtar No role of provincial ministers in transfer and posting of government employees

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan has categorically stated that there is no role of the provincial ministers in transfer and posting of the government employees.

If anyone (civil servant) approaches any provincial minister, member national or provincial assemblies for one's transfer and posting, then it comes in misconduct and departmental action is compulsory against one.

The Chief Justice was speaking to the partici-

pants of first Midcareer Management Course (MCMC) in the Balochistan Civil Services Academy here on Tuesday.

The CJ BHC interacted with the participants of MCMC. He delivered lecture on the "judicial oversight of administrative action."

While having an interaction with the MCMC participants, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan said that the capacity of government employees is built with training during the service.

Daily **Independent**
Voice of Masses

Aiding investment

The new Pakistan Investment Policy 2023 appears to have been driven by the government's short-to medium-term objective of facilitating 'promised' investment from the Gulf countries, and the longer-term goal of improving the overall business environment at home to enhance investment-to-GDP ratio to 20pc.

The World Bank estimates that investment will plunge to 13.3pc as a ratio of GDP during the present financial year from 15pc in FY20. Designed in collaboration with multilateral financial institutions, the policy is expected to attract \$20-25bn in investment over the next few years.

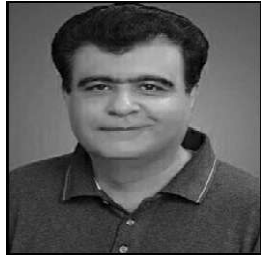
The government has indicated that the GCC nations are very interested in investing in different segments of Pakistan's economy to support development. The prime minister has already formed a Special Investment Facilitation Council to overcome any obstacles in the way of the project.

The policy will focus on reducing the cost and facilitating the ease of doing business, streamlining business processes and promoting the convergence of trade, industrial and monetary policies. It offers numerous incentives to foreign investors, including elimination of the minimum equity requirement and permission to invest in all sectors, barring a few.

The investors will be able to remit their entire profits back home in their own currencies and receive special protection. They will be also allowed to lease land without restriction, and transfer any land they hold without limitation. The policy lifts restrictions on foreign real estate developers. Foreign investors will be permitted to hold a 60pc stake in agricultural projects and 100pc equity in corporate farming.

Recent trends show that FDI flows are directed mostly towards politically and economically stable economies that have strong foundations for future growth and can access broader markets. Other factors that influence foreign investors' decisions include tax rates, regulatory transparency, policy consistency, technological infrastructure and a secure environment. Sadly, we lag far behind even regional countries on these counts. No wonder foreign firms are exiting our market. Even Chinese firms looking for relocation of their manufacturing facilities for export back home and elsewhere in the world are reluctant to invest here. Pakistan stands at a critical juncture in its history: it can turn its economic crisis into an opportunity by quickly implementing governance and structural reforms to attract investment or suffer on account of inaction. The new policy will likely woo official investment from friendly foreign governments. But private foreign investment flows will not materialise unless we fix all our systems that can affect an investor in any way.

Breakaway states



Dr Niaz Murtaza

Most states today are either historical ones or were made by colonisers. Only a few broke away from larger states after World War II. Excluding non-UN member breakaway regions like Somaliland, this includes Singapore, Timor-Leste, Bangla-desh, Pakistan and Lebanon in Asia; Eritrea and South Sudan in Africa; six ex-Yugoslav states; Slovakia and 14 ex-USSR states (eight Christian-dominated ones in Europe and six Muslim-dominated ones in Asia). The ex-USSR states and Singapore were evicted; the rest pursued freedom.

Singapore, Croatia, Slovakia, Latvia, Slovenia, Lithuania and Estonia are doing very well politically and economically. Sixteen other states have political stability and moderate economic growth (including Ukraine until the Russian invasion). Conversely, South Sudan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Bosnia have weak economies, political instability and insecurity. Eritrea, the fond site of my PhD research where I spent months living in tiny villages studying how stable traditional human systems were undermined by external intrusion over 100 years, has become a totalitarian, reclusive, pariah state.

To explain this divergence, I look at three factors: their mode of freedom, homogeneity and prior existence as a free state or a regional unit with its own governance structure that could aid post-freedom governance. The seven

doing well are religiously and ethnically homogeneous — with at least 70 per cent of the people belonging to one identity group — and were at least regional units for long. Those doing moderately well are only slightly less homogeneous but were still at least regional governance units for long.

The last five are all diverse, with no ethnic group having even a 50pc majority. Pakistan, South Sudan and Lebanon had never existed as even distinct regional political units — Eritrea only for 90 years under Italian rule after 1890 that created some unity, and Bosnia rarely through history. South Sudan, Eritrea and Bosnia became free via civil war and Pakistan and Lebanon via colonial division. South Sudan and Eritrea had faced huge abuse for decades under Sudan and Ethiopia, creating unity. The Pakistani, Lebanese and Bosnian freedom drives were pre-emptive, driven by elite fears of future risks. Ours was led by elites that hardly belonged locally after 1947.

Thus, most of the problems of the five are embedded in their DNAs which lacked both a natural nation (where most people belong to one social group) or historical state (even as a regional unit) strand. They faced the huge task of creating both a state and nation almost from scratch after freedom. States lacking both can progress via a cultivated nationhood, where diverse groups adopt a new national identity based on mutual benefits perceived from being part of a larger state. But cultivated nationhood requires devolved democracy, which we have struggled with.

This is all the more surprising as the demand for Pakistan was first made in March 1940 based on a charter that

embodied devolved democracy as its driving force, a novel, brilliant idea that was decades ahead as a governance model among decolonising regions then. It's a surprise that an elitist, drab outfit like the Muslim League gave it. It was only adopted under regional pressure and to get regions on board. But the League leadership took no steps to operationalise it before or after 1947. The Muslim elites who feared Hindu-majority democratic rule before 1947 feared even Muslim-majority democratic rule after independence. Thus, some say that while the Indian and Bangladeshi freedom drives were pursuing democracy, the Pakistani one was not.

The devolved democracy idea was dangled by the British in the Cabinet Mission plan, seen as an option against the majoritarian, centralised democracy Congress sold and the partition Muslim League wanted. Ironically, Muslim League accepted it while Congress didn't. Yet in their respective post-freedom turfs, Congress adopted it much more. Hence, today, we lack ancient statehood, natural nationhood and even cultivated nationhood. The first two cannot be created. But cultivated nationhood through devolved democracy is still possible. Yet, our elite-dominated state structure supports patronage elite politics to crush grassroots, egalitarian politics and supports autocratic, extremist religious, populist and ethno-populist politics when even the elitist politician becomes too autonomous. In short, this review highlights a key fact: a thriving nation and state cannot be created easily based on real elite fears alone if there isn't an ancient state and a natural nation. -- Courtesy Dawn

Idle & unemployed



Zofeen T. Ebrahim

Our chief census commissioner Naeemuz Zafar's words failed to cause a stir when he said recently that there were 249,566,743 of us in the country. That we are too many is stating the obvious. But maybe if he had said it, it may have sunk in. Or maybe if 'we are too many' becomes a mantra of sorts, and is repeated from different platforms, we may hear it. We need to hear it from the pulpit, on television and radio, social media, in the national and provincial assemblies and the Senate. We need to hear it in schools and universities. Maybe, Hasan Raheem could come up with a song, maybe Coke Studio could devote a whole season to the population explosion we just witnessed, and maybe then we will stop breeding like rabbits.

Pakistan's population has doubled twice since 1951, when the first census was held, and is estimated to double again within four years, ie, 2027, registering an eightfold increase since 1951, which is 'unacceptably high' if you ask demographer Dr Farid Midhet.

For years, our leaders have been telling us that our youth bulge (currently 58.7 million) is our demographic boom. They are not telling the truth. The government needs to abandon spinning this tale about the population dividend. According to economist Dr Hafiz A. Pasha's calculations, 17m youth in Pakistan are either 'idle' or unemployed; of these almost 7m are young men. Does the government have a plan

for the uneducated, malnourished, stunted, unhealthy and unskilled cohort of this country? Because that is what Pakistan will eventually be left with.

The young educated, tired of wading through chest-deep corruption, is fleeing the country at the first opportunity. In 2022, more than 800,000 people left the country to work abroad. These are the recorded numbers; the real figures could be manifold. Many from the same educated fraternity, using both legal (on the pretext of pursuing a higher degree, never to return) and illegal (such as last month's Greek boat tragedy) channels, could be far more.

Then there is the frustrated brigade of graduates stuck in Pakistan but unable to find work matching their skillset and education. A 2022 Pakistan Institute of Development Economics study revealed that the unemployment rate among university graduates in Pakistan was over 31pc.

The government can continue building more schools, universities, hospitals, even dams to store water. It can plan youth development programmes too, but will these ever be enough?

Dr Midhet wants to set up a 'Population and Development Research Centre', a kind of a think tank, where new knowledge is generated around population, specially the youth bulge. This knowledge, he says, can then be shared with stakeholders to channel the unemployed (even uneducated) and idle towards more productive use. While there is some donor interest in establishing the centre, he says, it needs to be set up in a government academic institution.

At the same time, policymakers must now look at the 249m figure through the lens of fam-

ily planning. One does not have to be a demographer like Dr Midhet to understand that the country's total fertility rate — the average number of births a woman would have in her lifetime and which currently stands at 3.32 — is still quite high. Although India became the most populous country this year, its TFR stands at 2.0 (even below the replacement level of 2.1) and its use of family planning methods is 66.7pc. Pakistan's stands at 34pc. The Indian government has attributed the decline in its TFR to the increase in the use of contraceptives and rising education among girls.

It is time to stop exploiting the population issue for political oneupmanship as this may only lead us down a rabbit hole. Dr Sabina Durrani, director general of the population programme wing at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, finds such formulas rather skewed. Giving the example of each province using its population numbers to influence the NFC award, or to gain more seats in parliament or a larger share in the civil services quota, she asks that if population is given so much weightage why would provinces want to invest in reducing the size of their respective populations.

UNFPA's representative in Pakistan says population issues need to be tackled in novel ways to uproot current biases. One way could be to set up an agency like the National Command and Operation Centre (created during the Covid-19 pandemic) for population matters and to safeguard the health and rights of Pakistan's women and girls, which is the theme of this year's July 11 World Population Day. - Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

President for skill development, financial, digital inclusion of women

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the need for skill development, digital inclusion, and financial inclusion of women in Pakistan in order to make them financially self-sufficient. He stated that women, who constituted almost 50 percent of the country's population, needed to participate in all sectors of the economy for their economic empowerment.

Women's and girls' education is a vital component that contributed to gender equality as well as

to the socio-economic development of the country, he added. The president made these remarks during a meeting with the delegation of Women Business Network, led by Sam Ali Dada, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Women Business Network (WBN) is a global network of business professionals and corporate leaders that aims to uplift women for key leadership positions in the industry and create opportunities for their businesses.

During the meeting, the president urged the delegation to increase employ-

ment opportunities for women in the private sector, besides establishing linkages with skill development institutions, such as NAVTTC and TEVTA, to provide women with marketable skills sets.

He also emphasized the importance of skill and educational development of women and girls in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

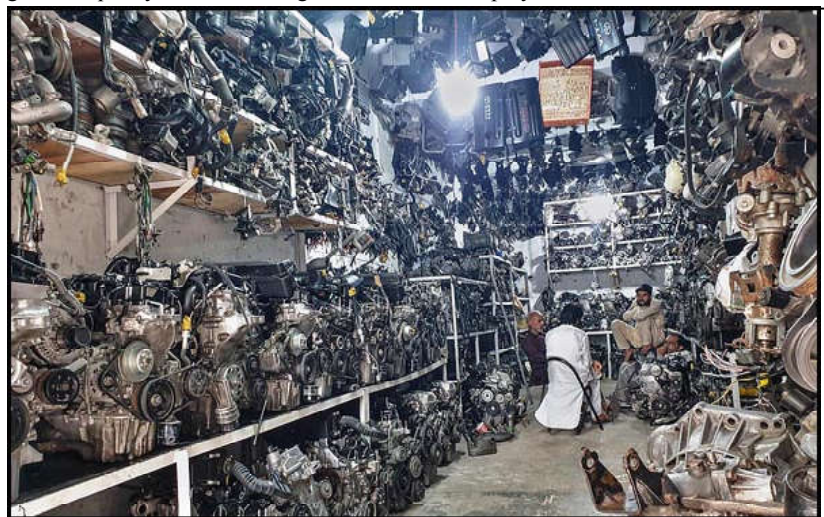
The president highlighted the need for projecting the success stories of women to encourage and motivate other women to take part in business and economic activities.

He also called for taking practical and meaningful steps to address gender disparity. He stressed the need for integrating women into the mainstream of economic activities for their financial empowerment.

The delegation briefed the president about the steps being taken by WBN for the socio-economic empowerment of women. He commended the efforts of WBN in providing job opportunities to women and taking steps for their financial inclusion.



President Dr Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation of Women Business Network, led by Ms Sam Ali Dada, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



RAWALPINDI: Vendors displaying old vehicles' engines to attract the customers in shop at Chah Sultan.

Ahsan Iqbal briefs Chinese companies on govt latest steps to facilitate investment

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal briefed the Chinese companies on the latest steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate investment and stated that Phase II of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was increasing the bilateral cooperation in industrial, infrastructure and information technology sectors.

The minister hosted a dinner for the Chinese Companies working in Pakistan on CPEC-related

projects, in Beijing.

The dinner was organized as part of celebrations of the Decade of CPEC (2013-23) to acknowledge the contributions of Chinese enterprises and companies in Pakistan's development through CPEC-related projects.

Addressing the participants, he also emphasized on business-to-business collaboration would be the hallmark of this phase of CPEC.

The minister also highlighted that the Government of Pakistan had for-

PBF commends govt's endeavours of renewing agribusiness area

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) lauding Green Pakistan Initiative said that the country's second green revolution will pave the way for progress and prosperity besides attracting massive foreign direct investment.

Vice President PBF, Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad, in interaction with APP on Tuesday, said that the government's historic initiative and the Pakistan Army's special focus on revolutionising the agricul-

UVAS holds stakeholder discussion on livestock development

LAHORE (APP): The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore in collaboration with the Punjab Agriculture Research Board (PARB) arranged a discussion on livestock development and research at City Campus on Tuesday.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmed and Chief Executive (PARB) Dr Abid Mehmood co-chaired the meeting and sought suggestions and technical inputs from stakeholders and identified priority researchable areas for development of the livestock sector and enhancing profitability of poor livestock farming community in the country. Representatives of dairy industry, stakeholders from public and private organizations, researchers, faculty members from different education institutions and professionals were also present. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmed sought suggestions from participants on future necessities of research & development for the livestock sector.

Pakistan eyes GCC's \$40 bln investment in agri sector in 5 yrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the government aimed to fetch investment of billions of dollars from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries into the country's food and agriculture sector.

In a tweet, he said, the GCC countries import food items and agriculture products to the tune of \$40 billion annually.

Sharif said the step would be taken under the supervision of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), for which

the ground has been prepared.

In the next four to five years, he said, there would be an investment of approximately \$40 billion in addition to the creation of four million new jobs.

The prime minister mentioned that at the national seminar on agriculture and food security held Monday, he stressed the importance of revitalizing agriculture as a harbinger of the second Green Revolution.

"The future holds the promise of departing from loans to building a resilient economy, which stands on its internal strengths," he said. "Together, we will make it happen."

Rupee gains Rs 1.24 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained Rs 1.24 against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 278.56 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.80. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 282 and Rs 284.5 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 17 paise to close at Rs 306.75 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.58, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Chinese, PCJCCI discuss low-cost energy projects

LAHORE (APP): A Chinese delegation from Huzhou visited Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) to discuss the scope of investment in low-cost energy projects here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Tuesday. The delegation was headed by Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co.

On this occasion, PCJCCI President Moazzam Ghurki said, "We are fully confident that the future of China-Pakistan relationship is broad and bright." He said that low-priced energy was produced in China through incineration of waste materials. This model could prove to be a solution to energy crisis and environmental pollution in Pakistan. He also said that many Chinese companies were willing to invest in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) incineration for power generation. Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co said that in Pakistan about 3,000 MW electricity could be generated using agricultural residue and municipal solid waste.

PM launches Laptop Scheme for KP students, inaugurates Fata University

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here Tuesday launched the Prime Minister National Laptop Scheme for the talented students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including merged areas enabling them to continue their studies and contemporary research.

The laptop distribution ceremony was held at Governor House and attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan, Federal Min-

ister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syad Akram Durani, Special Assistant for Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima, PM Adviser Engr Amir Muqam, Federal and Provincial Ministers, Chairman HEC and students in large number.

The prime minister distributed laptops among the position holder students of different universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif said that the laptops scheme was launched for all the talented students of the country including KP that was being distributed strictly on merit. No favouritism or nepotism would be tolerated in its distribution, he added.

The prime minister said that 100,000 laptops would be distributed among students in the country this year. A total of one million laptops were distributed so far among students under the PM scheme in the country.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman in a group photo with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi along with his cabinet members after meeting.

Dr Jamal expresses annoyance over SSH's poor management

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir on Tuesday expressed annoyance over the poor management at the Social Security Hospital (SSH) Rawalpindi and apprised the Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi of the situation.

During a visit to SSH, he directed the relevant officials to utilize the available resources judiciously as the patients were suffered and delayed in treatment due to mismanagement.

The minister warned the hospital's administration to improve the management of the hospital within a week or else strict action would be taken against them.

Dr Jamal Nasir took rounds of the emergency, OPD, laboratory, X-rays room and other parts of the hospital.

He interacted with the patients and asked about the treatment facilities and the doctor's and hospital staff's attitude.

Meeting of District Peace Committee held in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): A meeting of the peace committee of Sukkur district was convened at Commissioner's office Sukkur on Tuesday and chaired by Deputy Commissioner Sukkur Dr Shahzad Thaheem.

The meeting was attended by SSP, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Assistant Commissioners (ACs), commissioner, representatives from the district administration, peace committee members, and license holders of majalis and processions were also present. The

objective of the meeting was to ensure public peace and security during Muharram.

The meeting underscored the necessity of implementing enhanced security measures at Imambargahs, including security checks, walk-through gates, metal detectors, and the installation of CCTV cameras.

The activation and involvement of peace committees were emphasized as crucial components in upholding peace and tranquility.

World Population day celebrated in Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): World Population Day was observed in the district, like in other parts of the country on Tuesday. District Health Office Sukkur with USAID Global health supply chain observed the day. A walk was planned at District Health Office where people from various Walks of life including District Health Officer Sukkur, Agha Samiullah, Dr Javed Talpur, doctors, nurses, Lady Health Workers Lady Health Visitors and many other participated. Speakers highlighted that population is a great asset but at the same time if we don't utilize its potential it becomes a liability.

HMC passes budget of Rs 4.0113 billion

HYDERABAD (APP): The maiden session of the newly elected members of the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (HMC), was held in Mumtaz Mirza Auditorium instead of the HMC hall here on Tuesday and approved the budget of Rs 4.0113 billion.

The newly elected Mayor Kashif Ali Shoro presided over the session and presented the day's 5-point agenda.

The Deputy Mayor Sagheer Qureshi and Municipal Commissioner Anis Ahmed Dasti were also present on the occasion be-

sides hundreds of elected and reserved seats local government representatives in the House of 240.

Speaking on the occasion, the Mayor condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden. He assured he would work hard to come to the expectations of the people who elected him as the mayor.

"The people of Hyderabad have elected me with a huge mandate to serve the city. I will try to employ all my abilities to serve," he assured.

The mayor vowed to undertake development

works in all parts of Hyderabad. The session also passed 2 resolutions condemning the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and the May 9 attacks on military installations by supporters of a political party.

The 5-point agenda introduced by the mayor included the introduction of the members; approval for the fiscal budget 2023-24; forming the council's committees; desilting of the drains before rainfall; and presentation of 2 resolutions. The session also gave its nod to the budget 2022-23.

Awareness walk arranged on World Population Day

LARKANA (APP): An awareness walk was organized by the District Population Welfare Department Larkana to mark World Population Day on Tuesday. The walk was led by the District officer Population Welfare department Larkana Karim Bux Bhutto, Dr. Muhammad Ayub Bhutto, Dr. Jamila Qureshi, Safdar Soomro, District Manager Mary Stopes Society Farman Ali Barro officials of the Population

Welfare Department.

It was largely participated by doctors, notables, para-medical staff, lady health workers, female and male mobilizers, social workers, students, and others.

The walk started from the Dargah Qaim Shah Bukhari Larkana and marched all the important thoroughfares of the Larkana city and concluded in front of Larkana Press Club.



HYDERABAD: Women and children belong to Oadh tribe hold a protest against demolishing their makeshifts during an anti-encroachment drive on Autobahn road.

Conference on foundational learning, early childhood care begins

KARACHI (APP): A two-day Conference on 'Foundation Learning and Early Childhood Care & Education in Emergencies' has commenced at a local hotel here on Tuesday.

The conference has been organized by the Sindh School Education and Literacy Department in collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Sindh Minister for Health Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Education Minister Syed Ali Sardar Shah, Secretary Education Ghulam Akbar Laghari, Chief of Field Office UNICEF Sindh Prem Bahadur Chand, Dr. Junaid Samo Chief Pro-

gram Manager RSU, Dr. Fauzia Khan and representatives from UNICEF, the World Bank, Save the Children, Idara e Taleem-o-Agahi, AKU, and other national and international organizations attended the event the first day.

The conference is aimed at addressing the challenges faced by the education system in Sindh and Pakistan. The speakers on the occasion said that COVID-19, the devastating floods, which washed away whole villages across Sindh, Balochistan, KPK and some districts of Punjab, left more than 2 million children in Pakistan inaccessible to education and damaged nearly 27,000 schools in the country.

These emergencies emphasize the urgency to build more resilience and preparedness for such crises and to ensure growing investment and system strengthening to the continuum of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) and Foundation Learning in lower primary (up to grade 3).

They said that the growing investment in these two sub-sectors where a majority of the enrolled children are present will create sustainable lifelong learning possible. The Foundational Learning crisis in Pakistan has solid evidence.

Addressing the conference, the Provincial Health Minister, Dr. Azra Pechuho, said that numer-

ous schools in the province were severely affected during the 2022 floods, resulting in extensive delays in their reconstruction.

Consequently, the education of children attending these schools has been disrupted for a period of 4 to 5 years, which are crucial years for their learning and development.

It is imperative for us to embrace e-learning and virtual education as we bring children back into the education system.

Bringing out-of-school children back into the learning environment is crucial. During the COVID-19 pandemic, children remained confined to their homes, and we made efforts

to ensure their immunization.

Speaking at the conference, the Provincial Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah emphasized the role of mothers as the first and best early childhood educators.

Early childhood education teachers play a vital role in guiding children towards proper education and the right path, just like mothers.

The minister expressed his disappointment at the fact that no philanthropist had come forward to help in constructing schools, unlike Mir Ghulam Muhammad Talpur, who built schools in Tando Bagho during the 1920s.

International News

Turkey gives green light to Swedish NATO membership bid

Monitoring Desk
VILNIUS: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan agreed to forward to parliament Sweden's bid to join the NATO military alliance, appearing to end months of drama over an issue that had strained the bloc as war has raged in Ukraine.

Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership last year, abandoning their policies of military non-alignment that had lasted through the decades of the Cold War in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While Finland's NATO membership was green-lighted in April, Turkey and Hungary have yet to clear Sweden's bid.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy says lack of timeframe for membership 'absurd'

Monitoring Desk
VILNIUS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said it would be "absurd" if NATO leaders gathering for a summit on Tuesday did not offer his country a timeframe for membership, after the alliance head said it would send Kyiv a "positive message".

Kyiv is pushing to be swiftly allowed into the Western alliance, bound together by mutual security guarantees. But divisions among NATO's 31 members mean there will not be a date or straightforward invitation for Ukraine to join.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Kyiv would get more military aid and security guarantees, an easing of formal conditions to join, as well as a new format of cooperation with the alliance.

Stockholm has been working to join the bloc at the alliance's summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, which begins on Tuesday.

"I'm glad to announce ... that President Erdogan has agreed to forward the accession protocol for Sweden to the grand national assembly as soon as possible, and work closely with the assembly to ensure ratification," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference, describing it as a "historic" step. He had convened Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson for several hours of talks on the eve of the summit as he sought to finally break the deadlock.



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson react during a meeting, on the eve of a NATO summit, in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar speaks during a press conference after the roundtable discussion between elected officials and Cuban activists about political prisoners at the Assault Brigade 2506 Museum.

South Korea, NATO to boost partnership on security, cyber threats

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea and NATO will expand cooperation on global security issues including Ukraine and North Korea their leaders said on Tuesday on the sidelines of NATO's annual meeting in Lithuania, the South Korean presidential office said.

President Yoon Suk Yeol arrived in Vilnius on Monday for the summit of NATO leaders, aiming to step up security ties in the

face of evolving nuclear threats from North Korea and tension over China.

Yoon said security in the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions were inseparable. "I came to institutionalise the cooperation framework by creating individually tailored partnership programmes, and to discuss cooperation on military intelligence and cyber areas," Yoon told NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Xi wants Russia, China to 'lead global governance reform'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Russia need to "lead the correct direction of global governance reform", according to Chinese President Xi Jinping, who hailed the two countries' partnership at a meeting with a top Russian politician in Beijing on Monday, state media reported.

Beijing and Moscow have ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts in recent years, with exchanges only growing closer

since Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

On Monday, Xi met Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of the Federation Council — the Russian parliament's upper house — at the Great Hall of the People, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Xi said the development of relations between the two countries was "a strategic choice made by both countries based on the fundamental interests of their respec-

tive countries and peoples", according to CCTV.

"Both sides also need to strengthen communication and collaboration within multilateral mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the BRICS countries, lead the correct direction of global governance reform, and safeguard the common interests of emerging market countries and developing countries," the statement continued.

Indonesia seizes Iranian-flagged tanker suspected of illegal oil transshipment

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Indonesia's coast guard said on Tuesday it has seized an Iranian-flagged supertanker suspected of involvement in the illegal transshipment of crude oil and vowed to strengthen maritime patrols.

A "shadow" fleet of tankers carrying oil from sanctioned Iran, Russia and Venezuela are transferring their cargoes in the Singapore Strait to avoid detection, according to a Reuters analysis earlier this year.

France to send long-range missiles to Ukraine-Macron

Monitoring Desk
VILNIUS: France will join Britain in supplying long-range SCALP missiles to Ukraine, a move that allows Ukrainian forces to hit Russian troops and supply dumps deep behind the front lines.

Speaking on arrival at a summit of the 31-member NATO alliance in Lithuania, French President Emmanuel Macron said he had decided to boost military aid to Ukraine to help its counteroffensive.

Kremlin says Turkiye should have no illusions over its EU bid

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Turkiye should be under no illusion that it might one day be allowed to join the European Union, the Kremlin said on Tuesday, as Moscow stressed its desire for strong relations with Ankara despite disagreements, including over Nato enlargement.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was responding to a question about Nato member Turkiye's decision to lift its

opposition to Sweden joining the alliance on the eve of a two-day Nato summit in Lithuania.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has sought to maintain cordialties with both Moscow and Kyiv during the 16-month war in Ukraine. He has refused to join Western sanctions against Russia over the invasion and has invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit Turkiye in August.

Hungarian farm minister to visit Turkey for talks on Black Sea grain deal

Monitoring Desk
BUDAPEST: Hungary's farm minister will go to Turkey on Tuesday for talks with his Turkish counterpart about extending the deal that allows Ukraine to export grain from its Black Sea ports, the minister said on Facebook. The deal is due to expire next week. Moscow has said it sees no grounds to extend it beyond July 17.

The United Nations and Turkey brokered the Black Sea deal between Russia and Ukraine in July 2022.

Israel occupation makes Palestinian territories 'open-air prison' - UN expert

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: A United Nations expert on Tuesday said Israel had transformed the occupied Palestinian territories into an "open-air prison" through widespread detentions of Palestinians, an assertion swiftly dismissed by Israel.

Francesca Albanese, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied territories, told reporters in Geneva that Israel had carried out widespread, systematic and arbitrary deten-

tion of Palestinians since the 1967 Middle East war. "There is no other way to define the regime that Israel has imposed on the Palestinians - which is apartheid by default - other than an open-air prison," Albanese said at a briefing for journalists.

"By deeming all Palestinians as a potential security threat, Israel is blurring the line between its own security and the security of its annexation plan."

Pakistan, China always stand together, extend unflinching support: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that as 'Iron Brothers' and old friends, Pakistan and China always stood together in difficult times and had extended unflinching support to each other on issues of mutual concern.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Charge d'affaires of the People's Republic of China Pang Chunxue, who called on him.

The prime minister felicitated the Communist Party of China on its 102nd anniversary and thanked the CPC leadership for its firm support to Pakistan's sovereignty, integrity and economic development, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Recalling his substan-

tive interactions with President Xi Jinping and more recently with Premier Li Qiang, the prime minister appreciated the strong personal commitment of the Chinese leadership for strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries.

Noting the upward trajectory in Pakistan-China ties and deepening economic and financial relationship, the prime minister thanked China for its support for Pakistan's economic stability and expressed his firm commitment to further deepen development cooperation between the two countries under the rubric of Global Development Initiative and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Conveying the best wishes and felicitations of the Chinese government for Pakistan, Pang underscored

that Pakistan was an all-weather strategic cooperative partner of China and a time-tested friend.

She highlighted that the Chinese government and the Communist Party of China accorded a special place to Pakistan in its neighborhood diplomacy and looked forward to further deepening relationship in all fields of bilateral cooperation.

Thanking the prime minister for his virtual participation in the first High-Level Forum on Global Development Initiative (GDI), Chinese Charge d' Affaires expressed China's resolve to implement GDI projects in Pakistan as envisaged by the leadership of two countries.

She further underscored that CPEC was a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

CM approves additional release of Rs. 323 mn for cancer ward in SZ Hospital

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has given approval of Rs. 323.708 million to the Indus Hospital for construction of the cancer ward in Sheikh Zaid Hospital Quetta.

According to an official hand out issued here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister approved the additional release of funds on the summary sent by the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Government of Balochistan.

It may be mentioned here that a memorandum of

understanding had been signed between Health Department, Government of Balochistan and Indus Hospital Karachi for the period of five years i.e., 2020-21 to 2025-26 so as to provide better healthcare facilities to the people in Balochistan.

The initiative is aimed at providing an effective system of health services delivery, which is accessible, equitable and culturally acceptable, cheaper and sustainable.

It is also meant for providing necessary health care services to the people and improving their health and quality of life.



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

ECNEC okays six projects including solarization of agriculture tube wells

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Tuesday approved six projects including "Prime Minister's National Programme for Solarization of Agriculture Tube Wells" aimed at facilitating the farming community and achieving food security in the country.

The ECNEC meeting, chaired by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, accorded the approval for tube wells solarization in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan at a cost of Rs 377,236.275 million in three years.

"Phase-I of the project will have Rs 90 billion including Rs 30 billion of PSDP and equivalent share by provincial governments as well as beneficiary

farmers for the financial year 2023-24. This project is to enhance agricultural productivity through clean and green energy by converting the existing 100,000 tube wells into solar PV system," a news release said.

The project is to be executed by the Ministry of National Food Security through the Federal Water Management Cell (FWMC) and Provincial Departments of Agriculture.

The ECNEC also considered and approved a project titled "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Industrial Support Project (RIISP)" to be executed by the KP government in District Bajur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, North Waziristan, Orakzai, South Waziristan and erstwhile Frontier Regions at a cost

of Rs 110,700 million including IDA (International Development Association) loan of \$300 million from World Bank with provincial government share of Rs 29,700 million (in kind).

The project would be completed in two phases with a six-year period each completing in 2023-2029 and 2029-2031.

The ECNEC also considered a revised PC-I of an ongoing project of the Sindh government titled "Sindh Solar Energy Project (SSEP)" executed in the province by its Energy Department at a revised cost of Rs 27,418.13 million including FEC (Foreign Exchange Component) of Rs 24,265.57 million.

The project is to be financed through World Bank (WB) loan i.e. IDA credit of \$100 million (95.2%) and \$5 million by Govt. of Sindh (4.7%).



ISLAMABAD: II - Pang Chunxue, The Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Land to be transferred in name of Journalist Housing Society soon, assures Roshan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The senior Member Board of Revenue (MBR), Roshan Ali Sheikh has assured that the land allocated for the housing scheme of media persons would be transferred in the name of Journalist Housing Society soon.

This assurance was made by the senior MBR while speaking to the President Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ), Irfan Saeed and former President Quetta Press Club, Razaur Rehman during a meeting here on Tuesday.

Also present on the

occasion was Director General Public Relations, Kamran Asad.

It may be mentioned that the 20 acres of land had been allocated for the housing scheme of media persons by the Government of Balochistan, however, the land was transferred in the name of Information department.

On this, the BUJ President had made request to the Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo to transfer the land in the name of housing society so that there is no legal lacuna in this regard in future.

PM praises IB's role, performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday appreciated the performance and role of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) in strengthening the country's solidarity, sovereignty and thwarting threats posed by local and foreign elements.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with IB Director General Fawad Asadullah Khan who presented a one-year performance report of the Bureau, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He expressed his satisfaction over the performance of the IB.

Mariyum terms news item published about Azam as false, baseless

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that the news item published in Friday Times about Azam Chaudhry was false and baseless.

In a tweet, she said that Azam Chaudhry was not a Pakistan Television Corporation employee and had never been a PTV employee.

She said that he has only been a member of an issues-based analyst pool for PTV. He has not been removed from the pool and has not been asked to leave.

She clarified that nothing of the sort has been communicated to him and he is part of the PTV Lahore analysts pool as she was writing this tweet.

She said that the views and opinions of the said journalist were known to the government at the time he was invited to the press conference.

"If the government wanted to suppress his voice or questions, he would not have been invited and given an opportunity to ask his questions. The Prime Minister answered his questions in detail," she said.

The minister said that she also answered his questions. She said that the PM spent a significant amount of time answering questions from various reporters at Governor's House that day.

The minister said that unlike the previous PTI regime and its fascist PM, who was declared a Press Freedom Predator by Reporters Without Borders, PM Shehbaz and the present government firmly believed in the freedom of media. The PTI government used to only allow selected reporters and journalists to its fascist PM's press conferences, she remarked.

The present government ensured that PM Shehbaz Sharif's press conferences are open to all reporters and journalists.

The minister said that this story was published without taking the government's point of view which was unprofessional and fell short of journalistic ethics and standards.

176th meeting of IBCC to be held from July 13

QUETTA (APP): The 176th meeting of the Inter-Board Committee for Chairmen (IBCC) comprising education boards across the country to be held here from July 13 to 14 to achieve a fair measure of uniformity of academic evaluation and curricular standards.

Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Quetta will host the national level meeting of education boards for the first time in history, said a news release issued here on Tuesday.

Chairman of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Ijaz Azeem Baloch presided the meeting of officers of the board in connection with the preparations regarding the holding of the IBCC meeting.

He said that a total of 21 agenda points including issuance of result card under a uniform format, implementation of grading system instead of marks, teaching of Holy Quran for Muslim students in matric and intermediate in the light of Supreme Court decision.

Decisions related to administrative matters including the election of the Chairman of the Inter-Board Sports Committee will be discussed in the meeting. He said that the implementation of the grading system would end the marking race and students would be able to get positions based on merit. He said the grading system was operative in the federal board, but the remote areas of the country were facing difficulties due to the lack of basic infrastructure.

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TEHRAN: Pakistan Delegation led by Senator Saifullah Abro is attending Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) standing committee on Budget and Planning.

Masood Khan urges Pak-American doctors to stay united, lauds contribution to socio-economic sectors

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S., Masood Khan, has commended the contribution of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (AAPNA) towards the uplift of Pakistan's health, education and economic sectors, with a clarion call for unity among Pakistani diaspora as their motherland faces challenges.

He was addressing AAPNA's annual convention—the 46th in the series which began in 1976—as it concluded in Dallas, Texas, on Sunday night, ac-

ording to a press release of the Pakistani embassy released on Monday. Thousands of Pakistani doctors participated in the week-long convention, which organized a range of events, including showcasing Pakistani products and culture.

"We have one person, one identity, one flag, one anthem. We are one nation. There should be no fissures or divisions among the Pakistani community," the Pakistani envoy said, adding that any differences must be bridged, not widened.

Rasheed says: Nation looking towards ECP for decision on general elections

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed stated that nation was looking towards the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for decision on upcoming general elections as there were no concrete indications that they will happen on time.

Taking to twitter, the former interior minister said with just four weeks left for the completion of the assembly's tenure.

Govt to ensure provision of best healthcare facilities to people: DC

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Kohlu Ijaz Ahmed Jaffar on Tuesday said that the provincial government was taking all possible measures to provide better healthcare facilities to people in remote areas of the province.

He expressed these views while visiting Basic Health Unit (BHU) Shaheed Jhangirabad. He also checked the attendance of paramedical staff and inspected the center, saying that people would get health facilities from the establishment of telehealth center.

He said that a comprehensive strategy was being made to completely ensure the attendance of paramedical staff for the provision of quality healthcare facilities to people in the area saying that no negligence would be tolerated in this regard.

Govt challenges stay order halting cypher investigation on PTI chief's request

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government on Tuesday filed a separate application in the Lahore High Court (LHC) against the stay order that was issued to halt the investigation of the cypher in the request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

The government's legal representative argued that the high court's decision to suspend the unilateral implementation of the investigation, without granting notice or a hearing to the government, was unjust.

Furthermore, the court ruling also resulted in the halting of the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) progress in the case.

In light of these concerns, the government requested the withdrawal of the stay order that was issued on December 6, 2022, specifically regarding the cypher investigation.

In response to the application, the court issued a notice to Imran Khan, summoning him to respond to the government's petition. The court has set a deadline of July 17 for the submission of his reply.

Sheikh Haseena sends gift of mangoes to Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (Online): Bangladeshi Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Haseena has sent mangoes as a gift to her counterpart PM Shehbaz Sharif. According to Bangladesh media report, the High Commission of Bangladesh in Islamabad handed over 1500 kg of mangoes to the protocol officer of Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bangladeshi High Commissioner has said that this gift of Prime Minister will add a new dimension to the diplomatic relations.

Asadullah Baloch says Agriculture deptt initiates kitchen gardening project, distributing plants, seeds

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives Asadullah Baloch said the agriculture department has initiated kitchen gardening project in the province, distributing plants and seeds among local people to overcome the looming food security challenges.

He said the department has also devised various teams to create awareness among the dwellers of the province to grow fresh and nutritious vegetables, fruits, and spices (Condiments) in their homes.

The agriculture department has encouraging kitchen gardening and in this regard we provide training

to different groups, farmers, individuals and distribute seedlings as well, the minister said.

The local people had expressed a great interest in kitchen gardening and used their home's terrace for growing vegetables and fruits. He further said that the latest technologies would be introduced to enhance the productivity of agriculture in the province.

Asadullah Baloch said the department through floriculture is ensuring the provision of flowers to the masses. The department has produced 10000 plants in nurseries and distributed on subsidies rate to emphasize the importance of trees.

Food dept. contradicts news

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Food Department Balochistan has contradicted news gone viral on the social media about selection of a Hindu candidate for the post of Pesh Imam in the department.

According to an official handout issued here on Tuesday, it has been explained that the candidate had applied on line in the Food department.

However, neither that candidate was selected nor shortlisted.



GWADAR: Customs Authority shows seized drugs to media at Pasi Customs House in City.

PMA Balochistan rejects selection of non local staff in WHO PEI Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Balochistan, a leading medical organization committed to promoting healthcare excellence, firmly emphasizes the significance of ensuring local representation in the World Health Organization Polio Eradication Initiative (WHO PEI) program. In addition, the PMA Balochistan would like to highlight the prolonged vacancy of the Team Lead position, which has been left unfulfilled for the past six months, with all operations currently being overseen by the Islamabad office.

The WHO PEI program plays a crucial role in eradicating polio from Pa-

kistan, and the PMA Balochistan acknowledges the efforts and support provided by the World Health Organization in this mission. However, it is imperative to ensure that the program includes effective representation of local professionals who possess a deep understanding of the region's unique challenges, cultural nuances, and local healthcare infrastructure.

Spokesperson said of the Pakistan Medical Association Balochistan, states, "We firmly believe that local professionals have an intrinsic understanding of the region's healthcare landscape, and their expertise and insights are invaluable in the successful implemen-

tation of the WHO PEI program. It is essential that the voice of Balochistan is heard and taken into account when making decisions that directly impact our communities." Additionally, the PMA Balochistan raises concerns regarding the extended vacancy of the Team Lead position within the WHO PEI program in the region. The absence of a dedicated leader has led to operational challenges and delays in critical decision-making processes. The association urges the authorities to expedite the process of filling this position with an international national staff member, as per the previous practice.



QUETTA: A delegation of opposition members meeting with Principal to Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Gichki. Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem and Secretary Higher & Technical Education Lal Jan Jaffar are also present