

Independent

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Decides in meeting of senior leadership

BAP to fully participate in general elections

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) has decided to take wholehearted part in the upcoming general elections in the country.

The decision to this effect was made in a meeting of senior leadership of BAP, which was chaired by the party's president and Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo here on Thursday.

The meeting was also attended by the Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Chief Organizer of BAP and Speaker, Balochistan Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamal besides the parliamentary leader of the party in National Assembly, Mir Khalid Khan Magsi, Senator Naseebullah Bazai and Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir.

The meeting also held discussion and consultation

on the caretaker set-up besides discussing the organizational matters of the party.

It was decided that the candidates of party would be fielded in all constituencies. Similarly, it was also decided to make alliance with other political parties and seat adjustment. The parliamentary board would be formed for distribution of tickets, it was decided further.

The meeting also decided to conduct a party meeting on July 26 to review the formation of parliamentary board and other party matters.

The members of national and provincial assemblies and Senate were directed to ensure their participation in the meeting.

The senior party leadership expressed complete confidence on its central President.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir attended the seminar as guest of honor.

Bilawal denies arms support to Ukraine Pakistan, Ukraine agree to expand cooperation in areas of mutual benefit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ukraine on Thursday agreed to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual benefit including trade, investment, agriculture, food security, defense cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts.

"In our meeting today, we agreed on the importance of regular dialogue and engagements to further strengthen the bilateral ties. We have also agreed to hold meetings of various institutional mechanisms in due course. We will continue to build on our conversation to add more substance to our relations," Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a joint press conference here along with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. He said Pakistan also affected by this dispute and we are not providing any kind of arms to Ukraine. These kind of news are fake and misleading. He said building bilateral trade and economic ties was a priority area for Pakistan. The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said the both sides agreed to reinventorize the bilateral mechanisms as both looked forward to holding the inaugural meeting of the Ukrainian and Pakistani Commission of the economic cooperation.

Pointing to an important issue of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Dmytro Kuleba said during the meeting he briefed the minister about the Russian withdrawal from this initiative.

PM vows to boost IT exports to \$25b; assures all-out facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was required to boost its IT exports to \$25 billion and investment to \$20 billion within a span of two to three years, as the government had already devised a mechanism to ensure one-window operations to facilitate the investors.

"This is something doable. This is difficult but not impossible. We have to achieve this target under all circumstances through your support and expertise," the prime minister said addressing an information technology (IT) seminar and launching ceremony of multiple IT-related projects.

He told the gathering of diplomats, IT experts, investors, entrepreneurs, professors and students that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would sit with them to discuss issues and find out solutions, and move forward like a corporate culture. He said Pakistan was rich with immense youth potential having modern skills, particularly IT, but the export figure hovering around \$2.5 billion did not justify it — owing to lack of support and archaic procedures. Citing the example of a neighbouring country that had excelled in the IT field and its exports, the prime minister said Pakistan was also positioned to claim its space.



ISLAMABAD: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari address a joint press conference, in Federal Capital.



QUETTA: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo. Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamal, MNA Mir Khalid Khan Magsi, Senator Naseebullah Bazai and Senator Abdul Qadir are also present.

Quetta lawyer murder case: SC directs PTI Chairman to appear in person on July 24

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed chairman PTI to appear in person before it on July 24 in Quetta lawyer murder case.

The court while accepting plea of Prosecutor General (PG) Balochistan seeking time for filing reply adjourned the hearing of the case till next Monday.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Khan Afridi took

up for hearing petition of chairman PTI Thursday.

During the hearing of the case, Justice Yahya Afridi inquired from Latif Khosa, counsel for chairman PTI has the petitioner to surrender before court by appearing in person for seeking relief. Ask chairman PTI to appear before the court in person.

Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi inquired can chairman PTI appear today.

Terrorists' attack at Bara foiled; two cops martyred, two attackers killed

President, PM and others condemn suicide blast in Bara

PESHAWAR (APP): The police here Thursday foiled a terrorist attack in Tehsil Bara by killing two suicide bombers in the encounter while two cops were martyred and six others got injured.

The police spokesman, Muhammad Asim told APP that constables namely Tayyab and Noor Bahadar were martyred during the encounter with terrorists and six cops and two civilians received injuries.

The injured constables are Jamil, Hadi, Bakht, Nawaz, Zubair and Gul Said.

He said two civilians also sustained injuries.

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Inspector General of Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Gandapur told media persons that the police fought valiantly and killed two suicide bombers in an attempt to enter the Bara Tehsil compound in district Khyber.

He said two suicide bombers tried to enter the compound through the main gate and its backside but the police personnel on duty stopped them and killed them on the spot.

Due to police firing, he said the vests of the suicide bombers exploded and caused huge explosion.



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly and Chairman of Balochistan National Party, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Army to be deployed across country for Muharram security

ISLAMABAD (Online): Home Ministry has decided to deploy army across country in Muharram.

It has been said in a letter issued by Home Ministry that decision has been made to deploy army across country under article 245. Home Minister has issued the letter to Gilgit and Azad Kashmir government including 4 provinces. Home Ministry said that on the request of the four provinces, the army has been deployed. The authorities in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, and Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir had sought the deployment of the military to control the law and order situation. Following up on their request, the Centre — under Article 245 of the Constitution — authorised the "deployment of army troops/assets and civil armed forces troops/assets" to ensure peace. The holy month, marking the beginning of the new Islamic year 1445 AH, will begin today (July 20) and the Youm-e-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday).

ECP announces to hold next elections on old delimitations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced to hold the next general elections on the old delimitations.

Talking to the media on Thursday, ECP Special Secretary Zafar Iqbal said that the elections would be held before October 11 if the assembly is dissolved on the completion of its tenure on August 12.

"We are fully ready for the elections. We have purchased water mark paper. We are in contact with all institutions. We have approached the judiciary for the appointment of the DROs and ROs," he announced.

ECP Secretary Umar Hameed said that the commission had made arrangements to hold the elections on the old delimitations.

"We will make the decision as per the law and the constitution if the new census is notified," he maintained.

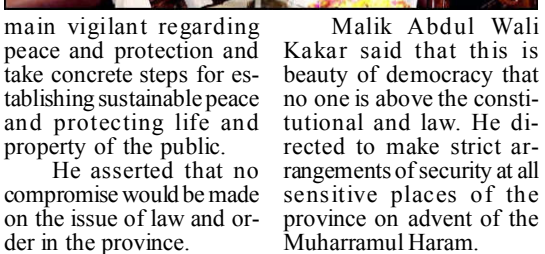
He said that the ECP is ready to hold the elections in 90 or 60 days. "The elections will be held under the new electoral reforms," he added.

Governor stresses for ensuring law & order

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the provincial government authorities and law enforcement agencies to remain vigilant regarding peace and protection and take concrete steps for establishing sustainable peace and protecting life and property of the public.

He asserted that no compromise would be made on the issue of law and order in the province.

The Governor was speaking to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Saleh Muhammad Nassar, who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.



Malik Abdul Wali Khan said that this is beauty of democracy that no one is above the constitutional and law. He directed to make strict arrangements of security at all sensitive places of the province on advent of the Muharramul Haram.

IHC declares imposition of Super Tax as illegal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Accepting the petitions filed by various companies, the Islamabad High Court (IHC), while pronouncing a reserved verdict on Thursday, declared the imposition of billions of rupees of Super Tax illegal. The court also declared all the notices issued for the recovery of the tax null and void. Similarly, it also declared section 4 of the Income Tax Ordinance illegal. In a detailed judgment, Justice Sardar Ishaq Khan also explained the court's objections to the section. Salman Akram Raja and Adnan Haider Randhawa represented the petitioners in the case.

Tensions between two warring groups Raisani initiates reconciliation efforts for ceasefire

QUETTA (APP): Former Chief Minister Balochistan Nawab Mohammad Aslam Raisani has initiated reconciliation efforts for the peaceful settlement of tribal tensions between two warring groups in the Wadh region of the province.

According to the spokesperson of Sarawan House, two armed groups each led by an MNA and local tribal chief are at arms for the last couple of days, creating law and order in the Wadh area of Khuzdar.

The spokesman said

the former CM has made a telephonic contact with Balochistan National Party chief and member of National Assembly Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal and tribal leader Mir Shafiqur Rahman Mengal and demanded a cessation of hostilities from both sides to reduce the tension. He also contacted Sardar Asad Mengal, Member of the Balochistan Assembly Mir Muhammad Akbar Mengal, and former Federal Minister Mir Naseer Ahmed Mengal to bring the tense situation of Wadh back to normal.

Balochistan Assembly voices concern over law & order situation in Harnai, Wadh

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly has voiced concern over the law and order situation in Harnai and Wadh area of KHuzdar. While the session was resumed with Chairman of Panel, Qadir Ali Nayal in the chair on Thursday evening, the senior Parliamentary leader of Balochistan National Party (BNP), Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani on an adjournment motion pointed out that the situation is being spoiled in Wadh intentionally. The acting President and other important personalities visited Wadh, but still the situation is not good there. Two armed groups are up against one another, adding he pointed out. He also pointed out that shells were fired and fell in a government college in Wadh inuring some people. Earlier, on his adjournment motion tabled on July 17's session of the assembly, the MPA Nasrullah Zairay pointed out the people are disturbed over the law and order situation in Harnai and Shirani. He urged the chair to get the recommendations of the committee implemented in this regard.

On the adjournment motion, BNP's MPA Sanaulah Baloch said that lawlessness is being created in the province intentionally, as such we would have to see our internal faults.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Lala Rasheed Baloch and MPs Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer, Asghar Khan Achakzai, Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani, Nasarullah Khan Zeeray, Mir Zabid Ali Reki, Sana Baloch and Maulvi Noorullah expressing their views during Balochistan Assembly session.

CM concerned about situation in Wadh; appeals both groups to demonstrate tolerance

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has expressed concern over the situation in Wadh area of Khuzdar.

In an official statement issued here on Thursday, it was mentioned that the Chief Minister has been getting himself acquainted about the current situation of Wadh.

He also appealed to both groups to demonstrate patience and tolerance. He said that it is also responsibility of the tribal and political elders along with the government to maintain law and order situation of the area.

The Chief Minister



KABUL: Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani called on Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

Taliban assure Pakistan Won't allow use of Afghan soil against anyone

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: Taliban on Wednesday told Pakistan that Kabul will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against another country.

Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani, who arrived in Kabul on Wednesday to discuss the latest security situation in the region.

"[Muttaqi] said that Afghans will never harm anyone; we will allow none to use our soil against other country; & our efforts will always be directed at working for regional security & stability," Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman for the interim foreign ministry, said in a tweet. Durrani visited Kabul after Islamabad urged the Taliban to take action against terrorists.

Akhtar Mengal says: Attempt being made to spoil circumstances in Wadh under conspiracy

Independent Report
QUETTA: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that an attempt is being made to spoil circumstances in Wadh under a conspiracy.

While speaking to the media persons on Thursday, the President BNP said that miscreants have made the life of people of Wadh miserable for last several days.

He said that two persons were injured in firing incident took place in Wadh the other day. The injured are included a child as well, he added. Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the armed groups have been given free hand to play with the life of people and spoil the situation in Wadh.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

IMF report

The IMF's staff report on its new, short-term bailout loan of \$3bn for Pakistan is a damning indictment of the Shehbaz Sharif government's economic and financial policies that deepened the trust gap between Islamabad and the lender, and pushed the country towards the precipice in the last nine months. Policy missteps and breach of the previous Extended Fund Facility programme had compelled the lender to halt the disbursement of funds, closing the door on other multilateral and bilateral financing.

The IMF document, released on Tuesday, also spells out the programme's goals, many of which, such as increased energy prices, will directly burden the people. It blames the finance ministry and State Bank for their frequent tinkering with the market-based exchange rate mechanism, leading to the growth of a large foreign exchange black market. It is also critical of the central bank for resisting a timely increase in interest rates. That is not all. The report points out that the government balked at maintaining fiscal discipline, cutting non-essential spending, broadening the tax net, controlling the drivers of the power sector's circular debt, and improving SOE governance.

In view of its experience with Pakistani authorities, the IMF has warned that continuation of the new programme will depend on the implementation of fiscal discipline, a return to a market-determined exchange rate and proper functioning of the foreign exchange market, a tight monetary policy aimed at disinflation, and progress on structural reforms, particularly with regard to the energy sector, SOEs and climate resilience.

The report also cautions against the "exceptionally high" downside risks to the Stand-by Arrangement goals emanating from a tense political environment and potential deviation from agreed policies. Such risks could undermine the programme's implementation, and jeopardise macro-financial and external stability and debt sustainability, leading Pakistan to seek foreign debt restructuring.

Additionally, it says that external financing risks remain high, and delays in disbursement of external financing from IFIs and bilateral creditors would endanger the fragile external balance given limited buffers. Spillovers from Russia's invasion of Ukraine through high food and fuel prices, and tighter global financial conditions continue to put pressure on the budget.

Highlighting Pakistan's large gross financing needs of \$28.3bn, including the \$6.4bn current account deficit, during this fiscal year, it stresses that multilateral and bilateral support will remain critical for Pakistan beyond the upcoming elections and the SBA. It is a foregone conclusion that the next government will need another, longer-term IMF programme to resolve structural challenges and meet high external debt obligations over the next few years. For that to happen, the country has to achieve the SBA goals, come what may.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan have signed an agreement to build a 760-kilometer-long (472-mile-long) railway track connecting the three nations. The railroad would travel from Termez, Uzbekistan to Kharlachi, Pakistan via Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2027 at a cost of \$2.8 billion. The success of the rail link will depend on a number of factors, including the political stability of the region, the availability of financing, and the continued, unconditional, and willing cooperation of the three countries. Nonetheless, the potential advantages of the rail link are substantial, and the initiative has the potential to transform the region.

The concept of a rail connection between Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan dates back many years. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union proposed constructing a railroad connecting the three nations. Due to the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, however, the project was never completed. The ratification of the agreement on July 18 in Islamabad, in the presence of "high-ranking" railway officials from the three countries, brought the age-old concept to fruition. According to plan, the rail route will traverse Termez, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif and Logar provinces, and conclude in Pakistan via the Kharlachi border crossing in the Kurram tribal district near the Afghan border.

Reportedly, the financing for this 760 km railway track has not yet been finalized, however, the World Bank, the Asian Development

Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have all expressed interest in lending support to the project, but no formal commitments have been made. Russia has also said that it would be willing to assist in laying down the railway and supplying locomotives and rolling stock, provided the project is able to attract fundings. In the absence of any firm commitments from international financial institutions, it is possible that the signatory countries will have to fund it themselves which seems uphill task keeping in view the dilapidated financial outlook of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, but if financial arrangements are made, it would be a major boost to regional trade and economic development.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2027, and by 2030, trains will be able to transport up to 15 million tonnes of products annually. The line will facilitate both passenger and freight services, reduce cargo delivery periods between Uzbekistan and Pakistan by approximately five days and transport costs by at least 40 percent. With the signing of the protocol, it would begin the phases of meticulous planning, resource allocation, and project implementation, as well as a concerted, coordinated efforts to establish robust regional connectivity.

The project's strength rests in its capacity to stimulate regional trade and economic growth, generate employment, and provide cost-effective industrial raw materials and utilities to enhance the competitiveness of

industrial services and agricultural outputs. The project is expensive and may be difficult to finance, is likely to encounter security challenges, particularly while passing through Afghanistan, and may require years to complete. It will create numerous opportunities, including the possibility of linking with the Gwadar port, which would provide Central Asian countries with access to a warm-water port, and extending to other nations in the region.

It may also face hazards such as political instability in one or more of the involved countries and imminent economic challenges, such as a decline in global trade and a dearth of export substitutes.

This project would provide Pakistan with an efficient and time-saving way to export its agricultural products, such as wheat, sugar, rice, maize, and vegetables and fruits such as apples, oranges, tomatoes, and potatoes, dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, meat and poultry, such as beef, chicken, and lamb, and a variety of processed food products, including canned food, spices, frozen food, and snacks. Pakistan can export cotton, wool, and silk in the textile industry, as well as a variety of home appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and electronics besides sports goods and surgical instruments.

Uzbekistan is a major producer of cotton, which is used to create textiles such as clothing, home furnishings, and other products. In addition to cotton, Uzbekistan also produces grapes, melons,

and tomatoes. In addition, it is a significant producer of meat and dairy products, including beef, lamb, and milk. It grows wheat and other cereal grains. It also produces gold, silver, and copper, among other minerals. It has a developing manufacturing sector and produces a range of appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, and washing machines, as well as mobile phones, computers, and televisions, as well as a range of construction materials, including cement, steel, and lumber.

Afghanistan's mineral wealth allows it to export copper, iron, gold, and lithium for use as basic materials in the production of finished goods. In addition to being a significant producer of agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables, it can also export carpets and other similar items. Afghanistan has oil and gas reserves that could be used to produce gasoline, diesel, and aviation fuel for export to Pakistan and Uzbekistan, where they could be used to fuel automobiles, generators, and other machinery.

The rail link could also be connected to the strategically located Gwadar port in Pakistan for the benefit of the entire region and the globe by giving Central Asian countries access to a warm-water port and giving Pakistan a new route into Central Asia and beyond. Once fully operational, it would help reduce poverty by creating a significant number of employment opportunities in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the rail link, and its increased trade and transportation efficiency would make it more attractive to investors.

The signing of the contract occurs at an important time. The somewhat shaky peace in Afghanistan may have been a major factor in the other two countries' decision to move forward with the project, despite the fact that other nations view it with skepticism due to the unrecognized status of the interim Afghan government and its deliberate refusal to adhere to the Doha Agreement. Nonetheless, the region is presently experiencing a period of relative peace and stability, which has made the signing of this and other high-value projects such as CASA 1000 and TAPI gas pipeline possible.

The success of these essential initiatives will establish a regional ecosystem to promote economic industrial, trade and investments.

The success of the project will also depend on the strong political will of the states and should not be affected by the change of governments in the respective countries, the allocation of sufficient and timely resources to it, and the hiring of credible, experienced, and resourceful contractors who have the ability, expertise, and resources to adhere to the project's timelines in letter and spirit.

Importantly, the success of the project would largely depend on the security and safety of the entire region, the eradication of terrorism from all countries, the destruction of terrorist safe havens, especially in Afghanistan, and the creation of a law and order situation that ensures the safe, secure, and effortless movement of goods along the route and to its destinations.

The security situation in Afghanistan will be the most difficult barrier for this project. Contrary to the Doha Agreement, Afghanistan is providing safe havens to over 6000 fully armed and trained Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists who are carrying out terrorist attacks all along the border, putting the lives and properties of people living in border areas in great danger and in constant state of fear.

They have also martyred scores of civilians and security personnel in recent days, prompting the Army Chief to warn Afghanistan to eliminate these terrorist groups which have ransomed the security and stability of the entire region.

These terrorist groups pose a significant risk to all such projects traveling through Afghanistan, necessitating the Afghan government's efforts to rid the country of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

The donor agencies' commitment of huge funds will also be contingent on the security and safety and establishment of law and order in Afghanistan, in the absence of which the donor agencies will naturally shy away from making any commitment for provision of funds, and one does not need rocket science to understand that cash starved Afghanistan and Pakistan are unable to fund this initiative with their own funds. With Afghanistan's security issues resolved, the project makes a lot of economic sense. ---
The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC

A rail link to reshape the region

By Qamar Bashir

Commerce News

Speakers at Houston conference call for boosting US-Pakistan economic ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Speakers at a "Conference on Diplomacy for Development", held in Houston, Texas, called for deepening the economic relationship between Pakistan and the United States in order to bring the two countries even closer together.

The Conference was organized by the International Academy of Letters USA, the Rupani Foundation, and the Ismaili Council for the South Western USA.

Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, and the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and

Central Asian Affairs, Elizabeth Horst, jointly chaired a session on the "Role of Trade Diplomacy in Pakistan-US relations".

The session was attended by thirty-five prominent Pak-American businessmen, entrepreneurs, professionals and area experts having successful business ventures and who are also investing in different projects in Pakistan, according to a press release of the Pakistan embassy.

Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, a businessman, underscored the importance of investment in education and health sector which he said was critical in

enhancing productivity of the young population.

Dr. Azeem-ud-Din, a pediatric hematologist-oncologist in Houston, highlighted his efforts in promoting and projecting Islamic art. He emphasized the need for greater efforts to introduce Pakistan, its culture and its products to the US audience.

Muhammad Saeed Sheikh, President, Houston Karachi Sister City Association, underscored the need for greater exchanges, especially trade delegations between Pakistan and the US for building strong linkages between the business communities of the two countries.



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

Word Bank, FBR reviews progress on PRR Project

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine and the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad held a meeting on Thursday at FBR Headquarters to review the progress of the Pakistan Raises Revenue (PRR) Program during the last financial year.

The World Bank team included the Operations Manager Gailius Draugelis, the Lead Country Economist Tobias Haque, the Senior Economist Lucy Pan, the Public Sector Specialist Irum Touqeer, and the Manager Shahib Ali Mohib.

Member Reforms, FBR, Ardesher Tariq and members of the project team were also present in the meeting, said a press release issued here.

It was noted that during the four years of the project, significant achievements have been made for sustainable revenue mobilization, taxpayer facilitation, and reducing the cost of doing business under the PRRP. In particular, the harmonization of Sales Tax laws and procedures among provinces and the federal government was a landmark achievement with benefits for taxpayers and all revenue authorities.

Dar reviews progress on outsourcing of airports' operations

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee to review the progress of work related to outsourcing of airports' operations, at Finance Division, today.

Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Law & Justice Azam Nazir Tarar, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Aviation,

CEO Public Private Partnership Authority, DG Pakistan CAA, IFC team and other government officials attended the meeting.

IFC, transaction advisor appraised the meeting of the progress on the working. The meeting unanimously decided and allowed Ministry of Aviation to proceed further for tendering of the outsourcing of the first airport i.e. Islamabad Airport in order to improve service delivery in line with the best industry practices.

Senate body on Finance meets Finance Bill 2022-23 empowers bureaucracy to formulate zero taxation regime

Senate body briefed on 55 recommendations for Financial Budget, 2023

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance met on Thursday under the Chairmanship of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla here at the Parliament House.

The committee received briefing on the inclusion of Budget recommendation of the Senate in the Budget 2023-24.

It was briefed that the Finance Division budget wing received 55

recommendations for Financial Budget 2023 from the Senate Committee, however, most of recommendations were related to Federal Board of Revenue.

The Ministry briefed that recommendations related to Privatization of loss making enterprises, increased budget allocation for health sector, funds for rehabilitation of flood victims, availability of

food items at subsidized rates, rise in TV Fee from 35 to 50 RPs and mechanism for subsidies on fertilizers, solar energy production and daily food items were fully adopted, however the Ministry partially adopted recommendations such as grant of tax holidays to export industry, laptops schemes etc, explaining that government is providing all necessary support to IT sector and export oriented industries.

Gold rates decrease Rs 5,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 5,300 and was sold at Rs 221,100 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 226,400 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 4,544 to Rs 189,558 from Rs 194,102 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 173,761 from Rs 177,926, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver and 10-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2900 and Rs 2485.28 respectively.

FTO launches helpline to address taxpayer grievances countrywide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah on Thursday launched a helpline to guide, facilitate and address the genuine grievances of the aggrieved taxpayers without loss of time especially the business community on top priority across the country. Addressing the orientation and awareness session of the business community Coordinator to FTO Meher Kashif Younis and Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, said "The FTO has been endeavoring for

redressing grievances of the aggrieved tax-payers in the wake of maladministration of the tax functionaries of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). "The helpline will fully ensure uninterrupted speedy and free-of-cost relief to the aggrieved taxpayers. In this regard, the FTO has launched a public awareness campaign to reach out the existing and prospective taxpayers for building their confidence to fulfill their national obligation by paying due taxes timely in national exchequer."



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik addressing the press conference.

Energy sector reforms need of hour: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Energy Economy Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday said that PML-N-led coalition government over the last year had launched several important development initiatives in diverse sectors including the energy sector for the well-being of the people and stressed comprehensive power reforms.

The government had given clear directions to all power distribution companies to ensure accurate billing and to avoid overcharging the consumers, he said while talking to a Private News channel. The

government had devised a plan and submitted recommendations for reforms in power distribution companies to control the Theft of energy, he added. "The government is focusing on bringing reforms along with deregulation of the energy sector in a bid to put the country on a sustainable path leading towards economic sovereignty," he added.

He further mentioned that during the previous PML-N government, efforts were made for the production of cheap hydel electricity, which were long-term measures to generate affordable power in the country but unfortunately,

PSX gains 303.20 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 303.20 points, a positive change of 0.67 percent, closing at 45,398.31 points against 45,095.11 points the previous trading day.

A total of 464,226,100 shares were traded during the day as compared to 245,453,654 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10.104 billion against Rs 9.402 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 344 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 227 of them recorded gains and 90 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 185,190,828 shares at Rs 1.43 per share; Bank of Punjab with 19,500,000 shares at Rs 4.20 per share and K-Electric with 15,889,256 shares at Rs 2.01 per share. Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 61.00 per share price, closing at Rs 1295.00.

CM visits Nullah Lai to inspect water situation

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Nullah Lai at Rawalpindi to monitor water flow near Katarian Bridge and inspected surrounding localities and issued necessary directions to the administration in this regard.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaqat Ali Chattha briefed the CM about water situation in Nullah Lai.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that more rain has been forecasted till July 23rd, adding that all concerned departments should remain alert, said a handout issued here.

He directed that dewatering pumps and heavy machinery should remain fully functional and all relevant staff should remain present on their

duties and evacuation of people should be the foremost priority in case of any untoward situation.

Commissioner Rawalpindi apprised the CM that 205 mm rainfall occurred in Rawalpindi on Wednesday however water from banks of Nullah Lai did not spill over. The maximum level of water at Katarian remained at 19 feet.

CM Mohsin Naqvi while talking to the media said that Rawalpindi administration did a commendable work despite unusual downpour, adding that he has paid a visit to encourage the administration. The city received 205 mm rainfall as funds amounting to Rs.120 million are being spent on the cleanliness of nullahs in Rawalpindi, he added.

Mohsin Naqvi said the government would

make an endeavour to launch a project so that the problem of Nullah Lai could be resolved on permanent basis. An operation against encroachments surrounding nullahs is underway, he remarked.

To a question, the caretaker CM said the Punjab government is taking measures to improve treatment facilities in the hospitals of Punjab including Rawalpindi. Funds for hospitals have been allocated whereas more funds to other hospitals would be provided within one week, he added. He outlined that all necessary resources are being assured for other projects of Rawalpindi. Provincial Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, RPO, CPO Rawalpindi, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were also present.



RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Liaqat Ali Chattha briefs the caretaker CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi during the visit of Katarian Bridge in City.

Amir Mir lays foundation stone of Information Complex

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Information, Culture and Local Government Amir Mir said that the first phase of the Information Complex would be constructed during the current financial year which would be completed at a cost of Rs 100 million.

He said that the Complex would be the first field office of the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) which would have its own state-of-the-art building.

He was addressing at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Information Complex here Thursday.

Amir Mir said that modern facilities were being provided to the field offices of DGPR and it would help further strengthen the bridge between the people and the government.

Rawalpindi Directorate is functioning as a media liaison office in the federal capital, Amir Mir said.

Feroze condemns blast at Tehsil compound Bara

PESHAWAR (Online): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has strongly condemned the explosion in Tehsil Compound Bara.

He said that no religion allows to play with the blood of innocent people. The caretaker provincial minister expressed his condolences to the family members of martyred police officer Taryab and said that the bravery and sacrifice of Taryab will always be remembered. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have made immense sacrifices in establishing peace in the province.

The sacrifices of security forces will be written in golden words in history. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that the policemen showed great bravery and stopped the attackers outside the police station and killed them. If the attackers entered the police station, there would be a huge damage. He said that the investigation of the incident and the identification of the two dead suicide attackers is in process and after getting the investigation report, strict action will be initiated against the anti-state elements and will be dealt with iron hands and in any case.

ANP expressed concern over recent wave of terrorism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party Provincial President Aimal Wali Khan on Thursday expressed concerns over three consecutive terrorists' attacks on police and FC in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last three days.

In a statement issued here he said that the suicide attack on FC vehicle in Hayatabad, target killing of two police officials in Regi area of Peshawar and suicide attack on Tehsil Compound in Bara district were strongly condemnable and matter of grave concern.

He said that the terrorists were targeting police and the general

public in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with full force while the business community were also receiving calls for ransom due to which the residents of the province were feeling insecure.

He said that strict action should be taken against those who were calling the terrorists fighters and brought them back under secret agreement, adding that exemplary punishment should be given to the perpetrators of the recent attacks. The ANP leader expressed grief over the losses of precious lives in the terrorist attack and sympathized with the bereaved families.



BAHAWALPUR: Floodwater forced people to travel in overloaded boats along with motorcycles in Patan Mangwani Mouza.



GILGIT: Massive traffic jam after land sliding near Shingus Paari at Juglot-Skardu Road (JSR).

KPCM inquires after health of injured cops of terror attacks

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here on Thursday visited Hayatabad Medical Complex and inquired after the health of the injured police personnel of terror attacks in Peshawar and Khyber.

The chief minister strongly condemned the attack on Regi check post and Bara blast.

Azam Khan was saddened by the martyrdom of police personnel in these heartbreaking incidents. He said that the government and all institutions were taking steps to prevent such incidents.

He said that Jawans of the security forces were sacrificing their lives to protect the innocent lives and the nation was paying homage to the sacrifices of the martyrs.

Azam Khan directed to provide the best medical facilities to the injured.

EIDHC project launched to provide best treatment to diabetic patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir, on Thursday launched the Expanded Integrated Diabetes-Hypertension Care (EIDHC) Project including foot care in 171 Rural Health Centers (RHCs) located in 20 districts of Punjab.

According to a handout issued here, the programme was being implemented by National Communicable Diseases Control Programme and Primary and Secondary

Healthcare Department in collaboration with Association for Social Development (ASD). Giving details of the project, the minister told that foot care and suitable footwear intrusion would help prevent foot complications to happen besides better management of any severe foot condition that happens in diabetes patients. He informed that 20 District Headquarters Hospitals would also be enabled for secondary-level diabetes foot care under this programme.

Working of Punjab Police developed on modern technology: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the working of Punjab Police has been developed on modern technology through software, applications and other programs. He expressed these views while talking to the under-training officers participating in the 37th Mid-Career Management Course who came on a study visit to the Central Police Office, here on Thursday.

He said police service centers across the province have provided fast and efficient service to the

Working of Punjab Police developed on modern technology: IGP

citizens. The IG Punjab said that equal attention and provision of additional resources have been ensured for anti-crime operations as well as investigations.

Thousands of officers have been promoted according to the merit and seniority to raise the morale of the police force, he added. Dr. Usman Anwar further said that the health screening of the force is complete, vaccination is ongoing, bravery medals are being launched for successful completion of dangerous operations.

Providing patients with facilities at govt hospitals top priority: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram has said that the patients who come to the public sector hospitals for treatment are the first priority for the government.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a facilitation centre, established at Kot Khawaja Saeed Teaching Hospital (KKSJH), here on Thursday. He said that various government

hospitals were being visited on the instructions of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

He said that every patient who comes to the government hospitals was like a VIP [very important person] for the hospital administration.

He said that the KKSJH would make it easier for patients to get treatment without botheration.

International News

China's Xi Jinping meets with Henry Kissinger in Beijing

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Chinese President Xi Jinping met with veteran U.S. diplomat Henry Kissinger in Beijing on Thursday, calling him an "old friend," Chinese state media reported.

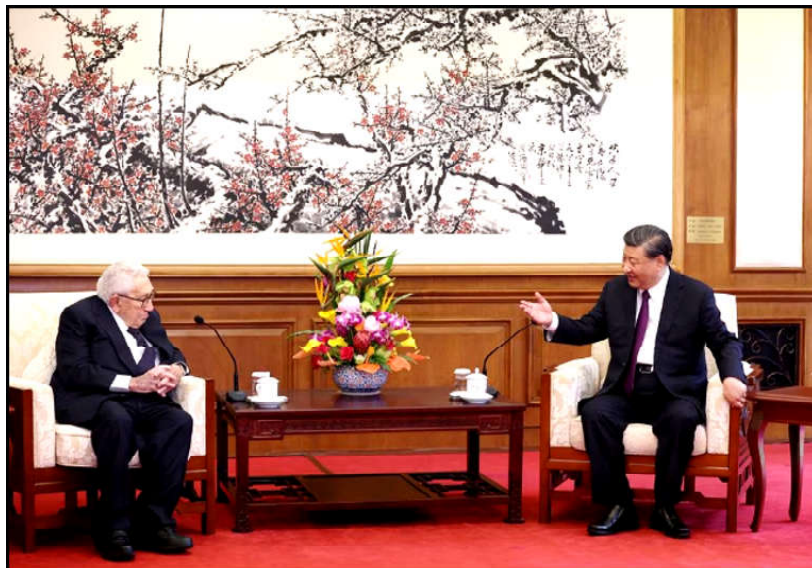
Xi said the visit by Kissinger, who has been to China more than 100 times and recently turned 100, had special significance because of the two "hundreds." Kissinger, who was Richard Nixon's national security adviser, made a

secret trip to China to 1971 that laid the groundwork for a historic trip by the president the following year and the formalization of relations between the United States and China in 1979.

"It not only changed the two countries, but also changed the world," Xi said, according to the state-run broadcaster CCTV. Xi said the Chinese people value their country's friendship with Kissinger and the U.S. "We will never forget our old friend and your historic contribution

to promoting the development of Sino-U.S. relations and enhancing the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples," he said.

Kissinger said it was a "great honor" to visit China again, noting that his meeting with Xi at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where many important diplomatic events are held, was the same place where he met in 1971 with Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier at the time.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, attend a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China.

North Korea threatens nuclear retaliation over U.S. displays of military force

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea said on Thursday that the deployment of U.S. weapons like aircraft carriers, bombers, or missile submarines in South Korea could meet the conditions for its use of nuclear weapons, state media KCNA reported, citing a statement by the country's defense minister Kang Sun Nam.

The comments raise the stakes as each side steps up displays of military force in a standoff over

the isolated country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

The defense minister's statement also accused the United States and South Korea of escalating tensions in the region while criticizing the first meeting by their nuclear consultative group. "The ever-increasing visibility of the deployment of the strategic nuclear submarine and other strategic assets may fall under the conditions of the use of nuclear weapons specified in the DPRK law,"

Iran warns against unloading Iranian oil from seized tanker

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran would retaliate against any oil company unloading Iranian oil from a seized tanker, the Revolutionary Guards' navy commander Alireza Tangsiri said on Thursday, according to state media. In April, the U.S. confiscated Iranian oil on a tanker at sea in a sanctions enforcement operation, according to a maritime security firm. Tangsiri added that Tehran would hold Washington responsible for allowing the unloading of the tanker's content.

Iraq expels Sweden envoy after another act of Holy Quran's desecration in Stockholm

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq on Thursday expelled Sweden's ambassador after a man stomped on a copy of the Holy Quran at a Stockholm demonstration just hours after the Swedish embassy in Baghdad was torched over the planned protest.

Sweden-based Iraqi refugee Salwan Momika, 37, stomped and kicked the Holy Quran but left the protest without burning it, just weeks after he set fire to pages of the holy book

outside Stockholm's main mosque. Sweden and other European countries have previously seen protests where far-right and other activists, citing free speech protections, damage or destroy religious symbols or books, commonly sparking protests and heightening diplomatic tensions.

Around the time of Thursday's protest in Stockholm, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani "instructed the Swedish ambassador in Baghdad to leave Iraqi territory," according to a statement by his office.

It said the decision was "prompted by the Swedish government's repeated permission for the burning of the [Holy] Quran, insulting Islamic sanctities and the burning of the Iraqi flag".

Overnight protesters had breached and set fires within the compound of the Swedish embassy in Baghdad and clashed with riot police, prompting an emergency meeting with the prime minister.

Russia bombards Ukraine ports, threatens ships, jolting world grain markets

Monitoring Desk
MYKOLAIV: Russia jolted world grain markets with an escalation in the Black Sea, mounting a third straight night of air strikes on Ukrainian ports and issuing a threat against Ukraine-bound vessels to which Kyiv responded in kind.

At least 27 civilians were reported hurt in the air strikes on the ports, which set buildings ablaze and damaged China's consulate in Odesa.

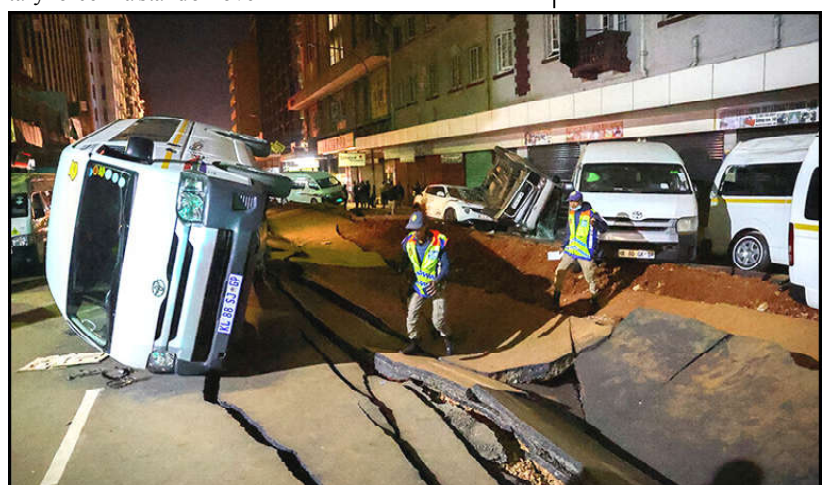
The United States said Russia's warning to ships indicated Moscow might attack vessels at sea following Moscow's withdrawal this week from a U.N.-

brokered deal to let Ukraine export grain. The signals that Russia was willing to use force to reimpose its blockade of one of the world's biggest food exporters set global prices soaring.

Moscow says it will not participate in the year-old grain deal without better terms for its own food and fertiliser sales. The United Nations says Russia's decision threatens food security for the world's poorest people. Kyiv is hoping to resume exports without Russia's participation. But no ships have sailed from its ports since Moscow pulled out of the deal on Monday.



Emergency services personnel work at the site of a building that was damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Police officers inspect damaged cars and the road after a suspected gas explosion injured people and caused significant damage, in the central business district of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Modi says India 'shamed' after video shows mob parading women naked

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that the country has been "shamed" by a video showing a mob parading two women naked in a northeastern state where ethnic violence has claimed at least 120 lives.

Speaking publicly about the Manipur clashes for the first time since they erupted in May, Modi said his "heart is filled with pain and anger".

"The Manipur incident is shameful for any civilised society," Modi told reporters.

"It has shamed the whole nation."

The video clip showed two women walking naked along a street and being jeered and harassed by a mob in the state, where the authorities have imposed an internet shutdown. It was reportedly filmed in early May but went viral on social media on Wednesday.

China, Russia begin joint drills in Sea of Japan, Chinese state media report

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Russia have begun their joint naval and air drills in the Sea of Japan, Chinese state media CCTV reported on Thursday.

The two sides will mainly focus on sea and air escorts, deterrence and repulsion, anchorage defence and other courses to carry out drills, CCTV reported.

More than 40 nations interested in joining BRICS - South Africa

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: More than 40 countries have expressed interest in joining the BRICS group of nations, South Africa's top diplomat in charge of relations with the bloc said on Thursday.

Anil Sooklal and officials from the department of foreign affairs were addressing journalists in the main commercial city of Johannesburg, a day after South Africa confirmed Russia's Vladimir Putin would not attend the BRICS summit due to take

place on Aug. 22-24.

The question of how far and fast to expand the club - centred around Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - is top of the agenda at the summit of nations seeking to offset to the perceived hegemony of the U.S.-led West in global affairs. Aside from the 22 countries that have formally asked to join, Sooklal said there was "an equal number of countries that have informally expressed interest in becoming BRICS members... (including) all the major global south countries".

Attempt being made to put Balochistan democratic forces against wall: Agha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch Thursday urged the Federal Government, provincial government, military leadership and journalists to play a positive role in resolving the issue of terrorism in Balochistan. He was addressing a press conference today along with Minister of State Hashim Notezai, Member of Balochistan Assembly Miss Shakeela Naveed and other BNP leaders.

Expressing his grave concern over the situation in Khuzdar and Wadh, the minister, who is also Central Information Secretary of Balochistan National Party (BNP), said mortars and shells were being fired at schools and colleges in those areas.

"Due to such terrorist activities, mass graves were discovered in Tutak in 2015," he added.

Agha Hassan Baloch said several cases were reg-

istered against Shafiq Mengal as he was responsible for the terrorist acts but he had not been caught as yet while the complainant were beaten and threatened. He said many journalists and levies officials had been martyred, women kidnapped and 94 political workers subjected to target killing but the provincial government did not take any action.

The minister said he had raised his voice at every forum including the Parliament, besides contacting the country's leadership on the matter.

Responding to a question, Agha Hassan Baloch said an attempt was being made to put the democratic forces of Balochistan against the wall. He also criticized the newly formed political party "BAP" and said the party was formed overnight comprising over dummy leaders with preparing its manifesto the very next day.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch, flanked by Mr. Hashim Notezai Minister of State for Energy addressing a press conference at National Press Club.

Dastagir says: Imran violated Official Secrets Act of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power Engineer Khuram Dastagir Khan Thursday believed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan violated the Official Secrets Act of Pakistan by disclosing the cipher in public, alleging that US had conspired against his government.

"The former Prime Minister (Imran Khan) has violated the Secrets Act of Pakistan. He had also breached his oath to the constitution by disclosing a secret document (cipher) in public," he said in a press conference here.

Dastagir was of the view that when a Prime Minister took an oath it stated he would not disclose anything secret.

"Imran violated rule of

law, people and country, just for his political gains. The PTI chairman destroyed Pakistan's diplomatic relations with other countries," the minister said. He said receiving cipher from different countries and calling their ambassadors to discuss on the subject were a routine matter, but the former prime minister painted the US cipher for his political gains.

"Now the other countries have warned their officials not to share anything with Pakistani diplomats as it can be waved in public just like Imran disclosed the cipher in the public gathering. "We brought vote of no confidence against the PTI chief but we are still trying to bring the diplomatic relations back on track which he destroyed," he said.



QUETTA: MPAs Qadir Ali Nail and Mubeen Khilji meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engineer Abdul Kareem Jamali at QESCO Headquarter.

Siraj stresses need for eliminating the usury from the country

SAFDARABAD (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq on Thursday stressed the need for eliminating the usury from the country. Addressing a public gathering, Siraj rued: "Despite the British rulers leaving the country, the system of usury is pretty much still in place."

"Sadly, the country does not yet have a functioning justice system. Every single person in the country is the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) slave," the JI

emir lamented. He took a jibe at the political opponents, asserting, "Both the previous and current rulers have dragged the country into loans from the international lenders."

Entire economic system of a country created to practice Islam is based on the 1939 Usury Act enforced by British Colonists, and government has been violating the repeated recommendations of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and the decision of FSC to jacking up the rate of interest continuously.

Rubaba Buledi calls for empowering women to control population growth

QUETTA (APP): Parliamentary Secretary of Law, Science, and Information Technology Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi Thursday underscored the need to empower women to bring the rapidly growing population to a sustainable level.

Effective measures should be taken by formulating strategies to empower Pakistani women by providing equal opportunities and creating awareness about their reproductive health rights to bring the rapidly growing population to a sustainable level, said Buledi.

seminar organized in collaboration with UNFPA and the Population welfare department to mark World Population Day.

"Only 10 percent of the total female population can make decisions about their own health," she remarked.

She said gender equality is a global issue, Pakistan ranks at the bottom of the Gender Gap Index ranking of 2022, which means that Pakistan has a very low rate of gender equality.

The percentage of women's seats in the national assembly is also low, women's empowerment



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a group photo with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi and ship crew during induction ceremony of two newly constructed PNS Shahjahan & Tippu Sultan held at Karachi.

Enhancing education standards primary aim of EPC: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here on Thursday said that the primary aim of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus established in the Senate was to foster collaboration among provinces, federation and educational institutions to enhance education standards in the country.

Addressing a seminar on education jointly organized by the Education Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), he said, "The purpose of setting up the education caucus in the Senate is to foster dialogue and cooperation, creating a collaborative approach towards enhancing education standards in Pakistan."

The event brought together representatives and experts in the field of edu-

cation. The Chairman Senate expressed the hope that friendly countries and organizations, including Japan, would extend technical support to bolster the education sector in Pakistan. He acknowledged the significance of learning from Japan's development experiences and encouraged sending teachers abroad for training and exposure to enrich their knowledge.

"Knowledge is the real jewel, and education goes beyond mere degrees and certificates. We must invest in skill development for our children, and identify the reasons behind our lag in the education domain," he added.

He stressed the importance of investing in teacher recruitment, training, professional development and curriculum reforms to promote digital literacy.

The Chairman also

highlighted the need to explore alternative and innovative educational models to further advance the education landscape in the country.

Sanjrani urged all participants to actively identify current challenges and obstacles facing the education system and work collaboratively to overcome them. He expressed gratitude to all stakeholders, particularly the Education Parliamentarians Caucus, JICA, PIPS, and other contributing organizations for their efforts in organizing the seminar and promoting educational development in Pakistan. Senator Sana Jamali, the Convener of Education in her speech expressed her immense pleasure and gratitude for the strong collaboration between EPC and JICA, emphasizing the urgent need to address the critical issue of "Empowering Pakistan's Future through Education."

Moen-jo-Daro express restored

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has restored Moen-jo-Daro Express traveling from Kotri to Rohri here Thursday.

Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khuwaja Saad Rafique had announced plans to restore the train.

Railway authorities in compliance with the directives of the Federal Minister have restored passenger train after necessary maintenance and renovation.

In this connection, a simple but impressive ceremony was held at Kotri Railway station where Divisional Superintendent Karachi Muhammad Nasir Khaskheli inaugurated the train after cutting the ribbon and offering dua. Moen-jo-Daro train was beautifully decorated on the occasion. Federal Minister for Railways Khuwaja Saad Rafique on the occasion addressed on video link.

Chairman Pakistan Railway Syed Mazhar Ali Shah was also accompanied by him.

Govt decides to charge radio fee of Rs 15 through electricity bills

ISLAMABAD (Online): Government has decided to charge radio fee to the tune of Rs 15 through electricity bills.

The finance ministry authorities have disclosed radio fee will also be included in electricity bills along with TV fee.

Information ministry has worked out summary in this regard.

Now both TV fee amounting to Rs 35 and radio fee amounting to Rs 15 will be included in electricity bills.

This step has been taken on the recommendation of Senate committee.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Law and Information Technology Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi addressing a ceremony regarding World Population Day.

Court acquits PM Shehbaz, others in NAB reference

LAHORE (APP): An accountability court on Thursday acquitted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, his son Hamza Shehbaz, and others in assets beyond means and money laundering reference, filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

PM Shehbaz's wife Nusrat, daughter Javeria Ali were also included among the acquitted persons besides Rashid Karamat, Muhammad Usman, Masroor Anwar, Nisar Ahmad, Shoaib Qamar,

Qasim Qayyum, Ali Ahmad, Rana Nauman and others. Accountability Court Judge Qamaruz Zaman announced the verdict while allowing acquittal applications of PM Shehbaz and 11 others. The court also ordered to defreeze all assets of the acquitted persons. Earlier, in his final arguments, the defence counsel argued that all assets of his clients were declared with the Federal Board of Revenue and the bureau failed to produce any evidence against them.



QUETTA: Members of Sunni Ulema Council are holding a rally in connection of first Muharram-ul-Haram the day of Martyrdom of 2nd Muslim Caliph Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.A).

Security forces patrolling continues: Two private checkposts removed on national highway in Wadh

Independent Report QUETTA: The efforts are being made by the district administration and law enforcement agencies to normalize the otherwise tense situation in Wadh area of Khuzdar.

In this regard, the patrolling of security forces is continued constantly in the Wadh area and national highway. While on the other hand, two check posts set up privately on two sides of the national highway in Wadh have been removed.

The patrolling is being led by Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar, Captain (Retd) Jamil Ahmed, DIG Police Khuzdar, Pervaz Umrani, FC commandant,

Colonel Hafiz Kashif and SSP Khuzdar Fahad Khosa. According to an official hand out issued here, it is an endeavour of the administration to normalize the situation. The efforts are also being made to stop the two-side firing and improve law and order in the area.

On the other hand, the contacts are also being made with both the groups to resolve the issue.

In the meantime, two private check posts set up by the tribal groups on the highway have been removed and the check posts of Balochistan constabulary and Levies are being set up there.

"GoB's initiatives aimed at improving quality of life & moving on to end backwardness of Balochistan"

Independent Report QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has taken series of initiatives with the aim to getting better the quality of life of people and moving on to end the longstanding backwardness from the province.

The Chief Minister has given the impression from his every act that the provincial government has come into being because of the power of public, and that he is answerable to them for his every action and deed.

This was mentioned in an official hand out issued here on Wednesday night.

According to the hand out, list of the important initiatives taken in the public interest by the provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus

Bizenjo is quite long.

The Chief Minister has always given the impression of public Chief Minister from his actions, and his positive gesture is also being acclaimed. Not only this, the steps being taken by the Chief Minister are also getting much appreciation.

In the official hand out, certain important initiatives taken by provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Bizenjo have been referred.

These are included: release of grant in aid of Rs. 2.5 billion for universities of the province, conducting of free and fair local government elections, timely relief and rehabilitation of the flood affectees of the province, digital population and housing census in peaceful manner, holding of National Games after 19 years and PSL's exhibitory match for the first time, resi-

dential colony for journalists and establishment of Hawkers Welfare Fund, residential colony for fishermen, giving status of labour to the fishermen, status of special district to Gwadar, practical steps for payment of arrears against PPL, payment of Rs. 2.5 billion to the province from Saindak Metal Limited, setting up of Endowment Fund for youth skill development, grant-in-aid for the bar councils and bar associations, establishment of border trade, making permanent to the internee teachers, nomination of the vice chancellors of the public sector universities on recommendation of search committee under the administration of provincial Higher Education department, appointment of government teachers in their respective districts, operationalization of the non-effective schools.



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Labour Federation are holding protest demonstration against IMF Policies and massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking.

Pak Navy inducts two modern naval ships in national fleet

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Navy Thursday inducted two newly constructed Type 054 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN into the national fleet.

The induction ceremony of two newly constructed Type 54 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN was held here at Karachi.

Federal Minister for

Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif attended the ceremony as Chief Guest who was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on arrival at PN Dockyard, a Pakistan Navy release said.

The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors having capability to undertake naval

operation under multi threat environment.

The induction of ships in PN Fleet will significantly enhance the Combat Readiness of Pakistan Navy.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region.

Govt drops bombshell of electricity

ISLAMABAD (Online): Once again shock of expensive electricity has been given to inflation stricken people by increasing electricity rates.

The price of electricity has been increased by Rs 1.90 per unit.

NEpra has issued the approval notification under the head of fuel price adjustment for May.

According to notification, the hike in tariff will be applicable on the bills for the month of July.

Increase in cost of electricity will not be applicable to life line and K-electric consumers.

CCP had requested an increase of RS 2.05 per unit.

NEPRA had heard the request on July 5th.

It is to remember that the Central Power Chasing Agency had submitted a complaint to NEPRA for increasing the price of electricity just a few days after the largest hike in the country's history in the basic electricity tariff.

Steps for anti-polio drive reviewed in Hub

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hub Zahid Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the anti-polio drive to be started from August, 01.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Hub District Health Officer (DHO) Hub, National Staff Transmission Officer Polio Hub, Lasbela officials from relevant government departments. The participants of the meeting discussed the past achievements of SNID Polio and making the micro plan more effective. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Hub Zahid Khan said that polio was a national cause for its success, and the relevant responsible officers must participate in training before polio campaign. He said that in addition to keeping an eye on the work of polio monitors, area in-charges and officials in the last polio campaign in Hab-ko, Vandra, Kharkhera, Pathra, the Union Council would have to ensure the safety.

Nawab Raisani inaugurates 10-bedded ICU in Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Hospital

Independent Report QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and former Chief Minister,

about the overall functioning and progress of the hospital.

It was informed that a



Chief of Sarawan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani visited the Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital Mastung on Thursday.

During the visit, Nawab Aslam Raisani inaugurated the newly built 10-bedded ICU/CCU in the Hospital.

The Chief Executive Officer of Hospital, Dr. Saeed Ahmed Mirwani briefed Nawab Raisani and media representatives

master plan has been prepared for making the Hospital at international level. The plan included extension of the hospital from existing 50-bedded to 200 beds, establishment of new trauma center, operation theater and modern eye theater. Moreover, the hospital would also be equipped with modern facilities, it was informed further adding that the work on expansion of the hospital would be started soon.

Four women among 12 medical officers recruited for 11 Balochistan' jails

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Department appointed 12 medical officers (BPS-17) including four lady medical officers for various jails of the province on an ad-hoc basis.

The Health Department source on Thursday told APP that these appointments were made by Health Department in order to provide health facilities to prisoners in respective jails of Balochistan saying that prisoners were deprived of health care facilities for a long time in the jails.

The source further said that prisoners' patients had shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment in the past saying that Balochistan Govt took initiatives and recruited medical officers for 11 jails of the province so that prisoners would not face difficulties during medical aid.



QUETTA: Members of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) are holding protest demonstration against unrest law and order situation in city, outside Balochistan Assembly building.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili presides over the meeting to review outstanding dues of QESCO.