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## 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 therein 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 revo-

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

## 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.

## Zia Langove takes notice of firing incident at Pishin stop; seeks 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 a close relative of Federal Minister Israr Tareen were armed down by unknown armed assailants on Pishin stop on Monday evening.



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

## 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.

The Governor stressed the need to establish effective coordination between the law enforcement agencies to maintain sustainable peace and protect life and property of the masses on permanent basis.

He also stressed that all socially and economically weakened segments of the society would also have to be realized that law and LEAs are their protectors.

The Governor directed all the DSPs and SHOs to eliminate the criminal elements, narcotics sellers and their facilitators in their respective areas within a week time.

He also directed to take immediate action against all the criminals involved in subversive acts and other criminal acts.

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## Mariyum inaugurates rehabilitation work of PBC Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday inaugurated rehabilitation and renovation work of the building of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Peshawar, including the Chagai Auditorium, which was ransacked during the May 9 vandalism, besides groundbreaking of a cinema.

Speaking on the occasion, she said as per the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the PBC building's renovation work would be carried out on emergency basis as the government aimed to restore the infotainment and recreational facility for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The minister directed the PBC management to digitalize the archives, including musical record and sound tracks.

## 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. Mariyum 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: Mariyum

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum 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.

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BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met with Mr. Zheng Shanjie, Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). They reviewed progress on ongoing CPEC projects and exchanged views on its future direction in line with the important consensus between the leadership of the two brotherly countries.

## 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 spe-

cial Joint Cooperation Committee meetings (JCC) meeting with the Vice Chairman, National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC). Besides, several meetings were held with key Chinese officials which included Chairman NDRC and other key officials.

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.

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

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

QUETTA: The Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Naem 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 depart-

mental action is compulsory against one.

The Chief Justice was speaking to the participants 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."

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## Non-payment of arrears: QESCO disconnects connection of DC office & House, Tehsil Office

QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) has suspended the power connection of Deputy Commissioner office and House on non-payment of the electricity dues, here on Tuesday.

According to the spokesman of QESCO, the power connection of the Tehsil office was also disconnected due to non-pay-

ment of the electricity dues. The QESCO spokesman claimed that around Rs. 9.6 million are outstanding against the DC office, House and Tehsil office. Moreover, the notices have also been issued to other defaulter government offices. It has been directed to all concerned to clear their dues, otherwise the power connection would be suspended.

## 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.



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

## PM expresses deep gratitude KSA deposits 2 billion dollars in SBP: FM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Finance Minister (FM) Ishaq Dar has said Saudi Arabia has deposited 2 billion dollars in State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

FM said in a statement loan has come in SBP account. This has raised reserves of Pakistan. The friendly country had made a commitment in this regard in the recent past.

He said these deposits have enhanced the country's foreign exchange reserves from 9.67 billion dollars to 11.67 billion dollars.

On behalf of the people and government of Pakistan, the Finance Minister

thanked the Saudi leadership especially King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud for always standing by Pakistan in difficult times. He said the Saudi leadership has always proved to be true brothers of Pakistan.

The Finance Minister said the country will witness more positive developments in the days ahead and it will now move towards growth trajectory.

I hope the economic situation in Pakistan will soon grow stable. Improvement has already come therein, he remarked.

## 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.

## 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 as a news of the Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) appeared in a section of press.

In context of the report, the IGP issued a directive memorandum to all ranges of the police all over the province.

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with Noor Muhammad Dummaz, Senior Minister for Planning and Development, Balochistan at Parliament House.

## India-Israel nexus with PTI now stands exposed behind May 9 mayhem: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday strongly condemned the statement of Israel regarding Pakistan at the United Nations and alleged that the Israel-India support for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its chief had fully exposed the sinister nexus behind the May 9 mayhem.

Addressing a press conference flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar, Sherry Rehman lambasted the PTI chairman for his reported venomous campaign against the state, who, she claimed, was ever ready to do anything to please Israel.

"He (Imran Khan) believes that Israel's violations in Palestine are fine. Today Israel also becomes an ambassador of human rights but in reality she is doing the opposite," the minister added.

She denounced the PTI chairman for criticising and opposing his arrest. "He asks why the government

did this to me? He says he was arrested in a disgraceful way, but he should know that no one is above the law," she added.

The minister there were some sinister designs behind the curtain. Today the PTI was the best friend of Israel and Indian Prime Minister Modi, and its leader was being "baptized" in the waters of Israel.

The PTI workers, she alleged, had desecrated and harmed the monuments of martyrs on the behest of their leader, who now wanted to harm Pakistan as a whole. "Israel is supporting Imran Khan today and what does that mean?" she asked.

The United States had always said that it was not meddling in the Pakistani politics but the PTI chief kept on dragging it, she added.

"Israel's blaming of Pakistan in favour of the PTI at the UN meeting is highly condemnable. Imran Niazi is part of the camp that is violating the rights of Palestinians. Israel did not speak even on the arrest and indictment of those involved in the Capit

tol Hill attack."

"What is the motive that Israel is giving recommendations in favour of attacks on Pakistan's sensitive installations? "Why Israel does not speak about human rights violations by India in the Occupied Kashmir?" she raised questions, adding in fact, it was not about human rights, but about "special sympathy" of Israel with the PTI and its chairman.

She said Israel itself had been violating the basic rights of Palestinian people every day for the last 60 years. "With what face and status Israel is lecturing the world regarding human rights," Sherry Rehman added.

Imran Niazi, she said, wanted to see the country becoming bankrupt. No politician or any former prime minister did not utter such words or perpetrate such hostile campaign against the country, she added.

The minister said all the reports about so-called human rights and treatment of women in detention were deliberately issued to defame the country.



QUETTA: A delegation of Noshki led by Sardar Asif Mengal meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## No decisions taken about seat adjustment, elections: Rana Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior leader of Muslim League (N) and Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, while reacting to PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's reservations, said on Tuesday that no decision had been taken in Dubai. In a statement, Rana Sanaullah said that political situation together and no decisions were taken regarding seat adjustments or elections in Dubai.

There was no such scheduled meeting in Dubai, he elaborated. "Pakistan Muslim League-N has a

definite and clear stance on political issues," he said. The interior minister said the elections should be held under a caretaker setup.

"Elections to all four provincial assemblies and the National Assembly should be held simultaneously. Assemblies should be dissolved on completion of their term," said Rana Sana. The PML-N leader said, "There is already a caretaker setup in place in two provinces. In the remaining two provinces, the caretaker setup will also be installed."

## CPEC landmark project in dev. history of Pak-China relations: Ahsan

BEIJING (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a landmark project in the development history of Pakistan-China relations which will bring prosperity and socio-economic uplift to the people of Pakistan and also contribute to the regional connectivity and development.

He made these remarks during a meeting with Chairman, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), Luo Zhaohui here.

He was accompanied by Chief Economist Planning Division Dr. Muhammad Nadeem Javaid and senior officials of the Embassy.

Paying rich tribute to the leadership of the two countries for providing strategic guidance to the development of CPEC, the minister highlighted key projects that have been completed since the launch of CPEC a decade ago.

During the meeting, Planning Minister conveyed best wishes and congratulations of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Chairman CIDCA on the successful holding of the "First High-Level Conference of the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development".

## Telephonic conversation between PM, Bill Gates

ISLAMABAD (Online): There has been a telephonic conversation between the Prime Minister and Bill Gates.

Shahbaz Sharif and Bill Gates discussed public health and sector programs.

The Prime Minister appreciated the services of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Pakistan.

The two leaders discussed providing mandatory services for malnutrition, stunted growth.

Discussion was also held regarding the digitization of Micro-payment Gateway Rast and National Savings Program.

Prime Minister (PM)

and Bill Gates agreed on continuing the cooperation and collaboration.

Shahbaz Sharif said that eradication of fatal diseases like polio and overcoming malnutrition are priority of government.

We want to make the ongoing cooperation more efficient and fruitful.

PM said that present government is specially focusing on access to resources.

While appreciating the struggle of Pakistan for eradication of Polio Bill Gates said that we will continue to support Pakistan to protect children against polio disability.



BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at a dinner with representatives of Chinese companies working on CPEC projects. A cake was also cut to celebrate the successful completion of Decade of CPEC.

## ECP issues non-bailable arrest warrants for Imran, Fawad in contempt case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI chief Imran Khan and ex-information minister Fawad Chaudhry in a case pertaining to contempt of the electoral body and the chief election commissioner (CEC).

The order was passed by a four-member ECP bench headed by member Nisar Durrani. Last year, the ECP had initiated contempt proceedings against the PTI chief, Asad Umar and Fawad for allegedly using "intemperate" language against the CEC and the electoral watchdog.

It had also asked them to appear in person or through their counsels before the commission to explain their position.

However, instead of appearing before the ECP, the PTI leaders had challenged the ECP notices and contempt proceedings in various high court on the grounds that Section 10 of the Elections Act 2017, which is the statutory provision regarding the commission's power to punish for contempt, was against the Constitution.

According to the Election Act 2017, Section 10 titled "Power to punish for contempt" states that the "election commission may exercise the same power as the high court to punish any person for contempt of court and the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003 (V of 2003), or any other law pertaining to contempt of court shall have effect accordingly.

## Governor annoyed over... Continued from page 1

The Governor asserted that the anti-social elements want to weaken us by creating differences for their nefarious designs, which would not be tolerated at all.

He said that stability of peace is top priority for economic development, therefore, we should maintain national unity among us.

To a query, the Governor expressed deep concern over increasing use of drugs among youngsters, which is putting the future of country at stake besides affecting the creative potential of the youth.

This is also responsibility of the government to take strict legal action for elimination of the curse of narcotics, adding he stressed.

## AJK President urges int'l community play its role to resolve Kashmir conflict

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that the international community should play its due role to resolve the lingering Kashmir conflict in line with the wishes and will of the Kashmiri people.

The AJK president said this while speaking at a dinner party hosted by him in honour of foreign diplomats and ambassadors posted in the federal metropolis Monday night.

Referring to the worsening political and human rights situation in the Indian-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), the president told foreign diplomats that the situation in the IOJK had

worsened to an alarming level since the Modi government revoked articles 370 and 35 A of the Indian constitution that guaranteed special status to the Indian occupied territory of J&K.

Kashmiris at this crucial point in time, he said, were desperately looking for urgent intervention and support from the international community.

He said that given the dire human rights situation in the region, it was high time that the world community should play its role in granting the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination to help resolve the Kashmir issue which happens to be the oldest unresolved issue pending on the UN agenda.

## Bahawalpur youth bags world record

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The names of two youths hailing from Bahawalpur have been inducted into Guinness Book of World Record 2023 for planting the largest saplings in the world.

A press release issued here said that two youths belonging to Bahawalpur identified as Abdullah Tanseer and Haider Mustafa Qureshi participated in the world formation spelled "TAKMEEL" which was created from 3,296 saplings over an area of 1,200 square feet here in Bahawalpur.

The local youth in collaboration with Takmeel Square officials and Paksarzameen collected 3,300 saplings of native species with the consultation of the Department of Forestry if they were suitable for the specified region.

The event started with a white chalk outline of the word and proceeded with members cohesively digging, planting, and watering these plants as time went by.

For the recording process to be completely transparent, independent personnel were seen examining and verifying every aspect throughout the process.

Continued from page 1

Balochistan). Regarding the aforementioned rules and judgments of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice said that the provincial ministers have no role in transfer and posting of the civil servants. He exhorted the course participants to make decisions on the merit and according to the rules and regulations without their linking and disliking so as to improve governance in the province.

The CJ also stressed that the civil officers should use the discretionary powers in the public interest.

Later, he planted sapling of Pine in the courtyard of Civil Services Academy.



ZHOB: Deputy Commissioner Zhub Muhammad Azeem Kakar and General Manager NHA Balochistan Agha Inayat presiding over review meeting regarding construction of Surra and Urak bridges

## If we have to eliminate...

Continued from page 1

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 societies.

"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.

Commending the rural women, he said that the ratio of the rural area women in the national building capacity was immense as they had been working on fields along side with the men.

He further observed that to achieve a place among the comity of nations, both genders of the country had to work together, and underlined the need for provision of financial and actual opportunities in different fields.

"The women segment of our society is the driving engine for the country's economy and serve as builders of nation," he added.

Recalling lofty promises made by the previous government with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mariyum said they once claimed to transform the KP into Switzerland, but ironically the provincial accountability commission was rendered dysfunctional

## Once desperate for cipher's... Continued from page 1

"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.

The minister said the PTI chief was opposing investigations into the Toshakhana theft and wanted his military secretary at that time to answer before the court.

"He received the gifts from the Toshakhana and sold them then why the military secretary should be held accountable?" the minister questioned.

On the other hand, she said, the three times prime minister (Nawaz Sharif) had faced the courts courageously and proved all the allegations against him wrong.

The people knew that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had done nothing wrong and had answers against all the allegations hurled against them by the PTI chief, she added.

"We have never hid ourselves in canister or boxes, nor we ran away from accountability," the minister maintained.

Recalling lofty promises made by the previous government with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mariyum said they once claimed to transform the KP into Switzerland, but ironically the provincial accountability commission was rendered dysfunctional

during their tenure.

"They (PTI) leveled allegations of theft against others, but they themselves turned out to be thieves. They promised to build universities and hospitals but did not even construct a single room in any hospital during their government tenure," she regretted.

She asserted that the PTI got stay order from the apex court in the BRT Peshawar corruption case and made all-out efforts to stop probe into the matter.

The minister said the PTI vowed to construct 350 dams in the country, but in fact, its leaders - "a gang of looters" made the people "dam fool".

She said the PTI's "arsonists" burnt the martyrs' memorials, ambulances, schools and hospitals on May 9, and "I am confident that the respectable people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will never vote for this Fitna and plotter".

The people of Pakistan did not vote him (PTI chief) to burn Pakistan, instead the PTI was given the mandate for development of the country, she added.

She pointed out that the "foreign agent" responsible for masterminding the May 9 tragedy had recently tweeted, asking who benefited from the mayhem.

"Only the enemies of the country benefited from the acts of vandalism and arson," the minister claimed.

Mariyum said those who set the PTV on fire and attacked the Radio Pakistan as well. They set ablaze the building of Radio Pakistan, parked ve-

hicles there and above all its precious archives, she added.

The minister said she had instructed the management of Radio Pakistan to display all the details related to the attack on its building in the internal corridors of the building so that the people could always remember how the national asset fell victim to the dirty politics of a "foreign agent".

Upon the prime minister's directives, she said, the task of redecorating and embellishing the building of Radio Pakistan was commenced on war-footing while the broadcast duration of PTV had also been increased in response to the long-standing desire of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Pakistan Television (PTV) would broadcast its programmes in regional languages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa around the clock, she added.

She said the PTV broadcast could be accessed worldwide through satellite, enabling overseas Pakistanis especially those from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to watch PTV programmes on their TV screens.

It would provide an opportunity to artists, producers, and journalists to sensitize the people about their culture and stance on different national and international issues, she added.

The minister congratulated the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the initiative and lauded the efforts of Secretary Information Sohail Ali Khan, PTV management, and the ministry's team in that regard.

## No role of provincial ministers...

While having an interaction with the MCMC participants, Mr. Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan said that the capacity of government employees is built with training during the service. The CJ on the occasion informed the participants of course about the Balochistan Rules of Business 2012 and judgments of Supreme Court, PLD 2013, Supreme court 195 (Anita Turab case) and powers of provincial ministers and duties of government officers regarding SCMR 4111 (Khan Muhammad in the name of Chief Secretary

S.No	Vehicle No	Type	Model	Present/Parking Position
01	QAN-6101	Suzuki Cultus	2007	Civil Secretariat
02	QAN-6102	Suzuki Cultus	2007	Civil Secretariat
03	QAN-6103	Suzuki Cultus	2007	Civil Secretariat
04	QAN-6104	Suzuki Cultus	2007	Civil Secretariat
05	QAN-084	Suzuki Cultus	2005	Civil Secretariat
06	QAN-145	Suzuki Polohar	2006	Civil Secretariat

نظامی نوٹس

محکمہ سیکورٹی

مختصر نوٹس

PRQ No.64/11-07-2023

## PM stresses ending disparity of resources among population

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday urged the stakeholders to invest in empowering communities by building their capacity through better health and educational facilities and ensuring an enabling environment to unlock their potential. In his message on World Population Day being globally marked today, the moment draws attention to the vast disparity between the requirements of increasing population and the availability of resources.

Also, he said, it highlights the need for affirmative policy actions to empower our communities and the people.

PM Sharif said population remains at the heart of effective national planning.

He said for developing countries in particular, managing population growth is key to socioeconomic

development. He said no country, however resourceful, can deal with the population explosion.

"Thus drawing a balance between population and resources is fundamental to the fulfilment of the needs of teeming millions," he said. This year's theme 'Unleashing the power of gender equality' is a powerful reminder of the imperative to empower our women, girls and men and end discrimination.

"Their mainstreaming in the national life will automatically help in achieving the development goals and increasing human productivity," he said.

The prime minister said gender equality was not just a human rights issue, but also an economic requirement.

"The idea of balanced development is grounded in the empowerment of communities, who are enabled

in not only fulfilling their aspirations of a meaningful life but also becoming a shareholder in the process of development of their societies," he said.

He mentioned the significance of the multifarious factors such as climate change, geostrategic upheavals and dysfunction of markets, the countries are finding it hard to stay on course for achieving Millennium Development Goals.

Add to this mix the issue of gender inequality and discrimination and humanity gets farther from Sustainable Development Goals, he said.

The prime minister said the concept of development was not abstract but rooted in the welfare of the people.

"Hence all the more reason to invest in effective communication between the policymakers and the people at large for better outcomes," he said.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Mrs. Zahra Wadood Fatemi calls on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## GCF approves US\$66 funding for WWF-Pakistan's flagship Recharge Pakistan project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has announced US\$ 66 million in funding to support the Government of Pakistan's efforts to reduce the twin climate impacts of flooding and drought.

The investment will improve the resilience of some of the country's most vulnerable communities affected by the impacts of climate change, including catastrophic flooding.

The new 7-year project, 'Recharge Pakistan: Building Pakistan's Resilience to Climate

Change through Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Integrated Flood Risk Management', is the largest investment at the national level to date in an ecosystem-based approach to flood and water resources management, a news release said.

A collaboration between the Government of Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) under the Ministry of Water Resources, and WWF-Pakistan, the project will demonstrate the effectiveness of ecosystem-

based adaptation and green infrastructure as an innovative addition to the nation's traditional grey infrastructure solutions to flood and drought.

This will be achieved through restoration and reforestation of forests and wetlands; rehabilitation of water flow paths and channels; development of recharge basins and retention areas; and strengthening the climate resilience of local businesses in the agriculture and forests sectors.

## PAC disposes audit objection on Lahore-Sialkot motorway construction

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Tuesday disposed of the audit objection on the construction of the Lahore-Sialkot Motorway project without design approval.

Chairing the PAC meeting, Noor Akh Khan asked the officials concerned of the Ministry of Communications that why the Lahore-Sialkot Motorway's detailed design had not yet been approved.

The audit officials said that the motorway project was started with Rs 43 billion.

The committee was informed that despite the construction of the motorway, its design had not yet been approved.

It was unveiled that Frontier Works Organization (FWO) submitted designs twice but these were rejected by the National Highways Authority (NHA).

## MNA Zahra Fatemi calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Member of the National Assembly (MNA), on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

During the meeting, Zahra Fatemi lauded the prime minister for the launch of PM's Initiative for Women Empowerment and provision of laptops, scholarships, interest-free loans and the launch of entrepreneurship programmes for the talented youth of the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

She also apprised the prime minister of the issues during the entry tests to medical colleges (MDCAT) to which the latter directed the relevant authorities to immediately resolve the students' issues in this regard.

## Mazari moves IHC for removal of her name from ECL

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former federal minister Shireen Mazari has filed petition in Islamabad High Court for removal of her name from Exit Control List (ECL).

Shireen Mazari has made interior secretary and director FIA respondents in her petition.

She pleaded in the petition that placing name in interim no fly list is illegal.

## Asian Games: Tennis star Aisam will represent Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): The squad of Pakistan Tennis team for Asian games has been finalized.

Tennis Star Aisam Ul Haq will represent Pakistan in Asian games.

The 19th Asian Games is to be played in China in September this year in which Pakistani squad has to participate in different games.

Pakistan Tennis Federation has finalized the squad of National Tennis Team for Asian Games.

Tennis Star Aisam Ul Haq will represent Pakistan while Aqeel Khan, Sara Khan, Ushna Sohail will be part of National Tennis Team.

The tennis team will compete in the category of five gold medals.

## Posters appear in IIOJK, urge people to observe shutdown on July 13

ISLAMABAD (APP): Posters have appeared, paying tributes to martyrs of July 13, 1931 and other martyrs in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir media service, the Kashmir Martyrs' Day is observed on July 13 every year not only on both sides of the Line of Control but also all over the world by the Kashmiris to pay homage to 22 Kashmiris who were martyred by the forces of Dogra ruler in 1931. They were demanding the freedom of Kashmir from the despot Dogra rulers.

The posters were displayed by All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Wareeseen-e-Shuhada, Jammu and Kashmir Sadai Mazloom, Nawjawan-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir, Political Resistance Movement (JKPRM), Jammu

and Kashmir Justice League Forum (JKJLF), Democratic Youth Forum, Jammu Kashmir Democratic Movement, Jammu Kashmir Peoples Resistance Party, Kashmir Resistance Movement (KRM), Kashmir Hurriyat Forum (KHF), Youth Democratic Political Movement, Jammu and Kashmir Tehreek-e-Azadi, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Alliance and several other pro-freedom groups in several parts of Kashmir valley. The posters also urged people to observe a strike on Thursday, July 13.

The posters read sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs would not be allowed to go waste and would definitely bring positive results. Call for the strike has been given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and supported by all pro-freedom organizations.



ISLAMABAD: Free food being distributed by Islamabad Crescent Lions Club among the deserving people at Poly Clinic.

## Ombudsman institutions functioning with full govt's support: Ejaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ombudsman institutions are functioning in Pakistan with the full support of its citizenry and the incumbent government.

This was stated by Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi while addressing an international seminar in Bangkok on the role of the Asian Ombudsman as a mechanism for promoting fair administration, good governance and the rule of law, a news release on Tuesday said.

The seminar was held as part of the Asian Regional Meeting 2023 hosted by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) which is a global ombudsman body with over 200 members from across the globe.

In his address to the seminar, Qureshi emphasized that the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib was playing its due role in the dispensation of administrative justice, thereby complementing the efforts of the supreme judiciary in providing justice to all citizens.

## ICP organizes 1,757 road safety workshops during the ongoing year

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police is striving to en-

amongst people about consequences of traffic rule violations, including over speeding, one-wheeling, non-pattern and fancy number plates, juvenile driving, lane-line discipline



sure traffic discipline and minimize the violation of rules through educating road users.

He said that, in this regard the Islamabad capital police organized 1,757 road safety workshops through which 5,12,669 citizens were educated during the ongoing year.

These road safety workshops were arranged for driving license applicants, volunteers, students of educational institutions and staff of government and non-government organizations, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, the Islamabad capital police is arranging such workshops and creating awareness

## Pakistan safe, important country for tourists: Ramesh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State, Chairman Prime Minister's Task Force Gandhara Tourism Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani on Tuesday said Pakistan is a safe country for tourism that attracts swaths of local and foreign tourists to explore its architectural beauty.

Addressing the Gandhara Symposium 2023 here, the minister welcomed the international delegates and researchers attending the international tourism conference in the country.

Vankwani said the international symposium would help promote the religious tourism potential of the country.

He said that cultural and religious tourism would bring various countries and societies closer to each other.

The symposium would pave the ways to highlight the country's soft image at the international level, he maintained.

## World Youth Skills Day to be marked on July 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Youth Skills Day will be marked on July 15 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan which aimed to encourage youth to celebrate the value of acquiring skills like building, making, and creating as a way to achieve personal success and fulfillment.

By empowering young people, they can better advance the broader mission of the United Nations (UN) for lasting peace, sustainable development, and human rights for all, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. A UN resolution to establish a World Youth Skills Day was adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2014.

On the UN's website, they state that education and training are the keys to success in the workforce. However, unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address the learning needs of many young people.

## Development work to be completed by 2025: FGEHA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) Tuesday said the development work of Green Enclave II residential project of the government employees would be completed by 2025.

FGEHA Director General Tariq Rasheed said the development work of Green Enclave II residential project of the government employees would be completed by 2025.

"The work of the first

part of the project Green Enclave II (Commoners Sky Garden) is going on vigorously. The Housing Authority Green Enclave II Project is a joint venture of FGE Housing Authority, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Housing and Construction, with Sky Garden to provide low-cost plots/flats to government employees.

He said the work on the first part of Green Enclave-II was progressing towards completion.

## Envoys call for promoting tourism in South Asia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The envoys of Bangladesh and Nepal in Pakistan on Tuesday stressed the need for collective efforts to promote and develop the tourism sector of the South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal for sustainable growth of their respective economies.

They also lauded the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) for organizing the International Tourism Summit 2023, which they said would also help in further

promoting tourism in Northern areas of the country, said a press release.

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Pakistan Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique congratulated President ICCI for successfully organizing the "First ICCI Tourism Summit Skardu 2023".

He said that the initiative provided an opportunity to see the natural beauty of the northern regions, and it would have a positive impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Syed Ali Zafar, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.



Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs, Attaullah Tarar addressing a press conference in Islamabad

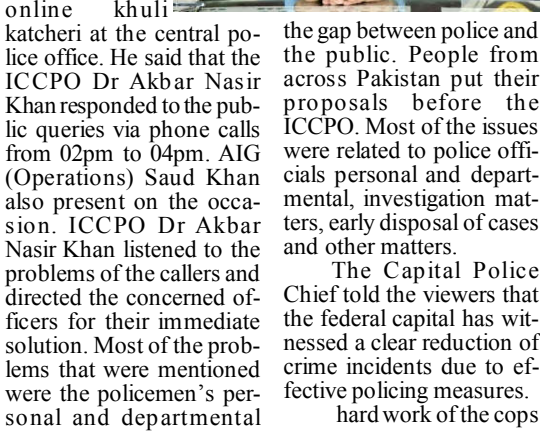
## Holds online Khuli Katcheri Police striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible: ICCPO

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan on Tuesday hold an online khuli katcheri to give the residents direct access to the police high ups, a police public relations officer said.

According to details on the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif and on the orders of Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan, the ICCPO holds an online khuli katcheri at the central police office. He said that the ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan responded to the public queries via phone calls from 02pm to 04pm. AIG (Operations) Saud Khan also present on the occasion. ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan listened to the problems of the callers and directed the concerned officers for their immediate solution. Most of the problems that were mentioned were the policemen's personal and departmental

problems, while citizens' problems were related to police stations.

Speaking to the citizens, the ICCPO said that the police were striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible. He said the purpose of such initiatives was aimed at bridging



ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Jamat-e-Islami Punjab Mian Muhammad Aslam talking to media persons after hiring at Election Commission.

## River Sutlej may experience medium to high flood in next 72 hours: FFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that except for River Chenab which is flowing in 'Low Flood' at Qadirabad (Khanki downstream), all other major rivers i.e. Indus, Jhelum, Ravi and Sutlej are normal. According to the daily FFC report on Tuesday, medium to high-Level Flooding is expected in River Sutlej at Ganda Singh Wala (First Control Station in Pakistan on River Sutlej) in the next 72 hours.

The combined live storage of the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Mangla & Chashma) is 8,359 MAF (62.18% of the Maximum Live Storage Capacity of 13,443 MAF). It was just 3,163 MAF last year on the same date.

Yesterday's deep trough of Westerly Wave over Kashmir and adjoining areas has moved away East-

wards. Moist currents both from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal have temporarily been cut off.

Also at present, weak seasonal low lies over Northwestern Balochistan. The Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore has predicted scattered thunderstorms/rain over the upper catchment of river Sutlej during the next 24 hours. Isolated thunderstorms/rain may also occur over upper catchments of other major rivers of IRS (except river Sutlej) besides, dry weather over the rest of the country during the same period. During the period from July 14th-15, scattered to widespread thunderstorms/rain with heavy falls at scattered places and very heavy falls at isolated places are expected over the upper catchments of rivers Kabul, Indus & Jhelum resulting in increased flows in these rivers.

Wednesday July 12, 2023

**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.



Arifa Noor

It turns out this Eid, many people of Pakistan didn't just have their hands full with animals and qurbani or other festive chores. A report in Dawn claimed that many also found the time to keep the police on their toes and ensure the 'wrong' kind of people did not celebrate Eid.

In at least two such complaints, the police were told to make sure the Ahmadi community did not sacrifice animals, which is a ritual for Muslims. Apparently, FIRs were also registered against those who did not heed the warnings duly issued by the police. This is a story which made it to the papers for usually our treatment of this community is so routine that it rarely makes it to the press. Indeed, stories of the desecration of

their graves or other forms of harassment usually pass without remark.

Our success in othering our own countrymen, especially on the basis of religion or even sectarian differences, is an example of continuity in policy that perhaps is unmatched; even our obsession with real estate came much later. And proof of this can be found in the barrage of news stories which simply tell of events such as the kidnapping or conversion of Hindu girls or the targeted killings of Sikhs.

What life for anyone of our minorities is like, their day-to-day existence, we never really learn of. The 'other' simply exists. There is little else to be aspired to. Only perhaps in death or some extreme hardship are they worthy of some sympathy.

This is one area, where perhaps India has caught up with us, despite our completely different trajectories in other areas where our neighbour is seen as an economic powerhouse being courted by the world.

The land which once

celebrated Amar Akbar Anthony is now one where stories of minorities being mistreated have become common. Just recently, two such men were brutally beaten on the suspicion of carrying beef; while one of them has since died, the other was said to be in hospital with brain injury.

Our journey here has been rather different: with the Muslim faith providing the main ideological bulwark for this country, it is little wonder majoritarianism was pushed in one form or the other from the first day in Pakistan, the Aug 11 speech notwithstanding.

And then, of course, the arrival of Ziaul Haq was simply the cherry on top, in more ways than one. His reign also absorbed the rest of us of any responsibility or blame for the state of affairs, for it was far easier to put all the horrors of religious intolerance at his door.

India, on the other hand, opted for a secular, more encompassing approach to unite a more diverse society. But that appears to be a lifetime ago now. Amar Akbar An-

thon has given way to Padmavat. And while our Islamisation project was a top-down affair from day one, India has followed suit only recently — but the change has come, decisively, or so say some.

Now it seems, the two neighbours are hurtling down the same path.

From a distance, it doesn't seem this journey has any roadblocks or turns which can take us in different directions. At home, there appears to be little in our politics to suggest any party or government can chart a different course; one simply has to examine the legislative record of the Punjab Assembly where every conservative and regressive law has garnered — across the aisle — consensus to understand this. And from the little I hear of our next-door neighbour, few feel that even if a different government were to be elected, it would lead to big changes on the issue of tolerance.

As an aside (it is called an 'aside' because little matters in comparison to the issue of citizens being in danger or facing humiliation simply for

their faith into which they were born), this obsession with majoritarianism manifests in other ways as well. Consider that in Pakistan, while we are vocal about state-imposed censorship, we rarely speak of how much we self-censor when it comes to issues related to religion.

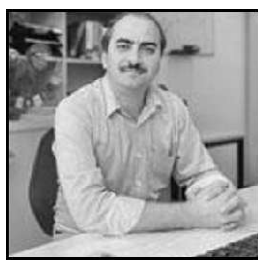
So much so that few are willing to speak up for cases such as Junaid Hafeez's and the need for reform in our laws, which lead to the needless and cruel incarceration of people such as him. It is far easier and safer to keep silent than speak up.

However, personally what intrigues me is not how we got here but how significant this period may turn out to be in the history of the region. After all, the subcontinent has always appeared to be a region far too populous and far too diverse to be too homogenous in terms of language, culture or religion. None of its rulers were able to impose a specific religion on the area, and to date, some of the most admired monarchs tend to be the ones who celebrated the diversity of the land.

Not just that, this was also a land which became home to so many who came from afar (for different reasons) and settled here, never to return — or to push out the locals. This doesn't only include those who came with raiding armies such as the Mughals.

Consider the Parsi community, which escaped persecution in their homeland of Iran to settle in the subcontinent. How generous and tolerant a culture or land it must have been for a persecuted community to settle here and call it home. It is a story that never fails to make me weep teary-eyed, especially at present. Was it the only such example of the land providing refuge and a home to those who needed it? And what was it about the subcontinent that people looking for a new start as well as safety were willing to risk the journey here?

But today that is just history. History that we are not even proud of, for we would rather write or squabble over the wars and the invasions that comprise the official story of this land. — Courtesy Dawn

**A decade of CPEC**

Dr Murad Ali

In recent times, hardly has any other strategy or initiative gained any such global limelight than Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The US's Build Back Better World (B3W)/Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and the EU Global Gateway are concrete instances of how the world has responded to counter the rising global role and influence of China.

There is hardly a policy think tank or academic institute across the globe that has remained disinterested in the enterprise. On account of massive enthusiasm for the subject, one study asserts that in China alone "the BRI-related publications increased by nearly 30,000 in 2018". To a large extent, similar has been the case with one artery of the BRI in Pakistan

— the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is one of the most discussed subjects in universities, think tanks and in business circles and the media.

In her study 'The Words of the Belt and Road Initiative: A Chinese Discourse for the World?', C M Costa has appropriately stated that the Chinese initiative has "turned into a global hot academic and media topic".

One study claims that in China alone, "the BRI-related publications increased by nearly 30,000 in 2018", including probably media reports otherwise these figures seem quite exaggerated. What I want to emphasize here is that the BRI (globally) and CPEC (to some extent globally but mostly regionally or locally) have remained at the centre of attention, although the intensity of interest has been waning of late.

Both Pakistan and China have identified the benefits of the corridor and its achievements to date and hence have decided to celebrate a decade of CPEC this month, including a planned international conference in Islamabad. I am in Germany on a short re-

search fellowship, working on my book on BRI/CPEC at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn, thanks to my researcher collaborator Professor Stephan Klingebiel, who is an eminent expert in the field of transnational development cooperation.

I participated in a workshop '10 years of BRI — learning processes, policy adaptations and managing complexity', organized jointly by University of Bonn and Academy of International Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). While a lot of issues were discussed during the seminar where experts and Sinologists from several countries participated, including from Taiwan and mainland China, there was also this feeling that the West is on the path of 'de-risking' — a mere euphemistic impression and a soft version of 'decoupling'.

One PhD scholar showed how Sino-EU cooperation in the area of space mission and space technology has come to halt during the last several years. In addition to space technology, there are several other areas such as AI, bio-

technology where the West has been on the course of 'de-risking' (read: decoupling). Sad for the growth of science and technology and for the greater benefit of humanity indeed.

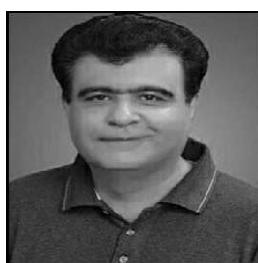
The problem with the US and by extension the larger Western world is that it has been looking at the BRI primarily from geopolitical lenses. In his book, 'The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict between the US and Xi Jinping's China', former prime minister of Australia Kevin Rudd argues that an "armed conflict between China and the United States over the next decade, while not yet probable, has become a real possibility". He is not alone to predict such a catastrophic scenario of the Sino-US bilateral ties, there is a long list of American writers. During the seminar, a US-based Chinese professor told me that you will rarely come across such warmongering from Chinese leadership and people in academia. The US is always obsessed with the idea of war, he stated.

And perhaps, no other writer can sum it better than the great Kishore Mahbubani, Singaporean

diplomat and author of several books, whose parents lived and grew up in pre-partition Pakistan in Hyderabad. In his book 'The Asian 21st Century', he asserts: "The Chinese have, for instance, avoided unnecessary wars. Unlike the United States, which is blessed with two non-threatening neighbors in Canada and Mexico, China has difficult relations with a number of strong, nationalistic neighbors, including India, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam. Quite remarkably, of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom), China is the only one among them that has not fired a single military shot across its border in 30 years... By contrast, even during the relatively peaceful Obama Administration, the American military dropped 26 thousand bombs on seven countries in a single year".

To be certain, CPEC is not a hollow narrative or a mere slogan as it has real and tangible impacts. Recently, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin stated in a press conference in Beijing that CPEC has attracted

about \$24.5 billion since it was initiated. He added that CPEC projects have generated about 192,000 jobs, added 6,000 MW of power, constructed 510 km highways, and expanded the national power transmission network by 886 km. Several government documents corroborate such statements. Also, among the six economic corridors envisioned under the BRI, CPEC has made tremendous progress as numerous projects worth \$25 billion have been executed in energy, infrastructure, and industrial sectors. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22, out of the total 56 projects currently underway, "26 projects worth approximately US\$17 billion have been completed so far and 30 projects worth US\$8.5 billion are under construction". Similarly, another 36 projects of about \$28.4 billion are stated to be in the pipeline. However, there is also a feeling that "China faces challenges in the realization of the BRI as the multiple countries along the network have different economic, political, institutional and infrastructural conditions and agendas". — Courtesy TheNews

**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 preemptive, 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 Naemuz 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 cream, 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 31 pc.

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 family

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

**Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spends busy day during his visit to Peshawar**



**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 Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Ziad Akram Durrani, 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 universi-

ties 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.

He said the laptops would help students to excel in their studies and get dignified jobs in the competitive IT market.

The prime minister said that the laptops distributed by the PML-N Government had greatly helped students to continue their studies during the time of COVID-19.

The prime minister said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the land of brave people who played a key role in saving the country from the menace of terrorism and held the sacrifices of law enforcement agencies, police, doctors, engineers, traders and people in high esteem.

He said that the deal with IMF was made in compulsion for the economic stability of the country.

Pakistan has all natural resources including precious lands for agriculture, mineral wealth and only strong will was required to take the country's out of existing challenges, he added.

The prime minister said that a comprehensive programme has been prepared for the promotion of information technology, agriculture and mineral resources, and increasing exports to alleviate poverty and generate employment opportunities for youth.



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

**CM Punjab, cabinet call on Governor Govt under striving hard for the development and prosperity of the country**

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and members of the provincial cabinet called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed development projects in the South Punjab during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Tuesday.

Development projects in the education, health and agriculture sectors in South Punjab came under discussion.

Caretaker provincial ministers Amir Mir, Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, Mansoor Qadir, Dr. Javed Akram, Dr. Jamal Nasir, Bilal Afzal, Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Law and Parlia-

mentary Affairs Kanwar Dilshad and Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports Wahab Riaz were present.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman, speaking on the occasion, said that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is striving hard for the development and prosperity of the country.

The Governor Punjab hailed caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and said that it is commendable to run a big province like Punjab efficiently with a small cabinet. He said that the efforts of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab to

improve the health sector are praise-worthy, but there is always room for improvement and this process of improvement should not stop.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that special attention given by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the agriculture sector is yielding positive results and it is good that the provincial government and all institutions are on the same page in this regard.

He said out-of-school children should be enrolled in the schools in Punjab and Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) should be run again in a better manner.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for local bodies Syed Nasir Hussain Shah along with Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon sharing Sindhi Ajrak during visiting at KPC.

**Pak Wheelchair Cricket team delegation calls on Governor**

KARACHI (APP): A six-member delegation of the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Team called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here on Tuesday.

M Q M - P a k i s t a n MNA Kishwar Zehra was also present, on the occasion.

The delegation included Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Board President Rukhsana Rajput, Captain Mohammed Zeeshan, Vice Captain Syed Arsalan Ahmed, Sajid Ali Abbasi, Imran Amin and Wassemuuddin. The meeting discussed the promotion of the Wheelchair Cricket, conduct of tournaments at the regional level, and other issues.

**Murad announces formation of PFC for local bodies**

**CM Sindh vows to eliminate dacoits, foresees Bilawal as next PM**

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday announced the formation of the next Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) for the vertical distribution of available resources to the local bodies.

"We have started spade work to design the next PFC and it will be finalized within a month."

This he said while talking to media persons just after performing the concluding ceremony of the three-day Urs of Abdullah Shah Ghazi at his shrine.

Replying to a question, the CM said that the cabinet had decided to announce the PFC award within a month of the formation of local bodies.

"Now the elected representatives of the local bodies have taken over and we are going to form the commission and then the commission decides the formula of the award," he said and added that his government would financially strengthen the third tier of the government. It may be noted that the PFC ascertains the share of available resources between provincial and local bodies, generally known as vertical distribution. It also formulates a criterion for the distribution of allocated funds to local government horizontally.

**Dist admin on high alert in wake of flood**

KASUR (APP): The district administration put up on high alert to cope with flood here in the district.

A spokesperson said here on Tuesday that on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Arshad Bhatti, flood relief camps were set up to deal with any untoward situation.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Kasur Rizwan-ul-Haq Puri visited the Talwar post relief camp established on River Sutlej and reviewed the arrangements.

He said that the administration was vigilantly monitoring the flow of water in the river.

He highlighted that currently, 20,000 Cusec water was recorded at Gandha Singhwala point, while it would increase to 60,000 Cusec by tomorrow.

**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.

Dr Jamal Nasir said that Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi had significantly increased funds for social security hospitals across the province and issued instructions for the provision of the best treatment facilities to domestic workers in social security hospitals.

He said that the social security hospital was less crowded than the general hospitals, but despite this, the patients faced difficulties in getting medicines and treatment facilities there.

**Labourer dies, three hurt as roof caves in**

MULTAN (APP): A labourer here on Tuesday was killed while three others sustained injuries as roof of house suddenly caved-in at Allah Nawaz dera near Naag Shah chowk.

According to Rescue officials, the labourers were working at the roof of a house near Naag Shah chowk when suddenly roof caved in.

Upon receiving the information, the rescue teams rushed to the spot and provided first-aid to three injured Hameed, Ishfaq and Javed.

While the heirs shifted the body of the deceased to Shujabad through Edhi ambulance.

**ANF seizes over 3400 kg of drugs worth \$86 mln in 26 operations**

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a series of 26 counter-narcotics operations conducted throughout Pakistan, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) successfully seized a staggering 3400.491 kilograms of drugs with an estimated international value of \$86.324 million.

The operations resulted in the arrest of 28 individuals, including five women, and the impoundment of 10 vehicles.

According to a spokesperson from the ANF Headquarters, the confiscated drugs consisted of various substances.

The largest quantity seized was 3248 kilograms of opium, followed by 2,569 kilograms of heroin, 108,795 kilograms of hashish, 762 grams of cocaine, 40,291 kilograms of methamphetamine (commonly known as Ice), 50 grams of weed, and 24 grams of ecstasy tablets (50 tablets).

ANF Balochistan, in its five operations, played a significant role by recovering 3282 kilograms of drugs.

The operations led to the arrest of five individuals involved in drug smuggling, and three vehicles were impounded. The drugs seized in Balochistan included 3224 kilograms of opium, 20 kilograms of hashish, and 38 kilograms of methamphetamine (Ice).

In four operations conducted by ANF Punjab, a total of 74,066 kilograms of drugs were recovered. The operations resulted in the arrest of nine individuals, including four women, and the impoundment of two vehicles. The seized drugs in Punjab comprised 24 kilograms of opium, 0.131 kilograms of heroin, and 49,935 kilograms of hashish.

ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) recovered 15,207 kilograms of drugs in three operations. The seized drugs included 0.168 kilograms of heroin, 14,500 kilograms of hashish, and 0.539 kilograms of methamphetamine (Ice).

In Sindh, ANF successfully conducted four operations, leading to the recovery of 15.97 kilograms of drugs.



KARACHI: High Commissioner Ghana, Eric Owusu Boateng calls on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

**Pre-flood rescue mock exercise held**

CHICHAWATNI (APP): The pre-flood rescue mock exercise was held here at the Lower Bari Doab canal on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner Sahiwal Ikram-ul-Haq and Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Aitezaz Aslam were the chief guests.

Officers from all district government departments including Civil Defense, Police, Traffic wardens, Health, Irrigation, Livestock and others participated in the exercise. The rescue teams presented demonstration of rescuing the flood affected people.

District Emergency Officer Dr Kahlid Abdullah gave detailed briefing about the purpose and importance of the mock exercise.

**Reham returns to Pakistan with her 3rd husband**

KARACHI (Online): Reham Khan Ex-wife of Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Anchor person has come to Pakistan for the first time with her third husband Mirza Bilal.

Reham Khan was accorded a warm welcome by her fans at Karachi Airport.

Reham Khan has shared her welcome video on the photo and video sharing APP Instagram and also expressed her love for Karachi.

In this video fans can be seen taking selfies with Reham Khan at Karachi airport.

By sharing this video Reham Khan wrote in the caption of her post "Jahan Dil ho Wohi Ghar Hota hy".

It's great to be back in Pakistan. She is more excited than ever to spend time with real Pakistan.

**Community projects prioritized to address public problems: Afridi**

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Taj Muhammad Afridi and Caretaker Minister for Irrigation Haji Fazal Elahi on Tuesday chaired a meeting regarding the construction and completion of Bara and Jabba Dams in Khyber district including Warsak Canal System, held at Civil Secretariat here.

The caretaker provincial ministers were told in the briefing that around one million people will get clean drinking water upon completion of the Jabba Dam, while 300 cusecs of drinking water and 400 cusecs of water for irrigation will be possible with the completion of the Warsak Canal system.

At the briefing, it was further informed that the completion of Bara Dam will not only irrigate 48 thousand acres of land, but it will also provide 16 cusecs of clean drinking water along with generating 6 megawatts of electricity.

On this occasion, caretaker provincial minister Alhaj Taj Muhammad Afridi said that he will give priority to projects of public interest and collective nature so that faster development in the area can be made possible. He also insisted on removing all reservations concerned with the said projects.

Caretaker Provincial Minister Taj Muhammad Afridi also issued instructions to include Malaguri and Bakarabad areas in the Warsak Canal System project so that the people there are provided with clean water, and do not face any problems in this regard.



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

## 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 skill 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.



BAHAWALPUR: Labourers busy in packing mangoes in boxes to be delivered in local fruit markets.

## 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-re-

lated 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 formulated a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for the economic revival of the country.

The SIFC will be chaired by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, with the Chief of Army Staff and Federal Ministers as its members. This is in line with the Government of Pakistan's vision to promote investment and prioritize exports.

Prof Ahsan Iqbal encouraged Chinese enterprises and investors to explore more investment op-

portunities in Pakistan.

He said both China and Pakistan would benefit from greater Chinese investment in Pakistan. It would not only support Pakistan's economy but would provide an avenue for Chinese companies to sell products manufactured in Pakistan into the Chinese market and elsewhere in the world. He solicited the support of Chinese Companies working in Pakistan to attract more foreign direct investment from China into Pakistan.

The minister recalled that the CPEC journey had started during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to China and within a few years it grew to encompass more than 25-billion-dollar projects, ranging from energy to infrastructure and information technology.

## 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 second Green Revolution is about making agriculture the major driver

of our economic growth, leading to food security that reinforces our national security," he said.

He said the seminar was not a routine event meant for churning of rhetoric, but it represented the beginning of a long overdue national effort for the economic revival of the country owned by all stakeholders.

"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."

## Naveed Qamar says: Foreign companies, factories likely to move to Dhabiji SEZ

KARACHI (APP): Many foreign companies and factories from different countries are likely to be shifted to Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, said Special Assistant to the Sindh Chief Minister for Investment and Public Private Partnership Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar.

The expected arrival of factories and companies from China, Turkey and Gulf countries will create their cluster in Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar expressed these views while talking to a delegation of local businessmen in his office here on Tuesday.

Qasim Naveed said

that Dhabiji Special Economic Zone is an economic zone with a lot of incentives for investment companies in terms of its prime location and availability of the cheapest labour. He said that the Dhabiji Special Economic Zone, located just a few kilometres away from Port Qasim, Karachi Port, Karachi Airport, Main Railway Line and National Highway, will connect its industries and production units not only to all regions of Pakistan but also to countries around the world. It has excellent bonding ability and the same is the reason why it is just the beginning.

## 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).

The Japanese Yen gained 2 paise to close at Rs 1.98, whereas an increase of 50 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

## FPCCI welcomes Pak, Kazakhstan direct air link

LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Tuesday welcomed commencing of a direct air link between Pakistan and Kazakhstan as it would help enhance bilateral economic cooperation and prove to be a milestone in forging mutual business and economic integration with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states.

FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Shiekh told the media here that direct flights would increase the possibilities of economic cooperation between the two countries. Two flights in a week from Almaty, the in-

deserved appreciation for playing an important role in the launch of a direct air link between the two brotherly countries. He said that economic relations between the two countries would improve further with the start of direct flights. He said the business community of Pakistan considered that the step would positively impact trade relations with Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Sheikh expressed his views by highlighting its positive impact on various aspects of the bilateral relationship between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He emphasized that introducing a direct air flight be-



Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan Yezzan Kistafin and FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Shiekh during a meeting.

## 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, stakehold-

ers 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. He mentioned that the UVAS was always ready in providing support to professionals and industrialists in the uplift of the livestock sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Abid Mehmood said that the meeting was aimed to provide a platform to stakeholders to discuss important issues, researchable areas and future challenges to boost the livestock sector.



LAHORE: Visitors taking keen interest in handmade crafts during an exhibition.

## 167 electricity schemes completed: FESCO chairman

SARGODHA (APP): Fesco Chairman Malik Tahsin Awan has said 167 electricity schemes had been completed in the district during the last financial year at a cost of Rs 206 million. He was addressing a ceremony organized by the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Tuesday.

He said the first priority was the industrial customers as industries were backbone of the national economy and it was vital for the country's development and employment. He also announced to install MDI meters on industries to eliminate billing complaints. On the request of SCCI President Sajid Hussain Tarar, he issued orders to repair and replace poles in the next ten days.

Earlier, SCCI Presi-

dent Sajid Hussain Tarar said the role of Fesco was very important for industrial development.

Member National Assembly Hamid Hameed said under the leadership of Malik Tahsin Awan the Fesco had installed grids of Bhagtanwala, Sargodha II and Sargodha City and upgraded at a cost of Rs 460 million, which would prove to be a revolution for the launch of new agricultural, commercial and industrial connections. He added that more than 110 schemes were being completed in Sargodha circle with Rs 165 million which would benefit consumers of 184 areas of the district. Senior Vice President Sargodha Chamber Ahmad Nauman Akbar, members of the Executive Council and others also participated.

## APCEA holds interactive session on 'Pakistan from the Eyes of Geologists'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises' Association (APCEA) with the mutual collaboration of the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences (CPJRC) and China SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center's (CSGC) co-organized a conference-interactive session, simultaneously held at APCEA's Islamabad office

and Xi An. The subject of the event was "Pakistan from the Eyes of Geologists" which is the title of the latest joint publication of CPJRC and CSGC. The book elucidates the potential of Pakistan in the sector of Geology via the technical expertise as well as the perspectives of Chinese and Pakistani geology professionals.



FAISALABAD: Farmers are busy in planting rice in field along the Satyana road in City.

## 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, Chair-

man, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co said that in Pakistan about 3,000 MW electricity could be generated using agricultural residue and municipal solid waste. He said that Pakistan generated about 15 million tonnes of crops residue annually, which could be used as feedstock to generate 120 MW of electricity. He added Pakistan had a huge potential for renewable energy resources such as wind, solar and biomass, which would also save foreign reserves to be consumed on the high-cost energy. The delegation was of the view that construction style in Pakistan was conventional and inefficient. By contrast, Chinese employ highly energy-efficient construction technology and style that could save construction and energy cost in Pakistan by up to 10 times. He added that among the 530MW cumulative generation capacity in Pakistan, 400 MW (75 percent) was generated from Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park.

## Musadiq says: Pro-agri budget to uplift rural development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadiq Malik on Tuesday said a major relief was given to the agriculture sector by giving incentives on seeds and fertilizers to uplift development in rural areas.

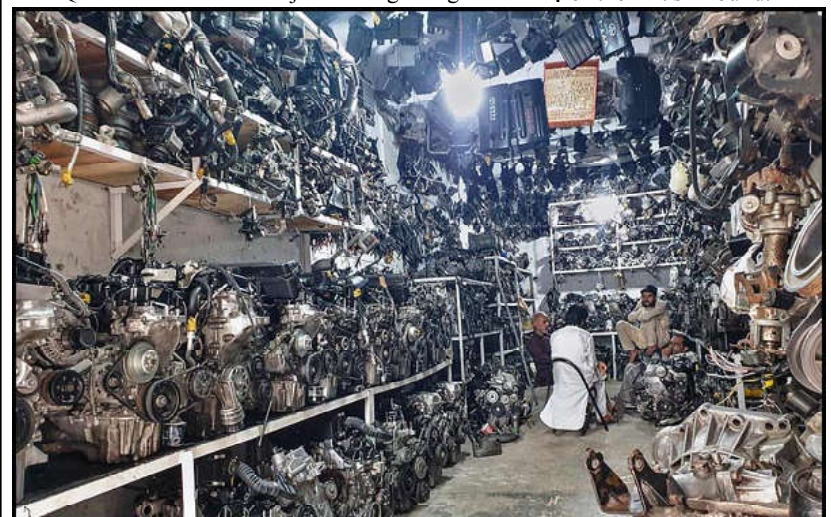
Talking to a private news channel he said, the incumbent government has primarily focused on the stability of the economy.

To a question about elections, he said the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will lead the election campaign after his arrival in Pakistan. He hoped that PML-N would win the general elections with a majority of votes.

He said opposition parties must follow moral legitimacy as they were bound to abide by the rule of law of the country.

## UBG Chairman resigns due to health reasons

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, United Business Group (UBG), Shahzad Ali Malik on Tuesday tendered his resignation from the position due to health reasons. Malik, who has been serving as the Chairman expressed his gratitude towards the trade leaders who supported him during his tenure, said a news release. In his resignation statement, Malik cited health concerns as the primary reason for his decision to step down. He acknowledged the immense support he received from the trade community across the country.



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

## 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 agricultural sector would make farming the significant driver of our monetary development and ensure food security as well.

He said that in Pakistan's agricultural sector, billion-dollar investments are anticipated within the next four to five years through the promotion of cutting-edge technology, collaboration between

the public and private sectors, and dividends distributed to local farmers to alleviate poverty.

GCC nations import \$40 billion worth of agricultural and food products annually, he observed adding that under the supervision of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, the government intended to attract investment in the amount of billions of dollars into Pakistan's agricultural sector from the GCC nations.

In addition to the creation of 4 million new jobs, there would be an investment of approximately \$40 billion over the next four to five years, Jawad anticipated. "We are importing \$4.5 billion worth of palm oil and as an emerging nation we can't spend such a gigantic sum on the import of a single commodity," he added.

## PSX stays bullish, gains 570 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 570.67 points, a positive change of 1.28 percent, closing at 45,155.80 points against 44,585.13 points the previous trading day.

A total of 555,100,181 shares were traded during the day as compared to 440,221,059 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 15.487 billion against Rs 12.086 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 363 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 253 of them recorded gains and 92 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 18 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 35,089,048 shares at Rs 1.28 per share; Pak Refinery with 31,421,276 shares at Rs.16.95 per share.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Khalida Ateeb, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

## 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.

## Ukrainian minister says he fears Russia has 'no red lines' to prevent attacks on nuclear plant

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: The catastrophic collapse of a dam in southern Ukraine has made Kyiv worried that Russia might stage an attack on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to attack the nuclear plant in a possible false flag operation. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged last week, citing intelligence reports, that Russian troops placed "objects resembling explosives" atop several power units to "simulate" an attack.  
"there are no red lines" for Moscow. He said it warrants the level of alarm Ukraine's leadership has been raising in recent weeks of an alleged Russian ploy to attack the nuclear plant in a possible false flag operation. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged last week, citing intelligence reports, that Russian troops placed "objects resembling explosives" atop several power units to "simulate" an attack.

## 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.  
"I have decided to increase deliveries of weapons and equipment to enable the Ukrainians to have the capacity to strike deeply," he said. He declined to say how many missiles would be sent. A French diplomatic source said they were talking about 50 SCALP missiles being sent. A second source aware of the move said some of the missiles had already been delivered to Ukraine.

## 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 detention 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 ... Palestinians are presumed guilty without evidence, arrested without charge or trial very often, and brutalized in Israeli custody."  
Israel's permanent mission to the U.N. in Geneva rejected Albanese's findings.

## Twitter better for 'freedom of speech', says senior Afghan Taliban official

**Monitoring Desk**  
KABUL: Twitter owner Elon Musk's free-wheeling approach to the platform's handling of censorship has won support from an unlikely quarter — Afghanistan's Taliban.  
Anas Haqqani, a senior Taliban leader without an official portfolio, said late on Monday that Twitter had "two important advantages" over other social media platforms following the launch of Meta-owned rival Threads.  
"The first privilege is the freedom of speech. The second privilege is the public nature and credibility of Twitter," he tweeted.  
"Twitter doesn't have an intolerant policy like Meta. Other platforms cannot replace it."  
The remarks drew an angry reaction from some users, who noted the Taliban government did not allow its own citizens the same rights.  
The Taliban had a low-key presence on social media until they stormed back to power in August 2021.

## 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.  
The risk of oil spills and accidents is growing as hundreds of extra ships, some without insurance cover, have joined this opaque parallel trade over the past few years.  
The Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC), MT Arman 114, was carrying 272,569 metric tons of light crude oil, valued at 4.6 trillion rupiah (\$304 million) and was suspected of transferring the oil to another vessel without a permit, Indonesia's Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) said.  
Bakamla chief Aan Kurnia told reporters the vessel was captured after it was spotted near Indonesia's North Natuna Sea conducting a ship-to-ship oil transfer with the Cameroon-flagged MT S Tinos, on Friday.



A damaged car lays on a collapsed roadway along Route 32 in the Hudson Valley near Cornwall, N.Y.

## 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.  
Stoltenberg thanked Yoon for joining condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and said North Korea's nuclear and missile threats were an important issue that has an impact on NATO and beyond.  
South Korea and NATO are expected to agree to expand cooperation in 11 areas, including non-proliferation and cybersecurity, which Stoltenberg said highlighted the significance of their ties.  
Yoon, at the NATO gathering with the leaders of Japan, Australia and New Zealand, could face renewed pressure to supply arms to Ukraine, which his administration has resisted doing, wary of Russian influence over North Korea.  
Media has reported that South Korea had agreed to send artillery rounds to the U.S. to be delivered to Ukraine but South Korea's defence ministry said while it was discussing ammunition exports to the U.S., the reports were inaccurate.

## 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 Valentin 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 respective 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.  
On Monday, Western leaders gathered in Lithuania's capital ahead of a summit expected to present unity on Ukraine's future membership of the NATO military alliance — a prospect Russia has reacted furiously to.  
Beijing says it is a neutral party in the war, but its refusal to condemn the invasion has led many of Kyiv's allies to accuse it of favouring Russia.  
Matviyenko on Monday said the strategic partnership between Beijing and Moscow "has reached the highest level in history and continues to develop steadily", according to CCTV.  
She said a March visit by Xi to Moscow, where he met his counterpart Vladimir Putin, had "injected strong impetus into the further development of Russia-China relations".  
Xi said China was "willing to continue to work with Russia to develop a comprehensive partnership of mutual assistance, deep integration, innovation, and inclusive cooperation in the new era".

## 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.  
Turkiye had held up Sweden's accession, accusing the Nordic country of not doing enough to crack down on people Ankara sees as terrorists. On Monday, however, Erdogan dropped his objection to Sweden becoming Nato's 32nd member.  
Russia sees Nato expansion as a threat to its own security, but Peskov played down a reporter's suggestion that Turkiye was pivoting away from Russia and towards the West.  
"Turkiye can orient itself to the West, we know that in the history of the Republic of Turkiye there were periods of intensive orientation to the West, there were periods of less intensive ones," he told a daily news briefing.  
"But we also know that... no one wants to see Turkiye in Europe, I mean the Europeans. And here our Turkish partners should not wear rose-tinted spectacles either," he said.



A migrant holds a placard reading "All muslims are brothers" during a gathering in Sfax, Tunisia's eastern coast.

## 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, aiming to prevent a global food crisis by allowing Ukrainian grain trapped by Russia's invasion to be exported from Black Sea ports.  
"Turkey is a key player in the long-term handling of market difficulties caused by Ukrainian grain imports (in Central Europe)."

## Nepal retrieves bodies of six dead in helicopter crash, five Mexicans among them

**Monitoring Desk**  
KATHMANDU: Authorities in Nepal have retrieved the bodies of all six people killed in a helicopter crash on Tuesday, including five Mexican nationals, authorities said, the latest in a series of air disasters to strike the Himalayan nation.  
The cause of the crash near Likkhu, just northeast of the capital of Kathmandu, was not yet known, the civil aviation regulator said, adding that the government would set up a probe committee to investigate.  
The helicopter was operated by Manang Air, which ferries tourists seeking a view of the country's towering peaks, including Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain. Rescuers have retrieved the bodies of all six, said Sita Adhikari, a regional official in the district of Solukhumbu, the site of the crash. "The bodies have broken into pieces," Adhikari added.  
"More police have been sent to the location. Only then will we know details."

## US intelligence assessment says Iran not currently developing nuclear weapons

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A U.S. intelligence assessment says Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons at the moment but has ramped up activities that could help it develop them.  
The assessment from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released Monday says Iran has moved to increase its capacity to produce an atomic bomb since 2020 but has stopped short of that so far.  
The findings corresponded with previous U.S. assessments about Iran's nuclear program, although many in Congress and elsewhere have been skeptical of those.  
The Biden administration has been defending its desire to return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, since it first took office. That effort has been complicated in recent months by the suspension of its chief negotiator, Rob Malley, who was placed on unpaid leave last month pending an investigation into claims he mishandled classified information.  
"Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device," according to the two-page unclassified synopsis of the report.  
However, Iran is also pursuing "research and development activities that would bring it closer to producing the fissile material needed for completing a nuclear device following a decision to do so," the report said.  
In that regard, Iran continues to violate the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal regarding uranium enrichment that it agreed to with world powers, the report said. The Trump administration withdrew from that agreement in 2018.  
"Iran continues to increase the size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile beyond JCPOA limits," the report said, adding that it also continues to exceed JCPOA restrictions on advanced centrifuge research and development.  
These findings have been generally supported by inspections from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

## A surging river threatens Vermont's capital as crews rescue more than 100 from swift water

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANDOVER: A storm that dumped up to two months of rain in two days in Vermont and other parts of the Northeast brought more flooding Tuesday in communities marooned by water, including the state capital, where a dam just upstream was threatening to overflow. The flooding has already caused tens of millions of dollars in damage, officials said, with more to come: If water pours over the dam on the Winooski River that flows through Montpelier, it could surge through downtown blocks where the floods were already waist-high.  
"We have not seen rainfall like this since Irene," Vermont Gov. Phil Scott said, referring to Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011. That storm killed six in the state, washed homes off their foundations and dam-

## UN set to clash over motion on religious hatred

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: The Human Rights Council is set to debate a contentious draft proposal on religious hatred in the wake of burning of the Holy Quran in Sweden, an initiative that has highlighted rifts in the UN body and challenged practices in human rights protection.  
In a draft resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the group described the burning of Holy Quran in Stockholm last month as "offensive, disrespectful and a clear act of provocation" that incites hatred and constitutes a human rights violation.

## 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-

ive 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).

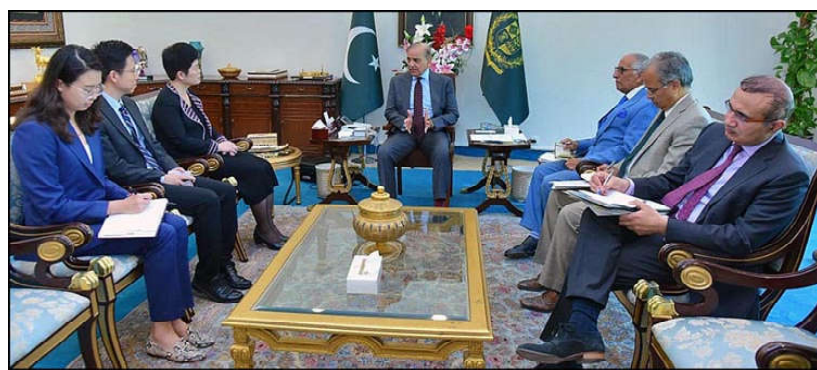
Conveying the best wishes and felicitations of the Chinese government for Pakistan, Pang underscored

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.



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 Qudus 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.



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 (APPNA) towards the uplift of Pakistan's health, education and economic sectors, with a clarion call for unity among Pakistani diaspora as their motherland faces off 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.

## Senate body deliberates on creation of two new provinces

ISLAMABAD (Online): The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice under the Chairmanship of Senator Barrister Syed Ali Zafar was held today here at Parliament House for discussing the matter of creation of two provinces of South Punjab and Hazara Region.

The Chairman of the Committee noted that there were sufficient and important justification for creation of provinces. Chairman Zafar pointed out that there was poor governance and lack of economic development in areas that were further from Lahore and Peshawar respectively and this distance was also creating daily communication problems for the people.

The creation of prov-

## 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.



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%).



QUETTA: A delegation led by Advocate Malik Aminullah Kakar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## 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 been 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.



GWADAR: Customs Authority shows seized drugs to media at Panshi 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 unfilled 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

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

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has given approval of the additional release 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: H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki, Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## 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.

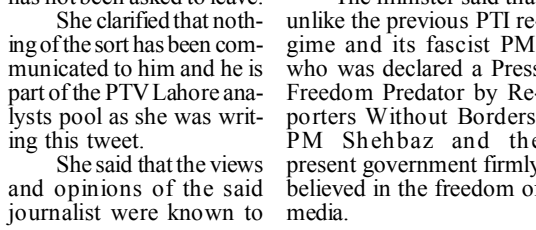
She said that the views and opinions of the said journalist were known to

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.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with Federal Secretary Ministry of Communications Chairman NHA CAPT (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha at Parliament House.

## 176th meeting of IBCC to be held from July 13

QUETTA (APP): The 176th meeting of the Inter-Board Committee for Education Ijaz Azeem Baloch presided the meeting of officers of the board in connection with the preparations regarding the holding 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.

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 the IBCC meeting.

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## 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 of 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.