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IMF Executive Board approves \$3b for Pakistan

IMF's Stand-by Agreement approval, a major step to help stabilize economy: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said International Monetary Funds (IMF), Executive Board approved USD 3 billion for Pakistan.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) had also fulfilled their promises made to Pakistan regarding the deposit of two billion dollars and one billion dollars respectively in the State Bank of Pakistan, he said while talking to a private television channel.

The previous regime of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), he said had created problems for the

country's economy due to its weak policies and tough agreements with IMF. Now Pakistan's economy was moving in the right direction after the agreement with IMF, he stated.

Dar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had visited KSA, U.A.E and China for seeking financial help for Pakistan.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the approval of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board for a Stand-by Agreement of \$3 billion, a little while ago, was a major step forward in the

government's efforts to stabilize the economy and achieve macroeconomic stability.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said that the agreement would bolster Pakistan's economic position to overcome immediate- to medium-term economic challenges, giving the next government the fiscal space to chart the way forward.

He further said that the milestone, which was achieved against the heaviest of odds and against seemingly impossible deadline, could not have been possible without excellent team effort.



QUETTA: A delegation of Jamaat Ahle Sunnat Balochistan led by Pir Syed Habibullah Chishti meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Entire nation standing with families of martyrs: CM pays tributes to Pak Army on foiling terrorists' attack at Zhub Garrison in retaliation

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has condemned the terrorists' attack at the Zhub Garrison and paid rich tributes to the Pak Army for foiling the attack of terrorists in immediate retaliation.

In an official statement issued here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that the jawas of Army created new history of bravery and courage by foiling the nefarious designs of the assailants in the Garrison.

He said that four jawans of Army embraced martyrdom by rendering sacrifice of their lives while protecting the motherland.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo said that we are

proud of the sacrifices of our martyrs. He said that our brave armed forces are determined to protect the country and nation. He also said that Pak Army is the guarantor of the country's peace and stability.

The Chief Minister expressed condolence and solidarity with the bereaved families of the martyrs. He said that the whole nation is standing with them.

He expressed best wishes for early recovery of the security personnel injured in the terrorists' attack in the Zhub Garrison. It may be mentioned here four security personnel were martyred and five injured in the retaliation against terrorists attacked at the Garrison in wee hours of Wednesday.

PM Shehbaz welcomes

UN passes Pakistan-led motion on religious hatred

WASHINGTON (Online): The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council on Wednesday approved a disputed resolution on religious hatred in the wake of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

Last month, a man desecrated the Holy Quran in Sweden's capital Stockholm, resulting in strong condemnation from several Muslim states, including Pakistan, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the European Union, Pope Francis and the Swedish government, among others.

The resolution, introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the 57-nation OIC, calls for the UN rights chief to publish a report on religious hatred and for states

to review their laws and plug gaps that may "impede the prevention and prosecution of acts and advocacy of religious hatred".

It was strongly opposed by the United States and the European Union, who say it conflicts with their view on human rights and freedom of expression.

While condemning the desecration of the Holy Quran, they argued the OIC initiative was designed to safeguard religious symbols rather than human rights.

An Iraqi immigrant to Sweden desecrated the Holy Quran outside a Stockholm mosque last month, sparking outrage across the Muslim world and demands by Muslim states for action.

Pakistan receives \$1 billion from United Arab Emirates: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has received a deposit of \$1 billion from the United Arab Emirates, which would further strengthen and improve the foreign exchange reserves of the country.

Addressing a press conference he said SBP as Federal Reserve Bank, has also confirmed and said that an amount of \$1 billion had been received from the brotherly United Arab Emirates as this inflow would further increase foreign exchange reserves, held by the SBP.

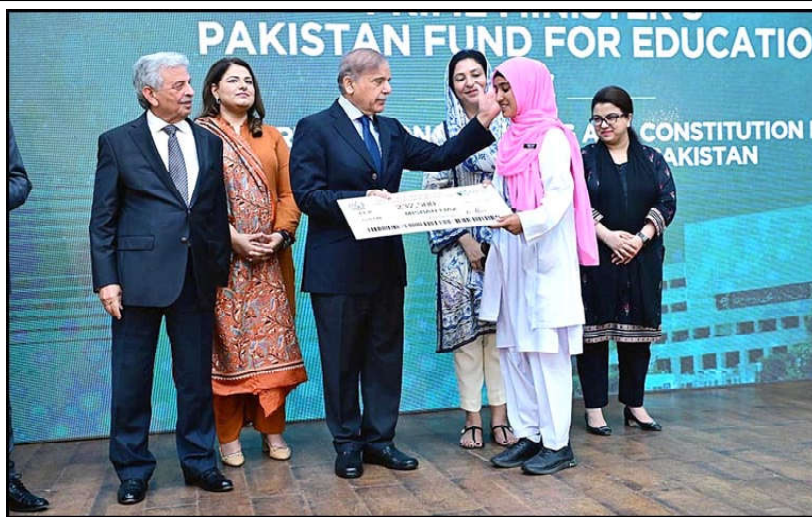
Ziaullah Langove condemns attack at Zhub cant

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has condemned the attack at Zhub cantment.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Wednesday, the Minister Home expressed satisfaction over the befitting response given to the terrorists after attack at the garrison.

He paid tributes to the martyrs saying that the timely retaliation by the Pak army is commendable. Mir Ziaullah Langove said that the nation has always acknowledged the sacrifices rendered by the security forces for the cause of sustainable peace in the province.

He said that the security forces would continue their action against the terrorists till their elimination.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes scholarship cheques among high-achieving students on merit basis under the Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education.

Our govt tenure to expire on August 14, EC will announce schedule for coming election: PM

Launches Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education, incorporation of coding, constitution in curriculum

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said tenure of our government will expire on August 14 and Election Commission (EC) will announce the date for next election.

"This is not matter of pride but it is matter of concern. There was a time when we competed neighboring countries. Today we are borrowing money from every where to save Pakistan from going default", PM said this while addressing Pakistan Education Endowment Fund (PEEF) and reforms in National Curriculum ceremony here Wednesday.

He went on to say this journey was started in 2008 from Punjab. Punjab Endowment Education Fund was established under Nawaz Sharif

The development and prosperity of country is possible through modern education, he stressed. Whichever government comes in future should raise education fund, he added.

Today there is meeting of IMF Executive Board. Pray for it that our program is approved in IMF meeting.

Educational scholarships were provided to 450000 boys and girls. Today thousands have become doctors and engineers among them.

It has been my endeavor to raise endowment fund from Rs 2 billion to Rs 5 billions. It is my desire Rs 140 billion is earmarked in next 10 years, he underlined.

When I was outside the country I talked to Dr Amjid Saqib about educa-

tion, he added.

Pakistan land is fertile, he said adding hard time for Pakistan will soon be over and we will come to stability.

We are stunned if we go to Gulf desert, he said adding youths can bring revolution in Pakistan too.

Promoting education is not politics but it is worship, he held.

China helped Pakistan in every hard time, he said adding We are grateful to Chinese leadership.

This is matter of grave concern for government, politicians, generals, judges and people from all walks of life and for me that what is reason that neighbouring countries have gone far ahead of us.

The Prime Minister

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Haji Muhammad Khan Toor Utmankhail, Advisor Information Mittha Khan Kakar and MPA Asghar Khan Tareen meeting with Principal Secretary of Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Gichki

Governor slams terrorists' attack at Zhub Garrison

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has strongly condemned the attack of terrorists at the Garrison in Zhub on Wednesday morning. In a condemnation statement issued here, the Governor expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom and injuring of security personnel in the terrorists' at-

tack. He expressed condolence and solidarity with the bereaved families of the security personnel martyred in the attack.

He said that we share the grief and sorrow with the bereaved families of the martyred Army jawans. The Governor prayed for the departed souls of martyrs. He also prayed for early recovery of those injured in the attack.

All have seen the result of giving country in the hands of a butcher: Nawaz

JEDDAH (Online): PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has said all have seen the result of giving the country in the hands of a butcher.

"All have seen the result of giving the country in the hands of a butcher. He destroyed everything. After coming to power again we will start the journey of development from where we had left. The task has been assigned to Maryam Nawaz to make PML-N active and dynamic all over the country,

he said this while talking to PML-N Saudi Arabia office bearers.

We are determined to put the country on path to development and prosperity. All saw the result of giving the country in the hands of a butcher. This butcher annihilated every institution and department. Only this man is behind the difficulties country is facing now. Ruling coalition propped up the economy despite the difficulties, he remarked.

Three-storey house catches fire, 10 members of a family die

LAHORE (Online): A fire wreaked havoc in interior Lahore. 10 people died including 6 women and 3 children of same family in fire incident.

Fire broke out in a building in Bhatigate area of Lahore. 10 people were burnt to death in the incident.

The deceased include wife, children, grandsons and granddaughters of a citizen named Zaheer-ul-Din Babar.

According to rescue authorities, fire broke out due to burst of refrigerator compressor in house.

PDM leaders hold 'consultation' on caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders held "begun" initial consultation for the caretaker prime minister.

The current National Assembly is completing its 5-year constitutional term next month (August) after which a caretaker prime minister will be appointed who will ensure elections within 60 days?

There was a disagreement in the coalition government on the election date as the Pakistan People's Party wanted elections to be held on time, while JUL-F and PDM chief Fazlur Rehman wanted a one-year extension in the tenure of existing assemblies.

PTI terminates basic membership of Khattak

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has issued a notice of Termination of Basic Membership of Parvez Khattak from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

According to notification with reference to the show cause notice served to Parvez Khattak, Ex-Provincial President, KPK, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on 21st June, 2023, a satisfactory reply within the given stipulated time regarding contacting party members and inciting them to leave the party was not received.

Martyred troops are nation's pride: PM Nine soldiers martyred, five terrorists killed in Zhub Garrison attack

ZHOB (INP): At least nine security personnel were martyred by terrorists on Wednesday in an early morning attack on the Zhub Garrison in northern Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

The military's media wing had earlier put the death toll to four, stating that five soldiers were critically injured. Later in the evening, it said that the injured soldiers succumbed to their wounds and embraced martyrdom.

"Initial attempt of terrorists to sneak into the facility was checked by soldiers on duty," the ISPR said, adding that the terrorists were soon after cornered in a small area near the boundary following a heavy exchange of fire.

"In total, five terrorists have been sent to hell during the operation," the

ISPR said, adding that the clearance operation was successfully completed.

"Security forces and the nation remain resilient and determined to thwart all such dastardly attempts of the enemy aimed at destroying peace of Balochistan and Pakistan."

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday terming martyred soldiers the "pride of the nation" said their invaluable sacrifices of lives could never be forgotten.

The prime minister expressed these remarks in a statement issued after four soldiers of the Pakistan army lost their lives in a terrorist attack in the Zhub garrison of Balochistan.

He paid tribute to the martyred soldiers and said that their sacrifice for the homeland would be remembered forever.



Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting inaugurating a podcast studio titled "Planet FM 87.6" at Radio Pakistan, Islamabad.

Info Minister lauds initiatives taken to revive Radio Pakistan, making it financially viable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, during a visit to Radio Pakistan Islamabad, has appreciated recent initiatives taken to revive the national broadcaster and make it financially viable.

Talking to media at the National Broadcasting House, Islamabad on Wednesday evening, she said the business plan under the "Stand-Up Radio Pakistan" project was completed in a short span of 14 months. She said a financially viable Radio Pakistan will ensure a significant improvement in its content, quality of transmission as well as welfare of the staff.

Highlighting the initiatives taken to bring diversity in national broadcaster's transmissions, the Minister said a

dedicated sports channel is airing youth oriented content round the clock to promote healthy activities amongst the masses. Similarly, exclusive channel of regional languages is playing an important role to promote cultural and linguistic diversity of the country.

She commended Radio Pakistan for establishing state of the art Technology platform to create awareness among people about latest and modern tools and gadgets to make a difference in the society. She said Radio Pakistan has now become a visual medium as well for which a Drama Studio Reels has been launched to provide quality entertainment to the viewers. She said it will encourage and facilitate young artists to demonstrate their skills through creativity.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Chief of the Naval Staff Pakistan Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at CM House.

Instead of human rights speech, Israel give account of atrocities on Palestinian: Khurram Dastgir

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal minister of energy Khurram Dastgir said instead of human right speeches to Pakistan Israel must give account of atrocities on armless Muslims of Palestine.

On Wednesday he said on one side he (Israel) is crying on human right violation in Pakistan and on the other side he is firing bullets and bombs on armless peoples of Palestinians.

He said question is that why was this question not made earlier from Israel, why now? We haven't recognized Israel in solidarity with Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Khurram Dastgir said



QUETTA: Acting Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Rehman Buzdar presiding over a meeting regarding affairs relating to investment opportunities in the province

Israel has no right to lecture Pakistan on HR: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik on Wednesday said Israel had no right to lecture any country on human rights violations as it was itself involved in the genocide of thousands of innocent Palestinians.

"Israel's comments in favour of the PTI have raised eyebrows. It is pertinent to understand, who is saying what and why?" the minister said while addressing a press conference here.

He said that the comments of Israel regarding human rights violations in Pakistan were tantamount to defending the desecration of the country's martyrs who laid their lives for the defence of their beloved country.

Israel which was the symbol of barbarianism in the world had intervened in the internal matters of Pakistan for the very first time, the minister said and further questioned, "Why did Israel think about human rights violations in Pakistan after May 9?"

It was surprising that

Israel's comments come in favour of PTI, a party, which instigated, planned and carried out violent attacks against state institutions and buildings on May 9, he said.

Israel's narrative on human rights violations regarding Pakistan on international fora was an attempt to make an impression that the arsons of May 9 were just an internal political matter of the country, Musadik Malik said.

"If their own people flare the government buildings and desecrate the statues of martyrs in their country and the government takes action against them, would it be a violation of human rights or just a political matter," the minister added.

He said the nation had to understand why Israel was defending the criminal act of the miscreants of a certain political party which attacked the core commander's house and the defence establishments of the country. The minister made it clear that only the actual perpetrators of the May 9 incident would be

penalized as per the constitution of the country after the complete investigation and it would not be a human rights violation.

He urged all political parties that to limit politics only to the sphere of politics and not make it personal.

Responding to a question, the minister said the experiment of importing oil from Russia was a great success which would reap profit in the coming days.

"Masses are not getting immediate relief due to the high price of dollars as we buy oil in dollars and sale in rupees at petrol pumps," he added.

Musadik Malik said that as soon as more oil in large quantity would be imported from Russia, oil prices would come down and huge relief would be given to the masses.

Furthermore, he said agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan regarding petroleum products were in the process of finalization which would help to meet the energy needs of the country.



A delegation of Zhab led by Haji Jarullah Kibzai meeting with Provincial Advisor Information Mittha Khan Kakar

Tribal clashes continue in Karam, 2 people killed, 25 injured, overall 11 killed

PARACHINAR (Online): Clashes between tribes have been going on for 5 days in Karam district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

2 more people were killed and 25 people were injured in fresh clashes.

Overall deaths increased to 11 people.

According to police and hospital sources, clashes that started 5 days ago in Bushehra over property disputes are still going on.

Apart from Piwar Gidu, Balish Khel Khar Kilay, Satta and Para Chamanki Karman, clashes are taking place between Maqbal and Kunj Alizai in which heavy and automatic weapons are being used.

More 2 people have been killed and 25 injured in fresh clashes in different areas of district Karam.

Most of the injured have been brought to District Headquarter hospital

Parachinar and Tehsil head-quarter Satta and condition of several injured is being said to be critical.

Federal Minister Sajid Turi, Deputy Commissioner Syed Saif Ul Islam Shah and DPO Mohammad Imran said that joint efforts are underway with tribal elders to stop the clashes in different areas of district Karam. Ceasefire has also been implemented in different areas but the ceasefire agreements are being violated due to which clashes are still going on.

Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Sajid Turi has demanded the provincial and federal government to take immediate steps to stop clashes in Karam district.

Due to clashes in Karam District traffic has almost stopped on roads including the main highway.

There has been a shortage of food, fuel and medicines in the district.

PishinCCI grieved over death of Alamgir Tareen

QUETTA: The office bearers of Pishin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) have expressed condolence over the death of Alamgir Tareen, brother of senior politician and business tycoon, Jahangir Tareen.

In a joint condolence message issued here on Wednesday, the Patron-in-Chief of PCCI, Muhammad Asif Tareen, Executive Member of PCCI, Naseebullah Khan Tareen, founder PCCI, Syed Abdul Bari Agha, President PCCI, Syed Abdul Rauf, Siddiqullah Tareen and others have prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss.

25 nations reduced poverty by 50pc in 15 years: UNDP

ISLAMABAD (Online): The latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) demonstrates that poverty reduction was achievable as 25 countries have successfully halved their global MPI values within 15 years, showing that rapid progress is attainable.

The latest estimates for 110 countries were released on Tuesday by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

According to estimates based on surveys for 2017-22, 21.5 per cent population in Pakistan is in severe multidimensional poverty, while 12.9pc is vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.

Bazai inquires about health of Zhab incident injured

QUETTA (APP): Special Secretary Health Balochistan Dawood Bazai on Wednesday visited Civil Hospital to inquire about the health of those who were injured in Zhab incident. On this occasion, MD Trauma Center Dr. Arbab Kamran gave a briefing to Dawood Bazai about the treatment of the injured. He said that four injured were brought to trauma center in Quetta.

Dawood Bazai inquired about the health of the injured and directed the doctors to provide the best medical facilities to them.



QUETTA: A delegation of Pak Pattan led by Khizer Hayat Mengal meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

PM felicitates Uzbek President Mirziyoyev on his re-election

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Sharif on Wednesday congratulated President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on his re-election in the presidential elections held on July 9.

Termining the re-election of President Mirziyoyev as the reiteration of the confidence of the Uzbek people in his leadership, the prime minister expressed his strong confidence that bilateral relations between the two countries would continue to strengthen under his stewardship.

The prime minister held a telephone call with the Uzbek president, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister underscored the importance

attached by Pakistan to bilateral relations with Uzbekistan.

He noted with satisfaction the operationalization of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (UPTTA).

Both these agreements would enhance economic and trade relations between the two countries, he added.

Recalling their previous interactions in Samarkand and Astana, the two leaders discussed the prospects of accelerating regional development and agreed on the need to further expand bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, connectivity, agriculture, IT, textiles, and logistics.

She said this transmission provided a platform for information, education and infotainment content addressing local issues and celebrating rich and vibrant culture and heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It would also help develop a local media ecosystem which would better serve the interests of local communities, she maintained.

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Theft of Imran in Toshakhana case proves, he will accountable for each penny: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Assistant Atta Ullah Tarar said theft of PTI Chairman Imran Khan in Toshakhana case is established and he is accountable for every penny.

While talking to media on Wednesday he said that PTI walas are seeking justice after attacking on military installations.

A country that kills

unarmed Muslims is talking about human rights.

Shall we wear "Haar" to vandals of 9th May?

While talking on Toshakhana Case he said that PTI Chairman is using delaying tactics to avoid punishment in Toshakhana Case.

If theft has been committed in Toshakhana, then you will have to answer.

Indictment has been made in the Toshakhana case.

We are told to show receipts.

The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (PM) further said that Imran Khan did not appear even once in the Toshakhana case.

There is no money trail for the amount received.

Officials from China, Pakistan review CPEC achievements over past decade

BEIJING (APP): Officials from China and Pakistan have reviewed the achievements of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) over the past decade.

At a meeting in Beijing of the two countries' Special Joint Cooperation Committee, they also looked to future opportunities, CGTN reported on Wednesday.

Promoting the high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC as it marks its 10th anniversary.

Officials from China and Pakistan joined to discuss key achievements, major projects and future plans of the CPEC.

CONG LIANG Vice

Chairman National Development and Reform Commission Cong Liang said, "In the past 10 years, China has been Pakistan's largest trading partner for eight consecutive years. In 2022, the bilateral trade volume between the two sides has reached 26.5 billion U.S. dollars. Some sections of Pakistan's first subway and first intelligent expressway have been completed and opened to traffic."

Achievements in various sectors such as infrastructure, energy, and ports under the CEPCC were also discussed.

As a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative, the CPEC highlights energy, transporta-

tion, and industrial cooperation and had created over 230,000 jobs by the end of 2022.

Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal said, "The completion of major infrastructure and energy projects, Gwadar port, and other socio-economic development related projects, has brought about tangible benefits to the people of Pakistan and has created new opportunities for business and investment."

Officials say the project has fostered connectivity, enhanced trade, and opened up new avenues for shared prosperity. And both sides are looking for other areas for further cooperation, it added.

Mariyam announces launch of regional transmission by PTV Peshawar Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyam Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that she was glad to announce launch of regional transmission by Pakistan Television.

In a tweet, she said that PTV Peshawar Centre would run its transmission seven day a week round the clock. She said the transmission was available in all local languages and dialects of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and was also available on satellite to make it accessible for overseas Pakistanis.

The minister said start

of this initiative marked the fulfillment of a long standing demand of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the inception of PTV National.

She said this transmission provided a platform for information, education and infotainment content addressing local issues and celebrating rich and vibrant culture and heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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General elections to be held as per schedule: Khurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Energy Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan on Wednesday said that general elections 2023 would be held as per the schedule of the Election Commission of Pakistan.

There would be no delay in the next elections after the dissolution of assemblies, he said while talking to a private television channel.

The elections should be held on time, he stated.

He further stated that coalition partners had a consensus to conduct elections within a 60 or 90-day period after the dissolution of assemblies.

Commenting on judicial respect in the country, he said Sharif family members had presented themselves before the courts in respect of the judiciary.

He said that false cases had been registered by PTI's last regime against the leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-N. He said that the Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), always tried to escape from the court cases, adding PTI chief could not provide evidence to courts in Toshakhana and foreign funding cases.

The PTI leaders had adopted delaying tactics in judicial matters and cases, he added.

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PHE using all available resources for provision of clean drinking water

QUETTA (APP): Syed Arif Shah, XEN of Public Health Engineering department, said that the PHE department is using all available resources to solve other problems including clean drinking water for the public.

"Doors of the government departments are open 24 hours for the public, people can directly contact for any issue falls within the purview of the PHE."

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the lo-

cal landlords, who called on him under the supervision of the social worker Hafiz Abdul Waheed Ababaki.

Syed Arif Shah said that as a government officer, it is his responsibility to ensure the solution of the problems faced by the people by providing clean drinking water to the area people.

All possible measures will be taken for water supply and no negligence in this connection will be tolerated, he added.

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QUETTA: Chairman Balochistan Hockey Federation Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani photographed with players of Chief Minister Talent Hunt Hockey Tournament

Parliamentary committee on election reforms first meeting, 73 suggestions represents

ISLAMABAD (Online): Parliamentary Committee on election reforms suggested to award power of banning political party to parliament instead of Supreme Court.

Parliamentary committee of election reforms held its first meeting on Wednesday.

73 suggestions were given for election reforms.

In suggested amendments it was said the power of banning a political party should be given to parliament instead of Supreme Court. Parliament should review that party should be banned or not, said in suggestion. If parliament agrees on banning party then issue should be sent to Supreme Court.

It was also suggested to give limited time to presiding officer to prepare election result, on delay in preparing results, presiding

officer should be held answerable. Presiding officer be bound to give solid reason of delay in election result.

Presiding officer should send the signed picture of election result to Returning officer.

Provision of highest speed internet and Smartphone to presiding officer is also suggested in committee.

Polling agents also are permitted to take camera phone and CCTV camera also be installed on every booth of polling station, further suggested.

According to suggestion cameras will help in review, count and prepare election results. Camera recording proof can also be presented in case of complaint.

Candidate can also get polling station video after paying the price.

Increase in limit of expenditures of election for national and provincial assembly should also be increased. 4 million to 10 million expenditures suggested for national assembly and 2 to 4 million were suggested for provincial assembly elections.

Criminal action should be made against presiding and returning officers for negligence. Punishment of election staff involved in rigging should be increased from 6 months to three years, suggestion in reforms committee.

Verdict on violation of code of conduct should be made in 7 days instead of 15 days.

Polling staff's final list should be uploaded in election commission's website.

Candidate can challenge the appointment of polling staff within ten days.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveils the plaque of ground breaking of Shaheen Chowk Flyover.

Local communities role vital in preservation, promotion of Gandhara heritage: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers on Wednesday stressed the vital role of the local communities in the preservation, protection, and promotion of the Gandhara heritage. The Day II of Gandhara Symposium 2023 titled "Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan" commenced with the Fourth Session on "Exploring the Spirit of Gandhara: Preserving the Past & Illuminating the Future."

The session was moderated by the Director of the State Bank Museum and Head of ICOM Pakistan, Dr. Asma Ibrahim.

Speakers of the session were Prof of Archaeology, University of Leicester, UK, Prof. Ruth Young; Senior Researcher, Cultural Heritage Foundation, South Korea, Yi Yun Jung; Director Minister of Buddhasana Religious and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, Nishantha Pushpakumara; Prof. Dr. Hridya Ratna Bajracharya; Former VC Lumbini University, Nepal; and Prof. Xiang Debao, Prof. School of International Journalism & Communication, Beijing University.

The panelists discussed that the heritage sites were very important for religious practices but also for building religious and national identity. They highlighted that the true spirits of Gandhara were reflected in the stone sculpture of fasting Siddharta, the academic excellence of Taxila, and the mindful, pragmatic, imaginative, creative, and bold nature of Gandhara. It was proposed to support the bringing of new digital technology and chemicals for preservation purposes. It was also underlined that Gandhara was not only a communication but an all-out campaign for modernization.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan held a meeting with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Arnold Grannas today to discuss Green Financing, General Discussion of mutual interest in Renewable Energy Investment and overall power arrangements.

Around 600 illegal housing societies operating in twin cities, NA body told

ISLAMABAD: Around 600 illegal housing societies have been operating in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad without any formal approval, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Captain @ Noorul Amin Mengal told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.

The 35th meeting of the committee was held here at the CDA Secretariat to receive briefing on comprehensive report on implementation status of the previous recommendations of the Committee, complete details of Housing Societies in Islamabad (legal and illegal) causing severe damage to the environment and sewerage system in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), briefing on all restaurants located on Margalla Hills causing severe damage to the environment with poor sewerage system, and especially the complete case study of Monal Restaurant



ISLAMABAD: A view of the overparked car at Aabpara area, which needs the attention of concern authority.

PIDE launches two much-awaited reports

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and RASTA jointly hold a book/report launch event at the Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad.

The highly anticipated gathering brought together esteemed experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to address the urgent challenges surrounding the housing sector in the country. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), addressed the audience and highlighted key challenges and opportunities in the sector.

"Power, Profit & Plans" delves into the political economy of housing in Pakistan, uncovering the unequal development patterns and socio-economic disparities prevalent in the urban landscape. The book underscores the pressing need for institutional and policy reforms, highlighting the role of improved govern-

nance in addressing the housing crisis. The book offers a comprehensive analysis and roadmap for addressing Pakistan's housing challenges.

Mr. Nasir Javed, Editor of the book, apprised the participants by presenting key features of the book titled: "Power, Profit & Plans: The Political Economy of Housing in Pakistan" is a multi-author book that highlights that urbanization in Pakistan, addition to the Slow and Steady flow of economic migrants from a rural area, had added at least six spikes starting with the migration of 1947, wars, floods, terrorism, etc. These unusual spikes placed pressure on urban housing, coupled with rapid population growth and institutional inefficiencies and complexities, described as 'institutional spaghetti,' has led to the housing crisis.

While speaking at the occasion, Mr. Pervaiz Latif

IHC grants time to police for recovery of Ali Nawaz's brother

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted more time to the authorities for the recovery of Umar Nawaz Awan, the brother of former lawmaker Ali Nawaz Awan.

The court instructed that the secretary of interior would appear in person before it if the missing person was not recovered by the next date.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case regarding the recovery of Umar Nawaz Awan. Inspector General of Police Akbar Nasir Khan appeared before the bench following its directives.

IRSA releases 283,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 283,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 325,700 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1,517.31 feet, which was 119.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 143,200 cusecs and 140,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1,198.60 feet, which was 148.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water in the dam were recorded 49,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.

Delegation of Karachi Institute of Management visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Karachi Institute of Management, consisting of 33rd senior Management course participants visited Safe City Islamabad to gain insights into the operations and significance of the state-of-the-art surveillance system.

Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the delegation was welcomed by the CPO Traffic/ Safe City, who briefed them with a com-

prehensive understanding of the various features and utilities of the Safe City Islamabad surveillance system.

The briefing included an in-depth introduction to extended the coverage of the Safe City Project to different areas of the city and an additionally 10% has been added in it, on the special interest and orders of the Federal Interior Minister

the cutting-edge technologies employed by Safe City Islamabad, such as "Pukar" 15, Crime Mapping, BriefCam, e-Challan, Wireless Control, Traffic Control, and FM 92.4.

He said that, the safe city Islamabad's modern technology-enabled cameras are playing a crucial role in the city's security, crime prevention and protection of citizens' lives and property. He further briefed the delegation that Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, after assuming office,



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Karachi Institute of Management, consisting of 33rd senior Management course participants visited Safe City Islamabad to gain insights into the operations and significance of the state-of-the-art surveillance system.

Lawyers fake degree case: SC directs VC Islamic university Bahawalpur to appear before court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed Vice Chancellor (VC) Islamic University Bahawalpur to appear in person before it on next hearing besides bringing criterion of law colleges and other record along with him. The court gave these orders during the hearing of case pertaining to fake degrees of lawyers and lawyers enrolment here Wednesday.

The court summoned report regarding scrutiny of faculty members from Pakistan Bar Council, report on policy regarding non practice allowance from

higher education, progress report from FIA and reports from provincial bar councils.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan took up the case for hearing Wednesday.

The counsel for non affiliated colleges told the court all inquiries are being held against these law colleges whose affiliation has ended. We are not being given opportunity to appear in inquiries. Permission be given to us to present record before JIT.

Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan remarked now it is too late.

SC had already ordered that case cannot be heard again now. Court will decide the inquiry has been held correctly or otherwise. FIA inquiry is not only for the present cases. The affiliation of law colleges can be terminated on the basis of it in future.

Chairman Executive Committee Bar Council Hassan Raza Pasha told the court the details of affiliated colleges have been presented in FIA report.

As per report 6227 students appeared in entry test. 3997 were declared fake and 2230 students were declared genuine.

CDA mulling over dualisation of Pir Sohawa Road, alternate route

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is mulling over dualisation of Pir Sohawa Road linking the scenic Margalla Hills National Park and the federal capital with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province along with an alternate route to the Bari Imam area to cope with growing vehicular traffic.

Chairman, CDA Captain @ Noorul Amin Mengal on Wednesday informed the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate

Change and Environmental Coordination meeting chaired by MNA Nuzhat Pathan that the rising traffic and congestion on Pir Sohawa Road on various occasions has become a nuisance for the Capital Territory Administration.

He said the Pir Sohawa Road was a mess and traffic congestion was posing a serious risk to nature and wildlife as heavy fumes of vehicular emissions were casting detrimental impacts on nature.

IHC dismisses plea of police officer regarding house allotment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday dismissed the petition of a former SP of Islamabad Police Samiullah challenging cancellation of his house allotment in the capital after his posting to the other city. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, hearing the case, remarked that why the police officer was not vacating the house after his transfer to Quetta. If no one would leave the house after transfers then how their successor would get accommodation here, he asked?

Senate body directs FIA to look into matter of bogus affiliations with hospitals

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Sub-Committee on National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination on Wednesday directed that the Federal Investigating Agency (FIA) may look into the matter of bogus affiliations with hospitals and fake certification issued to nurses by the institutions registered with the Pakistan Nursing Council.

The committee directed to write letter to the ministry on their persistence negligence and unpreparedness on this crucial matter involving lives of the people of Pakistan. It was also recommended that the matter may also be marked to the Prime Minister. The committee also sought details of the new nursing council after it has been notified. The Convener while admonishing the working of the Pakistan Nursing Council termed this act as a criminal negligence. "We will not let you play with the lives of the people", the Convener Senator Rubina

Khalid grieved the menace spread by the Pakistan Nursing Council. "This is all fake, the PMC runs with speed money, buy seats and attribute thug behaviour" she said while adding that this mafia has to stop.

The meeting which was led by Senator Rubina Khalid and members Senator Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar and Senator Dr Mehr Taj Roghani here at the Parliament House on Wednesday took serious notice of the non representation of the PNC and absence of the Secretary, or the Special Secretary and other versant officers of the ministry on the matter. The convener while expressing shock that no representatives are present to brief such a climacteric agenda point, "the ministry and the PNC jointly trying to fool us she said. The committee on inquiring on the absence of Rafat Jan, chairman Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), was informed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister, Mian Javed Latif, addressing a press conference.

USAID supports Pakistan's climate research coordination

ISLAMABAD (INP): In order to enhance the capacity building of researchers in the field of climate adaptation and resilience, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Higher Education System Strengthening Activity organized a workshop on climate resilience research coordination here on Wednesday.

This forum aims to advance the capability of researchers to co-produce science-to-action interdisciplinary research, education, and workforce development that improves climate adaptation and resilience in Pakistan, a news release said.

The inauguration session of this 3-day workshop was chaired by Yohannes Araya, Deputy Mission Director USAID/Pakistan.

While Asima Rehman, Acting Director Education, USAID/Pakistan, Dr. Michael Barber, University of Utah, Dr. Steve Burian, University of Alabama, Nadia Rehman, Member of Planning Commission, and Nisar Memon, Water Environment Forum were among the senior officials present at the session.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Michael Barber emphasized the importance of academia to tackle the climate crisis.

He said, "Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to climate change, being amongst the top 10 most impacted countries.

Therefore, the USAID's project is very pleased to kickstart this research coordination network on climate change to support Pakistani faculty researchers to do more applied research and collaborate with peers locally as well as globally to arrive at locally relevant innovative solutions that will make Pakistan more climate resilient."

Pakistan's higher education sector can take a leadership role in catalyzing teams and ideas to help communities adapt and build resilience through teaching, research, and local community service.

USAID/Pakistan's Deputy Mission Director, Yohannes Araya said, "We are working with partner countries including Pakistan to implement emissions reduction measures, transition to renewable energy, and build resilience against the impacts of climate change."

192 Pakistani students get scholarships in European universities

ISLAMABAD (INP): The highest number of 192 Pakistani students have received scholarships to study in European universities under the EU's flagship Erasmus Mundus Joint Master scholarships programme including 103 men and 89 women during the current year.

The European Union Delegation to Pakistan hosted a pre-departure event to celebrate the achievement of the recipients of the scholarship, said a news release.

This is the second year in a row that Pakistan ranked top in the world for the number of scholarships awarded and remained in the lead in terms of scholarship applications.

In his welcome remarks, EU Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Thomas Seilers said, "Today we congratulate the young men and women who will embark on an educational and cultural journey through the Erasmus+ programme over the coming months. I am sure that they will return with strong knowledge and rich experiences, and their exposure to European universities will also contribute to the development of Pakistan."

The EU Chargé d'Affaires a.i. further added, "The results of the scholarship's selection demonstrate that Pakistani students are well prepared and that the Pakistani universities provide them with the necessary skills to compete at the global level."

He added that he is particularly pleased to see more students from Pakistan have accessed the Erasmus+ programme.

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Kurram clashes

Considering the troubled history of sectarian tensions in KP's Kurram tribal district, and the impact violence in the region can have on communal relations in the rest of the country, the authorities need to act with alacrity as soon as disturbances emerge.

Unfortunately, the district has again witnessed bloodshed, with several deaths and injuries reported after a tribal clash erupted on Friday — apparently, the result of a quarrel between the residents of two settlements over a disputed parcel of land in upper Kurram. The violence has continued since. In fact, there are numerous land disputes — some dating to the pre-partition era — among tribes in the district. Worryingly, tribal and communal disputes often take on a sectarian colour in Kurram.

Even more distressing are the claims of some local residents that terrorists of two banned groups, the TTP and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, have been involved in the latest episode of bloodletting.

The authorities face two major challenges in the current situation: to end the violence and prevent land disputes from descending into bloodshed, and to ensure that sectarian narratives, amplified by social media, do not inflame the situation, especially as Muharram approaches.

Firstly, Kurram itself must be pacified and calm restored, as a humanitarian situation is developing, with people facing shortages of food, fuel and medicine due to the clashes. This is the second major outbreak of tribal/sectarian violence this year; earlier in May, the region experienced a bout of bloodshed as several people, including teachers, were killed in targeted attacks. That episode was also linked to land disputes. After calm returns, the land commission formed by the KP government should address the land disputes that are at the heart of these clashes judiciously, while the parties involved must abide by their commitments, with violators penalised by the state.

Secondly, the situation requires the security forces to keep a vigilant eye on the movement of banned sectarian militants in this sensitive region. If these elements are not checked, they can further endanger Kurram's fragile communal peace. With Muharram just a week away, the state as well as the clergy need to put in extra effort to prevent the Kurram clashes from being exploited by vested interests that want to fan sectarian hatred across the country. In particular, social media accounts that promote violence and hatred, and spread unfounded rumours likely to fuel violence in society, should be monitored. Secondly, clergymen from both sects need to use the pulpit to defuse tensions, instead of fanning the flames.

Kurram and its surrounding areas have been witnessing a tense calm for the last decade or so after several years of bloodshed. The local people should not be abandoned again by the state, left to deal with the escalating sectarian violence on their own.

**Zahid Hussain**

It seems that the ruling coalition has still not made up its mind about the election date, even though only four weeks are left for the current term of the National Assembly to expire. The confusion is unsettling. The conflicting statements emanating from the prime minister and some senior members of allied parties on the matter are baffling.

There is no indication yet of the political parties gearing up for the hustings. The usual electioneering that should have started by now, with just weeks left for the dissolution of the National Assembly, is absent. It is all quite inexplicable. So, what's cooking in the corridors of hybrid power? The indecision is intriguing and it is intensifying the political uncertainty in the country.

Meanwhile, the old game of political engineering is on, raising questions about the fairness of the entire electoral process. The ruling coalition seems to have completely aligned itself with the powers that be in the ongoing project that is apparently meant to obtain a 'positive outcome' from the elections, whenever they are held. With the die already cast, the fear is that we may witness more of a pretence of democratic transition. Curiously, the present hybrid rule doesn't appear very different from the power arrangement that existed at the time of the PTI government. What was previously deemed wrong has now become kosher, with only a change in alignment. The shadow of the establishment has hardly receded.

In fact, the role of the security agencies is far more pronounced, with increasing incidents of midnight knocks. The forced disappearances, which have long been a norm in the smaller provinces, have now come to the heartland. Political victimisation is the rule of the game and state oppression is justified in the name of national security.

Freedom of expression

It may be true that almost all major political parties, which are part of the present dispensation, have experienced persecution in the past. But now in government, these parties are using the same coercive power of the state, which they were once a victim of, against their opponents.

It seems that Pakistani politics is stuck in a vicious cycle of vengeance. Now it is the turn of the former prime minister to face persecution in the same way the former opposition leaders had suffered under his rule.

Khan is facing scores of cases on charges ranging from murder to terrorism and corruption in various parts of

the country. It is a ridiculous situation. It seems that our political leadership has never learnt any lesson from history. We may have witnessed similar or even worse political repression in the past, but what is happening now has polarised the country much more. One must see beyond this false sense of stability: the ongoing political confrontation and the use of coercive power by the state could lead to further political instability. The entire power structure has been shaken, with deep cracks emerging within the ranks of the power elites.

Never before in Pakistan's history have state institutions been so divided. The country is fast moving towards a state of disarray, with the virtual collapse of the rule of law. Interestingly, there is a sense of euphoria in the government with the IMF deal coming through. The \$3 billion Stand-by Arrangement spread over nine months may have given some breathing space to the country and helped avert immediate default on external debt repayments, but there is nothing to celebrate as there are a number of challenges for our heavily debt-ridden economy.

It is true that borrowed funds from friendly countries may keep us afloat for a while, but long-term structural reform to move forward is urgently needed — and that is hard to achieve in the ongoing unstable political situation. We are lurching from crisis to crisis. Economic stability is directly linked to political stability. The lack of firm commitment from the government to hold elections within the stipulated timeframe will only add to the uncertainty.

What is needed is the will to bring down the political temperature and create a conducive atmosphere for political reconciliation. It may be true that Imran Khan's confrontational politics is largely responsible for destabilising the democratic process and that it has also been the reason why some senior PTI leaders are abandoning the PTI.

However, one only hopes that Khan has learned some lessons from the political cost that he has had to bear for his reckless and confrontational politics.

But it is mainly the responsibility of the government to take steps to ease the tension. It could not be possible with Khan and other PTI

leaders being implicated in fabricated cases. Surely, the May 9 violence is deplorable but it does not help to use this incident as an excuse to dismantle the PTI. The spectacle of PTI leaders reading from the same script denouncing the May 9 attacks and resigning from the party exposes the government's real game plan. There must be an open inquiry into the incident rather than using it as a pretext for political repression. There is also talk about banning the PTI and disqualifying former prime minister Imran Khan. But such a move is not going to break the party. Both the government and the establishment have failed to realise the volatility of the situation. The use of brute force cannot deliver.

Elections may not provide the solution to all our problems but they are the only way out of the present political morass. Indeed, it is imperative for all stakeholders to reach a consensus on a mechanism that can ensure the conduct of free and fair elections. And it should be remembered that any move to delay the elections on any pretext will be disastrous for the country's stability and unity. -- Courtesy Dawn

New approach to investment**Dr Muhammad Zeshan**

Global nations are fiercely competing for foreign direct investment (FDI) to fuel economic growth, job creation and technological advancements in the interconnected global economy.

Pakistan too finds itself in the midst of this race. However, it is crucial to highlight the shortcomings of an ad hoc investment policy like the Pakistan Investment Policy (PIP) 2023. It solely focuses on attracting a predetermined FDI amount, lacking a strong foundation built on extensive research.

Instead, the government should adopt a comprehensive and evidence-based investment policy — one that can unlock Pakistan's true economic potential and secure its future prosperity.

The PIP 2023 has set ambitious goals of drawing in \$20-25 billion in FDI, with noteworthy contributions expected from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. While these projections may initially spark optimism, it is imperative to scrutinize the lasting effects of impromptu investment strategies.

An excessive fixation on reaching predetermined investment targets, without due consideration for the foundational economic principles, could result in unfavourable outcomes. Thus, a comprehensive assessment of the broader implications is necessary to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of our economy.

Pakistan faces a significant challenge in meeting its external debt repayment obligation of around \$25 billion in 2024, highlighting the urgency for a sustainable investment strategy. Depending heavily on substantial FDI inflows to fulfil debt commitments can be risky, particularly when the repayments are concentrated within a specific timeframe.

Excessive reliance on external funding, without a thorough comprehension of

the accompanying risks, has the potential to worsen Pakistan's debt burden, jeopardizing both its economic stability and long-term growth prospects. To safeguard its future, Pakistan must prioritize a comprehensive understanding of these risks and implement measures to mitigate them effectively.

An ad-hoc investment policy centred on securing large-scale commitments from a few countries can undermine the importance of diversification. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE may contribute significant amounts of FDI, an overreliance on specific nations leaves Pakistan vulnerable to geopolitical shifts, economic downturns and changing global dynamics.

A research-based investment policy will emphasize diversification by targeting investments from a wide range of countries, sectors, and industries, reducing Pakistan's exposure to external shocks and ensuring a more robust and resilient economy.

Focusing solely on attracting FDI can overshadow the immense potential of local businesses and entrepreneurs. While foreign investment is undoubtedly valu-

able, nurturing domestic innovation, entrepreneurship and technological advancement is equally vital. A research-backed investment policy will strike a balance, fostering an environment conducive to local enterprise development and attracting foreign investment that complements and strengthens domestic capabilities. This approach would create a virtuous cycle of economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development.

To foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth, Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture where it must design such an investment policy, which hinges upon a profound comprehension of the nation's economic strengths, weaknesses, and untapped growth potential.

Here are the pivotal reasons why the implementation of such a policy is of utmost importance: It will empower Pakistan to recognize and capitalize on its comparative advantages across diverse sectors. By undertaking comprehensive studies and analyses, policymakers can pinpoint industries and sectors where Pakistan possesses inherent strengths such as agriculture, textile, information technology, and renewable energy.

A targeted approach of this nature will attract investments that align with the country's core competencies, subsequently yielding heightened productivity, job opportunities, and bolstering its competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Pakistan's economic progress can be strengthened through the implementation of well-designed investment policy. Such a policy will empower the country to effectively assess the risks and rewards linked to various investment prospects. Thorough research and analysis will equip policymakers with valuable knowledge regarding the enduring sustainability, economic implications, and risk elements associated with specific investments.

With well-informed choices, Pakistan can maximize its investment inflows while minimizing the potential pitfalls of mounting debt burdens. Ultimately, this approach will guarantee optimal returns on investment and foster a stable economic trajectory for the nation.

Revitalizing Pakistan's investment strategy through well-informed policies holds immense potential for the nation's progress. By placing emphasis on technology transfer, skill development,

and capacity building, we can pave the way for a brighter future.

Instead of fixating on capital-intensive ventures, it is crucial for Pakistan to actively pursue investments that foster knowledge sharing, drive innovation, and empower its workforce. Such a progressive approach will enable local industries to enhance their technological infrastructure, boost productivity, and cultivate an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth. Let us embrace this transformative strategy, propelling Pakistan towards prosperity and global competitiveness.

Revamping Pakistan's investment policy based on thorough research will tackle key elements affecting the business landscape, including regulatory frameworks, business-friendly environment, transparency, and governance. By pinpointing and resolving obstacles and inefficiencies, Pakistan can establish a more enticing and competitive atmosphere for investors. This strategic approach will attract a diverse pool of foreign investors and spur domestic entrepreneurship, fuelling a positive cycle of economic progress and advancement. -- Courtesy TheNews

Give peace a chance**Mohammad Ali Babakhel**

Lack of awareness within civil society, weak political manifestation, institutional gaps, misconceptions, and over-expectations from peace talks and amnesty schemes have cast a shadow over a pragmatic approach to dealing with militants and insurgents. Consequently, peace has remained elusive. What lessons have been learned from this process?

Before peace talks and the announcement of any amnesty scheme, the delicate issue of dealing with militancy needs extensive discussion. Can any state afford a prolonged spell of militancy? For sustainable peace, what are the options: persistent efforts to counter terrorism, killing terrorists, countering ideologies, or increasing investments in diplomacy? There is also a need to understand how media speculation can negatively impact the process. It must be asked: how can we develop political and societal consensus regarding issues related to the peace process, including resettlement? How can we identify and overcome any irritants?

During the pre-negotiations phase, the names and other details of militants must be collected, and a screening committee should be entrusted with scrutiny of the process. The benefits of amnesty schemes should not be used to recycle surrendered militants. Those who surrender should go through a rigorous re-training cycle. Eligible persons should be entitled to a fixed monthly stipend and an initial grant

that will only be paid out on the successful completion of training.

Amnesties are used when there is no resolution to an ongoing conflict in sight. To deal with rebels, Uganda tried both kinetic and non-kinetic options. Eventually, in 1999, it opted for peaceful solutions and announced a general amnesty that resulted in the 'Amnesty Act of 2000'. It provided blanket amnesty for all Ugandans engaged in armed rebellion.

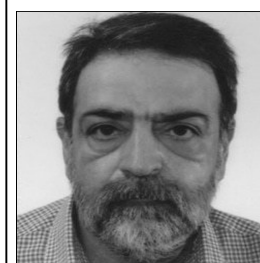
To oversee the implementation, a seven-member Amnesty Commission (AC) was established, funded by the Ugandan government and the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme. The Amnesty Act used the term 'reporter' to refer to individuals who had taken steps to secure amnesty. At the time of the establishment of the commission, the approximate number of potential 'reporters' was estimated at 50,000. By the end of 2008, a total of 22,995 people had 'reported' under the scheme.

Under the Ugandan amnesty scheme, a reporter was not to be prosecuted for their past crimes. They were given the option of reporting to the police, army, local council, a magistrate, or a religious leader. A reporter who faced insurgency charges had to declare to a judge, a prison officer, or a magistrate that they had surrendered and desired amnesty. They also had to surrender their weapons. Reporters residing outside Uganda were provided the option of reporting to a Ugandan diplomatic mission. After the completion of the process, the reporters were given amnesty certificates. The military and police ensured their security. To ensure their well-being, the government also sought assistance from NGOs like Give Mea Chance, which helped the AC repatriate, rehabili-

tate, and reintegrate former militants. Unicef also helped to resettle child soldiers. The armed conflict between militants and the military in Nigeria's Niger Delta continued for two decades, defying all peace efforts. To mitigate conflict in the oil-rich region, the Presidential Amnesty Programme was introduced in 2009. PAP was a special intervention from the federal government to disarm, demobilise, and reintegrate former agitators. The PAP followed a multipronged model: robust stakeholder engagement, strategic and targeted communication, community outreach, peace building, and reconciliation.

In our case, amnesty schemes may be classified differently for 'home-based militants' and 'foreign-based militants'. In 2015, the Balochistan government announced a general amnesty for those who abandoned violence. Point 17 of Pakistan's National Action Plan emphasises the need to fully empower the Balochistan government for political reconciliation with complete ownership by all stakeholders. The idea needs to be magnified, so other areas can also be included in such endeavours.

Since militants are far away from the brighter aspects of human life, bringing them closer to the pragmatic aspects of life is inevitable. Militants need to be convinced that death and destruction are not the way to achieve their ideals. However, general amnesty and offering financial incentives may not prove enough in the absence of skills training and employment opportunities, so picking up a gun may be the only option left for militants trying to reintegrate. Denying such an option requires collective will and response. Let's give peace a chance. -- Courtesy Dawn

Jenin revisited**Mahir Ali**

Last week's Israeli 'special military operation' in the West Bank town of Jenin has been compared, in terms of its intensity, to a 2002 assault during the second Palestinian intifada. Smaller-scale incursions, however, have become almost a nightly occurrence in what is invariably described as a hotbed of militancy.

The toddlers who witnessed the depredations of 2002 and survived the sporadic bouts of lethal repression are now in their 20s. The despair they have experienced throughout their lives has only deepened over the years. Should anyone be surprised that some of them see little choice other than to join the armed resistance?

Many of the young fighters are independent of the usual outfits such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad or the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, choosing to resist violence with violence simply because they see no alternative. Even under less extremist regimes, Israeli intent has never seriously shifted from the idea of indefinite occupation. The Palestinian Authority (PA) introduced after the Oslo Accords 30 years ago was always intended to serve as little more than a collaborationist entity.

Briefly optimistic about the possibilities held out by the Oslo settlement, Edward Said rapidly became disillusioned, pointing out that it would turn out to be little more than a reflection of the Nazi-backed

Vichy regime in wartime France, increasing the likelihood of militancy, which would serve as an excuse for reinforced repression.

There are parts of Jenin where the PA dare not venture, and some Western commentators have suggested Israel's hand is forced because of the authority's inability to subdue the resistance. More pertinently, in Palestinian eyes its weakness stems from its chronic inability to resist the increasingly brutal reality of the occupation. Younger Palestinians in particular hold it in contempt for its designated role as handmaiden to Shin Bet and the Israeli Defence Forces.

The disillusionment has intensified in the wake of what is viewed as the most extremist Israeli government, whose leading ministers proclaim their desire to annex 'Judea and Samaria' by expelling all Palestinians, exterminating as many as necessary. Illegal West Bank settlements are growing by leaps and bounds, with the settlers routinely rampaging through Palestinian villages.

They have been egged on by the likes of ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich neither of whom bothers to disguise his fascist tendencies. That fits into an Israeli pattern whereby, before and during the Nakba of 75 years ago, some of the leading Zionists were perfectly comfortable with invoking the Nazi practices they had recently survived. The security establishment has acknowledged some of the settlers' crimes as indistinguishable from terrorism, and even Netanyahu has urged restraint — although the implication often seems to be: it's not a good look, let us do it for you.

Perhaps they worry too much. The 'international community' seems to be focused on Russia/Ukraine and China/Taiwan. Serial violations of the 'rules-based order' by Israel barely

cause a ripple, every now and then occasioning an expression of concern or a mild reprimand, but never any repercussions. There isn't the smallest sign of the kind of international pressure that persuaded South Africa to dispense with apartheid.

Israeli apartheid is barely acknowledged by any state, even though the designation is commonplace among human rights organisations and growing segments of the Western intelligentsia, and to call it out as a terrorist state would immediately — and absurdly — be termed anti-Semitic. Back in May, writing in Haaretz, Israeli satirist B. Michael asked a series of crucial questions about his country: "What's the difference between a terrorist who murders a mother with her two daughters, and a state that murders — in a single night — a mother and her four-year-old daughter, parents and their son, a 12-year-old girl and her eight-year-old brother, and another two sisters who are neighbours?"

"What exactly is the difference between them? And why is the murderer a terrorist, and not the state? Where does it say that a state can't be a terrorist? And how many innocent people is a state allowed to kill before being called a terrorist state? And how many children?"

The answer, as someone said, is blowing in the wind. And who can say how many times Jenin will again be violated before those who matter open their ears, let alone heed Israeli historian Ilan Pappé's comment in April, in the context of the demonstrations against the Netanyahu regime's tinkering with the judiciary, that "the current protest wave has highlighted Israel's fundamental paradox: it cannot be both democratic and Jewish. It will either be a racist Jewish state, or a democratic one for all its citizens. There is no middle ground." -- Courtesy Dawn

CM visits Jhang, Kasur to check flood situation

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday visited various areas of districts Jhang and Kasur to take stock of the flood situation. During his visit to River Chenab in Jhang, the CM reviewed the water situation in Kharor Baqir, other areas and inspected deluged villages.

He met with residents of the inundated village and inquired about their problems, and directed the departments concerned for arranging access to the inundated villages and ordered to monitor 24/7 water situation in the river, besides expediting relief activities there to vacate the localities at the river, according to CM's spokesman here.

The Secretary Irrigation and Commissioner Faisalabad Division briefed the CM about relief activities, arrangements being made for relief and medical facilities and about the entry and exit of water situation in the River Chenab. They said that Irrigation Department, PDMA (Provincial Disaster Management Authority) and Rescue 1122 had been alerted to cope up with any untoward situation.

Later talking to media on this occasion, the CM said that water in 40 villages has entered in bed of River Chenab and affected 48,000 people. Relief and medical camps have been established to provide relief to the affected persons. Evacuation of localities in the river bed was essential for their protection, he added.

Naqvi said, "It is our utmost endeavour that no human loss occurs. Water up to four feet is present in a few villages. There is a lower level flood at the place of Kharor Baqir in River Chenab."

Mohsin Naqvi disclosed that snake bite treatment vaccines and other essential medicines were made available in the medical camps.

He said that he had also sought a report from Commissioner Faisalabad about flood in River Chenab. He said that sewerage problems persist in all small cities of Punjab including Jhang, adding, "We are striving to resolve sewerage issues. We will improve treatment facilities at District Headquarter Hospital Jhang and doctors are performing excellently despite dearth of resources."



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori is being briefed by DIG Maqsood Memon on professional skills Special Security Units.

Governor Sindh visits SSU HQs Police playing key role to restore peace in the Sindh province

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori on Wednesday visited the Special Security Unit (SSU) Headquarters and lauded the Unit's professionalism in administrative, security, and counter-terrorism functions by paying tribute to martyrs of Sindh Police.

He said the Police were playing a key role to restore peace in the province, according to a news release.

Upon his arrival at the SSU headquarters, Governor Sindh was welcomed

by the DIGP Security and Emergency Services Division Dr. Maqsood Ahmed. He was presented a guard of honor by a special contingent of SSU.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori accompanied by DIGP Security visited the army, firing range, and different sections of SSU.

Dr. Maqsood Ahmed briefed the Governor about the journey of SSU since its establishment to a state-of-the-art and modernized unit.

He also informed about the foundation of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (S.W.A.T), the first ever in the country, comprising highly trained

commandos and lady commandos equipped with modern tactical weapons, capable to challenge any emergency situation, round the clock.

The Pakistan Army was also providing training to further enhance the professional techniques of commandos including lady commandos at its different training institutes, he added.

The DIGP Security and Emergency Services Division further briefed about the up-gradation and advancement made in Madadgar-15 which was one of the sub-units of Sindh Police as the response time of the Madadgar had been reduced

to 7 to 10 minutes from 30 to 40 minutes in any emergency situation.

Governor Sindh on the occasion also witnessed the drill conducted by the commandos of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (S.W.A.T) to deal with any hostile situation.

Commandant SSU Dr. Farrukh Ali Lanjar, SSP Madadgar-15 Amjad Hayat, SSP Security-II Syed Salman Ahmed, SP Foreigners' Security Cell Saddam Hussain, SP SSU Anil Haider and SP SSU Farah Amreen were also present.

Later, DIGP Security Dr. Maqsood Ahmed presented an honorary shield to the guest.



RAWALPINDI: Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs/Minister Incharge Prime Minister's Public Affairs & Grievances Wing attending "Open Kachari" at Commissioner Office.

Murtaza Abbasi says: Assemblies to be dissolved after allies' consultation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Wednesday said that the dissolution of the assemblies including the National, Sindh, and Baluchistan assembly would be decided in consultation with the allies.

Talking to journalists at Commissioner's office after listening to the complaints of people in an open court, he said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz's (PML-N) stance was clear on the issue of the conclusion of the constitutional assemblies term, and election to be held in time.

Abbasi said that consultations were underway in the party over the return of Nawaz Sharif, who will lead the election campaign. Federal Minister for

Parliamentary Affairs said that the government's policy about Israel had not been changed and there was no U-turn on the issue of relations with Israel.

Answering a query, he said that every political party has its opinion according to the party policy, adding Chairman PTI was responsible for his politics and policy.

A furious leader of a political party is weakening the democratic system," Chairman PTI may declare India as his benefactor tomorrow, and "We should not think so much about him," he added.

Murtaza Abbasi added that the country was in a better situation when the government was taken away from PML-N in 2018 and the election was rigged. He said that the PML

N government had ended inflation, terrorism, and energy crises during his five-year government.

"We are facing economic difficulties and returned to IMF for loans due to policies of the previous government, he said adding the higher cost of electricity was being charged due to the IMF agreement.

He said that Imran Khan's best effort was to make the country default and the country had reached this point, but the coalition government saved the country from default with the help of friendly countries.

Murtaza further added that the government had reduced the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 35, while it was reduced by Rs 10 during the previous government.

Minister express concern over unavailability of funds in Info department

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel expressed concern over financial difficulties faced by the information department and said the matter would be brought to the notice of the chief minister.

He expressed these views during his visit to the KP Information department. Director General Information Department Basir Ali Rehman, Director Public Relations Liaquat

Amin, Director Administration Saleem Khan and other officers were also present.

The caretaker provincial minister inspected various sections of the information department and reviewed the records and performance of various sections. He also presided over a meeting of Public Relations Officers (PROs) and directed them to highlight the performance of the caretaker provincial government. During the visit, the provincial minister was also informed about problems faced by the department due to the unavailability.

One dacoit killed, four others injured in Kashmir firing

KASHMIRE (APP): A dacoit was killed while four other persons including policemen sustained injuries in a firing incident that took place near Karanpur Kacha area of Kashmir district, private news channels reported on Wednesday.

The police party was patrolling near the Karanpur Kacha area when dacoits opened firing that injured three cops and a passerby. The injured were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Sharjeel Memon says: FM Bilawal raised desecration of Quran issue internationally

KARACHI (APP): Minister for Information Transport and Mass Transit Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon Wednesday said Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his capacity as a foreign minister of Pakistan has brought the issue of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden to draw the attention of the international community towards the issue.

Bilawal has emphasized the importance of respecting all religions and urged for the sanctity of Islam to be upheld in the same manner, said Memon while speaking at the media corner before the meeting of the Sindh Assembly.

Sharjeel Memon stated that the foreign minister effectively conveyed his commitment to advocating for religious respect worldwide, anticipating the international community to devise a comprehensive action plan on promoting religious tolerance, ensuring that the sentiments of followers of all religions are safeguarded from any form of harm in the future.

He mentioned that the Israeli statement has confirmed its alleged support for Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He highlighted a previous incident where the Chairman of PTI supported his Jewish brother-in-law over a candidate of Pakistani origin Sadiq Khan in the election for Mayor of London.

The Sindh Information Minister expressed concern over the recent revelation of connections between certain politicians and Israel, which is a significant matter of concern for the entire Pakistani population.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the development, in light of the Israeli statement, raises alarming implications.

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PESHAWAR: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali

Problems of 75 years cannot be solved in 75 days: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday said that the problems of 75 years cannot be resolved in 75 days and assured that he would fight to resolve problems of the city with all his energies to serve the citizens.

He was talking to media during a visit to the Karachi Press Club along with Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad here.

He said that the politics of tolerance, love and brotherhood will be exercised in the city and he is trying hard to further improve the institutions under the control of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation.

He termed bringing people together as the need of the hour to further develop the economic hub of the country which he said should be maintained to continue the process of development.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that he is trying very hard to improve the situation in the city and, some time is needed to bring

improvement. People will feel the difference in the metropolis as efforts will be made in the next four years to manage the matters in a transparent and fair manner.

He said that he has a close relationship with Karachi Press Club and being the son of a journalist, this organization (KPC) is like his home.

Earlier, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Karachi held a meeting with the office bearers and members of the press club.

KPC President Saeed Sarbazi and General Secretary Shoaib Ahmed also spoke on this occasion.

The Mayor of Karachi visited various sections of the press club and later held media talks.

Expressing his views to media persons, he said that the tradition of giving grants to Karachi Press Club will continue and will be further increased.

He also announced allowing an exemption to the journalists in the vehicles parking fees in the charged parking managed by the KMC throughout the metropolis.

Dr Jamal Nasir says: Provision of medical facilities to health dept shows countries' confidence

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir Wednesday said that funding provided by the developed countries' institutions for increasing medical facilities in primary and rural health centres was an expression of confidence in the transparency and efficiency of the Punjab government.

He said this while inaugurating the completion of renovation work of selected rooms in the Rural Health Center of Khayaban Sirsyed by the Norwegian government here.

Under this project, besides the renovation of the labour room, the family planning room and lady

health visitor's rooms were also completed while primary and secondary medical equipment had also been provided.

He informed that the government institutions of the US, Norway and Denmark had provided support to the public health sector of Punjab, adding comprehensive measures were also being taken to improve discipline and administrative affairs. Dr Jamal said that the pilot project of the hepatitis screening campaign was underway in eleven high-risk Union Councils of Rawalpindi with the support of the US Task Force for Global Health organization. He said that after the successful completion of the pilot project, it would be further expanded to other areas.

Largest seizure of smuggled vapes from Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Customs authorities on Wednesday made the largest-ever seizure of smuggled vape from a building at Shahrah-e-Faisal.

According to Director Anti-Smuggling Organization of Pakistan Customs Inam Wazir, the Customs officials raided a building at Shahrah-e-Faisal on a tip-off and recovered approximately 20,088 pieces of assorted smuggled vapes, 1,378 kg accessories of vape and 578 liters vape flavor.

The approximate value of the seized items was Rs.90 million.

The owners/possessors could not produce any documents showing the legal import of these goods accordingly they were arrested.

1400 Afghan children enrolled in NFE schools at refugee camps

PESHAWAR (APP): Around 1400 non-school-going Afghan children involved in child labour are enrolled in Non-Formal Education (NFE) schools in refugee schools for equipping them with the treasure of education. The initiative was taken by Helvetas Pakistan, a Swiss-based development organization, through its humanitarian response to address the immediate life needs of vulnerable Afghan communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Initially, we have confined our focus to three districts of KP including Peshawar, Charsadda and Mardan, informed Irshad

Ahmad, an official of Helvetas Pakistan.

Talking to APP, Irshad said among these 1400 Afghan children around 25 were disabled including 13 girls and 12 boys.

While giving a break up of the total figure, he said 728 are girls and 672 are boys who were not going to schools but are now getting an education.

The Afghan children are obtaining non-formal education at 22 centres, 12 for girls and 10 for boys in refugee camps including Khazana, Kababyan, Nauguman, Mera Kachori, Hajizai, Utmanzai, Munda and Jalala.

Caretaker govt strengthens social sector: CM's aide

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to the caretaker Chief Minister on Tourism Culture and Archeology Zafar Mahmood has said that the Caretaker Government is taking vigorous steps to solve public problems while strengthening health, education, and social institutions.

Addressing a ceremony in the Mansehra district on Wednesday, he said that the government is solving the problems of the people on a priority basis and the provision of basic facilities in all the remote and difficult areas is the first priority.

He said that along with the construction and repair of roads and providing health, education, gas, and electricity facilities to the public, vigorous measures are being taken for the development of tourist places and the completion of public welfare projects will be ensured as soon as possible and the available resources will be utilized in their best manner. He said that the cooperation of the people is also indispensable in this regard and they should play their full role in the construction and development of the province so that the country can move towards development in the true sense.

NAB hand over Rs 7.4m to depts after recovery

MULTAN (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Multan handed over Rs. 7.41 million to government departments in the shape of three pay orders after recovery from officials and others named in corruption cases, at a ceremony here Wednesday.

Director General NAB Multan engineer Masood Alam handed over a pay order valuing Rs 3.5 million (3,549,037) in the name of Chief Secretary Punjab to Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (Retired) Saqib Zafar, NAB spokesman said in a statement. This amount was recovered from officers and officials of the food department Punjab and others. A pay order valuing Rs 2.9 million (2,989,100) in the name of HBL regional headquarters was handed over by Director NAB Multan.

Info department decides to start talent hunt prog

PESHAWAR (APP): The KP Directorate General Information on Wednesday decided to start a talent hunt program under the auspices of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar, as per instructions of Minister Information Mian Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel and Secretary Information.

It will give an opportunity to the students of various colleges and universities to test their artistic and creative skills.



LAHORE: Police personnel stand guard during the protest of Government Employees of Punjab outside Civil Secretariat in Provincial Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes awards among the highest exporters of Pharmaceutical Industry in Pakistan.

PM stresses balance in pricing of life saving drugs & pharma sector growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed the formulation of a balanced strategy that could lower the pricing formula of life-saving drugs and also ensure growth of the country's pharmaceutical industry.

Addressing the Pharma Export Summit and Awards (PESA-2023), he said the government was committed to protecting the poor on one hand besides helping the pharmaceutical sector to thrive.

The event organized by Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA) gathered corporate heads of national and multinational pharmaceutical companies and pharma experts.

The prime minister said the country's pharmaceutical industry was playing an important role in meeting the demands of medicine.

He paid tributes to the companies for propelling the export of medicines.

Because of the steep rise in the cost of raw materials, he said, the prices of medicine witnessed an upsurge.

He, however, stressed that the situation must not lead to conflict with the production of life-saving drugs.

PM Sharif constituted a committee to resolve the issues and demands of the pharma industry within two weeks.

He hoped that before the completion of the con-

stitutional term of incumbent government, the matters pertaining to the pharma industry would be resolved amicably.

The prime minister expressed confidence that the board meeting of the International Monetary Fund this evening would help open more Letters of Credit (LCs) relating to pharma products.

"This is just the beginning of a long journey, for which, the government, businessmen and all institutions need to work together," he said.

He said the nation could make remarkable progress if all segments work with unity within their ambit.

Regarding Saudi Arabia's \$2 billion deposit

with the State Bank of Pakistan, the prime minister gave the entire credit to army chief General Asim Munir, saying this happened "purely due to his untiring efforts".

Shehbaz Sharif recalled that in 2016, while serving as Chief Minister of Punjab, he effectively carried out transparent procurement of medicines for the government hospitals, saving Rs 8 billion.

He mentioned that state-of-the-art laboratories were set up in the province in collaboration with a British company.

Chairman PPMA Syed Farooq Bukhari said the pharmaceutical industry of Pakistan witnessed a 25 percent growth compared to the previous year.

Speakers term Islamic finance system as solution to economic problems of country

KARACHI (APP): Religious scholars and experts on the economy termed the Islamic financial system as a solution to the economic problems of Pakistan and stressed the need for legislation and academic research on conversion of the traditional financial system into an interest-free economy.

The thoughts were expressed in a seminar on Islamic Finance organised by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here on Wednesday.

Chairman Shariah Advisory Committee State Bank of Pakistan, Mufti Dr Irtisad Ahmed Aijaz, said that the remarkable success

and exponential growth of Islamic financial system around the world has negated the perception that financial systems could not work without interest.

The decision of the Federal Shariat Court on interest was a significant decision that provides answers to all questions on the subject, he said adding that share of Islamic banking in the overall banking sector has surpassed 20% while Pakistan would be the first country in the world heading to conversion of financial system on such a large scale.

All the stakeholders in Pakistan including the bankers and business commu-

nity have a consensus over conversion to an Islamic financial system, he said and stressed the need for legislation and academic research on the subject along with coordination among stakeholders and unanimity of efforts for the purpose.

CEO of Macro Economic Insights and former adviser to Ministry of Finance Sakib Sherani said that boom-bust cycles, over-consumption and reliance on debt were 3 characteristics of Pakistan's economic performance. He was of the opinion that the Islamic Financial system has distinct advantages as it is stable, avoids boom-bust cycles and has distributive justice.

Pakistan eyes to enhance pharma exports to \$5 bln by 2030: Naveed Qamar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar Wednesday stressed the need for collective efforts to boost pharmaceutical exports up to \$1 billion by 2025 and by \$5 billion by 2030 to improve exchange reserves of the country.

Realizing the export potential of the pharmaceutical sector, he said the government, pharma industry players and regulatory bodies should join together to tap the true potential of this particular sector and

Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA), brought together industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss strategies for growth and innovation in the pharmaceutical sector.

While highlighting the immense opportunities for growth in the global pharmaceutical market, valued at \$1.4 trillion, the minister emphasized the need for Pakistan to benefit from it.

Expressing gratitude to Chairman of PPMA Syed Farooq Bukhari, and



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in a group photo with transports and traders

Rupee gains Rs 1.09 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday gained Rs 1.09 against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 277.47 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.56. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 278 and Rs 281 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 85 paise to close at Rs 305.90 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.98, whereas an increase of 13 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 359.14 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 359.01.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 30 paise and 29 paise to close at Rs 75.54 and Rs 73.97, respectively.

NA body told Poultry traders, importers' hullabaloo on GMOs import halt exploitative

ISLAMABAD (APP): The poultry traders and importers of Soybean seeds have created an exploitative hullabaloo at the national level pertaining to halt of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) seeds as the importers were illicitly importing the soybean seeds without meeting the legal formalities and protocols.

Additional Secretary Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Musadik Ahmed Malik on Wednesday informed the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination presided by MNA Nuzhat Pathan that in 1995 GMOs were introduced to create pest and weather resistant crops.

The chairperson raised the query before the Ministry of Climate Change pertaining to the alleged deliberate halt of soybean seeds causing economic damage to the poultry industry and increase in the price of broiler chicken.

Setting the historical context, he said there were

two lobbies one opposing and the other supporting the GMOs.

However, later the Cartagena Convention was formulated in Spain and all countries made commitments that they would report on international biosafety house to report transboundary movement of the GMOs. In Pakistan, the Cultivation regime after 2005 introduced locally produced BT Cotton GMOs based seeds and it was the only genetically modified crop prevailing in the country and there was no other GMOs locally produced or cultivated.

Soybean seeds were imported to produce oil and its husk was used for making poultry feed as it had high protein which was good for fast growth of chicks, he added. "In Pakistan, there is no import without license. From 2015 till date none of the importers took license for importing soybean seeds. US is the biggest exporter of GMOs-based soybean and canola and it is not signatory to Cartagena Protocol," he added.

Zong collaborates with Sehat Kahani for discounts for My Zong App users

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, the leading telecommunications company in Pakistan, has forged a strategic collaboration with Sehat Kahani, propelling the nation's healthcare landscape into a new era of accessibility and affordability.

"This dynamic alliance empowers users of the My Zong App with exclusive discounts on telemedicine solutions and comprehensive healthcare services, spanning from diagnosis to treatment. Together, Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani are revolutionizing healthcare access, making it more convenient, affordable, and transformative for people across the country," a Zong spokesperson said in a statement on Wednesday.

The spokesperson said Zong 4G users in far-flung areas could access the Sehat Kahani portal through the My Zong App, available on both Android and iOS platforms, enabling

them to connect with the best doctors in Pakistan, who provide quality and cost-effective healthcare services.

"Under this month-long initiative, My Zong App users can avail the first two consultations with general physicians free of cost, followed by a 50 percent discount on the third consultation. Moreover, the first consultation with a medical specialist will only cost Rs. 249, regardless of the original consultation fee, which ranges from Rs 300 to Rs 4,500.

"The app also offers the first mental well-being consultation at Rs. 750 (whereas the original consultation fee ranges from Rs 1,500 to Rs 4,500."

Additionally, the spokesperson said My Zong App users could subscribe to a month-long unlimited consultation package with general physicians and medical specialists for just Rs 499.

RCCI says: Religious tourism can generate millions of foreign exchange

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab have agreed to put joint efforts to promote religious tourism to earn foreign exchange. These views were expressed by Acting President RCCI Faisal Shahzad in a meeting with Secretary Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif at the chamber house.

Faisal said that Pakistan has a largely unexplored avenue of tourism in the religious sector primarily Sikh and Buddhist tourism which can potentially generate millions of dollars for Pakistan, and create over 100,000 jobs.

Pakistan contains numerous sacred sites of different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism that can easily be transformed into tourist destinations, he added.



help economic development of the country.

Speaking at the 6th Pakistan Pharma Summit and Awards (PESA) 2023, the minister outlined the government's plans to significantly increase Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports. The event was organized by the Pakistan

Chairman of the organizing committee Dr. Kaiser Waheed, for their exceptional leadership in arranging the prestigious summit, the minister said pharmaceutical market of Pakistan was growing very fast and together, we could make Pakistan a leading player in the global pharmaceutical market.

HC Rwanda for enhancing trade ties with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan James Kimonyo here on Wednesday invited the business community to invest in different sectors of its economy and assured the full support and facilitation by the embassy for promoting bilateral trade and investment relations between both countries.

Talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari during his visit to the chamber the envoy

asked the local business community to take advantage of the business-friendly environment of Rwanda and look into the opportunities of trade and investment existing in its different sector of economy. There are many possibilities to take the trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda to new heights, he said adding that Rwanda is the best investment destination for the business community with its business-friendly environment, peace, and transparency, said a press release.



LAHORE: Newly elected Vice President SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry Mian Anjum Nisar meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House

KP CM's aide visit KPRA, stressed on increase of tax base

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance and Energy and Power, Himayatullah Khan visited the headquarters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) here on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Finance, Muhammad Ayaz. Director General KPRA, Shah Mahmood Khan gave them a detailed presentation on the structure, working, and revenue achievements of KPRA with proposed way forward.

The DG KPRA informed that KPRA has contributed 71 percent of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's own source tax-revenue in the financial year 2022-23. Since 2017 KPRA's revenue collection has increased by 180 percent which speaks for the performance and dedication of the KPRA

team.

The Director General KPRA informed the Advisor on Finance and Energy and Power about the pending amounts of KPRA with FBR, NTDC and PESCO which need efforts of the KP government for release of the outstanding amount.

The DG KPRA said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has so far paid Rs8 billion to KPRA under an MoU signed between KPRA and FBR for the cross-input adjustment and a total of Rs10 billion is pending with FBR.

The Advisor on Finance and Energy and Power stated that the government will take up the pending amount issue with the Federal Government.

The DG KPRA in his presentation intimated that KPRA has stretched its tax base and new sectors pertaining to services business have been bought under the tax net.

PPMA delegation calls on Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) Wednesday called on the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad and discussed issues related to sale tax regime governing the pharma sector.

LESCO ensures maximum facilities to customers: Hafiz

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) Board of Directors Chairman Hafiz Mohammad Nauman said on Wednesday that LESCO was dedicated to provide maximum facilities to its customers and in taking effective measures to check electricity thieves and their supporters.

Accompanied by LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider, he was addressing the 'Meet the Press' programme here at Lahore Press Club (LPC), where the LPC President Azam Chaudhry, Finance Secretary Hafiz Faiz Ahmed, Member Governing Body Alia Khan,

Hafiz Adnan Tariq Lodhi, Nafees Ahmed Qadri and a large number of the club members were also present.

Hafiz Nauman added that the company was holding open courts (Khhulli Kachehryian) in its circles where the LESCO high-ups listened to customers' problems and issued on the spot directives accordingly, while a system had also been developed under which departmental action was taken against the officers or employees on people's complaints. "We always engaged in serving the people despite harsh weather conditions and torrential rains in LESCO region," he maintained.



QUETTA: Shopkeeper setting up frames of Kulfi to attract customers at Mission Road.

Telenor Pakistan partners with Kistpay to scale smartphone financing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Telenor Pakistan has entered into a partnership with Kistpay, Pakistan's leading smartphone financing platform, to bring affordable smartphone financing solutions to customers at unprecedented scale. A signing ceremony in this regard took place which was attended by Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO Telenor Pakistan, Asif Jafri, CEO Kistpay, Julian Gorman, Head of APAC Region GSMA, Saira Faisal, Country Lead and Jeanette Whyte, Head of Public Policy APAC GSMA who participated virtually to emphasize the importance of this partnership.

The highlight of this partnership is the launch of Shariah-compliant smartphone installment plans, which are tailored specifically for Telenor's vast customer base in Pakistan. The collaboration offers an inclusive solution for individuals hailing from middle and low-income segments of the

society, promoting smartphone ownership through user friendly installment-based financing options that align with Shariah (interest free) principles. The partnership aims to further digitalisation in the country and empower communities through this first-of-its-kind collaboration by making the purchase of smartphones convenient and affordable.

Irfan Wahab Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Telenor Pakistan, commented on the development, "We are committed to forging impactful partnerships that enrich the lives of our customers. Our partnership with Kistpay marks a significant stride in delivering inventive and necessary solutions that bridge the digital divide and promote inclusion. By offering smartphone financing choices, we are empowering more individuals to join the digital revolution and unlock the advantages of connectivity."



QUETTA: MD BPPRA Abid Saleem briefed Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem about E-Procurement Software

North Korea launches ICBM after threatening U.S. over alleged spy flights

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea launched a suspected intercontinental ballistic missile Wednesday, its neighbors said, two days after it threatened the U.S. over what it said were spy plane incursions into its airspace. The South Korean military confirmed that North Korea had launched a suspected long-range ballistic missile toward the east from the outskirts of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, around 10 a.m. Wednesday (9 p.m. Tuesday ET). It said that surveillance had been strengthened and that it was maintaining military preparedness in close cooperation with the U.S. Japanese government spokesperson Hirokazu Matsuno said that while

details were still being analyzed, the missile was estimated to have flown for 74 minutes before it fell into the Sea of Japan about 155 miles west of Okushiri Island in Hokkaido around 11:13 a.m. The missile, which was launched at a lofted trajectory, was estimated to have traveled 620 miles and reached a maximum altitude of about 3,725 miles. Matsuno said that it landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone and that there were no reports of damage in the area. Nuclear-armed North Korea launched its first ICBMs in 2017 as part of its effort to develop long-range weapons able to reach the continental U.S. It then observed a self-imposed moratorium on such launches until last year,

when it resumed testing ICBMs amid stalled talks on denuclearization. North Korea is also thought to be preparing for its seventh nuclear test, which would be its first since 2017. The launch Wednesday was North Korea's first missile test since June 15 and the first time it has launched an ICBM since April. Both South Korea and Japan condemned it as a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which bar North Korea from using ballistic missile technology. "These acts by North Korea threaten the peace and security not only of our country but also the region, as well as the international community, and it is absolutely unacceptable."



Move Forward Party leader Pita Limjaroenrat greets supporters during a rally to thank voters ahead of the vote for a new prime minister, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Thai diplomat meets with Suu Kyi in detention in Myanmar and says she wants to join talks on crisis

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Thailand's top diplomat said Wednesday that he met ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi in detention over the weekend and she conveyed her openness to engage in talks to resolve the crisis in her strife-torn nation. Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai is the only government official outside of Myanmar to have met Suu Kyi since she was detained with other officials when the army seized power from her elected government on Feb. 1, 2021. He told his counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, who are meeting in Indonesia's capital, that Suu Kyi was in good health when he met with her Sunday. "She encourages dia-

logue," Don told reporters in Jakarta when asked what message Suu Kyi conveyed to him. "Obviously we're trying to find a way to settle with Myanmar." The military takeover and the crackdown on the armed resistance to it plunged the country into deadly chaos. Western and European governments, including the United States, have imposed sanctions on Myanmar's military government and demanded the immediate release of Suu Kyi and other political detainees. ASEAN has been under international pressure to address the crisis, and it again banned Myanmar's generals from attending the ASEAN foreign ministerial meetings in Jakarta after the military government largely ignored an emergency plan to take steps to end the crisis.

Germany tells UN: Nord Stream inquiry found subsea explosive traces on yacht

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Germany found traces of subsea explosives in samples taken from a yacht that it suspects "may have been used to transport the explosives" to blow up the Nord Stream gas pipelines, it told the U.N. Security Council in a letter with Sweden and Denmark. A series of unexplained explosions hit the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines connecting Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea last September in the exclusive economic zones of Germany, Sweden and Denmark. The trio are each conducting separate investigations and sent an update - seen by Reuters - ahead of a meeting of the 15-member Security Council on Tuesday called by Russia, which has complained that it has not been kept in-

formed about the probes. "None of the investigations has been concluded and at this point, it is still not possible to say when they will be concluded. The nature of the acts of sabotage is unprecedented and the investigations are complex," the three wrote in a joint letter, dated Monday, which included an update on each inquiry. The joint letter said Germany has been investigating "the suspicious charter of a sailing yacht" that had been rented in a way to "hide the identity of the real charterer." Germany was still investigating the precise course of the boat. "It is suspected that the boat in question may have been used to transport the explosives that exploded at the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines."



People walk outside the Bank of England in the City of London financial district in London, Britain.



Philippine's Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo, Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Interface With ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights Representatives as the seat reserved for Myanmar is left unoccupied at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Iran's president begins a rare visit to Africa 'to promote economic diplomacy'

Monitoring Desk
NAIROBI: Iran's president has begun a rare visit to Africa as the country, which is under heavy U.S. economic sanctions, seeks to deepen partnerships around the world. President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Kenya on Wednesday is the first to the African continent by an Iranian leader in more than a decade. He is also expected to visit Uganda and Zimbabwe and meet with the presidents there. Africa is a "continent of opportunities" and a great platform for Iranian products, Raisi told journalists in a briefing. He didn't take questions. "None of us is satisfied with the current volume of trade," he said. Iran's leader specifically mentioned Africa's mineral resources and Iran's petrochemical experience, but the five memoranda of understanding signed on Wednesday by the Islamic Republic and Kenya appeared not to address either one. Instead, they addressed information, communication and

technology; fisheries; animal health and livestock production and investment promotion. Kenyan President William Ruto called Iran a "critical strategic partner" and "global innovation powerhouse." He expressed interest in expanding Kenya's agricultural exports to Iran and Central Asia well beyond tea. Iran also intends to set up a manufacturing plant for Iranian vehicles in Kenya's port city of Mombasa, Ruto said.

Russia's Medvedev: NATO's military aid to Ukraine brings World War Three closer

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's powerful Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, said late on Tuesday that the increase in military assistance to Ukraine by the NATO alliance brings World War Three closer. Commenting on the first day of the summit of the U.S.-led alliance in Lithuania, where a number of countries pledged more weaponry and financial support, Medvedev said the aid would not deter Russia from achieving its goals in Ukraine. "The completely crazy West could not come up with anything else ... In fact, it's a dead end. World War Three is getting closer," Medvedev wrote on the Telegram messaging app. "What does all this mean for us? Everything is obvious. The special military operation will continue with the same goals." Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a "special military operation," while Kyiv and its allies say Moscow is waging an unprovoked war to grab land and dominate its neighbour.

UK jobless rate climbs

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: UK unemployment rose back to four per cent in the three months to the end of May, official data showed Tuesday, as the economy struggles with stubbornly high inflation. The unemployment rate increased from 3.8pc in the three months to the end of April, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement, dashing expectations for no change. The rate was back at 4pc for the first time since the start of 2022. Despite the rise, finance minister Jeremy Hunt said Britain's "jobs market is strong with unemployment low by historical standards." The ONS added that pay excluding bonuses had risen at record levels.



Migrants disembark from a Spanish Maritime Rescue vessel in the Port of Arguineguin on the Canary Island of Gran Canaria.

BBC presenter faces new charge about second person

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: A crisis at Britain's BBC over alleged payments by an unnamed star to a young person for explicit photos deepened on Tuesday when its news division reported that the male presenter had sent abusive messages to a second person, aged in their early 20s. The new revelations came after the BBC sought to defend its handling of the growing scandal, after acknowledging that it did not flag the first complaint to senior management for seven weeks until a tabloid newspaper approached it about the story. Britain's leading broadcaster has been rocked by a report in the Sun newspaper that the presenter had paid a young person 35,000 pounds (\$45,000) for explicit photos over three years, beginning when the person was 17. The presenter has been suspended but not named, angering other high-profile stars who have fallen under suspicion on social media. BBC News said on Tuesday it had been contacted by a second young person - unconnected to the first - who said they had been approached by the presenter on a dating app.

iPhone assembler pulls the plug on \$19.4bn India deal

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwanese electronics giant Foxconn withdrew from a \$19.4 billion deal with India's Vedanta to make semiconductors in the South Asian nation owing to "challenging gaps", it announced on Tuesday. The world's top iPhone assembler signed an agreement in September with Vedanta to set up a chip factory - which would also produce display screens for phones and tablets - in India's Gujarat state. Russian officials repeatedly say there are no grounds for extending the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is up for its fourth renewal Monday. It's something they have threatened before - then have twice

Traces of explosives were found in a yacht in the Nord Stream sabotage investigation, diplomats say

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: Investigators found traces of subsea explosives in samples taken from a yacht that has been one aspect of a probe into the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea last year, European diplomats have told the United Nations Security Council. They say that the investigation hasn't yet established who the perpetrators were and whether a state was involved. Denmark, Sweden and Germany have been investigating the Sept. 26 attack,

and the Danish Foreign Ministry tweeted a letter Tuesday from the three countries' U.N. ambassadors to the president of the Security Council with information on their activities so far. Officials voiced caution in March over media reports that a pro-Ukraine group was involved in the sabotage. German media reported then that five men and a woman used a yacht hired by a Ukrainian-owned company in Poland to carry out the attack, and that it set off from the German port of Rostock.

South Korea, Japan leaders to meet; Fukushima radioactive water, North Korea missile launch focus

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol is set to meet Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday on the sidelines of a NATO summit, with the release of radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear plant and North Korea expected on the agenda. Japan plans to soon start releasing more than a million tons of treated radioactive water from its tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, a move which has stirred anger and concern among South Koreans. After a two-year review, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said last week Japan's plans were consistent with global safety standards and that they would have a "negligible ra-

diological impact to people and the environment". A South Korean presidential official has said the Fukushima water discharge plan could be discussed at the meeting. South Korea's government said on Friday it respected the IAEA's report and that its own analysis had found the release will not have "any meaningful impact" on its waters. But Seoul has said it will decide whether it will agree or not to Japan's release when Tokyo comes up with the final plan. North Korea is also likely to be a focus during the meeting, which will take place in Lithuania, after Pyongyang launched a long-range ballistic missile off its east coast just hours before the planned talks.

UN human rights body takes up concerns about Quran burnings in Europe

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The U.N. human rights chief used a special debate on Tuesday about burnings of the Quran in Sweden and other European countries to tread a fine line between freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs, while broadening his call for respect of "all others" including migrants, LGBTQI+ people, and women and girls who wear headscarves. Volker Turk, speaking to the Human Rights Council, took on hatred and discrimination that fans violence amid growing concerns about "manufactured" shows of intolerance aimed to drive a wedge between civilizations. Recent burnings of the Quran have had sweeping repercussions and even weighed on Turkey's reflections about whether to admit Sweden into NATO. The debate, coming during the council's summer session, shaped up largely along the lines of Western countries that condemned

such intolerance but affirmed the right to freedom of expression, and predominantly Muslim countries who want governments to strengthen their legal arsenals to ban expressions of religious intolerance and hatred that could lead to violence, discrimination or hostility. "We'd like to stress that freedom of expression is an ethical value that should spread to peaceful coexistence rather than causing a clash of civilizations," said Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, in a video statement. "We should spread values of tolerance." Turk denounced the Quran burnings in Europe among recent incidents that "appear to have been manufactured to express contempt and inflame anger, to drive wedges between people and to provoke transforming differences of perspective into hatred and perhaps violence."

Russia's threat to pull out of Ukraine grain deal raises fears about global food security

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Concerns are growing that Russia will not extend a United Nations-brokered deal that allows grain to flow from Ukraine to parts of the world struggling with hunger, with ships no longer heading to the war-torn country's Black Sea ports and food exports dwindling. Turkey and the U.N. negotiated the breakthrough accord last summer to ease a global food crisis, along with a separate agreement with Russia to facilitate shipments of its food and fertilizer. Moscow insists it's still facing hurdles, though data shows it has been exporting record amounts of wheat. Russian officials repeatedly say there are no grounds for extending the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is up for its fourth renewal Monday. It's something they have threatened before - then have twice

gone on to extend the deal for two months instead of the four months outlined in the agreement. The U.N. and others are striving to keep the fragile deal intact, with Ukraine and Russia both major suppliers of wheat, barley, vegetable oil and other food products that countries in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia rely on. It has allowed Ukraine to ship 32.8 million metric tons (36.2 million tons) of grain, more than half of it to developing nations. The deal has helped lower global prices of food commodities like wheat after they surged to record highs following the invasion last year, but that relief has not reached kitchen tables. Russia's exit would cut off a source for World Food Program aid for countries at risk of famine, including Somalia, Ethiopia and Afghanistan, and compound food security problems in vulnerable places struggling with conflict.

After half a century, Israel moves to evict squatter from his cave home on the beach

Monitoring Desk
HERZLIYA: Over half a century, Nissim Kahlon has transformed a tiny cave on a Mediterranean beach into an elaborate underground labyrinth filled with chiseled tunnels, detailed mosaic floors and a network of staircases and chambers. He lives in the one-of-a-kind artistic creation, which is a popular destination for local curiosity seekers, and Kahlon, 77, is quick to welcome visitors into his subterranean home. Now, Israel's government wants him out. Fifty years after Kahlon moved into the home, Israel's Environmental Protection Ministry has served him an eviction notice, saying the structure is illegal and threatens Israel's coastline. "Instead of encouraging me, they're denigrating me," Kahlon said, sitting in his mosaic-tiled living room, rolling a cigarette. The sun glimmered on the sea outside his west-facing windows. Kahlon was living in a

tent along the Herzliya beach north of Tel Aviv in 1973 when he says he began scratching into the sandstone cliffs and moved into a cave he carved. Over time, his simple hole in the wall turned into a real-life sandcastle on steroids, filled with recycled wood, metal, ceramic and stone. Nearly every surface of his main quarters is covered in elaborate mosaics, made from discarded tiles of every color that he collected from dumpsters in Tel Aviv over the years. Recycled glass bottles serve as decoration and insulation on exterior walls. Every wall in the labyrinthine complex is curved, and stairways bend and branch through the bedrock to chambers of different design and purpose. The complex has plumbing, a phone line and electric lighting in its many rooms, and Kahlon insists his construction is sturdy. "From the stones I quarry I make a cast and build a wall.

PM vows to utilize all resources for country's development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday pledged to the nation that under the leadership of its Quaid Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, if given the mandate in next general elections, would utilize all available resources to bring the country out of economic crisis and take it to the zenith of development and prosperity.

State of the art technology would be introduced for development in various sectors, including agriculture, energy and industries, he said addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of a flyover here at Shaheen Chowk on Ninth Avenue.

The prime minister said the coalition government had launched a series of development projects in the Federal Capital to provide relief to its residents.

The Capital's most important project, he said, was the Bahara Kahu flyover that had almost been completed and its inauguration was likely by the

end of current month. The project was not only beneficial for the residents of the twin cities but it would also facilitate the people from all over the country in their travel to Kashmir and Northern Areas.

Referring to the stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said it was all because of the prayers of the people and now the country would resume its journey of development and prosperity.

It was not an easy task as the PML-N and its coalition partners put their politics at stake by taking tough economic decisions to save the country from default, he added.

Pakistan, he said, would now stand on its own feet. "We will promote agriculture, information technology and other sectors. Pakistan will not only shed the debt burden but also emerge as a powerful country very soon."

He said the PTI's Imran Niazi was bent upon ruining the economy as evident from his willful deviation from the IMF agreement.

He wanted the country to default, but with the blessings of Almighty and efforts of the coalition government, such an eventuality was averted, the prime minister added.

Pm Shehbaz said not a single corruption scandal had been reported during the current government's tenure of over one year, rather billions of rupees were saved by reaching big deals such as import of wheat and the agreement of a nuclear power project with China.

The cost of the nuclear power project remained the same as agreed with the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif in 2018, besides a discount of Rs 30 billion, he added.

Speaking about the 9th May incidents, the prime minister said what the PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) had done on that day the enemy even could not do.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also inaugurated the monsoon tree plantation campaign by planting a tree near the project.



MULTAN: Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad addressing Etihad Bainul Muslimeen Seminar.

Talha for developing sustainable tourism initiatives on Gandhara

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Talha Mahmood on Wednesday said that developing sustainable tourism initiatives, particularly related to Gandhara, should be one of key goals.

He expressed these views here during the concluding session of the two-day Gandhara Symposium 2023 titled "Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan".

Senator Talha highlighted the hospitable nature of Pakistani society and dispelled the negative propaganda about security in the country. As a mark of Pakistan promoting interfaith harmony, he extended an invitation to the people of different faiths and cultures to visit the country.

The second day of the symposium commenced with the Fourth Session on "Exploring the Spirit of Gandhara: Preserving the Past & Illuminating the Future." Speakers of the session were Prof of Archaeology, University of Leicester, UK, Prof. Ruth Young; Senior Researcher, Cultural Heritage Foundation, South Korea, Yi Yun Jung; Director Minister of Buddhasana Religious And Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, Nishantha Pushpakumara; Prof. Dr. Hridya Ratna Bajracharya; Former VC Lumbini University, Nepal; and Prof. Xiang Dehao, Prof. School of International Journalism & Communication, Beijing University.

The session was moderated by the Director of the State Bank Museum and Head of ICOM Pakistan, Dr. Asma Ibrahim.

The speakers stressed the vital role of the local communities in the preservation, protection, and promotion of the Gandhara heritage. They discussed that the heritage sites were very important for religious practices but also for building religious and national identity. They highlighted that the true spirits of Gandhara were reflected in the stone sculpture of fasting Siddharta, the academic excellence of Taxila, and the mindful, pragmatic, imaginative, creative, and bold nature of Gandhara.

It was proposed to support the bringing of new digital technology and chemicals for preservation purposes. It was also underlined that Gandhara was not only a communication but also an all-out campaign for modernization for an international audience.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about Monsoon Tree Plantation Drive 2023.

Secretary Finance visits BPPRA: Process of E-Tendering bring transparency in development projects

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Secretary Finance Department, Zahid Saleem visited the office of Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) here on Wednesday.

During the visit, the MD, BPPRA, Abid Saleem Qureshi briefed the Secretary Finance about the overall performance of the Authority.

He also briefed the Secretary Finance about the E-tendering and its related matters. He informed that the process of E-Tendering has brought transparency in the development projects.

The Secretary Finance while appreciating performance of BPPRA noted

with pleasure that most of the financing matters have been transferred on the E-Technology, which has ended means of corruptions on one hand and made it an easy access of the common men to these matters on the other hand.

He exhorted all the government employees to perform their duties with hard work and dedication. He also stressed the need to bring transparency in the system to stop wastage of the resources and spend them on the public welfare.

He said that a best example of benefiting from the modern technology is the BPPRA's E-Procurement Software.



QUETTA: Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem being briefed about Public Private Partnership Authority.

ANP expresses concern over target killings, lawlessness

By Sardar Khondai
CHAMAN: The leaders of Awami National Party (ANP) have charted that the recent wave of lawlessness in the Pashtoon dominated areas is an attempt to stop the way of interest of China on the western route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The tragedy of Dhana sar, target killing of police officials in Laki Marwat, attack and firing in Zhob as well as the incidents occurred in Harnai and Waziristan are part of such

acts. However, the ANP would continue to wage struggle as a representative democratic party of the motherland and would stand firm against all these hurdles. These views were expressed by the President of ANP Balochistan and Parliamentary leader, Asghar Khan Achakzai, Provincial Minister for Food, Zamarak Khan Achakzai, General Secretary, Mabat Kaka, vice President, Senator Arbab Umar Farooq Kasi and other leaders.

Success of chairman, vice chairman in Kech historic: Ali Hassan

Independent Report
HUB: President of Pakistan People's Party District Hub, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, arrived and met the senior leader of the party, Mir Abdul Rauf Rind at the house. He congratulated him on great success.

On this occasion, the two leaders discussed mutual issues and strategy for making the party more active and the next election. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri expressed his happiness to

Mir Abdul Rauf Rind on the success of Chairman and Vice Chairman in Kech and said that the success is the result of the passionate leadership of the party leaders and the tireless work of the workers. Mir Abdul Rauf Rind thanked Mir Ali Hassan Zehri for coming home to congratulate him on success. Pakistan People's Party minority affairs leader Piso Mall, Jani Chand and others were also present in the meeting.

Bazai visits trauma center to review health facilities

QUETTA (APP): Special Secretary Health Balochistan Dawood Bazai on Wednesday visited the trauma center Quetta to review the health facilities being extended to the injured of the Zhob incident.

On this occasion, MD Trauma Center Dr. Arbab Kamran gave a briefing to the Special Secretary Health Balochistan about the treatment of injured of Zhob incident.

MD told special secretary that at least 4 injured of Zhob cleaning operation were brought to trauma center in Quetta.

"All available resources should be utilized for the treatment of the injured, urged Special Secretary Health.

Earlier, he met with the injured and inquired after their health. He also inspected different units and medicine store of the trauma center.

Naeem says: PML-N playing vital role for country's development

QUETTA (APP): Central senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Chaudhry Naeem Karim on Wednesday said his party always played an important role in the construction and development of the country. He said this while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Muslim League-N workers called on him here. Chaudhry Naeem Karim said that when the PML-N took over the federal government, the country was close to becoming a defaulter and the country has again started on the path of development and prosperity. He said that the PML-N believed in democracy and that the leaders and workers of the party were ready for the upcoming general elections.

He said that the leader of the party and former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would return to Pakistan before the general elections to lead the election campaign.

Dar seeks roadmap for outsourcing of first airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday sought a roadmap with timelines to move forward for the outsourcing of the first airport to improve service delivery and match the best international aviation practices in Pakistan.

The minister was chairing a meeting of the steering committee to oversee the outsourcing of airports' operations, according to a Finance Ministry press release.

Officials of the International Finance Corporation, the transaction advisor, briefed the meeting about the latest status and progress on the matter.

Besides the IFC team, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique; Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa; SAPM on Government Effectiveness Dr Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan; and senior officers from Aviation and Finance divisions.

Pakistan is confident it is on right path to polio eradication

ISLAMABAD (Online): Secretary for the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Iftikhar Shallwani, has said that Pakistan has made remarkable progress on polio eradication, despite many challenges, and is well on the path to wipe out polio from its borders.

Delivering a statement on behalf of Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel at the 22nd meeting of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) in Geneva on Tuesday.



QUETTA: Adelegation of Zamindar Action Committee led MPA Asghar Tareen by meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

BMC students protest against suspension of academic activities

Independent Report
QUETTA: The students of Bolan Medical College (BMC) took out protest rally and staged demonstration against the suspension of academic activities in the college, hereon Wednesday.

The protestors including male and female students of the BMC were carrying banners and placards inscribed with the slogans against suspension of the studies and closure of the college for last four months.

They chanted slogans against the provincial government for not paying any heed towards the issue, which is affecting their medical studies and future.

They demanded of the government to take notice of the demands of medical teachers, who otherwise have been observing protest for last four months.

As the medical teachers have been boycotting the classes, the academic activities have come to standstill for last four months, the protestors alleged.

PPP ready for general elections 2023: Ghazala

QUETTA (APP): President PPP Balochistan Women's Wing and former provincial minister Ghazala Gola and general secretary Zareena Zehri said that in the upcoming general elections, Pakistan People's Party will emerge as the largest political party in the country.

The PPP is active as it has won the local elections in the province with a huge majority.

Talking to a delegation of women, they said that Pakistan People's Party strongly believes in democracy and is ready for the

DG for formulating master planning of Balochistan coastal line

QUETTA (APP): Director General Balochistan Coastal Development Authority (BCDA) Naseer Ahmad Nasar on Wednesday emphasized the formulation of master planning of the coastal line of the province in order to determine the future feasibility of compressive development and preservation of natural ecosystems.

The master planning of coastal lines is important as the implementation of the potential projects that would contribute to efficient use of resources and planning in the future, he said in a statement issued here.

The Balochistan government was making serious efforts to frame the master plan of the coastal belt soon as the province possessed a plethora of tourist attractions along the 750-kilometer-long coastal belt.

The construction work on the Eco-tourism resorts, beach parks, floating jetties, and rest area was in full swing with allied facilities in the coastal areas of Balochistan to cater to the needs of local and foreign tourists visiting its beautiful coastal lines.

President asks bank to refund lost amount, apologize to fraud victim

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has rejected a representation filed by Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAFL) against the decision of Banking Mohtasib directing it to send an apology to a customer for enabling online transaction/payment system on his credit card without his consent and neglecting his timely complaint about a disputed transaction.

He said that when Internet Banking Facility was provided by a bank to its customers, it was incumbent upon the bank to educate its customers about its pros and cons.

He also directed BAFL to refund the lost amount of Rs 66,850 along with the profit to the customer.

The president gave these remarks while deciding upon a case wherein Muhammad Yar (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Banking Mohtasib stating that he had a Bank Alfalah Credit Card and a scam of

Rs 66,850/- occurred on his Credit Card when his card was used at Noon-e-Commerce solution. He informed the bank that he had not done this transaction and requested to stop this online transaction/payment. The bank had initially reversed this transaction amount but surprisingly after six months, the bank had deducted this amount from his Credit Card. Feeling aggrieved, he escalated his complaint before the Banking Mohtasib which directed BAFL to refund the lost amount. The Bank, then, filed a representation with the President against the decision of the Mohtasib. The president held a personal hearing of the case and rejected the representation of the bank. In his decision, he noted that the complainant was not conversant with Internet/Digital Banking and became aware of the transaction on receipt of a call from the bank's real-time Monitoring Unit wherein he told the Bank's representative.



GENEVA: Federal Secretary for Health, Iftikhar Ali Shallwani is attending IMB meeting.

Governor urges Govt to guide and help livestock breeders & farmers in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar has stated that the province can meet the requirement of sacrificial animals of 2.5 million pilgrims of Saudi Arabia during Hajj, if we were successful in putting the livestock sector on modern lines.

Therefore, it is very important for the government to provide wholehearted help and guidance to the livestock breeders and farmers of the province. He stressed the need to provide cheaper electricity and quality seeds to the zamindars as well as vaccine, proper food and standard medicines to the livestock breeders.

The Governor also stressed the need to hold a national level seminar in Quetta for developing agriculture and livestock sectors in order to strengthen the country's economy.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Governor while speaking to delegations of

zamindars and Balochistan Agricultural research and Development center who called on him separately under leaderships of Member Provincial Assembly, Asghar Khan Tareen and Director General of the center, Nadeem Sadiq respectively here on Wednesday.

The Governor on the occasion directed Quetta Electric Supply Company to provide electricity on all agriculture feeders of the province with full voltage. He said that the economy of the country especially of Balochistan is based on agriculture and the major part of the province's economy is also associated with the livestock. He said that Balochistan is the land of natural grazing having several rare species of the birds and animals. The Governor said that around 2.5 million animals are brought from different countries on occasion of Hajj in Saudi Arabia, and the province can meet the need of sacrificial animals utilizing its own resources.



QUETTA: Florence Rolle, FAO Representative in Pakistan, and Rehmat Dashti, Project Director, GLISP-II, exchange documents after signed the agreement.

Balochistan govt collects Rs7.2 bn revenue from minerals sector

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government collected Rs 7.2 billion in revenue from the minerals sector during the last financial year.

The government has collected a huge amount from the mining sector and deposited it in the provincial treasury, an official of the Balochistan government said.

The government has initiated various business-friendly initiatives to boost investors' confidence and increase investment in the minerals sector.

Computerized weighing scales have been installed besides increasing mining check posts in the province and upgrading the royalty system in line with modern technology, he added.

The official said that the Department of Mines and Minerals would launch a project of digitization of the royalty system to bring transparency in revenue collection management.

The Mines and Minerals department was work-

ing on the establishment of a mineral testing laboratory under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode to attract several investors, as the province lacks testing laboratories despite its rich potential of mineral resources, he added.

He said the automation of the licensing regime, royalty management, and inspection on sites has been initiated with the project "Institutional Strengthening Automation of Royalty Regime in Mining Sector." Most modules of the software development have been completed, and data digitization has been carried out. The integrated development of mining sites has been initiated to enhance labour welfare and safety measures, with the provision of scholarships, safety equipment for the inspectorate of mines, and other measures, he said. The government has initiated various business-friendly initiatives to boost investors' confidence and increase investment in the minerals sector.