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QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar addressing Azmat-e-Quran and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference organized by Central Jamiat Ahle Hadith Balochistan

Azmat-e-Qura'an & Istehkam-e-Pak conference: Panacea of sufferings and tribulations lie in understanding and following Holy Qura'an, says Governor

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has emphasized that the Holy Qura'an is the great source of guidance for the whole humanity, and as such the panacea of our sufferings and tribulations being faced by us lie in understanding and following teachings of the Holy Book.

He also said that meaningful change in the Muslims' lives can be brought only when we would make part of their practical life by understanding the Holy Qura'an.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Governor while addressing

the Azmat-e-Qura'an and Istehkam-e-Pakistan conference organized by Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith here at the Jamia Salfiar, Airport road on Sunday.

The leaders of Jamiat Ahle Hadith as well as political leaders and religious scholars belonging to different schools of thoughts also participated in the conference.

The Governor maintained that we learn lesson from the Holy Qura'an to speak before every cruel and against all social evils, and we can succeed in forming exploration and cruelty-free society by following the teachings of Holy Qura'an.

He on the occasion appreciated the organizers for holding the conference on vital topic of Azmat-e-Qura'an and Istehkam-e-Pakistan, which he added, speaks high about their deep affiliation with Islam and patriotism. He said that the only solution to our sufferings is that we must understand Holy Qura'an and follow its teachings.

He said that the objective behind holding conference also invites us to make ourselves accountable instead of merely expressing happiness on it. In the end, the Governor prayed that may Allah Almighty create unity among our ranks in the country and province besides serving them.

Govt committed to empower youth of country PM pledges to take country on path of prosperity if given opportunity in upcoming polls

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that if given an opportunity in the upcoming general elections, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the entire leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz would change the destiny of the country by taking it on the path of progress and prosperity.

Addressing the cheque distribution ceremony under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, he said they would accept the public mandate in the upcoming polls and urged the people to take their decisions after looking into certain facts and by juxtaposing

the performance of the PML-N governments with that of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's four years' saga of destruction.

The prime minister while lauding the statesmanship qualities of his elder brother, regretted that former prime minister and his leader Nawaz Sharif was ousted from power despite the fact that he had ended hours-long crippling load shedding, provided laptops and loans to youth, brought multi-billions China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CEPC) power and road infrastructure projects during 2015.

On the other hand, Continued on page 2

Balochistan has suffered financial loss of over Rs. 300 billion so far since 2017, regrets CM

Outcome of non-existence of new NFC Award: Approach of federation on the NFC Award is beyond comprehensible

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has regretfully pointed out the Balochistan province has so far suffered financial loss of over Rs. 300 billion due to non-existence of new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award since 2017.

He said that the approach of federation on the NFC Award is beyond comprehensible, as it is a constitutional requirement to announce new NFC Award after every five

years. He said that the new NFC Award is due since 2015, but this constitutional obligation is being violated for last eight years affecting Balochistan the most.

At the time when there's talk of meeting constitutional requirements everywhere, then why the requirement of NFC Award is being overlooked?, he questioned.

In an official statement issued here on late Saturday night, the Chief Minister also referred to the financial issues being con-



fronted by the province and mentioned that the matter of arrears of the province against Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) is also yet to be resolved.

He said that it is an unwise act and insult of the people of Balochistan to give preference to a company over the province. Continued on page 2



TEHRAN: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir meeting with President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi

Balochistan's development linked with provision of NFC share: Zubaida Jalal

QUETTA (APP): Member of the National Assembly, Zubaida Jalal has said that the provision of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award is imperative for the economic development of the province and to bring it up to the level of other provinces.

Talking to members of the business community here on Sunday, she expressed that the federal government has acknowledged Balochistan's backwardness but failed to effectively address the issues and lift the people out of poverty, said a news release.

The main reason for the

poverty and backwardness of Balochistan is the lack of funds and not enough share in the NFC Award, despite the fact that Balochistan constitutes half of Pakistan," she explained.

She said that the provision of security for half of Pakistan is a huge challenge, and the province spends 40 per cent of its resources on maintaining law and order.

"We are asserting our rights in accordance with the law and the Constitution while remaining within our means. We ought not to be found in some unacceptable light said Jalal and Continued on page 2

BA session to begin today

Independent Report QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to begin today (Monday) in the Assembly Hall here.

According to the sources of Provincial Assembly, the first sitting of the assembly session would be held at 04:00 PM.

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar had summoned the assembly session earlier last week.

The agenda of session has already been issued by the secretariat of provincial assembly.

SC's division bench to hear cases at Quetta Registry from today

Independent Report QUETTA: A division bench of the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the cases at Quetta Registry from today (Monday).

The division bench comprises Mr. Justice Aminuddin and Mr. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail.

The hearing of cases by the division bench would remain continued till July 21, 2023.

Pakistan, Iran vow to counter terrorism in border areas

COAS Ge. Asim Munir wraps up a two-day "successful" trip to Iran; Army chief also meets Iranian president and foreign minister.

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Sunday concluded his two-day successful visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The military leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan agreed that terrorism was a common threat to the region in general and both countries in particular.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the military commanders on both sides vowed to eradicate the menace of terrorism in the border areas through intelligence sharing and effective actions against the terrorists' networks, and explore avenues

for enhancing cooperation in the security domain.

During his visit, the COAS had detailed meetings with the Military leadership of Iran including Chief of General Staff of Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri.

The COAS also called on President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

During discussions, the significance of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations for regional peace and stability was highlighted. The COAS was presented with the Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Iranian Armed Forces at the Military Headquarters on his arrival.

Transporters hails govt. decision of abolishing unnecessary check posts

ACS Home and Principal Secretary to CM assure resolution of problems being faced by transporters and traders in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The transporters from all over the Balochistan province have hailed the decision of Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and his cabinet about abolishing the unnecessary check posts of the Pakistan Customs, Coast Guards, Police and Levies on the roads and highways.

However, they have stressed the need to start implementation on the cabinet's decision and make the concerned departments bound to fully honour the

decision in this regard. The transporters representatives including office bearers of different associations of the transporters, unions and traders organizations were in meeting with the Additional Chief Secretary Home, Muhammad Saleh Nassar and Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Gichki here on Sunday.

The transporters' and traders leaders apprised the senior government officials about the issues being faced

Continued on page 2

Much-needed & much-awaited Green Bus Service set to be launched in Quetta today

Independent Report QUETTA: The much-needed and long-awaited Green Bus Service is going to be launched from today (Monday).

According to the provincial Transport Department, all the necessary arrangements have been made to start the Green Bus Service from today.

The formal inauguration of the Green Bus Service is scheduled to be made at 12:00 Noon at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) Takato campus, Baleli.

As per programme, the inauguration of Green Bus Service would be done by an ordinary passenger travelling on the local public transport, as already announced by the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo in a tweet on his social media account Twitter.

Initially, the Green Bus Service would be operated between Baleli to University of Balochistan. In all eight big and small green buses would be plying on the route, which would have 18 stopovers between its route on one side.

While a Green Bus would have the seating capacity of 60 passengers, the small buses would be 40-seated.

The fare for a passenger has been fixed as Rs. 30 in the Green buses, the sources of Provincial Transport department informed.

According to the Information Department, the special seating arrangement has been made for the women and elderly persons in the Green Buses.

It is also believed that the Green Bus Service would help reduce the flow of traffic in the provincial metropolis.

While on the other hand, the middle class segment would have the modern transport facility with the launch of Green Bus Service in Quetta.

کوئٹہ کے شہریوں کے لیے
بڑی خوشخبری
 وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان میر عبدالقدوس بزنجوی زیر قیادت
 حکومت بلوچستان کی عوامی خدمت کی جانب ایک اور کامیابی
 کوئٹہ میں ماحول دوست جدید ایئر کنڈیشنڈ
گرین بس سروس کا آغاز

کر ایئر صرف 30 روپے

- گرین بس کی بدولت متوسط طبقہ کو سفر کی بہترین سہولیات میسر آئیں گی
- شہر میں ٹریفک کے دباؤ کو کم کیا جاسکے گا
- گرین بس میں خواتین اور بزرگوں کے لیے علیحدہ نشستیں مختص
- معذور افراد کے لیے وہیل چیئر کے ساتھ سہل سفر کرنے کا انتظام
- بلوچستان یونیورسٹی سے بائیں کے درمیان بس روٹ پر 18 سٹاپ مقرر
- بزرگ، خواتین، سٹیچے اور طلباء اس سہولت سے استفادہ کر سکیں گے

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12 tourists dead as coaster falls into ditch in Chilas

GILGIT (INP): A tourist coaster on Sunday skidded off the road and fell into a ravine on the Karakoram Highway near Thalichi in Chilas, Gilgit-Baltistan, killing at least 12 people.

According to details, a coaster carrying tourists plunged into a gorge on the Karakoram Highway near Thalichi, killing at least 12 people and injuring 6 others including women and children. The coaster was going to Gilgit from Lahore. Rescue teams recovered the dead bodies and shifted them to a hospital.

According to the sources, the tourist coaster skidded off the road due to high speed. The local administration has started efforts to identify the names of the dead tourists.



QUETTA: A combine delegation of transporters meeting with Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Saleh Nassar. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Imran Gichki and Commissioner Quetta Sohailur Rehman Baloch are also present

Wrong economic policies of PTI govt led to existing economic turmoil: Kh Asif

SIALKOT (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that wrong economic policies of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has led to the existing economic turmoil.

Addressing the workers' convention at Mohallah Water Works on Sunday, he said, "We are determined and will soon succeed in bringing the country out of darkness".

Khawaja Asif said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had gathered all po-

litical parties to support the national economy.

He said that unfortunately, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was brought into power in 2018 through a rigged elections, and those who supported Imran Khan, the performance of Imran Khan and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was in front of them.

During the planned attacks on 9th May, the memorials of martyrs were insulted, he said, adding "we stand with our martyrs and Ghazis" and those who insulted the memorials of martyrs would be brought

to justice under the law.

Khawaja Asif said that during the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government before 2018 election, the country's economy was getting stable, but then the premier Nawaz Sharif was disqualified under a conspiracy.

He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was working very hard for the stability of the country's economy and he hoped that they would soon be able to put the country on road to development and

prosperity.

The Defence Minister said that allied parties of the coalition government had also played a very important role and maintained unity under a spirit for which he salute them.

He further said that elections would be announced in a month after the dissolution of assemblies.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had started its election campaign.



SIALKOT: A delegation of Parliamentarians called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi talking to media persons at Jamia Manzoorul Islamia.

De Silva leads Sri Lanka's fight Pakistan in Galle Test

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dhananjaya de Silva hit an unbeaten 94 as Sri Lanka recovered from an early collapse to reach 242-6 at stumps on a rain-hit day one of the first Test against Pakistan in the city of Galle on Sunday.

The fifth-wicket pair of de Silva and Angelo Mathews (64) put on 131 after Sri Lanka had slipped to 54-4 in the opening session, with Shaheen Shah Afridi taking three wickets on his Test return.

De Silva stood firm in an extended final session in Galle despite losing his partner Sadeera Samarawickrama, who made 36, after a 57-run stand. Wicketkeeper-batsman Agha Salman's spin and play, which had witnessed two rain interruptions at a cost of 24.2 overs lost, was called off for the day.

De Silva batted elegantly with deft cuts, drives and pulls, and

amassed 10 fours and three sixes — one of them to reach his fifty.

But he slowed down in the final hour of play as he awaits his 10th Test century in his 50th match.

Mathews, playing his 105th Test, raised his 39th half-century in the five-day format.

The pair seemed comfortable and de Silva started to take on the bowlers with boundaries, but leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed got former captain Mathews caught behind at the stroke of tea. Sri Lanka had looked in trouble at lunch, which was put back by an hour after officials adjusted the session timings to make up for a first rain delay of nearly 90 minutes.

Afridi, a left-arm quick playing his 26th Test, moved from 99 to a century of wickets on his return from injury when he sent back Nishan Madushka caught behind for four in his second over.

Pakistan Street Child Football team wins exhibition match

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Street Child Football team outplayed the European Union Ambassadors team in a friendly exhibition match 5-0 here at the Jinnah Stadium of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Sunday.

The final training camp of the Pakistan Street Child Football Team for the world's biggest youth football league 'Norway Cup' was underway here at Jinnah Stadium.

In relation to that, a friendly football exhibition match was organized between the ambassadors of

the European Union, donor agencies of the United Nations and the Pakistan Street Child Football team.

In the game, five goals were scored by the Pakistan street child football team. On the occasion, foreign ambassadors appreciated the game of the Pakistan street child football team.

It may be mentioned that the street child football team won the second position in Norway in 2015 and the third position in 2016. The street child football team would leave for Norway on July 27.

Balochistan's development....

Continued from page 1

added, "We are also demanding our right, and every province demands its right."

She said that the Iranian diesel and petroleum exchange at the boundary is being facilitated to guarantee the continuation of individuals' jobs, empowering them to keep their ovens consuming in their homes. This action was taken to try not to deny our kin of work until we can give them elective well-springs of occupation.

She said there were few government jobs and no industries in Balochistan. If people remain unemployed, they may fall prey to the propaganda of anti-state elements.

She also said that the provincial government should also devise a plan to generate their own funds after being given the provincial autonomy to implement provincial taxes in different ways and indulge the world bank in different economic-based projects.

Similarly, the Balochistan Board of Investment (BBOIT) should launch the incentive model for the investors of one window facility with the support of the Pakistan Army interim of security.

As Balochistan have ample mineral opportunities also potential in corporate agriculture farming which needs to be tapped with the attractive business and investment plan through BBOIT, she added.



QUETTA: President Balochistan Hockey Association Nawabzada Mir Muhammad Haroon speaks during a press conference.

PPP, PMLN set formulae for GB government

GILGIT (Online): Pakistan People Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (Pmln) has set the formulae of power sharing on the basis of majority to form government in Gilgit Baltistan.

According to reports after PPP, Pmln is ready to be the part of government. People Party will get three positions and Pmln will have two ministries.

Sources told that PPP will have his deputy speaker and two ministries. Names has been finalised for two ministries. Engineer Ismael and Shehzad Agha will be the candidate for ministries.

Pmln has not finalised their names for ministries yet. In GB assembly PPP has four and Pmln has only three members.

Election of deputy speaker of GB assembly will be held tomorrow afternoon. On success Sadia Danish will be the first female deputy speaker of the assembly.

Pak urges unified action to assist Asian-Pacific nations deal with climate-induced disasters

AT UN
UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for a coordinated effort to help the vulnerable nations of the Asia-Pacific region.

Ms. Alam, who is and convener of the National Parliamentary Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced herself as "representing the Parliament of Pakistan" at the conference which is a part of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'s High-Level Political Forum.

"I bring your attention to the Resolution I recently presented in the National Assembly to appreciate the contributions of the UN and its agencies that use their expertise and resources to help Pakistan in its fight against climate change.

The Resolution was passed unanimously by the members of the August Forum on 23rd June 2023," the Pakistani delegate told the conference.

Ongoing war against terrorism is the war for future of the nation

Says there is deep concern over the recent incidents of terrorism in Zhob, Sui and other parts of the country involving Afghan nationals and the use of Afghan territory.

Independent Report

QUETTA: Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has expressed deep concern over the recent incidents of terrorism in other parts of the country including Balochistan. She said that such cowardly acts are intolerable and the armed forces will not rest until the menace of terrorism is eradicated from the country.

Security of the country should be the first priority of all of us and the way our brave security forces are fighting to protect the homeland from the cowardly terrorists, the en-

emies of the country, the enemies attacked the military boundaries with their nefarious actions. She said that the whole nation and the security forces will defeat all the heinous attempts to destroy the peace of Balochistan and Pakistan. They are determined and will not allow any kind of harm to the country.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri further said that the security personnel sacrificed their lives in the line of duty in the attacks and many personnel were also injured in these attacks and it is an undisputed fact that the defense and security of Pakistan depend on

the holy blood of our martyrs and the greatness of the Ghazis. She said that the ongoing war against terrorism is the war for future of the nation and the terrorists will be defeated in this war. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the brave forces and the nation together have defeated terrorism before and the protection of this country is the mission of the patriotic people and the brave security forces and also the national responsibility of all of us. The security of the country is dearer to us than our own lives.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed serious concerns about the involvement of Afghan citizens in the recent attacks in Pakistan. She said that the safe havens of terrorists in Afghanistan are the real root of terrorism. She said that it is very worrying and unacceptable that Afghan soil is being used for terrorist activities in Pakistan. She also expressed hope that the Afghan government will not allow its land to be used for terrorism against any country and will take effective action against and ensure that Afghan soil is not used against Pakistan.

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PM pledges to take country on ...

Continued from page 1

Imran Khan had a phobia of PML-N leadership and the opposition as day in and day out, he was bent upon putting them in jails with the framing of fake cases, he said, adding the PTI leader could not assimilate the revolutionary steps taken by the PML-N government.

All the youth programmes, he said were started during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif as alone 50,000 vehicles were provided to the people on merit across Punjab province. The success of the loan scheme could be gauged from the fact that 99 per cent of loans were returned back to banks, he added.

The prime minister maintained that Nawaz Sharif and they had experienced the worst kind of political vendetta, even they were sent into exile after being removed from power, but unlike Imran Niazi, the PML-N Quaid never thought of anything against the country.

The prime minister elaborated that the person (IK) who was brought to power through a fraud election, kept on chanting the corruption charges during his four years tenure but did not prove them, adding that when he was removed from power corridors through a constitutional manner, he used dirty language and tactics against the state institutions.

The prime minister mentioned that PTI's tenure was tainted with huge corruption scams including sugar and wheat scams, BRT Peshawar, Malam Jabba, sale of Toshakhana gifts, Rs 60 billion money embezzlement returned by the UK agency, etc, and said that no one could deny these



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif is addressing the workers convention of PML-N at Union Council Water Works.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with the delegation of Jamaat-e-Islami at CM House.

Balochistan has suffered...

Continued from page 1

pany (PPL) over a federating unit.

Describing the attitude of federal government with Balochistan as unjustified, the Chief Minister maintained continuous and repeated contacts has not bear any positive result yet.

He said that such attitudes cause differences and misunderstandings, which is not good for the federalism as well, he maintained.

Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has stated that we had a lot of expectations with the incumbent government and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and he had also taken our stance serious.

But it is beyond understandable that why the concerned federal government institutions are not giving due importance to the orders of Prime Minister? he questioned. Justifying his fierce reaction to the federation's attitude, the Chief Minister if we give our reaction to the federation it is because that we are facing hardships. He also said that we don't make criticism with pleasure, rather we do it in compulsion.

Transporters hails govt....

Continued from page 1

Urea fertilizers besides other related matters. The ACS Home gave patient hearing to the issues of transporters and traders and assured that these would be resolved in due course of time.

He also assured that the checking procedure would also be made friendly in order to maintain honour of the transporters and general public travelling on the roads and highways.

The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister said that today's meeting has been held on directives of the Chief Minister so as to resolve the issues of transporters and traders.

He assured that the projects of construction and repair of the roads would be completed in Quetta city as soon as possible.

In addition to this, the issues of traffic would also be resolved and the Green bus service is part of the initiatives taken by the government in this regard, adding he mentioned.

The local bus owners association on the occasion announced to withdraw the call off strike regarding Green Bus service project.

stark facts.

The prime minister said during his tenure, about one million laptops were given to the youth and the PTI leadership blamed them for using the scheme as a bribe, adding that contrary to it, their initiative brought about an IT revolution in the country, enabling the youth to continue their studies, work as freelancers and earn a respectable livelihood for their families.

A number of ministers, advisers, parliamentarians, officials and beneficiaries of the loan and families attended the ceremony.

The prime minister stressed that these laptops were given purely on merit, and if proved otherwise, he would be held accountable as these resources belonged to the country.

The prime minister said that allegations, scandals, and the use of foul language were rife during the PTI's government. About 3 billion dollar loans were given to the powerful families during the PTI's government, he said, and questioned why this huge amount was not spent on the future of youth.

Toshakhana gifts for the country were sold in a shabby manner and efforts were made by Imran Niazi to protect his spouse from criminal cases.

"The worst kind of vengeance was unleashed against the opposition and the civilservants. What was the difference between Hitler and Imran Khan?" he regretted.

He observed that nations were harmed by such tactics. "It was a heart-wrenching story but now it has become a part of the past," he added.

He said that Nawaz Sharif had spent 40 years in

politics and experienced ordeals for the sake of the motherland.

Nawaz Sharif was accused of Panama papers and given punishment in Iqama charges, he said, adding that PML-N Quaid appeared before courts regularly but on the other hand, Imran Niazi was being granted bail.

The prime minister referring to the minister for finance's announcement regarding the reduction in prices of petroleum products by Rs9 and Rs7.50 per liter said that it was all possible due to appreciation in the value of the rupee against the dollar which provided them an opportunity to pass on the relief to the public.

The crude oil price in the international market was still high, he added.

The prime minister said that it was also the IMF's programme's positive aspect that brought stability to the value of the rupee.

If they had not reached the agreement, the prime minister observed the difference between the value of the rupee and the dollar could have increased leading to a further difficult economic situation. "Those people who had conspired against the country, with the grace of Allah Almighty, all their machinations have been buried and their links abroad, including a recent statement by Israel against Pakistan, all these were failed," he added.

About IMF's agreement, he said it was something of 'sweet meat', and alluded to the economic challenges. But with determination and commitment, they could stabilize the economy with revolutionary and bold steps, he stressed.



QUETTA: People are resting under the shade of a tree on the lawn of Metropolitan Corporation during extremely hot weather in the city.

Spreading derogatory & inappropriate content Urgent need for awareness among all sections of society to prevent misuse of social media platforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has emphasized the urgent need for awareness among all sections of society, particularly religious scholars, professors, journalists, lawyers, traders, political and social leaders, and institutions in an effort to prevent the misuse of social media platforms for spreading derogatory and inappropriate content.

It called upon them to play their responsible role in the campaign to curb offensive material and, in every circumstance, to utilize legal avenues to combat such content by reporting it to the relevant cyber crime authorities and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), it said.

According to details

released by the Ministry, nefarious elements have been actively using social media to launch a well-organized campaign aimed at undermining the ethics, behavior, and beliefs of our youth for several years.

The negative and harmful effects of social media on society have become a matter of great concern. While indecency itself is intolerable, the situation has escalated to the point of blasphemy, which is an extremely grave offense.

As per the Ministry's statement, highly organized campaigns on social media platforms are being conducted to spread extremely blasphemous material against the most revered figures, including Allah Almighty (God), the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), the Ahl-al-Bayt

(Prophet's family), the Mothers of the Believers, the Companions of the Prophet, the Holy Quran, and the national flag. Such offensive content is being shared through images and videos on specific applications and groups. The Cyber Crimes wing of the FIA has apprehended individuals involved in these crimes, including doctors, professors, engineers, chartered accountants, lawyers, and people from various walks of life. According to the Ministry, the report filed by the FIA Cyber Crime and the investigation conducted by the Legal Commission in the Rawalpindi Bench of the Lahore High Court revealed that more than four hundred thousand accounts in Pakistan are involved in disseminating such severe blasphemy.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters jumping and bathing in water channel of Rawal Dam to get some relief from hot weather in Federal Capital.

Unsung heroes of Religious Ministry overcome odds to deliver flawless Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): The unsung heroes of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony deserve accolades for accomplishing a remarkable and enchanting feat in successfully organizing the Hajj arrangements, despite facing personal challenges, time limitations, and inadequate support from the local Pak Hajj mission.

Under the guidance of Director Moavineen Sajjad Haider Yaldrum, a team of over 1,800 Seasonal Duty Staff (SDS), Moavineen diligently fulfilled their responsibilities in different departments such as transportation, accommodation, lost and found, wheelchair assistance, help centre, and

monitoring at the main control office in Makkah and Madinah. Additionally, the ministry ensured that the pilgrims received extensive medical support throughout their journey.

Over 50 accomplished Pakistani women, with diverse professional backgrounds, diligently supported and served Pakistani hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia as part of the contingent of Moavineen. Their efforts showcased the increasing empowerment and recognition of Pakistani women in significant roles, contributing to a stronger representation of the nation in Hajj affairs. A committed team of more than 137 doctors and paramedics provided

quality medical services to pilgrims. The Ministry staff collaborated closely with Saudi authorities and hotel establishments to allocate accommodations that effectively meet the diverse requirements and preferences of the pilgrims. Their unwavering commitment, supported by personnel from departments like the Pakistan Army, police, and high-ranking government officers, played a crucial role in providing comfort to pilgrims. Serving as Moavineen and Haram guides, they navigated the challenges of scorching heat, efficiently managing transportation, meals, and accommodation while offering comprehensive support to Pakistani pilgrims.

Strict action against smoke emitting vehicles ordered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police has intensified action against smoke emitting and pressure horns



vehicles involved in polluting the environment. Mobile squads of Islamabad capital police have been formed to implement the

campaign against the smoke-emitting vehicles. These squads patrol in various areas and important boulevards of the city and are directed to take legal action against those vehicles involved in noise and smoke pollution. Special squads had been constituted as per the directions of IGP Islamabad in order to conduct regular checking and issued fine tickets against vehicles involved in noise or other environmental pollution in the city.

He said that, following the special directions of Capital City Police Officer Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police have intensified the crackdown against vehicles causing environmental pollution and using pressure horns.

In this regard all Zonal DSPs have been directed to take stern action against

Rain likely at various parts of country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast hot and humid weather in most plain areas of the country. However, rain-wind/thundershower was expected in Kashmir, Potohar region, Northeast Punjab, and Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the synoptic situation, monsoon currents from the Bay of Bengal were penetrating the upper parts of the country.

During the last 24 hours, the weather remained hot and humid in most parts of the country. However, rain-wind/thundershowers occurred in various parts of the country.

The rainfall recorded was Punjab: Faisalabad 80 mm, Gujranwala 79, Murree 49, Okara 40, Sialkot (City 29, Airport 03), Chakwal 26, Sahiwal 16, Gujrat 08, Bahawalnagar, Lahore Airport 06, Islamabad (Saidpur 05, Golra 01), Narowal 05, Kasur 03, Layyah, Joharabad, Attock 01, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Malam Jabba, Kakul 15, Balakot 09, Kashmir: Rawalakot 60.



ISLAMABAD: A view of a banner hang on a security check post at D-Chowk attention for motorcyclists to closed gate 1st Muharram-Ul-Haram till 10th Muharram, in the Federal Capital.

Rana Tanveer says: Govt aims to bring out-of-school children in educational network

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Education has always been our priority, it is the mission of the government to bring 20 million out-of-school children into the educational network, and under the dynamic leadership of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) can play a vital role to make this mission successful," said Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the academic block of Sheikhupura Regional Campus of AIU.

Rana Tanveer Hussain briefed about the initiatives

taken for Sheikhupura by the government, he said that we had laid the foundation stone for the building of Sheikhupura Regional Campus last year and today laying stone of its academic block.

The Federal Minister for Education, Rana Tanveer Hussain directed the Vice Chancellor AIU to complete the construction work of Sheikhupura Campus in three months.

He also demanded to provide scholarships for the students of Sheikhupura. He also asked to establish an examination centre at Narang Mandi.

Vice-Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood announced that AIU will allocate 20 lacs per year as a scholarship fund for Sheikhupura and will refund the fees to students who get 80% marks.

Dr. Nasir assured Education Minister to establish an examination centre in Narang Mandi.

Director General, Pakistan Institute of Education, Dr. Shahid Soroya, Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmad Khan, Assistant Regional Director Sheikhupura, Javed Iqbal, Regional Directors of Lahore, Faisalabad, Narowal, Sialkot, Gujranwala, MNAs, educationists, and students also attended the event.

He said that, following the special directives to Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the

orders, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. Following these

Abdullah condemns Afghan border attack on Quetta Garrison

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Tehreek Jawawan Pakistan Mohammad Abdullah Hamid Gul Sunday strongly condemned the Afghan border attack on Quetta Garrison in which nine Pakistan Army soldiers and six civilians were martyred.

In a statement, he prayed that may Allah Almighty raise the ranks of the martyrs and give patience to the bereaved.

He said a militant attack on a garrison in

Balochistan, near the border of Afghanistan, caused a huge loss of life.

He said that it was decided in the Qatar Agreement that the territory of Afghanistan will not be used against any country, but the Afghan government is not fulfilling its promise.

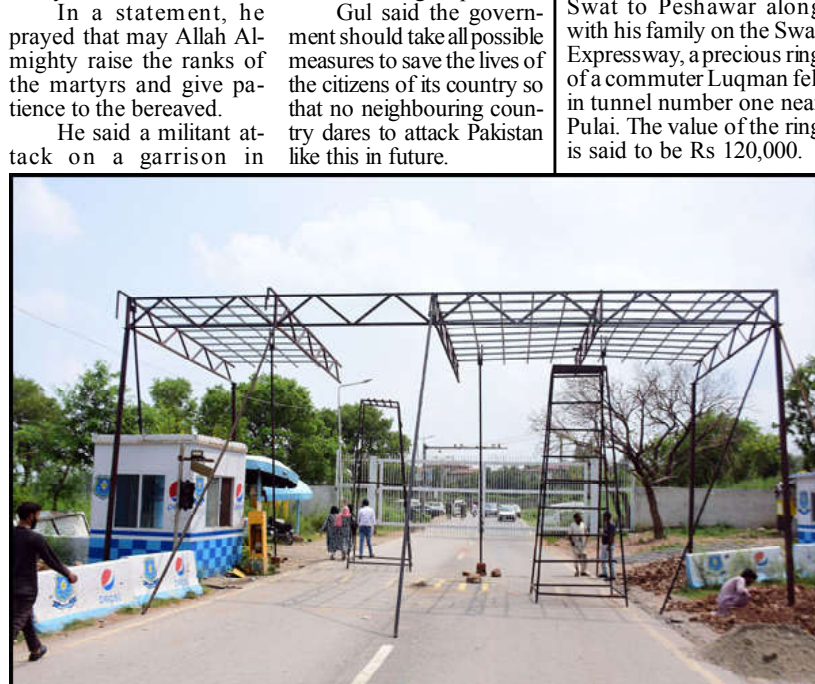
Gul said the government should take all possible measures to save the lives of the citizens of its country so that no neighbouring country dares to attack Pakistan like this in future.

NHMP traces lost diamond ring, returns to owner

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police on Sunday returned a diamond ring to its owner.

The Motorway Police found the missing diamond ring and returned it to the owner.

While traveling from Swat to Peshawar along with his family on the Swat Expressway, a precious ring of a commuter Luqman fell in tunnel number one near Pulai. The value of the ring is said to be Rs 120,000.



ISLAMABAD: A view of gate closed of entrance of Bari Imam road for traffic due to construction of security gate, in the Federal Capital.

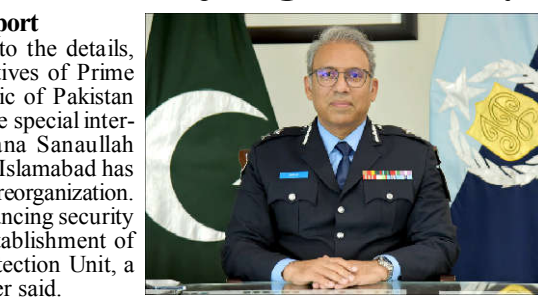
Pak first Judicial Protection Unit establish; to enhance judges security

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mian Shehbaz Sharif and the special interest of Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan, the Security Division Islamabad has undergone a comprehensive reorganization. This initiative, aimed at enhancing security measures, has led to the establishment of Pakistan's first Judicial Protection Unit, a police public relations officer said.

He said that the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has spearheaded the complete restructuring of the Security Division to fortify the security of judges' offices, court premises, and residences. The newly formed Judicial Protection Unit will operate under the vigilant supervision of the SSP Security Division.

In addition, a standard operating procedure (SOP) has been issued for security of all courts, and over 500 high-tech security cameras have been installed in court facilities. These cameras are integrated with the advanced surveillance system of the Safe City Islamabad project, enabling direct monitoring of court premises.

To further bolster the security of residences and courts, a request for the recruitment of 550 personnel has already been submitted to the Ministry of Interior. Once the necessary financial resources are allocated, the performance of this unit will further improve.



water provision in the absence of any declared tankers rates mechanism.

"It is an apathy that we regularly pay water bills to our societies but they fail to meet our water needs. Therefore, we have to buy it from tanker owners who charge us as per their desire," said Adil Mahmood, a resident of Doctor's Town.

"We fail to understand why the authorities do not gauge this situation while according to approval to the owners for developing a housing society," he said. "It is unjust that on one side they charge for routine water supply and on the other sell us water in tankers."

The tube wells installed to pump out ground-

Water scarcity - another cartel in the making

ISLAMABAD (APP): The growing population and subsequent growth of residential settlement had put the capital's natural resources under severe stress with its wetlands, cleaner environment and water resource depleting gradually.

Once known for its serene evenings, open spaces, less congested population areas and healthy lifestyle, Islamabad in recent years, has gone through several transformations from road infrastructure to taller buildings and a large number of private housing societies developed in the suburbs.

Due to the ill planning of the city masters, the Islamabad Capital Territory

water are often choked due to depleting water tables leaving the residents particularly in summer leaving at the mercy of the water tanker mafia who charge Rs 2000 to 4000 for each tanker and sometimes more if water is required urgently. Although the housing societies also provide cheaper water tankers yet they take 24 to 48 hours to reach one's residence.

"Forget about society water tankers as they will arrive when you don't need them anymore," said Irshad Ahmed, a resident of the PWD colony. "The management of these societies should seriously think about a mechanism for water supply otherwise the

MD PBM commits to fighting poverty, uplifting underprivileged in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), a national social welfare organization, led by Managing Director Amir Fida Paracha, is dedicated to combating poverty and uplifting marginalized communities in Pakistan.

The MD PBM in a statement highlighted the establishment of 46 Sweet Homes across the country, providing care for orphaned children. Additionally, PBM has set up 163 Women Empowerment Centers, promoting skill-based education for women, and 159 Child Labor Welfare Schools.

Furthermore, 18 Shelter Homes have been established, and the "Roti Sab Kay Liye" program has been introduced, which offers meals through 20 food

trucks.

The organization has successfully implemented the Orphan and Widows Support Program (OWSP) in ten districts, extending financial assistance to widows and orphans.

He appreciated the support provided to individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and the needy, through medical treatments and educational opportunities. These programs have had a positive impact on the lives of deserving citizens.

He expressed the organization's commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of its programs by fostering public-private partnerships. By engaging local and international donors, PBM has gained increased resources and efficiency.

Search, combing operation conducted at Bani Gala police stations jurisdiction

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital police, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a search and combing operation at

orders, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. Following these



Bani Gala police station jurisdiction, a Police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives to Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the

orders, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. Following these

ADHD medication abuse in schools is a 'wake-up call'

ISLAMABAD (Online): At some middle and high schools in the United States, 1 in 4 teens report they've abused prescription stimulants for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder during the year prior, a new study found. "This is the first national study to look at the nonmedical use of prescription stimulants by students in middle and high school, and we found a tremendous, wide range of misuse," said lead author Sean Esteban McCabe, director of the Center for the Study of Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking and Health at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

"In some schools there was little to no misuse of stimulants, while in other schools more than 25% of students had used

stimulants in nonmedical ways," said McCabe, who is also a professor of nursing at the University of Michigan School of Nursing. "This study is a major wake-up call."

Nonmedical uses of stimulants can include taking more than a normal dose to get high, or taking the medication with alcohol or other drugs to boost a high, prior studies have found.

Students also overuse medications or "use a pill that someone gave them due to a sense of stress around academics — they are trying to stay up late and study or finish papers," said pediatrician Dr. Deepa Camenga, associate director of pediatric programs at the Yale Program in Addiction Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut.

Emergency flood control centers being set up in AJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The State Disaster Management Authority of AJK Government, with the collaboration of local authorities, has decided to set up the District and Tehsil level emergency flood-monitoring centers in all AJK districts to effectively deal with any eventuality during the season, official sources said on Sunday.

According to the authorities of State Disaster Management the centers were fully equipped and vigilant to deal with any untoward situation following the much-predicted devastating monsoon rains.

The sources disclosed that the district-level emergency cell control room would be functional soon at the DC office in Mirpur besides similar centers being set up at all the concerned Deputy Commissioners in all 10 districts as well as tehsil HQs in AJK.

Similar emergency cells would also be set up in all sub-divisions of the districts. With the required staff, these centers would be fully alert and vigilant round the clock for bringing about immediate necessary safety steps in case of emergency in any part of the district.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in fixing tiles on footpath at Aabpara Market.

Monday July 17, 2023

Financial woes of Balochistan and tepid response of Islamabad

The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo is up against the federal government once again. The issue is identical, one and the same, financial problems being confronted by the province for long. This is evident from yet another policy statement issued by the Chief Minister Bizenjo referring the otherwise "lukewarm" attitude of the federal government right under the Premier-ship of Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif.

In his statement, the Chief Minister gave intense reaction towards the federal government's approach towards lack / non-existence of new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award.

The Chief Minister rightly pointed out that the new NFC Award is overdue for last eight years. According to him, the new NFC Award is due since 2015, but this very constitutional obligation is being violated for last eight years affecting Balochistan the most.

He said that Balochistan province is the biggest affectee of the situation than other federating units.

It's awesome when the Chief Minister noted with concern that Balochistan has so far suffered financial loss of over Rs. 300 billion due to non-existence of new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award since 2017.

He said that the approach of federation on the NFC Award is beyond comprehensible, as it is a constitutional requirement to announce new NFC Award after every five years.

At the time when there's talk of meeting constitutional requirements everywhere, then why the requirement of NFC Award is being overlooked? he questioned.

Mr. Bizenjo also referred to the financial issues being confronted by the province and mentioned that the matter of arrears of the province against Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) is also yet to be resolved.

He said that it is an unwise act and insult of the people of Balochistan to give preference to a company (PPL) over a federating unit.

Describing the attitude of federal government with Balochistan as unjustified, the Chief Minister maintained continuous and repeated contacts has not bear any positive result yet.

He said that such attitudes cause differences and misunderstandings, which is not good for the federalism as well, he maintained.

Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo was of the view that we had a lot of expectations with the incumbent government and Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and he had also taken our stance serious.

But it is beyond understandable that why the concerned federal government institutions are not giving due importance to the orders of Prime Minister? he questioned.

Justifying his fierce reaction to the federation's attitude, the Chief Minister if we give our reaction to the federation, it is because that we are facing hardships, and we do it in compulsion.

Undoubtedly, it is high time for the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif-led federal government to pay heed towards the critical financial situation of the province. needless to mention here is that the Bizenjo government had already made it clear that it would not be able to execute the much-needed development process in the province, rather it would harm the already ongoing process.

This is also high time for the federal government to pay heed towards the issue of lack of representation of the province in the federal government institutions and autonomous bodies. And last but not the least, the Prime Minister should personally look into the matter and find out why his very directives are being ignored by certain federal departments?

**Muhammad Amir Rana**

The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation were displeased with India's decision to host their 22nd summit virtually instead of in person. This decision was widely interpreted as a deliberate strategy to prevent inviting the Pakistani prime minister to Delhi and to convey a message to the US. Furthermore, it was perceived as an effort to transform the SCO into an organisation similar to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

The primary objective of establishing Saarc was to enhance economic and cultural cooperation in the South Asian region. It was agreed that the forum should not be utilised for discussing bilateral dis-

putes. However, this optimistic expectation was shattered as Saarc members blamed India and Pakistan for the failure of this initiative. With the inclusion of India and Pakistan in the SCO, a sense of hope arose that both nations would eventually normalise relations, thereby fostering mutual interdependence. The SCO's potential for collaboration in security and counterterrorism was seen as an opportunity to influence the Pakistan-India relationship positively. Unfortunately, both countries have let down the Central Asian states, Russia and China thus far.

India has been accused of using the SCO platform for political purposes. The last virtual forum, in which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeated his allegations of cross-border terrorism and the CPEC route going through the Gilgit-Baltistan region, is an example. Although there is little substance to these allegations, India keeps using this narrative as an excuse to avoid dialogue with Pakistan. However, exploiting regional forums for this purpose is not beneficial to the regional initiative and

will not favour India.

The failure of regional forums pushes states towards bilateral and multilateral engagements for co-operation. China has initiated several such initiatives, including trilateral initiatives with Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan and a quadrilateral initiative that includes Uzbekistan. These initiatives align with several objectives of the SCO. India is also seeking alternatives to regional forums, like Bimstec (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). However, alternative or parallel platforms cause distractions and waste diplomatic vigour.

In the manner of the 'Asean way' of consensus politics, regional forums are struggling to produce results. These forums still hold the potential for broader cooperation in the security, economic and political domains. As for the SCO, there is a need to develop synergy in the expectations of its member states.

For this purpose, the SCO established a public diplomacy channel headquartered in Tashkent to build trust among member

states. The centre's mandate focuses on expanding cultural and humanitarian ties between member states, facilitating mutual visits of delegations, and fostering friendly relations between civil society institutions. However, India and Pakistan are the least active members of the forum.

The cases of India and Pakistan differ. India might have political objectives in not engaging in public diplomacy at the SCO level in order to avoid enhancing its interaction with Pakistan. But India has already developed multilayered economic, defence and strategic relationships with the Central Asian states and made significant inroads into Central Asia's educational institutes, think tanks, and media. Bollywood has also helped boost India's soft image.

Pakistan's case is different, as it still carries the image of a state supporting the Afghan Taliban. It needs to correct this image and to utilise opportunities. The bureaucratic structure of the Foreign Office, political influences and the divergent priorities of security institutions make Pakistan's case com-

plex.

It is intriguing that the Foreign Office, like other ministries, is good at keeping its records updated. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a dedicated public diplomacy division to foster engagement with various entities. However, the outcomes of these efforts are limited to paperwork and are without tangible results.

The Pakistani Foreign Office has conspicuously focused on image cultivation, often overshadowing the substantive needs of the country. This skewed priority was glaringly evident when former prime minister Imran Khan criticised Pakistani diplomats for their alleged treatment of overseas Pakistanis. Instead of using the criticism as an opportunity to introspect, the diplomatic community resisted the feedback, seeing it as compromising a polished image.

The dichotomy is even more glaring when we consider the performance of Pakistani foreign missions in the economic and cultural sectors. A common perception is that these missions fall short of their

expected role in these areas. Pakistani embassies primarily concentrate on protocol-related tasks, largely overlooking their role in the host countries' academic, cultural and social activities. The conspicuous absence of Pakistani diplomats in such activities not only results in missed opportunities for enriching cross-cultural exchanges and academic dialogues but also adds to a perception of isolation.

Pakistani diplomats have shown a marked interest in connecting with local or visiting Pakistani scholars at embassies. In stark contrast, their proficiency in providing protocol to state officials and politicians is notable. This selective approach underscores a profound imbalance in their duties, favouring ceremonial procedures over substantial tasks. Pakistani diplomats have mastered the art of professional appearances. There is an urgent call for them to embrace a more comprehensive and substantive approach, moving beyond the restrictive boundaries of protocol. - Courtesy Dawn

Hiccups in SCO diplomacy**India's Reluctance to Recognize Afghan Diplomats****Asad Ali**

Afghan Taliban are struggling for global recognition. Regional and friendly states have refused to extend even de facto recognition to the Islamic rulers in Kabul. The Afghan Taliban, since taking over Kabul, have launched their efforts to change diplomats across the world, which were appointed by previous Ashraf Ghani government. However, few countries such as Pakistan, China and Iran have allowed new Afghan diplomats to take over their embassies and resume diplomatic duties. However, last month, Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed Qadir Shah as Chief Envoy of Afghanistan in its mission at New Delhi. Likewise, former

president Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani's era appointed ambassador Farid Mamundzay with the tacit approval of Indian Ministry of External Affairs has been resisting Shah's appointment.

It is true that Ghani government had strong strategic ties with Indian government. Ghani government provided Indian government with strategic space in order to accomplish political, economic and strategic objectives. The reluctance of Indian government to accept Taliban's nominee to run Afghan embassy is demonstration of that bonding. Indian foreign ministry has not accepted Qadir Shah's credentials as ambassador so far. Thus Afghanistan embassy at New Delhi is still showing Ghani era tricolor flag and a portrait of Ashraf Ghani still hanging against the embassy's wall. Likewise, Indian government has allowed Afghan embassy in Delhi to function as an extension of previous government on the same pattern as it did during Taliban's last stint in power between 1996 and 2001 - the embassy then continued to represent government of former

president Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Despite the change in who holds power in Kabul, Farid Mamundzay says embassy still follows the rules and policies of the old government that appointed him. He added that we are still representing the former republic, our former democracy. We are not taking orders from Taliban.

Since the last 10 months they took power, Afghan Taliban sent ambassadors to a number of countries including Russia, Pakistan, China, Turkmenistan and Iran. However, Indian MEA has so far not allowed Emiratis (Taliban) flag to be raised at Afghanistan's embassy at New Delhi. All these events suggest that while India does not recognize Taliban government but contrary to that it set up a technical mission in Kabul.

India is following wait and watch policy towards Afghanistan. They are assessing the activities and governance of Afghan Taliban. At the same time Indian security establishment has been pursuing the policy of engaging anti-Taliban factions such as Northern Alliance and

Northern Resistance Front (NRF). Likewise, New Delhi has been maintaining its anti-Taliban nexus with Younas Qanoni and with others who have been anathema to Taliban. Reportedly, on 15 June 23, NRF and ex Jihadis delegation headed by Younas Qanoni have left Turkey for India. Their meetings with Indian officials are reported to be held.

Such non-recognition makes it abundantly clear that India is still standing with Ashraf Ghani's regime and its remnants. Sequel to above episode in which Taliban appointed envoy is not recognized - 'question' arises with regard to presence of 'Technical Staff' (with diplomatic status) of India stationed at Indian Embassy at Kabul. The episode clearly shows that India has double standards towards Afghanistan which is the best example of, "Bagal Main Churi, Muh Main Ram Ram".

On one hand India propagates that it is building better relations with Afghanistan and on the other hand, it has rejected new Afghan Ambassador and also reorganizing NRF through Younas Qanoni, which may deteriorate se-

curity situation across the country.

Similarly, there are a number of corruption allegations against Ghani era ambassador Farid Mamundzay and other diplomatic staff currently stationed in Afghan embassy at New Delhi. On 14 December 2022, an Indian named Vivek Dixit, a head of an Indian company in a letter to Indian PM stated to have been cheated/ made to suffer a loss of INR 22,500,000/ by Afghan ambassador in Delhi in various activities like government quotas, award of residential building on lease for commercial purposes and Afghan Culture Center including lease of two properties of embassy & an empty lot identified as Chaman. He has not been given the possession the same.

Likewise, Shams Rahman Qarizada, a representative of India based Afghans voiced concerns over widespread corruption/ malpractices at the embassy like case of transportation of wheat provided by India for the people of Afghanistan, passport validity extension requests by Afghans, collecting of aid from Indian

government for Afghan people.

In a document seen by ToloNews an Afghan national complained that he had paid \$5,000 to the employees of the embassy to help him receive an urgent visa which he hasn't yet received.

India is following wait and watch policy. Afghanistan was a loose alliance between the democratic government in Kabul, West and other democracies like India. But the world is likely to see Pakistan, Russia, Iran and China coming together to play the next chapter of the Great Game. Some in India see this as a loss for Delhi and a big win for Pakistan.

Likewise, few people in power corridors of India optimistic that the Pakistan-led Taliban has never recognised the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, creating discomfort for Islamabad.

India's best option at the moment seems to keep a channel of communication open with the Taliban. But it will be an uneasy relationship, considering the history between the Taliban and Delhi. — The writer is Islamabad based regular contributor

A fine balance**Muna Khan**

When people hear I teach journalism, I'm often asked what I think about the media coverage of X issue or how I would cover X issue if I was a journalist. The questions usually reflect the person's frustration with the media. Last week, I was asked how I would cover Democratic candidate Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Jr's presidential bid. Kennedy is widely accused of spreading "lies" — I use quotes because I don't think it's always possible to prove someone is willfully lying.

Should media organisations give their platform to someone who, according to the Centre for Counting Digital Hate named RFK as the second most prolific poster of anti-vaccine information online? There is a lot of focus on Kennedy's views on vaccines and he is routinely described as an anti-vaxxer, though he claims he is asking for more studies on vaccines.

I understand the dilemma with Kennedy. He is, after all, American royalty with that surname. I doubt he'd garner the kind of attention if he was someone else. Kennedy's views are controversial: he is against big pharma, blames 5G for a host of ailments, says Wi-Fi causes "leaky brain", HIV may not cause AIDS, suggests links between antidepressants and the rise in mass school shootings, and claims chemicals in water may cause children to become transgender. These are some of the wilder theories he has spoken about — but it's

important to say they are finding resonance across the political divide.

Kennedy has the support of venture capitalists, tech bros in Silicon Valley — including the former and present owners of Twitter — and has earned Donald Trump's praise too. Although he pitches himself as an outsider — who is routinely censored for his views — he has received immense media coverage with profiles in all leading publications. He has appeared on nearly all the highly watched podcasts, save Sam Harris' who said he won't give him the platform to air his misinformation. It was Harris' podcast that had my lunchmate posing the question on what I would do as a journalist.

I think the important distinction to make here is that Harris and the other podcast bros are not journalists. This doesn't diminish their power to engage with their guests, or ask difficult questions, or influence voters, but they're not following the same rules as journalists. Journalists do their due diligence and ask tough questions, with the goal being to inform the public, not think about their own ratings or brand. I know this is hard to believe, given how polarised the media and society is, even in Pakistan, but the trust deficit has been caused because journalists veered from these guidelines. They can bring audiences back by ensuring fair and balanced coverage of leaders and fighting attempts to censor them as that is a huge disservice to the public's right to information.

Labelling Kennedy a loon or dangerous or both only shows the media has learned nothing from covering Trump — who, if you remember, was ridiculed from the day he announced his candidacy. There is a way to report on RFK without amplifying him and always adding

context and data to let readers make their own decisions.

RFK cannot be ignored, but should he get the oxygen the media feels it needs to get ratings? Because that is essentially what this comes down to: profitability vs public interest. Media outlets look at elections through the lens of a horse race, ie, who will win. Except that in their coverage of a candidate, they end up creating an electable. RFK garners more attention than the other contender, Marianne Williamson, who was once described as Oprah's spiritual adviser. Why isn't every move of hers given the same space?

I see the appeal in RFK because he's saying things others do not: anti-corporate, anti-elite capture in the political system, antiwar, anti-CIA, whom he blames for the murder of his father and uncle. He does not have answers to the kind of policies he'll create, and lacks support from his party, and many of his family members, including siblings, have endorsed Joe Biden. Much of the RFK amplification machine is coming from the right-wing media that wants an election between Trump and RFK. The media shouldn't fall into this trap. There is a way to report on people without amplifying or ignoring them.

De-platforming and/or censorship does not work.

It was embarrassing to watch TV channels in Pakistan blur out the PTI leader's face in his meeting with the IMF delegation. What is the purpose of this ridiculous ban? Why are audiences treated with such little regard? I have full faith in the media's ability to do its job of reporting fairly on all leaders and debunking their nonsense. Let them do their jobs, please. -- Courtesy Dawn

Abolish the CDA**Danyal Adam Khan**

With the approval of three new sectors in Islamabad worth Rs30 billion, certain residents of the city can brace themselves for a new round of evictions and demolitions in the name of progress. Although this will — and should — spark legitimate resistance and a renewed conversation about the city's master plan, we can also use this opportunity to ask ourselves a more fundamental question: why does the CDA even exist?

If you happened to be a dictator in the 1960s, it would have been one of your lesser crimes if you looked over undulating green hills and thought, "I probably need an authority to raze these and build a capital". Nearly 56 years later, though, it is ludicrous to leave the governance of the capital city in the world's fifth-most populous country to a non-representative bureaucratic institution.

Islamabad is not the sleepy town it was even one decade ago, and requires some serious urban planning if it is to avoid the congested fate of our other megacities. It requires an intra-city mass transit system, entire sectors dedicated to low-cost housing, mixed-use development, an equitable expansion of its water network, a functioning waste management system, and so on. The idealistic list of possibilities is endless. But these are not decisions that can be made without incorporating the will of the city's residents

and, as an unelected institution, the CDA simply does not have that mandate.

By no means does this imply that every decision the CDA has ever made is flawed or, on the contrary, that the opposite will be true for an elected local government. It only means that the mechanism for reaching such decisions must contain a certain level of accountability towards the people on whose behalf they are being made. In other words, the prerequisite is to have a system which enables representation.

The CDA is essentially no different to any other housing society, except their playing field is all of Islamabad — or at least those parts where it can use bureaucratic muscle to evict, rather than, say, cantonment areas. They see land — not the people who happen to live on it — and feel irked by the wasted potential of 'undeveloped' sectors which could be lucrative plots. This is the CDA's bread and butter. It was never meant to govern the city, only to 'develop' it, and has been doing so in its own way. When looked at in this context, it seems obvious that the CDA is not a substitute for local government.

But what would abolishing this white elephant look like in practice? At the most, it would entail dismantling the entire institution. At the least, it would mean breaking its monopoly by placing it under the control of the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad, ie, the capital's body of elected representatives. This would include legislative and constitutional amendments to guarantee election cycles and security of tenure — providing a legal and political foundation for local gov-

ernment. It would include administrative devolution, such as transferring the CDA's nearly 20,000 staff to the MCI's payroll.

Most importantly, this would entail a fiscal rearrangement. The idea that the primary source of income for a city is to sell its own land has to be revisited. Any revenue currently collected by the CDA or the ICT administration can be redirected to the public chequer, that is, MCI — and bolstered by a comprehensive taxation system, which includes sources that are common to cities worldwide, such as property tax. At present, the CDA has a Rs150bn bud-get for the in-coming financial year over which no control can be exerted by the residents of Islamabad.

This proposed arrangement is very much the opposite of what CDA has maintained with the MCI. Since the latter's inception in 2015, the bureaucratic resistance put up by the CDA against the fledgling and ineffective MCI has been fierce. Within the first mayoral term, any powers it had been vested with were stripped away and returned, leaving the MCI entirely dependent on the CDA for finances, rather than the other way around.

Such a relationship cannot be changed by a tweak to the system, but only through a fundamental shift towards prioritising citizens over profits. With Islamabad as its birthright, the CDA has become very comfortable wielding power that should not belong to it. The fact that a democratic institution can be held hostage by unelected officials is not new to Pakistan, but it does seem to plague the system ranging from local governments to the top of the pyramid. -- Courtesy Dawn

PML-N saves country from default: Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam here Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League-N President and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have saved the country from default after a successful agreement with IMF besides taking bold economic and fiscal decisions for Pakistan.

Addressing a big public gathering here where ANP leader Sher Rehman

along with thousands of supporters joined PML-N, Engr Amir Muqam said that PML-N was the only party that could take the country out of all existing challenges.

He said that PML-N has strong roots in masses in all provinces and would form the next government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Engr Amir Muqam said that PTI has disappointed the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and completely failed to deliver despite its nine years long rule in the province.

He accused the PTI chief of destabilizing the country and destroying the national economy.

Amir Muqam that the entire nation had seen attacks on national institutions and defense installations during May 9 vandalism. He said that people knew that one party had made a deep conspiracy against Pakistan on May 9 by attacking state institutions while Pakistan Muslim League-N had frustrated the evil designs of the attackers. Amir Muqam

said that PTI's chief politics was irrelevant now and PTI has been shattered in groups due to the negative politics of Niazi.

He said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had brought the country back on track of development and if voted to power would change the destiny of people. Amir Muqam said that former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had restored peace, abolished load shedding and made defence of Pakistan impregnable.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with delegation of public representatives of District Mohmand.



HYDERABAD: View of the water level increasing in the Phuleli Canal while many nearby residents evacuate from their homes due to increased water level and overflowing canal water, in Hyderabad.

Ombudsman office facilitates 18 individuals in securing govt jobs

Independent Report
LAHORE: In the latest development, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab successfully interceded on public complaints to ensure that provincial government departments provide permanent jobs to 18 applicants of different districts under Rule 17-A of the Punjab Civil Servants (Appointment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1974.

While giving details, the spokesman for the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab reported on Sunday that Talha Tariq had been appointed as a junior clerk in Attock, Muhammad Ilyas of TT Singh as a gardener and Omar Daraz of Jhang as a watchman. Additionally, Amina Bibi from Vehari had been recruited as bulwari, Abrara Sadiq and Chaand Hamza Goraya had been posted as naib qasid in Faisalabad and DG Khan respectively by the education department after the involvement of the ombudsman office.

Furthermore, the

health department recruited Muhammad Waqas Bashir of Jaranwala as a ward boy, Rawalpindi's Sultan Muhammad as a sentry patrol and Muhammad Hamad Ali of TT Singh as a junior clerk in BPS-11.

Similarly, the Superintending Engineer of the Lower Chenab Canal East Circle Sheikhupura provided Asif Ali with the position of a junior clerk after the ombudsman office interceded to protect the legal right of the applicant, the spokesman added.

The spokesman further stated that the office of deputy commissioner Bhakkar recruited Safdar Abbas and Muhammad Shakil as junior clerks in grade 11 with the revenue department. In addition, Tauqeer Ahmad from Vehari had been employed as a constable in grade-7 by the police department and Muhammad Sajid from Multan had been selected as a naib qasid by the irrigation department, the spokesman said.

One killed, 5 injured during firing in marriage ceremony

FAISALABAD (APP): One person was killed while five others sustained serious injuries due to firing during a marriage function in the area of Satiana police station.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that guests of groom and bride sides indulged firstly in exchange of harsh words and then in blunt firing on each other in Chak No.278-GB over some marriage related issues.

As a result, 33-year-old Muhabbat Ali received serious injuries and died on the spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted five others to hospital after providing them first aid.

Among the injured included 55-year-old Muhammad Lal, 60-year-old Fateh Bibi, 45-year-old Akram, 70-year-old Akbar and 50-year-old Muhammad Ali.

Two notorious bike snatcher gangs busted, 12 arrested

RAJANPUR (APP): Police have busted two notorious motorcycle snatcher gangs and arrested 12 criminals of these gangs besides recovering looted valuables worth over Rs two million during a special crackdown launched on Sunday.

This was disclosed by Station House Officer (SHO) Muhammadpur Dewan police station, Akhtar Khan while holding a press conference at his office.

He said that under the directions of the District Police Officer (DPO) Capt (ret'd) Dost Muhammad, a special team was formed to launch a comprehensive crackdown against criminals involved in depriving citizens of motorcycles and other valuables in the district.

The police team busted Kamran alias Kami Waja gang and Ayaaz Raan gang and arrested 12 criminals of these gangs including the ring leaders.

32 dead, 1202 injured in 1105 crashes in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 32 persons were killed and 1,202 injured in 1,105 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 500 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals, said a spokesperson for Rescue-1122 here on Sunday.

He said that 549 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 133 pedestrians, and 457 passengers were among the victims of road crashes, adding that 199 crashes were reported in Lahore which affected 224 persons placing the provincial capital.

Abbasi inaugurates development projects in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Javed Abbasi Sunday inaugurated a series of completed development projects worth millions of rupees across various areas, including Batangi, Ser Sharqi and Ser Gharbi in Abbottabad.

The projects encompassed significant initiatives such as the expansion of the electricity supply and the construction of roads, demonstrating the government's commitment to progress and growth.

Addressing the public gathering after the inauguration of the projects the federal minister stressed the utmost importance of maintaining quality and transparency in all ongoing development ventures.

He underscored the significance of timely project completion to ensure that the public can promptly benefit from the improvements. Murtaza Javed Abbasi emphasized the essential role of the youth in propelling Pakistan towards a brighter future.

Tight security to be ensured during Muharram: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Higher Education/Chairman Standing Cabinet Committee for Law & Order Punjab Manzoor Qadir said that tight security arrangements would be ensured during Muharram-ul-Haram to foil all nefarious designs of the miscreants.

Addressing a press conference at Municipal Corporation Hall here on Sunday, he said that all law enforcing departments including police have been made alert with a clear-cut

direction to keep vigil eye on movement of the suspects so that any untoward incident could be averted before its occurrence.

He said that role of religious scholars was imperative for maintaining law and orders. Therefore, he appealed the Ulema Kiram to promote religious harmony and urged the nation to forge unity among their ranks and avoid from sectarianism so that peace could be ensured in the society for greater national interest. He said that control rooms would

be made functional at provincial, divisional and district level which would remain active round the clock.

The minister said that divisional commissioner and police officers had pointed out some security related issues which would be resolved on war-footing to make the Muharram security foolproof. He said that a comprehensive strategy was devised for Muharram security which would be implemented in true spirit. This strategy would not affect trade and business activities.

Jirga succeeds in brokering peace agreement in Kurram

PESHAWAR (APP): A 30-member peace jirga succeeded in brokering a peace agreement between the two rival tribes of the tribal district Kurram on Sunday. After the signing of the one-year peace agreement, the personnel of security forces and police were deployed after clearing the fronts of the parties and normalcy began

to be restored. Talking to APP, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Kurram, Muazzam Khan Bangash said that a 30-member peace jirga comprising Sunni and Shia elders from Orakzai, Hangu and Kohat after hectic efforts of negotiations with both parties for a period of last three days succeeded in stoppage of clashes.

Climate March held

KARACHI (APP): The participants of a 'Climate March' on Sunday stressed the need for a clean environment and highlighted the importance of a clean city. The Climate March started from Frere Hall while passing through the Governor House and culminated at the Karachi Press Club. The participants carrying placards inscribed with slogans 'United against fossil fuel', raised their demand for clean and pure air in the city.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman addressing the cheque distribution ceremony of Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan.

Sector Commander FC South reviews security arrangements for Muharram

TANK (APP): Sector Commander Frontier Corps (FC) South Brigadier Suhail Bajwa here on Sunday chaired an important meeting at Captain Sikandar Shaheed FC Camp and reviewed the arrangements regarding the security plan for upcoming Muharram-ul-Haram.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Shoaib, Acting District Police Officer Tank Nasir Khan, district officers of various departments and institutions, notables and elders of the area.

The meeting was also attended by Suni religious scholars including Maulana Muhammad Saddiq Khatib, Pir Saleem Shah, Mulla Abdul Rehman, Qari Nasrullah, Hakeem Sana Khan, Maulana Gul Muhammad and Maulana Khan Muhammad. While from the Shia sect, Nazir Abbas, Gulam Khan and Nazim Ashraf, Syed

Mazhar Abass, Muhammad Aslam, Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Shahbaz Ali, Syed Hanif Shah, Fazl Hussain, Qasim Ali and Shafiqat Ali also participated in the meeting.

Speaking on this occasion, Sector Commander FC South Brigadier Suhail Bajwa said that all the law enforcement agencies would ensure fool proof security during Muharram.

He said that Pakistan Army, FC South, Police and all other law enforcement agencies and the district administration would not hesitate to make any sacrifice to maintain law and order and ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property during Muharram. The sector commander said that it was a heavy responsibility on the people and scholars belonging to all schools of thought to promote brotherhood and sectarian harmony in order to maintain peace.



KARACHI: Turkish Consul General Ali Fuad Erkurt sapping plant for who lost their lives in July 15, 2016 defeated coup attempt orchestrated by Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), to mark the seventh anniversary of the July 15 defeated coup attempt, organized by Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in Provincial Capital.

Minister asks People to apprise admin about social media's sectarian elements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister of Primary, Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Sunday asked the residents to keep an eye on those who spread religious hatred and sectarianism through social media. While speaking at a ceremony held at Ali Masjid, Satellite Town, he said that propagators of sectarianism were the enemies of Islam and asked the people to report to the FIA cyber wing and local administration about these miscreants. The minister urged the Ulema to

coordinate with the administration and strictly follow the code of conduct devised for maintaining law and order. "Islam teaches brotherhood, tolerance, fraternity, patience and by adhering to these principles, peace in the country can be achieved," he said and added that it was indispensable to follow these principles strictly during Muharram al-Haram." Dr Jamal Nasir said that people belonging to different schools of thought lived in complete harmony with each other in the country.

AIOU autumn semester admissions to be started from July 15

LAHORE (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the schedule for the admissions in the autumn semester (First Phase) 2023. Official sources told APP on Sunday that the admissions for the first phase of Semester Autumn 2023 will commence from July 15, while the admissions for the second phase will start from September 1 across the country. They said that the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood has given the approval to establish facilitation centres.



HYDERABAD: Naib Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Feroz Ahmed Paracha addressing during a ceremony title "Election Convention" at local hall.

Affordable houses for all: still a distant dream for people of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Besides climate change, shabby economy and population bulge, Pakistan was also confronted to the monster challenge of providing affordable housing facility to all its citizens.

As the country's population has crossed the psychological barrier of 240 million mark in May this year, which means that about 10 million housing units including 2.5 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be required by 2040.

"Affordable housing was the fundamental right of all citizens of Pakistan where rapid population growth, migration from rural to urban areas, high

construction and land cost factors have largely contributed to houses backlog," said Professor Dr Z.A. Malik, former Chairman, Economic Department, University of Pakistan while talking to APP. He said the current demand for new housing units is growing at the rate of 600,000 houses per year and if we add 0.5 million more houses, then 1.1 million units per year will be required to clear the existing backlog of 10 million houses in the next 17 years. He said that the housing gap in Punjab was estimated at 2.3 million units in 2017 and was expected to skyrocket to 11.3 million units by 2047.

He said that half of all urban households were overcrowded or lived in informal settlements with inadequate access to basic infrastructure, civic facilities and services while formal housing was almost out of reach of the people.

Dr Malik said the rapid urbanization of the agricultural land turned the fertile land into unplanned towns and societies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, Swat, Kohat, DI Khan and Nowshera.

He said that the housing problems would further aggravate in Peshawar where the urban population had reached

1.970 million and was estimated that it would reach up to 2.80 million by 2030, that would eat up more agricultural land.

As a result of the shortage of housing units, the price of a five marla house in Peshawar has crossed Rs20 million and the rent to Rs 40,000 that was beyond the purchasing capacity of a common man and low paid employees.

Ikhair Wali, spokesman of PML-N told APP that PTI government has made tall claims to construct 5 million houses but failed to complete its promises.

He said poor housing policies of PTI rulers increased housing problem

and property prices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Muhammad Waqas Anjum, Assistant Director, Provincial Housing Authority (PHA), told APP that under Naya Pakistan Housing Program, a survey regarding shortfall of houses was conducted revealing that five million houses of five marla were required in Pakistan including 7,50,000 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that 2,62,500 kanal land was needed for the construction of these five marla housing units. Peshawar is facing a shortfall of 104, 897 houses while 58,309 houses are required in Mardan, 65,749 in Swat.



HYDERABAD: demonstration is being held in favor of the demands of the Jai Sindh movement.

PM directs to establish one window facilitation centers to resolve exporters' problems

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed to establish one window operation facilitation centers to resolve exporters' problems. He gave these instructions, while talking to a delegation of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries and parliamentarians from the city of Iqbal, which called on him in the leadership of Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Sialkot on Sunday.

regard. He also ordered the Sialkot district administration to ensure construction, maintenance and restoration of national highways. The delegation commended the Prime Minister for final approval of IMF agreement and economic revival in the country. Shehbaz Sharif thanked members of the delegation for supporting him in taking tough decisions in the best interest of the country. Prime Minister's Advisor Ahad Khan Cheema, Special Assistants

Jahanzeb Khan, Tariq Bajwa, Rana Shamim Ahmed Khan, Nelson Azeem, Arshad Warraich, Rana Liaqat, Arif Iqbal, Rana Afzaal, Rana Abdul Sattar, Chaudhry Ikram, Manshaullah Butt, Mrs. Shehzad Gulnaz, Zeeshan Rafiq, Muhammad Rafiq Mughal, Khawaja Maqsood Akhtar were among those, who called on the Prime Minister. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Wahab Jahangir, Amir Majeed Sheikh, Dr. Mariyam Noman, Arshad Butt, Sohail Barlas and

Sarfraz Bhatti represented the business community of Sialkot. APP add: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday directed the formulation of a policy for the establishment of one-window facilitation centers for resolving issues of exporters. He was talking to a delegation comprising members of Parliament and office bearers of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here. The delegation paid tribute to the prime minister on the final approval of the agreement with the International.



A delegation of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Sialkot. Minister of Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif was also present.



FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan offering 'dua' after inaugurating sui gas supply at Chak No. 4 JB Ram Diwali.

Measures needed for industry to put economy on track: Faheem Saigol

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF), Faheem Rehman Saigol stressing the need for putting the economy on a sustainable growth trajectory by providing incentives to the industry, has lamented that the economy was facing multiple challenges of falling exports, high inflation, and low growth, with fiscal accounts under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments.

In a statement on Sunday, the PIAF Chairman said that the low growth shows the government was finding it

difficult to achieve the industrial growth and export target, leading to more pressure on foreign exchange reserves of the country. He asked the government to address the underlying structural vulnerabilities through smooth energy supply at competitive rates, as country's overall export proceeds continued to shrink.

Faheem Rehman Saigol said that the government has increased the gas and electricity tariffs and, at the same time, also the subsidy has been phased out, which will further increase the cost of production.

Ifthikhar Malik says: Need stressed to unlock potential of regional economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry's former President Ifthikhar Ali Malik on Sunday stressed the urgent need of unlocking the potential of regional economic cooperation and integration to boost trade among SAARC member countries, especially with Afghanistan at this critical juncture.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Muslim

Khan Buner, he said inter-regional trade in South Asia is less than one-third of its potential which indicates 67 percent of trade is not being fully exploited, said. News release. He said the role of Afghanistan as a connector and as a land bridge between Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia needs to be reviewed in the prevailing scenario to primarily focus on the promotion of trade and investment.

Recent increase in power tariff not acceptable: Shahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that recent increase in power tariff was condemnable and unacceptable.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he clarified that the public and businesses already reeling under unprecedented inflation and other problems cannot afford the new price of electricity.

Shahid Rasheed said that the decision to revise the power tariff will open

floodgates for inflation in the country, because of which poverty and unemployment will increase.

Instead of making electricity more expensive, theft should be controlled, private power plants should not be given massive profits, and the facility of free electricity should be withdrawn from the privileged classes, he added.

The business leader said that per unit price of electricity has been increased by 4 rupees and 96 paise.



LAHORE: Women are busy is buying second-hand hand carry bags at Sunday weekly bazaar in Shadman area in Provincial Capital.

PCMEA for containing dollar rate

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) has urged the government to take appropriate steps to contain dollar rate against rupee so that export deals could not affect due to fluctuations in the dollar rate.

PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, central leader Abdul Latif Malik, Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejazur Rehman and other senior members told media here Sunday that exporters were reluctant to do foreign business deals due to uncertainty of the dollar, therefore government should focus on stabilizing the foreign exchange reserves by bringing in foreign exchange through exports and remittances to give a direction to the faltering economy. Dollar fluctuations were creating difficulties in importing raw materials and signing the contract with the foreign buyers, they added.

PCMEA office-bearers said that policy makers should also consult the stakeholders and take a unanimous decision regarding the dollar, as the prevailing situation had a negative impact.

PBF for bringing agri sector under federal govt again

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has suggested that federal government should take over the agriculture sector again for its revival in a better way through recently launched Green Pakistan Initiative.

Talking to media here Sunday, the PBF Central Vice President Jahan Ara Watoo said that agriculture sector development had been slowed since its devolution to provinces under 18th Amendment as the

provinces were still looking for federal government's assistance on this count. "At province level, agriculture is still functioning as extension departments with regard to monitoring, supply, procurement, distribution and prices, and even today, agricultural policy making is the domain of regulatory bodies at the centre," she argued. Jahan Ara Watoo explained that about 48 million hectares (60 percent)



QUETTA: People buy plastic shoes from a roadside stall casual sue.

Mafia pushed sugar prices to highest point in country's history: Murtaza Mughal

LAHORE (INP): President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said that the influential sugar mafia has pushed the price of sugar to the highest level in the country's history.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he warned that if the sugar exports were not stopped, the price will exceed two hundred rupees per kg in the open market.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that allowing exports despite the decline in production is an injustice to the people which only benefits the sugar mafia.

Sugar will become scarce in the country before the next crushing season if exports continue at this pace, he warned. He informed that now

sugar was fetching 150 to 160 rupees per kg in different parts of the country, and its price was continuously increasing.

The business leader said that if the export of sugar was not immediately banned, it will exceed two hundred rupees per kg, which will be unaffordable for the majority.

He said that the people's interests have been put aside to benefit the sugar mafia, and they have been allowed to export the commodity while sugar smuggling was also on the rise. The price of sugar in the wholesale market has increased by Rs19 in twenty days, but the authorities were not paying attention to this, which was encouraging hoarders.



KARACHI: A large numbers of people are busy is buying birds in birds market at Liaqatabad area, in the Provincial Capital.

Green Pak initiative to enhance food security, bolster agro-productivity

LAHORE (APP): Experts believe that the coalition government's 'Green Pakistan' initiative will revive country's agricultural economy and help pave the way for prosperity and progress in the country. The government authorities, on the other hand, say that the initiative would enhance food security, increase exports and reduce agriculture-related imports. In this connection, the government last week established a Land Information and Management System Centre of Excellence (LIMS-CoE) to enhance modern farming on over 9 million hectares of uncultivated farmlands,

with Saudi Arabia providing an initial investment of \$500 million to improve the country's irrigation system.

The Centre will work in collaboration with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and China on various agricultural projects to enhance Pakistan's exports. Agriculture contributes more than 23 percent to Pakistan's GDP and employs 37.4 per cent of the labour force, but productivity is currently below par, with decreasing cultivation area, a population-production gap, and agricultural imports amounting to \$10 billion annually. It is a good omen that the Gulf countries have shown

willingness to invest in the Green Pakistan initiative as their ambassadors were also briefed last week about the project, and they showed complete willingness to invest in it.

Secretary Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Muhammad Ishaq, while talking to APP, highlighted the salient features of the initiative, that will boost revival of agriculture for economic prosperity of the country. He also shed light on the landmark steps, being undertaken by the government to exploit its full potential in agriculture and other domains under the ambit of the recently launched Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). He said

around \$50 billion investment in the next five years, primarily from Gulf states, is expected under the green initiative in the agriculture sector. Giving an example, he said that earlier, as a scientific achievement, Pakistan introduced 20 new high-yielding and disease-resistant varieties of wheat and maize.

As a result, more than 211,000 individuals applied for the improved technologies and farming management practices on nearly 367,000 hectares in the country, he said. In this connection, the United States Agency for International Development USAID had constructed 420-km irrigation canals, providing

access to irrigation water to nearly 8,000 farming households in the newly-merged districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

USAID works with the Government of Pakistan and development partners to boost private sector development, enhance agricultural productivity, and improve trade and the business-enabling environment.

In addition, to further increase farmers' and agribusinesses' incomes, USAID helps agricultural SMEs' access to financing and add value to agricultural commodities and produce, and links them to more lucrative markets. Chairman PARC Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali said that according to

the move, the government was aiming at providing conducive environment to farmers through provision of quality seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. Also, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on last Monday that the government expected investment worth billions of dollars in the next four to five years in the agriculture sector in Pakistan. He expressed these remarks during a seminar on agriculture and food security, held in Islamabad. Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Chaudhry Tariq Bashir Cheema, while talking to APP, highlighted the government's commitment to promoting the agriculture sector.

Cabinet approves Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023: Amin

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for IT and Telecom Syed Amin ul Haque has said that move to strengthen the country's cybersecurity posture; the Federal Cabinet of Pakistan has given its approval to the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023.

In a statement, the minister said that the decision comes after a thorough consultation process that involved various stakeholders, with the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT) taking the lead in formulating the CERT Rules.

According to an official statement, under section 51, read with section 49 of the Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (PECA), 2016, and in compliance with the National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP), 2021, the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT) as a designated organization of the Federal

Government to deal with Cyber Security has formulated the CERT Rules in consultation with the concerned stakeholders.

The consultation session with the government bodies and regulatory authorities was started in August 2021. Subsequently, sector regulators carried out extensive consultations with their respective private entities.

IT Minister further said that CERT Rules - 2023 provides a legislative umbrella to handle ever-emerging cyber-security risks and vulnerabilities at the National, Sectoral, and Organizational levels by laying out a working mechanism in the form of technical support, operational facilities, and capacity-building services.

"These Rules further provide a state-of-the-art proactive and integrated risk management process for identifying and prioritizing protective

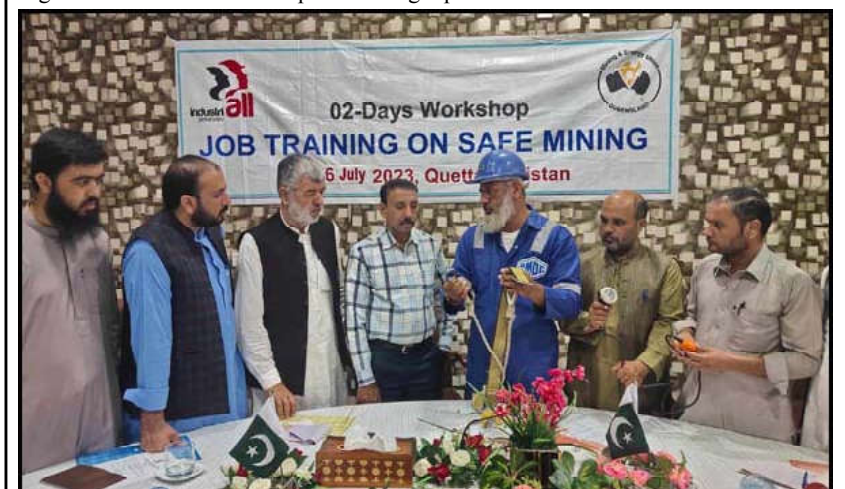
measures regarding cyber-security".

He said that a CERT council will be established as a forum for a consultative and coordinating process to advise CERTs for the effective implementation of its functions and services.

The definitions and constituencies of National CERT, Government CERT, Critical Information Infrastructure CERT, Sectoral CERT, Federal CERT, and Provincial CERT are discussed separately, he added.

The specific responsibilities, functions, and services of the National CERTs and Sectoral CERTs are also outlined in the rules.

Federal IT Minister said that as far as the impact on Cyber Security Landscape is concerned, CERTs at National and Sectoral Levels will enhance the overall cybersecurity posture and resilience at the national level.



QUETTA: Haji Yunas briefing the participants of workshop of Job Training on Safe Mining. Central Chairman Pakistan Mines Labour Federation Abdul Sattar, Industry Global Union Project Coordinator Tanveer Nazeer and others are also present.

Sugar mafia took over whole country

FAISLABAD (Online): Sugar Mafia has taken over country and created artificial scarcity of sugar and flour and prices are skyrocketing.

District administrations and price control magistrate are busy in paper work and fine on shopkeepers instead of taking action against sugar hoarding. According to Online sugar mafia heated up the markets across big market. Sugar mafia looting people with long hands.

Before Eid ul Azha sugar price was 110 pkr which is now Rs.150 and witnessing daily rise. Same like flour which was 95 to 100 pkr per kg and now flour price is Rs.140 to 150.

CEO TDAP says: Trade facilitation to Afghanistan vital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP) Muhammad Zubair Motiwala said that Pakistan always attached the highest importance to its trade facilitation for Afghanistan.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of the Imam Abu Hanifa Exhibition held Sunday in Kabul.

Motiwala shared that Pakistan was the largest trading partner of Afghanistan. In this context, he thanked the Afghan government for providing such business opportunities to Pakistani

exhibitors which will further widen the business-to-business relations between the two fraternal neighbors.

He further shared that more than 25 leading Pakistani manufacturers are participating in the exhibition, making Pakistan's largest participation in the fair.

He emphasized that traders and businessmen on both sides should benefit from the opportunities presented by this exhibition. He stated that Pakistan always supports such bold steps which could generate a conducive environment for business communities.

Putin says Russia has 'sufficient' cluster munitions for tit-for-tat

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country had enough cluster munitions to answer if Ukraine was to use the weapons, in an interview published on Sunday.

Ukraine started receiving cluster weapons from the United States, a move that sparked concerns due to the long-term risk posed to civilians by bomblets that fail to explode.

"Russia has a sufficient stockpile of various kinds of cluster munitions," Putin told a state-television journalist.

The controversial weapons can disperse up to several hundred small explosive charges, which can remain unexploded in the ground.

"If they are used

against us, we reserve ourselves the right to tit-for-tat actions," Putin said.

He added Russia had not yet used the weapons despite a "certain shortage of munitions at some point".

Human Rights Watch and Ukrainian forces have accused Russia of already using cluster munitions on the battlefield.

They are banned by numerous countries — notably in Europe — that are signatories to a 2008 Oslo Convention, to which neither Russia, the United States nor Ukraine are parties.

Humanitarian groups have strongly condemned the US decision to supply cluster munitions to Ukraine.

US President Joe Biden said the decision was

"very difficult" but stressed Ukraine needed extra ammunition to refill its depleted stocks.

The munitions, which are bombs that open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets, are seen by the U.S. as a way to get Kyiv critically needed ammunition to help bolster its offensive and push through Russian front lines. U.S. leaders debated the thorny issue for months, before President Joe Biden made the final decision last week.

Cluster bombs have long been criticized by humanitarian groups, and some U.S. allies, because those used in previous conflicts have had a high "dud rate," meaning that they often leave behind unexploded bomblets that can harm civilians long after a battle has ended.



Syrian President Bashar Assad and Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani review a military honour guard during a welcome ceremony in Damascus, Syria.

Iraqi premier in Syria for first visit in over a decade to discuss boosting cooperation

Monitoring Desk
DAMASCUS: Iraq's prime minister held talks Sunday with Syrian President Bashar Assad in Damascus during the first trip of its kind to the war-torn country since the 12-year conflict began.

The two leaders told reporters that they discussed fighting drugs, the return of Syrian refugees and the imperative of lifting Western sanctions imposed in Syria. They also talked about Israel's strikes on the war-torn country

and water shortages in the Euphrates River that cuts through both countries because of projects in Turkey.

Iraq and Syria have had close relations for years even after many Arab countries withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus and Syria's membership in the 22-member Arab League was suspended because of the crackdown on protesters in 2011.

Assad received Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, who was heading a high-

ranking delegation, at the presidential palace in Damascus. They discussed mutual relations and cooperation between the two neighboring countries among other issues, according to the office of Syria's president.

Al-Sudani's office said in a statement that talks revolved around ways of expanding cooperation in the fields of trade, economy, transportation, tourism, how to combat climate change and collaboration to fight terrorism.

India ties up with UAE to settle trade in rupees

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India has signed an agreement with the United Arab Emirates that will allow it to settle trade in rupees instead of dollars, boosting India's efforts to cut transaction costs by eliminating dollar conversions.

During a visit by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE on Saturday, the two countries also agreed to set up a real-time payment link to facilitate easier cross-border money transfers.

The two agreements will enable "seamless cross-border transactions and payments, and foster greater economic cooperation", said a statement from the Reserve Bank of India on Saturday.

India, the world's third biggest oil importer and

consumer and whose central bank last year announced a framework for settling global trade in rupees, currently pays for UAE oil in dollars.

Bilateral trade between the two countries was \$84.5 billion in the year from April 2022 to March 2023. An official with knowledge of the details of the agreement said India could make its first rupee payment for UAE oil to Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC), Reuters reported on Friday.

The Reserve Bank of India said the two central banks agreed to link India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and UAE's Instant Payment Platform (IPP).

Such arrangements, which are a growing trend in Asia, typically lower the cost of payments.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol attend a meeting, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

US envoy Kerry arrives in China to restart climate talks

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: US climate envoy John Kerry will head to China on Sunday to meet with his counterpart Xie Zhenhua and restart stalled talks between the world's two biggest emitters of planet-warming gases.

Kerry's trip to China — his third as President Joe Biden's climate emissary — follows weeks of record-setting summer heat that scientists say is being exacerbated by climate change.

Bilateral climate talks stalled last year after Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, visited self-ruled Taiwan and infuriated Beijing, which considers the island its territory.

But Kerry, a former secretary of state, has enjoyed comparatively cordial and consistent relations with China despite Wash-

ington and Beijing locking horns over Taiwan and a number of other thorny issues, including advanced semiconductor.

His trip to Beijing also comes after two other high-profile visits by US officials — first Secretary of State Antony Blinken, then Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen — aimed at stabilising US-China ties.

Kerry was scheduled to depart for China on Saturday, according to the US State Department.

The Biden administration has identified climate as an area for potential cooperation with Beijing, despite the tensions elsewhere.

The restart of US-China climate talks will come on the heels of record global, according to the World Meteorological Organisation.

Iran relaunches police patrols against veil violations

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iranian police on Sunday relaunch patrols to catch the increasing number of women leaving their hair uncovered in public in defiance of a strict dress code, state media reported.

The report comes exactly 10 months after the September 16 death in custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, triggered nationwide protests and saw morality police largely disappear from the streets, while more and more women flouted the law.

Amini, an Iranian-Kurd, had been arrested by morality police for allegedly violating the dress code, which requires women to cover their head and neck in public.

Xi Jinping calls for 'solid' security barrier around China's internet

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said China must build a "solid" security barrier around its internet under the supervision of the ruling Communist Party, in his latest call to safeguard online data and information.

China must persist in managing, operating and ensuring access to the internet in accordance with the law, Xi said in instructions delivered to officials attending a two-day cybersecurity meeting in Beijing that ended on Saturday.

"We must adhere to the Party's management of

US remains concerned N.Korea will conduct another missile test

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Sunday the Biden administration remains concerned that North Korea will move forward with another intercontinental ballistic missile test.

"I have been concerned for some time that North Korea would conduct what would be its seventh nuclear test," Sullivan said during an interview with CBS's Face the Nation. "I don't see any immediate indications that's going to happen, but it would not come as a surprise if North Korea moves forward with another test."

China, Russia to start joint air and sea drill in Sea of Japan

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: A Chinese naval flotilla set off on Sunday to join Russian naval and air forces in the Sea of Japan in an exercise aimed at "safeguarding the security of strategic waterways", according to China's defence ministry.

Codenamed "Northern Interaction-2023", the drill marks enhanced military cooperation between China and Russia since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and is taking place as Beijing continues to rebuff U.S. calls to resume military communication.

The Chinese flotilla comprised of five warships and four ship-borne helicopters, left the eastern port of Qingdao and will rendezvous with Russian forces in a "predetermined area", the ministry said on its official WeChat account on Sunday.

On Saturday, the ministry said Russian naval and air forces would participate

US, South Korea, Japan hold missile defence drill after North's ICBM launch

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: The U.S., South Korea and Japan held a joint naval missile defence exercise on Sunday to counter North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats, the South's navy said, days after the North launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). North Korea fired its latest Hwasong-18 missile, which Pyongyang describes as the core of its nuclear strike force, off the east coast on Wednesday in what it said was a "strong practical warning" to the adversaries.

Sunday's trilateral drill was conducted in international waters between South Korea and Japan, bringing together destroyers equipped with Aegis radar systems from the three countries, the navy said. Washington and its Asian allies have been working to improve their information-sharing system on North Korea's missiles. South Korea and Japan are

independently linked to U.S. radar systems but not to each other's.

The exercise aimed at mastering the allies' response to a North Korean ballistic missile launch with a scenario featuring a virtual target, the military said.

"We will effectively respond to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats with our military's strong response system and the trilateral cooperation," a South Korean Navy officer said. The North's ICBM launch was denounced by the U.S., South Korea and Japan, though Pyongyang has rejected the condemnation, saying it was an exercise of its right to self-defence. The latest launch followed heated complaints from North Korea in recent days, accusing American spy planes of flying over its exclusive economic zone waters, condemning a recent visit to South Korea by an U.S. nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine.

Paris bans protest against police violence

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: A Paris court on Saturday banned a protest against police violence in the capital as tensions persist following riots earlier this month over the police killing of a teenager.

Authorities have attempted to clamp down on demonstrations to avoid further chaos after the week of riots saw massive destruction to public and private property.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin had announced the ban on Wednesday of any protest "directly linked to the riots" that followed the shooting of 17-year-old Nahel during a traffic stop.

A video of a police officer shooting the teen at point-blank range went viral, fuelling old tensions over police brutality and racism in the country. An administrative court in Paris upheld the ban on Saturday, after a last-ditch effort by protest organisers to appeal the decision. "Given the very recent nature of the serious riots", a lack of police availability, and the risk of disturbances.

Heavy rains, flooding leave 37 dead in South Korea

Monitoring Desk
CHEONGJU: Rescuers battled on Sunday to reach people trapped in a flooded tunnel in South Korea, where at least 37 people have died and nine are missing after heavy rains caused flooding and landslides.

South Korea is at the peak of its summer monsoon season, and there has been heavy rainfall for the last four days, causing a major dam to overflow.

The interior ministry reported that 37 people were killed and another nine were missing nationwide in the

EU urged to probe Greek shipwreck killing

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Nearly a month after the sinking of an overloaded boat off the Greek coast where 700 people, including Pakistanis, were killed, a prominent global humanitarian body has called on the European Union (EU) to ensure a "full, transparent" investigation into the tragedy.

"So far, there have been no moves to launch such an investigation into the shipwreck — one of the deadliest on record in the Mediterranean Sea — despite calls to do so from NGOs and members of the European Parliament."

Japan issues heatstroke alerts as temperatures soar

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Japan issued heatstroke alerts on Sunday to tens of millions of people as near-record high temperatures scorched swathes of the country, while torrential rain pummeled other regions.

National broadcaster NHK warned viewers that the heat was at life-threatening levels, as temperatures soared to nearly 40 degrees Celsius in some places, including the capital Tokyo.

"Please stay hydrated and use air conditioners appropriately, and refrain from outings that seem difficult," a news presenter said.

Hundreds of migrants in southern Mexico form group to head toward US

Monitoring Desk
SUCHIATE: Nearly a thousand migrants that recently crossed from Guatemala into Mexico formed a group Saturday to head north together in hopes of reaching the border with the United States.

The group, made up of largely Venezuelan migrants, walked along a highway in southern Mexico, led by a Venezuelan flag with the phrase "Peace, Freedom. SOS." The men, women, children and teenagers were followed by Mexican National Guard patrols.

Migrants told The Associated Press they crossed into Mexico illegally through a river dividing the two countries. They said they decided to organize the group and start out because many had been sleeping on the street and had run out of money to buy food.

"We just want to move forward, to fulfill our American dream and work, because we're all workers here," one Venezuelan,

in the drill taking place in the Sea of Japan.

This would be the first time both Russian forces take part in the drill, state newspaper Global Times cited military observers as saying.

Gromkiy and Sovshenniy, two Russian warships taking part in the Sea of Japan drill, had earlier this month conducted separate training with the Chinese navy in Shanghai on formation movements, communication and sea rescues. Before making port at the financial hub of Shanghai, the same ships had sailed passed Taiwan and Japan, prompting both Taipei and Tokyo to monitor the Russian warships.

Days before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping declared a "no limits" partnership they said was aimed at countering the influence of the United States.



Hike in UK immigration health fee faces criticism

Hike in UK immigration health fee faces criticism

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The UK's oldest medical union Saturday hit out at government plans to increase the amount migrant workers pay to use the state health care service, to cover public-sector wage increases. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government this week approved recommendations to boost wages of teachers, doctors and police by between 5.0 to 7.0 percent, reports VOA.

Sunak ruled out tax increases or government borrowing to fund the raise but instead said hikes in the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) and visa fees

Japan issues heatstroke alerts as temperatures soar

would raise \$1.3 billion. Doctors in Unite, which represents junior doctors, general practitioners and hospital consultants, said it was "appalled" at the move, as it would see migrants pay double to use the National Health Service (NHS).

Most employees in the UK have National Insurance contributions deducted at the source on their salaries, which pays for the National Health Service, as well as state pension and unemployment schemes.

"Just like other workers, migrants contribute to NHS funding through general taxation."

Japan issues heatstroke alerts as temperatures soar

Participants in the group said that they received little aid from Mexican immigration authorities and that they were given mixed and confusing instructions about how to move forward or seek asylum in the U.S.

The formation of the latest migrant group in southern Mexico comes amid a record migratory flow to the United States from countries across Latin America. In the 12 months through May 2023, U.S. authorities reported nearly 2.5 million encounters with migrants on its southern border, an uptick from the year before. The journey is not an easy one, with migrants often targeted by kidnappings, extortion and other violence from armed groups in the region.

Pakistan seeks Chinese investment to upgrade agriculture, IT, mining, housing sectors: Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has said that Special Economic Zones (SEZs) will provide an opportunity for Chinese investments to take advantage of incentives that Pakistan offers to foreign investment with concessions.

"We are working on nine special economic zones.

The first Rashakai Special Economic Zone will be inaugurated later this month. Similarly, the other economic zones are also in the advanced stages, in Sindh, Punjab, and Baluchistan," he told APP during his recent visit to China.

Pakistan, he said, also has a great advantage in low cost of labour. As in China, many industries are experiencing high costs of produc-

tion due to increased levels of cost and are now moving to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Pakistan also has a great advantage in terms of low cost of production.

The minister said, Pakistan has a very good infrastructure and then it has the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework. So, it becomes a very attractive destination for Chinese enterprises to

relocate to these economic zones in Pakistan.

About specific Chinese companies who are looking forward to cooperating in this regard, he said, there are many Chinese companies which are coming. Many have invested in Gwadar free zone.

"But, we are now really looking forward to developing our agriculture sector based on new technologies.



SIALKOT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with high achievers who received laptops under the PM Youth Scheme distribution ceremony.



KARACHI: Participants hold banners during Climate March at Frere Hall in Provincial Capital.

Religious Harmony: Pakistani leaders unite in historic interfaith press conference

LAHORE (APP): Muslim and Christian leaders, in a groundbreaking display of religious harmony, came together for a historic press conference on Sunday, where they held the holy scriptures of the Bible, Torah, Psalms, and the Quran.

This momentous event marked the first time in the nation's history that leaders from both communities gathered in unison to address the importance of respect for all four heavenly books.

The notable event took place at the University of the Central Punjab and was organized under the auspices of the International Interfaith Harmony Council and the Pakistan

Ulema Council. Among the prominent figures present was Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Ashrafi, who joined hands with the Muslim and Christian leaders to promote interfaith understanding and cooperation.

During the conference, the leaders underscored the significance of showing reverence for all heavenly religions and their sacred texts.

They emphatically stated that no individual, group, country, or organization should ever be allowed to disrespect any heavenly book, as well as the prophets and messengers associated with them.

Condemning the recent incident of Quran burning in Sweden, they also stressed that permitting the burning of Torah, Bible, or Psalms would be equally unacceptable. Gratitude was extended to those who respected the sanctity of the Torah.

In a collective appeal to the European Union and the United Nations, the leaders urged immediate attention and global legislative action to safeguard the sanctity of all heavenly religions.

Recognizing the universal message of peace, harmony, moderation, and tolerance found in Islam and all other religions, they vehemently clarified that no religion's teachings promote violence or extremism.

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15-member Pak delegation to visit China

ISLAMABAD (INP): A 15-member Pakistani delegation led by Ambassador @ Sohail Mahmood Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), would participate in a Seminar and Think Tank Forum in China, with an aim to further promote academic and people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and China.

On invitation from Fudan University, Shanghai, the Pakistani delegation including diplomats, senior academics, researchers and media persons, departed to China on Sunday for a week-long visit, said a press release issued here.

The delegation includes Prof. Dr. Engr. Attaullah Shah, Vice Chancellor, University of

Karakoram; Dr Ayesha Alam, University of Hazara; Prof. Dr Ayesha Sohail, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Amb. Babar Amin, Former Ambassador; Dost Mohammad Barrech, University of Balochistan; Dr Fouzia Hadi Ali, University of Punjab; Prof. Dr Kausar Takrim, University of Peshawar; Muhammad Ali Baig, Research Fellow, ISSI; Dr Mukesh Khatwani, University of Sindh; Shaikat Piracha, Senior Anchor, Aaj News; Dr Tahir Mumtaz Awan, COMSATS University, Islamabad; Dr Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC), ISSI; Tanveer Hashmi, Jang Group and Misbah Mukhtar, Research Associate, ISSI.

PM urges women to ramp up role in economic progress

SIALKOT (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday urged women to come forward and ramp up their vital roles in different fields of life and make contributions to the progress of the economy.

Addressing a ceremony to distribute laptops under PM's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023 at Government College Women University here, he said Rs 5 billion were allocated for projects related to the empowerment of women. "No nation can make progress if women are not made productive part of society."

He said in the past his government had spent a substantial amount on the medical education of female students and the investment in women's education would continue. He said

next month his government would complete its tenure and a caretaker government would be formed.

If people would give chance to them in the next election, our government would bring revolution in the field of education and a large number of students would be given laptops, he remarked.

He said the laptops were given as recognition of the hard work and talent of the students. The laptops were distributed on the basis of merit in the past as well, he added.

As Khadim e Aala Punjab, he said he always wanted to share the resources with other provinces as the progress and prosperity of the country depended upon shared development.

He said 100,000 laptops had already been

distributed while in the current year, another 100,000 laptops would be awarded.

The people should decide in the general elections after evaluating what had happened in the country in the last five years, he asserted.

He thanked Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for ensuring the allocation of funds for the import of laptops for students.

He said students would be given more laptops and scholarships and laboratories and research institutes would be set up in educational institutions.

Shehbaz Sharif said Muslims were left behind in different fields of education while the West moved ahead and it was time for reflection and action in the right direction.

PTI suspends membership of more party leaders

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday suspended the basic party membership of six more party leaders.

The members include Haji Shaikat Ali, Mujahid Maital, Nadia Aziz, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, Nadia Aziz and others.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) terminated the basic party membership of former defence minister Pervez Khattak for not giving satisfactory reply about inciting PTI members to leave party.

PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan issued the termination letter 'with reference to the show cause notice' served to Pervez Khattak last month.

"You [Khattak] have not provided a satisfactory reply within the given stipulated time regarding contacting party members and inciting them to leave the party," the termination notice stated.

Therefore, the notice stated, Khattak's basic membership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been terminated.

Railways minister calls on PM; briefs on reforms

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and apprised him of the progress over reforms in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and outsourcing process aimed at provision of better services at airports.

During the meeting, they also discussed the matters related to the relevant ministry.



Pak Army along with Rangers and CI Administration continue its flood relief/evacuation efforts in flood area of Bahawalnagar Chishtian and Sulemanki.

Sutlej River in medium flood at Sulemanki Headworks

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): Sutlej River has been in medium flood at Sulemanki Headworks with continuous upsurge in the river water. The water inflow and outflow in Sutlej has been 81,000 cusecs with upsurge reported at Bhikan Pattan bridge. The river water has submerged scores of residential settlements and crops.

Local administration has shifted over 5,000 people to safer places and rescued 151 people and hundreds of cattle stranded in floodwater.

Floodwater has badly affected Basti Maqsood Watto in Dona Qutab Sarho area, while a protective dyke of the river being

eroded with floodwater at Nama Jinde Kaka, local people said. However, the water level in Sutlej River going down at Ganda Singh Wala with 20,000 cusecs water flow. Local authorities have been engaged in flood rescue operation in areas adjacent to the river. "Rescue 1122 teams have shifted 4782 people to safer places and provided boat services to 12,924 individuals", Rescue sources said. "Hundreds of cattle stranded in flooded areas, have also been rescued," sources added. India had released over 2,00,000 cusecs water in Sutlej downstream in Pakistan on Tuesday after persistent rains in the catchment areas of the river.

PML-N fully prepared to contest polls: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain says PML-N has strong roots in masses and party will fully take part in upcoming elections.

Addressing an inauguration ceremony of water supply project in Sharqpur on Sunday, he said PML-N will field young candidates in elections. The Minister said there is no future for those who change political loyalties.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar inaugurating Science & Computer Lab at Darain Educational System School & College Quetta

'India can't change Kashmir's disputed status by deploying more troops'

ISLAMABAD (INP): India cannot change the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir by deploying more and more troops in the territory.

According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service on Sunday, the Modi regime has deployed personnel of a special commando unit of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the already highest militarized zone in the world.

It said India is sending CRPF's CoBRA commandos to further brutalize the people of the occupied territory. It said huge concentration of Indian troops has made IIOJK a giant open air prison for its residents but the Modi regime cannot get rid of the Kashmir dispute by deploying more troops in the territory.

The report said the world human rights organizations have already warned of genocide in the

territory as the India military has previously committed scores of massacres since 1989 in IIOJK.

It deplored that 96,213 Kashmiris had fell to Indian bullets in the past 30 years in IIOJK and Indian army and Hindutva forces carried out genocide of nearly 250,000 Muslims in Jammu region in November 1947. It said the Modi regime is trying to change the demography of IIOJK, by committing genocide of Kashmiris but would never succeed in its nefarious designs and the people of Kashmir would continue their freedom movement till completes success.

The report said the IIOJK people are engaged in peaceful political movement and the Modi government cannot subdue them through its military might, adding lasting peace and stability in the south Asian region is linked to amicable resolution of the lingering Kashmir dispute.

PM expresses grief over loss lives in tourist bus accident

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a tourist bus accident near Thalichi, at Karakoram highway on Sunday.

In a statement on Sunday, he prayed for eternal peace of the deceased and expressed condolences with their bereaved families.

The Prime Minister directed the Gilgit-Baltistan authorities for immediate relief operation and also directed relevant federal departments to assist in relief work.

Praying for speedy recovery of the injured, the Prime Minister directed authorities concerned to provide best medical facilities to them.

Govt takes tough decisions for resolving country's challenges: Hamza

LAHORE (APP): Former Punjab chief minister Hamza Shehbaz on Sunday said the incumbent government had taken tough decisions to bring the country out of challenges created by the previous incompetent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.

Talking to the media, he said anti people policies of the PTI forced the people to "commit suicides".

The PTI dragged the country into an economic quagmire due to its flawed policies, whereas the present government had been working hard for the past 15 months to address issues that have developed as a result of the PTI-led government's negligence."

He said the country's agreement with the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) has considerably prevented it from default. If the prime minister had not held negotiations with the IMF MD, the country might have defaulted, he continued. He said the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) put its politics at stake by taking tough decisions in larger national interest.

Hamza Shehbaz said that the future of the country was linked with holding general elections held on time in a free, fair and transparent manner.

He stressed the need of all political stakeholders to sit together for taking collective efforts to strengthen economy of the country, adding that political point scoring at this time may further worsen economic and overall situation.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Sohailur Rehman Baloch presiding over a meeting regarding Muharram Haram and law & order situation.

Gwadar Free Zone North to start operation in 30 days

ISLAMABAD (INP): Holding Company. "The factory's construction started last year and was completed in a remarkably short time. Agven will offer hundreds of job opportunities and provide local business opportunities in terms of commodities and raw material supply," Project Coordinator Arslan told Gwadar Pro.

Upon operation, it can potentially attract other investors to Gwadar Free Zone. Mr. Arslan added that sulfur and sulfuric acid, used as raw materials for fertilizer manufacturing, would be imported from Iran and Central Asian countries.

Another export company, "Hangeng," along with its branches "Hangeng Trade Co (SMC-PVT) Ltd" and "Yuanhua Industrial Co," is set to start operations in Gwadar Free Zone North.

Hangeng Trading Co., Ltd. will foster cultivation

and purchase of agricultural products like aloe vera and import pharmaceutical raw materials globally for processing in the Gwadar Free Zone and export to China. Yuanhua Industrial Co., Ltd. will mainly engage in animal husbandry and livestock development.

An official of Hangeng stated that the operation, expected to commence soon, will create 1,000 direct and 3,000 indirect employment opportunities for locals. Hangeng plans to build an industrial ecosystem in Gwadar, intending to establish aquaculture, medical treatment, and technical support facilities. For this, experts from China will be hired to train local youth in animal husbandry, livestock, and aloe vera cultivation.

Moreover, a free animal husbandry breeding hospital will be established to provide medical and technical services.

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QUETTA: Chairman Balochistan Aman Jirga Lala Yousaf Khilji is addressing the public gathering at Airport Road.

PPP takes big decision over Asifa Bhutto politics

KARACHI (Online): Pakistan Peoples Party has decided to launch Asifa Bhutto in political arena in upcoming election.

Sources told that Asifa Bhutto will take full part in next election.

People party has started paying attention on various constituencies of Sindh.

Sources said that Asif Zardari will take final decision about the constituency from where Asifa will take part in politics.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Balochistan Shafiqullah Lango meeting with Sardar Shahid Khan Leghari

Govt crossing all bounds of shame: Rasheed

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed expressed his strong disapproval of the current government's attitude towards loan acquisitions, accusing them of exceeding all bounds of "shame." In a scathing Twitter statement on Sunday.

Ahmed highlighted the concerning trend of celebrating loans as an achievement. He underscored that governments across the globe typically feel a sense of embarrassment when seeking loans. However, he lamented that the sitting Pakistani government seemed to be embracing this practice as a source of pride. The former federal minister's remarks shed light on his concerns regarding the country's economic

policies and decision-making. Lambasting the government, Ahmed said electricity, gas, flour and sugar had become more expensive in the 15 months of the PDM government and any efforts to bring the country's economy on track would be "futile".

Taking a jibe at Shehbaz Sharif, the seasoned politician said he took oath as the Prime Minister on the day of his indictment, got cleared himself from money laundering cases and now "committed" a Rs.70 billion money laundering in solar energy.

Ahmed said the rulers, who were only concerned about their own children, would face their [disasters] end, adding they [rulers] were unable to realize up to what extent the poor had gone into poverty.