

Independent

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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Quetta

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting.

Parliament passes Election (Amendment) Bill 2023; empowering caretaker setup

Bill approved with majority the vote; Granting caretaker government power to take decisions regarding existing bilateral or multilateral agreements, projects

ISLAMABAD (INP): Despite opposition from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), a joint session of the Parliament approved amendments to the Election Act of 2017 on Wednesday.

The move enables the caretaker government to effectively take actions and make decisions concerning current bilateral or multilateral

agreements and projects. The Elections (Amendment) Bill 2023 aims to be moved by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi.

Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar, taking the floor, clarified that no new powers are being given to the caretaker government.

He said that amendments in Section 230 are aimed to ensure that the decisions already taken by the federal cabinet do not face any hiatus.

He said that the bill was presented with consensus, saying it was a sensitive bill and things would be explained about the proposed amendment in Section

230 when the provision comes up for approval.

APP adds: The Joint sitting of Parliament on Wednesday passed much-awaited amendments in the Election (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which aimed to improve the election law and ensure smooth and transparent elections.

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BHC declares appointment of coordinators & spokespersons to CM, GoB illegal and void

No provision of Constitution or Rules provide for appointments; Directs all concerned to return office accommodation and facilities including govt. vehicles to GoB

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has declared the appointment of Coordinators and spokespersons to Chief Minister and Government of Balochistan as illegal, void and of no legal effect, and as such, restrained them from work with immediate effect.

The BHC also directed all the Coordinators and spokespersons to the Chief Minister and Government of Balochistan to immediately return the office accommodations and all the other facilities provided by the provincial government

including the vehicles, if any, to the government.

The court directed the Secretary Services and General Administration Department to submit report in the above regard to the Registrar High Court for the perusal in Chambers.

The judgment was announced by the division bench of High Court headed by Chief Justice Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan on two constitutional petitions filed against appointment of the Coordinators and spokespersons to Chief Minister and spokesperson to Government of Balochistan, here on Wednesday.

The lawyers Abdul Sadiq Khilji Advocate and Aster Mehak Advocate had filed the CPs in the High Court.

The court, in its judgment, stated that the appointment of Coordinators and spokespersons to CM and GoB by the respondent No. 1 means Chief Minister has financially burdened the province of Balochistan, which is already suffering from financial crises / deficit budget.

According to the verdict, the elected representatives of the people of Balochistan are sitting in

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Cabinet approves E-Safety, Personal Data Protection Bills 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved the E-Safety Bill 2023 (E-Safety Bill 2023) on the recommendation of the Ministry of Information Technology (IT) to protect user data and prevent illegal and illegal use of information systems.

Under this law, a comprehensive framework will be established to ensure the protection and unauthorized use of user data on all types of online services, online shopping, data provided to various companies, and social networking websites in Pakistan. After the approval of the bill, heinous crimes like online harassment, cyberbullying, and blackmail will be effectively prevented.

The meeting of the cabinet was held here with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in chair.

The federal cabinet also approved in principle the Personal Data Protection Bill 2023 on the recommendation of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication.

Under this bill, the government will ensure the security of the user's personal information/data of various organizations and companies and prohibit sharing of the user's information/data with any company, individual, or government organization without their permission.

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Governor Balochistan reaches Gwadar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar reached Gwadar city on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary, Abdul Aziz Uqaili and Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh were also accompanied with the Governor.

Upon arrival in Gwadar, the Commissioner Makran, Syed Faisal Agha, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Izzat Nazir Baloch welcomed the Governor at Gwadar Airport.

During the visit, the Governor was briefed about different development projects as well as the law and order situation in the port city.

Another electric shock to public NEPRA increases electricity price by Rs 1.88 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): NEPRA has approved increase in cost of electricity by RS 1.88 per unit for 1 month.

Additional RS 24 billion will be charged to people.

Chairman NEPRA said that why did they buy expensive electricity despite being cheap?

National wealth is being wasted despite having all resources. Who is responsible for so many destroyed towers?

Request for increase in cost of electricity by RS 1.88 for 1 month for government Discos has been heard in NEPRA under H. Farooqui. Authorities said that alternative and expensive plants were operated due to fault in transmission lines. Chairman NEPRA asked that you are getting electricity for 4 to 7 rupees, so why did you charge more?

NTDC authorities said that getting power from K2 Hydro and others is the first priority. Member NEPRA said that from 2016 to 2023, 133 towers were destroyed on the NTDC system.

All Quetta-Karachi Coaches Union announces strike from August 1

QUETTA: The All Quetta-Karachi Coaches Union has announced to observe strike from August 1, 2023.

The decision to this effect was made in a meeting of the Union held on Wednesday.

According to the spokesman of Quetta-Karachi Union, passenger coaches would not be plying on the Quetta-Karachi route from August 1 against the alleged behavior of the Coast Guard.

He charged that the transporters of Balochistan are allegedly mistreated and subjected to unfair treatment on the route, which is unwarranted.

He said that on the situation, the Union has decided not to run the coaches on the route from 1st of August. He said that the Makran transporters would also join the Karachi coaches Union on the issue of observing strike on the Karachi route.



Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili and Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh reach Gwadar

Foolproof security arrangements made for Muharramul Haram: Zia

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has stated that foolproof security arrangements have been made by the provincial government for Muharramul Haram.

The Minister Home was speaking on occasion of the visit of Quetta city ahead of the 7th Muharramul Haram procession on Wednesday.

During the visit, he visited the route of 7th Muharram procession and reviewed the security arrangements made there.

The SSP Operations Quetta, Zohaib Mohsin about the security arrangements made for the procession of 7th Muharram in the provincial metropolis.

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ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi chairing the Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy held at Naval Headquarters.

Naval Chief stresses combat readiness to thwart any aggression against country

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Wednesday emphasized on maintaining perpetual combat readiness to effectively thwart any aggression against Pakistan.

He stressed this while addressing the concluding session of Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy held at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the conference, participants assessed evolving maritime situation

in the region and discussed a range of topics related to national security, geostrategic affairs, combat readiness and discussed various service policies. Readiness for disaster relief operations amid potential flood alerts during ongoing monsoon season in the country was also reviewed.

Naval Chief Admiral Amjad Niazi also directed all naval commands to be fully ready for humanitarian assistance during the ongoing monsoon season.

PM due to arrive in Gwadar today

QUETTA: The Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is due to arrive in the port city of Gwadar today (Thursday).

The Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister Housing, Maulana Abdul Wasey, Federal Minister Communications and Postal Services, Maulana Asad Mehmood, Federal Minister Information, Ms. Maryam Aurangzaib and others are also expected to be accompanied with the Prime Minister during the Gwadar's visit.

Upon his arrival in Gwadar, the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar would welcome the Prime Minister along with other provincial higher authorities. The Prime Minister would lay foundation stone and inaugurate different development projects in Gwadar. As per the schedule, Mr. Shehbaz Sharif would also distribute cheques among the fishermen in the port city.

Economy on track of progress as default risk ebbs away: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said that the country's economy was on the course of progress as the risk of default had been averted, consequent to the efforts by the coalition parties.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Business Council here, said all the coalition parties cooperated in every decision of the government.

He said the government was keen to revive national economy through investment facilitation and business-friendly policies.

The prime minister said restoring the confidence of investors and the business community was the greatest achievement.

He said the government would miss no opportunity for economic recovery, restoration of confidence of international partners, investors and the business community.

He told the meeting that a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been established for foreign direct investment in Pakistan.



QUETTA: Chairman Balochistan Public Service Commission presenting annual report to Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali

SC rejects chairman PTI plea for stopping trial in Toshakhana criminal case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while rejecting chairman PTI plea for stopping the trial in Toshakhana criminal case has sent the matter to Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The court ordered that the counsel for the petitioner and DG Law election commission agreed that IHC should give decision after hearing both of the applications first.

Justice Yahya Afridi remarked the point related to jurisdiction in the case is basic and important. We can only request the high court. To my view we should avoid interfering in the matter at this time.

A two members bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Afridi took up the case for hearing Wednesday.

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Secy communications for early restoration of affected highways

QUETTA (APP): Federal Secretary Communications and Chairman National Highway Authority Captain Muhammad Khurram Agha directed for earlier restoration of traffic on affected portions of the roads affected by recent rains and floods in Balochistan.

He also desired to maintain close liaison with provincial and local authorities to tackle unpleasant situations in the province.

On the directive of Federal Minister for Communications Asad Mehmood, the NHA chairman has paid a detailed visit to Balochistan with the view to review the condition of motorways and national highways.

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Federal Secretary Communications and Chairman NHA Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha is giving instructions to deal with the flood situation in Balochistan.



QUETTA: SSP Quetta Captain (retd) Zohaib Mohsin briefed Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango about route of 7th Muharram procession

Bilawal, Russian FM discuss bilateral coop. in multiple sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored the need for concerted efforts to find viable solutions that would in particular, benefit developing countries, already under economic strain.

He expressed the hope that all parties involved in the BSGI would engage in constructive dialogue to revive the Initiative. In this regard, the Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's support for international efforts for restoring the deal by addressing the concerns of all sides.

The Foreign Minister informed his Russian counterpart about his discussions on BSGI with the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine and Turkey, the US Secretary of State and the EU High Representative.



QUETTA: Security officials stand high alert on route to avoid any untoward incident as security has been tightened during mourning procession of 7th Muharram-ul-Haram

Passing out parade of 38th Recruit Course held Primary purpose of the state is to protect the lives and property of masses: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): The police here on Wednesday organized a ceremony to mark the passing out parade of the 38th Basic Recruit Course.

Minister for Interior, Rana Sanaullah Khan attended the ceremony as chief guest, said a press release.

Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, senior police officers, representatives from civil society, and the newly inducted young recruits were present on the occasion. A smart contingent unit of the police force presented a guard of honor to the chief guest.

The minister said young talent from various parts of the country was serving as members of the Islamabad Police force.

He commended the inclusive recruitment process and emphasized the significance of upholding values like honesty, integrity, and service to the people as they started their duty to protect and serve the nation.

The minister pointed out that the recent recruit-

ment of 1,751 personnel in Islamabad Capital Police, the largest recruitment drive in the nation's history, included 208 women.

The selection was based on merit rather than political, linguistic, or regional affiliations, he added. "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the jawans for choosing the path of service through the police force. Your dedication and commitment to safeguarding the life, property, and honor of the citizens are commendable and praiseworthy," Rana Sana remarked.

He also shed light on the government's commitment to enhancing the welfare of the police force.

The minister said Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif's steps for approving and implementing various initiatives aimed for the welfare of Islamabad police personnel.

"The primary purpose of the state is to protect the lives and property of its citizens. The most crucial responsibility of a police official is to safeguard the lives and prop-

erty of the people, and it is a duty and a form of worship," he added.

Rana Sana stated highlighted the government's initiative for providing financial support to the police personnel's families.

The minister said that the outstanding dues of the martyrs' families, amounting to a substantial sum of Rs 1240 million, were immediately paid when PML-N led government came into power.

Additionally, Pakistan's first National Police Hospital project worth Rs 5 billion, a state-of-the-art 9-storey building, had been approved and construction on the project was already started, the minister said.

This hospital would cater to the healthcare needs of the police force and their families, he said, adding Shahada Model College had been sanctioned to ensure the best educational facilities for the children of police personnel, he added.

The minister said the government was committed to providing all possible resources to the Islamabad Police for their well-being.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan reviewing the parade during the passing out ceremony of 38th Basic Recruit Course at Police Lines.

Single-use plastic items banned in Capital from Aug 1: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday informed that a new regulation further limiting the use of single-use plastic items was going to be imposed from August 1 in the federal capital.

The minister flanked by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Syed Mujtaba Hussain while launching the first-ever National Adaptation Plan approved by the federal capital, briefed the media on banning one-

time use of plastic items. Senator Rehman said that the Ministry had taken the decision after proper consultations with the plastic bags and items manufacturing industry to circumvent any possibility of unemployment or damage to businesses.

She said, "By 2050, plastics will be more than marine life in our oceans and it has a lifetime shelf life."

The single use of plastics would be completely banned after the implementation of the revised statutory regulatory order (SRO), she added.

The Additional Secretary informed that plastic

plates, bowls, cups, glasses, stirrer and cutler and also packaging items would be completely banned in the federal capital whereas all these items had their environment friendly alternatives.

Hussain said from ban on single use plastic bags it was further extended to other items were used in routine life and was causing risk to the environment as the drains, land and air were polluted by plastics.

The legislation, he said would be imposed in Islamabad and the provinces could adopt it completely or develop their own as per their needs.

Majlis-e-Shoora assures minority rights, addresses law, order concerns in Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Majlis-e-Shoora, chaired by Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Wednesday expressed solidarity with all minority communities including Hindus reaffirming their legal rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The session held to address various issues, including concerns raised by Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party about the deteriorating law and order situation in Sindh.

The speaker apprised the joint sitting of parliament about the alarming situation in the 'Kacha' area of Sindh, where dacoits were posing a serious threat to the Hindu community.

These dacoits had targeted the community's properties and lives, causing fear and hindering their ability to practice religious rituals freely.

The senator sought the Speaker's ruling on the matter and urged the gov-

ernment to take immediate action.

In response, Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf assured the Hindu community of full support and emphasized that they should not live in fear, as it was the state's responsibility to ensure their safety and protect their rights.

MNA Kesoo Mal Kheal Das of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz echoed the sentiment, highlighting that all believers of different faiths were equal citizens of the state.

He urged the government to protect the Hindu community and take decisive action against the dacoits in the province to restore law and order.

MNA Akbar Ali Chitrali of Jamat-e-Islami reiterated that all citizens of Pakistan were equal under the Constitution stressing that any threat posed to bona fide citizens, such as the Hindu community, was a threat to the Constitution itself.



ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist pass through rain water at Ghouri Town.

WPC forms 'Alliance for Women Inclusive Electoral and Political Processes'

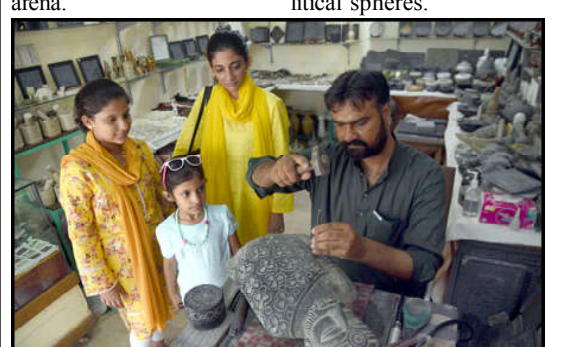
ISLAMABAD (APP):

In a landmark alliance aimed to foster a more equitable and representative political landscape by advocating for the active participation of women in decision-making and governance. With the collaborative efforts of diverse stakeholders, the Alliance endeavored to break barriers and promote women's voices and leadership in shaping the nation's future, she added.

Shahida Rahmani shared that as a testament to the Alliance's commitment to its cause, the WPC would host a 'National Dialogue on Women Inclusive Electoral Process' on 3rd August, 2023, in collaboration with UNDP and UN-Women.

She said this forum would provide a platform for experts, policymakers, activists, and citizens to deliberate on concrete measures to enhance women's involvement in electoral processes and strengthen their representation in political spheres.

Mehnaz shared that all stakeholders unanimously agreed on the critical importance of inclusive political participation for women, underscoring the need to engage young women in the political arena.



ISLAMABAD: -A skilled man is busy in finalizing the statue of the Buddha at this hut at Lok Versa in Federal Capital.

Police Education Wing organizes four-day road safety workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Islamabad Capital Police (Education Wing) organized a four-day Road Safety Workshop at COMSATS University Islamabad which emphasized the importance of observing road safety and traffic laws, not only for one's own safety but also for the safety of others.

More than 50 drivers and other staff members participated in the workshop, where they were educated about road safety and cautious driving. On this occasion, special guest SP Traffic Chaudhry Abid Hussain emphasized the importance of observing road safety and traffic laws, not only for one's own safety but also for the safety of others. He urged everyone to act responsibly while driving, follow traffic rules, and encourage others to do the same. He emphasized that being a responsible citizen means adhering to the law and avoiding negligence, which ensures our safety and the safety of others. Protecting

the lives and property of citizens is our foremost duty, he added. According to the police spokesperson, the special instructions of Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital Police organized a 4-day Road Safety Workshop at COMSATS University Islamabad, where more than 50 drivers and other staff members participated. The participants were educated about road safety, cautious driving, and other traffic laws. This initiative was carried out by the SP Traffic Chaudhry Abid Hussain emphasized the importance of observing road safety and traffic laws, not only for one's own safety but also for the safety of others. He urged everyone to act responsibly while driving, follow traffic rules, and encourage others to do the same. He emphasized that being a responsible citizen means adhering to the law and avoiding negligence, which ensures our safety and the safety of others. Protecting



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the residence of former Mayor Rawalpindi and PML-N leader Sardar Naseem to express condolences upon the demise of his mother.

"Contempt of Parliament Bill" strengthens Parliament: Qasim

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Chairman of Privileges Committee Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon on Wednesday expressed gratitude to the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairman of the Senate for the unanimous passage of the "Contempt of the Parliament" bill.

Speaking during the joint session of the Parliament, he emphasized that this legislation was a crucial step in strengthening the Parliament and upholding its supremacy.

Noon told the House that the bill would ensure the writ of Parliament. "Parliament has to be respected. The members were insulted inside and outside the House but now we will not accept insults from anyone," he said.

He stressed that it was a historic moment in the parliamentary history of the country.

The MNA said, "This bill will ensure the supremacy of the Parliament, the mother of all institutions, it will also ensure the proper functioning of the standing committees and the role of parliamentary oversight more effective."

Mian Raza Rabbani, representing Pakistan People Party, raised the issue of Pakistan International Airlines employees' salaries. He criticized the exclusion of the salary matter from the Board of Directors' meeting, considering it unjustifiable.

Rabbani called upon the federal government to take immediate notice of the situation and put pressure on the PIA management to address the salary issue.

Sedition case: Court declares Gill proclaimed offender

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has declared PTI leader Shahbaz Gill proclaimed offender in inciting rebellion against state institutions case.

The sedition case came up for hearing before district and sessions court Islamabad Wednesday.

The court has declared Shahbaz Gill proclaimed offender for his persistent absence. The proceedings for confiscation of property of Shahzad Gill has been started.

FIA and NADRA

have filed reports about properties of Shahbaz Gill in the court.

The court rejected two petitions of Shahbaz Gill during the hearing of the case.

Shahbaz Gill through petitions had requested the court to stop proceedings of case besides allowing him to mark his attendance through video link. Shahbaz Gill had filed requested the court to allow him to mark attendance through video link due to his illness.

The court rejected both of the petitions.

IHC suspends sentence of vendor

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday approved the bail of a vendor and suspended the sentence announced by a magistrate in a case pertaining to placing a stall near Faisal Mosque without a license.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri announced the verdict on the appeal of vendor Farmanullah. Petitioner's lawyer Barrister Umar Ijaz Gilani argued that his client was accused of placing a stall without receiving a license. He said that so far challan had been submitted into the case and his client was not indicted.

The lawyer said that his client was convicted as he admitted to the charges of running the stall. His client was running a stall in the parking area of Faisal Mosque to earn bread and butter for his family.

Rain, wind with thundershower expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD (Online): Rain and wind with thundershower is expected in northeast and south Punjab, Pothohar region, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan during the next twelve hours.

Heavy falls are likely to occur in northeast/south Punjab and northeast Balochistan during the forecast period. Temperature of some major cities recorded this morning: Islamabad twenty-five degree centigrade, Lahore and Karachi twenty-nine, Peshawar twenty-eight, Quetta twenty-two.

NDMA emphasises Undertaking encroachment clearance in river beds, public awareness on monsoon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Acting Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) during a NEOC session with key stakeholders on Wednesday emphasized undertaking encroachment clearance in and around river beds and conducting public awareness campaigns to maximize the general public's knowledge of risks associated with the monsoon season.

The Acting Chairman NDMA presided National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on the current monsoon situation, a news release said. He also underscored

the news to enhance vigilant monitoring of rivers and reservoirs during monsoon season. The session was attended by representatives of PMD, FCC, PDMA, SDMA, GBDMA, FFD, Provincial and Irrigation Departments, SUPARCO and PCIW. The Acting Chairman NDMA reviewed the situation of major Dams and the regulation of river flows during ongoing monsoon spells.

The PMD briefed about the heavy rainfall observed in the areas of Sindh and Punjab and the expected heavy rainfall in the Northwestern Parts of Balochistan and in the Northern parts of Punjab.

NTRC sensitizes people on road safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Transport Research Center (NTRC) on Wednesday conducted a road safety workshop to educate drivers, citizens and professionals on the fundamentals of road safety, and analyze national and global trends in fatalities.

"The primary goal of the workshop was to develop a better understanding of strategies and policies to foster a safer road environment in the country," said a press release.

The training course witnessed active participation from diverse stakeholders, reflecting a shared commitment towards adopting a road safety culture in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of WEFIXERS Organization, Islamabad visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House.

PMDC approves national medical dental curriculum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has unanimously approved the National Medical and Dental curriculum for the year 2023-24.

The decision was made in PMDC's National Medical and Dental Academic Board meeting.

The Academic Board unanimously decided to constitute committees to review all the regulations and matters referred to the board entrusted under Section 13 of the PMDC Act 2022.

Chairman HEC and President CPSP extended their full cooperation and

assistance with the PMDC Council to achieve quality medical education in Pakistan to further upgrade the standards across the world.

The Academic Board will formulate the first-ever criteria, regulations and proforma for CME/CPD which will help to reinvigorate our doctors.

The CPSP has also ensured full support to assist and share measures taken in this regard at their end. The committee will also devise CME/CPD credit hours for general and specialist medical and dental practitioners for further renewal of their PM&DC licenses.

Moderate to heavy flash flood likely in tributaries of River Kabul

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that moderate to heavy flash flood is likely in the tributaries of River Kabul besides in hill torrents of DG Khan from Thursday to Sunday.

According to daily FFC report on Wednesday, currently Rivers Indus at Chashma and Sutlej at Head Suleimankiare experiencing medium flood. Rivers Indus, Kabul and Sutlej are flowing with mild category flood (low flood) at (Tarbela, Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu & Sukkur), at (Warsak & Nowshera) and at (Ganda Singh Wala) respectively while rivers Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi are discharging normal flows. The combined live storage of major reservoirs (Tarbela, Chashma & Mangla) is 10.455 MAF i.e. 77.77% of the total value of 13.443 MAF.

Tarbela Reservoir has attained water level of 1531 feet i.e. 19 feet below against its Maximum Conservation Level (MCL) of 1550 feet whereas Mangla Reservoir is at an elevation of 1220.25 feet (21.75 feet below its MCL: 1242.00 feet).

In view of higher water levels, Tarbela Dam Management and Flood Mitigation Committee (FMC) of Mangla Dam are advised to remain vigilant and ensure filling of reservoirs as per approved SOPs and dam safety guidelines.

COMSTech, UoS sign MoU for scientific coop.

ISLAMABAD (APP): To implement joint educational and scientific programs, COMSTech and University of Sargodha (UoS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday.

The MoU was signed by the Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the Vice Chancellor of UoS, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas.

The officials of COMSTech and the university were also present in the signing ceremony. The two sides agreed to develop and implement joint educational and scientific programs in the fields of science, technology and innovation and collaborate in joint organization of international events, such as workshops, conferences, symposia, seminars, exhibi-

tions, and training courses. COMSTech will offer associate membership of COMSTech Consortium of Excellence to the University of Sargodha and the registration in the OIC technology and innovation portal. The UoS will benefit by arranging the visits of distinguished scholars to the university under COMSTech distinguished scholars program.

COMSTech will provide support in placement of students, academics and scientific personnel at the UoS along with international academic exchanges. COMSTech will develop a program in association with the university through which students from OIC states will conduct research in different fields of science, technology and innovation at UoS.



ISLAMABAD: Workers are busy in their work at the site of Khayaban-e-Margalla road, as the construction work is keep going gradually, in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Thursday July 27, 2023

Wrong move

At a time when Pakistani democracy is facing an unprecedented existential crisis, legislation to improve service delivery for ordinary citizens would have gone a long way towards demonstrating that the country's leadership is serious about turning its fortunes around. Instead, the record for the past year shows that politicians seem to be preoccupied with their own troubles and power struggles.

The Contempt of Majlis-i-Shoora (Parliament) Bill on Monday became the latest piece of legislation to clear both Houses in record time, with normal procedures bypassed to hasten its enactment.

The proposed law, which seeks to impose criminal penalties on anyone for contempting parliament or parliamentarians, has been bluntly described by experts and observers as a 'weapon' that our lawmakers wish to wield in their ongoing stand-off against the Supreme Court.

The bill proposes that anyone who wilfully refuses to comply with an order passed by parliament or any of its committees be slapped with an imprisonment sentence of up to six months, or a fine of up to Rs1m, or both.

A 'parliamentary contempt committee' comprising five members, of which three will be drawn from the Lower House and two from the Senate, is to determine if anyone is to be charged with contempt of parliament, hear the matter, and also issue a punishment if left unsatisfied.

In this, the law has been criticised, and rightfully so, for arrogating to parliament the power to act as judge, jury and executioner. Critics have pointed out that Article 66(3) of the Constitution, under which it has been proposed, directs that the matter of punishments in case of noncompliance with parliamentary directives be left to a court.

Further, the language of the law — especially how it defines contempt — is also vague and rather expansive, which makes it vulnerable to abuse. As an example, even journalists protecting their sources against a parliamentary order to name them may be charged with contempt under the law if a contempt committee so decides.

Despite all these warnings, parliament seems intent on having this bill enacted. Parliament and public representatives do deserve to be accorded due deference and respect, especially when discharging their duties. However, they cannot be handed quasi-judicial powers to enforce their writ.

Unless all members of the committee are trained legal experts as well, it is unlikely that the trials they hold will be in accordance with the universal standards of justice.

This has grave implications for constitutional rights, especially as there is a possibility of a criminal sentence at the end. The government must reconsider this move. It may tighten existing rules or legislate to ensure better compliance with parliamentary directives, but it must leave the determination and imposition of punishments to the courts.

**Zahid Hussain**

With less than three weeks left for the expiry of the current National Assembly's term, the debate over the upcoming caretaker administration is heating up. The floating of Ishaq Dar's name as interim prime minister has given an interesting twist to the paver in the run-up to the election.

Although there was no formal announcement by the PML-N, his name has been under serious consideration by the party's top leaders for the post. The proposal was not without purpose.

The finance minister, who is not only a relative but also the closest confidant of party supremo Nawaz Sharif, is considered the most trusted person to ensure that the party sails through the critical elec-

tions.

While the test balloon was soon deflated with growing voices of dissent within party ranks and a key coalition partner shooting down the proposal, the episode was a manifestation of the top PML-N leadership's desire not to take a risk with the installation of a so-called non-partisan interim set-up.

For a 'positive outcome' of the poll results, the PML-N desires a trusted person at the helm to deliver. Even if it is not Dar anymore, the plan has not been shelved.

The ruling coalition has apparently already agreed to choose a politician to head the interim administration. It will be a complete departure from the tradition of selecting a retired judge or technocrat for the position. The purpose of picking a non-politician was to ensure at least a semblance of neutrality in conducting the polls.

But the rules of the game have been completely changed by the ruling alliance in its attempt to eliminate any obstacle in the way to success in the polls.

Under the Constitution, the head of the interim administration has to be selected via consultation between the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. However, the exercise itself appears to have become irrelevant, with the PTI, the main opposition party, out of the National Assembly.

The decision is now apparently to be taken by the ruling coalition, in consultation with a token Leader of the Opposition. In fact, the composition of the caretakers may be decided by the bigwigs of the two most powerful political dynasties, who have reportedly gathered in Dubai again for a second round of talks to chart out their future political course.

It is incongruous that political decisions are not made at home and in elected forums but in other destinations and by a few powerful individuals.

In fact, the entire debate over the caretaker administration at the centre has become irrelevant with the electoral process already tainted by the ongoing political engineering, which is tantamount to pre-election rigging.

With partisan interim administrations in place in Punjab and KP, the fairness of the upcoming polls is already in doubt. Both provincial administrations are virtually an extension of the PDM administration at the centre. There is not even a modicum of fair play, with the establishment seen as resorting to its usual game of making and breaking political parties.

Placing Dar, or another of his ilk, at the head of the interim government would completely destroy the legitimacy of the polls or whatever is left of it. The plot has thickened with the ruling coalition's plan to pass new laws that would empower the caretaker government to take policy decisions.

Under the existing provision, the role of the caretakers is limited to supervising elections. The caretakers are not supposed to take policy decisions.

Even in countries where there is no provision for an interim arrangement, the power of the incumbent is restricted during the election period. Policy decisions are left to the elected representatives to take. Moving new legisla-

tion and getting it passed by a truncated parliament has raised questions about the motive behind such action.

The government says that in the existing situation, where the country is facing serious economic issues, there is a need for an empowered administration to take immediate decisions. That is certainly very strange logic and will open up a new Pandora's box.

Two months are not that long a period that policy decisions cannot wait. The move also fuels speculation about elections not being held within the stipulated timeframe.

Piggy-backing on the establishment, the ruling coalition is a partner in the game of dismantling the PTI, making a mockery of the democratic process. It now seems certain that former prime minister Imran Khan will be barred from the electoral race. But this will not help stabilise the political situation.

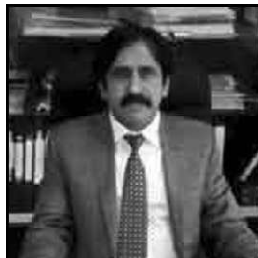
Sidelining a popular political leader never works. The ongoing repression of the PTI has already given a lifeline to Imran Khan, notwithstanding his own role in destroying the

democratic process.

We have seen this game being played several times in the past, with leaders of the main political parties being disqualified. But their political support base could never be destroyed. Both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif returned with much greater support.

Ironically, both the PPP and PML-N are now part of the same game they had fallen victim to in the past, to eliminate their opponent. Unfortunately, both parties have forgotten the lessons from their own history.

Whatever is happening will ultimately come back to haunt the political parties who have now aligned themselves completely with the security establishment. Tainted elections under a partisan caretaker administration will aggravate an already combustible situation. The country is in the midst of an existentialist crisis, with an economy in dire straits and increasingly divided state institutions; it cannot be managed by an unrepresentative government coming to power in the event of controversial elections. -- Courtesy Dawn

Caretaker conundrum**A tsunami of loans****Hassan Baig**

Pakistan is under a severe debt trap, suffering from economic stagnation, economic slack and high inflation. There seems to be no solution to the country's economic woes as the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) could not provide relief to the poor.

Pakistan is getting loans to pay back the existing loans, which is the worst strategy adopted by any country. The ever-increasing loan portfolio has added more burden on the economy, resulting in economic slowdown and negative growth. All macro-economic indicators are in a bad shape with no hope of economic recovery in the near future.

The outgoing fiscal year saw the total huge loan reach Rs58.962 trillion, an increase of over Rs11 trillion — or around Rs33 bil-

lion daily. The external debt

increased to Rs21.908 trillion mainly owing to the depreciation and devaluation of the rupee against the dollar. We have to pay back about Rs7.302 trillion in debt servicing out of the total budget outlay of Rs14.5 trillion during the current financial year. There seems to be no strategy to manage this loan burden on the government exchequer.

The skyrocketing circular debt is another headache disturbing all economic plans. The accumulated impact of circular debt is about Rs4.0 trillion. The IMF's standby agreement has already talked about circular debt management, while emphasizing the need for opening up imports, discouraging subsidies and openly spelling out conditions for no amnesty scheme in the future to manage the economy.

The average increase in circular debt is about Rs52.5 billion on a monthly basis, which is disturbing the country's economic and financial management plans. Inflation is a by-product of regular price hikes owing to multiple reasons including but not limited to circular debt resulting in an increase in elec-

tricity prices.

The IMF — while extending the \$3 billion standby agreement — has outlined Pakistan's economic challenges, which are complex in nature and need a major overhaul. The IMF has outlined a set of stipulated conditions in its country report, prohibiting currency manipulation — not to let the premium between the interbank and open market on an exchange rate go above 1.25 per cent. It also says that Pakistan will not use forex sales to prevent rupee depreciation.

The IMF has further asked the government not to extend amnesty schemes or provide subsidies for SOEs. It encourages Pakistan to focus on improving its governance structure. It has also suggested to hike interest rates to reduce or control inflation as a monetary policy tool and tax the agriculture and construction sectors.

Almost all sectors of the economy are suffering owing to the country's unmanageable debt, which has also prevented it from meeting its SDG targets; before that, Pakistan could not meet its Millennium Development Goals due to poor economic performance.

Poverty is on the rise due to the ever-increasing cost of living at a time when the rate of unemployment is increasing.

Pakistan's shrinking job market is a result of multiple factors, including low output posted by the large-scale manufacturing sector. Other areas like education, health services, agriculture, manufacturing, imports, exports, and remittances have also performed unsatisfactorily. The perennial volatile exchange rate due to falling foreign exchange reserves is another headache for the government which has to take strict measures to stabilize the currency which has now touched around Rs285 per dollar.

The situation has taken a turn for the worse, and profiteers have found this to be a perfect opportunity to profit off of people's vulnerabilities. Many unregistered online apps and lenders are on the rise with the sole purpose of looting the poor and exploiting their conditions to make money. A few weeks ago, a debtor who fell in the trap of these loan sharks died by suicide as he was not in the position to pay back the loan which grew

exponentially with comp-

ound interest.

The FIA, SECP and PTA are now trying to nab such lenders to protect borrowers from predatory online lenders, but the exercise would go in waste as the rising poverty has no end in sight. This suicide case shows the poor economic conditions owing to the rising prices of petroleum products, utilities and food.

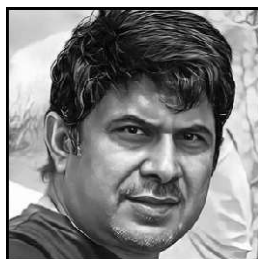
The business sector is the worst hit by the current economic slowdown, and rising prices have increased the cost of doing business. The situation can best be analyzed through the private capital outflow from Pakistan. It is quite unfortunate to see a few multinational brands closing down their businesses in Pakistan due to uncertain future prospects.

The same is the case of the temporary shutdown of auto motor companies due to restrictions placed on the imports of their spare parts urgently needed for their manufacturing units.

The lack of funds and financial resources has also resulted in the partial collapse of the healthcare system in Pakistan as we have

failed to improve health infrastructure to tackle our huge population. Government hospitals lack sufficient doctors, nurses and other staff to manage seriously ill patients. The federal government allocated only Rs24.21 billion (overall 2.95 per cent of the GDP including provincial spending) for the current financial year for the healthcare sector, which is insufficient by all means. Pakistan ranks 122nd out of 190 countries in the World Health Organization (WHO) performance report.

The education sector is equally suffering from a lack of funds and financial resources, and almost 25 million children are out of school which is worrisome for all of us. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has been allocated about Rs59 billion under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). It is unfortunate that Pakistan is spending only 2.4 per cent of the GDP on its education sector. Our literacy rate is 60 per cent, and this unfortunate situation is a reason why Pakistani people find it difficult to get some space in the international community. -- Courtesy TheNews

Resketching Karachi**Masood Lohar**

Amidst the changing winds of power and politics in Pakistan, Karachi witnesses its first ever mayor from the PPP. The young Murtaza Wahab, a born Karachiite, has to deliver on multiple fronts in addition to facing the earnest political rivalry in the shape of the Jamaat-i-Islami and the PTI's vote bank.

Karachi's municipal history is as old as the modern city's emergence as a key port after the British annexation of Sindh in 1843. Only a year after the establishment of the Municipal Commission in 1852, the latter was turned into the Karachi Municipal Committee. The first local government elections in Karachi were held on Nov 1, 1884.

Before it got converted to the Karachi Municipal Corporation in 1933, among many others Seth Harchand Rai Vishandas (1862-1928) and Jamsheed Nusserwanji Mehta (1886-1952) continued as elected presidents of the Karachi municipality. The former is known for his introduction of electricity to Karachi in 1913, which became common in the US not before 1920. This visionary step made Karachi 'The City of Lights'.

Unlike his predecessors a century ago, when Karachi was known as 'Queen of the East', Wahab is taking over a city rated as one of the world's least livable cities by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Of 173 cities, Karachi stands at 169th, only a little ahead of war-torn Damascus and Tripoli. Hosting 10 per cent of Pakistan's population and

two key seaports, Karachi urgently needs bold and innovative measures for environmental improvement, economic growth, and socio-cultural progress.

The new mayor's journey surely can't follow the beaten track. A lot more innovation and out-of-the-box solutions are needed to bring this city back to normal, if not to its original glory.

Some key actions include the restoration of the Lyari and Malir rivers, the creation of wetlands for rainwater harvesting, and the conversion of inhabited islands into ecotourism hubs. Additionally, there is an urgent need to restore Karachi's key lagoons, Obhayo and Nai Nar, and declare areas like Turtle Beach protected zones.

Promoting urban forests, disaster-risk reduction measures, and coastal mangrove cover is critical for a more resilient city. Simultaneously, fostering economic opportunities for the youth and meeting their recreational needs are equally vital for Mayor Wahab's ambitious agenda.

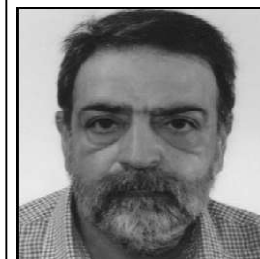
Restoring the once-glorious Lyari and Malir rivers is an arduous task that demands immediate attention. Unchecked industrial pollution and untreated sewage have turned these rivers into toxic streams, posing severe environmental and health risks. Restoration efforts can capitalise on creating wetlands within the Lyari and Malir riverbeds, serving as natural reservoirs for rainwater harvesting, mitigating the impact of monsoon flooding, and replenishing the city's water resources.

Karachi's four inhabited islands, including Manora, hold great potential for ecotourism development. Collaborating with the native fishing community, Mayor Wahab can ensure that tourism initiatives respect ecological integrity while providing economic opportunities.

Disaster-risk reduction measures, including improved infrastructure, early warning systems, and coastal mangrove cover, can enhance Karachi's resilience to natural calamities, like the recent near-miss Cyclone Biparjoy.

Leveraging Karachi's young population, Mayor Wahab can foster economic opportunities by reaching out to Commonwealth countries in need of human resources and providing job training and skill development programmes for unemployed youth.

Creating safe and vibrant recreational spaces will enhance residents' well-being and strengthen social bonds within the community. -- Courtesy Dawn

Bangkok backslide**Mahir Ali**

It did not come as much of a surprise when Pita Limjaroenrat was prevented from becoming the prime minister of Thailand earlier this month. After all, his potential problems on the path to power were widely discussed after his Move Forward party won the highest number of votes in the May elections.

Somewhat less expected was the party leader's suspension from parliament by the constitutional court, after it accepted a case challenging Pita's eligibility as a candidate. The disqualification charge relates to his alleged ownership of (inherited) shares in an effectively defunct media company. But that's just a technicality; the underlying reasons for the heavily military-flavoured Thai establishment's resistance to a Move Forward-led government are hardly a state secret.

The party's campaign agenda included vows to challenge both military involvement in politics and the dominant clout of monopolies in the economy, posing a twin threat to vested interests. Arguably an even bigger issue, though, was the questioning of royal absolutism and, more specifically, the absurdly anachronistic lese-majeste laws that punish even the mildest criticism of the monarchy. Just a couple of years ago, a former civil servant in her 60s was sentenced to 87 years in prison for posting audio clips on social media. It was reduced to 43 years after she pleaded guilty.

That's longer than Pita

has been around. The 42-

year-old's chances of becoming prime minister rested on securing a parliamentary majority, but while the elected Lower House proved willing to back him, he won only 13 out of a possible 249 votes in the unelected senate. The senators couldn't care less about the popular will because they are picked by the army — and any shift in the status quo could jeopardise their status.

What lies ahead for Thailand is unclear. Media reports suggest a likely alternative is property tycoon Srertha Thavisin, a luminary of the Pheu Thai party that entered into a coalition with Move Forward, but has a chequered history with the military, exemplified by the fate of its exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (toppled in 2006) and his sister Yingluck (thrown out in 2014).

The election result in May was portrayed in the Western media as a triumph for 'progressivism' — a concept that has become more nebulous of late. Pita evidently became interested in politics at school in New Zealand, and was enthused by the Obama presidential campaign while at Harvard. He claims to be an admirer of Uruguay's José Mujica, and recently told The New York Times he was reading Bernie Sanders' book 'It's OK to be Angry about Capitalism'.

None of that necessarily suggests an inclination to overturn the existing order; it seems the idea, at best, is to tweak it and to pull Thailand out of the dark ages. Reducing the political input of the monarchy and the military would be an achievement, and may set Thailand on a path where progressivism goes beyond the US-sponsored 'rules-based order' that Pita appears to favour. But it seems all aspects of modernity are anathema to the Thai military and the related

'stakeholders'.

In terms of its polity, it's hard to discern how much better Thailand is than its neighbours Myanmar and Cambodia. Military rule is even more regular — and abrasive — in Myanmar, which is embroiled in a sporadic civil war after the army overthrew an allied political order. In Cambodia, Hun Sen, in power for nearly 40 years, further solidified his support last weekend by excluding adversaries through bans and imprisonment. He intends to emulate North Korea by passing the baton to his son, Hun Manet — a West Point graduate who might not measure up to the expectations of his Pentagon tutors.

Inevitably, coup-prone Thailand and Myanmar throw up parallels with Pakistan, not least in the context of the coalescence between feudalism and militarism, alongside obvious variations. Common ground can also be located in the resistance to various aspects of modernity and, of course, democracy. The latter, though, is also clearly ailing in nations where it was long considered the established norm, from India to the US, and across much of Europe.

Thailand could have gone a different way, but it seems the very idea of curbing the military and downgrading — let alone abolishing, which really ought to be the aim — the monarchy is a bridge too far for the dominant segments of the elite. As one Thai voter told AFP, 'Why ask people to go to the polls? Why don't you just pick someone from your families to be the prime minister?'

It's a reasonable question, and not just for Thailand. But the show must go on, the democratic charade, even if the crown goes to the crown. The very concept of democracy is due for a reckoning. Where it might begin remains an open question. -- Courtesy Dawn

Naqvi reviews security arrangements to ensure public safety in Muharram

Mohsin also reached Sambal affected Mouza of Chinot in view of increase in the water level of River Chenab.

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has stated that comprehensive security arrangements have been made throughout Punjab to ensure public safety during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Processions and gatherings have been geotagged and all processions and gatherings are being supervised through CCTV cameras, he added.

He said that every effort is being made by the government to ensure peace and security during Muharram-ul-Haram, adding that mobile service would be temporarily suspended where needed.

Chief Secretary, IG police and relevant security officials are monitoring the security situation, and all line departments are on high alert, he said.

Provincial ministers, administrative officers, and police officials are present

in the field and will remain present to maintain a peaceful atmosphere through unity and cooperation, he added.

CM Mohsin Naqvi inspected the routes and reviewed security arrangements for gatherings and processions related to Muharram-ul-Haram by visiting Khaima-e-Saadaat, Lytton Road, and Taxali Road late night.

The chief secretary, IG police, CCPO Lahore, ACS (Home), commissioner and deputy commissioner Lahore and DIG (Operations) were also present.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi reached Sambal affected Mouza of Chinot in view of increase in the water level of River Chenab. He made a detailed visit of Mouza Sambal being affected by the erosion of river and reviewed damages, said a handout issued here on

Wednesday. Mohsin Naqvi met with the affected people, listened to their problems, and reviewed relief activities. He inspected the affected village due to river erosion and collapsed houses. Around 50 villages of Mouza Sambal were inundated permanently while all houses of a village were collapsed.

The CM announced to build a protective embankment to save Mouza Sambal from river erosion and stated that funds were being released today for building the protective embankment. Mohsin Naqvi urged the people to adopt safety measures and cooperate with the administration in this regard.

He directed the administration to adopt all possible preventive measures and vowed that the Punjab government would not leave the flood affected alone.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inspecting the control room during on the eve of Muharram ul Haram during his visit to Razaq Police Station.

Azam directs effective measures for improvement of law and order in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Expressing concerns over recent incidents of terrorism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan here Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to take effective measures for improvement of the law and order situation in the province.

The caretaker Chief Minister stressed the need

over a high-level meeting about the law and order situation in KP. The meeting reviewed the overall security situation of the province. Information Minister Farooz Jamal, Chief Secretary, IGP KP and other senior officials attended.

He was presiding

Minister stressed the need

for a special focus on security measures in sensitive districts and places during Muharram and said that special measures in that regard were inevitable for which all stakeholders need to play an effective role.

The caretaker Chief Minister held the sacrifices of security forces and police in high esteem.

Court orders to stop salary of IGP, others over not producing Parvez Elahi

LAHORE (APP): A special court (central) on Wednesday ordered accountant general Punjab to stop salary of Home secretary Punjab, inspector general of police (IGP) Punjab and inspector general of prisons Punjab over not producing former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi during the hearing of a money laundering case.

The court imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 each on the officers and also issued show cause notices to them for August 5.

Special Court Judge Bakht Fakhir Behzad conducted the proceedings of the money laundering case against Parvez Elahi and others.

Earlier, the court expressed displeasure over not producing Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and directed for producing him by 3.00pm.

The court observed that strict action would be taken if the court orders were not complied with. As the court resumed proceedings at 3.00pm, DIG Operations Ali Nasir Rizvi, Deputy Superintendent Adiala Jail and other officials appeared.

To a court query about Parvez Elahi, the DIG informed that a police team was standing outside Adiala Jail but the accused was not being handed over. He further submitted that the Home Department gave approval for shifting of the accused to Rawalpindi.

Transformation process should be continued in parties: PPP

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Central Punjab Information Secretary Shehzad Saeed Cheema has said that the process of transformation in the political parties and organizations should be continued.

Addressing a meeting of the divisional information secretaries, here on Wednesday, he said that the first time, social activists had joined the party. He stressed to ensure effective information and political contacts as elections were close now. He said that the future strategy should be set to contest the upcoming elections. He asked the office bearers to collect data of the works made by the PPP. Several divisional information secretaries also addressed the meeting.

Senator Mushtaq for steps to improve law & order in merged KP districts

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, representing Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) on Wednesday called for taking steps to improve law and order situation in merged districts of Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that the local community had also taken out peace marches to express their support to promptly resolve these issues.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, paid tribute to the sacrifices of the security forces in their relentless efforts to eliminate terrorism these areas.

A prayer was led by Member National Assembly Moulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali for the departed soul of ASI Adnan Khan Afridi, who tragically lost his life while on the duty.



MULTAN: Security officials holding flag march to develop a sense of protection among the masses and maintain law and order situation during the holy month of Muharram ul Haram.

Water accumulated during rains in sloping areas cleared: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday said that we are aware of the problems of the people and making sure rainwater does not stay anywhere during the rains.

Other institutions were also present.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab visited and inspected the double drain at Shadman and UP drain which has been cleared by immediate action, Mayor Karachi also inspected Chowranghi, UP Mor, Saleem Centre, Power House Chowranghi and adjoining areas where the rainwater drainage staff had completed the drainage work.

Visiting different areas of district central here, Mayor Karachi said that water accumulates during the rains in the sloping areas was cleared and the people who have posted pictures of rainwater on social media are nowhere now. Those who posted the pictures on social media can also see the pictures of the water cleared, he added.

If the citizens have any complaints, they should inform, the teams of all the relevant departments, including Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation, are present on the ground.

On this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner of Central District Taha Saleem, local leaders of PPP, officers of KMC, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and

The Mayor Karachi said that in view of the problems faced by the citizens during the monsoon rains, we have taken such measures in advance, thanks to which not only the flow and level of the storm drains were maintained, but also the drainage work on the roads and streets was completed quickly.

He said that the citizens of Karachi are seeing our work and efforts, they know that their problems can be solved not by mere statements, but by practical work. We believe in work, not criticism, he added.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman inaugurates "Degree with Skill Centre".

Citizens to get municipal services through single click: Amir Mir

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir on Wednesday said that the Punjab government decided to decentralize all municipal services for the convenience of citizens.

To achieve the goal, the local government department established a complaints management and information system where citizens could access services with just one click. In a statement, the minister said that as part of this system, preparations have been completed to launch a helpline number 1198 through which citizens could register complaints and obtain information related to municipal services. Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi would soon

inaugurate this system for awareness and handling of complaints about municipal services, he added. With the complaints management and information system, complaints about municipal services could be lodged from the comfort of citizens' homes, he said and added that in addition to the helpline, citizens would also have an option to use a mobile app, online web portal and WhatsApp service for the purpose. Complaints received on the helpline number 1198 would be promptly addressed, he informed.

The minister said the helpline of the complaints management and information system would be available 24/7. Citizens were encouraged to report municipal issues in their areas and fulfill their responsibilities, he added.



KARACHI: View of Korangi Road has been closed for traffic due to flooding of Malir River.

Tablets distributed among Afghan students at INU

PESHAWAR (APP): Afghan students pursuing digital marketing courses at Iqra National University (INU) Peshawar under its project Livelihood Improvement & Vocational Skills Training for Afghan Refugees Programme were provided with digital tablets for skill development.

The significant event marked a crucial milestone in the Livelihood Improvement & Vocational Skills Training for Afghan Refugees program, aiming to empower Afghan trainees pursuing courses in Digital Marketing and Mobile Repair, it added.

The ceremony was held at INU Hayatabad Campus and organized by Pak Mission Society in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The ceremony was filled with gratitude and hope, as both the organizers and beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for the UNHCR's funding and support. This collaboration demonstrated the commitment of all involved parties to empower Afghan refugees.

A total of 23 Afghan students benefited from the scheme while more than 250 students mostly Afghans are studying vocational training courses free of cost from INU through its initiative of implementing combined skill development projects

Youth shot dead, body found in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): A youth was shot dead over financial dispute while body of another youth was recovered roadside in different areas of the city on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, Muhammad Ali of Defence-C Lahore sold his land to Rana Nasir at Kala Khatai road but accused refused to pay for the purchased after which the deceased got stay order from the court.

Over same dispute, culprit Rana Nasir gunned down Muhammad Ali and fled the scene. Raids were being conducted to arrest the culprit.

Sheikh stresses promoting peace during Muharram

KARACHI (APP): Saddar Town Chairman Mansoor Ahmed Sheikh on Wednesday appealed to the masses belonging to all schools of thought to do their best for the peace and security of the city by upholding the sanctity of Muharram. The month of Muharram teaches us sacrifice and tolerance as well as brotherhood and mutual unity, said Sheikh promoting the spirit of religious harmony and unity among the people at all levels. He expressed views along with vice chairman Abdul Rahman Motiwala on the occasion of a meeting.

'Education to usher era of progress, development in tribal region'

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Excise and Narcotics Control, Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has said that education will play a key role in the development of the merged districts and a new era of development will begin in the region by paying special attention to it. He expressed these views while discussing the education sector projects in merged districts during a meeting with Education

Adviser Rahmat Salam Khattak. Deputy District Education Officer District Khyber Shahid Ali Khan and other officials participated in the meeting. The provincial minister said that the caretaker government is taking practical steps for the promotion of education and besides the provision of facilities in educational institutions; scholarships are also being paid to both boys and girls students.

KMC starts physical verification of pensioners

KARACHI (APP): Karachi Metropolitan Corporation is starting the process of physical verification of all they the pensioners of KMC, DMCs and District Council Karachi from August 1, who receive their monthly pension through Habib Bank and National Bank to make the process of payment of pension better and transparent. The staff of the KMC Welfare Department in collaboration with the Finance and Accounts Department will conduct the physical verification of pensioners at designated branches of Habib Bank and National Bank in the city, said a spokesperson of the KMC on Wednesday.

ECI officers imparted training on use of EMS

PESHAWAR (APP): Orientation and training workshop for officers of Election Commission of Pakistan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding use of Election Management System (EMS) software app in the general elections 2023 concluded here on Wednesday.

During the workshop, the officers were briefed regarding technical aspects and knowledge about the app.

The training/workshop started on Monday consisted of three phases. The last session was attended by Director Els & Local Govt Elections.

DG NAB holds open public hearing at NAB KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Waqar Ahmad Chauhan along with concerned officers held an open public hearing (Kuli Katchery) at NAB KP here Wednesday.

orders on complaints were issued on the spot. According to the statement issued by Mian Muhammad Waqar Director NAB KP, the complainants pertaining to misuse of authority, embezzlement/misappropriation of public money, accumulation of assets disproportionate to the known sources of income,

bribery, criminal breach of trust, cheating public at large and abatement were lodged.

Most of the complaints related to various housing schemes and marketing companies who are not delivering their promises despite lapse of many years.

It was decided by the NAB KP.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Jamal Nasar, Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir and Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman participating in the cabinet committee meeting at Civil Secretariat.

Secretary ESD reviews emergency cover during Ashura

LAHORE (APP): Emergency Services Department (ESD) Secretary Dr. Rizwan Naseer reviewed arrangements of Rescue 1122 to provide emergency cover to mourning processions of Ashura in all districts of Punjab.

He directed all DEOs to review the checklist of preparedness & continuously hold meetings of District Emergency Boards with key focal persons of Majalis, ensure training of Imamia Scouts/volunteers, and mapping of all processions and mass gathering event well in time. Earlier, Provincial Monitoring Officer (PMO) briefed the Secretary that rescuers in all districts are performing emergency duties as per emergency plans for Muharram-ul-Haram in accordance with the directions issued by the Government of Punjab. As per emergency plans 6979 rescuers would be deployed during 9th and 10th Muharram to provide rescue and medical cover to 1033 processions/events.

He was chairing a video link meeting of all Districts Emergency Officers (DEOs) and senior rescue officers at Emergency Services Headquarters here on Wednesday. He reviewed monitoring and quick response mechanism of all districts control rooms and Provincial Monitoring Cell.

He directed all DEOs to restrict the leaves of the rescuers, implement Code Red on 9th & 10th of the Muharram to provide emergency cover. He asserted that the Disaster Response Force (DRF) stationed at Emergency

PM for extensive export policy; assures all out support of FG

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed upon the formulation of a comprehensive export policy and assured that the federal government would make every effort to facilitate the exporters, traders, industrialists and businessmen. He said that the port city of Karachi had always been a gateway and home to exporters, traders and entrepreneurs that served as the backbone for national economy.

He was addressing at Karachi Chamber of Commerce (KCCI) Export Trophy Awards ceremony. The prime minister said that Karachi always been the place of main hub for revenues generation for the country and underlined that Pakistan required extensive efforts for boosting its exports by setting up industries and utilization of modern techniques to compete in the global market.

The export quality must be competitive in global market, he added. He also appreciated the contribution of exporters and industrialists for country's economy and said that

despite difficulties, they made relentless efforts to increase exports. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, federal ministers, provincial ministers, parliamentarians, office bearers of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and relevant authorities were present during the ceremony.

The prime minister also observed that when compared with the neighbouring countries with regard to booming industries and exports, they still lagged behind in this race.

Enumerating various

factors of the past, he said they required very serious deliberations to evaluate the factors including the successes, failures of the past governments and lack of modern techniques, and issues faced by the industrial sector etc.

"With mere blame-game, they will not get anything concrete as it would only cause damage and result in wastage of time. There should be a frank discussion as to how the challenges faced by the industry can be mitigated by the government by facilitating them," he added.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Business Council.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal cutting ribbon to inaugurate Hyper Future E-Commerce Operations Center.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan have trade potential of \$1 billion: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan have the potential of \$1 billion of bilateral trade for which the communication and interaction between both sides is pivotal.

He said this while addressing a seminar on the theme of "Small and Medium Enterprises and Women Entrepreneurs" organized by Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) along with the Founder President of IWCCI, Samina Fazil here.

The envoy said that the IWCCI and other local business chambers can play an important role in increasing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and in their cooperation with the business community of both sides.

Yerzhan Kistafin said that 47% contribution to the economy of Kazakhstan is currently from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which are growing day by day.

He said that women have a very important role in the economy of Kazakhstan, women entrepreneurs are the

owners of big brands in Kazakhstan, and there are a lot of women, especially in the textile, clothing, fashion and IT sectors.

The Ambassador said that the delegation of IWCCI under the leadership of Samina Fazil should visit the cities of Almaty, Astana and others to evaluate the business opportunities there so that they can have an idea about the local market and also both sides could establish business links.

Meanwhile, Yerzhan Kistafin said that Kazakhstan is currently the most attractive country for foreign investment.

ECC approves Rs985.43 for USC Ramzan Atta Scheme-2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Monday approved Rs985.43 million for Ministry of Industries and Production that were spent by Utility Stores Corporation (USC) under the Prime Minister's Free Atta Scheme during Ramzan in last financial year (2022-23).

The scheme was launched on March 18, 2023 and continued till April 16, 2023, according

Ahsan inaugurates historic 'FUTURE E-Commerce Operations Center'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday inaugurated a historic 'FUTURE E-Commerce Operations Center', calling upon the younger generation to embrace e-commerce and information technology as pivotal components of Pakistan's economic growth.

The event marks a significant milestone for Pakistan, as it celebrates the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and showcases the country's remarkable progress over the years, a news release said.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister highlighted the essence of nation-building, emphasizing that unity and cooperation formed the bedrock of any successful

nation. He drew attention to China's remarkable progress, attributing it to three fundamental pillars including political stability, policy continuity and peace.

"Political stability in China played a pivotal role in fostering an environment of peace, enabling the nation to channel its efforts towards growth and prosperity," he said stressing the importance of policy continuity, as it had been instrumental in sustaining China's progress over the years.

He said no country could progress without a system that prioritized peace, stability and policy consistency.

Ahsan Iqbal made a crucial point that no matter how qualified and exceptional the individuals in government may be, "political uncertainty, turmoil, or divisive politics

hinder a country's path to success."

He urged for the prioritization of peace and stability above all else, as it formed the bedrock of a nation's strength.

In light of Pakistan's 75th anniversary of independence, the minister called for a collective embrace of unity and progress. "Learning from our nation's history, the current generation must acknowledge the significance of sustained policies and shun experimentation."

By working together, the minister said Pakistan could move on the path of a stable and peaceful future, securing national prosperity.

He highlighted that CPEC became a global brand, attracting attention from major international players, including the United States, Britain, Japan, and Europe.

Rs30b loans distributed under PMYB&ALS in five months: SAPM

KARACHI (NNI): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYB&ALS), the loans of 30 billion rupees were distributed during the last five months.

This was stated by her while addressing the ceremony held for the distribution of laptops and cheques under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme and Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023, respectively at the Sindh Governor House.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the business loan programme was initiated by former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in 2013. The loans amounting to Rs. 75 billion were distributed under the scheme in last 10 years, she added. The SAPM said the loan was being provided in three tiers. In the first tier, the loan of Rs. 0.5 million, in the second tier, Rs. 0.5 to 1.5 million and in the third tier, Rs. 1.5 million to 7.5 million is provided, she said.

FBR hosts farewell dinner in honor of its chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) here on Wednesday hosted a farewell dinner in the honor of outgoing its Chairman, Asim Ahmad.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Revenue Tariq Mahmood Pasha lauded Asim Ahmad's many sterling qualities and recalled the pleasant memories he shared with him, said a news release issued here.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa outlined the critical importance of FBR for the country and acknowledged the contribution of the chairman towards making the organization more dynamic and impactful despite the innumerable challenges being faced by the country.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Jemal Beker Abdula calls on Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways, Khawaja Saad Rafique at Ministry of Aviation.

PTCL implements robotic process automation for Digital Transformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the leading ICT services provider in Pakistan, has announced the implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in its Customer Care operations as a vital part of its digital transformation strategy.

The aim is to improve overall customer experience across all touch points. The initiative will help PTCL firmly align with the highest global standards in digitalization and automation, reinforcing its position as the industry leader, said a

Gold rates decline by Rs 2,400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,400 and was sold at Rs 222,100 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 224,500 on the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 2,058 to Rs 190,415 from Rs 192,473 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 174,547 from Rs. 176,433. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2750 and Rs 2357.68 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$12 to \$1,972 from \$1,960, the association reported.

Traders warn countrywide protest against increase in electricity tariff

MULTAN (APP): The Chamber of Small Traders expressed concern on the recent increase in electricity tariff and warned of countrywide protest in case the electricity tariff was not reduced.

President Chamber of Small Traders Tariq Kareem along with other traders held a press conference stating that the traders were unable to pay electricity bills.

He stated that the traders had to pay Rs 65/unit of electricity. The office bearers lamented that peak hours had also

PSX stays bullish, gains 265 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 265.19 points, a positive change of 0.57 percent, closing at 46,682.53 points against 46,417.34 points the previous trading day. A total of 429,515,564 shares were traded during the day as compared to 319,893,485 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 14.137 billion against Rs 10.259 billion on the last trading day. As many as 352 companies transacted their shares in the stock market.

PITB, LCCI open Punjab Job Center

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) jointly opened Punjab Job Center here at Lahore Chamber on Wednesday.

The center is an Innovative Government-Level Online Data Repository aimed at revolutionizing the labor market and providing crucial social protection during times of disaster and catastrophe.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by prominent figures from both organizations including LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, PITB Additional Director General Qasim Afzal and Director (Labour and Human Resource Development) Imran Haider Tipu.

The Punjab Job Center marks a significant stride in efforts to bolster human capital potential.

PIA to celebrate 60yrs of flying high between Pakistan and China

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will celebrate 60 years of flying to the People's Republic of China, next year.

With the inaugural flight between Karachi and Shanghai via Guangzhou (Canton) on April 29, 1964, with a Boeing 720B, the national flag carrier earned the distinction of becoming the first airline from a non-communist country to fly into China, official sources told APP here on Wednesday.

Later, in addition to flights operated between Islamabad and Beijing, passengers also enjoyed direct and convenient access to Tokyo, Japan via Beijing and Hong Kong via Bangkok.

At present, passengers travelling by PIA can fly between Pakistan and 16 captivating cities of China via Beijing in partnership with Air China.



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

Govt ensures sustainability of external, fiscal sectors in FY2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has succeeded in ensuring the sustainability of the external and fiscal sectors through various tough decisions and stabilization measures in FY2023.

In FY2024, the government is gearing towards achieving higher growth of 3.5 percent through various measures like the Kissan package, industrial support, export promotion, encouragement of the IT sector, and resource mobilization, etc, according to the Monthly Economic Update and Outlook Monthly report issued by the Ministry of finance here on Wednesday.

According to the report, to achieve higher and sustainable economic growth, it will require

prudent and effective economic decisions, political and economic certainty, and continuation of friendly economic policies along with enough foreign exchange financing.

The recent IMF approval of the stand-by arrangement and other bilateral and multilateral inflows will pave the way to further improve the macroeconomic environment and the confidence of economic agents.

Despite of substantial decline in imports, the LSM and the overall slowdown in economic activity, the government's effective resource mobilization strategy remained effective in maintaining the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

tax collection growth at 16.6 percent, while non-tax grew by 31 percent, the report said.

Similarly, on the expenditure side, though mounting interest expenditure remained a significant burden on fiscal accounts, curtailing non-interest spending triggered a primary deficit to narrow down. For FY2024, the government is taking various measures for domestic resource mobilization.

The government has unveiled a comprehensive strategy for every sector of the economy in an effort to revive economic growth and move towards a higher inclusive and sustainable growth trajectory.

Further different administrative and policy

measures have been introduced to increase the tax collection.

Additionally, SBP's withdrawal of restrictions on imports will create demand for imports. All these measures will be supportive in improving the revenues, the report said. On the expenditure side, various austerity measures are in place that will be helpful in reducing non-productive expenditures.

About the overall Economic Activity, the Monthly Economic Indicator (MEI) is developed as a tool to distribute the past annual GDP numbers, as reported by the PBS, on a monthly/quarterly basis, and to now cast on that same frequency GDP growth for



QUETTA: President Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry Haji Abdullah Achakzai presenting special shield to Provincial Minister for Finance and Chairman BFA Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai.

New Chinese foreign minister Wang talks Ukraine in Turkey on first trip

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi discussed Ukraine with his Turkish counterpart in Ankara and met President Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday during his first foreign trip since being appointed, a Turkish foreign ministry source said.

China named Wang, a veteran diplomat, as its new foreign minister on Tuesday, removing former rising star Qin Gang after a one-month absence from duties barely half a year into the job.

Discussions between Wang and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan included the latest situation in Ukraine as well as the global financial system, the Turkish foreign ministry source said.

Russia has expanded

its air attacks on Ukrainian grain targets in recent days after quitting a 2022 deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey that had allowed the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain for the past year.

The United States and several European countries have urged China to use its influence over Russia to seek an end to the war in Ukraine. Earlier this year, China published a 12-point peace plan, calling for the protection of civilians and the sovereignty of all countries to be respected.

During his talks with Wang, Erdogan voiced hope that Turkey and China would intensify their cooperation as both countries play important roles in global and regional issues, Erdogan's office said in a statement released after the

meeting. Fidan and Wang also touched on the development of economic and trade relations between Turkey and China, the Turkish foreign ministry source said.

Their discussions included "harmonisation of the initiatives of (China's) Belt and Road and Middle Corridor", as well as nuclear energy, agriculture and civil aviation, the source added. The two top diplomats discussed the situation of Uyghurs, a mostly Muslim ethnic minority in the western Chinese region of Xinjiang, during talks in Ankara, the source said. Human rights groups accuse Beijing of abuses against Xinjiang's Uyghur inhabitants, including the mass use of forced labour in internment camps. China denies the allegations.



Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey.

African leaders arrive in Russia for summit as Kremlin seeks allies amid fighting in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
ST. PETERSBURG: Some African leaders arrived in Russia on Wednesday for a summit with President Vladimir Putin as the Kremlin seeks more allies amid the fighting in Ukraine.

Putin has billed the two-day summit that opens Thursday in St. Petersburg as a major event that would help bolster ties with a continent of 1.3 billion people that is increasingly assertive on the global stage.

On Wednesday, Putin met separately with Ethiopia's Prime Minister

Abiy Ahmed, and said Russia will more than triple the number of Ethiopian students it hosts and cover their education costs.

Later in the day, Putin is set to hold talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Africa's 54 nations make up the largest voting bloc at the United Nations and have been more divided than any other region on General Assembly resolutions criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine.

It's the second Russia-Africa summit since 2019, and the number of heads of

states attending shrank from 43 then to 17 now because of what the Kremlin described as a crude Western pressure to discourage African nations from attending it.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov deplored "unconcealed brazen interference by the U.S., France and other states through their diplomatic missions in African countries, and attempts to put pressure on the leadership of these countries in order to prevent their active participation in the forum."

Indian government faces no-confidence vote over Manipur ethnic clashes

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's parliament on Wednesday authorised a no-confidence vote against Narendra Modi's government by an alliance of opposition parties, to force the prime minister to address in detail concerns about ethnic clashes in the northeastern state of Manipur. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a clear majority of 301 members in the 542-seat lower house of parliament, so the no-confidence vote will not affect its stability.

The opposition instead wants to trigger a debate about violence in the remote, BJP-ruled Manipur state,

where more than 130 people have been killed and 60,000 displaced since it began in early May. Approving the opposition motion, lower house speaker Om Birla said he would soon decide when the debate and vote would take place. The ethnic tensions in the small state of 3.2 million people are seen as a rare security and political failure by Modi's government, which will face a national election by May 2024. Further incidents of arson and the destruction of some abandoned houses, government offices and vehicles by armed mobs were reported from at least two districts of Manipur on Wednesday.

Jakarta terms Taliban officials' visit 'informal'

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Representatives of Afghanistan's Taliban government travelled to Indonesia this month on an unofficial visit, the foreign ministry in Jakarta said on Tuesday, despite Kabul saying they held meetings with politicians in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

"My understanding is that they were in Jakarta informally for internal matters with the Afghanistan mission here," said Indonesian foreign ministry spokesman Teuku Faizasyah. But the deputy spokesperson at the Afghan foreign ministry, Hafiz Zia Ahmad, tweeted on July 14.



Members of the Philippine Coast Guard remove a fallen tree from a road following the onslaught of Typhoon Doksuri in Buguey, Cagayan province, Philippines.

Iran gives 'detailed answers' to UN inspectors over 2 sites where manmade uranium particles found

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran said Wednesday it gave new details to the United Nations about two sites near Tehran that inspectors say bore traces of manmade uranium, part of a wider probe as tensions remain high over the Islamic Republic's advancing program.

The comments by Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran's civilian nuclear program, come as Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers remains in tatters and as Tehran enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Resolving questions from the International Atomic Energy Agency could see Iran avoid further sanctions as an October deadline approaches that would lift international restrictions on its ballistic missile program as well. Speaking after a Cabinet meeting, Eslami said Iran had sent "detailed answers" to the International Atomic Energy Agency. "If those answers are not accepted and there are any ambiguities or doubts, as we have always said, we will clarify and reverse the documents."

US officials to meet Taliban representatives to discuss security, rights issues

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. officials will meet Taliban representatives and "technocratic professionals" from key Afghan ministries during a visit to Doha this week, the State Department said on Wednesday, adding they will discuss security, narcotics and women's rights. Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West and Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights Rina Amiri will travel to Astana.

First France-born panda heads to China

Monitoring Desk
SAINT-AIGNAN: The first giant panda to have been born in France received an emotional send-off on Tuesday as he left his French zoo ahead of the long haul flight back to his ancestral China. Yuan Meng, who was born in 2017 in the Beauval zoo in the Loire region of France, was cheered by visitors and zoo staff as he was driven under police escort to Charles de Gaulle airport for a 12-hour Air China flight to the Chinese city of Chengdu. Trained for several days to get ready comfortably for the trip, the son of Yuan Zi and Huan Huan — the first pandas loaned to France by the Chinese authorities in 2012.

Canada's immigration creates 'mirage' of economic prosperity economists

Monitoring Desk
OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has fueled economic growth and plugged gaps in the labor market by ramping up immigration, but now new arrivals are straining public services and contributing to an overheating economy, economists say.

Since taking power in 2015, Trudeau has brought in an estimated 2.5 million new permanent residents, driving the population above 40 million. Canada's population

grew at its fastest pace since 1957 last year, placing it among the top 20 fastest-growing countries in the world, Statistics Canada said, in part offsetting the effects of aging residents who are retiring and adding to healthcare costs.

In large part thanks to immigration, Canada has matched the United States with an average GDP growth of just over 2% over the past decade, well above the 1.4% G7 average, according to Marc Ercolano, an economist at TD Economics.

North Korea to welcome China and Russia with military display after pandemic isolation

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: After years of pandemic isolation, North Korea has invited its friends back this week, hosting senior Chinese and Russian delegations for 70th anniversary commemorations of the Korean War and the struggle against the United States and its allies.

The visiting dignitaries, which include Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chinese Communist Party Politburo member Li Hongzhong, are expected to be presented with one of North Korea's signature events: a massive military parade showcasing its latest weaponry.

Analysts say the spectacle will likely include the North's nuclear-tipped missiles banned by the United Nations Security Council, where Russia and

China are permanent members.

The visits are the first known foreign delegations to visit North Korea since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and come as Pyongyang has looked to deepen its ties with Beijing and Moscow, finding common ground in their rivalries with Washington and the West. Thursday's holiday, in which North Korea celebrates what it sees as a victory over U.S.-led allied forces in the 1950-1953 Korean War, provides a chance for Pyongyang to highlight the Cold War days when North Korean troops fought with Chinese and Russian support.

North Korea is still technically at war with the U.S.-led alliance after fighting ended in an armistice, rather than a formal peace treaty.

West Africa recorded over 1,800 terrorist attacks in first six months of 2023, regional official says

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: West Africa recorded over 1,800 terrorist attacks in the first six months of the year resulting in nearly 4,600 deaths with dire humanitarian consequences, and a top regional official said Tuesday that's just "a snippet of the horrendous impact of insecurity."

Omar Touray told the U.N. Security Council that half a million people in the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States known as ECOWAS are refugees and nearly 6.2 million are internally displaced. If there isn't an adequate international response to the 30 million people ECOWAS assesses need food right now, he said, the number of people in need will increase to 42 million by the end of next month. Touray, who is president of the ECOWAS Commission, singled out the following drivers of insecurity in the region: terrorism,

armed rebellion, organized crime, unconstitutional changes of government, illegal maritime activities, environmental crises and fake news. He said the region is worried about the resurgence of the military, with three countries — Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea — under military rule.

"The reversal of democratic gains runs parallel to insecurity that West Africa and the Sahel have been facing for some time now," he said, and insecurity continues to inflict pain and suffering on millions of people. For example, Touray said, the 4,595 deaths in terrorist attacks between January and June 30 include 2,725 in Burkina Faso, 844 in Mali, 77 in Niger and 70 in Nigeria. He added that terrorist attacks in Benin and Togo which have coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean are a "stark indication of the expansion of terrorism to littoral states, a situation that poses additional threat to the region."

Security risks in Sweden rise due to Quran desecrations and protests, security agency says

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM: Sweden's security situation has deteriorated after recent Quran burnings in the country and protests in the Muslim world, both of which have negatively impacted the Nordic nation's image, its domestic security service said Wednesday.

The Swedish Security Service said the burning and desecration of religious books in Sweden, and ongoing disinformation campaigns on social media and elsewhere, have negatively affected Sweden's profile.

The image of Sweden has changed "from a tolerant country to a country hostile to Islam and Muslims, where attacks on Muslims are sanctioned by the state and where Muslim children can be kidnapped by social services," the agency, which is known by the Swedish acronym SAPO, said in a statement.

The country's current reputation risks fueling threats against Sweden "from individuals within the violent Islamist milieu," the

agency said, adding that the risk of terrorism in Sweden remains at an elevated level, at three on a five-point scale.

"It's a serious situation that we're in," Susanna Trehöjning, SAPO's deputy head of counter-terrorism, told Swedish public broadcaster SVT. "It's a heightened threat, and an attack can occur within the framework of a heightened threat."

A recent string of public Quran desecrations by a handful of anti-Islam activists in Sweden — and more recently in neighboring Denmark — has sparked angry demonstrations in Muslim countries.

In Egypt, Al-Azhar Mosque, the oldest Sunni institution in the Muslim world, urged Muslims on Tuesday to boycott Swedish and Danish products. The Cairo-based institution decried decisions by Swedish and Danish governments that allowed the burning of the Quran and said such policies would open the door for racist,

Obesity drugs don't make WHO's essential list, but Ebola, MS drugs added

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Obesity drugs will not join the World Health Organization's (WHO) latest essential medicines list, but treatments for Ebola and multiple sclerosis will, documents published by the U.N. agency showed.

The WHO's essential medicines list is a catalogue of the drugs that should be available in all functioning health systems.

Inclusion on the list can have great significance for access: for example, experts say adding HIV drugs in 2002 helped make them much more widely available to AIDS patients in poorer countries.

A group of U.S. academics had proposed including obesity drugs on the WHO list for the first time earlier this year, focused particularly on the active ingredient liraglutide in Novo Nordisk's obesity drug Saxenda. But a WHO expert panel on Wednesday recommended against adding

the drugs for weight loss, citing the "uncertain long-term clinical benefit and safety in this patient population."

Benedikt Huttner, WHO team lead for the EML, said in a press conference on Wednesday that there were also "uncertainties" about how long to use the treatments "because often when you stop the treatments there is a rebound in weight gain."

But he said the medicines may be reconsidered in future when there is more long-term evidence.

The decision is part of a wider update of the list following an expert meeting in Geneva in April. The document is designed to guide government purchasing decisions in low and middle-income countries.

Experts did back adding other new treatments. For example, a trio of drugs that can individually be used to treat multiple sclerosis was added for the first time, including the generic and biosimilar versions where available.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits the Chinese People's Volunteer Army Martyrs' cemetery in this photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

China's sharp-tongued foreign minister is ousted, but his combative style is expected to continue

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's sharp-tongued foreign minister, Qin Gang, was something of an avatar for nationalist Communist Party leader and President Xi Jinping, warning of "conflict and confrontation" with the U.S., the stakes of which could be the "future of humanity." Now, Qin has been dismissed from office in the biggest political tumult to strike China in a decade.

Qin's departure was announced Tuesday after a month-long disappearance from public view, sparking rumors of personal scandals or friction within the top party echelons. He was absent from key meetings as the U.S. sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other officials to Beijing. It also comes during economic challenges and poor relations with the United States and other nations that China relies on

for economic development but is also seeking to push aside in its drive to overcome the Western-led economic order.

Ultimately, Qin's situation reflects back on Xi, who has concentrated power under his direct authority to a degree not seen since Mao Zedong in the 1960s. Xi was seen as backing the 57-year-old Qin's swift rise from ministry spokesperson to protocol chief — where he oversaw arrangements for Xi's overseas trips — to ambassador to the U.S. and then foreign minister. "The real issue of the Qin affair is that it showed how poor Xi's judgment was in helicoptering Qin to the foreign minister post, and then took so long to act on his removal," said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies and a longtime analyst of Chinese leadership dynamics.

Russia's Lavrov says won't impose solution on Armenia, Azerbaijan

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday that Moscow had no intention of imposing any solution to resolve a decades-old dispute pitting Armenia against Azerbaijan, focusing on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Lavrov made his comments after another in a series of meetings between senior officials from both ex-Soviet states left unresolved the notion of clinching a durable peace treaty.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought two wars in the past 30 years over Karabakh. In a six-week campaign in 2020, Azerbaijan recaptured large swathes of territory held by Armenia since soon after the collapse of Soviet rule.

Iranian chess player who removed hijab gets Spanish citizenship

Monitoring Desk
MADRID: An Iranian chess player who moved to Spain in January after she competed without a hijab and had an arrest warrant issued against her at home has been granted Spanish citizenship, Spain said on Wednesday.

Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, better known as Sara Khadem, took part in the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships held in Kazakhstan in late December without the headscarf that is mandatory under Iran's strict Islamic dress codes.

Laws enforcing mandatory hijab-wearing became a flashpoint during the unrest that swept Iran when a 22-year-old Iranian-Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, died in the custody of the morality police in mid-September.

Firefighting plane crashes in Greece as wildfires rage

Monitoring Desk
RHODES: A Greek water-bombing plane crashed on Tuesday while battling a forest fire on the island of Evia as hundreds of firefighters struggled to beat back blazes still raging in Rhodes and Corfu amid a new wave of soaring temperatures.

The fire department said the Canadair aircraft crashed into a ravine close to where the fire started some three days ago.

Footage on state TV ERT showed the plane clipping a tree before falling nose-first and exploding.

The plane was among at least three other aircraft and around a hundred firefighters in the fight against the flames on Evia.

The accident occurred as Greece battled wildfires on three major fronts, including the tourist islands of Rhodes and Corfu, with many of the country's re-

gions listed at extreme risk of dangerous forest fires exacerbated by strong winds.

The very hot weather comes after a weekend of intense heat as thousands of locals and tourists fled forest fires on the Greek islands of Rhodes and Corfu, with the prime minister warning the heat-battered nation is "at war" with the flames.

WWF Greece on Tuesday said 35,000 hectares (86,500 acres) of forest and other land had been scorched by fire in the country just in the past week.

Authorities evacuated nearly 2,500 people from the island of Rhodes on Monday, after tens of thousands of people had already fled blazes on the island of Rhodes, with many frightened tourists scrambling to get home on evacuation flights.



A firefighting aircraft drops water over a wildfire near the village of Vati in the Greek island of Rhodes.

Will distribute a million laptops annually, if given mandate in next polls: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that if given a mandate in next general elections, his next government would distribute around one million laptops across the country annually as part of the vision to support the talented youth.

The prime minister, addressing a ceremony for the distribution of laptops and cheques for youth business loans, said with support from allies, a mechanism will be formulated – to be equally funded by centre and provinces – to distribute up to 1000,000 laptops across all provinces.

“This is how the revolution will come... This is the only way to make the nation progress,” the prime minister told the ceremony also attended by Sindh governor, chief minister, federal ministers, MQM leaders, provincial ministers, diplomats, and representatives of bankers.

He said youths from across the country needed to be equipped with education and provided maximum resources for country’s swift progress.

Mentioning the launch of the capital venture initiative for freelancers on Tuesday, he lauded the

youngsters’ talent for developing the projects like converting banana peels into different products and drones for agricultural use.

He said it would be sheer injustice if the talented youths were not provided with the required resources as they were the guarantee for the country’s prosperity.

He said the incumbent government was in the process of distributing 100,000 laptops announced for the fiscal 2022-23 while the provision for another 100,000 laptops had been made in the budget 2023-24 which would be distributed purely on merit, with-

out any nepotism.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the caretaker government should also ensure the merit in laptops’ distribution keeping the excellence and enrollment in public sector universities as the only merit.

He said through hand-holding, the talented youths could bring in billions of dollars to the country within a short span of time which other industries could not do.

The prime minister also thanked the commercial banks for distributing Rs 30 billion among youth within a few months in the form of business loans.



ISLAMABAD: The Planning Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal launches “National Multi-sectoral Nutrition to Reduce Stunting & Other Forms of Malnutrition” worth Rs8.5 billion under Pakistan Nutrition Initiatives (PANI).



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes laptops among the high achievers of public sector universities of Sindh under PM’s Youth Laptop Scheme 2023 at Governor House.

Sherry unveils country’s 1st ever National Adaptation Plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman Wednesday unveiled the country’s first-ever National Adaptation Plan unanimously approved by the federal cabinet to enhance nation’s resilience against adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

The minister flanked by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Syed Mujtaba Hussain briefed the media persons over the landmark

achievement that remained unaccomplished due to poor interest of the previous regime.

She said the country needed adaptation and resilience as after 2022 floods the devastation and scale of the disaster underscored its significance for the future of the nation.

The minister alleged said the adaptation plan had reportedly started in 2019 but she did not find any record of the document in the ministry.

The team under the leadership of Additional Secretary Mujtaba Hussain worked extensively to create first ever adaptation plan which was a home grown plan and had been prepared with the input of the line ministries and provincial ministries, she added. The minister informed that detailed consultations with all the provinces including the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

personnel of the police and other law enforcement agencies were deployed.

The shops and markets enroute of the procession were sealed and the roads and streets leading to the route of procession were closed.

The procession was monitored through the CCTV cameras installed on the route and different other parts of the metropolis.

Earlier, the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langave also visited route of Muharram procession Quetta city and reviewed the security arrangements made there.

7th Muharram procession taken out amid tough security in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The mourning procession marking 7th Muharram Haram was taken out in the provincial metropolis on Wednesday.

Strict security measures were adopted on occasion of the procession started from Imambargah Kalan located on Prince road.

Led by the President Balochistan Shia conference, Agha Jawad Rafie, the mourners were carrying the alam (flag) and tazias while passing through the roads and streets.

According to the Deputy Inspector General of Police, around 4,000



QUETTA: DG PDMA Jahanzeb Khan meeting with Deputy Commissioner Quetta Shehak Baloch

Civil society call for new charter of democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Civil society has emphasized the need for new charter of democracy in order to initiate dialogue and meaningful deliberation for the inclusion of all political parties and stakeholders in the democratic process.

The civil society tabled the proposal of strengthening democracy in the country during a National Dialogue on New Charter of Democracy organized by Pakistan Development Alliance (PDA), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the National Press Club (NPC).

Speaking on the occasion, President National Party Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch said that all political parties considered as the nurseries of democracy and their vibrancy and inclusiveness enrich nations’ democratic experiences.

“We call upon the political parties to consider creation of ‘National Commission for Democracy’ as

envisaged in the CoD-2006 to support civic education, study circles and training of future leaders and cadre through the political parties,” he added.

He also stressed the political parties to ensure that all citizens irrespective of their gender, class, economic background and creed should be valued and equally involved in the affairs of the party.

National Convener Pakistan Development Alliance Zia ur Rehman emphasized the cohesiveness of all political parties and said the dialogue between all political parties could only pave the way for developing the country.

He said that all political parties should adopt proposed COD2.0 as their party manifesto.

Constitutional Expert Zafar Ullah Khan emphasized the importance of centrality of Parliament and demanded that constitutional supremacy should be accepted by all.

Chinese Defense Minister meets with PAF Chief

BEIJING (APP): Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu met with Chief of the Air Staff of the Pakistani Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zabeer Ahmed Baber in Beijing.

Gen. Li Shangfu said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and iron-clad friends. Chinese President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the relations between China and Pakistan and has provided overall guidance for the growth of bilateral relations.

Qureshi says: PTI being kept away from Electoral Reforms Bill

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said PTI is being kept from Electoral Reforms Bill (ERB). “Maulana Fazlur Rehman is striving to forge alliance against PPP,” he said this while talking to media men outside Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) here Wednesday.

He went on to say that the judge directed the prosecution to bring to fore evidence on previous hearing ERB has become talk of the town now a days and we have reservations on it, he held. The allied parties of government have two reservations on this bill. Raza Rabbani too has expressed reservations on this bill.

PML-N in favor to conduct elections on time: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Wednesday said Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) was not in favor to delay elections. Talking to private news channel, he said PML-N was supporting to hold elections after completion of constitutional period adding that delaying elections would not be in favor of the country. Commenting on caretaker setup Kaira said Ishaq Dar was a most experienced politician.

Ahsan for collective efforts to tackle ‘hyper malnutrition’ challenge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed for collective efforts to tackle the confronted challenge what he called ‘hyper malnutrition’, affecting the physical and mental health of children.

“After last year’s floods, the challenge of malnutrition is no longer malnutrition but it has become the challenge of hyper malnutrition as the flood-calamity hit the poorest of the poor,” the minister was addressing the launching ceremony of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Programme to reduce stunting and other forms of malnutrition.

He said the federal government had launched this initiative which would be implemented in collaboration with all stakeholders including provinces, donors and active community.

Terming the nutrition-related issues ‘alarming,’ the minister said “Today is the age of knowledge revolution which requires creativity and innovation driven by cognitive skills. And it all depends on children’s nutritional health.”

Sharing some statistics, Ahsan Iqbal said around 40 per cent of children were having stunting growth-related issues, 80 per cent faced deficiency of calcium, zinc and iron, 60 per cent vitamin C and 25 per cent vitamin B, 64 per cent faced insufficient protein problem, 75 Folate-deficiency and 30 per cent were getting excessive fat.

He emphasized to address the issue of malnutrition on a priority, warning that it could lead to affecting children’s physical and mental health. The minister was of the view to engage professionals on at least a five-year contract to advance the social sector programmes; and get rid of typical bureaucratic hurdles. He expressed astonishment that Pakistan attained the nuclear capability despite opposition by the international community, but when the world was willing to help Pakistan in executing social sector programmes like health.

Due to ongoing spell of rains Water reservoir storage raised in catchment area of Hub dam

Independent Report
QUETTA: The ongoing spell of heavy rains has resulted in increase in the water level at catchment area of Hub dam on Wednesday.

According to the district administration, the water can be charged anytime from the spill way of Hub dam. The discharge of thousands of cusec water from the dam’s spill way can cause flashflood in the Hub River. The Deputy Commissioner Hub, Zahid Khan informed that the necessary awareness has been created among the dwellers of adjoining areas of Hub dam for evacuation.

UNESCO demands ban smart phones in schools

ISLAMABAD (Online): United Nations demanded ban on use of smart phones in educational institutes so that children learning ability may increase and save them from online abuse.

UNESCO’s (UN’s institute of education, science, and culture) report contains evidence to prove that often use of mobile phones affects students educational performance.

Children’s emotional stability also affects due to excessive use of phones: Report

It has been demanded in report to ban smart phones in schools to send a message that technology does not matters more than an assistant to human’s education.

UNESCO warned the effects of digital technology and stressed that positive effects of technology are exaggerated for learning and

economic benefits. Report said that every change cannot be declared development, every new thing is not always better.

According to international institute many revolutions are hidden in digital technology but along with that many risks are also being discussed. Same attention should be paid to education sector.

UNESCO director general Azoulay Audrey said technology use experiment should be to improve the students and teachers but it is needed to focus our attention on those who are learning its use. Online contacts cannot replace human relations. It is needed to make digital technology beneficial and safe from its disadvantages, said in report. Referring international data report said that excessive use of smart phones, tablets or laptops.

President Alvi calls for cementing Pak-Tunisia economic collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday emphasized the need for promoting greater economic collaborations with Tunisia to boost bilateral trade.

He, talking to Pakistan’s Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Tunisia, Javed Ahmed Umrani, who called on him, also called for increasing interactions and exchanges between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries.

He said that Pakistan greatly valued its historical and brotherly ties with Tunisia and both countries had commonality of views on various issues.

He asked the envoy to play his role in further strengthening bilateral relations with Tunisia by increasing cooperation in the

fields of education, culture, and defense.

President Alvi acknowledged Tunisia’s vision for making OIC a substantive platform for advancing inter-faith harmony as well as cooperation in addressing international issues such as the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, Palestine and Islamophobia.

He also welcomed Tunisia’s support to the resolution presented by Pakistan on behalf of OIC at the UN Human Rights Council in July 2023 on “Countering Religious Hatred” in the wake of the incident of burning of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

The president asked the ambassador-designate to highlight at various fora the issues of Islamophobia as well as the mistreatment of minorities in India.

Customs foil smuggling bid worth millions

QUETTA (APP): The Quetta Customs on Wednesday foiled a smuggling bid and recovered a large number of new tires, blisters, betel nut, harmful Chinese salt and Iranian dry milk in operations against smugglers in Balochistan on Wednesday.

According to the Spokesman of Pakistan Customs Balochistan, Dr. Atta Bareach, a truck and a container were stopped near Sarkhab Mihajir camp and a large number of new tires, chalia, gutka, harmful Chinese salt and Iranian dry fruit were recovered from it, and later vehicle took into custody.

The general public particularly the villagers have been advised to remain away from the nullahs and streams as the Met office has already predicted more rains till July 30.

According to the alert issued by the Met department, there’s a threat of flashflood in the streams and nullahs in Hub and adjoining areas.

The general public has also been advised to avoid unnecessary travel on the Quetta-Karachi highway.

Peshawar’s environmental samples tested polio positive

ISLAMABAD (APP): The environmental samples collected from Peshawar district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province tested positive for wild poliovirus.

According to the Ministry of National Health Services, on receiving the report, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said that the poliovirus on any side of the border was a threat to children everywhere.

He said that parents must continue to ensure that their children under five received the anti-polio drops in all campaigns.

“The Pakistan Polio Programme is maintaining a robust surveillance system, which is evident from the prompt detections of the virus in sewage samples recently,” he said.

Three minors killed as roof collapsed in Mansehra

MANSEHRA (APP): At least three minors died and seven others of a family were injured when a house collapsed in the Damgalla Datta area on Tuesday due to torrential rains. The total death tolls caused by the rain reached 8 in district Mansehra. According to the sources, the house of Sabir Shah collapsed amid heavy rain and all family members were buried alive under the debris. Locals rushed to the spot, retrieved the injured after an effort for hours and shifted them to the King Abdulullah Teaching Hospital. The doctors declared dead Sabir Shah’s son Saeedullah, 6, and his nephews Haydahtullah, 8, and Mohammad Firdous 10 while two out of seven injured, including Sabir Shah’s wife and a son, were referred to Ayub Medical Complex Hospital Abbottabad (ATH) owing to critical condition.

Dr Rubaba lauds role of media in reforming society

QUETTA (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Science and IT, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi on Wednesday said that journalists have performed their professional duties diligently and played the best role to reform society.

She expressed these views while talking to a delegation who called on her under the leadership of the senior vice president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Saleem Shahid.

While talking to the delegation, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said journalists played a very positive role in the last five years’ parliamentary journey by adopting the attitude of encouraging the better work of the provincial government and criticizing the negligence.

“Over the years, a cordial relationship between the provincial government and the press has been established, and it is hoped that this sustainable series of criticism for reform and guidance in a positive direction will continue in the future, she maintained. Earlier, Senior Program Officer Shirkat Gah Balochistan Seema Batool and Admin Officer Anwar Baloch met the parliamentary secretary and thanked her for supporting various steps for women’s rights, including the Women Protection Bill.

Appreciating the efforts of Shirkat Gah for providing technical support and holding various advisory meetings, the parliamentary secretary said that the entire team fully supported the Commission on Status of Women in this important legislation.

Pakistan at 99th place among 121 countries on Global Hunger Index

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has dropped from 38.1 in 2006 to 26.1 in 2022 in the ranking on the Global Hunger Index (GHI-2022) and is at 99th place in the list of 121 countries.

According to the report, although Pakistan’s ranking has improved, the hunger level is considered serious. Zero score indicates a country has no issue of hunger.

The report said 16.9 per cent population in Pakistan was undernourished. The death rate of children under the age of five years is 6.5 per cent and 7.1 per cent are wasted, while 37.6 per cent children under five are stunted.

The problem itself is due to a combination of factors. One is the devastating 2022 summer floods. A second is the current economic crisis that is severely affect-

Pakistan at 99th place among 121 countries on Global Hunger Index

ing the Pakistan government’s ability to manage food scarcity.

The devastating floods destabilised Pakistan’s rising inflation and poor economic situation. Pakistani government officials stated that the floods destroyed almost 80 per cent of crops. This staggering number has major ramifications for a country where an average household spends around 50 per cent of its income on food.

“The current edition of the GHI reveals that armed conflicts, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic are intensifying each other; as a result, up to 828 million people were forced to go hungry. As things stand, 46 countries will not even achieve a low level of hunger by 2030, much less eliminate hunger entirely.

QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Finance Zahid Saleem presiding over a meeting regarding financial affairs of Technical Education Departments.

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