

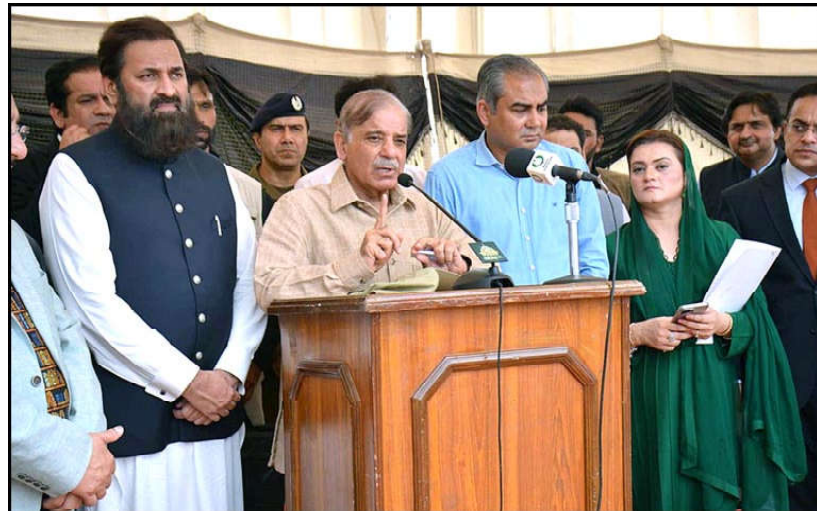
Independent

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Quetta

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MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressing his views after visiting under construction Nishtar II Hospital.

Kashmir Martyrs Day reminds us of great sacrifices rendered by innocent Kashmiris: CM

Says people of Pakistan including Balochistan are standing with their Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for freedom

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has paid homage to the innocent and armless Kashmiris who embraced martyrdom on July 13, 1931 in the Occupied Kashmir.

In a message issued here on the Kashmir Martyrs Day observed on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that the voice of Kashmiris

for their right of determination can't be suppressed and as such the United Nations and other international organizations should take notice of the Indian state aggression and violation of human rights continued in the Occupied Kashmir.

Referring the Kashmir Martyrs Day, the Chief Minister said that this day reminds us the great sacrifices rendered by the innocent and armless Kashmiris against the naked aggression by the Dogra force.

He said that this day also reminds us that the voice of right and truth can't be overpowered by force.

The Chief Minister noted with concern that hundreds of thousands Kashmiris have been martyred and a number of

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QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Zamrak Khan Achakzai, acting Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Rehman Buzdar and Provincial Secretaries attending meeting of Executive Committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council chaired by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal through video link

SJC moved against shelving corruption reference in respect of Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed in Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against shelving corruption reference regarding Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi of Supreme Court (SC). The petition has been filed by Mian Dawood advocate and its copies have been sent to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and other members of SJC.

It has been said in the petition that petitioner has filed reference in SJC since February 23, 2023 against financial corruption and illegal increase in his and his family members assets through, misuse of his judicial office by SC judge Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi.

Authentic information and irrefutable evidences have been provided in the reference. However no proceeding has been initiated against Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi with regard to reference despite lapse of four months.

It has been further stated in the petition the petitioner has come to know through different sources that CJP is persistently providing protection to Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi the most corrupt judge in of the judicial history and he is not fixing the reference for hearing to save Justice Mazahar.



GILGIT: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah administering oath from Newly Elected Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan at Governor Secretariat.

Lack of coordination major cause behind delay: Commissioner dismayed over NHA's slow pace of work on Western bypass project

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Commissioner Quetta Division, Sohailur Rehman Baloch has expressed anguish over the slow pace of work on the Western bypass NH-25 project by the National Highway Authority (NHA).

The Commissioner was chairing a meeting held to review the progress of Western bypass project and removal of the hurdles in its completion, here on Thursday.

The meeting attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Quetta

(General), Anwar Kakar, Assistant Commissioner Quetta (Political), Babar Khan, besides the representatives of Sui Southern Gas Company, QESCO and NHA.

The meeting reviewed the work of shifting of the utility lines on the Western bypass as well as the hurdles being faced in completion of the project in detail.

Addressing the meeting, the Commissioner expressed concern over the slow pace of work on the project and described lack

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Haji Gulbar elected as CM GB

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (Online): Haji Gulbar has been elected as Chief Minister (CM) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

The GB Assembly on Thursday elected Haji Gulbar as new chief minister of the province.

He has been elected as CM with the support of 19 members of GB assembly.

Speaker GB has announced success of Haji Gulbar as CM GB in the polls. Haji Gulbar enjoyed the support of PPP and PML-N.

Haji Gulbar was elected as member of GB assembly in 2020 on PTI ticket. He remained health minister.

Haji Gulbar had remained health minister in PPP led government in 2009. He belongs to district Diamir of GB.

PPP and PML-N had announced to support Haji Gulbar from PTI forward block for the post of CM GB.

The three members of the PTI like-minded group who had submitted their nomination papers for the post of chief minister late at night announced to boycott the election.

Zia Lango pays salute to martyr Kashmiris of July 13, 1931

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has paid salute to the Kashmiris who had been martyred by Indian forces on July 13, 1931.

In a message issued here on eve of the Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Kashmir observed on Thursday, the Minister Home said that we pay salute to 22 martyr Kashmiris on the day of martyrs.

He said that we are standing with Kashmiris on the martyrs day. He said that the freedom of Occupied Kashmir is nearing, and the day is not far away when our Kashmiri brothers and sisters would see the morning of freedom.

Will hand over to caretaker govt in August

Despite conspiracies, coalition govt brings country out of deep crisis in the shortest period: PM

Says his govt cleaned up four years of economic devastation, sacrificing politics to restore the IMF program; It is now time "stand on our own feet and gain our lost position", urges nation to "break the begging bowl"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said despite challenges and conspiracies hatched by the political opponents, the coalition government had successfully managed to put the country in the right direction in the shortest period.

The prime minister, in his over 14-minute address to the nation, said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme agreed by the previous government on the toughest conditions, was the biggest obstacle in the way of the country's economic revival.

The last regime had brought the country to the brink of default by deviating from that agreement, he

added. He said ironically, the political opponents remained busy in hatching conspiracies and creating hurdles while the coalition government was trying to resume the programme.

The incumbent government had to face the biggest challenges and conspiracies in Pakistan's democratic history in the shortest period, and steered it out of the deep crisis, he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the coalition government was going to end in August on completing its tenure and would hand over the reins to the caretaker set up.

"During the short period of one and a quarter

years, due to our collective wisdom and prudent policies, we cleared the debris and economic landmines laid by the previous government," he added.

He said the period of his government was a journey of moving from the destruction towards construction, economic stability, helping the flood affected people, providing maximum employment to the jobless and relief to the people hit by inflation, and revival of freedom of speech, media freedom and national integration.

He said the coalition parties sacrificed their politics for saving the country from default by taking the toughest decisions. "We al-

Continued on page 2

Pakistan gets \$1.2bn from IMF as a first tranche under new deal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday transferred US\$1.2 billion to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) out of total \$3 billion under the Stand-By Agreement (SBA) that was approved by the IMF board the previous day.

Talking to media persons, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said that the balance amount of \$1.8 billion would be provided after two reviews that would be held in November 2023 and February 2024.

The finance minister said that the IMF funds would help improve foreign exchange reserves, adding that in total around \$4.2

billion were added to the country's reserves during the week.

These include \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$1 billion from United Arab Emirates and \$1.2 billion from IMF.

The state bank would issue the exact figures on Friday he said adding that the reserves are expected to reach between \$13 to \$14 billion.

The minister thanked Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and his economic team for their untiring efforts made during the past eight months in materializing the programme.

The minister said that the agreement was limited to 9 months to enable new elected government to take decisions for future.

SC fixes case regarding army court for hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday fixed July 18, a date to hear the cases pertaining trials of rioters of May 9, in military courts.

A six-member bench of the top court headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial would take up the cases for further hearing.

The court served notices to all respondents regarding the next date of hearing.

The court also fixed cases for hearing on July 21, regarding Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill 2023.

An eight-member bench of the top court headed by the chief justice would take up the case for hearing.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh talking with Ulema and representative of Anjuman Tijran regarding security arrangements for Muharramul Haram

Present govt makes state broadcasters financially viable: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the present government during its 14-month rule had taken several steps to transform the Pakistan Television Corporation and the Radio Pakistan into financially viable organizations.

Addressing the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting about the reforms carried out in the state broadcasters, the minister said the former government had planned to auction the national assets, including Radio Pakistan and PTV.

The committee meeting chaired by Javaria Zafar Aahir, was attended by its members Zaib Jafar, Kiran Imran Dar, Zulfiqar Ali, Naz Baloch, Dr Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Nasir Khan Musazai and Asiya Azeem.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mubasher Hassan, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Chairman Saleem Baig

and other officers of the Ministry of Information also attended the meeting.

The minister said now both the Radio Pakistan and the PTV were now on moving path of self-reliance and due to the prudent policies of the present regime, the latter had earned a record profit worth Rs 5.5 billion during the current year.

The government, she added, had regularized all contract employees of the PTV to boost its performance.

She informed the panel that the PTV Peshawar Center had started 24-hour transmission of its programmes in regional languages, including Pashto, while Multan and Karachi centres were airing round-the-clock their programmes in Saraiki and Sindhi languages respectively.

All studios of the PTV Lahore had been upgraded, she said, adding a virtual studio was set up in the PTV Islamabad Center.

Marriyum said for the promotion of filmmaking,

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ATC issues bailable arrest warrants of Imran, Shibli others

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has issued bailable arrest warrants of chairman PTI, Shibli Faraz, Farrukh Habib, Hassan Niazi and others.

The court while issuing bailable arrest warrants of the accused has directed them to appear in person before it on July 19.

PTI chairman did not appear in ATC.

The court while rejecting the exemption plea issued bailable arrest warrants.

The court also issued bailable arrest warrants of Shibli Faraz, Farrukh Habib, Hassan Niazi and other leaders in judicial complex riots case.

The hearing of two cases registered in Ramna police station and one in Golra police station against Chairman PTI started in the court. Their lawyer filed the plea for exemption.

Sardar Masroof, counsel for chairman PTI told the court his client has to appear in Lahore high court. Therefore, he could not come to Islamabad.

Shehbaz Sharif says: Instead of serving humanity, PTI doing revenge politics

MULTAN (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif said that previous government did nothing except repeating rhetoric of bandits, thieves.

Where is the justice in doing politics on projects of public interests?

He expressed his views while talking to media on his visit to under-construction Nishtar-2 Hospital in Multan equipped with international medical facilities.

He said that those who brought Chairman PTI on their shoulders would have got this hospital completed by his government but what happened after that is history. Now this hospital will be completed on September 30. He said that PTI government had wasted 4 years by not releasing funds.

The last 4 years were grossly neglected which is less to be condemned.

The suffering humanity was waiting for the completion of the hospital but previous government had not issued funds even to hospitals.



QUETTA: Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan Nazir Muhammad Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Govt. determined to restore railway network between twin cities of Sibi-Harnai

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the present government is determined to restore the railway network between twin historic cities of Sibi and Harnai.

He said that Sibi city has a historic and traditional value. This city has also been center of the Pashtoon-Baloch tribes while its role can't be overlooked too from agriculture and livestock point of view.

This was stated by the Governor while speaking to the former caretaker Chief Minister, Nawab Ghous Baksh Barozai who called on him at the Governor House on Thursday.

The Governor spoke about the importance of historic city of Sibi. He said that Sibi is also an important source of spreading message of peace and stability to the people of the country.

He said that we are well aware of the sense of deprivation prevailing among the people of Sibi besides the lack of basic facilities there.

He said that it is his personal desire and endeavor to provide all basic facilities to the people of Sibi at their doorstep. Referring the Chakar Khan University in Sibi, the Governor said that the students of Sibi and adjoining areas are benefiting from the facility of higher education with establishment of the University. It would also have far reaching impacts in future, adding he believed.

About the Barozai family, the Governor said that there has been important role of Barozai family in the history of region, and expressed the hope that they would continue to play their due role for development and prosperity of the province and country.

Kashmiris observe 92nd Kashmir Martyrs Day

MIRPUR (AJK)

(APP): Kashmiris living on both sides of the Line of Control, besides the rest of the world, observed the 92nd Kashmir Martyrs Day on Thursday with the renewal of the pledge to continue the grand mission of the Kashmiri martyrs through continuing the freedom struggle, with full vigour, for the achievement of the birthright of self-determination.

They paid glorious tributes to the martyrs of Jammu & Kashmir including 22 valiant sons of the soil for laying down the supreme sacrifices.

About 92 years ago on this day (July 13) in 1931 in front of Central Jail Srinagar raised mutiny by laying the foundation stone of the movement for the liberation of the motherland from the despotic Dogra

Maharajah's rule.

Special prayer meetings and symposiums were the hallmark of the Kashmir Martyrs Day across AJK as well as at various places in the strife-torn Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the rest of the world to observe the day.

It was on this day in 1931 when the Dogra troops shot dead 23 Kashmiris in front of the Central Jail Srinagar. A large number of people had gathered outside the jail protesting against the trial of a young man—Abdul Qadeer for treason inside the high-security zone.

In AJK, it was a state holiday to facilitate the people to participate in the events of the day from all over the liberated territory.



QUETTA: A delegation of All Pakistan Regional Newspapers Society meeting with Director General Public Relations Kamran Asad

President Alvi urges world to ensure peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute

Pakistani people join Kashmiris in solemnly observing Kashmir Martyrs' Day: PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the international community, especially the international human rights organizations and the United Nations human rights machinery, to take cognizance of the dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Arif Alvi in a message on Kashmir Martyrs Day observed, Thursday, called upon these global bodies to ensure a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

He said on this solemn occasion, he pays homage to the 22 Kashmiri martyrs, who rendered the ultimate sacrifice while braving the indiscriminate firing by the Dogra forces in 1931.

He further said that as they honoured the invaluable sacrifices of the heroes of 1931 as well as all innocent Kashmiris who had laid down their lives in their this just struggle, they once again urged India to immediately halt repression in IIOJK, cease all human rights violations, release all political prisoners, lift the military siege, stop its attempts to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory, and let the Kashmiri people exercise their legitimate right to self-determination.

On this somber day, he said, the people of Pakistan joined their Kashmiri brethren in commemorating the sacrifice of the Martyrs of 1931.

Regrettably, the president noted that Kashmiris were still struggling against India's illegal occupation. Even today, over 900,000

strong Indian forces continued to hold the Kashmiri people hostage to perpetuate their wrongful occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

The President said India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 were yet another attempt to strip the Kashmiri people of their distinct identity and turn them into a minority in their own land.

Meanwhile Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, has said the people of Pakistan join their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in solemnly observing the Kashmir Martyrs' Day and paying rich tribute to those who laid down their lives on this day in 1931.

The prime minister in a tweet, today, said these Kashmiris chose to embrace martyrdom but refused to give in to the oppression of Dogra rule.

Miftah Ismail says: Credit for agreement with IMF goes to PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Finance Minister (FM) Miftah Ismail has said the credit of agreement with IMF goes to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif.

"Credit for IMF agreement goes to PM as he only talked to US in connection with IMF program, Miftah said in a statement issued here Thursday. He went on to say way of working of government is so outdated that no work can be done.



QUETTA: A delegation of employees of PTV led by Jailil Ahmed meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

FIA confirms Over 400,000 social media accounts exposed for spreading blasphemy in Pakistan

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

It called upon them to play their responsible role in the campaign to curb offensive material and, in every circumstance, to utilize legal avenues to combat such content by reporting it to the relevant cyber crime authorities and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), it said. According to details released by the Ministry, nefarious elements have been actively using social media to launch a well-organized campaign aimed at undermining the ethics, behavior, and beliefs of our youth for several years.

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

As per the Ministry's statement, highly organized campaigns on social media

platforms are being conducted to spread extremely blasphemous material against the most revered figures, including Allah Almighty (God), the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), the Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet's family), the Mothers of the Believers, the Companions of the Prophet, the Holy Quran, and the national flag. Such offensive content is being shared through images and videos on specific applications and groups.

The Cyber Crimes wing of the FIA has apprehended individuals involved in these crimes, including doctors, professors, engineers, chartered accountants, lawyers, and people from various walks of life.

According to the Ministry, the report filed by the FIA Cyber Crime and the investigation conducted by the Legal Commission in the Rawalpindi Bench of the Lahore High Court revealed that more than four hundred thousand accounts in Pakistan are involved in disseminating such severe blasphemy. The proliferation of indecency through social media is promoting the degradation of our society and dragging the new generation into the quagmire of blasphemy. Currently, over 100 million people in the country use social media, which demonstrates the rapid spread of this evil.

Govt should provide support, guidance to farmers for advancement of agriculture, livestock: Kakar

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar Thursday said that measures would be taken to organize a national level seminar in the provincial capital Quetta regarding development of agriculture and livestock sectors to stabilize the country's economic system.

This can be done with certainty if we succeed in developing the livestock sector on modern lines, then only Balochistan will meet the need of sacrificial animals of five million pilgrims of Saudi Arabia, he said adding that therefore, it was important that the government would provide full support and guidance to the owners and landlords and farmers across the province.

He said that in addition to providing cheap electric-

ity and quality seeds to the landlords, provision of vaccines, proper food and quality medicines for the livestock of the farmers.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of landowners led by Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Asghar Tareen and Director General of Balochistan Agricultural Research and Development Center Nadeem Sadiq at Governor House Quetta.

The Governor directed the QESCO to immediately provide electricity with full voltage to all agricultural feeders in all the farmers. He said that the economy of Pakistan and especially Balochistan was mainly agricultural in nature, the most important and largest part of the economy in province was related to livestock as it was

a fact that Balochistan was a land of natural pastures. There are also many rare species of animals and birds and it can be developed as a profitable business at the international level by developing livestock and fisheries on modern lines, he said.

He said that every year in Saudi Arabia, about five million sacrificial animals were brought from different countries to be sacrificed on the occasion of Umrah and especially offering Hajj.

While this need of Saudi Arabia can only be fulfilled from development of the Livestock Department by Balochistan with its own resources. It is said to know about the nomads of Balochistan that even in this advanced age, they do not have the basic facilities of life, he said.

Pakistan among first countries to recognize Algerian govt after revolution: Brahim Romani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Algerian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Brahim Romani on Thursday said Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize the interim government of the Algerian Revolution, declared on September 19, 1958 and opened its representative office in the capital, Karachi, at that time.

Pakistan, he said, also granted diplomatic passports to some leaders of the revolution, including Ahmed Ben Bella, who became the first President of the Algerian Republic from 1962 to 1965, after the regaining of independence.

Pakistan also supported the positions of the Algerian Revolution in the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement since its establishment in 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, he remarked.

He was speaking at a function hosted by Pervaz Hoodbhoy to honour Dr. Eqbal Ahmed, a renowned thinker, researcher, journalist, poet, and supporter of the Algerian Revolution.

The ambassador said the Algerian government established the 'International Association Friends of the Algerian Revolution to honour those, including Dr Eqbal Ahmed, who had fought, sacrificed, extended solidarity and supported the Algerian Revolution of 1954-1962 in all forms of assistance.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan calls on by Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins.

Senate body on Kashmir Affairs and GB meets

ISLAMABAD (Online): A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan was held today at the Parliament House, chaired by Senator Prof. Sajid Mir.

At the outset, a comprehensive briefing was given by Additional secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to highlight the issue of repealing Articles 370 and 35A, which revoked the special status of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir by India, on various international forums. The officials emphasized that Kashmir is a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. Since India's unilateral actions on August 5, 2019, the Government of Pakistan made a fundamental decision not to engage with India bilaterally until the previous status of Jammu and Kashmir is restored. The officials stated that Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmir cause is evident from our efforts to raise awareness about the plight of Kashmiri people at international platforms such as the UN. These efforts aim to sensitize the international community

about the human rights violations committed by Indian forces. The officials cited the Pak-China joint statement as an example, which called for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with relevant UN resolutions and bilateral agreements. Senator Prof. Sajid Mir, the chairman of the committee, emphasized the need to highlight these efforts to dispel the perception that the Kashmir issue is being ignored.

The committee was also briefed on the progress of the construction of Ms Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College in Mirpur and Mirwaz Muhammad Farooq Shaheed Medical College in Muzaffarabad. It was informed that the revised project, which includes the construction of 11 buildings such as an auditorium, hostels for boys/girls/doctors, library, and sports gymnasium, was approved by the CDWP in 2022. Regarding Mirwaz Muhammad Farooq Shaheed Medical College Muzaffarabad, the revised project for civil and external development works was also approved by the CDWP in 2022.

Present govt makes state....

Continued from page 1 the PTV Film Division had been established, besides setting up the Film Production Institute at the PTV Academy.

She said now film production and media related courses were being started in the PTV Academy.

Cinemas were being established on the premises of the Radio Pakistan Lahore and Peshawar, and their foundation stones had been laid, she added.

The minister said 12 new studios were established in the Radio Pakistan Islamabad, while the work of digitizing the entire archive of Radio Pakistan had started.

"On May 9, the building of Radio Pakistan Peshawar was burnt down, but we have started a project for its restoration," she informed the committee.

The minister recalled

the then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government had introduced the first film policy in 2017-18, and now money had been allocated for the purpose in the current year's budget.

In the film policy, she added, filmmakers had been given immense incentives. Moreover, she said, health insurance funds had been established for artists and journalists.

The minister said they had worked round the clock during the last 14 months to complete the projects.

"When we came into power, we used the national assets for the people and did not opt for their auction," she said recalling the tenure of former information minister who had come up with the policy of selling everything.

She said now national broadcasters were playing their due role in providing information to the public in a better way.

Kashmir Martyrs Day...

Continued from page 1 children have been made orphan by the Indian forces in the Occupied Kashmir.

While on the other hand, there is a complete ban on expression of opinion and freedom of press in the Occupied Kashmir and the people are forced not to lodge protest, he maintained.

The Chief Minister said that India might have forgotten that the voice of Kashmiris can't be put down by using extreme force.

He asserted that the people of Pakistan including Balochistan are standing with their Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for freedom.

He demanded of the United Nations and other international organizations to take notice of the situation of Occupied Kashmir and give the right of plebiscite to the Kashmiris.

He also demanded of the world community to force India to restore the special status of Kashmir.

Commissioner dismayed over...

Continued from page 1 of coordination among the concerned departments as major cause behind delay in its completion despite wholehearted cooperation being extended in this regard.

Sohailur Rehman Baloch mentioned that two special magistrates have been deputed to monitor the work of the projects of Sariab road, Sabzal road and Eastern bypass projects in Quetta.

The Commissioner charged that the work on the vital project is incomplete just because of the alleged carelessness of the NHA and lack of coordination between the line departments.

Otherwise, this project should have been completed by the end of June this year, he mentioned.

He asserted that no negligence would be tolerated on the project, and stressing that it should be completed within next one and half month.

Continued from page 1 ways remained worried about increasing the foreign exchange reserves instead of thinking about our vote banks."

The prime minister said despite anti-state conspiracies, the government did not lose its heart and succeeded to reach a staff level agreement with the IMF.

"Today on behalf of the whole nation, I sincerely thank friendly and brotherly countries China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, which once again supported Pakistan with sincerity under very difficult situation and that can never be forgotten," he added.

He said the way, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan played their role in bringing Pakistan out of the crisis, was praiseworthy.

The prime minister also acknowledged the efforts of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the diplomatic front. Similarly, he also appreciated Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir for their untiring efforts to help stabilize the economy.

Now, he said, the time had come to regain the country's lost glory by moving forward with collective wisdom and struggle. For that purpose, he added, a comprehensive national plan of economic revival had been finalized. The Special Investment Facilitation Council had been set up, which had initiated its work and was paving the way for big investments from the Gulf countries in various fields including agriculture, industry, energy, IT, defence production and minerals, he said.

PM Shehbaz also assured the nation that on this national agenda, the federal government, all the provincial governments, and the

Despite conspiracies, coalition govt brings country.....

armed forces were adopting the whole of the government approach to make it a success.

Expressing satisfaction over the overall economic situation, the prime minister said the trust of the business and investment communities was also reviving while the international rating agency Fitch had also improved Pakistan's rating to triple C.

Similarly, he said, the United Nation's Human Rights Council had also testified the improving situation of human rights in Pakistan whereas the country had also showed improvement by seven points in the International Freedom Index.

Shehbaz Sharif said when the staff level agreement with the IMF was announced on June 30, the investors expressed their full satisfaction through the Stock Exchange Market as the KSE-100 index jumped by record 2446 points in a single day.

Now the Stock Exchange had crossed the 45,000 points level which was the highest in 14 months, he said adding that the value of Pakistani Rupee was also improving.

The prime minister said the Rs 1,150 billion historical development budget, Rs 2,000 billion agriculture development fund under Kissan Package, conversion of agriculture tube wells to solar energy, Rs 80 billion Prime Minister Youth Programme, interest-free and concessional loans in agriculture industry, IT and other sectors, provision of laptops to the talented students, educational scholarships, women empowerment, special scholarships to families of martyrs, and timely completion of infrastructural projects were few of the achievements of the incumbent government.

Resolving to break the begging bowl, he asked the

youth to come forward to take the country to new heights of development and prosperity.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the deal inked with International Monetary Fund (IMF) was a moment for Pakistan to re-evaluate its policies towards attaining the goals of financial self-reliance.

"The IMF agreement is not a moment of rejoice, but to assess the state of affairs as to how the country has become dependent on loans and foreign grants," he said in his address at the PM Youth Loan and Laptop Scheme event here at the Bahauddin Zakariya University.

The IMF's executive board on Wednesday approved the \$US3 billion stand-by agreement for Pakistan to help overcome its current financial challenges.

The prime minister said though the country had averted the dangers of default, however, consistent efforts were required to stabilize the economy from recent external shocks.

He emphasized a united approach by all segments of the country including the government, the State institutions, and the nation to lead the country towards financial self-reliance.

"A nation, which learns from its mistakes and takes corrective measures, attain the goals of prosperity," he said.

Terming youth the future of Pakistan, he said the development policies must ensure their inclusion in the national mainstream.

The government, he said, was pursuing the vision of encouraging the youth in educational and professional fields.

He appreciated the brilliant students who were focusing their energies on education with dedication and hard work. He recalled establishing several Danish schools across Punjab and south Punjab for underprivileged students to help them excel. The prime minister said contrary to nepotism, merit could help drive students belonging to underprivileged backgrounds to achieve success in their fields.

He mentioned that due to the restraint of resources, only 100,000 laptops were being distributed under the programme and stressed the need for expanding the project to benefit a large number of students.



QUETTA: Daily wages labours sitting under umbrella while waiting for customers during hot day.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
SINGLE STAGE - ONE ENVELOPE PROCEDURE

Tenders are hereby invited in sealed covers from approved Government Contractors who have the relevant filed of specialization and duly registered / renewed their enrollment for 2023-2024 with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant category. The schedule for the purchase of bidding documents and submission/ opening of Bids shall be as quoted below.

| | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------|
| i | Submission of Application with documents quoted below up to | 27.07.2023 (Office Hours) |
| ii | Issuance of Bidding documents on | 31.07.2023 (Office Hours) |
| iii | Submission of Bids on | 01.08.2023 (Till 12:30 PM) |
| iv | Opening of Bids on | 01.08.2023 (at 1.00 PM) |

| S.No. | Name of Work | Estimated Cost NIT | Earnest money | Cost of Tender |
|-------|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. | DEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN KALAT DISTRICT PACKAGE NO.I | 146957522/- | 04% of Bid amount | 5000/- |
| 2. | DEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN SURAB DISTRICT PACKAGE NO.II | 146957522/- | 04% of Bid amount | 5000/- |
| 3. | DEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN MASTUNG DISTRICT PACKAGE NO.III | 146957522/- | 04% of Bid amount | 5000/- |

NOTE: Tender can be purchased for prescribed cost (Non-refundable) in the shape of Pay order of Rs.5000/- mentioned against the above noted works from the office of the undersigned during office hours upto 27.07.2023, that is before the date of opening of tender

Note: If the Tender are not sold/ opened on the schedule mentioned above, 2nd schedule date for the sale of tender will be up to 03.08.2023 and will be received back on 04.08.2023 up to 10.00 AM and will be opened on same date, 3rd schedule date for the sale of tender will be up to .07.08.2023 and will be received back on 08.08.2023 up to 10.00 AM and will be opened at same date while other Terms & Conditions will

All other Term & Condition may please be seen on PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk) Notice Board of this Division.

Executive Engineer
Central Civil Division No-1
PAK PWD, Quetta

PID(Q)18/23

Law minister chairs meeting to finalize rules for Sex Offender Register

ISLAMABAD (APP): A crucial meeting was convened on Thursday at the Law Ministry to discuss and finalize the rules pertaining to the establishment of a comprehensive Sex Offender Register. The meeting was chaired by Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazir Tarrar, and attended by the Chairperson of the Special Committee and National Commission on the Rights of Child, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, the committee's focal person and Deputy Advisor Ministry of Law and Justice Usama Malik, and Section Officer J.R. Sultan. The purpose of the meeting was to present an update on the progress made so far.

During the meeting, the participants engaged in in-depth discussions re-

garding the framework and implementation of the Sex Offender Register. The Chairperson of the Special Committee expressed gratitude for the opportunity to present the progress made by the committee in developing robust rules and regulations for the register. Section Officer J.R. Sultan elaborated on the intricate legal aspects that need to be considered while formulating a comprehensive and effective system.

The committee's focal person, Usama Malik provided valuable insights into the technical aspects of maintaining and managing the register. The subject rules shall be finalized once approved by the special committee under the Anti Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021.

The minister, ac-

knowledge the significance of establishing a Sex Offender Register to safeguard the rights and well-being of individuals, particularly vulnerable sections of society. He emphasized the government's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of its citizens, especially children. With a firm resolve, the minister reaffirmed the ministry's support for the Special Committee and its efforts to develop a robust and efficient system. The creation of a Sex Offender Register is a crucial step in combating sexual offenses and preventing the recurrence of such heinous crimes. This register will serve as a comprehensive database, enabling law enforcement agencies to effectively monitor and track convicted sex offenders.



ISLAMABAD: Law Minister, Senator Azam Nazir Tarrar chairing a meeting with Chairperson Special Committee and National Commission on the Rights of Child, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, the committee's focal person and Deputy Advisor Ministry of Law and Justice Usama Malik and Section Officer J.R. Sultan.

Talha stresses media's role for spreading culture of tolerance, respecting religions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood Thursday said that the government is committed to providing full support to promote religious tourism in the country so the media should play a positive role in spreading a culture of tolerance and interfaith harmony.

"Media platforms are a huge effect on people's

lives and thus should aim at spreading the speech of moderation and tolerance against hate speech and extremism," he said while talking to a private news channel.

"There is no stability in our existence without spreading the true spirit of brotherhood, unity, solidarity, and coexistence, regardless of religion and the diversity of cultures," he further mentioned.

Replying to a question, he said Islam is a reli-

gion of peace as it turned enemies into brotherly friends and preaches love among humans irrespective of caste, colour, creed, or gender.

He said we reject propaganda drives against Muslims in any part of the world saying our great religion Islam preaches peace, compassion, tolerance, and harmony. As Muslims, we strongly believe we have to respect all other religions and their sacred books, he mentioned.

Irfan calls for judiciary to deliver 'easy and speedy' justice for all

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui Thursday said that his leadership firmly believed in the supremacy of the constitution and stressed the need to simplify laws for the general public to provide speedy and easy justice for all.

"Law should be treated equally for everyone and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should be

held accountable for its anti-state acts over the past few days", he demanded while talking to the PTV news channel.

"Democracy can only flourish if the undemocratic forces are held accountable in a country and the courts should dispense justice without any discrimination," he added.

Replying to a question, he replied that all cases against Imran Khan are based on facts.

Raja says: No sectarian issue in Parachinar, but conspiracy against Pak

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen Pakistan Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Jafari has said in his statement released from the media cell that the attack on Parachinar ahead of Muharram ul Haram is a deliberate conspiracy of anti-state elements. Parachinar situation is also a precursor of a big storm.



ISLAMABAD: NDMA and Save the Children sign an MoU to enhance cooperation in field of Disaster 5 Risk Reduction. Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik witnessed the ceremony.

Rana inaugurates women's police station

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior, Rana Sana Ullah on Thursday inaugurated a Women's Police Station in the federal capital in order to empower and cater needs of women by providing state-of-the-art facilities.

"The government has completed all the demands of Islamabad police by the establishing women's police station, increasing salaries and paying due allowances. Now, it is the responsibility of the police to ensure the safety of the citizen," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony.

The minister said that Islamabad was the face of the country as a huge diplomatic community lived here and analyzed the social setting of the country through the infrastructure and intuitions of Islamabad.

"Therefore, every institution of the federal capital should be a role model, particularly the police department as it deals the public mostly," he added.

Stressing the need of maintaining discipline in the force, Rana Sanaulah said a well-disciplined police department in the federal capital would help create a positive image of the country across the globe.

He said that the PML-N government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif left no stone unturned to make the city modern and started different development projects in that regard.

Divulging details of the projects, he said that a total development projects worth Rs 150 billion were underway in the capital out of which Rs 100 billion would be completed before elections.

Amir Muqam, Awais Leghari call on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed with him overall political situation in the country.

Amir Muqam praised the prime minister of his recent announcement to establish a university for the people of the erstwhile tribal areas.

He expressed confidence that the university would help the youth of the area to excel in educational and professional fields.

Separately, President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Punjab chapter and former parliamentarian Awais Leghari called on the prime minister and discussed with him the political situation in country.

Sherry says: Citizens to remain watchful amid new monsoon spell start

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday urged the citizens and authorities concerned to remain watchful amid start of new spell of monsoon.

The federal minister took to Twitter to share the update as the new spell of monsoon season had commenced.

Senator Rehman said that rains with thunder-showers were likely in different areas of Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. "This new wave of monsoon is likely to continue till July 17. In the meantime,



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Andrei Metelitsa calls on the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari.

DG health stresses Media awareness to utilize 'Humraaz app' to improve mental health

ISLAMABAD (Online): Director General Health Ministry of Health, Dr Baseer Khan Achakzai Thursday stressed media and youth's active role in spreading awareness for utilizing 24 hours available government "Humraaz app" to improve the mental health of the public.

Talking to the PTV news channel, he called for joint efforts by stakeholders, including media and provincial governments, the community, students in medical universities, and health professionals to work for the prevention and treatment of mental health disorders.

To support people's health, the government has launched a revolutionary program in the field of health and introduced a free mobile application "Humraaz" and a free helpline "1166" on which people can share their problems and issues with experts.

He said there is a need to develop positive behavior at a young age to prevent people from falling prey to mental health issues at a later stage in life, adding, around 3 million population need mental health treatments which need more awareness through media.

ECP organises training prog

ISLAMABAD (APP): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) organized a two-day specialized training programme to raise awareness and enhance understanding of the newly developed Election Management System (EMS).

The purpose of the training was to equip officials with comprehensive knowledge of the newly developed system "EMS", facilitating its effective utilization for efficient and secure elections across the country. ECP strengthens its commitment to conducting free, fair, transparent, inclusive and technologically advanced elections. This initiative marks a significant step towards modernizing electoral processes and ensuring the ECP remains at forefront of innovation.

Around 7.2 million families received Benazir Kafaalat payments: Faisal Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Thursday said that around 7.2 million families received their quarterly payments under the Benazir Kafaalat programme till today.

Addressing a press conference, the SAPM said that the Benazir Education stipends were also being disbursed along with the Kafaalat payments.

He advised the beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to only follow the messages which was sent through BISP official number 8171 and ignore the fake messages from other numbers.

The SAPM said that around 0.3 million cards of the beneficiaries, earlier blocked during the previous government tenure, had been reactivated to provide relief to the poor while the remaining cards would be reactivated soon after completing the necessary re-

quirements. To a question, Faisal Kundi said that beneficiaries of BISP would be able to open their accounts in any bank available near to them instead of only two banks which were designated for this purpose in the past.

Expressing his concern over the Parachinar issue, Faisal Kundi urged the political parties and ulemas (Religious Scholars) from all school of thoughts to intervene for resolving the issue of Parachinar.

"There is need to resolve the issue immediately to ensure peace as Muharram is near", Faisal Kundi said.

Land occupation was still a major issue in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led government did nothing for resolving such issues, he said.

Criticizing the attack on the military installations on May 09 by rioters, Faisal Kundi said those involved in the incident must be punished.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfan Siddiqui calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

MD PBM commits to fighting poverty

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

The MD PBM in a statement highlighted the establishment of 46 Sweet Homes across the country, providing care for orphaned children. Additionally, PBM has set up 163 Women Empowerment Centers, promoting skill-based education for women, and 159 Child Labor Welfare Schools. Furthermore, 18 Shelter Homes have been established, and the "Roti Sab Kay Liye" program has been introduced, which offers meals through 20 food trucks.

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

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

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

In the past years, PBM has allocated Rs. 24.7 million for the care and sponsorship of 4,408 children in Sweet Homes.

Additionally, Rs. 40.28 million was spent on shelter and meals for 891,375 individuals in Shelter Homes, and 5,070,614 people were provided meals through the Roti Sab Kay Liye program.

Through the Orphan and Widows Support Program, Rs. 162.4 million was disbursed among 857 families in ten districts. Women attending the Women Empowerment Centers not only receive free vocational training but also receive a daily allowance of Rs. 50. Vocational training has been provided to approximately 14,490 women at a cost of Rs. 4.6 million in the past year.



ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas and Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan Andrea Wicke cuts the ribbon to inaugurate the event entitled "Celebrating 70 Years of the First Ascent of Nanga Parbat by a German-Austrian Expedition 1953" at Austrian residence, in Federal Capital.

Toshakhana case: Court seeks arguments from ECP counsel on today, from Imran counsel on Monday

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has accepted PTI chairman Imran Khan plea for exemption from attendance in Toshakhana case.

The court sought arguments from the lawyers of chairman PTI on July 17.

At the inception of hearing, barrister Gauhar counsel for Imran Khan filed exemption plea from attendance and told the court the hearing could not take place due to non availability of chief justice

Islamabad High Court. One more opportunity be given on the basis of justice.

Additional Sessions Judge Hummayun Dilawar while accepting exemption plea of Imran Khan remarked I am fixing the case for hearing on Saturday.

Barrister Gauhar requested the court to fix the case for hearing on Monday.

Amjid Pervez counsel for election commission opposed it saying he wants to give arguments tomorrow.

Islamabad Police bolster security measures for Muharram processions

ISLAMABAD (APP): In preparation for the upcoming religious observance of Muharram-ul-Haram, the Islamabad police have vowed to implement stringent security arrangements.

A high-level meeting, chaired by SSP (Operations) Malik Jameel Zafar and attended by senior police officials, was held to review the security mea-

sures. The authorities emphasized the utilization of advanced technologies such as safe city cameras, smart cars, surveillance cameras, and drone cameras to maintain high vigilance and ensure the safety of processions. Stringent directives were issued to organizers, emphasizing the cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

The lecture shed light on the pressing global issue of climate change and its far-reaching impacts on the environment and overall human society, especially for developing countries like Pakistan.

Dr Adil Najam provided invaluable insights during the lecture, shedding light on the urgency of addressing climate change.

Water underscored as frontline issue for climate change adaptation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International and Dean Emeritus and Professor of International Relations and Earth and Environment at Boston University's Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies, Dr Adil Najam on Thursday identified water as a frontline issue for climate change adaptation, drawing a parallel between its significance and carbon in mitigation efforts.

He was delivering a distinguished guest lecture on 'From Crisis to Opportunity: Harnessing Climate Change for Pakistan's Sustainable Future', which successfully concluded at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Islamabad, said a news release.

The lecture shed light on the pressing global issue of climate change and its far-reaching impacts on the environment and overall human society, especially for developing countries like Pakistan.

Dr Adil Najam provided invaluable insights during the lecture, shedding light on the urgency of addressing climate change.

He highlighted that we were now living in what he called the 'Age of Adaptation', where the world, particularly poorer and more vulnerable countries, were compelled to confront the impacts of climate change and adapt to them. He explained the distinction between mitigation and adaptation, adding that the politics of climate change had predominantly focused on mitigation since 1992 but countries like Pakistan needed to focus on adaptation.

Dr Najam highlighted that advanced countries needed to decouple economic growth from carbon

production, enabling future global strategies to be conscious of environmental impacts and the persistent presence of climate change in the world. He articulated that climate change should be viewed not just as a "carbon management" challenge but as a development challenge and even a sustainable development opportunity.

The concept of security was another key aspect discussed by Dr Najam, who emphasized that security issues become existential when societies feel threatened about their survival, rendering cost considerations irrelevant. As evidence, he pointed to the swift allocation and spending of trillions of dollars by the US Congress in response to the existential threat of the COVID pandemic.

Highlighting the climate crisis as an existential threat, he drew attention to

the alarming increase in global temperatures, including recent record-breaking highs occurring multiple times within a week in the month of July.

The distinguished guest speaker identified water as a frontline issue for climate change adaptation, drawing a parallel between its significance and carbon in mitigation efforts. Additionally, he discussed the two primary aspects of energy in the context of climate change: clean energy and energy growth.

For Pakistan, achieving energy security also required addressing energy poverty faced by the common citizen, he said. Addressing the failures in wisdom, climate negotiations, politics, and morality, Dr Najam noted the long-standing demand of the world's most vulnerable countries for a Loss and

Damage Fund (L&D), and its eventual acceptance at COP27, as a crucial step forward. However, he acknowledged that at present, such a fund did not exist and lacked funding.

Expressing concerns that climate change would exacerbate existing injustices and broken governance systems, disproportionately burdening the poor and vulnerable in Pakistan, Dr Najam called for a shift from a reactive to a preventive posture and advocated focusing on minimizing "insecurity" efforts rather than maximizing security.

Earlier, Advisor and Director Emerging Technologies at CASS, Air Marshal @ Ashfaq Arain highlighted the pressing global issue of climate change and Pakistan's vulnerability, despite its low carbon emissions. He warned that the melting of glaciers since

1997 had caused devastating consequences, including floods and reduced water availability, and stressed that a comprehensive plan for adaptation and mitigation was needed to safeguard Pakistan's socio-economic conditions and the well-being of its population.

In his Concluding Remarks, Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd), President of CASS, Islamabad, hailed Dr Najam's talk as a powerful wake-up call, urging Pakistan's younger generation to take on the responsibility of confronting climate change head-on. Emphasizing that climate change was already a reality, not a future phenomenon, he drew attention to the often-overlooked threat of sea-induced disasters, warning that their scale could surpass the devastating floods experienced by Pakistan in 2022.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Friday July 14, 2023

Election time

Has the PDM government formally decided to quit office in the first half of August? It would appear so from the remarks Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made on Wednesday during a function in the capital where he sought to rectify his earlier slip-up of mentioning Aug 14 as the last day of the current National Assembly.

A day earlier, the premier had held a meeting with the chief of the PDM coalition, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, in which the latter reportedly stressed that elections in the country needed to be held on time.

The prime minister's whirlwind meeting with Mr Rehman had followed a high-level huddle between the senior leadership of the PPP and PML-N in Dubai, to which the JUI-F chief, much to his chagrin, had not been invited.

The Dubai huddle, aimed at deciding candidates for the caretaker set-up and a possible seat adjustment formula for the upcoming elections, failed to achieve "anything final", according to PPP leaders.

Nonetheless, the PML-N has now indicated when their coalition arrangement is due to expire. This clears up some of the uncertainty about the path forward: the PDM government, at least, will not overstay its welcome.

It is intriguing, however, that the prime minister desisted from providing even a rough timeline for when the next general elections could be held, leaving the matter to the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Technically, the ECP is the relevant authority empowered to announce the election schedule, but its conduct with respect to the elections to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab assemblies — repeatedly delayed in violation of the Constitution — gives rise to justified fears that the path to the next polls may not be straightforward at all.

It is now up to the ECP to clear the air completely. There have been rumours that whatever caretaker set-up is brought in to take the reins from the PDM government may stay on for longer than two or three months, much like the KP and Punjab interim governments, which have continued in office long after their respective tenures expired.

If something like this transpires, it would be antithetical to the entire raison d'être of the ECP. The law minister recently argued during a television show that no power on earth could compel the ECP to set a date for any election, even if the ECP is clearly in violation of the law of the land.

Does his twisted logic betray the true intentions of the state? One hopes that the country will not be taken along on another misadventure. The country desperately needs an empowered government formed after a free and fair election to take it forward. Any move to thwart this will only be seen as another blatant subversion of its constitutional order.



Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

There is no bigger threat to Pakistan's macroeconomic and financial stability than climate shocks. Around this time last year, we were hit by floods costing \$30 billion that have derailed economic growth and development. This sad fact was not lost on the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It has now integrated climate risks as a touchstone in all its lending operations. The staff-level Stand-by Agreement (SBA) with Pakistan is no exception, even if it is not always publicly recognised.

The key conditions of SBA include doing away with heavy subsidies on energy, strengthening public debt sustainability, implementing a market-based exchange rate system, increasing tax revenue, improving governance and reducing

corruption, reforms in the energy sector and, finally, climate resilience.

The last one of these commitments seems innocuous, perhaps out of place. In reality, this will potentially pose a very serious threat to the compliance and adherence of other areas of action. The dark clouds of the monsoons have already begun to gather on the horizon.

Climate change was, however, discussed during the 2021 Article IV Consultation with Pakistan whereby, for the first time, climate change was identified as a priority area for IMF's surveillance activities.

While the IMF and World Bank, two Bretton Woods institutions, are under increasing heat to reform and respond to the climate crisis, the IMF has moved rather quickly. Upon assuming office in October 2019, Kristalina Georgieva acknowledged the centrality of climate change for the Fund's work: "The criticality of addressing climate change for financial stability, for making sure that we can have sustainable growth, is so very clear and proven today, that no insti-

tuition, no individual can step away from the responsibility to act." Soon thereafter, the Resilience and Sustainability Trust was established in April 2022, as a pillar of the IMF's lending toolkit. RST provides longer-term concessional financing to vulnerable middle-income countries like Pakistan to address longer-term climate and other risks. It was probably through this window that IMF fast-tracked the release of \$1 billion following the monstrous floods last year.

While the recipient countries like Pakistan may have been slow to embed climate change in their policies, the IMF has steadily taken up climate risks as an integral part of its lending considerations. For IMF, climate risks have become macro-critical that undermine macroeconomic and financial stability.

By integrating climate risks into its lending frameworks, it has begun to systematically address the risk in vulnerable countries and economies. IMF is now hardly constrained by its mandate to address climate risks.

For Pakistan, and several other countries, it is

poised to become a significant institution in the fight against climatic changes, particularly since IMF has recast all three major pillars of its mandate.

First, Article IV Consultations by IMF is a regular feature of country-level assessments. In the past, it only covered fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies but now it has developed tools to assess the macro-fiscal risks of climate shocks and the climate implications for macroeconomic stability.

The following three climate risks are reportedly covered: i) physical risks such as climate-triggered disasters and their impact on infrastructure, ii) transition risks, such as mitigation and adaptation-related policy changes that could affect economic sectors particularly fossil fuel industries, renewables, and transportation, and iii) financial risks such as the exposure of financial institutions and investors to climate-related risks. Concurrently, IMF has begun to take a closer interest in carbon trading and carbon pricing for debt swaps for climate. IMF also proposes an international carbon price floor arrange-

ment to complement the Paris Agreement.

Second, Financial Sector Assessment helps the IMF identify potential vulnerabilities and risks and make informed policy decisions. It has been a tool jointly used with the World Bank since 1999 for assessment of the stability and soundness of a country's financial sector.

FSA now integrates climate-related financial stability challenges. In order to further strengthen its policy interventions, the IMF is now more active than ever before in the Network for Greening the Financial System, a network of 114 central banks that aims to accelerate the scaling up of green finance. It develops recommendations for a climate-smart role for central banks. The State Bank of Pakistan is also a member, and in recent years, it has moved to promote green banking and align its policies with global sustainable finance policies.

Since climate risks vary from country to country based on the specific country context, it is imperative for Pakistan to begin to engage with IMF at the staff levels to avoid any arbitrariness and help them make in-

formed policy decisions.

Third, since the IMF is a data-driven organisation like no other, it has begun to collect its own datasets for IMF's flagship Climate Change Indicators Dashboard, bringing together climate-related data needed for macroeconomic and financial policy analysis.

The IMF uses climate-related datasets to help its members address the climate challenges for which fiscal and macroeconomic policies are an important component of the appropriate policy response. The datasets are also used to manage climate risks by integrating its macro data on growth, employment, inflation, balance-of-payments, and fiscal deficit with carbon intensity and vulnerability to climate shocks. Carbon intensity is a measure of the amount of CO2 emissions associated with particular activities or products, including the carbon footprint of its loans, carbon taxes, emissions-trading systems, or fuel excise taxes. It has thus become important for policymakers in Pakistan to clearly communicate the rationale for reform to IMF on an ongoing basis.

— Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan's skills report card



Dr Ayesha Razzaque

The vast majority of 240-odd universities in the country are failing both of their missions: the idealistic goal of learning for learning's sake, broadening horizons and personal enlightenment, and also the worldly objective of producing graduates that are skilled, employable, and productive citizens. Of course, universities do not carry all the blame — they have to work with the intake the school system feeds them.

As I have written about on prior occasions, for those with the requisite language skills, internet connectivity, and the ability to self-learn, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) by several providers help bridge the skills gap to achieve employability. Major MOOC providers are sitting on a goldmine of data from learners spanning the globe. For

the last few years, Coursera — the biggest MOOC provider at 124 million subscribers — has been publishing an annual Global Skills Report. The 4,000 skills covered by its library of MOOCs are organized into a multi-level taxonomy. Broadly, however, those skills have been grouped into three broad categories: business, technology, and data science.

The report for 2023 was published a few days ago and covers 100 countries, including Pakistan. In the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills category, Pakistan contributed 642,562 learners on Coursera, the fourth highest, only behind India (around 6.0 million), the United States (around 4.6 million) and Nigeria (675,371). Another glimmer of positive news in Pakistan's data is that year-over-year growth in enrollment for STEM skills stands at 79 per cent, the second highest globally, surpassed only by Nigeria at 98 per cent.

Countries are both ranked and rated for the skills proficiency of their learners. In the ranking, Pakistan stands 92 out of 100. The only countries ranked lower

than Pakistan are Somalia, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines, and Nigeria. For perspective, countries ranked above Pakistan include Uganda (90), Yemen (88), Nepal (80), Zimbabwe (77), Ethiopia (72), Bangladesh (73), and India (60).

Pakistan's business skills index stands at 22 per cent while the Asia-Pacific region's average is 41 per cent. In technology skills, Pakistan scored only 10 per cent versus a regional average of 49 per cent. In data science skills, Pakistan scored an abysmal 8.0 per cent against a regional average of 52 per cent. Not surprisingly, Pakistan is not featured as a country with strengths and opportunities, neither in the business nor data science skills categories in the region.

For its global analysis, the report rated skill levels of learners from countries into one of four categories (quartiles): From the top down, they are labeled 'cutting-edge' (100-75 per cent), 'competitive' (75-50 per cent), 'limited' (50-25 per cent), and 'lagging' (25-0 per cent). Pakistan placed in the last quartile — that is: lagging. Countries in the lagging skills category are character-

ized by an average human capital index score of 52 per cent (against an average of 73 per cent in the cutting-edge category), average internet access of 56 per cent (against 87 per cent in the cutting-edge category), and an average percentage of working age population registered on Coursera of 2.68 per cent (against 4.67 per cent in the cutting-edge category).

In addition to reporting data, the report offers seven key findings.

First, economic growth is tied to skill proficiency: Higher skill proficiency is correlated with economic advances and average GDP per capita (to be clear, correlation does not imply causation). That is what is largely driving the recent global conversation about education that is inclusive of skills.

Second, internet access is tied to economic opportunity. In addition to being a prerequisite for accessing MOOCs, internet access opens the door to remote and online white-collar work opportunities in tech and a growing number of other sectors. In Pakistan, in addition to internet access issues, we also have to contend with frequent internet

closure triggered by political rallies and a growing list of other reasons.

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) very recently issued a report ('The Economic Cost of Internet Closure') that puts the direct losses to businesses by one day's internet shutdown in Pakistan at Rs1.3 billion or 0.57 per cent of the daily GDP. Indirect losses are beyond this and not accounted for.

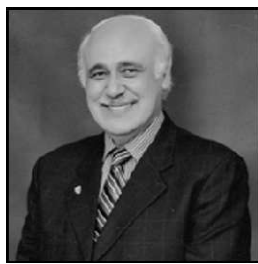
Third, learners in high-income countries are more likely to invest in learning human skills: To no surprise, learners in wealthier societies where jobs are at greater risk of automation tend to invest more in skills less easily automatable. Learners in middle- and low-income communities tend to invest in technical skills that can open the doors to global and remote work opportunities. Fourth, learners with postgraduate education are most likely to invest in AI-related skills: this is not surprising given that a deep enough understanding of artificial intelligence and machine learning requires proficiency in algorithms, statistics, and multiple branches of mathematics. Furthermore, putting that knowledge to work requires

proficiency in programming. In most countries, certainly in Pakistan, education systems only expose learners to these areas at the college/university level.

Fifth, many countries are closing the gender gap in online learning: the global average of women learners on Coursera stands at 43 per cent. Against this backdrop, women make up only 16 per cent of learners from Pakistan. Countries closing the gender gap span the range of high- (Canada 55 per cent, Spain 50 per cent) to medium- (Mexico 51 per cent, Thailand 51 per cent) to low-income countries (Philippines 51 per cent).

Sixth, learners around the world are preparing for digital roles with Professional Certificates: in addition to the second-highest year-over-year growth in STEM enrollments, Pakistan also has the second-highest year-over-year growth in enrollment numbers for professional certificates at 228 per cent (only behind the Philippines at 253 per cent) while the global average growth is 46 per cent. Globally the US (22 million) and India (19 million) still lead in terms of absolute numbers. — Courtesy TheNews

Vacuous governance



F.S. Aijazuddin

Are Pakistanis justified in regarding Islamabad as superfluous to their governance?

Do they need a president? The present incumbent perches in a gilded cage, his wings clipped by the 18th Amendment. Even his power to stall approval to legislation has been circumscribed by the government. It waited until he went on Haj and then got an acting president to sign off in his stead.

Do they need such an obese cabinet? At the last count (March 2023), it comprised 34 federal ministers, seven ministers of state, four advisers to the prime minister and 39 special assistants to the prime minister, making it perhaps the largest mute chorus since independence.

Save for some voluble ministers to whom publicity is akin to oxygen, what do all these personages do except act as a paid claquer whenever the lead tenor sings his solos at cabinet meetings? When was the last time the public heard from their ministers of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety, or National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, or National Food Security and Research, or Science and Technology, or Inter-Provincial Coordination? Their vow of silence would be better served in a Trappist monastery.

Does the country need 342 MNAs and 100 senators when, like the pope, they have no legions to enforce their writ? Nothing could illustrate the degree of parliament's emasculation better than the recent ex-

change between the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Conventionally, the PAC is headed by the Leader of the Opposition. Technically, it should function as a watchdog and occasionally the bloodhound of our national finances. Its bite should be more fearful than its bark.

Similarly, the State Bank is autonomous, charged with overseeing the nation's financial sector. It has formidable punitive powers. Instead, it has become an apologist for well-connected borrowers.

According to a report of the PAC/SBP meeting on July 5, "it was disclosed that during the PTI government's tenure, textile, cement, tyre and auto industries took \$3 billion [in rupee equivalent] in loans under the refinancing scheme at a five per cent interest rate".

The PAC asked the governor SBP for details of the 620 people who had taken loans on such 'sweet-heart' terms. It was told that private banks had provided almost 85pc of the financing, the textile sector at 42pc being the major beneficiary.

When pressed to disclose the names of specific borrowers, the governor SBP replied that while he had the list of borrowers, the details of the loans were "confidential between the banks and customers". He added that "instead of making the list of borrowers public, it would be appropriate to hold an in-camera briefing of the committee". The PAC obligingly agreed.

Whose interests, one may ask, are the SBP and PAC safeguarding? Those of innocent depositors, or of the 620 borrowers too shy to have their names made public? The amount lent to these 620 borrowers is equal in dollar terms to the \$3bn stand-by facility made miraculously available by the IMF. Understandably, the local IMF staff — before taking the matter to their

board — sought assurances from the major political parties that this facility had their broadest ownership, since somewhat form the next government and the rest carp from the opposition.

This unprecedented initiative by the IMF flies in the face of its declared neutrality, "not to favour any political party but to negotiate with whichever party forms the next government". Hitherto, governments have complained that IMF's insistence on political stability as a quasi-condition amounted "to interference in the country's internal affairs". Today, the government is silent on the IMF's novel outreach to its impatient opponents.

Has anyone in the IMF, though, considered whether these 'summer promises' are binding. Will they be honoured after the post-election winter sets in, and by whom?

While no one would fault the IMF or other lenders (the Saudis, the UAE and the Chinese) for wanting to protect their money, surely what matters is not who today promises to repay, but if elected how and when? Remember, elections can be tricky, unpredictable things. Winston Churchill won World War II for the Brits in 1945, then lost the general election months later. Will the next parliament try to assert its sovereignty and demand a say in the IMF deal? Some believe that Pakistan forfeited that sovereignty decades ago when, in 1955, it agreed to join the US-led Baghdad Pact (later Cento). Others believe the erosion of its sovereignty, like global warming, will remain an on-going process.

When \$3bn equivalent can be lent by local banks to 620 faceless borrowers, and \$3bn is having to be borrowed by the state from the IMF, Pakistan is deserving something better than vacuous governance from Islamabad. — Courtesy Dawn

Unemployment Crisis: Balochistan's Educated Youth Struggle for Opportunities



By Hamza Shahzad

Balochistan's educated youth are increasingly feeling exasperated and desperate, as years of university education are no assurance of acquiring a job. With mounting inflation, this catastrophe is also distressing their mental health.

Of the 25,000 students who graduated from different universities in Balochistan in 2021, only 2,000 were able to secure a job. According to the Pakistan Labor Force Study 2021, Balochistan has the highest redundancy rate in the country. Despite its latent status, Balochistan has always lagged behind other provinces across most development-related metrics. In recent times, the status of the province has deteriorated because of a rising dearth and youth unemployment rate, with the latter currently standing at 4.3 per cent. The foremost motives for youth unemployment in Balochistan are negligence of resources, a lack of digital or technical skills, and a lack of job opportunities and business programs.

In Balochistan, most governmental vacancies have been kept unfilled for years, and in recent times, the number of these vacancies has

only increased. Given the incapacitating youth unemployment rates, these jobs have created anxiety and anger. An average of 6,000 applicants appear every year for a single government job opening. Recently, there has been a rise in the number of reported suicides in Balochistan. According to an NGO that supervises human rights in Balochistan, 56 people were reported to have committed suicide in 2022 alone.

To tackle the hazard of joblessness and to provide opportunities for these sophisticated young men and women to flourish fiscally and also safeguard their peace of mind, the Balochistan government has arranged 3,000 internships in numerous sections out of 8,000 in the Prime Minister's Empowered Youth Program. Apart from this, Google has also increased scholarships for the youth of Balochistan from 1,000 to 3,000, empowering them to support themselves. So far, 961 students, including 462 males and 279 females, have joined the package. Recently, 60,000 paid internships for fresh graduates were announced by the Government of Balochistan in Provincial Departments. Google, in collaboration with District Administration Kech, has announced 500 Career certificate scholarships solely for the esteemed Youth of Kech.

The government is the major employer, providing employment to hundreds of thousands of people at diverse levels. Presently, there are

295,000 staff in different government branches. The Education department has the highest number of employees with 67,732, followed by 49,000 in the Police department and 32,987 in the Health department. These 60,000 announced internship opportunities are the prime hope for the hundreds of thousands of jobless, educated youth in Balochistan.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan, The Chief Secretary, and the secretaries of the concerned departments should be praised for their keen interest in resolving this concern of the youth. Such steps will not only create a sense of ownership in the youth but also keep them away from negative activities. Along with these internship opportunities, the government should introduce Basic restructurings at the necessary level in all levels of institutions, mostly at the bachelor's level, to cultivate and enable our youth to realize market prospects. Beside this, the education institutes should also introduce and involve the students in various skill growth programs to intensify their skill set. Likewise, self-employment through freelancing and entrepreneurship, which offers an extensive variety of job opportunities, should be stimulated at the district level by the local government by introducing various training and skill development programs to extend the visualization of youth and instantly solve the problem of unemployment.

PM gets briefing on Nishtar-II hospital, commends Naqvi, team

MULTAN (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday visited the site of Nishtar-II hospital to check the status of mega tertiary healthcare project worth Rs 9450 million and praise Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his team for their untiring efforts that made the OPD operational and formal completion in sight, by September 30, 2023.

Soon after his arrival at Multan International airport, the prime minister reached the Nishtar-II hospital site where he received briefing from CEO Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab (IDAP) and was informed that the project was initiated on December 29, 2019 carrying a cost of Rs 9450 million at a spacious 456 Kanal area and so far Rs 7430 million

funding had been utilized, about 79 per cent of the total cost.

PM Shehbaz Sharif commended the health secretary Punjab Ali Jan Khan, Commissioner Multan engineer Amir Khatak, IDAP CEO and all relevant department who did hard work to make another most advanced tertiary healthcare facility that would benefit people of Multan, rest of south Punjab besides nearby districts of Sindh and Balochistan.

The prime minister said, the machinery had arrived and expressed his desire for completion of the project as per the schedule.

Shehbaz Sharif later told media persons that a lot space was available around the project site and added that he would talk to the chief minister to develop a medical city

there. After the briefing, the prime minister accompanying CM Naqvi visited the Nishtar-II OPD where he talked to some patients and enquired after their health and the level of facilities being provided.

MNA Ahmad Hussain Dehar, on this occasion, thanked the prime minister for providing Nishtar-II facility and described it as a gift for Multanites. "We had lost hope that project would see the light of the day. But with your support, this project will complete soon," he added. Earlier before the arrival of the prime minister, Mohsin Naqvi visited the Nishtar-II, visited its different sections and reviewed the pace of progress.

Foolproof security arrangements were put in place by the police on the occasion.



MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the under-construction Nishtar II Hospital.

Sindh, Iran to work together in medical, transport sectors

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Consul General of Iran Hasan Nourian discussed cooperation between Sindh and Iran in health and transport sectors here at CM House on Thursday.

Under the plan, the provincial Health Department will conduct a short training course on entomological surveillance of dengue fever vectors for the entomological expert delegation from Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.

The medical doctors and specialists with experience in the treatment of patients with dengue fever will conduct a training workshop on the diagnosis, treatment, and nursing care of dengue fever in Zahedan, Iran.

The CM Sindh said that the virtual and in-person expert meetings would be held in order to exchange experiences regarding malaria elimination and tuberculosis and vaccine-preventable disease control activities.

Considering the high incidence of beta-thalassemia in the Sindh Province and the success of the thalassemia disease control program in Iran and the successful activity of the prenatal diagnosis laboratory (PND) of Zahedan University of

Sindh CM hopes good governance from newly elected LG representatives

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah Thursday expressed the hope that the newly elected members of local government in Hyderabad would focus on resolving civic issues through good governance.

He urged the Mayor, deputy mayor of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, chairmen, and vice chairman, of Matiari, Thatta, Sujawal, and Tando Allahyar districts to work hard in resolving the issues of the people of their respective areas so that people feel the difference.

"I have started meetings with the newly elected representatives so that their problems can be discussed and given them direction for developments of their cities and towns," he said in a meeting held with Mayor, Deputy Mayor and elected town Chairmen, vice chairmen of Hyderabad district.

The CM said "We have to give ownership to our cities and towns for their genuine uplift".

The meeting was attended by Syed Ali Nawaz Shah Rizvi, Rehana Leghari, Zaheer Pitafi, Deputy Speaker Dost Ali Jesar, Sadiq Memon, Mayor Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Kashif Shoro, and Deputy Mayor Saghir Qureshi and chairmen and vice chairmen of the towns.

Shah said that the major issues of our cities and towns include water, sanitation, cleanliness,

CM discusses proposal to develop urban park

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting at his office to assess the progress of restoring 12 historic gates and to discuss the proposal of developing an urban park, similar to Greater Iqbal Park, near the mausoleums of Noor Jahan and Jahangir in the city.

DG Walled City of Lahore Authority gave a briefing on the restoration of historic buildings. Instructing the WCLA, the CM emphasized the importance of setting a timeline for the restoration of the historic gates. He stressed the need to initiate the work promptly to restore the gates to their original condition and eliminate encroachments. He directed to contact LESCO to lay underground electricity cables.

The CM issued orders for the immediate removal of wall chalking and banners from the historic buildings and instructed the restoration of the Mariam Zamani Begum Mosque, located opposite Lahore Fort.

Under a phased program, the experts from WCLA will finalize the restoration plans for Lahore's historic gates, including Taxali, Lohari, Shah Alami, Mochi, Akbari, Delhi, Yaki, Roshnai, Sheranwala, Masti Gate, and others. The meeting was attended by Provincial Ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, SMBR, as well as secretaries from the finance, local government, planning & development, and communication & works departments. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, along with others, were also present.



KARACHI: A delegation of Abu Dhabi Ports UAE led by Consul General Bakheet Ateeq Al Remeithi call on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

Minister inaugurates 'Dastkar Mela'

Independent Report
LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir has emphasized the potential of promoting handicrafts at the international fora to generate foreign exchange for the country.

He acknowledged the remarkable craftsmanship of artisans from Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye and Afghanistan whose products were cherished worldwide. Pakistani artisans create awe-inspiring items ranging from Ajrak to carpets, salt, and clay crafts. The Dastkar Mela provides a platform for artisans and craftsmen to showcase the essence of their art.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Dastkar Mela 2023 organized by the Punjab Small Industries Corporation at a local hotel on Wednesday, the minister commended the event and felicitated MD PSIC and

the organizers.

He highlighted the significance of promoting talented artisans, noting that the government and the chief minister attach great importance to the artisan fair. Housing Minister Azfar Ali Nasir expressed that the purpose of organizing the Dastkar Mela was to encourage the artistry of artisans and craftsmen. "Such platforms play a vital role in introducing Punjab's handicrafts at the international fora while projecting a positive image of Pakistan through these artistic endeavors." He stressed the need for organizing similar programs at both national and international levels and highlighted Punjab's prowess in the cutlery, surgical instruments and sports equipment industry, emphasizing the government's efforts in promoting Women Resource Incubation Centers for empowering women.

Australian High Commissioner calls on KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins on Thursday called on Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here at the CM house.

Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest and agreed to extend cooperation in various sectors.

Speaking on the occasion the KP CM said that the provincial government wanted foreign investment in health, education, tourism, industry and other sectors and gave several incentives to the foreign investors in this regard.

The CM said that Pakistan and Australia enjoy cordial relations and the government values Australia's cooperation in various sectors.

Secretary General PHF calls on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): Secretary General of Pakistan Hockey Federation Syed Haider Hussain Thursday called on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here.

Promotion of hockey, organization of Olympic qualifying tournament and other issues were discussed in the meeting. The Governor said that holding the international hockey competitions in Pakistan after many years was a welcoming sign and said taking measures to promote the national sport was imperative at the moment. The SG PHF said that Olympic qualifying matches will be held in January next year in which eight teams from the world will participate.

3 killed in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): Three persons were killed in different road accidents in Faisalabad during the past 12 hours.

A spokesperson for Rescue-1122 said here on Thursday that 40-year-old Mumtaz Ahmad of People's Colony was crossing the road near Khurrianwala Chowk on Faisalabad Road when a speeding van hit and killed him. Also, 50-year-old Saifur-Rehman of Kot Addu was killed when his car collided with a trailer in its rear due to over-speeding near Samundri Interchange on Lahore-Multan Motorway (M-3).



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Amir Meer and Barrister Zafar Ali inspecting the stall at cultural festival.

Establishment of FATA University gift for tribal youth: JUIF leader

PESHAWAR (APP): The central leader of Jamiat Ulema Islam (F) and Member of the National Assembly James Iqbal on Thursday welcome the establishment of FATA University by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and termed it a gift for the young generation of tribal areas.

In his statement issued here, he said that the Prime Minister has adorned the tribal youth with the jewel of education, adding that the step would ensure peace, development, and prosperity in the tribal districts. James Iqbal who was also President of Parliamentarians Forum

Pakistan, demanded the government to immediately change the name of FATA University in consultation with the tribal elders.

While congratulating the tribal people on the establishment of the varsity, he said that the distribution of laptops among the talented students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a good initiative by the Prime Minister. The world is moving forward with advancements in modern technology and it is high time to facilitate the young generation especially who belong to backward areas in this regard so that they could play their imperative role in peace.

One killed three injured in police shooting

PESHAWAR (APP): A man died and three critically injured in a police shooting on a vehicle here on ring road.

According to police, the vehicle was signaled to stop at a police picket but the driver sped up the car in a bid to escape.

The police personnel on duty opened fire at the car, as a result of which one of the four passengers in the vehicle belonging to Dara Adam Khel was killed. The other persons on board received critical bullet injuries and shifted to Lady Reading Hospital (LRH). The condition of one of the injured was also reported critical, the police informed, adding that the identity of the four persons was being ascertained.



GILGIT: Secretary Finance Gilgit-Baltistan Faisal Pirzada presenting copy of Budget 2023-2024 to Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah at Governor Secretariat.

Consultative conference held for LEAs

LAHORE (APP): A consultative conference was held for law enforcement agencies on strategic planning for HIV-affected persons with the support of UNDP.

In the conference, the challenges for prevention of HIV infection, care and rehabilitation of infected persons, obstacles and recent initiatives were discussed.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar was the chief guest of the concluding session of the conference.

In the concluding session, the need to adopt a common strategy for prevention of AIDS, discouraging hateful attitudes towards the affected persons and treatment was emphasized.

Health screening of personnel has been done, vaccination and modern treatment of hepatitis C and B police personnel are

ongoing, said IG Punjab. He added that steps have been taken to protect the cops from HIV infection.

He said that Tahaffuz centers have been established to provide protection to transgender and women victims of exploitation. Over 7200 complaints of citizens, including transgender, have been resolved in 37 Tahaffuz centers, said Dr. Usman Anwar.

He said that UNDP and other international organizations should use police Tahaffuz centers for their welfare projects. IG Punjab also said that UNDP should implement a policy in all the provinces by combining their efforts regarding the prevention of AIDS and care of affected people.

Law Enforcement Specialist UNDP and former IG Punjab Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam said that the officers and personnel

11 killed, 1149 injured in 1090 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least eleven persons were killed and 1149 injured in 1090 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 600 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 549 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that 574 drivers, 35 underage

drivers, 127 pedestrians, and 462 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 224 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 257 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by 80 in Faisalabad with 74 victims and at third Multan with 64 RTCs and 65 victims.

According to the data, 922 motorbikes, 130 auto-rickshaws, 67 motorcars, 25 vans, 12 passenger buses, 34 trucks and 101 other types of auto vehicles.



PESHAWAR: Monks from different countries visit Peshawar Museum to see the remains of Buddha's.

Free of-cost treatment to be provided to expectant mothers: Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Health Care and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir on Thursday said that free-of-cost treatment would be provided to expectant mothers at government hospitals.

The minister said that apart from normal delivery, the facility of labour through surgery would also be provided free of charge and no expenditure would be taken for this purpose. Dr Jamal told that the medical

superintendents of all district and tehsil headquarters hospitals of Punjab had been directed to make necessary arrangements including the availability of human resources, medicine, supplies, equipment functionality and proper cleanliness for conducting surgeries and normal deliveries in their respective hospitals to provide uninterrupted services.

The minister directed the hospital's administration to deal with the patients kindly.



HYDERABAD: A large number of youngsters enjoy bathing in the local swimming pool at Khisana Mori to get relief from scorching hot weather in the city.

IT Ministry signs agreement to enhance connectivity in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology has embarked on two significant projects worth Rs. 69.8 billion to bolster connectivity in Balochistan province.

Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Amin-ul-Haque and Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch here on Thursday jointly initiated the execution of these projects.

The agreements were

signed by USF CEO Haaris Chaudhary and Ufone's Chief Executive Officer Hatem Bamatraf.

The projects, funded through the Universal Service Fund via Ufone, aim to provide the fastest connectivity to commuters and residents along the motorway.

The first project will involve an investment of Rs. 47.82 billion in laying 478 kilometers of optical fiber cable, linking Gwadar, Quetta, Awaran, Khuzdar, Jhal Magsi, Qambar

Shahdadkot, and Larkana.

The second project, costing Rs. 19.6 billion, will offer broadband services to 34,000 individuals in 47 villages surrounding Sabi.

On the occasion, Amin-ul-Haque said, the projects will be completed in 18 months with funding from the Universal Service Fund through Ufone.

The minister said, the project aims to provide the fastest connectivity to commuters and populations residing along

the motorway.

He highlighted that in the past four years, 83 broadband projects worth Rs. 77 billion were initiated nationwide.

These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to expanding broadband infrastructure in Balochistan, with numerous projects already underway across the province. Moreover, 21 broadband projects worth Rs. 27.12 billion have been launched in 30 districts of Balochistan.



MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes cheques among the successful candidates who received loans under Prime Minister's Youth Loan Scheme.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque and Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch witnessing contract signing of High Speed Mobile Broadband Projects for Balochistan.

Khurram Dastgir says: Decade-long CPEC brings Chinese companies and technologies to Pakistan

BEIJING (INP): Thanks to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan is now slowly moving from imported fuels to local fuel for power generation and from outdated technology to new Chinese technology, Minister for Power, Khurram Dastgir Khan has said.

"This shift is happening and Chinese companies are much more visible now. They are bringing their technology, their management to Pakistan, and they are teaching Pakistani engineers and workers," he told Xinhua in a recent interview at a power transmission project under the CPEC.

The deeper

penetration of Chinese companies into the energy sector was one of the major positive developments that had happened in the country as a result of CPEC, Khan said.

Highlighting the prospects of the transmission network, he said that 660kV Matiari-Lahore high-voltage direct current transmission project under the CPEC was the most advanced transmission project in Pakistan's history.

The project, being the only transmission project under CPEC, was crucial for Pakistan as it connected the country's south to the north and vice versa, he said.

This is now one of the principal backbones of

Pakistan's national transmission line, he said, noting that it had been operational for over 1,000 days without any issue, which was also a testament to the Chinese and Pakistani engineers who worked here and who had done so well in very challenging circumstances.

Regarding the 10th anniversary of CPEC this year, the minister said China supported Pakistan in 2013 when no other country was willing to invest.

By the end of 2022, CPEC has brought 25.4 billion U.S. dollars in direct investment to Pakistan and has created about 236,000 jobs for the country, as per a recent data revealed by Chinese embassy.



FAISALABAD: A farmer woman busy in seedling the rice crop in her field.

Fake pesticides of worth over Rs 425.1 seized in one year: DG Agri

MULTAN (APP): Director General Agriculture (pest warning & quality control of pesticides) Punjab, Rana Faqeer Ahmed Thursday said that the department launched a comprehensive crackdown against fake pesticides and confiscated fake pesticides worth over Rs 425.1 million during a year.

In a statement issued here, the DG Agriculture said that zero tolerance policy was being followed against the persons involved in the illegal business of fake pesticides. He said that as per directives of the provincial government, the agriculture department has collected samples of 9600

pesticides across the province out of which 286 have been proved fake and sub-standard.

He said that the teams have conducted 617 raids in a year and not only registered 750 cases but also arrested 254 dealers involved in selling fake pesticides. Rana Faqeer urged citizens to inform the agriculture department, police and district administration and get their complaints registered against the dealers selling fake pesticides. He said that the concerned department would initiate action within 24 hours through which the culprits could get imprisonment of five years and Rs 500,000 fine.

HC of Ghana to Pakistan visited SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan Eric Owusu Boateng visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed the distinguished guest.

Addressing an important meeting with the business community at SCCI Auditorium here on Thursday, High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan Eric Owusu Boateng acknowledged the need to transform economic and political relations into stronger economic ties.

He emphasized the importance of facilitating direct trade and addressing challenges like indirect sourcing and limited export channels. He expressed his commitment to working closely with SCCI, promoting cooperation, exchanging information, and identifying tradable products. While appreciating the trade and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Ghana, the President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik discussed the trade opportunities in both countries and highlighted to the distinguished guest the export products produced in Sialkot.

Bilal Azhar says: \$4.2 billion credited to Pakistan in 3 days

ISLAMABAD (INP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani on Thursday said that \$4.2 billion have been credited to Pakistan in last 3 days from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Giving breakup figures, the coordinator tweeted that \$2 billion were received from Saudi Arabia, \$1 billion from UAE and \$1.2 billion from IMF.

He said that Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has shared that State Bank of Pakistan has

received US \$1.2 billion from IMF, following the approval of the US\$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) by the IMF Executive Board the previous day.

He said that remaining amount of \$1.8 billion would be credited in 9 months, following two quarterly reviews. He said more inflows were expected from multilateral development partners including World Bank (WB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which would further improve country's foreign exchange reserves, he added.



LAHORE: Wholesale traders are waiting for customers to begin the auction of Black plums at Fruit and Vegetables Market in Provincial Capital.

Uzbek Trade counselor visits MCCL, discusses promotion of mutual trade

MULTAN (APP): Uzbekistan's Economic and Trade Counselor to Pakistan, Bakhrom Yusupov, paid visit to Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and discussed the promotion of mutual trade with MCCI President Mian Rashid Iqbal.

On this occasion, Senior Vice President Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Sheikh Muhammad Asim Saeed, Cotton Commissioner Dr Zahid Mahmood, Syed Saqib Ali, Sheikh Faisal Saeed and others were present.

Trade Counselor of Uzbekistan said that there were lots of opportunities in promotion of trade between two countries in various sectors. Political

stability and law and order situation in Uzbekistan was better which is suitable and conducive for business activities. He said that the Pakistani companies and traders could make investments in sulphur, coal and LNG from Uzbekistan which would be helpful in Pakistan's energy problems. The best cotton was being produced in Uzbekistan, he added. MCCI President Mian Rashid Iqbal said that the South Punjab region was agriculturally fertile. Here are opportunities of investment in cotton, mango, snack food, and agricultural fertilizer. However, assistance could be taken from Uzbekistan in view of the energy problems.

FCCI delegation calls on Punjab governor

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), led by President Dr. Khurram Tariq, called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House, here on Thursday.

The governor, speaking on the occasion, said that the country's economy is improving due to the prudent policies of the government and foreign investment is also increasing.

The governor said traders and industrialists are backbone of a country's economy, adding that the PML-N government has

always taken steps to facilitate business community and solved their problems on priority basis.

Governor Punjab said that the government is taking all possible measures for the development of trade and industry.

He said that industry and trade not only lead to economic development, but also provides employment to many families. Governor Punjab said that promotion of technical and vocational education is very important for providing skilled manpower to the industries.

China major export market for Pakistani products: Moin Haque

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque said that China is a major export market for Pakistani products and the government is working together to further enhance the access of Pakistani products to the untapped sector of the Chinese market.

"Our two countries have a robust trade and investment cooperation, which is very essential for Pakistan's economy. As our largest trading partner, China is a major export market for Pakistani

products, and we are working together to further enhance the access of Pakistani products to untapped sectors of the Chinese markets," he said while talking to The Nation and Nawa-i-Waqt dailies.

The ambassador said Pakistan takes pride in its special friendship with China which is time-tested and timeless. "Our relations with China are based on strong political support, strategic trust and practical cooperation. A heart-to-heart relationship between our two peoples enjoying support across

the political spectrum. No wonder, this friendship remains the cornerstone of our foreign policy."

Ambassador said that China has recently lifted its Covid-related travel restrictions and opened up international travel. This naturally has a positive impact on various sectors of the Chinese economy, including trade and tourism. The re-opening has resulted in enhanced bilateral interaction between our two countries. A many high-level visits took place in the last few months.

Rupee on recovery path; gains Rs1.01 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed more recovery by gaining Rs1.01 against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs276.46 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.47.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 278 and Rs 281 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.65 to close at Rs 308.55 against the last day's closing of Rs305.90, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paisa to close at Rs1.99, whereas an increase of Rs1.4 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs360.54 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs359.14.

USF awards contract worth Rs 6.78 billion to Ufone

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Universal Service Fund (USF) has awarded contract worth approximately PKR 6.78 billion to Ufone for providing High Speed Mobile Broadband services in Sibbi district of Balochistan province and Motorway M-8.

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque and Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch witnessed the contract signing ceremony and launch of Research Impact Assessment Study in Islamabad on Thursday.

The contracts were signed by Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, CEO of USF with Hatem Bamatraf, President, and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G. The Secretary for IT & Telecommunication and

Chairman USF Board, Navid Ahmed Shaikh, Member Telecom, Muhammad Omar Malik were also present at the ceremony.

While addressing the ceremony, the Chief Guest, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque said, "We are gathered here today to commemorate the signing ceremony of two new projects that targets provision of uninterrupted voice and 4G broadband data services in Balochistan. One of these projects is worth PKR. 1.96 billion that aim to empower around 34,000 individuals residing in 47 Mauzas of Sibbi district.

Additionally, another project worth PKR. 4.82 billion has been initiated to ensure voice and 4G coverage on 478 kms of previously unserved road segments along the M-8 motorway.



LAHORE: Women participating in the Dastkar Mela organized by Punjab Small Industry at the local hotel.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, MSC Shanelle-V, MSC Cape Town, Leon and Al-Areesh, carrying Container, Coal and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Wednesday. PQA berths were engaged by 09 ships during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Karimata, Milaha Qatar, MSC Shanelle-V and Atrotos Heracles sailed out to sea on Thursday morning (today) on 13th July, while three more ships, MSC Capetown-III, Santa Ace and GC-Argon are expected to sail on same day afternoon. Cargo volume of 188,199 tonnes, comprising 156,222 tonnes imports Cargo and 31,977 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,967 Containers (1,086 TEUs Imports and 1,881 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

FTO Coordinator praises FDI role in promoting economic growth, development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday lauded the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) role in promoting economic growth and development by bringing in capital, technology, expertise, and job opportunities to host countries.

Speaking at a round table conference on "Impact of excessive screening on global foreign direct investment", he said its important for countries to protect their national security and economic interests, however, lengthy screening measures can indeed have negative impact on global FDI, said a press release.

He said it is equally important to strike a balance between security concerns and promoting a welcoming environment

for foreign investors. He said if developed countries impose overly restrictive or burden some screening processes, it can discourage foreign investors and hinder the flow of investments especially in developing countries especially Pakistan.

He said the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has also recently cautioned that excessive screening may result in missed opportunities for the host country to attract valuable investments.

In today's globalized economy, countries compete for FDI, and if potential investors face onerous screening processes, they may choose alternative destinations with more favorable investment climates, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Prince Ahmed Umer Ahmedzai, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Communications presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

West offers security assurances to frustrated Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
VILNIUS: The United States and global allies unveiled new security assurances for Ukraine at a Nato summit, designed to bolster the country's defences against Russia over the long haul while Kyiv strives for membership in the alliance. Members of the world's most powerful military bloc offered the prospect of long-term protection a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky decried as "absurd" a refusal to offer an invitation or timetable for Ukraine's entry into Nato.

Swallowing his disappointment over the lack of a membership timetable, Zelensky called the out-

come a "meaningful success" following a flurry of announcements of military aid for Kyiv. "Today there are security guarantees for Ukraine on the way to Nato," he said. "The Ukraine delegation is bringing home a significant security victory for Ukraine." Zelensky said he would raise Ukraine's need for long-range weapons at a meeting with Biden at the summit. At a bilateral meeting, Biden promised Zelensky the US was doing everything it could to meet Ukraine's needs and acknowledged Zelensky's frustration about the scale and speed at which he was receiving support.

"Your resilience and your resolve has been a model for the whole world to see," Biden said. "I look forward to the day when we're having the meeting celebrating your official, official membership in Nato. The bad news for you is, we're not going anywhere. You're stuck with us," Biden joked, prompting laughter from Zelensky. Asked by a reporter how soon after the war he would like Ukraine to join Nato, Biden responded "an hour and 20 minutes". US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Biden would offer Zelensky long-range missiles when they met.



US President Joe Biden, Japan's PM Fumio Kishida, British PM Rishi Sunak, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, France's President Emmanuel Macron, President of the European Council Charles Michel, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky pose for a family photo, as they attend an event with G7 leaders as the NATO summit is held in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is welcomed by Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, at Harare airport in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Iranian president arrives in Zimbabwe to anti-West songs for the last stop on a rare Africa trip

Monitoring Desk
HARARE: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was welcomed in Zimbabwe on Thursday by people singing songs criticizing the West as he arrived on what's expected to be the last stop of his three-nation Africa trip. Raisi was greeted at Harare's international airport by Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who thanked the Iranian

leader for showing "solidarity." Both countries are under U.S. sanctions and Raisi's trip to Africa, which has already included stops in Kenya and Uganda, highlights Iran's efforts to build new partnerships in a bid to soften the impact of those heavy economic punishments. Iran and Zimbabwe already have a joint permanent commission on political and trade relations.

US Navy plane flies through Taiwan Strait after Chinese drills

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Chinese fighter jets monitored a US Navy patrol plane that flew through the sensitive Taiwan Strait on Thursday, following two days of Chinese military exercises to the south of the island Beijing views as China's sovereign territory. China has been incensed by US military missions through the narrow strait, most frequently of warships but occasionally of aircraft, saying China "has sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction" over the waterway.

EU helping UN, Turkey in bid to extend Black Sea grain deal

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The European Commission is helping the United Nations and Turkey try to extend a deal allowing the Black Sea export of Ukraine grain - that could expire on Monday - and is open to "explore all solutions," a European Union spokesperson said on Thursday. The EU is considering connecting a subsidiary of the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) to the international payment network SWIFT to allow for grain and fertilizer transactions, sources familiar with discussions told Reuters on Wednesday. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres proposed in a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday that Moscow allow the Black Sea grain deal to continue for several months to give the EU time to connect a Rosselkhozbank subsidiary to SWIFT, two of those sources familiar with discussions told Reuters.

The European Commission's priority is to ensure that Ukrainian grain can reach the world market and it calls on all parties to extend the Black Sea deal. A European Union spokesperson in Brussels said on Thursday. "We are assisting the talks led by the U.N. and Turkey as required," the EU spokesperson said. "We are of course open to explore all solutions that contribute to our objective, whilst continuing to ensure that Russia's ability to wage war in Ukraine is hampered as much as possible." A key demand by Moscow is the reconnection of Rosselkhozbank to SWIFT. It was cut off by the European Union in June 2022 over Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said last week that Moscow would not be satisfied with the alternative proposal because it would take "many months" to open a subsidiary and another three months to connect it to SWIFT.

Russia issues nuclear threat, hits Kyiv as Nato vows support for Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia responded strongly after members of the Nato alliance pledged support for Kyiv against Moscow's aggression on the country, striking several cities, while threatening to "send F-16 fighter jets capable of carrying nuclear bombs". According to Kyiv, Moscow conducted an aerial assault on Ukraine, resulting in the destruction of 20 Russian attack drones and two cruise missiles. The capital witnessed major destruction, with four people injured as confirmed by the city's mayor. Expressing its displeasure for Western support, Russia declared that it would view the F-16 fighter jets sent to Ukraine as a "nuclear" threat due to their capability to carry atomic bombs. In a sign of its anger at Western backing for Kyiv, Moscow said it would regard F-16 fighter jets sent

to Ukraine as a "nuclear" threat because of their capacity to carry atomic bombs. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov emphasised that Russia could not overlook the potential nuclear capabilities of these aircraft, dismissing any assurances provided by the West. Taking the lead in a coalition of 11 nations, the Netherlands and Denmark have initiated a plan to train Ukrainian pilots in operating the US fighter jets, following authorisation from Washington. Since the Russian special military operation against Ukraine in February 2022, such threats have been earlier made. President Biden's visit to Helsinki followed the G7 countries' commitment to support Ukraine until it defeats Russia. During his visit, the 80-year-old President is to meet with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, whose country shares a 1,300-kilometre

(800-mile) border with Russia and abandoned its historical military non-alignment after Russia entered Ukraine. In addition to Niinisto and Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, Biden will also discuss issues regarding security, environment, and technology with leaders from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland to explore cooperation between the Nordic countries and the US. This visit was the first time a US president has visited Helsinki since Donald Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin five years ago. During the Cold War time alliance summit, members apparently disappointed President Volodymyr Zelensky by not providing a clear timeline for Ukraine's membership in the group, stating that an invitation would only be extended when "certain conditions are met".

At least 87 buried in mass grave in Sudan's West Darfur - UN

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: At least 87 people including ethnic Masalit were buried in a mass grave in Sudan's West Darfur, the U.N. human rights office said on Thursday, saying it had credible information that the Rapid Support Forces were responsible. Local people were forced to dispose of the bodies including those of women and children in an open area near the town of western El-Geneina between June 20-21, the U.N. statement said. Some of the people had died from untreated injuries during a wave of

violence by the RSF and allied militia in the days following the killing of local governor Khamis Abbakar, it said. "I condemn in the strongest terms the killing of civilians and hors combat individuals, and I am further appalled by the callous and disrespectful way the dead, along with their families and communities, were treated," said U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk in the same statement. He called for a prompt and thorough investigation. It was not immediately clear what portion of the dead were Masalits.

India gives initial nod to buy French Rafale jets, submarines

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's defence ministry has given initial approval to purchase 26 Rafale fighter jets for its navy and three Scorpene class submarines, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival in France, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. Modi began a two-day visit to Paris on Thursday to deepen ties with New Delhi's oldest strategic partner in the West, with a slew of high-profile defence deals expected and a new joint plan to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific. The Singh-led Defence Acquisition Council, the apex body for military capital procurements, granted the approvals earlier in the day. The deal will cover the purchase of 26 Dassault Aviation AM.PA Rafale fighter jets, including four trainers, and three Scorpene class submarines to be built by India's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders - MAZGNS and France's Naval Group, two sources familiar with the details told Reuters. The total value of the purchases is expected to be around 800 billion rupees (\$9.75 billion), according to one of the sources.

ASEAN struggles for unity on Myanmar conflict

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Finding unity over how to deal with Myanmar's junta continued to evade Southeast Asian nations on Thursday, as foreign ministers meeting in Jakarta struggled to agree on a communique that would include a reference to their neighbour's internal strife. Gathered in the Indonesian capital for their annual meeting, foreign ministers for the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had been expected to issue a joint communique on Wednesday, but by late afternoon on Thursday there was still no sign of it. The cause of the delay was unclear but an ASEAN official said a communique was being finalised and would be released soon. ASEAN, which includes Myanmar among its 10 members, has pushed, without success, for the implementation of a five-point peace plan agreed with the junta shortly after a coup in early 2021. No Myanmar representatives were present in this week's meeting. Junta officials have been barred from high-level ASEAN meetings due to the lack of progress on the plan, which calls for a halt to violence and talks between the military and its pro-democracy opponents. The inability to exert more influence over the junta has fed long-held doubts about ASEAN's effectiveness as a regional political bloc. Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai told reporters that the communique was "probably not" finalised yet, saying it "must be complicated". ASEAN chair Indonesia on Wednesday urged the group's foreign ministers to remain united in tackling the escalating violence in Myanmar. Malaysia, a vocal critic of the junta, urged ASEAN to strongly condemn the junta's actions, including violence.

Thailand's Pita Limjaroenrat failed on Thursday in his initial bid to become Thailand's next prime minister, after he was thwarted in a high-stakes parliamentary vote that included a host of no-shows and nearly 200 abstentions. The leader of election winners Move Forward was unopposed in the contest but struggled to muster the required support of more than half of 749-member bicameral parliament, despite the backing of his eight-party alliance. Another vote is expected to be held next week, which Pita can contest if nominated again. The progressive Move Forward party and its alliance partner, Pheu Thai.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh arrive to lay a wreath of flowers by the graves of those killed in recent Israeli military raids on the Jenin camp for refugees.

Thailand's Pita defeated in parliament in bid for PM

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: Thailand's Pita Limjaroenrat failed on Thursday in his initial bid to become Thailand's next prime minister, after he was thwarted in a high-stakes parliamentary vote that included a host of no-shows and nearly 200 abstentions. The leader of election winners Move Forward was unopposed in the contest but struggled to muster the required support of more than half of 749-member bicameral parliament, despite the backing of his eight-party alliance. Another vote is expected to be held next week, which Pita can contest if nominated again. The progressive Move Forward party and its alliance partner, Pheu Thai.

Abbas vows to rebuild Jenin camp after deadly Israeli raid

Monitoring Desk
JENIN: Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas vowed to rebuild the Jenin refugee camp during a rare and brief visit, a week after a deadly Israeli raid destroyed much of the camp in the occupied West Bank. Abbas, 87, hailed the Jenin camp as an "icon of struggle" during his first trip to the area in more than a decade, a period during which fighters have gained popular support at the expense of his Pales-

tinian Authority. The two-day Israeli raid last week — the largest such operation in years, involving hundreds of troops, drone strikes and armoured bulldozers — killed 12 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier. Israel views the densely-populated urban area, a stronghold of fighter groups including Islamic Jihad and Hamas, as a "terrorism hub" and has launched frequent armed raids there since early last year.

Google AI health chatbot passes US medical exam: study

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Google's artificial intelligence-powered medical chatbot has achieved a passing grade on a tough US medical licensing exam, but its answers still fall short of those from human doctors, a peer-reviewed study said. Last year, the release of ChatGPT — whose developer OpenAI is backed by Google's rival Microsoft — kicked off a race between tech giants in the burgeoning field of AI. While much has been made about the future possibilities — and dangers — of AI, health is one area where the technology had already shown tangible

progress, with algorithms able to read certain medical scans as well as humans. Google first unveiled its AI tool for answering medical questions, called Med-PaLM, in a preprint study in December. Unlike ChatGPT, it has not been released to the public. The US tech giant says Med-PaLM is the first large language model, an AI technique trained on vast amounts of human-produced text, to pass the US Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). A passing grade for the exam, which is taken by medical students and physicians-in-training in the United States, is around 60

WHO worried bird flu might adapt to humans 'more easily'

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The World Health Organisation warned that the surge in bird flu outbreaks among mammals could help the virus spread more easily among humans. Since late 2021, Europe has been gripped by its worst-ever outbreak of bird flu, while North and South America have also experienced severe outbreaks. This has led to the culling of tens of millions of poultry worldwide, many with the H5N1 strain of the virus, which first emerged in 1996. "Avian influenza viruses normally spread among birds, but the increasing number of H5N1 avian influenza detections among mammals — which are biologically closer to humans than birds are — raises concern that the virus might adapt to infect humans more easily," the WHO said in a statement. "In addition, some mammals may act as mixing vessels for influenza viruses, leading to the emergence of new vi-

rus that could be more harmful to animals and humans." The current bird flu outbreaks have caused "devastation" in animals, the UN health agency said, including poultry and wild birds, along with some mammals, and had harmed farmers' livelihoods and the food trade. "Although largely affecting animals, these outbreaks pose ongoing risks to humans," it said. The WHO, along with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), urged countries to work together to save animals and protect people. "There is a recent paradigm change in the ecology and epidemiology of avian influenza which has heightened global concern as the disease spread to new geographical regions and caused unusual wild bird die-offs, and alarming rise in mammalian cases," said WOAH science chief Gregorio Torres.

Floods force Indian capital to shut schools, offices, and plan water rationing

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Flooding in parts of New Delhi forced the city government to close all education institutions in India's capital on Thursday and advise people to work from home, while warning that there would be water rationing after the Yamuna river broke its banks. Since the rainy monsoon season began on June 1, Delhi has recorded 113 per cent above-average rainfall, the India Meteorological Department said, and the rains in the hilly states to the north have fed the river's floodwaters. Video footage showed submerged roads in the downtown area, where government and private companies' offices are located, with water halfway up the sides of parked cars. Other images showed the road by the city's historical Red Fort under water. "I appeal to all the

people of Delhi to cooperate with each other in every possible way in this emergency," Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday, warning that water supplies would be badly affected. "Due to the closure of water treatment plants, the supply of water will be affected by up to 25pc. That's why water rationing will be done," Kejriwal told reporters. The city of 20 million people has ordered the closure of all schools, colleges and universities until Sunday and stopped non-essential government staff from coming to the office, Kejriwal said, adding that private firms were also being advised to "implement work from home." Kejriwal said the Yamuna's level would peak later today, having already reached its highest levels in 45 years as a result of the unusually heavy downpours north of the capital.



Members of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) evacuate stranded residents from a flooded locality, after a rise in the water level of the river Yamuna, in New Delhi, India

Pakistan vows to engage with Afghanistan on all aspects of cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to engage with Afghanistan on all aspects of cooperation and concern including issues relating to terrorism threats. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch urged the Afghan authorities to fulfill their promises that their soil will not be used for terrorism against Pakistan. She said it is their responsibility to ensure that their land is not used against Pakistan, and Afghan authorities have accepted this responsibility on various occasions.

On the situation in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said since 5th August 2019, over seven hundred and eighty Kashmiri people have been martyred by the Indian occupation forces. She said India's unabated repression over the last seven decades has failed to break the will of Kashmiri people for the right to self-determination. She said Pakistan will con-

tinue to support its Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle against Indian oppression till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Responding to a question, the spokesperson said Indus Water Treaty is an important document that has served both Pakistan and India. She said Pakistan is committed to its full implementation and hoped India will remain committed to it.

The Spokesperson said the UN Human Rights Council recently adopted a historic resolution presented by Pakistan on the behalf of the OIC which condemned any advocacy of religious hatred including the recent acts of desecration of Holy Quran and underscored the need for holding the perpetrators to account.

She said Pakistan shared the disappointment of the OIC countries that despite its balanced and apolitical nature.



MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes laptops among high achievers of public sector universities under the PM's Youth Laptop Scheme at Bahauddin Zakaria University.

Ahsan Iqbal says: Pakistan hopes to take CPEC into next phase with greater vigor

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan is looking forward to taking the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into the next phase with greater vigor and hopes to see the fruits of the CPEC benefit not only China and Pakistan, but the whole region, said Ahsan Iqbal, the Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

Ahsan Iqbal was talking to the Global Times in an interview after a meeting of the 12th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of the CPEC in Beijing.

Iqbal, who has extensive experience and longstanding involvement in the CPEC, said he was overwhelmed at how much has been accomplished by the CPEC in just 10 years.

The beauty of the CPEC is that it is a project between two countries that enjoy a very unique relationship, Iqbal said. "Normally, countries come close when they need to, and they get farther away when they don't need each other. But in the case of China and Pakistan, it has been always spring. There has never been autumn in this relationship."

This year marks a decade of the CPEC. The landmark project was formalized on July 5, 2013.

The CPEC has done a great service to Pakistan, helping it overcome the energy crisis, develop modern infrastructure and restore the country's image as an investment destination. Prior to the CPEC the world used to look at Pakistan as a very dangerous country, the minister said.

Pakistan would be facing an extreme energy crisis today without the projects launched under the CPEC, Iqbal emphasized.

PR decides to resume train service on Sibi-Khost section

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Railways has decided to resume the train service on the otherwise abandoned Sibi-Khost railway section from August 1.

According to the sources of Pakistan Railways Quetta Division, the necessary work of repair and rehabilitation of the railway track and bridges on the Sibi-Khost railway section has almost been completed.

The repair and rehabilitation of the railway track and bridges has costed around Rs. 4 billion.

The train service on the section had been suspended for January 2006 following subversive acts.

GoB electrified 2900 villages during last financial year

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government has electrified as many as 2900 villages in various districts of the province during the last financial year. The government has spent Rs 3.12 billion on the scheme during the said period to provide the electricity facility to maximum number of residents, an official of Balochistan government told APP here Thursday.

He said the provincial government has also provided small-scale solar energy systems to 5000 households at a cost of Rs 900 million and converted

tube wells and street lights on solar energy.

He said that multiple power supply projects would be formulated at a specific location in off-grid areas which would benefit the people of the far-flung area.

The official told that the Balochistan government was working to provide solar geysers in mosques and public places in various areas of the province. The government is planning to connect the commissioners and public offices at district headquarters with solar energy sources, he added.



ISLAMABAD: The newly-appointed envoys of the Philippines, Iran and Rwanda presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President calls for prevention, early diagnosis of life threatening diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday called for prevention and early diagnosis of diseases like breast cancer and water borne ailments to give people a chance to live longer healthy lives. Speaking virtually at an awareness programme arranged by Siemens Healthineers, he underlined the need for improvements in the health and education sectors of Pakistan.

Despite the limited resources a developing country like Pakistan should give priority to

health and education of the people, he stressed.

The president said preventive measures and widespread awareness were vital to prepare the people against the onslaught of life threatening diseases.

He said Pakistan had an experience of effectively and successfully tackling Covid-19 as compared to the neighbouring country where the death rate was higher. Spreading of awareness among the people was critical to keep Covid under control, he said, adding

the people followed the advice of the government to wear masks, keep distance and take preventive measures helping the country eventually overcome the challenge. The president urged the people to ensure cleanliness to stop the spread of communicable diseases. Religious scholars could play an important role by teaching the significance of hygiene during their sermons in mosques, he continued.

He appreciated the efforts of Begum Samina Alvi

in raising awareness about the threats posed by breast cancer to the health of women. Citing reasons for late diagnosis of breast cancer, he said the women in Pakistan were hesitant to share information about any unusual signs which was the cause of delay in screening for the deadly disease. He said those who go for early screening their chance of survival from breast cancer was 99 percent and women should undergo screening when they feel a lump in their chests.

Case against appointment of judges, judicial staff: Objective of hearing case is ensuring transparency in appointments: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed to provide to the lawyers of respondents the report filed by registrar Sindh High Court (SHC).

The court issued the orders during the hearing of case against appointment of judges and judicial staff in subordinate courts in Sindh.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial took up the case for hearing Thursday.

The CJP remarked the objective of hearing this case is bringing transparency in appointments. Registrar SHC has sent report of 3-member committee to us.

Counsel for SHC

Munir A Malik told the court copy of report has not been received by him so far.

He took the plea before the court I assure on behalf of SHC no negligence will be made in future. Institutional process is there in connection with appointments

Khawaja Shams ul Islam, counsel for the petitioner told the court that SC has given observation against the appointments in two court orders related to this case.

The CJP remarked our observation in court's orders is of temporary nature. Committee of 5 judges of SC made appointments of 90 or 100 judges after working for three months. Judicial committee of

judges appoint judges. Lapses are there in grant of relaxation in age limit without solid reason in certain appointments. Also aspect is there of posting from one district to other district.

As far as the appointments of stenographer are concerned those who are expert in shorthand are not available. The reason is that most of people have shifted to computer. Therefore, appointments were made from interior Sindh. We have not made final decision in this matter so far.

The court while directing to provide report to the lawyers of the respondents which has been filed by registrar SHC adjourned the hearing of the case till August.



QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Home Saleh Muhammad Nassar presiding over a meeting in connection with prevention of increasing crime in Quetta city

Mehran Baloch assumes charge as DC Duki

QUETTA (APP): Mehran Baloch on Thursday assumed his charge as Deputy Commissioner (DC) Duki district.

Baloch held an introductory meeting with the heads of various government departments.

Speaking on the occasion he said no negligence would be tolerated in implementing government orders.

He asked the departments to prepare a comprehensive plan for the uplift of the district saying that he would play his role as DC to address the legal problems of the public with the aim to provide maximum facilities to people in the area.

According to the official announcement, Mir Mehran Baloch was appointed a few days ago by the provincial government.

Dr. Ruqia flays terror attack in Zhub Garrison

QUETTA (APP): Central leader of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and former provincial minister Dr. Ruqia Saeed Hashmi on Thursday strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Zhub Garrison.

In a statement issued here, Dr. Ruqia Saeed Hashmi paid homage to the martyrdom of four personnel of security forces in the attack of terrorists in Zhub Garrison.

The official told that the Balochistan government was working to provide solar geysers in mosques and public places in various areas of the province. The government is planning to connect the commissioners and public offices at district headquarters with solar energy sources, he added.

Heirs of martyrs, others pledge not to let anyone harm country

Independent Report

QUETTA: The heirs of martyrs and other speakers have made pledge not to let anyone harm the country and put its stability and survival at stake as the martyrs have rendered sacrifice of their lives for it.

They said that Pakistan had come into being to last forever.

These and similar other views were expressed by the speakers at the ceremony held under the auspices of Balochistan Shuhada Forum at the

Balochistan Boy Scouts Association Headquarter here on Thursday.

The ceremony marked the annual martyrs day and 5th death anniversary of Nawabzada Siraj Raisani, who was martyred on July 13, 2018 in Daringarh area of Mastung. A large number of family members of the martyrs and their companions and representatives of the civil society participated in the ceremony. Prominent among the organizer and son of Nawabzada Siraj Raisani,

Jamal Khan Raisani, tribal elder, Sardar Kamal Khan Bangulzai, former provincial ministers, Mir Asim Kurd and Tahir Mehmood Khan and others. One minute silence was observed to pay tributes to the martyrs after the national anthem. The participants also paid homage to the Pak army for their great services and sacrifices rendered and being rendered for the cause of country. They also strongly condemned the incident of terrorism in Zhub garrison the other day.

Balochistan Police decides to change Quetta Traffic Police uniform

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Police has decided to change the uniform of Quetta Traffic Police from Friday (tomorrow) and equipped them with modern requirements to improve the traffic management system and enhance their performance.

SSP Traffic Police Quetta, Behram Khan Mandokhel while talking to media persons said the traffic management system has linked with the online banking system to facilitate the commuters in the submission of fines on the spot despite standing in a queue in the bank to pay the fines.

The latest system has been installed in the devices of the traffic sergeants, through which fines can be

also deposited through debit cards, credit cards, easy money and other means on the spot, he added.

SSP Traffic Behram Khan Mandokhel said that a summary of the development of traffic police offices on the model of mega centers like NADRA and passport centers has been sent to the higher authorities.

SSP Traffic said that Quetta Traffic Police has been connected with Data Command and Communication Center (D3C) and traffic is being monitored through D3C cameras installed in the city.

The wireless operator informs the sector in charge where observed a traffic jam problem in the city.

Supdts of different prisons transferred

Independent Report QUETTA: The transfer and posting of superintendents of different prisons has been made in Balochistan on Thursday.

According to an official notification issued here by the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Superintendent of District Prison Sibi, Abdullah Khan Kakar has been transferred.

President for expanding ties with the Philippines, Iran, Rwanda

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to expand bilateral ties with the Philippines, Iran, and Rwanda in the fields of trade, economy, investment, culture, and people-to-people contacts.

The president made these remarks while talking to the Ambassadors-designates of the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the non-resident High-Commissioner-designate of the Republic of Rwanda, who presented their diplomatic credentials to the president and made separate calls on him, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to the Ambassador-designate of the Philippines, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, the president said that Pakistan was keen to expand bilateral relations with the Philippines across all areas of cooperation and expressed the need to explore new avenues of cooperation to further diversify bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Speaking to the Iranian Ambassador-designate to Pakistan, Dr Reza Amir Moghaddam, the president highlighted the need to promote economic engagement and mutually beneficial economic exchanges between the two countries through the established institutional mechanisms and private-sector collaborations. He called for further expanding economic ties by strengthening the existing institutional mechanisms, besides making the Border Sustenance Marketplaces functional.

Talking to the High Commissioner-designate of Rwanda to Pakistan, James Kimonyo, the president emphasized the need to further strengthen trade and economic relations, adding that the business communities of the two countries needed to exchange visits to boost bilateral trade.

He remarked that Rwandan businessmen should explore the Pakistani market, especially for the import of rice, textile products, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, and sports goods.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Mckran Panjur Prof. Dr. Malik Tareen and Pro-Vice Chancellor Saadat Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Maryam Nawaz likely to return to Pakistan on July 17 or 18

LAHORE (Online): Maryam Nawaz senior vice president of PML-N is likely to return to Pakistan on July 17 or 18.

According to sources Maryam Nawaz will give final shape to her schedule of public meetings and rallies in connection with her mass contact campaign on her return to Pakistan.

The prime minister thanked the IDB president IDB for giving one billion dollars to Pakistan and said the received amount also played an important role in finalizing the standby agreement with the International

IDB president assures PM of continued support to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Monetary Fund (IMF). President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Dr Sulaiman Al Jasser on Thursday assured Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of continued financial support to Pakistan.

The IDB president, in a telephonic conversation with PM Shehbaz, termed Pakistan a brotherly country and vowed to cooperate with it, the PM Office said.

He recalled his meeting with Sulaiman Jasser in France, and said Pakistan was keen to further strengthen its partnership with the IDB.

He apprised the IDB president of the recently established Special Investment Facilitation Council for the promotion of investment in the country.

Teachers strike continues Academic activities suspended in all four medical colleges

Independent Report

QUETTA: The academic activities in all four medical colleges of the Balochistan province continued to remain suspended following strike of the medical teachers for acceptance of their demands.

The academic activities have been suspended in Bolan Medical College Quetta, Jhalawan Medical College Khuzdar, Loralai Medical College, Loralai and Makran Medical Col-

lege, Turbat for last three months due to the strike and protest being observed by the medical teachers under the umbrella of Balochistan Medical Teachers Association (BMTA). The medical teachers have been observing protest and strike to pressurize the government to accept their demands including regularization of health professional allowance, expedite the process of proposed service rules, promotion of teaching faculties.



QUETTA: A representative delegation of APRNS led by its President Ghulam Murtaza Jatt meeting with Director Abdul Manan Babar during their visit to PID Quetta

Chairman WAPDA reviews construction activities on Mohmand Dam

ISLAMABAD (APP): WAPDA Chairman Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) on Thursday visited Mohmand Dam Project's all key sites, including diversion scheme of the project, which will be completed during the upcoming low-flow season to divert River Swat.

The chairman had a detailed review of construction activities - concrete works on upper stilling basin of the spillway, excavation and support of inlet portal and concrete lining in the diversion tunnels in particular.

The chairman directed the project management to double their efforts for the diversion of River Swat in the upcoming low-flow season as planned.

He also urged upon the contractors to take all precautionary measures for securing the critical construction sites, particularly the diversion tunnels in high-flow season to prevent any adverse impact of floods on the project.

Activities on part of the contractors relating to availability and stock piling of rock-fill material for the main dam need to be expedited as well, the Chairman further directed. He urged the project team to squeeze the timelines for completion of the project.

The multipurpose Mohmand Dam Project is being constructed by WAPDA across River Swat in Mohmand District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Sohailur Rehman Baloch presiding over a meeting regarding security and other arrangements for Muharramul Haram processions