

Independent

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Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XVI No. 53, Zil Hajj 14, 1444 AH Monday July 03, 2023, Pages 08, Price Rs.15

Emergency session OIC calls for collective measures against desecration of Holy Quran

*International law should be used to stop religious hatred;
We must send constant reminders to world community: OIC chief*

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Sunday said that collective measures are needed to prevent acts of desecration to the Holy Quran and international law should be used to stop religious hatred.

The statement by the group of 57 member states, most of whose members have a Muslim-majority population, was issued after an extraordinary meeting in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah called to discuss Wednesday's incident in Sweden where the holy book was desecrated in a protest outside a mosque.

"We must send constant reminders to the international community regarding the urgent application of international law, which clearly prohibits any advocacy of religious hatred," OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha said.

During the meeting, Mr Taha called for a unified response to such incidents, describing the most recent one as a "despicable act".

The Secretary-General emphasised that such inci-

dents are not mere Islamophobia, but actions that deeply insult and offend the religious sensibilities of Muslims. As such, they require serious international measures to prevent their recurrence.

On Wednesday, a man desecrated the holy book outside Stockholm's central mosque, the first day of the Muslim Eid al-Adha holidays. The act angered OIC member Turkey whose backing Sweden needs to gain entry to the NATO military alliance.

Swedish police had granted permission for a protest to take place. But, after the incident, police charged the man who carried it out with agitation against an ethnic or national group.

The incident has triggered large protests in Baghdad in front of the Swedish Embassy. It has also been condemned by the United States.

Turkey in late January suspended talks with Sweden on its NATO application after a similar incident of desecration of the Holy Quran by a Danish far-right politician near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm.



JEDDAH: Pakistan's Ambassador to the OIC Fawad Sher participating in extraordinary meeting of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) called to discuss incident of the Holy Quran's desecration in Sweden.



Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari speaking at a function organized by the Pakistani diaspora in Tokyo

Three police and one FC cop martyred in attack on check post in Sherani district

Langove grieved over martyrdom of security personnel

Independent Report
QUETTA: Three police and one Frontier Corps (FC) personnel were martyred in a rocket attack and firing at a check post in Dhana Sar area of Sherani district on Sunday morning.

According to the reports reaching here, unknown armed assailants resorted to fire few rockets targeting a check post located in Dhana Sar area in wee hours of Sunday. The rocket attack was followed by extensive firing at the check post. As a result four security personnel

embraced martyrdom on the spot. In the meantime, the security personnel retaliated and exchanged firing with the assailants.

During the exchange of fire, one terrorist was also killed, the sources informed. Afterwards, the armed assailants fled from the scene. Later, the security forces and area administration cordoned off the area and started hunt of the terrorists.

However, no arrest was made in the terrorism act neither any group or individual claimed responsibility of the incident.

Meanwhile while condemning the terrorists' attack at a check post of security forces in Dhana Sar area in strongest words, the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of four security personnel in the attack.

In a condemnation issued here on Sunday, the Minister Home paid homage to the martyred personnel of Balochistan police and Frontier Corps.



USTA MUHAMMAD: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali and Muhammad Khan Lehri visiting different canals

Pakistan, Japan have full potential to increase bilateral trade: Bilawal

TOKYO (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says Pakistan and Japan have the potential to increase bilateral trade in diverse sectors for mutual benefit.

He was speaking at a function organized by the Pakistani diaspora in Tokyo on Sunday.

The Foreign Minister said both countries can benefit from investment in agriculture and livestock.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said incumbent government is working on economic diplomacy to bring prosperity in the country.

He said Pakistan can learn from Japan's advancement in Information Technology and other fields.

investment in Pakistan. He said Pakistan has over sixty five percent populations of youth and we can exploit this human resource through skills based education and training.

The Foreign Minister urged Pakistani overseas particularly businessmen to play their role for increase in trade between two countries and also strengthening of bilateral relations.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari interacted with a number of Japanese business executives and representatives of Japan International Cooperation Agency and Japan External Trade Organization in Tokyo on Sunday.

During the meetings, the matters related to bilateral cooperation in trade and investment came under discussion.

PM summons cabinet session

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned the federal cabinet session on Monday (tomorrow), citing sources.

PM Shehbaz Sharif summoned the federal cabinet's session on Monday in which the participants will review the political and economic situation of the country.

Offices open today after Eid vacation

Independent Report
QUETTA: The official holiday of Eid-ul-Adha is over and all government offices across the country will be open as usual from today.

According to the details, the official holiday of Eid-ul-Adha is over and all the government offices across the country will be open as usual from today.

According to the announcement of the bank, all banks and financial institutions across the country will be closed for public transactions on July 3.

CM demands fresh NFC Award, maintains: Balochistan enduring loss of over Rs. 10 bln annually due to non existence of new NFC Award

Quddus Bizenjo charges PPL proving itself to be "East India Company" for Balochistan; asserts we may not be forced to give strong reaction; says efficiency of PM's formed parliamentary committee yet to be proven

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has stated that Balochistan has been enduring financial loss of over Rs. 10 billion due to non-existence of new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, as such fresh NFC Award should be announced at the earliest.

In a policy statement issued here the other day, the Chief Minister regretfully pointed out that the

7th NFC Award has completed its due tenure in 2014, and since then no other NFC Award has been announced yet.

He said that the constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of rights of the smaller provinces of country, and added that it is an unconstitutional and undemocratic act to overlook any federating unit in this manner.

The Chief Minister said that attitude of the federal government with



Balochistan is very sorrowful.

He said that the federal government maintained its tradition of abiding by its commitment with the province as neither PPL's arrears were paid nor the due share

of NFC Award could be received till June 30, 2023 as had committed by the Prime Minister.

He regretfully pointed out that the Finance Division and PPL Board didn't pay any heed towards the PM's announcement.

He said that it seems that the Federal Finance Minister doesn't take the PM's directives seriously.

The Chief Minister made it clear that we have no personal grudge with the federal government. We had

also boycotted the NEC meeting and federal budget in compulsion just because of non-implementation of the promises and commitment made by the federal government with the province.

The Prime Minister formed a parliamentary committee to resolve the financial issues being faced by the province and we also sent a 11-point stance to the committee for consideration, but to no avail, he added.

Slams Sherani terrorists' attack; Governor calls for showing unity to foil enemies' nefarious designs

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has directed the concerned authorities to mobilize all available resources to take all those sabotaging the peaceful environment of the province and spreading fear and harassment among the masses to task.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Sunday, the Governor strongly condemned the terrorists' attack at a check post of security forces in Dhana Sar area of Sherani district and expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of four security personnel in it.

The Governor stressed that those sabotaging the peace and spreading harassment and fear should not be spared at all.

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar also stressed that we have to demonstrate national unity to foil the nefarious designs of the terrorists and miscreants.

The Governor prayed for the departed souls of the martyrs. He also expressed best wishes for those injured in the terrorist attack.

It may be mentioned here that four security personnel were martyred in a terrorist attack at a check post of security forces in Sherani district.

Nation stood by security forces: Chief Minister

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has strongly condemned the incident of rocket attack and firing at a check post of security forces in Dhana Sar area on Sunday.

In a condemnation issued here, the Chief Minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over martyrdom of the three police and one FC personnel in the terrorist act.

He also applauded the Police and FC for killing a terrorist in retaliation

against the terrorists. Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo said that terrorists can't down the moral of our security forces by carrying out such cowardly acts.

He said that the sacrifices of security forces are worth following for the nation. The Chief Minister also said that the security forces are ensuring protection of the nation and country with strong resolve and courage.

He said that the entire nation is standing with its security forces to foil the nefarious designs of the enemies.



DUBAI: Leaders of PML (N) United Arab Emirates photographed with former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz

PM Shehbaz to attend SCO summit via video link

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will participate in the 23rd Meeting of SCO Council of Heads of State being held in videoconference format on Tuesday.

The invitation to the Prime Minister to attend the SCO-CHS was extended by the Prime Minister of India in his capacity as the current Chair of the SCO.

At the forthcoming CHS, the highest forum of the SCO, the leaders will deliberate on important global and regional issues and chart the future direction of cooperation among SCO Member States.

This year, the SCO CHS will also welcome Iran as a new member of the organization.

After winning elections, PMLN to end inflation on priority basis: Nawaz

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Pakistan Muslim League-N and former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has said that after winning the upcoming elections, PMLN will end inflation on a priority basis.

Former prime minister held an important meeting with the Pakistan Muslim League (PMLN) Gulf delegation in Dubai.

PMLN leader was briefed about the high morale of the party workers based in the Gulf countries including the UAE.

During the meeting, the delegation inquired about the well-being of Nawaz Sharif, while PMLN delegation also met PMLN Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz discussed the strategy of the upcoming elections with the delegation.

Nawaz Sharif assured and said that the Muslim League-N will quickly overcome the problems of Pakistan.

Nawaz Sharif said that he saluted his party workers who were facing difficult situations.

PMLN Nawaz Sharif finalized his future travel plans and confirmed his return ticket to London on 4th of July.

Sources claimed that PMLN supremo will return back to London.

He will hold important meetings in Dubai before leaving for London.

Army kill six terrorists in DIK IBO, ISPR

RAWALPINDI (Online): Army has killed six terrorists in an intelligence based operation (IBO) in Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to ISPR, on 02 July 23, security forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation in general area Kulachi, DI Khan District. During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, three terrorists were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists.

The killed terrorists remained actively involved in various terrorist activities against security forces, Police and innocent civilians.

They were also highly wanted for conducting a raid on a Police in Kulachi on 11 April 2022, which resulted in Shahadat of five brave police constables.

Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori receiving the pilgrims warmly with flower garlands as first hajj flight landed at Karachi International Airport during post hajj operation

Monday July 03, 2023

Relief, for now

The IMF's announcement that it has agreed to extend a lifeline of \$3bn to rescue our crisis-hit economy has come as a relief to all stakeholders: government, business and the public.

Yet the fact that it balked at the idea of approving Islamabad's request to complete the ninth review of the just-expired EFF facility and release the \$1.2bn tranche stuck for months shows that the lender still has trust issues with Pakistan.

The new agreement comes under the IMF's short-term Stand-By Arrangement and is structured for a nine-month period to help save the teetering economy.

Even multiple interventions by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who must be credited for clinching the deal, despite Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's outbursts against the Fund, couldn't bridge this gap.

The IMF, which blames policy 'missteps' and shocks like floods and the Ukraine war for our declining economy, did not think it a good idea to free politicians and their collaborators in the finance bureaucracy from its oversight in the lead-up to the elections.

It wants Islamabad to strictly execute Budget 2023-24 and not cede to pressure for unbudgeted spending and tax exemptions.

After all, an economy plagued with high inflation, drying dollar inflows and macroeconomic instability takes a long time and sustained fiscal discipline to turn around.

The SBA is a better deal as it ends the uncertainty around fiscal discipline before and after the elections, with fears of an immediate sovereign default receding as reflected by the rapidly surging prices of Pakistan's short-duration eurobond debt becoming due in 2024 and 2025.

If Pakistan follows the programme, it can unblock financing from multilateral and bilateral lenders and easily secure bilateral and commercial debt rollovers to shore up its foreign currency stocks.

Moreover, the fear of losing IMF support again will keep fiscal authorities on their toes.

But macroeconomic stability will not come free; the Fund demands that energy and foreign exchange market reforms be implemented, and the State Bank must pursue a proactive monetary policy.

That means interest rates will remain high and base electricity prices rise by a third to over Rs33 a unit.

The home currency may stabilise, even strengthen, in the short run, but further depreciation of the exchange rate cannot be ruled out once the administrative curbs on imports and dollar outflows are lifted.

Politicians and policymakers need to recognise that the deal gives them another chance to implement fundamental, structural reforms for long-term debt sustainability and macroeconomic stability.

If we implement the SBA diligently, it will help us secure a new long-term and less-encumbered bailout after the elections once the arrangement ends.

That is crucial to raise multilateral and bilateral funds to boost reserves, and buy some room to execute basic reforms for overall economic stability.

**Muhammad Amir Rana**

Pakistan has been successful in pulling off a staff-level deal with the International Monetary Fund and securing a \$3 billion stand-by arrangement. Pending approval by the IMF board in July, this pact is expected to provide immediate respite to Pakistan's acute balance-of-payments crisis and serve as a platform for opportunities for further financial support from multilateral and bilateral partners.

Reaching an agreement with the IMF was no piece of cake, as it required extensive political capital from both the civil and military leadership. Undeterred, they embarked upon a relentless diplomatic campaign in major capitals of friendly nations. However, this victory is not the end; it merely marks the begin-

ning of another arduous undertaking — securing additional financial assistance from these friendly countries. Their demands are known, and include issues related to security and terrorism. As Pakistan emerges from the shadow of adversity, one recalls that last year, it had successfully met another formidable challenge: getting off the menacing 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This achievement was the product of years of dogged determination and persistent efforts to convince the international community of its strong commitment to tightening its monetary regulations in order to prevent exploitation by terrorists and criminals.

These milestones can be seen against the backdrop of the Indian prime minister's recent visit to the US, where discussions between US President Joe Biden and Narendra Modi led to a joint statement condemning cross-border terrorism and urging the FATF to enhance its anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing standards. It was aimed at Pakistan which swiftly is-

sued an official demarche to the US envoy in Islamabad.

The strategic community in Islamabad believes that the US and its allies are employing the IMF and FATF as geopolitical tools. This perception is further bolstered by the view that Pakistan's close strategic proximity to China and its role in Afghanistan make it an unfortunate target of coercive politics, with India emerging as the principal beneficiary.

While acknowledging the existence of such geopolitical factors, it is essential to avoid falling into the trap of victimhood that saps the nation's energy and compromises its ability to stay the course. Externalising the issue will not yield a solution. Economists and security experts have long warned of the looming economic crisis and the ramifications of leniency towards any militant group in the country. When the consequences of policies are well known, clinging to the status quo, without making the necessary course correction, would leave little room for justifiable complaints.

Pakistan now stands at a critical juncture where

it must harness its resilience and determination to not only navigate the challenges imposed by global politics but also take transformative measures to ensure long-term solutions.

The allegation of militants infiltrating India-held Kashmir from Pakistan lacks substance. Pakistan has successfully subdued militant groups in compliance with FATF. Major groups, like the Jamaatud Dawa and Lashkar-e-Taiba, are having an internal debate but are unwilling to go to public with it due to their mistrust of and fear of exploitation by India. Friendly nations also have concerns about militant groups and extremism in Pakistan.

The way out for Pakistan is obvious. The institutions should focus on countering terrorism financing and fulfilling international obligations. Efforts to neutralise the militant infrastructure should prioritise core national interests — and any temptation to use them for internal politics must be avoided. Pakistan has established mechanisms to check the illicit financial flows under FATF compliance. Effective oversight from parliament and legisla-

ture cover will increase legitimacy and gain international trust.

In the grand tapestry of global affairs, the presence of strong institutions to combat illicit financing is not merely a matter of international trust, but a crucial factor in maintaining geopolitical equilibrium. Recognising the significance of this paradigm, Pakistan must strategically position itself as a member of esteemed international bodies, such as the FATF, to bolster its influence on the geopolitical stage.

Securing a FATF membership calls for heightened responsibility. A few nations currently find themselves on the FATF's grey list, and are subject to scrutiny by this international watchdog. However, for Pakistan, membership promises to arm it with the necessary tools to deftly navigate the intricate web of diplomatic and political challenges thrust upon it by formidable forces such as India, the US and others.

To secure this coveted position within the FATF, Pakistan has earnestly attempted to meet the watchdog body's stringent criteria and elevate its standards.

The FATF places particular emphasis on fostering transparency, understanding beneficial ownership, and ensuring that criminals are unable to conceal their nefarious activities behind a veil of opaque corporate structures.

In the journey towards membership, Pakistan's inclusion lies in the hands of member countries engaged in the intricate process of mutual evaluation. It is within this evaluative framework that the final verdict will be rendered, determining Pakistan's destiny in the ranks of the world's foremost financial warriors.

However, lurking in Pakistan's geopolitical landscape is a formidable challenge, one that tarnishes its global image and threatens its strategic interests. This challenge emanates from the terrorist groups operating across the Afghan border.

Even as Pakistan navigates the complex web of relations with the Afghan Taliban regime, the nation steadfastly supports its regime. On the other side, the Taliban, in their unwavering stance, continue to lend support to the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

Meeting challenges**Ah, but there's the rub****Ghazi Salahuddin**

An 'Alhamdulillah' moment it was for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif when Pakistan reached a nine-month \$3 billion staff-level agreement with the IMF on Friday, the second day of Eid. And it certainly lifted the spirits of the ruling coalition's supporters. There had been great suspense about it, with the threat of a default looming on the horizon. It was more real for some than others. Like in a thriller, the happy ending was delivered at virtually the last minute. The lead role in this 'chase sequence' was played by the prime minister. Obviously, his vindication bodes well for his party's prospects in the expected elections later this year.

But what does it mean for Pakistan and what happens in the country in the

immediate context? In the first place, of course, the bailout that has to be formally approved by the IMF Board by the middle of this month has grave economic implications.

That, obviously, is not my territory. However, comments made by independent experts and commentators suggest that this deal is a good sign for our economy. Miftah Ismail, the former finance minister of the present political arrangement, has called it good news for Pakistan during Eidul Azha. He graciously congratulated the prime minister for his personal commitment and for speaking to the IMF MD multiple times. For business and economy journalist Khuram Husain, this is a "ray of hope after a year of economic chaos".

Altogether, there is a sense of relief that Pakistan has earned an economic breathing room. At the same time, there is increased awareness about the challenges that lie ahead in the economic domain. As it is, the acquisition of a loan or financial assistance is not something to be jubilant about.

For that matter, the thought of our economic

management remaining the same cannot be reassuring. But we have generally remained prisoners of the business-as-usual mindset. It is repeatedly asserted that economic stability demands political stability — and it is politics that has forever been the source of our disorders.

This observation should allow me to turn to politics that has entered into its most treacherous and violent phase. There is the spectre of May 9 to contend with. Nothing has ever been so disruptive and so testing in our political history. While it is hard to grasp the extent and depth of what has already happened after that day of infamy, some very pertinent issues are still in the process of being resolved. Naturally, a number of questions relating to the ongoing developments in the political arena were posed to the prime minister when he addressed the press conference on Friday.

Eid has been some kind of an interlude in these proceedings. For instance, speculation about when Imran Khan would be taken into custody had rested on this premise: before Eid or

after Eid? That is how a festival like Eid becomes a marker also in our personal business.

Anyhow, the before Eid option is now dead. We are entering into the after-Eid segment of time. There have been these five holidays and the action, in a sense, begins tomorrow — on Monday. The pace of events is likely to be hectic, under the dark shadow cast by that momentous press conference of the director general of the ISPR on Monday June 26. Its easily deciphered message was that the game for Imran Khan and his party was over.

How this ending is to be scripted is the cause of tension that is now gripping the nation. There are various dots that are yet to be connected. Surely, the IMF deal is woven in this story, giving the coalition government much confidence in playing its cards. Shehbaz Sharif has explained the government's position on who will be tried in the military courts while the issue is still before a divided Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Against this backdrop, Pakistan has clearly a very welcome opportu-

nity to make a new beginning. If the preliminary IMF deal can facilitate the necessary economic reforms and the anticipated closure of the May 9 disaster can restore some harmony in the political arena, what can now impede Pakistan's gradual advancement?

Ah, but there's the rub. Apart from the fact that old ideas do not a new beginning make, our rulers have congenitally ignored or paid little attention to an entire area of national activity that is crucial for any movement in any direction. I am referring to the social sector and the building of social capital. This is something that cannot be imported or borrowed. Nor can any judgment made in whichever court can change or modify our human development indicators.

There is this simple point that should be present to the rulers when they sit on the table of authority to make policies for this nation. No crisis, whether it is economic or political, can be resolved when there is a human capital crisis in the country. The truth of this statement is manifest in the quality of

our performance and behaviour at all levels of society.

Though we did not need those reminders, international agencies and research organizations have constantly been trying to rouse us from our deep slumber, though in a careful and diplomatic nudge. We are not waking up. What opium has been administered to the rulers and the populace of Pakistan?

Almost exactly two months ago, the World Bank had released the Pakistan Human Capital Review in Karachi and Islamabad. One focus of the report was our population growth and the state of health and education. Pakistan's Human Capital Index is below the South Asian average. We can only compare it with some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In his IMF deal press conference on Friday, PM Shehbaz Sharif confessed that "this is not a moment of pride but of contemplation". He would do well to hold a meeting of all high functionaries, and do some contemplation on what this World Bank Review is telling us. -- Courtesy TheNews

Eat, pray, cancel**Muna Khan**

What is literature's purpose and should it be different in times of war? I was left wondering about this after reading Elizabeth Gilbert's decision to postpone the publication of her novel *The Snow Forest* "out of respect" for her Ukrainian readers who expressed their disappointment that her book was set in Russia. Although the book was set to be released in February 2024, reviewers left one-star reviews on Goodreads, having read only the description about it being set in 1930s Russia.

The Snow Forest is a historical novel based loosely on the Lykov family, Russian Christian fundamentalists who moved to a remote part of Siberia to avoid religious persecution. They lived in isolation from the 1930s to 1970s when they were discovered by a group of geologists. Gilbert said she was inspired by their story during the pandemic, her period of isolation.

"It is not the time for this book to be published," Gilbert said in a video statement she published on Instagram a few days after announcing the publication of *The Snow Forest*. "And I do not want to add any harm to a group of people who have already experienced, and are all continuing to experience, grievous and extreme harm."

I wonder if she'd have done this if her story was set in Palestine, or Kashmir, or Xinjiang or any other conflict-riddled territory. Gilbert is arguably

most known for *Eat Pray Love* — a memoir cum self-help book cum travelogue, which stayed on the New York Times bestseller list for 187 weeks. She has laid open her life bare for readers, so I can understand why she'd feel like she owes them something. But she has received a lot of censure from them.

She has also been criticised for being bullied into postponing her novel and how such actions pose a threat to freedom of speech. When will it be OK to publish *The Snow Forest*: when the war is 'over' or will Ukrainian readers — how do you quantify this — decide this?

I wonder if her act of self-cancellation is an act of boycott and non-violent resistance that has often led to success — albeit at painful costs: non-violent protests in the subcontinent to British rule, sanctions against apartheid in South Africa and the BDS movement against Israeli occupation of Palestine.

That was then and it was collective. Today, it is easier to organise on the internet, as we saw with the case of the Ukrainian reviewers on Goodreads. Protest takes different forms — be it street art, music, scathing journalism, or diaspora in India standing up for WSJ reporter Sabrina Siddiqi who faced a torrent of abuse from Modi supporters after she asked the Indian prime minister about human rights abuses at a press conference in D.C.

I return to the question: what is literature for in times of conflict? Kate Malby in *I News* offered a possible answer: "If literature is not about the cultivation of human empathy, it is nothing."

History teaches us how aggressors attempt to wipe out their victims' culture and identity in wars. Putin is no exception. But

as many have pointed out, Ukrainians are doing the same in their attempt to erase Russia. Malby writes how Ukrainian writers are refusing to share space with Russian dissident writers like Mikhail Shishkin who is in exile because of his open criticism of Putin. I'm not questioning calls to boycott Russian music productions, art, literature but to ask who joins in those calls, and when they do, are they endorsing one group's nationalistic endeavours?

Socialists have noted how support for the Ukrainian war effort comes from a group "whose rabid hatred of Russia is historically rooted in Cold War anti-communism" and that Russia won't be forgiven for its socialist, Bolshevik ties. Without such questions that allow for reflections, I fear we're headed to an era of book burning. (We're already living in an era of book bans.)

Nationalism is problematic especially when myths are peddled as fact to legitimise policies and power. Writers — fiction and non-fiction — have an important role to play in challenging myths, lies and various groups' assertions. I believe that is art's purpose. The anger at the atrocities of war should be redirected at corporations and industries that support those efforts, not artists who set their novels in, this case, Russia.

Journalists challenge nationalist, military, hyper religious narratives every day in Pakistan, often at great cost. But many also practise self-censorship out of fear. Soon they may be joined by artists who will feel they have to create for popularity rather than purpose. Literature and art should not be weaponised. You may not want to read Gilbert's new book but that should be your choice, not one made for you by a mob. -- Courtesy Dawn

Focus on food**Aisha Khan**

COP27 saw a step change in the focus on food systems as a vital sector for climate action, but investment and policies continue to fall far short. In the lead-up to COP28, the June discussions in Bonn made significant progress in the first week but encountered a breakdown regarding the establishment of a coordination group for collaborative efforts on agriculture and food security. The negotiations concluded with a procedural outcome that is expected to be followed with a draft text in Dubai for delivery of food system transformation that ensures sustainable food security.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlights the huge impact of climate change on food systems and warns that, without urgent action, millions more people will be at risk of hunger. At the same time, industrial food production systems and ultra-processed foods are fuelling an obesity pandemic. Food systems (across the whole food supply chain) are responsible for 34 per cent of global GHG emissions, and food energy systems are fundamentally intertwined. The challenges to reforming food systems include climate change constraints on pollinators, soil quality, water availability, and crop variety feasibility. However, the threats of unsustainable agriculture as the greatest driver of biodiversity loss (responsible for 80pc of deforestation and 70pc freshwater use) are undermining resili-

ence, increasing fragility in food systems and hampering adaptation efforts. As the world grapples with food shortages, with more than 250 million people facing acute food insecurity, exacerbated by the climate crisis, it is time to change the rules of international finance that are stacked against the world's poor, and accelerate momentum for fit-for-purpose food systems.

COP28 must set clear goals, laying out pathways and identifying priority policies and investments to deliver food system transformation. The benchmarks for defining pathways and ambition at sub-national, national, regional and multilateral food systems transformation must be guided by a just transition. This will require taking into consideration food sovereignty, equitable food distribution and protection for farmers, farm workers, processors as well as marginalised communities, placing small-holder and family farms at the heart of food system transition plans.

Moving beyond benchmarks that are already embedded in international agreement and commitments, the new contours require clear goals from governments and the private sector to address food systems reform in an integrated way, including meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commitments under UNFCCC and the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

For the Global South, meeting SDG 2.1 to end hunger and ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round, is becoming a distant dream. This is less a problem of global food supply and more due to food systems that prioritise profits over public health and the environment. Without a massive investment in food systems and wider develop-

ment needs, large populations in the Global South will face a daily struggle to secure sufficient food for themselves and their families.

The agriculture methane emissions by industrialised countries also need clear, time-bound targets for reducing and implementing policies that focus on the harmful impacts of industrial livestock farming and damage to ecosystems, water quality and health, labour rights and animal welfare. Globally, the use of inorganic fertilisers has increased tenfold since the 1960s. This has been a key driver of industrialisation of agriculture, increasing yields in many places but with knock-out impacts on soil, health and ecosystems.

In Pakistan, 81pc of farm holdings are less than five hectares in size. While smallholders and family farmers are ideally suited for embracing agro-ecological and regenerative practices, they often face investment structures that limit their access to finance and exclude them from supply chains dominated by larger businesses. Pakistan ranks 92 out of 107 countries with 43pc of the population food-insecure and 18pc facing severe food shortages. With rapid urbanisation and greater quantities of food consumed and wasted in cities, Pakistan needs to revisit policies, repurpose agricultural subsidies and align objectives with initiatives like the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

The FAO roadmap for food systems announced at COP27 with the first output due at COP28, can help Pakistan improve sustainability whilst also enhancing resilience and improving food security. It is critical to plan and set milestones now for different sub-sectors for the agri-food system to 2050. -- Courtesy Dawn

KSA, UAE keen to invest in Pakistan: Musadiq Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadiq Malik on Sunday said that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates are taking keen interest in Pakistani information technology, agriculture and mining sectors.

KSA has planned to fix funds of 24 billion dollars for investment purposes, while U.A.E allocated 22 billion dollars funds for exploring opportunities in three sectors of Pakistan, he stated in an interview with a private television channel. The heavy investment in three major sectors of Pakistan would open many job opportunities for young people, he added. Our young people having knowledge of advanced technology are fully capable to show the world about their skills, he said. We are hopeful to bring business opportunities

here in this country, he said. He said the government has recently constituted committees for One-window operations to facilitate the investors. Commenting on Nawaz Sharif's arrival in Pakistan, he said, after the announcement of the date by the election commission of Pakistan, the former prime minister will come Pakistan to lead the election campaign. He said the incumbent government's tenure will be finished by August mid and the caretaker set-up will invite ECP to announce the schedule for general elections.

He said it is the responsibility of ECP to hold the next elections in a transparent manner. He said the PML-N under the guidance of Nawaz Sharif would sweep the general elections. To a question about the next leadership role in this country, he said the PML-N will decide

about the leadership role. To a question about relief to poor people, he said despite economic challenges, the government has provided maximum relief to employees, and pensioners besides the people working in the private sector. About load-shedding of gas and electricity, he said, we have issued directives to the department concerned to ensure energy supply during cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner timing. He said that a discussion has been made with Azerbaijan regarding the provision of LNG cargo to Pakistan before next winter. To a question about IMF, he said a nine-month relief through an agreement has been made to run the economic affairs in a proper manner. He hoped that heavy investment from the Gulf region would boost business activities besides open job opportunities in Pakistan.



KARACHI: Workers are peeling the "Siri Paye" outside their shop at nanakwarha area, the paye and Siri is the one of the favorite and famous dish in Pakistan.

Speakers say: 5G has the potential to revolutionize industries

LAHORE (Online): It is evident that 5G has the potential to revolutionize industries and drive economic transformation on a global scale.

Speaking at a seminar on "The role of 5G in Economy" held here today under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Sunday said that the impact of 5G on the economy is expected to be significant, with numerous potential benefits across various industries. He said 5G technology will open up new possibilities for innovation and entrepreneurship. Startups and businesses will be able to leverage the high-speed and low-latency capabilities of 5G to develop and deploy new applications, services, and business models. This will spur economic growth,

create jobs, and drive technological advancements, he added.

He said this improved connectivity will enable faster and more reliable communication between devices, leading to increased productivity and efficiency across industries. He said the low latency and high reliability of 5G networks will enable real-time monitoring and control of machinery, improved supply chain management, predictive maintenance, and overall operational efficiency. He said this will fuel the growth of mobile-based services, such as mobile gaming, streaming platforms, e-commerce, and mobile advertising. Meher Kashif Younis said the widespread adoption of 5G is expected to contribute significantly to economic growth and productivity gains. According to estimates by the World Economic Forum,

PFC to take part in 2nd Intl Expo, Trade Fair Kabul starting on July 16

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in the 3-days Imam Abu Hanifa 2nd International and National Expo and Trade Fair Kabul starting from July 16 to discover business opportunities and explore new market access for Pakistani products.

Chief Executive Officer PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Ch Zeeshan Elahi Arain CEO Marvel Cables here on Sunday said that PFC along with Chenone will be participating in this mega event, said a news release. "Chenone will also exhibit its high-quality

international standards products to capture their share in the global market besides it's an excellent opportunity to showcase Pak products and develop business deals with international buyers", he added. Mian Kashif Ashfaq said that around over hundreds of Pak companies will be exhibiting their products which included furniture, textile, garments, leather garments, sportswear, sports goods engineering, etc. He said this expo will also offer professional buyers a sourcing platform with a wide variety of products ranging from basics to the most creative and qualitative.



FAISALABAD: Workers preserving sacrificial animal hides at their warehouse.



FAISALABAD: A worker is busy in his work at Tissue making factory, to earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.

Pakistan is now firmly back on right track, says Miftah Ismail on IMF agreement

Monitoring Desk

KARACHI: Reacting to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement, former finance minister Miftah Ismail on Friday said, "Pakistan is now firmly back on the right track".

Pakistan and the IMF reached a long-awaited staff-level agreement (SLA) on a \$3 billion "stand-by arrangement" (SBA), the global lender announced today.

The \$3 billion funding, spread over nine months, is higher than expected for Pakistan. The country was awaiting the release of the remaining \$2.5 billion from a \$6.5 billion bailout package agreed in 2019, which expires on Friday (today).

Taking to Twitter, Miftah said that the signing of the \$3 billion agreement was "great

news" for Pakistan. He also congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who ensured that the deal went through because of his "personal commitment and intervention".

"As I have been saying, a deal with the Fund is the best insurance we have against default. Now InshaAllah the clouds of default will recede, demand for hoarding dollars will slowly decrease, and there will be renewed hopefulness and vibrancy in the business climate," said Miftah.

The former Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader noted that Pakistan lost nine months in reaching the agreement. He also acknowledged the efforts of his successor Ishaq Dar, State Minister for Finance Aisha Ghaus Pasha, special assistant to the prime minister on

Finance, secretaries of finance, revenue and power and their teams in securing the deal.

"We must recognise that this IMF deal gives us yet another chance for making fundamental reforms. Unless we undertake these reforms, Pakistan will remain at the mercy of multilateral lenders and the people of Pakistan will continue to pay for the structural and governance failures of their governments," said Miftah.

The former finance minister was part of the ruling PML-N. However, he recently decided to step down as the party's Sindh general secretary and all other positions after months of bitterness over his removal and the subsequent appointment of Ishaq Dar as the finance minister in September last year.

Actions needed to make northern regions a center of tourism: Ahsan Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari met Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Mohiuddin Ahmed Wani.

During the meeting held at Gilgit-Baltistan House, Islamabad, he briefed about the first ICCI International Tourism Summit to be held in Skardu from July 7 to 9 next month. On this occasion, arrangements and measures regarding the tourism conference were also discussed in detail.

President Islamabad Chamber while speaking said that the tourism sector is the easiest source of foreign investment for Pakistan. There are probably no other tourist destinations in the world like our northern regions. However, our

problem is that unfortunately tourism has never been given priority in our country and due to lack of concrete measures in this regard, tourists are turning to other countries.

Along with the completion of the CPEC project and the construction of Skardu International Airport, more steps need to be taken to promote tourism. International flights should be launched in Skardu. Flights from all over the world should come to Skardu.

Apart from this, special attention should be paid to the construction of infrastructure for the promotion of tourism in Skardu. For the promotion of tourism, new restaurants, hotels and guesthouses should be built to attract tourists.

Brazilian analysts upgrade GDP's growth forecasts

BRASILIA (Xinhua/APP): Brazilian financial analysts raised their projected GDP expansion in 2023 from 2.14 to 2.18 percent, the seventh consecutive weekly upgrade, and upped the 2024 forecast from 1.20 to 1.22 percent, the Central Bank of Brazil.

Analysts lowered the forecast inflation for the year from 5.12 to 5.06 percent, and for next year, from 4.00 to 3.98 percent, according to the bank's weekly Focus survey of the country's top financial institutions.

Brazil's target inflation is 3.25 percent for 2023 and 3 percent for 2024, with a 1.5 percentage point margin of tolerance in both cases.

Market analysts maintained the forecast for the benchmark Selic interest rate at 12.25 percent for this year.



HYDERABAD: Female farmers are busy in seeding rice crops in their fields at the bypass.

Farmers stressed need for switching over to "Inter cropping"

LAHORE (Online): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday stressed the need for switching over to "Inter cropping," for growing two or multiple crops simultaneously in the same field for bumper agricultural production to achieve food autarky besides boosting profitability of farmers across the country.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Pir Saddam Hussain Shah of Pindi Shaikh Musa district Faisalabad here today he said Inter cropping can significantly enhance overall crop productivity.

By growing different crops together, farmers can maximize the use of

available resources, such as sunlight, water, and nutrients, he added. He said the complementary nature of different crops helps in better utilization of the growing space, resulting in higher yields per acre. The added income from inter cropping can improve farm profitability and financial stability.

He said Inter cropping provides a form of insurance against crop failure. If one crop is susceptible to pests, diseases, or adverse weather conditions, the other crops in the mixture can compensate for the losses, he added. This diversification of crops reduces the risk of complete crop failure and helps farmers maintain a more stable income.

Stocks push higher as investors track China

NEW YORK (APP): Global stocks advanced as China's growth reassurances and solid economic data in the United States helped reduce recession worries.

US consumer confidence surged unexpectedly to an 18-month high in June, fueled by an uptick in the outlook for family finances.

Meanwhile new home sales surged in May to reach the highest rate in over a year, while orders of big-ticket manufactured items rose again last month, fueled by a sharp jump in orders for transportation equipment.

"There was a lot of US economic data released today and the key takeaway was that the economy is not breaking just yet," said Oanda's Edward Moya.

Ahsan calls for increasing exports

NAROWAL (INP): Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the need for increasing exports of the country by utilising all available resources.

Addressing a news conference in Narowal on Sunday, the federal minister said five main fields of economy including agriculture, IT, manpower, minerals and industries could play a vital role in increase of exports and to deal with the economic crisis.

The Planning Minister said Pakistan has the lowest GDP growth rate in the region and by

paying special attention to SMEs we can achieve the set target. He said that we must increase the tax to GDP ratio for self-sufficiency. He also urged the nation to adopt the tax culture for the development of the country.

Iqbal said Pakistan is now on a right track after its agreement with the IMF and this Stand by Arrangement will be helpful in economic turnaround of Pakistan.

He regretted that the PTI has tried to sabotage the IMF's agreement with Pakistan but could not succeed.



QUETTA: An elderly man pushing his handcart full of coconuts for selling to earn livelihood for his family.

BMP says: IMF financing good Dev. but reforms must to end economic crisis

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has termed the agreement with IMF as a positive development for the economy but warned that the multilateral donors financing might not bring any significant impact on struggling economy, as the sustainable solution to Pakistan's economic issues lies in the structural reforms and consistent policies.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said the deal would end speculation of a possible default, but the country's debt troubles won't end there, as the more IMF aid will be

needed in 2024, he added. He said that the rupee will strengthen which will reduce inflation, so, the IMF agreement is overall a good development.

The BMP Chairman expressed his opinion on the agreement with the International Monetary Fund and said that there is positive news at the beginning of the new fiscal year, as it was not expected but the agreement was reached.

Now the rupee will strengthen, which will reduce inflation. He said that there is a 9-month agreement which is very positive, as the caretaker government will remain in the facility, however, the IMF conditions have increased the cost of production.



RAWALPINDI: Shopkeepers are packing the Charcoal for customers at their shop in Ganjmandi area as due high demand because of Bakra Eid.

MEPCO nabbed 16985 power pilferers during 2022-23

MULTAN (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) caught 16985 power pilferers across the 13 districts of South Punjab and imposed a Rs 534.2 million fine on them during the fiscal year 2022-23.

Rs 11.9 million fine was imposed on 343 commercial consumers and 90 FIRs were registered. Rs 12 million fine was imposed on 42 industrial consumers (industrialists) and 16 cases were registered. Rs 69.2 million fine was imposed on 337 agricultural tubewell users (farmers) and 128 FIRs were registered.

Rs 4.6 million fine was imposed on 37 other consumers and six cases were registered during fiscal year 2022-23.

Apple's market value ends above \$3tr for first time

Monitoring Desk

O A K L A N D / BENGALURU: Apple Inc's stock market value ended a trading session above \$3 trillion for the first time on Friday, lifted by signs of improving inflation and bets that the iPhone maker will successfully expand into new markets.

Shares of the world's most valuable company jumped 2.3% to \$193.97, giving it a market capitalisation of \$3.05 trillion, Refinitiv data showed.

It was Apple's fourth straight record high close. The Cupertino, California company's market

capitalisation briefly peaked above \$3 trillion in intra-day trading on January 3, 2022, before closing the session just below that mark.

Heavyweight growth stocks including Apple, Nvidia Corp and Tesla Inc rose sharply after a Commerce Department report showed the Personal Consumption Expenditure price index advanced less in May than in April, reflecting progress in the Federal Reserve's fight against inflation.

Apple has surged 49% so far in 2023 in a rally by several of Wall Street's most valuable companies.



KARACHE: Activists of Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimien Pakistan holds protest outside Press Club against the burning of Quran Pak in Sweden.

Samina Zehri says: Desecration of Holy Quran very sad & intolerable act

QUETTA (APP): The desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden with government support was a highly condemnable and intolerable act.

These views were expressed by Central Vice President of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri in her condemning statement issued here on Sunday. She said that the growing hatred against Muslims and anti-Islam in Europe was increasing day by day.

She has expressed deep anger over the incident of burning the Holy Quran by the cursed Silwan Momika in Sweden and said that no matter how much this heart-breaking incident was condemned.

We condemn this incident in the strongest terms and demand from the Swedish government that the person involved in the incident and the elements behind him should be severely punished, she said.

She said that this inci-

dent has hurt the sentiments of Muslims all over the World and it was very disgusting and condemnable.

It is an intolerable act which should be condemned by every intelligent person. Such incidents are an attempt to inflame the sentiments of Muslims. Such incidents cannot be ignored. Such an incident under the permission and patronage of the Swedish government is a moment of concern for the whole world, she maintained.

Fresh wave of inflation to further expose Shehbaz's govt: Rashid

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Sunday said the cash-strapped Shehbaz-led government's downward countdown is expected to begin from July 12 [the start of new wave of inflation including increasing power tariff].

Taking to Twitter, he asked what was the difference between the IMF decisions of former finance minister Miftah Ishaq and his successor Ishaq Dar except they are relatives. "Dar's tone was aggressive initially and then he started bowing before the [International Monetary Fund] to get the loan approved for nine months."

He said a new wave of inflation would engulf the masses from July 12, leading to downward countdown of the incumbent government, adding the three governments the sitting government, the caretaker government and the new

government—had to fulfill the IMF's strict conditions in nine months and pay back \$11 billion in six months.

The former minister said the time would tell if the deposit assurances given by the friendly countries would reach any practical conclusion, adding there was no room for errors in the IMF agreement as an environment of now or never had been created. He was of the view that the government had wasted 10 months, signed [staff level] agreement with [the IMF] on the last day [June 30].

"Is it fair that diesel has become expensive by Rs7.50 even on the arrival of Russian oil in the country, the AML leader questioned. He said the foreign minister of PPP made more than 50 foreign tourism trips but is a silent spectator on the IMF agreement. Nawaz Sharif's coming or not depends on his health and not on politics and the decision of the case."

Newly constructed Levies HQ Thana inaugurated in Ziarat

QUETTA: The newly constructed Levies Headquarter Thana was inaugurated in Ziarat city on Sunday.

The Deputy Commissioner Ziarat, Shabbir Ahmed Badini inaugurated the newly built Levies Thana.

Also present on the occasion were the tribal elder, Sardar Qasim Khan Sarangzai, others besides the officers of Levies force. Special prayer was

offered for the country's stability and peace on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Ziarat said that Levies force has always played vital role in elimination of crimes and establishment of peace in the areas of their control.

He pledged that we have to put the Levies force on modern lines by providing it necessary resources.



ZIARAT: Deputy Commissioner Shabbir Ahmed Badini inaugurating newly constructed Levies Headquarter Thana

Indian troops committing systematic HR abuses in IIOJK'

SRINAGAR (INP): Political experts and analysts have said that systematic human rights violations committed with impunity by Indian troops are daily witnessed in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The political experts and analysts in their interviews and statements in Srinagar said human rights situation in the occupied territory has further deteriorated since August 2019 when the Modi-led fascist Indian government repealed Kashmir's special status and imposed military siege in the territory.

They said the international rights bodies have re-

peatedly raised alarm about the worsening rights situation in IIOJK, adding several United Nations reports have documented massive human rights violations by Indian troops in the occupied territory. They said killings, arrests, torture and molestations have become a routine as the Modi regime is blatantly violating every human rights principle in IIOJK.

The political experts and analysts said HR violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir are directly connected to unresolved Kashmir dispute and the global powers must demand that India respect its rights obligations.

3 injured in Mastung road mishap

QUETTA (APP): At least three people were injured in road mishap near khada-Kochia area of Mastung district on Sunday.

According to Levies sources, the victims were on way to Mastung from Quetta on a motorbike when their bike slipped on National Highway near Amanullah Kariz due to over speeding.

As a result, they received injuries on the spot.

The injured were shifted to Ismail Baloch Welfare Society Rescue Center where they were referred to Quetta Civil Hospital for further treatment processes after provision of first aid.

Govt. utilizing all resources to provide relief to poor: Jabbar

Independent Report USTA MUHAMMAD: Director General Benazir Income Support Program Abdul Jabbar, has said that under the three-month installment of Benazir Income Support Program in April-June 2023, 511451 families of Balochistan 657634 will be distributed and till now 40% of people have been distributed to 144 campsites established by Benazir Income Support Program. More than 250 employees of the Benazir Income Support Program, including the Zonal Director General and Directors South and North have been performing monitoring duties to ensure transparent

payment of money at more than 350 retail shops and the district administration is also providing appreciable help in achieving the above target.

Director General Abdul Jabbar further said, "All the deserving women are once again informed that HBL can go to the respective retail shops and collect their money and in case of any kind of deductions or complaints, Benazir Income Support Program, that concerned zonal district tehsil or zonal director general office established complaint cell should be immediately reported on this number 0156 287 081."

Sardar Khetran condemns attack on police and FC check posts in Sherani

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Communications, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has strongly condemned the terrorist attacks at police and FC in Sherani district.

In a condemnation issued here on Sunday, the Provincial Minister Communications paid homage to the martyred security personnel on the sacrifice of their lives. He said that the Police and FC have ren-

dered great sacrifices for the country's stability. He said that the terrorists' attacks can't demoralize us. He said that we salute all those who are rendering sacrifice of their lives for the cause of country. Sardar Khetran prayed for the departed souls of security personnel and expressed sympathy with the bereaved families.

He also prayed for the early recovery of injured personnel in the Sherani attacks.



QUETTA: Provincial President of Pakistan Muslim League Balochistan, Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Roshan, addressing the Press Conference.

Hamza strongly condemns desecration of Holy Quran

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Leader Hamza Shehbaz on Sunday strongly condemned desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden which severely hurt the sentiments of Muslims across the globe.

In a message issued here, Hamza said that such despicable actions in the garb of freedom of expression were not acceptable at all. He said, "Islamophobia is a outcome of hatred and extremism". Hamza Shehbaz said that legislation was needed at international level to stop rising incidents of Islamophobia. Such heinous actions by extremist elements were threat for peaceful societies, he added.

ANF arrests 1652 drug smugglers

RAWALPINDI (INP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan in their operations conducted across the country managed to net 1652 drug smugglers during last 12 months and registered 1678 cases against the accused.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF recovered over 157.551 metric tons drugs during the period.

He informed that as the premier anti-narcotics agency, the ANF, along with other law enforcement agencies, continued to be at the forefront of national anti-narcotics efforts.

Consul General Chengdu visit Pakistan pavilion at West China Intl Fair

BEIJING (APP): Acting Consul General, Pakistan Consulate General, Chengdu, China, Agha Hunain visited Pakistan national pavilion at the 19th West China International Fair (WCIF) in Chengdu, the capital of southwest China Sichuan province.

The organizers plan to hold 50 activities, including over 30 investment promotion activities. A number of Pakistani products including carpets, clothes, marble and wooden decoration pieces have been displayed for the next few days.

Govt to save Rs438bn annually with energy plan applicable from July 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government expects to save Rs438 billion annually through the implementation of the energy conservation plan from July 1.

The implementation of the previously announced plan will save 8,000 megawatts of electricity.

According to the documents obtained, the duty imposed on substandard fans will get the government tax worth Rs15 billion.

Moreover, banning the manufacturing and im-

ported of substandard bulbs will fetch Rs23 billion in revenue, Rs86 billion will be generated from e-bikes, and Rs23 billion will be saved by using LED lights instead of bulbs.

According to the plan, closing the markets four hours earlier will save Rs62 billion, while allowing 20% of the staff to work from home will save Rs56 billion, the documents say.

Using conical baffles in geysers will save 25% gas, and Pakistan save Rs92 billion annually under this head.

Samina, Naila create history by scaling world's second highest peak K2

The Pakistani trailblazers and 28 other mountaineers from around the world summited the peak early Sunday morning

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: High-altitude mountaineers Naila Kiani and Samina Baig made history on Sunday as they became the first Pakistani women to successfully ascend the perilous peak of Nanga Parbat, the world's ninth highest mountain. The announcement was made by the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) and the Karakoram Club, marking this achievement as a significant milestone in the history of Pakistani mountaineering.

Nanga Parbat solidifies her reputation as a pioneering woman in Pakistani mountaineering, as she is now the first woman from the coun-

try to have successfully summited seven global peaks that rise above 8,000

formidable challenges that included severe weather conditions and treacherous terrain, the two women, along with their team, made their successful ascent. Joining them in this daring feat were other Pakistani mountaineers including Rizwan Dad, Eid Muhammad, Ahmed Baig, Waqar Ali, Saeed Karim, Liaqat, Wajid Nagri, and Shah Daulat, confirmed ACP secretary general Karar Haider, who further mentioned that all of the mountaineers on the team had successfully scaled the peak.



Overcoming a series of meters.

No one will be allowed to worsen Balochistan's situation: Sana

Independent Report USTA MUHAMMAD: Central leader of the Balochistan National Party, Member Balochistan Assembly, Sanaullah Baloch has said that he will not allow anyone to worsen the situation in Balochistan adding that "Don't test the patience, now the patience of the Baloch has been exhausted."

Sardar Akhtar Jan is the leader of the Baloch nation, the roads of Pakistan's development pass through Balochistan. All the available resources will be utilized to take Kharan on the path of justice.

He expressed his views while talking to me-

dia persons on the occasion of meeting with the district organizer of BNP District Usta Muhammad, Muhammad Hanif Bakhtiar Zai Baloch at his residence Baloch House Kharan.

He said, "Balochistan National Party is a name of thought and concern. The oppressed people of Balochistan consider BNP as a ray of hope. People are joining the BNP one by one. We are treating the public service as worship." He further added that development works have been laid in Kharan. All the available resources will be used for prosperity.

He said that the young generation should focus all

their attention on education. He expressed his anger and said that the Naseerabad division was the green belt and granary of Balochistan, but unfortunately, under a deliberate conspiracy, the green belt has been turned into a desert and the canal system has been destroyed.

The farmers have been left in need of agricultural water and they yearned for a drop of agricultural water. Irrigation Naseerabad Division has become a center of corruption. It was not possible to supply agricultural water to the farmers, but all the funds were seen to be corrupt.



MURIDKE: Federal Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain talking with media members

Talha strongly flays Holy Quran desecration in Sweden

MAKKAH MUKARMA (APP): Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Talha Mehmood vehemently denounced the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

In a resolute statement, he emphasized that mere condemnation is insufficient.

Talha strongly stated, "Islamophobia is a stigma on the face of the Western world," stressing that freedom of expression cannot be shielded by such heinous acts that have deeply hurt the sentiments of over 1.5 billion Muslims.

He called upon the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) to actively engage in effectively addressing such issues.

Husband kills wife over domestic issues

QUETTA (INP): A man, in a fit of rage, opened fire and fatally shot his own wife over domestic issue in Sohbatpur district of Balochistan province.

According to the police, the incident occurred within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Malik Muhammad Ali Police Station. As soon as the information about the incident was received, the police immediately reached the scene. The police took the body of deceased woman into custody and transferred it to DHQ Hospital Sohbatpur for further legal procedure. The police stated that the perpetrator managed to escape after committing the crime. Moreover, it was assessed in the initial investigations that the incident happened due to domestic violence.

IMF standby agreement to help economic stability of country: Ch. Naeem

QUETTA (APP): Senior central leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Chaudhry Naeem Karim on Sunday said that the credit of the 9-month standby arrangement with the IMF went to Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the entire team of the Ministry of Finance.

The IMF standby agreement will help the economic stability of the country, he said. In a statement issued here, Chaudhry Naeem Karim said that the current coalition federal government was trying to rid the country of the anti-Pakistan policies of the former Imran government and restore the confidence of the international community.

He said that the trust of Saudi Arabia and China has been restored by the current government and now the staff-level agreement with the IMF was actually the rubbish of the previous Imran government from which we have brought the country out.

He said that the new IMF program would give Pakistan an opportunity to make fundamental reforms saying that this would improve the economic situation in Pakistan, which was suffering from severe balance of payments crisis and falling foreign exchange reserves. He said that there was an urgent need for an IMF standby agreement which would help the country to achieve economic stability but nations were not built on debt. We should just pray that this program from IMF is Pakistan's last program, he mentioned. He said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif took tough decisions by putting the politics of

Karot HPP contributes 3.64 billion units of clean electricity

ISLAMABAD (INP): The 720 megawatts Karot hydropower plant contributed around 3.64 billion units of clean and low-cost electricity to the National Grid in one year of its commercial operations.

This was disclosed by CTG Int'l, which marks the completion of the first year of the commercial operations of the Karot hydropower project.

Karot was the first hydropower project completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative, which started commercial operations on June 29,

2022. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, that Karot contributed Rs 4 billion worth of electricity to the National Grid free of cost during its testing and commissioning phase.

Karot is a steady source of clean and affordable electricity for Pakistan. According to the latest energy purchase data released on June 15 by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), Karot contributed more than 509.86 million units of electricity in May 2023 at a cost of Rs 115.02 million.



QUETTA: Gypsy family spends their life under the open sky.