

Independent

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PM calls for SCO's joint action to counter economic recession, terrorism & climate change

Reaffirms Pakistan's firm support for shared dreams of peace in SCO region

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for a joint action by the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to address the common challenges of economic recession, terrorism, and climate change.

"The SCO represents a promising future only if we seize the opportunity to achieve the shared goals for the region's peace and prosperity," he said in his virtual address to the 23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS).

The invitation to Prime Minister Sharif to attend the SCO-CHS, which was held in a video conference format, was extended by the prime minister of India in his capacity as the current Chair of the SCO.

Chinese President Xi

Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi joined the virtual moot among other leaders of the observer states.

PM Sharif said the SCO leaders were meeting at a critical juncture as the world faced socio-economic challenges.

He stressed that the regional organization could play the role of "beacon of peace, stability, and progress."

Termining regional connectivity a defining feature of the modern economy, he emphasized focusing on in-

vestment in this area as a "vehicle of peace and prosperity".

He mentioned that China Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, could become a game-changer of progress in view of Pakistan's location connecting the region.

He announced that Pakistan was planning to host a regional connectivity conference in the last quarter of the current year.

On terrorism and extremism, the prime minister said the "monster" must be fought with vigour and determination by all SCO states.

He pointed out that diplomatic point-scoring must be avoided by all countries and said that all forms of terrorism, including State terrorism, must be condemned.



RAWALPINDI: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Secretary Defence, Lt. Gen (Retd) Hamood Uz Zaman Khan chairing a meeting with H.E. Sher Ali Mirzo, Defence Minister of Tajikistan along with his delegation at Ministry of Defence

GB-CM Khalid Khursheed disqualified in fake degree case

GILGIT (Online): Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khalid Khursheed has been disqualified by GB chief court in case of obtaining fake degree.

Three member bench led by Justice Inayatullah Rehman issued reserved verdict in petition of seeking CM disqualification from his office under article 62 and 63 of constitution.

Notably, last April, Khursheed's Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree turned out to be fake, a year after he was appointed to the post.



Khursheed had acquired his degree from a network of diploma mills operating under the brand name Belford, but it doesn't actually exist.

He was entrusted with the top slot over his 'outstanding educational achievements', something even the former premier was misled into believing as he called him the 'right choice' last year.

Subsequently, the senior leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had come under heavy criticism in G-B for

extending legal assistance to their political opponent in the fake degree case.

However, following his disqualification today, a no-confidence motion was submitted against the CM in the Assembly Secretariat almost immediately.

There are reports that the opposition members have submitted a no-confidence motion to thwart the possible plan of the chief minister to dissolve the GB Assembly.

Sources have said that nine members have submitted the motion.

On the other hand, Chief Minister Khalid Khursheed's consultation is ongoing to dissolve the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly.



BAKU: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & HRD, Sajid Hussain Turi signing MoU with his Azerbaijan counterpart on social welfare.

27 killed during June on Balochistan highways

QUETTA (APP): At least 27 people have died and 1095 were injured in 739 incidents that occurred on the highways of Balochistan during the month of June.

According to data released by Medical Emergency Response Center (MERC), most of the accidents occurred on N25 at Winder, Lasbela area on the Karachi-Quetta highway.

The MERC responded to 739 road accidents that happened on the main highways of Balochistan in the month of June and provided medical treatment to 1095 injured people while shifting the dead bodies to the nearest hospitals.

port, the authority has recorded the highest number of road accidents of 107 at Winder Lasbela, due to which 124 people were injured during the said period.

To provide first aid in emergency situations, Medical Officers, and trained paramedical staffs have been appointed at every Medical Emergency and Response Center to save human lives in case of accidents on the national highways.

The centers have been connected with district hospitals to deal with emergency situations and for administrative purposes. The government had also been working to expand the main roads to control the accidents in the province.

Nepra further jacks up electricity tariff

ISLAMABAD (INP): In yet another power tariff hike, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Tuesday jacked up electricity prices by Rs1.25 per unit.

According to media reports, the power regulatory authority, NEPRA approved Rs1.25 per unit hike in electricity in the wake of the monthly fuel adjustment. The consumers have to pay the additional amount in August.

Furthermore, the increase in electricity cost will apply to all the consumer categories except lifeline consumers and KE users.

Dollar is in reverse gear after IMF deal

KARACHI (Online): After success of deal with International Monetary Fund (IMF), dollar also lost its power against Pakistani Rupee. Dollar lost Rs.11 against rupee on Tuesday.

Yesterday, market witnessed brisk in the result of IMF deal and dollar also depreciated.

Today, dollar got cheaper and in interbank dollar price lowered by 11.01. Dollar is trading in interbank at the price of 274.98Pkr.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif signing Joint Declaration and other documents adopted at the conclusion of the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit held virtually

Khawaja Asif, Tajik Defence Minister discuss bilateral defence cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tajikistan Defence Minister, Sherali Mirzo along a delegation called on Defence Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and discussed bilateral defence cooperation the other day.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif expressed best wishes for the military and civil leadership of Tajikistan, and its people, said a press release on Tuesday.

The minister highlighted that being neighbours of Afghanistan, both Pakistan and Tajikistan were facing similar security challenges and threats.

Pakistan believed in peaceful resolution of all issues and appreciates the

efforts of Tajikistan in promoting peace and stability in the region, he added.

The minister highlighted that CPEC would further provide new and unique opportunities for enhancing connectivity and integration from Gwadar to Kashgar and Murghab in Tajikistan.

Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan would continue to provide assistance in intelligence capacity building and sharing of technical expertise with Tajik Armed forces.

Tajik Defence Minister assured his government's commitment and pledged to work with Pakistan to strengthen bilateral ties.

Governor Balochistan says Provision of basic facilities to exiguous but scattered population big challenge

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that it is a big challenge to ensure provision of basic facilities to the exiguous but scattered population in the province.

He regretfully pointed out that the people are forced to migrate towards the urban areas because of gross poverty, backwardness and lack of basic facilities in the far flung areas of the province.

The Governor was speaking to the United Nations' country representative to Pakistan for Population Programme, Dr. Luay Shabaneh who called on him here at the Governor's House on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, different issues were discussed relating to increasing population, family planning, mother and

child healthcare issues, nutritional issues, migration of people towards urban areas, registration of Afghan refugees, etc.

While speaking to the UN's country representative for Population Programme, the Governor expressed deep concern over the high maternal mortality ratio in Balochistan. He said that it is a matter of great concern that the maternal mortality ratio is highest in the province even in the present scientific era and technology.

He pointed out that the poverty is the biggest hurdle to ensure balanced diet full of nutrition to the poor people.

Under the given circumstances, it is necessary for the national and international organizations to pay focus on the poor people in the remote areas, adding he stressed.

Minister Home takes notice of road block, directs to take action against responsible

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has taken notice of the reports of road block by some and directed the concerned authorities to take action against those responsible.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the Minister Home said that strike is democratic right of all, but it should also be used democratic manner.

He was reacting on the reports of road block on the social media the other day. It may be mentioned here

that roads and highways were blocked on call of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) against the issues of law and order in Wadh and other parts of the province besides other issues.

Mir Ziaullah Langove said that there is no fault of party heads in the strike, but we need to create awareness among the political workers.

He said that if there's fault of anyone, it is of those who were present at the spot. He stressed that we should uphold our traditions, which were not followed unfortunately.

Govt. announces nationwide protests on July 7 against Holy Quran's desecration

"Speaking with one voice, the whole nation will give a message to the evil minds," says PM; Joint session of parliament called on Thursday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government would observe Yaum-e-Taqaddus-e-Quran on July 7 to hold countrywide protests demonstrations against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and convene a joint parliamentary session a day earlier.

The decision was made on a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here to discuss the issue of the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.

It was decided that protest rallies would be held on Friday across the country to condemn the act.

The prime minister appealed to the nation, including all the political parties, to participate in the protest

to convey a united message to the mischievous minds.

Besides, the government would also convene a joint session of the parliament on July 6 to formulate a national strategy on the issue and represent the nation's sentiments and feelings through the parliamentary forum.

The joint session would also adopt a resolution to condemn the desecration of the Holy Quran.

The prime minister, also the president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, instructed the party to participate in the Yaum-e-Taqaddus-e-Quran and hold countrywide rallies.

He told the meeting that the sanctity of the Holy Quran was a part of the Muslims' belief for which all of them were united.

He said that the astray minds were toeing a nefarious agenda of fanning the negative trend of Islamophobia.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that nations and leadership believing in peace and co-existence should contain the violent forces infested by the Islamophobia and religious biases.

He believed that the violent mindset targeting the religion, sacred personalities, beliefs and ideologies were in fact the enemies of the world peace.



QUETTA: Country Representative of UNFPA, Dr. Luay Shabaneh called on Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Kakar.

Ban imposed at picnic points, deep water & dams during Monsoon season

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has imposed ban on the picnic points, deep water and dams in the province during the Monsoon season.

According to an official notification issued here on Tuesday, the PDMA has issued an official memorandum to the district administration of all districts regarding ban on the picnic points. As per the notification, the ban would remain imposed on the picnic points, deep water and dams from July 4 to 8, 2023.

Needless to mention here is that the ban has been imposed to prevent any untoward incident at the picnic points.

CM writes commendation letter: Food Department achieves target of 1 million bags of wheat for current year

Independent Report QUETTA: The Food Department, Government of Balochistan has achieved the target of purchasing 1 million bags of wheat for the current year 2023 in the province.

According to the sources of Food Department, the target of purchasing 1 million bags of wheat has been achieved for the year 2023 well in time.

It may be mentioned here that the Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo-led provincial government had directed the

concerned authorities to ensure purchase of the wheat for 2023 so that no shortage of the same is occurred.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has written an appreciation letter to the Provincial Food Department on achieving target of the wheat purchase in the province.

He said that it is appreciable to meet the target of purchase of wheat for year 2023. The Chief Minister expressed the hope that Secretary Food and his team would continue to serve with the same zeal in future.

Abdul Razzaq Shar's murder case: Imran Khan failed to appear before JIT once again despite second notice

Independent Report QUETTA: The former Prime Minister and Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan didn't appear before the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) formed to probe into the brutal murder of senior lawyer, Abdul Razzaq Shar, here on Tuesday.

The JIT had summoned Imran Khan to record his statement about the murder of senior lawyer on June 6, 2023.

However, the Chairman PTI failed once again to appear before the JIT. It may be mentioned here that it was 6th meeting of the JIT held on Tuesday.

On the other hand, another nominated accused Sardar Khan appeared before the JIT. However, the JIT found his reply unsatisfactory in the case, thus he was taken into custody for further investigations, the JIT sources informed.

The JIT sources told that the future course of action is being reviewed about the PTI Chairman. Earlier, two notices had been issued to Imran Khan for appearance before the JIT.

It is being considered whether to release arrest warrants of Imran Khan or issue further notices to him for appearing before JIT.



NASEERABAD: Country Head of WHO Pakistan Dr. Palitha Mahipala and Deputy Commissioner Ayesha Zehri inaugurating EPI Resource Center

Wednesday July 05, 2023

Stop Islamophobia

It is not impossible to distinguish between freedom of speech and malicious actions calculated to insult and offend. And it should be clear, especially to the Western world, that the desecration of the Holy Quran comes under the second category.

The appalling incident, where an Iraqi refugee burned a copy of the Holy Book outside a mosque in the Swedish capital, is not the first of its kind. Nor is it likely to be the last — unless Western nations go beyond the usual condemnation and pass and enforce strict laws to deter those whose hate-filled narrative against the world's 1.8bn Muslims continues to be fanned by the lethargy of governments.

A similar incident took place in Stockholm in January, when a politician from the far-right desecrated the Quran in front of the Turkish embassy — an act for which he received a mere rap on the knuckles when the Swedish prime minister described it as “deeply disrespectful”. Preceding this description was his assertion: “But what is legal is not necessarily appropriate.”

Perhaps it is the ‘legality’ of such atrocious actions — and not only in Sweden — that needs to be questioned. Following the recent incident, condemnation has poured in from all sides. The EU has termed it “an act provocation”, saying, “manifestations of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance have no place in Europe” — which, unfortunately, has hardly proved factual, as so many anti-Islam incidents in various European countries have demonstrated.

Sweden has voiced similar criticism of the latest episode, but added that the country had a “constitutionally protected right to freedom of assembly, expression and demonstration”.

The Pope was more to the point when he said, “Freedom of speech should never be used as a means to despise others and allowing that is rejected and condemned”. The 57-member OIC, meanwhile, has called for the application of international law “which clearly prohibits any advocacy of religious hatred”.

Europe will never forget the dark days of Hitler and World War II when six million Jews were sent to their death. Images and stories from that era are etched not only on the memory of the individuals who lived through those times but also on the soul of the generations that followed. In 2005, the UN designated Jan 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Several European countries have laws that criminalise Holocaust denial. The world today is going down a similar path of hate — against ethnic and religious communities, against minorities, against the ‘other’.

It was this venom spewed on the Muslim world that led the UN to designate March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Just as Europe, and countries outside it, seek to curb anti-Semitism, they should deploy all, including legal, means to stop the march of Islamophobia before it's too late.



Arifa Noor

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has pulled a rabbit out of the hat by successfully negotiating the IMF programme. The fear of default is over, say those who are in the know and those who know the economy (the two don't necessarily overlap much).

For once, the glory that is the prime minister's is not being contested by anyone; there are no hushed whispers or declamations of who worked on the matter behind the scenes despite the breaking news which came days earlier about the riyasat having decided to complete the programme.

The finance minister should also get some of the credit but it is hard to decide if he should get the credit for the success of the negotiations or the earlier eyeball-to-eyeball contest.

Moving on, if I actually had any grasp of economic affairs, I would hold forth — intelligently and poignantly — of our sad state of affairs where success has come to be defined as completing negotiations with the IMF (not even a completion of the programme but just the negotiations). But this is best left to those who understand the issues.

For the likes of ordinary hacks and commentators, it is easier to simply applaud and look forward to the new targets — or definitions of — success we have and will continue to set. From reimagining Pakistan to redefining success, we have it all covered.

But success it surely is because now the risk of default is over, and so is the uncertainty. Or so we are being told. And the uncertainty didn't simply refer to default but also politics. For why else would there be renewed talk about polls where even ministers in the ‘caretaker’ governments are now claiming they are here only to hold elections?

Indeed, the statements about the impending general elections are being delivered with an increased

quotient of certainty. So much so that they are said to be the main discussion point of the meeting of the PPP and PML-N chieftains in Dubai. If news reports are to be believed, from seat adjustment to public sentiment to much else, it was all discussed when the titans met in the Gulf.

Considering that both families had to fly to a third destination for this important discussion, it was surely more important than the economy and the IMF which Dar sahib and the prime minister have successfully handled, while staying put in Pakistan.

However, those in the know link the elections to our resounding success in having completed negotiations with the IMF. For as it is a short programme, which has to be followed by successful negotiations of the next, longer programme, elections have to be held, a government brought to power which will then take over from where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has left the economy and talks with the IMF.

Seems logical enough. But to be honest, I never realised the uncertainty

over the elections was due to the IMF and kept mistakenly linking it to the undesired results of polling.

The latter situation may not witness much change in the coming days. For while there has been more than one sigh of relief at the IMF news, chances are it will bring little good news to the ones who have to exercise their right to vote. Obviously, they would have been worse off had the default occurred but this may not be consolation enough or a convincing enough argument to vote for the coalition in power.

As they struggle to pay bills of utilities and of food, they may not be grateful enough to realise that had default occurred, they wouldn't have had food available in the stores or fuel available for their cars or electricity.

And hence the confusion about the election. Even with the IMF, the people may still want a broader choice than PDM on the one hand and Raja Riaz and Jahangir Tareen-led stability on the other.

Such dangerous desires on the part of the

people may still be a cause for concern. And for this reason, whatever has so far been ensured through the power games has to be complemented by legalse.

But how much can the law achieve? Keep an individual out of elections? Or more? While elsewhere we have set lower and lower targets for what counts as success, in the political sphere, ambitions are sky-high; to ban not just an individual but also a party. For even Ziaul Haq couldn't manage this back in the big, bad days, which were so much worse than the unprecedented times of today.

This is more than the IMF deal and its benefits may just continue to feed the uncertainty surrounding us. And we may just have to wait till October to get some answers.

For whichever way we go — election and a ‘happily forever’ for PDM — or no election and a ‘happily forever’ for Shehbaz Sharif — it does not seem to lead to certainty any time soon. The IMF may not have provided an answer to our political questions either

way. Postscript: It is worth remembering the ‘stability’ experienced during the Zia or Musharraf period had more to do with the generosity of the West during those years than the abilities or the power exercised by these men themselves. Even authoritarianism requires deep pockets.

PPS: A journalist is missing. He is a journalist and he has been missing for nearly two months now. This is all that matters; his views, his professionalism or even his biases are irrelevant. Journalists can be good or bad, professional or unprofessional, but none of this justifies a disappearance.

Can the government pay attention to this issue? And perhaps the industry called the media? Imran Riaz's disappearance and the ensuing silence is the collective failure of our employers and press representatives. But eventually, history will only remember the government under the watch of which he disappeared. And it might be remembered for longer than the IMF negotiations. -- Courtesy Dawn

May 9 and the cult of Imran Khan

Ahsan Iqbal

On May 9, the militant cult-follower of a ‘political’ leader waged war against the state of Pakistan, violently attacking symbols of the state and dishonouring monuments put up in memory of our martyrs. The nation expects that the law will take its course and those responsible for these heinous acts will face the consequences of their actions through the due process of the law. As we all are recovering from the incidents of May 9, it is important to critically analyze the underlying causes behind the day's incidents and do some self-introspection as a state and society. We must ask how and why we allowed one individual — Mr Imran Khan — to put his own petty vested interests above the people and state of Pakistan. Imran Khan joined politics in the 1990s;

he was a cricketing celebrity/star at the time. But before 2018 he did not get a major electoral victory at the national level. What allowed Imran Khan to become a cult-leader in Pakistan?

The rise of Imran Khan cannot be explained without acknowledging the policies of the few segments of the previous military-judicial establishments. A group of people in the army and judiciary did not only provide him political and financial support but also helped him with media management. They cleared the way for him by ousting Mr Nawaz Sharif from the arena.

From 2011 onward, ‘Project Imran Khan’ bombarded people with two messages. One, everyone except Imran Khan is corrupt; and two Imran Khan is a messiah and an angelic honest leader. Imran received positive press while his political rivals were maligned through concerted media campaigns. Hate was injected in people's minds against old parties and the path to victory was created for Imran Khan. The results of GE 2018 were manipulated and rigged in favour of Imran Khan to

bring him into power. In short, with the help of his benefactors in the military and judicial establishments and with the support of a large section of Pakistani media, Imran Khan became a ruthless cult-leader.

What does it mean to be a cult-leader? A cult of personality arises when a leader is represented as larger-than-life through uncritical praise and flattery. Propaganda is a common vehicle used to help create personality cults. Leaders are often depicted as super-human, courageous, wise, and incapable of error. If a leader is viewed as super-human, it is less likely followers will criticize or question his policies or challenge his power.

It is not surprising to see many educated followers of Imran Khan blindly follow and defend him, no matter how ridiculous, contradictory or irrational it is. No matter what Imran Khan does, his core support base tends to justify and romanticize his every action. In other words, it does not matter what policy position Imran Khan takes; his cult-followers will blindly follow him. Historically, this is not new in Pakistan. Religious-spiritual leaders

tend to have a cult-following in Pakistan but what makes Imran Khan extremely threatening for pluralistic parliamentary democracy is his political agenda of neo-fascism and totalitarianism in Pakistan.

I would like to outline six salient features of Imran Khan's cult-politics which stand in contradiction to constitutional democratic rule. One, Imran Khan has projected himself as a cult of a redemptive, ‘infallible’ leader who never admits his mistakes. We as human beings are prone to making mistakes. What makes us strong and courageous is our ability to accept our mistakes and take responsibility for our actions. For example, Mr Nawaz Sharif and the late Ms Benazir Bhutto publicly acknowledged their mistakes of the past when they signed the Charter of Democracy (COD), which has allowed Pakistan to move forward as a parliamentary democracy.

If Imran Khan was serious about rule of law and democracy then after his ouster from the PM Office, he should have publicly apologized to those who were politically victimized and imprisoned during his

term. On the contrary, whenever he is confronted on this issue, he does not even acknowledge that anyone was politically victimized during his term. In other words, he never admits his mistakes because he is a cult-leader who is solely motivated by narcissism.

Two, loyalty to Imran Khan is paramount and more important than competence. Imran Khan cannot stop talking about ‘meritocracy’ when it comes to critiquing his political rivals. But he totally disregarded merit in his own appointments. For example, he nominated one of the least qualified MPAs in the Punjab Assembly as chief minister; the same was true in the case of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Imran Khan wants absolute control, and he appoints the least competent individuals so he can dictate them. His kitchen cabinet was full of such sycophants.

Three, to undermine his political opponents, Imran Khan endorses myths, conspiracy theories and promotes lies. Imran concocted the conspiracy theory of ‘imported government’ after his ouster from the PM Office. First, he blamed the US for his

ouster and then he started blaming others. Therefore, May 9 cannot be seen as a spontaneous reaction but as an inevitable outcome of the neo-fascist cult politics of Pakistan. Therefore, the primary contradiction of Pakistan's politics is the fight against the neo-fascist cult-politics of Imran Khan versus the multi-party parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. History is taking note of those who are still protecting the neo-fascist cult-politics of Imran Khan versus those who are putting up a resistance against neo-fascist politics of Imran Khan to protect the pluralist character of Pakistani politics.

Imran didn't only attack this multi-party pluralist democratic system but also attacked the foundation of Pakistan by attacking the country's military installations and those who sacrificed lives for this country. But as a nation we came together after May 9 because Imran Khan grossly overestimated the power of his cult-following. This larger-than-life syndrome has destroyed many in the history and we are witnessing another episode before our eyes. -- Courtesy TheNews

Post-Fund deal

Rashid Amjad

The euphoria that greeted the IMF Staff-Level Agreement on a new nine-month Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) of \$3 billion was understandable. The economy was facing near-certain default and was in the midst of a deep slump, with little or no growth last financial year.

This was accompanied by unprecedented inflation of 35 per cent, causing the IMF to insist on hiking interest rates further to an all-time high of 22pc — the highest in living memory. Poverty levels have soared and left five million workers actively seeking and not finding jobs.

That it was a self-inflicted wound in large part was brought home when the prime minister rightly took credit for the last-minute agreement as the head of the economic team that had failed to achieve this over six months — mainly due to his misplaced confidence — sat next to him. Indeed, the economy overall has been very poorly managed over the last year.

The first thing to note about the IMF SBA is that only the first tranche of \$1.1bn will come in later this month after the agreement is approved by the IMF Board. The second and third tranches will only be forthcoming at three-month intervals after a joint review and the IMF's go-ahead.

So, even if the threat of default has eased temporarily and it should open flows from multilaterals and friendly countries of an

other \$5bn to \$6bn, Pakistan's troubles are far from over.

The country faces an overall foreign exchange financing gap of near \$24bn this year. This makes it imperative that this SBA must not end halfway as the last and many before have done. Critically, first and foremost, the IMF will examine in three months' time whether we have fully removed existing administered import controls and stopped our habitual fiddling with the exchange rate.

Even in a slightly improved foreign exchange reserve position, this is a very challenging task and involves some difficult choices. If we go through this policy change as agreed, we will end up with an unaffordably high exchange rate, despite its current drop, to balance out the rising import demand that will follow in the new import regime in the face of falling export earnings and remittances.

To stem the rising tide of imports, the IMF agreement requires us to impose very tight demand suppression measures. These include continuing with a high interest rate regime and implementing steep increases in tax rates — as announced in the budget — on high-income earners and higher sales tax on many goods, together with deep cuts in development expenditure.

These steps, if fully implemented, will bring the fiscal deficit to a more prudent 4pc. However, these strong stabilisation measures will also mean continuing with very little or no economic growth, rising unemployment and further pressure on rising prices.

But will this tightening of aggregate demand suppress import demand sufficiently to allow the demand-driven exchange rate to fluctuate within an affordable band, one that does not result in such high import prices that inflation

goes through the roof? My own assessment is that these measures will not be enough.

If we really wish to ensure that the IMF deal holds, what is required is for the large banks and major importers (in all sectors) to acknowledge the harsh macroeconomic realities in which they must operate and adjust their requirements accordingly — rather than always maximising narrow self-interest as they are wont to do.

What the country needs is a ‘Charter of the Economy’ endorsed by the private sector (or its representative bodies) that clearly spells out the policy framework required to increase its competitiveness and exports without the usual wish list of more protection and unaffordable subsidies.

The troubling question on everyone's minds is whether the IMF deal will break the back of this unprecedented, entrenched inflation. Given that the current price spiral is in large part driven by cost-plus pricing by sellers to protect their incomes, it will take time for inflation to come down. This will require that direct income support for the poorest households be suitably increased.

The real task, however, of carrying through far-reaching structural reforms to ensure sustainable growth will fall on the new government that will take over in November this year. They should start preparing for how to successfully conclude the current IMF deal and agree on the contours of the next IMF programme, which we will in all probability still need.

For this, we require an economic team in both the interim and new government with professional competence, vigilance and leadership to maintain confidence of financial markets. Hopefully the selectors will find them! -- Courtesy Dawn

Low growth

Javid Husain

The most important task facing Pakistan's economic policymakers is to realise the goal of a high rate of economic growth on a sustainable basis. Unfortunately, it is a task in which successive governments have failed in the relatively recent past. For instance, in 2007-08, which was the last year of Pervez Musharraf's military rule, even a low GDP growth rate of 4.4 per cent resulted in an unsustainably high level of current account deficit of \$14bn or 6.9 pc of GDP. The difficult economic situation forced the succeeding PPP government to apply brakes on the GDP growth rate to lower the current account deficit and balance Pakistan's external account.

By 2010-11, the current account deficit turned into a marginal surplus of 0.1pc of GDP but the GDP growth rate had to be slashed to 3.2pc which was barely sufficient to take care of the growth in population. The PPP government in the last year of its rule (2012-13) kept the current account deficit at the manageable level of 1pc of GDP but by keeping the GDP growth rate at the low level of 3.9pc. The goal of a high GDP growth rate (7pc or above) combined with the current account surplus or at least a manageable level of current account deficit remained elusive.

During its tenure from 2013 to 2018, the

performance of the PML-N government from this point of view was only marginally better than its predecessor. It was finally able to raise the GDP growth rate to 6.1pc by 2017-18 but by paying a heavy price in the form of an unsustainably high level of current account deficit amounting to \$19.2bn. The PTI government during its tenure from 2018-22 couldn't do better. After recording low GDP growth rates in the initial years of its tenure, it succeeded in raising the GDP growth rate to 6.1pc in 2021-22 but at the cost of an unsustainably high current account deficit of \$17.5bn.

The present PDM government, therefore, had to go through the familiar exercise of slashing the GDP growth rate, estimated to be about 0.3pc in 2022-23, to drastically lower the current account deficit which declined to \$3.3bn in the first ten months of 2022-23 as against \$13.7bn in the corresponding period a year earlier. Thus, the country, despite changes in government, unfortunately remains stuck on the path of a low GDP growth rate so as to maintain a sustainable balance in its external account.

The fundamental cause of Pakistan's low economic growth rate and persistent current account deficits is its low national saving rate which translates into low national investment and GDP growth rates. Consequently, any attempt by the government to raise the national investment rate for accelerating economic growth results in a current account deficit which, as any student of economics knows, is equivalent to national investments minus national savings. The country then needs capital inflows in the form of loans or for-

performance of the PML-N government from this point of view was only marginally better than its predecessor. It was finally able to raise the GDP growth rate to 6.1pc by 2017-18 but by paying a heavy price in the form of an unsustainably high level of current account deficit amounting to \$19.2bn. The PTI government during its tenure from 2018-22 couldn't do better. After recording low GDP growth rates in the initial years of its tenure, it succeeded in raising the GDP growth rate to 6.1pc in 2021-22 but at the cost of an unsustainably high current account deficit of \$17.5bn.

The only way to balance our external account while maintaining a high growth rate of the economy is to raise our currently low national saving rate of about 12pc to at least 25pc of GDP or even higher so that our national savings are sufficient to finance a high rate of national investment needed for accelerating our GDP growth rate. This effort should be combined with economic policies designed to promote exports and import substitution. This should not be an impossible task. After all, in our region the national saving rates of Bangladesh and India are well above 30pc of GDP. China's national saving rate exceeds 45pc of GDP.

The main reason for Pakistan's chronically low national saving rate and the consequent slow economic growth and huge current account deficits is the addiction to conspicuous consumption of our decadent elite consisting of the top echelons of its civil and military bureaucracy, political leadership, feudal landlords, professionals, and business community. Until they mend their ways and adopt austerity as their motto or a strong and stable government forces this through appropriate economic, financial, and administrative measures, Pakistan will remain stuck on the path of slow economic growth while lurching from one economic crisis to another. The latest budget presented by the government could have done more to embody the strong and far-reaching measures needed to push the country in the right direction. -- Courtesy Dawn

Governor unveils Rs.75 commemorative banknote to mark 75 SBP years

KARACHI (INP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, on Tuesday, unveiled a commemorative banknote to mark the 75 years of the establishment of SBP in a ceremony held here at the SBP Museum.

The Rs 75 commemorative banknote is predominantly blue which has been chosen to impart a sense of stability associated with a central bank, said a statement issued here adding that a distinctive feature of the banknote was the inclusion of a stylised sketch of the State Bank building by the renowned calligrapher and artist, Syed Sadequain Ahmed Naqvi, which shares space with the traditional portrait of the Quaid on the front of the banknote.

The reverse of the banknote is dedicated to the SBP's drive of 'Banking on Equality', represented on the banknote by the portrait of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah.

The reverse also highlights Pakistan's national commitment to address climate change through the depiction of alternative and sustainable energy sources, including wind turbines and solar panels.

The central bank governor, speaking at the occasion, highlighted the achievements of SBP specifically focusing on its engagement with commercial banks regarding supervision and developments therein over the years. He also highlighted the initiatives of the SBP in recent years, with special mention of micro-payment gateway Raast, Roshan Digital Accounts for overseas Pakistanis, encouragement and facilitation of commercial banks for providing digital banking solutions, and development of inclusive policies for different segments of the society including women, youth and agriculturists.

The Governor also spoke about the Strategic

Plan of SBP 'Vision 2028' and its key areas including bringing inflation to the target level in the medium term, promoting fairness in the banking system, propagating gender-inclusive policies, encouraging green financing, providing a conducive environment for Shariah-compliant banking in line with the directives of the Federal Shariah Court, and transforming the SBP into a high-tech, people-centric institution.

He expressed hope that the whole banking industry would work with the SBP in realising the goals. He also appreciated the hard work put into the SBP commemorative banknote, and congratulated the team members on the successful launch of the banknote.

Addressing the ceremony Deputy Governor SBP Sima Kamil, discussed the positive consequences of women's participation in the financial sphere.

FBR, Inland revenue recovers sales tax evasion worth billions of rupees

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Directorate of Intelligence and Investigation (Inland Revenue) Lahore has detected sales tax evasion worth billions of rupees by a reputed company.

The company had issued illegal credit notes of huge amounts in Annexure-C of the sales tax returns without corresponding debit notes from the buyers, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

In this way, the company suppressed output tax to reduce its sales tax liability for the tax periods in which illegal credit notes were issued

and thus deprived the national exchequer from due tax revenue.

The team of Directorate gathered information meticulously without disturbing the business activity of the company and initiated proceedings under section 38 of the Sales Tax Act, 1990 and retrieved the record and documents from the business premises.

Thereafter, the company management agreed to deposit the amount of sales tax involved in the credit note issued/claimed in the return of March 2023 along with default surcharge.



LAHORE: President of Anjuman Tajran Khidmat Group, Hall Road, Babar Mehmood, called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Govt is committed to bring economic stability to the country: Baligh

Independent Report LAHORE: President of Anjuman Tajran Khidmat Group, Hall Road, Babar Mehmood, called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore, here today. Various issues including the country's economic situation were discussed in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the government is committed to bring economic stability to the country.

He said that the government is making efforts to revive and strengthen the country's economy. He said the

business community actively participates in welfare works in addition to contributing to the country's economic development. Governor Punjab said that it is commendable that the business community has generously helped the flood victims and rebuilt the houses for the victims. On this occasion, Governor Punjab presented a shield of appreciation to President Hall Road Babar Mehmood for constructing 300 houses in the flood affected areas of South Punjab. Governor Punjab appreciated the efforts made by him and the business community for the rehabilitation of the flood victims.



KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad inauguration revealing the new banknote of Seventy Five Rupees during celebrating 75 years of SBP Establishment during ceremony at State Bank.

BoAJK to practice latest banking services on IBP-set parameters

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): State-run Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (BoAJK), in collaboration with the Institute of Bankers Pakistan, has agreed in principle on measures for practising modern banking services, further improvement in banking strategy including staff training and professional capacity building.

A decision was taken to promote cooperation in a meeting between Khawar Saeed, BAJK President/CEO and Mansur-ur-Rahman, Institute of Bankers Pakistan (IBP) Chief Executive Officer in

Karachi late Monday. Khawlah Usman, Director of IBP Marketing & Sales and other executives were also present on the occasion. In the meeting, the President BAJK informed about the steps taken for the progress of the institution.

Strategies were also considered for training and professional development of the staff including the staff of head office and field offices while the examination procedure for various levels of staff, the appointment and training of Management Trainee Officers (MTOs) in future was also discussed.

China to restrict exports of chipmaking materials

BEIJING (Online): China will control exports of some metals widely used in the semiconductor industry, its commerce ministry announced on Monday, the latest salvo in an escalating war over access to high-tech microchips between Beijing and the United States.

The controls, which China said were aimed at protecting national security and interests, will require exporters to seek permission to ship some gallium and germanium products.

The move to manage exports of the rare elements that Beijing classifies as strategic, comes as

Washington mulls new restrictions on the shipment of high-tech microchips to China, according to media reports.

The United States and the Netherlands are also set to deliver a one-two punch to China's chipmakers this summer by further restricting sales of chipmaking equipment, part of efforts to prevent their technology from being used to strengthen China's military.

China's controls, to take effect from August 1, will apply to eight gallium-related products: gallium antimonide, gallium arsenide, gallium metal, gallium nitride.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

5G technology set to revolutionize connectivity, business concepts 5G

ISLAMABAD (APP): The commercial usage of 5G technology (the 5th Generation Mobile Network) would herald a new era of seamless connectivity, empowering individuals and propelling industries towards a future of untapped potential.

With its transformative capabilities, the 5G is set to revolutionize the way people connect, while simultaneously ushering in a wave of extraordinary business opportunities, particularly in the realms of the Internet of Things (IoT), sensing and advanced manufacturing.

As the fifth-generation cellular network takes centre stage, its ability to connect people better than ever before opens up a world of possibilities.

With lightning-fast speeds and reduced latency, individuals will experience seamless streaming, instant downloads, and real-time interactions, transforming the way they communicate, work, and entertain themselves.

Industries are set to benefit immensely from the targeted support that 5G brings to industrial needs. The Internet of Things (IoT), which connects an ever-expanding network of devices, will flourish under 5G's enhanced capacity, reliability, and low latency.

This will enable industries to harness data-driven insights, optimize operations, and create intelligent, interconnected systems that drive efficiency and innovation.

Sensing technologies, utilized in fields such as environmental monitoring,

healthcare, and smart cities, will also witness a significant boost from 5G.

With its high-speed connectivity and ability to handle vast amounts of data, 5G facilitates real-time data collection, analysis, and decision-making, enabling timely and informed actions to address critical challenges and improve the quality of life.

Sabrina Meng, Huawei's Rotating Chairwoman and Chief Financial Officer at Mobile World Congress (MWC) Shanghai in her keynote address titled "Embracing 5G transformation" said 5G has been in use across all industries and countless households around the world and is changing the way people work and live, creating tremendous economic, industrial, and social value.

Stocks struggle in subdued deals amid US holiday

LONDON (AFP/APP): Asian and European equities faltered Tuesday in muted trade, with Wall Street shut for the US Independence Day holiday. Oil rebounded from losses the previous day, when key producers Saudi Arabia and Russia unexpectedly unveiled more output cuts in a bid to stabilise the market. The dollar rose against the euro but fell against the yen, as investors awaited Wednesday's publication of minutes from the Federal Reserve's most recent monetary policy meeting.

Friday's key US nonfarm payroll (NFP) report will provide clues on the health of the world's biggest economy.

"European stocks are struggling for direction amid a light economic calendar and on thin volumes with the US markets closed for Independence Day."

PBF hopes no further depreciation in IMF SBA Agreement

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) hopes that no further depreciation of the rupee will be seen in the IMF SBA agreement as PKR is already undervalued compared to our regional neighbours. As signing of a \$3 billion stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund a positive development in the current scenario but at the same time it raised questions over the coalition government's economic plan to revive the ailing economy. While talking to media on Tuesday, the PBF spokesman Zainab Jatoi said that in the last IMF program (July 2019 - June 2023) witnessed PKR devaluation of 45% and average devaluation of 11.25% (last four years). This is the highest PKR devaluation we have seen comparing all the previous

IMF programs. We expect PKR will slightly appreciate in the short term after the successful SBA agreement with IMF and rupee is strengthening against dollar a ten rupee correction was witnessed in interbank which is a healthier sign for the economy. She said Pakistan will become the fourth largest International Monetary Fund borrower in the world after receiving additional loans of \$3 billion in the next nine months under the standby arrangement from the global lender. Pakistan also holds the "title" of being the largest IMF borrower in the Asian region. Zainab Jatoi further said Pakistan's economy has been in a free fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation.



FAISALABAD: Formers are packing the Corns in sacks at Field along the Satyana Road in City.

Trade deficit narrows by 43% as exports mount to \$27.7 bln in FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 43.03 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the previous year (2021-22), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The trade deficit during July-June (2022-23) was recorded at \$27.547 billion against the deficit of \$48.354 billion in July-June (2021-22), a decline of 43.03 percent.

The exports during the period were recorded at \$27.744 billion against \$31.782 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.71 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 31 percent falling from \$80.136 billion last year to \$55.291 billion during the fiscal year 2022-23.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 18.72 percent and were recorded at \$2.366 billion in June 2023 against the exports of \$2.911 billion in June 2022.

The imports also decreased to \$4.180 billion in June 2023 from \$7.857 billion in June 2022, showing negative growth of 46.80 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports during June 2023 however increased by 7.55 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.200 billion in May 2023.

The imports into the country declined by 3.42 percent in June 2023 when compared to the imports of \$4.328 billion in May 2023, according to the data.

Gold prices decrease by Rs.2,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,200 and was sold at Rs 205,000 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs. 207,200 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,887 to Rs 175,754 from Rs 177,641 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 161,108 from Rs 162,837, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs. 2,500 and Rs. 2,143.34 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$17 to \$1929 from \$1912, the association reported.

Sindh govt takes notice of non compliance of official cotton rates

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government has taken notice of the non-compliance of the official cotton rates.

The provincial Agriculture Advisor Manzoor Hussain Wasan has said that the official price of cotton is 8,500 rupees per 40 kg.

The adviser directed all the Deputy Commissioners and officers of the Agriculture Department to take action against the dealers who do not buy cotton from the farmers at the government-fixed rate. Cotton factories buying cotton from farmers at low prices should be sealed, he said.

Wasan said that farmers from Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah, Khairpur and other cities registered such complaints which would be redressed.

China, Pakistan jointly explore new path of silage harvesting, processing

BEIJING (APP): China and Pakistan will step up efforts to jointly explore a new path of silage harvesting and processing in Pakistan, as the two sides agreed on a meeting held last Wednesday to promote the joint research and outcome commercialization of small and medium-sized silage harvesting equipment in mountainous and hilly areas of China and Pakistan.

At the meeting that took place in Lanzhou, China, it was announced that China will help Pakistan in the livestock sector by establishing a test and demonstration base, donating agricultural machinery and equipment worth 1.5 million yuan, and training a professional

team for the R&D and design of silage harvesting and processing machinery and a group of technicians for the operation, use and maintenance of the machinery for Pakistan. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the project, undertaken by Gansu Academy of Mechanical Sciences Co., Ltd., aims to enhance the mechanized operation, efficiency and economic benefits of Pakistan's agricultural production, and the export competitiveness of its silage. Since the project was launched in 2018, the team has been studying the key technologies suitable for Pakistan in terms of silage harvesting and processing, sealing reliability of wrap film, mechanical properties.



FAISALABAD: Farmers seeding the rice crop on their field.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly labourer on the way loading a sack on a Suzuki van on Fruit and Vegetable market.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, MSC Tokyo, MSC Kritika, Huang Shan-16, Al-Marrouna and Chemroad Hope carrying Containers, Palm oil, LNG and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile two more ships, Atrotos Heracles and N-Orhanwith Canola and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them an edible oil tanker 'GC Berly' sailed out to sea Tuesday morning on Tuesday and three more ships, MSC Kritika, MSC Tokyo and Aruna Berk are expected to sail on today.

Altat Baloch says: Maximum cotton production priority

MULTAN (APP): Secretary of Higher Education South Punjab, Muhammad Altat Baloch, said on Tuesday that maximum cotton production was a top priority of the Punjab government.

He expressed these views during a visit to Tehsil Chohara to monitor the campaign to grow more cotton and inspected the demonstration plot of cotton crops. He also inspected the Farmer Facilitation Center Rafiqabad and inquired about the problems of the farmers.

Secretary further said that a good cotton crop will be a source of getting more foreign exchange.

Assistant Commissioner Chohara Jam Muhammad Aslam,

Assistant Director Agriculture Muhammad Sadiq, and Assistant Director Pest Warming Ejaz Qaisrani were also present. Secretary of Higher Education South Punjab directed the agriculture department to reach out to every cotton farmer for consultation. Farmers should be fully informed about the proper use of fertilizers.

He said that farmers' meetings (Baithak) should be organized for timely information about crop irrigation and harmful insects killing pesticides.

Altat Baloch, while checking the quality and prices of agricultural inputs at the Kisan Sahulat Center, directed officials to ensure the availability of fertilizers and pesticides at the center.

Holy Quran desecration: UN rights council to hold urgent meeting on Pakistan's request

ISLAMABAD (Online): United Nations Human Rights Council will hold an urgent meeting to address the issue of desecration of the Holy Quran following the desecration incident that occurred in Stockholm and sparked global anger, said spokesperson on Tuesday.

The request of an urgent session with change of its agenda on Pakistan's request of 'Swift Justice'.

The development comes after a man, who fled from Iraq to Sweden several years ago, tore up and burned the Holy Quran outside Stockholm's central mosque last week as Muslims around the world began marking the Eidul Azha holiday.

The act drew strong criticism from several countries, including Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Iraq and Iran.

The Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council, which is meeting in session until July 14, will change its agenda to stage an urgent debate, following a request from Pakistan.

"The UN Human Rights Council will hold an urgent debate to discuss

the alarming rise in pre-meditated and public acts of religious hatred, as manifested by the current desecration of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries," council spokesman Pascal Sim told reporters, citing the wording of the request.

"This urgent debate will be convened following a request of Pakistan, sent on behalf of several members of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, including those that are members of the Human Rights Council.

"It will most likely be convened this week at a date and time to be determined by the bureau of the Human Rights Council that is meeting today," Sim added. There are 47 members of the Human Rights Council. The UN's top rights body is currently in the second of its three regular sessions per year.

A day earlier, Pakistan demanded immediate action against the perpetrator of the act.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while addressing a cabinet meeting had said the whole Ummah and the government and people of Pakistan

strongly condemned the sacrilegious act.

"We demand immediate action against the perpetrator," the premier had said.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that such an act has been committed, he had added, recalling that a similar incident had taken place in the past too.

The premier had also demanded that the Swedish government take notice of the Islamophobic and hateful narrative against the Muslim population in their country.

PM Shehbaz had further appreciated the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation for convening an urgent meeting on the issue and said Pakistan endorsed the OIC's meeting and its decision with the hope that such Islamophobic incidents would not recur in the future.

On Sunday, the OIC had called an emergency meeting and said collective measures were needed to prevent acts of desecration of the Holy Quran and international law should be used to stop religious hatred after the burning incident in Sweden.



QUETTA: Hindu Panchayat in the leadership of Sunil Kumar Bajaj meets with Governor Balochistan Abdul Wali Kakar.

PAC order inquiry of \$3 billion interest free loan amid Covid

ISLAMABAD (Online): Public Accounts Committee (PAC) ordered Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Military Intelligence (MI) to take joint investigation three billion interest free loan scheme amid Covid era.

Committee also summoned Finance secretary and Governor State Bank of Pakistan on Wednesday.

Chairman Noor Alam Khan said during corona time \$3 billion interest free loan was given to some favorite industrialist and other few people.

State Bank wrote explanatory letter in which he said the loan was given to assist industrialies amid Covid time and it was not interest free. 5% interest was imposed on loan. Loan was given under TERF scheme.

Chairman further said State Bank has not told the name of those who took loan and present situation of loan return.

Member committee Barjis Tahir of Pmln said 620 people and companies

were awarded with interest free loan. During that other member Senator Mohsin Aziz of PTI said TERF scheme gave loan to industrial sector, loan was also given to increase imports and due to which \$4 billion imports raised.

Mohsin Aziz expressed anger over again and again interruption and it caused exchange of bitter words between committee member Barjis Tahir and Mohsin Aziz, committee chairman interfered and make both quiet and said don't make committee meeting a market.

Mohsin Aziz PTI senator said I will not work as rubber stamp 3200,000 people got jobs due to this \$3 billion loan, I will tell truth, also see what benefits country got by awarding these loans.

Committee chairman said I only want the revelation of name who took loans.

PAC summoned State Bank governor and Secretary Finance for explanation of issue and also summoned list of those who took loans.

Audit report 2019-

2020 of energy ministry was reviewed in the meeting. Report identified more than 4000 billion irregularities.

50 objections of Rs.128.23 billion were presented for review. Committee expressed anger for not holding departmental accounts committee meetings.

Chairman Committee expressed deep concern over unannounced electricity load shedding across the country.

He said I spent Eid holidays on Grid stations, officers' salaries gets increase but people don't get electricity.

During that Committee member Ramesh Kumar said main reason behind load shedding is electricity theft. I know three areas where is no electricity theft and they are at zero load shedding.

Secretary energy told committee that circular debt of electricity sector crossed Rs.2370 billion.

PAC handed over the investigation of eight audit paragraphs of 9.20 billion to FIA.

PM for priority to completion of public welfare projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed on according high priority to the public welfare projects, besides maintaining quality and transparency of the ongoing development projects.

He said preference should be given to commencement of those projects which were aimed at development and prosperity of youth and women's empowerment.

The prime minister issued these directives while chairing a high-level meeting on uplift projects under the current fiscal year.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, PM's Adviser Ahmad Khan Cheema, PM's Special Assistants Malik Ahmad Khan and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and other relevant authorities, the PM Office

Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was apprised of the progress on the development work during the fiscal year 2023-24 and a detailed briefing was also given about the steps for the progress and prosperity of youth and women, and development of agriculture, industries, infrastructure and other sectors.

The prime minister directed for completion of all the projects within the stipulated period of time and the submission of a comprehensive report over the related mechanism.

He said the PM's Merit Scholarship initiative was being launched across the country, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

The meeting was further briefed that under the PM's Youth Programme, distribution process of laptops among the talented youth would commence soon.

Government takes all possible measures to end terrorism

Independent Report QUETTA: Spokesman Chief Minister Balochistan Babar Yousafzai said that the reason for targeting the security forces was the fear of the terrorists. They were defeated and now these few miscreants will also meet their end soon.

He further said that the miscreants did not have any details of the movement of the security forces. The se-

curity forces are always engaged in the service of the people, but in the meantime, the extremists carry out their operations.

The government is taking all possible steps to eradicate terrorism. Our effort is to root out terrorism.

The extremists want to prove their movement successful by targeting the security forces, he said.



QUETTA: Children attending classes established by a NGO in Mastung.

Siraj says: Desecration of Quran in Sweden, JI to hold protests on Friday

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has announced to hold countrywide protest demonstrations on Friday (July 07) against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.

Addressing a press conference at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he termed the incident a sequence of an organized campaign against Islam in western world which particularly started after 9/11, following the worldwide boost in the demand of Quran.

Sirajul Haq noted that anti-Islam elements, psychological patients and hatemongers could not digest the promotion to the message of peace and equality. But their tactics would never succeed as Almighty Allah has taken responsibility for the protection of Quran which is the final divine message for mankind, he added.

Islamophobia became a culture in west and posed a serious threat to world peace, he said.

Courts extends interim bails of Imran in ten cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The local courts on Tuesday extended the interim bails of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI)'s Chief Imran Khan in ten cases pertaining riot, vandalizing public property and violation of section-144 of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

Additional District and Session Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the interim bail petitions of

ousted prime minister in six cases.

Imran Khan's lawyer Sher Afzal Murawat objected over the court, hearing this case, and said that it had already disclosed its mindset in the matter to the extent of two co-accused.

He said that the decision should have come together and prayed the judge to transfer the case to another court.



QUETTA: Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) Leader, Allama Maqsood Domki addresses to media persons during press conference regarding to condemning the latest incident of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, at Quetta press club.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding PSDP projects.

Rs 44124mln allocated for construction of 51 new NHA road building schemes

ISLAMABAD (APP): For implementation of the present coalition government's vision of building road infrastructure in the country, Rs 44124.386 million have been earmarked in the Public Sector Development Programme for 51 new schemes of the National Highway Authority (NHA). According to official data, Rs 6000 million have been proposed in the PSDP 2023-24 for dualization and rehabilitation of Karachi-Kararo and Wadh-Khuzdar road. Similarly, Rs 6000 million have been allocated for the Kararo-Wadh and Kuchlak-Chaman section. Rs 4000 million have been set aside for construction of Abdul Khel Interchange to Dhakki to Kalurkot road.

For rehabilitation and upgradation of 38 km Pezu-Tank Road, Rs 2200 million have been allocated whereas Rs 2000 million have been apportioned for

35 km road from Yarik Interchange to Tank road. For construction of 14.9 km two-lane D.I Khan bypass, Rs 1000 million have been set aside and as much amount has been earmarked for construction of 66 road link from Ramak (N-55) to Daraban (N-50). Rs 1800 million have been set aside for rehabilitation and reconstruction 86 km section of N-5 from Moro to Ranipur including damaged bridges under ADB flood emergency loan. For establishment of Interchange at Tandliwala Area, District Faisalabad on M-3 motorway, Rs 1000 have been kept. For rehabilitation and upgradation of 56 km Kundal Interchange to Lakki Marwat to Tajazai road under D.I Khan Development Package, Rs 1000 million have been allocated. Rs 2500 million have been allocated for the PC-1 for Lowari Tunnel electrical and mechanical works.



QUETTA: Secretary College & Higher Education Lal Jan Jaffar meeting with Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Shafiqur Rehman

PMA flays teaching Hospital Khuzdar incident

QUETTA (APP): The Pakistan Medical Association Balochistan (PMA) condemns in the strongest terms the deplorable incident that took place at Teaching Hospital Khuzdar.

"We are deeply saddened and outraged by the series of attacks on hospitals, destruction of properties, and the insulting of doctors that occurred during this incident," a statement issued by PMA Balochistan on Tuesday.

The statement read, the PMA firmly believes that hospitals are sacred spaces where patients seek care, comfort, and healing. These facilities serve as pillars of our healthcare system, and any act of violence or vandalism targeting them is an assault on the very essence of humanity. It is deeply concerning to note that over 400 attacks were carried out on hospitals, leading to significant dam-

age and disruption of essential healthcare services. Such acts not only undermine the crucial work of medical professionals but also jeopardize the lives and wellbeing of patients who depend on these facilities for their medical needs.

Insulting doctors is not only a violation of their professional dignity but also undermines the trust between healthcare providers and patients. We strongly condemn any form of disrespect towards our doctors and healthcare workers who tirelessly serve the community, often under challenging circumstances. PMA called upon the authorities to thoroughly investigate this incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

It is imperative that the rule of law is upheld, and those responsible for these heinous acts are held accountable for their actions.

Khetran flays desecration of Holy Qura'an in Sweden

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Communications, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran has strongly condemned the incident of desecration of Holy Qura'an in Sweden.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Tuesday, the Provincial Minister described the act as an anti-Islam and unacceptable.

He said that it is totally unacceptable to cover up the desecration of any religion with freedom of expression. He said that the condemnable act has hurt the sentiments of over 1.5 billion Muslims all over the globe. Sardar Khetran also said that extremists are behind this unwarranted act.

IPP to contest upcoming poll with full strength: Tareen

LAHORE (INP): Chief of Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) Jahangir Tareen has said that his party would contest the upcoming general elections with full strength and a proper preparation.

The party chief held a meeting with Secretary General of IPP Amir Kayani and Additional Secretary General Awn Chaudhry and held discussion with them on various political issues.

It was agreed to increase the political activities of the party with issues ranging from the party's registration in the Election Commission of Pakistan.

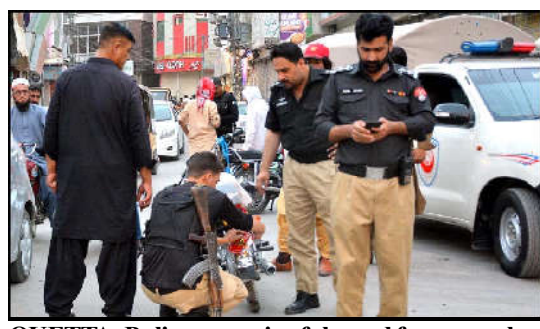
Rally held in Nushki to solidarise with martyrs

NUSHKI (APP): The representatives of the civil society and traders community have staged a rally here to express solidarity with the martyrs who rendered sacrifices for the country.

The rally was held under the supervision of President of Anjuman-e-Tajirani Haji Mir Ahmed Mengal which concluded at Anam Boston Chowk, said a press release on Tuesday. The participants were carrying banners and national flags and raised slogans to pay tribute to the martyrs.

Meanwhile, medical camps were organized at Barkhan and Lasbela where over 330 patients were examined for various diseases.

A Babch Cultural Day activity was organized at Barkhan in which over 700 individuals participated.



QUETTA: Police removing fake and fancy number plate from motorcycle at Mission Chowk.

Rubina Irfan says Govt paying special attention to Balochistan

Independent Report KALAT: The coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has saved the country from default and paved the way for development.

This was stated by senior politician Rubina Irfan while talking to a delegation of journalists.

It is not a matter of one party to solve the problems of the country. All political parties should play a role for the development of the country.

Global investors have restored their confidence in the current government. Special attention should be paid to the current government of Balochistan, she said.

The government is trying for peace, development and prosperity in Balochistan. Agriculture

plays an important role in the country's economy. Special attention needs to be paid to agriculture. Ending poverty and unemployment is one of the top priorities of the current government, she expressed.

Journalists are the fourth pillar of the country. Journalists should bring a better image of the province and the country to the world by highlighting the basic problems of the people and promote positive reporting on the problems of journalists, she said.

Aware announced the supply of all the necessary equipment to the press club and said that journalists will not be left alone, but all the problems of journalists will be solved on a priority basis. The present era is about knowledge and skills.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Izzat Nazir Baloch exchanging views with Deputy Regional Security Officer US Consulate David Oban

UoB Mustang campus providing higher education to students from remote areas

MASTUNG (APP): The Director of the University of Balochistan (UoB) Sub-Campus Mustang,

Muhammad Iqbal Tareen on Tuesday said the campus was providing the best higher education opportunities to the students from remote areas of the province. The director in a meeting with the former Chief Minister of Balochistan, Provincial Assembly Member Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani discussed the matter regarding education, research activities, future plans, financial matters and current issues of the sub-campus.

The University of Balochistan sub-campus

Mustang was providing higher education and accommodation and transportation facilities to students at very low fees, said a news release.

The university has provided higher education with limited resources and also reduced their expenses to a great extent.

Despite the financial difficulties, the process of teaching and learning is going on, including the timely conduct of university examinations and admissions, Tareen told.

Aslam Raisani while considering the educational efforts of UoB Sub-Campus Mustang said that all resources should be utilized to improve the financial and other matters of

Aziz Pathan visits Loralai Teaching Hospital

Independent Report LORALAI: Chairman Municipal Committee Loralai Aziz Pathan visited Loralai Teaching Hospital. He inspected the hospital care system and issued orders to find a permanent solution.

The water of the hospital was flowing on Zangiwal Road for a long time, causing people to suffer. The chairman instructed his staff on the spot and said that now efforts should be made to improve the sewage system permanently by building a new channel so that the sewage water will not go to the road and this long-standing problem of the hospital authorities and citizens will solve.

He said that on the occasion of Eid al-Adha in the city, the staff of the municipal committee worked day and night for cleaning and throwing away the garbage despite their small number and resources. The work of supplying water to the farmers and their livestock also continued.

PPP fights for democracy: Ghazala Gola

QUETTA (APP): President of Pakistan People's Party Women's Wing Balochistan and former provincial minister Ghazala Gola, General Secretary Zarina Zahri said on Tuesday that Pakistan People's Party has always fought for democracy.

In a statement issued here, they said 05 July 1977 was the darkest chapter in the history of the country, during which the popular political leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was overthrown.

Pakistan People's Party has always raised its voice for democracy in the country and its leadership and workers have rendered sacrifices for democracy in the country.

July 5 is the black day in the democratic history of the country, PPP leaders added.

Telenor delegation visits PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from Telenor, led by Senior Vice President and Head of Spectrum, Erlend Fanebust, visited the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) headquarters on Tuesday.

The delegation included Senior VP Spectrum, Dr. Magne Pettersen; Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Mr. Kamal Ahmed and Mr. Shan Ul Haq, VP, RA & Public Policy said a news release. The delegation met with Chairman PTA, Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman.