

Independent

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Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 05. No. 198 Zil Hajj 16, 1444 AH Wednesday July 05, 2023 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

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.

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 investment 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.



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

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: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government would observe Yaum-e-Iqadaddus-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-Iqadaddus-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.

Bilawal terms July 5 as Black Day in national history

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has termed July 5, 1977, as a black day in national history.

He said that this day will continue to remind us how a power-hungry dictator pushed the entire nation into the mire of extremism, terrorism, Kalashnikov and drug culture under the guise of religion, from which even after 46 years, we still could not get rid of them completely.

On July 5, 1977, the tin-pot dictator General Zia-ul-Haq seized power by unconstitutionally overthrowing the government of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the first elected

prime minister of Pakistan and the most popular leader, and deprived the citizens of their basic rights. Since then, Pakistanis around the world observe the 5th of July as Black Day.

According to the statement issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, the Chairman of PPP further said in his message that dictator Zia is a culprit of the Constitution of Pakistan and the Pakistani nation.

He said that the way civil and human rights were violated during the dictatorship of General Zia and the way atrocities were committed on those who demanded the restoration of democracy, humanity will

always be ashamed of such crimes.

Bilawal said that the nation is well aware of the fact that a handful of people who follow dictator Zia's thinking are still busy making conspiracies against the people's right to rule in their hunger for power, but failure is their destiny. "The era of dictators and puppets has become a thing of the past. Now there is only democracy in the present and future of Pakistan," he added.

The PPP Chairman saluted the Jiyalas (party workers) who were flogged, endured the hardships of imprisonment and embraced martyrdom for the sake of democracy during the Zia regime.



KARACHI: A delegation of Tanzeem-e-Azadari meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori

CM Sindh says:

Water sports facilities to be developed at Guddu, Sukkur, Kotri barrages

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Yamaha Japan Senior General Manager for Central Asia & Middle East Yoshiyuki ITO discussed developing water sports facilities at different barrages and lakes of the province, including launching a ferry service from Do-Darya to Port.

The Chief Minister said that there was a great scope to develop water sports facilities at Keenjhar, Guddu, Sukkur, and Kotri Barrages in collaboration with Yamaha Pakistan.

These facilities could be established through the private sector.

The visiting Yamaha representatives told the



Chief Minister that a ferry service could be established from Do-Darya to Port Qasim for transport facilities and recreation. He said that their WaveRunners were the best sports.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah met the 36

athletes of Sindh who participated in the Berlin Special Olympics here on Tuesday.

According to the spokesman of the Sindh Chief Minister, the players of the Special Olympics were dressed in green shirts. Chief Minister Sindh met the athletes of the Special Olympics by going to their seats and praising their performance in Special Olympics.

The Athletes' delegation was headed by Special Olympics coach Iram, Qamar and Benish Javed. Speaking on this occasion, Chief Minister said that necessary steps will be taken for the promotion of Special Olympics athletes.

KWSB getting corporation status benefits will reach people soon: Nasir Shah

Sindh government trying to provide relief people under direction of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

Independent Report

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Local Government Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that after Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) got the status of a corporation, another promise made by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto to the people has been fulfilled. He said that the transfer of powers to the local bodies will be a means of providing facilities and relief to the people which is the vision of Chairman Bilawal

Bhutto. He said that the KWSB getting corporation status benefits will reach people soon. He added that an increase in the powers of Mayor Karachi will bring convenience to the citizens, while the increase in the powers of the elected local representatives will continue. He said that under the direction of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, the Sindh government is trying to provide maximum relief and facilities to the people.

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.

Khawaja Asif, Tajik Defence Minister discuss bilateral defence cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan and Japan have vowed to remain engaged at all levels to further intensify bilateral cooperation.

This came at high-level meetings of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during his visit to Japan from 1st to 4th of this month.

In Tokyo, the Foreign Minister held bilateral talks with his Japanese counterpart Hayashi and also called on Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

During these meetings, the two sides discussed all aspects of bilateral relation; including, trade and investment, defence cooperation, education and export of manpower from Pakistan to Japan.

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 CPÉC 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.



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



HYDERABAD: Workers of Jamaat-e-Islami hold a protest against burn of Quran Pak in Sweden

CS Sindh assures starting devt work in journalists' housing schemes

KARACHI (APP): Chief Secretary Sindh, Dr Muhammad Sohail Rajput on Tuesday assured starting development works in Journalist Colony Hawk's Bay and New Malir Housing Scheme Block 12 at the earliest.

The CS Sindh extended the assurance to President Karachi Press Club Saeed Sarbazi and Secretary KPC Shoaib Ahmed who held a meeting with the CS Sindh on issues of the housing society of Karachi Press Club, said a

handout issued here.

The Chief Secretary directed deputy commissioner Kiamari to immediately start the demarcation of Lyari Development Authority Block 68 and hand over full possession of the land to the Karachi Press Club.

President KPC Saeed Sarbazi briefed the CS Sindh about matters of demarcation of Lyari Development Authority Hawk's Bay Block 68, development work in Block 3A and 3A-1, the

commencement of development work for resettlement of allottees of Journalist Colony of Malir.

Development Authority Block 12 and summary regarding allotment of plots to new 700 members of KPC.

Secretary KPC expressed gratitude to Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput for his cooperation with the Karachi Press Club and the journalist community on every occasion. He also invited the CS for the visit of Karachi Press Club.

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KARACHI: Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has expressed the Pakistan People's Party and the Sindh government's strong condemnation of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, this abhorrent act has been widely condemned by people around the world, regardless of their religion or nationality.

It is regarded as a reprehensible act, and we join in strongly condemning it as well.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Archives Complex in Clifton, Karachi, Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted that the duration of power outages has been prolonged in Karachi, and rural areas of the province are experienc-

ing even more severe load shedding.

Consequently, the people are enduring immense hardship. Memon urged the Prime Minister and federal government to take immediate and strict action, directing relief measures to alleviate the suffering of the people in Sindh. He stated that Jamaat-e-Islami has been spreading false propaganda against the Sindh government and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in recent days. It is worth noting that Jamaat-e-Islami received significantly fewer votes than our party.

Furthermore, even the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not vote in favor of Jamaat-e-Islami. Despite this, Jamaat-e-Islami continues to engage in baseless propaganda against us. We



urge the Election Commission to investigate the utilization of Jamaat-e-Islami's funds.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that he invited Jamaat-e-Islami to refrain from placing blame and instead collaborate for progress. He encouraged them to come together, discuss the issues at hand, and work collectively to find solutions for the city's problems. He said that Jamaat-e-Islami

Insaaf expressed no confidence in the Chief Justice yesterday, which is an attempt to exert pressure on the judiciary. He said that just as the PTI resorted to false propaganda against their country's institutions, they are now employing the same tactic against the judiciary in order to seek relief. Imran Khan, a known liar who has caused harm to the public treasury and tarnished Pakistan's reputation, stands accused of looting Tosha Khana, a fact recognized worldwide. However, questioning the eligibility for hearing his actions today is itself a questionable sign. He said that Imran Khan desires to reinstate Saqib Nisar to his former position, despite the fact that Saqib Nisar had previously legalized Imran Khan's residence.

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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 is surely 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.

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 legalese.

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 Sheh-baz 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 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-followers 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 superhuman, courageous, wise, and incapable of error. If a leader is viewed as superhuman, 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 pluralistic 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.

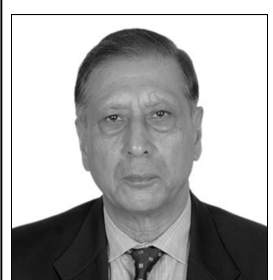
If we really wish to ensure that the IMF deal holds, what is required is for the large banks and major importers (in all sectors) to acknowledge the harsh macroeconomic realities in which they must operate and adjust their requirements accordingly — rather than always maximising narrow self-interest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

ign assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources to finance the current account deficit or the gap between national investments and national savings.

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 Pak-is-tan's chronically low national saving rate and the consequent slow economic growth and huge current account deficits is the addition 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

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, 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 payrolls (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 spokesperson Zainab Jatoti 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 Jatoti 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.



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-Marroura 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, Atros 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 POA 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 Chobara 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 Chobara Jam Muhammad Aslam,

Assistant Director Agriculture Muhammad Sadiq, and Assistant Director Pest Warning 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.



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 \$27.744 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.

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 Advisor Agriculture 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.

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



PROJECT DIRECTORATE,
AGRICULTURE DELIVERY UNIT (ADU)/PMU,
SINDH WATER AND AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION (SWAT),
AGRICULTURE, SUPPLY & PRICES DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT
OF SINDH, DIRECTORATE GENERAL AGRICULTURE EXTENSION
2ND FLOOR, BLOCK F, SHAHBAZ BUILDING, HYDERABAD

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Corrigendum in Extension of Date on REOI of Project Implementation Support Consultants (PIC)-SWAT-Agriculture Component

With reference to our REOI published on 5th June 2023 for the selection of Project Implementation Support Consultants (PIC) under Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation Project (Agriculture Component). Please note that REOI can now be submitted to the project office till 14th July 2023 from 9.00 AM to 5.00 PM.

Project Director,
Agriculture Delivery Unit/PMU
Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation (SWAT) Project,
2nd Floor, Agriculture Complex,
Block-F, Shahbaz Building, Thandi Sarak
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SC rejects plea against BHC's decision to quash FIR against PTI Chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected the plea against the Balochistan High Court's decision to quash the First Information Report (FIR) and arrest warrant filed against the PTI chairman in connection with the killing of senior lawyer Abdul Razzaq Sharif in Quetta.

A two-member SC bench comprising Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan and Justice Ayesha A Malik heard the case filed by Imran Khan against his nomination and arrest warrant in the case of the senior Supreme Court lawyer who was killed in Quetta.

During the course of proceedings, Chairman PTI's lawyer Latif Khosa read out the murder case of lawyer Abdul Razzaq Sharif and said that the son of the slain lawyer Abdul Razzaq Sharif filed a case against

Imran Khan under terrorism provisions. Latif Khosa insisted that his client's life was in danger.

Justice Ijaz asked who determined the imposition of terrorism provisions in the case. The lawyer said that the primary responsibility lied with the SHO of the police station.

Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan asked that if the SHO's decision was wrong, would an application be made against it in the ATC or not?

When the lawyer said that a non-bailable arrest warrant had been issued for Chairman PTI, Justice Ayesha Malik asked whether the constitution of joint investigation team (JIT) was challenged.

Latif Khosa said that he did not know what was happening against his client and SHO could not impose terrorism provisions at the stage of investigation.

The lawyer said that Imran Khan was still coming to Islamabad, but he had stopped him from coming to the Supreme Court, on which Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan said that this case was to quash the FIR and there was no need for Imran Khan to come.

Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan said that if he wanted more relief, request the Chief Justice of Pakistan.

The Supreme Court rejected the request for injunction and interim bail against the decision of the high court and sought the details of the case from the government lawyer.

The court also issued notices to other parties including the Advocate General and Prosecutor General Balochistan.

Subsequently, hearing of the case was adjourned till date in office.



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

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.



KARACHI: A delegation of traders led by Atiq Mir photographed with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori after a meeting.

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.

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.



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

Beneficiaries of Benazir Nashonuma Program cross 770000 figure

KARACHI (INP): The beneficiaries of Benazir Nashonuma Program including women and children being provided health and nutrition facilities under Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) have crossed 770000 figure.

As many as 38,2900 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and 387400 children have been facilitated under the program till now.

These beneficiaries had been served through the network of over 488 Nashonuma Centers across the country, the official sources revealed adding that the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) intervention of Benazir Nashonuma was designed in August 2020 to increase the uptake of Health and Nutrition services of its beneficiaries.

The primary objectives of the program were to prevent stunting in children under two years of age, improve weight gain of pregnant women during pregnancy, reduce anemia

and micronutrient deficiencies and prevent low birth weight.

World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead implementing partner for Benazir Nashonuma which aims at addressing stunting among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and their children less than two years of age through the provision of additional cash of Rs 2,000 per quarter per PLW and boy child and PKR 2,500/- per quarter per girl child of BISP beneficiary families.

In return, mothers are required to attend regular antenatal health checks and awareness sessions during pregnancy, consume specialized nutritious food (SNF), and take their children for immunization and regular health checks.

According to the statistics, Pakistan's high rates of malnutrition (40.2 percent stunting, 28.9 percent underweight, and 17.7 percent wasting) are indicative of an ongoing child nutrition crisis.

Holy Quran desecration: UN rights council to hold urgent meeting on Pak 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 premeditated 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.

Kundi condoles of demise of Liaqat Shabab

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday expressed his condolence over the sad demise of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Peshawar Division President Liaqat Shabab.

In a condolence message, the state minister said the death of Liaqat Shabab was very tragic.

He said the party and social services of the deceased were commendable. Faisal Kundi, who is also the Central Information Secretary of the PPP, said "The PPP was deprived of a hard worker and leader with the death of Liaqat Shabab." The services of Liaqat Shabab for the party would be remembered for a long, he said.

He said the party workers not only from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but from across the country were saddened by the death of Liaqat Shabab. He prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

BISP to utilize mobile registration vans from next month: Minister

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi has said that mobile registration vans would be utilized from next month to facilitate and register women hailing from far-flung areas for the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

He said BISP was a non-political program which was underway for the welfare of the poor voters of every party in a transparent manner.

He expressed these views while addressing an open court at BISP Center to address issues of the people of Daraban, Darazinda and adjacent areas.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that open court was meant to resolve citizens' problems at their doorstep.

He said that the total population of the Daraban Tehsil was about 1,25,000 which included 17500 BISP beneficiaries.

He informed that about 160 million amount

after every three months among them.

He added that the stipend for children of cardholders had been increased and added that amount was also being provided for college and university students to enable children of the poor to pursue higher education as well. He added 11,000 cardholders were given Rs25000 each during the flood in Daraban last year.

He said that 85 percent of the genuinely deserving people were benefiting and if this program was not there then who would ask the poor people of Daraban and Kulachi Tehsils.

He said more incentives would be given to the deserving people of this program.

He said that Daraban, Kalachi and Darazinda were the backward Tehsils of Dera Ismail Khan and the BISP office would be set up there as government land was provided.

If an application was given for a device for his convenience then Bank Al Falah could provide a device to each union council so that people



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir tarar had a meeting with the Turkish Ambassador Dr Mehmet Paçaci.

Rs 44124m 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-Karar and Wadh-Khuzdar road. Similarly, Rs 6000 million have been allocated for the Karar-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 recon-

struction 86 km section of N-5 from Moro to Ranipur including damaged bridges under ADB flood emergency loan. For establishment of Interchange at Tandianwala 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.

plus bridges. Rs 2580 million have been allocated for construction of dual carriageway connecting M-2 at Neela Dullah via Khaur with M-14 CPEC Western Corridor at Kharpa, Pindi Gheb. Rs 1500 have been kept in the PSDP for link road from M-1 Motorway to Margalla Avenue in Islamabad Capital Territory.

For dualization of road from Faisalabad Bypass to Motorway M-3 via Satiana, Rs 1625 million have been set aside. Rs 986.949 million have been apportioned for extension of Karachi-Lahore Motorway start point to Saggian Road and Main Ravi Bridge Road.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman presenting souvenir to Vice Chancellor of Lahore College for Women University Professor Dr. Bushra Mirza during a farewell call at Governor House Lahore.

Over Rs 47 bln disbursed among 5.2m beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat

ISLAMABAD (APP): BISP has already released over rupees 81 billion to its partner banks, that is, Bank Alfalah and Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for disbursement among the beneficiaries through their retail distribution network.

Along with Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir educational scholarships are also being given out to the children of registered families, however, 70 percent attendance in the school is mandatory to receive educational scholarships, said the spokesman of the programme.

Direct air flight between Kazakhstan-Pakistan to start from July 8: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (Online): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin on Tuesday said that direct air flight operation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan would start from July 8 this month, which would increase economic, social and cultural integration of both countries.

Addressing a round table on 'Kazakhstan and Pakistan bilateral relations and way forward', he said a direct air flight between Almaty and Lahore would start on July 8.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that direct air flights between the two

countries were crucial for regional economic and trade integration in Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

He said that duration of the direct flight between the two countries would be 2 hours, which would promote mutual economic and trade relations and the possibilities of cooperation in the field of tourism would be brighter.

The envoy said that after success of direct flight operations in these two cities, such air service would be started between other big cities including Islamabad and Karachi.

He said that just last week, there was a phone

conversation between the President of Kazakhstan, Kassim Tokayev, and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif during which issues of mutual interest between the two countries were discussed.

The Ambassador said that the top leadership of both the countries was determined to strengthening and promoting of bilateral economic, trade and diplomatic relations.

He said that Kazakhstan was currently a great destination for foreign investment which attracted \$28 billion FDI this year.

Steps being taken rapidly to make five TMCs functional in District East: Tabriz

Independent Report

KARACHI: Deputy Commissioner East Tabriz Sadiq Marri along with Transition Officer Naveed Khan Kolachi chaired a meeting of officers held at the office of the Defunct DMC East and also visited the offices of DMC East.



On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner East Tabriz Sadiq Marri said that steps are being taken rapidly to make the five TMCs are functional in District East, steps are being taken to provide offices and other facilities to the elected local representatives, it will take some time but work would be completed very soon in transition period.

On this occasion, Transition Officer Naveed Khan Kolachi said that a lot of work has been done regarding the transfer of staff and assets.

He was accompanied by Town Municipal Commissioner Jinnah, Fakhr e Alam Rizvi, senior officers Mubeen Sheikh, Ghulam Mustafa Sheikh and others.