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PM vows to boost IT exports to \$25b; assures all-out facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): He told the gathering of diplomats, IT experts, investors, entrepreneurs, professors and students that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would sit with them to discuss issues and find out solutions, and move forward like a corporate culture.

He said Pakistan was rich with immense youth potential having modern skills, particularly IT, but the export figure hovering around \$2.5 billion did not justify it — owing to lack of support and archaic procedures.

Citing the example of a neighbouring country that had excelled in the IT field

IT-related projects.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir attended the seminar as guest of honor.

CM concerned about situation in Wadh; appeals both groups to demonstrate tolerance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has expressed concern over the situation in Wadh area of Khuzdar.

In an official statement issued here on Thursday, it was mentioned that the Chief Minister has been getting himself acquainted about the current situation of Wadh.

He also appealed to both groups to demonstrate patience and tolerance. He said that it is also responsibility of the tribal and political elders along with the government to maintain law and order situation of the area.

The Chief Minister

said that the government is ready to play its part in the peaceful resolution of the issues and disputes through talks as the tension and fighting is not in interest of anyone and the best solution of the issues is possible through dialogue.

Moreover, the Chief Minister directed the administration, police and law enforcement agencies to ensure establishment of peace in the area at any cost.

He particularly directed the divisional Commissioner to use influence of the tribal, political and religious leaders to resolve the issues. He, however, asserted that no one should be allowed to take law in one's hands.



ISLAMABAD: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and his Pakistan counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari address a joint press conference, in Federal Capital.

Taliban assure Pakistan Won't allow use of Afghan soil against anyone

ISLAMABAD: Taliban on Wednesday told Pakistan that Kabul will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against another country.

Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani, who arrived in Kabul on Wednesday to discuss the latest security situation in the region.

Akhtar Mengal says: Attempt being made to spoil circumstances in Wadh under conspiracy

ISLAMABAD: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that an attempt is being made to spoil circumstances in Wadh under a conspiracy.

While speaking to the media persons on Thursday, the President BNP said that miscreants have made the life of people of Wadh

miserable for last several days.

He said that two persons were injured in firing incident took place in Wadh the other day. The injured are included a child as well, he added. Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the armed groups have been given free hand to play with the life of people and spoil the situation in Wadh.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir attended the seminar as guest of honor.

Bilawal denies arms support to Ukraine Pakistan, Ukraine agree to expand cooperation in areas of mutual benefit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ukraine on Thursday agreed to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual benefit including trade, investment, agriculture, food security, defense cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts.

"In our meeting today,

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PM calls for negotiated, diplomatic settlement of Ukraine conflict

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday highlighting the significant global impact of the Ukraine conflict hurting economies of many countries, stressed the need for a negotiated and diplomatic settlement in line with the UN Charter.

The issue was discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz and Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba, who is on a bilateral visit to Pakistan from July 20-21. They recalled the warm and friendly relations between their countries ever since Ukraine gained its independence.

Special sitting of parliamentary leaders on Wadh situation today

ISLAMABAD (Online): A special sitting of all parliamentary leaders has been convened at 03:00 PM on July 21, 2023.

According to an official statement issued here by the provincial assembly on Thursday, the special sitting has been convened on the tense situation of Wadh area.

The participants would ponder upon the prevailing tense situation of Wadh in the special sitting.

ECP announces to hold next elections on old delimitations

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced to hold the next general elections on the old delimitations.

Talking to the media on Thursday, ECP Special Secretary Zafar Iqbal said that the elections would be held before October 11 if the assembly is dissolved on the completion of its tenure on August 12.

"We are fully ready for the elections. We have purchased water mark paper. We are in contact with all institutions. We have approached the judiciary for the appointment of the DROs and ROs," he announced.

ECP Secretary Umar Hameed said that the commission had made arrangements to hold the elections on the old delimitations. "We will make the decision as per the law and the constitution if the new census is not notified," he maintained.

He said that the ECP is ready to hold the elections in 90 or 60 days. "The elections will be held under the new electoral reforms," he added.

Quetta lawyer murder case: SC directs Imran to appear in person on July 24

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed chairman PTI to appear in person before it on July 24 in Quetta lawyer murder case.

The court while accepting plea of Prosecutor General (PG) Balochistan seeking time for filing reply adjourned the hearing of the case till next Monday.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Khan Afridi took

up for hearing petition of chairman PTI Thursday.

During the hearing of the case, Justice Yahya Afridi inquired from Latif Khosa, counsel for chairman PTI has the petitioner to surrender before court by appearing in person for seeking relief. Ask chairman PTI to appear before the court in person.

Justice Mazhar Ali

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ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly and Chairman of Balochistan National Party, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Army to be deployed across country for Muharram security

ISLAMABAD (Online): Home Ministry has decided to deploy army across country in Muharram.

It has been said in a letter issued by Home Ministry that decision has been made to deploy army across country under article 245.

Home Minister has issued the letter to Gilgit and Azad Kashmir government including 4 provinces.

Home Ministry said that on the request of the four provinces, the army has been deployed.

The authorities in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, and Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir had sought the deployment of the military to control the law and order situation.

Following up on their request, the Centre — under Article 245 of the Constitution — authorised the "deployment of army troops/assets and civil armed forces troops/assets" to ensure peace. The holy month, marking the beginning of the new Islamic year 1445 AH, will begin today (July 20) and the Yum-e-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday).



QUETTA: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo. Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali, MNA Mir Khalid Khan Magsi, Senator Nasibullah Bazai and Senator Abdul Qadir are also present.

Terrorists' attack at Bara foiled; two cops martyred, two attackers killed

President, PM and others condemn suicide blast in Bara

PESHAWAR (APP): The police here Thursday foiled a terrorist attack in Tehsil Bara by killing two suicide bombers in the encounter while two cops were martyred and six others got injured.

The police spokesman, Muhammad Asim told APP that constables namely Tayyab and Noor Bahadar were martyred during the encounter with terrorists and six cops and

two civilians received injuries.

The injured constables are Jamil, Hadi, Bakht, Nawaz, Zubair and Gul Saif.

He said two civilians also sustained injuries.

Inspector General of Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Gandapur told media persons that the police fought valiantly and killed two suicide bombers in an

attempt to enter the Bara Tehsil compound in district Khyber.

He said two suicide bombers tried to enter the compound through the main gate and its backside but the police personnel on duty stopped them and killed them on the spot.

Due to police firing, he said the vests of the suicide bombers exploded and

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IHC declares imposition of Super Tax as illegal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Accepting the petitions filed by various companies, the Islamabad High Court (IHC), while pronouncing a reserved verdict on Thursday, declared the imposition of billions of rupees of Super Tax illegal.

The court also declared all the notices issued for the recovery of the tax null and void. Similarly, it also declared section four C of the Income Tax Ordinance illegal.

In a detailed judgment, Justice Sardar Ishaq Khan also explained the court's objections to the section.

Governor stresses for ensuring law & order

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the provincial government authorities and law enforcement agencies to re-

The Governor was speaking to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Saleh Muhammad Nassar, who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.



main vigilant regarding peace and protection and take concrete steps for establishing sustainable peace and protecting life and property of the public.

He asserted that no compromise would be made on the issue of law and order in the province.

Malik Abdul Wali Khan said that this is beauty of democracy that no one is above the constitutional and law. He directed to make strict arrangements of security at all sensitive places of the

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Tensions between two warring groups Raisani initiates reconciliation efforts for ceasefire

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Chief Minister Balochistan Nawab Mohammad Aslam Raisani has initiated reconciliation efforts for the peaceful settlement of tribal tensions between two warring groups in the Wadh region of the province.

According to the spokesperson of Sarawan House, two armed groups each led by an MNA and local tribal chief are at arms for the last couple of days, creating law and order in the Wadh area of Khuzdar.

The spokesman said

the former CM has made a telephonic contact with Balochistan National Party chief and member of National Assembly Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal and tribal leader Mir Shafiqur Rahman Mengal and demanded a cessation of hostilities from both sides to reduce the tension.

He also contacted Sardar Asad Mengal, Member of the Balochistan Assembly Mir Muhammad Akbar Mengal, and former Federal Minister Mir Naseer Ahmed Mengal to bring the tense situation of Wadh back to normal.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Lala Rasheed Baloch and MPAs Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer, Asghar Khan Achakzai, Malik Naseer Shahwani, Nasirullah Khan Zeeray, Mir Zaid Ali Reki, Sana Baloch and Mauvi Noorullah expressing their views during Balochistan Assembly session.

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Saud Shakeel shines as Pakistan defeat Sri Lanka in first Test to lead series 1-0

Sports Desk
GALLE: Pakistan triumphed over Sri Lanka by four wickets on the final day of the opening Test to lead the two-match series 1-0 in Galle on Thursday, courtesy of a doubleton by Saud Shakeel in the first innings.

Pakistan had resumed their run-chase of 131 runs at 48-3 with Babar Azam and Imam-ul-Haq on the crease.

Azam scored 24 in 28 balls, with the help of five fours, before being trapped by Prabath Jayasuriya in front of the stumps.

Shakeel also couldn't stay at the crease till the end as he was dismissed after scoring 30 runs in 38 balls.

Imam played an impressive knock and remained unbeaten on 50 runs, which included four fours and a six.

Agha Salman smacked a six on the very first ball he faced to help Pakistan get over the line.

In the final session yesterday, Jayasuriya claimed two top-order wickets from Pakistan after dismissing Abdullah Shafique (8) and Shan Masood (7).

Meanwhile, nightwatchman Nauman Ali was run out after attempting a suicidal second run.

Sri Lanka were dismissed for 279 in their second innings on day four,

which meant that Pakistan were set a target of 131 runs to win the match.

Abrar Ahmed and Nauman Ali were the chief destroyers for Pakistan after claiming three wickets each. Meanwhile, Shaheen Afridi and Agha Salman bagged two wickets each.

Dhananjaya de Silva, who scored a ton in the first innings, was the top scorer for the home side once again after notching up 82 runs.

It must be noted that Saud Shakeel notched up his maiden double century in Tests as Pakistan took a 149-run lead against Sri Lanka in the rain-hit opening match.

The visitors were bowled out for 461 in the final session on day three after a frustrating ninth-wicket partnership of 94 between Shakeel, who remained not out on 208, and Naseem Shah, who scored six off 78 balls.

Spinner Ramesh Mendis ended with a five-wicket haul, but Shakeel combined with the tailenders, including a 52-run seventh-wicket partnership with Nauman Ali, who scored 25.

But it was his 177-run partnership with Agha Salman, who hit 83, which brought Pakistan back in the game after slipping to 101-5 in their reply to Sri Lanka's 312.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a group photo with the participants of the nationalseminar on education jointly organized by Education Parliamentarians' Caucus (EPC) Senate of Pakistan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a delegation level meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba at PM Office, in Federal Capital.

Balochistan Assembly..

Continued from page 1

lawlessness is being created in the province intentionally, as such we would have to see our internal faults.

He said that the solution of issue of the province is not "gun" rather reconciliation. He also stressed the need to implement the recommendations of the parliamentary committee for peace in the province.

While expressing his views on the adjournment motion, the senior Provincial Minister Noor Muhammad Durrani also expressed concern over the law and order situation in Harnai.

He stressed that we have to sit together for peace in Harnai. He also demanded compensation for the owners of coal laden trucks, which were burnt in Harnai.

Terrorists'..

Continued from page 1

caused huge explosion.

He said that blood and body organs of the attackers were obtained and sent for DNA testing.

The police chief appreciated the timely response of the police officials, adding such cowardly act of terrorism could not shake resolve of the police in fight against terrorism and extremism.

He said the brave policemen thwarted the attack as they were put on high alert position after receiving intelligence information about a possible attack at Bara and thus saved many precious lives.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Gulam Ali strongly condemned the attack. He prayed for early recovery of the injured and expressed solidarity with the victims families. Meanwhile, President Dr. Arif Alvi on Thursday condemned the suicide blast that took place in Bara Bazar of Khyber district.

He expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the blast, according to a President House statement. The president prayed for high ranks of the martyrs in paradise and patience to the bereaved families as well as for speedy recovery of the injured. Earlier Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned a blast in Bara Bazar.

Governor stresses..

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he stressed.

Mr. Kalar also said that sustainable peace and stability is actually conditional with the supremacy and implementation of law.

He stressed that it is human and national obligation of our political elders, ulema and tribal elders to play their part for resolving the clashes and disputes among the nationalities and tribes. Otherwise, the whole province can be affected due to the situation, adding he feared.

provision on advent of the Muharramul Haram so that no untoward incident is occurred.

The Governor also said that the masses have the ruling powers in real democracy, and all whether one is king or a beggar are equally bound to the law.

Therefore, it is top responsibility of the government to take practical steps for the rights and basic freedom of the masses, adding



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Asadullah Baloch and Mitha Khan Kakar meeting with Principal Secretary to CM Imran Ghichki.

Pakistan, Ukraine agree to..

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we agreed on the importance of regular dialogue and engagements to further strengthen the bilateral ties. We have also agreed to hold meetings of various institutional mechanisms in due course. We will continue to build on our conversation to add more substance to our relations." Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a joint press conference here along with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba.

He said Pakistan also affected by this dispute and we are not providing any kind of arms to Ukraine. These kind of news are fake and misleading.

He said building bilateral trade and economic ties was a priority area for Pakistan.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said the both sides agreed to reinvigorate the bilateral mechanisms as both looked forward to holding the inaugural meeting of the Ukrainian and Pakistani Commission of the economic cooperation.

Pointing to an important issue of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Dmytro Kuleba said during the meeting he briefed the minister about the Russian withdrawal from this initiative on Monday and about its consequences for global food security.

"We regret that it will be Ukraine and countries of Asia and Africa, who will suffer the most from Russia's withdrawal", he said adding that by doing so Russia significantly undermined global food security that would result in hike in global food prices.

He said Ukraine considered Pakistan a good partner and it was ready to work in all areas especially in the area of food security.

Bilawal said it was in larger interest of Pakistan as well as the developed world that this grain deal should be restored.

"I will be reaching out to the United Nation Secretary General and to my counterparts in Turkey and Russia to discuss Pakistan's concerns and our desire the black sea grain initiative to be restored", he assured his

Ukrainian counterpart.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said during the meeting, the current Ukrainian situation was also discussed and he expressed Pakistan's deep concern about the prevailing situation and offered condolences on the loss of precious lives and immense human suffering.

"In a gesture of solidarity with the people of Ukraine and despite our own economic challenges, we have sent humanitarian assistance, he said adding that prolonged conflict brought immense hardship and suffering to the civilian populations.

He hoped that peace will prevail so that the people of Ukraine and Russia could enjoy peace dividends. He also emphasized the importance of peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts through dialogue and engagement and Pakistan's readiness to support peace initiatives which can bring peace to the region. Bilawal said Pakistan had vested interest in promoting peace and reconciliation.

ECC approves Rs 42.5b for conduct of elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Thursday. The committee approved an amount of Rs 42.5 billion for the conduct of the elections. Initially, the ECC will be given Rs 10 billion for preparations of the elections.

Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Power Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, Minister of State for Petroleum Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Coordinator to the PM on Economy Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, Coordinator to PM on Commerce & Industry Rana Ihsan Afzal, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers attended the meeting.

The ECC considered and approved a summary of Election Commission of Pakistan regarding the demand for funds of Rs. 42.528 billion as TSG for conduct of General Elections in FY 2023-2024. The ECC allowed Rs. 10 billion as first release and further release on need basis.

The ECC also approved a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of Rs. 200 million in favor of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) of PM Secretariat, which has been established to attract investment from GCC and other countries in the fields of Defence, Agriculture, Mineral, IT, and Energy.

MQM-P demands general elections on new census data

ISLAMABAD (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leaders held a meeting with the election commission officials on Thursday and demanded to hold general elections 2023 on new census data and delimitations.

The MQM-P delegation headed by Dr Farooq Sattar held a meeting with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officials today.

During the meeting, the MQM-P leaders urged ECP to organise general elections 2023 on the basis of new census data and delimitations.

The political party also expressed reservations about flaws in electoral lists and census. The MQM-P delegations also presented evidence of flaws in Karachi's electoral lists to the ECP officials.

Dr Farooq Sattar said that the upcoming general polls must be held on new census data.

He claimed that the flaws in delimitations and voters data can be removed in 15 to 20 days. "We demanded the prime minister for holding elections on new delimitations. The premier has also assured the MQM-P of fulfilling the demand."

The delegation also expressed serious reservations on the recent census statistics in which Karachi's population was undercounted. Sattar said that 30% of Karachi voters have been shifted to other constituencies far from their current residences.

The delegation urged the election commission to remove irregularities in the voter lists.

SC directs Imran..

Continued from page 1

Akbar Naqvi inquired can chairman PTI appearing today, Counsel Latif Khosa said he will come to SC within an hour.

Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi remarked we say to chairman PTI to come today.

Justice Yahya Afridi remarked it will be better that state counsel reply comes first in this case. Then Chairman PTI should appear.

Aman Ullah Kanrani counsel for complainants told the court there is matter of appearing of chairman PTI before JIT in lawyer murder case.

Latif Khosa counsel for chairman PTI said we don't accept JIT constituted in lawyer murder case.

Justice Yahya Afridi remarked the petitioner will have to appear in the court at every cost to seek interim relief. Why the chairman PTI did not resort to the respective forum to get abolish FIR.

Latif Khosa told the court we have come to SC via Balochistan High Court

(BHC). And this is respective forum.

Justice Mazahar Ali Naqvi while addressing the counsel for the petitioner remarked "you should take this matter seriously. The petitioner has to come in person to get quash FIR and for bail."

Copy of FIR is not there in the petition seeking quashment of case against chairman PTI. It should be mentioned in your petition that the case against Chairman PTI is baseless. When investigation officer has not called chairman PTI accused then case is what.

Latif Khosa told the court the case under terrorism clauses is registered against chairman PTI.

Justice Mazahar Naqvi remarked investigator is of the view that chairman PTI is not cooperating in the investigation. Tell us who issued non bailable arrest warrants of chairman PTI and how.

The counsel for Balochistan government told the court his information no such warrants are there against chairman PTI.

'Fast-track implementation on CPEC projects is success of govt: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor on Thursday said the incumbent government had completed a number of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects that remained during the tenure of the previous regime.

"Fast-track implementation on the CPEC projects is a success of the present government," he expressed these views while talking to Chinese Charge d' Affaires Ms Pang Chunxue during a meeting, a news release said here.

The Additional Secretary Ministry of Planning, Chief Economist of Pakistan, who is also Project Director of the CPEC, and other stakeholders also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to further expedite the CPEC projects, which achieved a significant milestone in fostering economic growth, infrastructure development, and regional connectivity over the past decade.

As part of the 10-year celebrations, the CPEC Secretariat and the Planning Ministry are organizing various events across the country, including an international conference, academic sessions, and cultural shows. During the meeting, the minister highlighted several projects related to energy, power, and infrastructure and reiterated the government's commitment to complete the CPEC projects under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Since the incumbent government came into power in April 2022, the CPEC projects have been revived which remained halted during the tenure of the past regime.

Under the 10-year celebrations of CPEC, a two-day international conference will be held in Islamabad in which sovereigns will be awarded to both Pakistani and Chinese companies who participated in the successful execution.

UNFPA, ILO strengthen collaboration for inclusive sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) here on Thursday aimed at achieving sustainable development in Pakistan.

The accord will develop joint programmes and strategies to provide comprehensive support to the government and people of Pakistan to meet commitments under various regional and international forums and frameworks, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Colombo Process, Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a press release said.

"In promulgating labour laws and labour policies with the population policies and related action plans, this collaboration will also extend to initiatives focused on the prevention of violence against women and children, fostering safer and healthier communities," said UNFPA Representative Dr Luay Shabaneh.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Naimatullah Badezai meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

PM vows to boost IT exports..

Continued from page 1

IT, mining and defence production.

"This is seriously a one-window operation with the whole of government sitting there and extending facilities to potential investors without any delay. No delay will be tolerated at any cost," he assured.

The prime minister said that the Gulf states were willing to invest in Pakistan and the country would also benefit from their investment to generate revenue and enhance exports.

He urged all the stakeholders to march with unity and do everything in their capacity to change history as "we have expertise and energy to do the wonder".

He said the government would act as a partner and catalyst to provide all kinds of support to the investors.

Mentioning the "wastage of energies" during the last four years of the previous government, the prime minister urged to move forward to change the landscape of history.

and its exports, the prime minister said Pakistan was also positioned to claim its space. Calling the investors his "masters", he said the government would extend all-out facilities to them through the SIFC as he himself chaired the Apex Committee meeting and Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir was also playing his full role.

He said the SIFC would focus on boosting investment in agriculture,

Government of Pakistan
Pakistan Public Works Department, Quetta

TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are hereby invited in sealed covers from approved Government contractors who have the relevant field of specialization and duly registered/ renewed their enlistment for 2023-23 with Pakistan Engineering Council, in relevant category. The schedule for the purchase of bidding documents, and submission/ opening of Bids shall be as quoted below:

- Submission of Application with documents quoted below up to: 07-08-2023 (Office Hours)
- Issuance of Bidding documents on: 11-08-2023 (Office Hours)
- Submission of Bids on: 15-08-2023 (till 12.00 PM)
- Opening of Bids on: 15-08-2023 (at 1.00 PM)

S. No	Name of works	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Cost of Tender
1	Construction of Flood Protection Wall at U/C Wlaia 1 District Duki.	34629970.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
2	Construction of Flood Protection Wall at U/C Wlaia 2 District Duki.	34629970.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
3	Construction of Flood Protection Wall at U/C Wlaia 3 District Duki.	34629970.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
4	Construction of Flood Protection Wall at U/C Rabbat 1 District Duki.	34629970.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
5	Construction of Flood Protection Wall at U/C Rabbat 2 District Duki.	34629970.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
6	Construction of Additional Class Room at Purana Duki City area Girls High School.	12398828.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
7	Construction of Primary School at District Loratai.	31008399.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
8	Construction of Primary School at District Duki.	31008666.00	03% of Bid amount	5000.00

Note: In case of any unavoidable situation the second schedule of submission / opening of Bids shall be as follows:

- Submission of Bids on: 22-08-2023 (till 12.00 PM)
- Opening of Bids on: 22-08-2023 (at 1.00 PM)

Other terms and conditions may be seen on PPRa Web site (www.ppra.org.pk)

(Aminullah Khan) Executive Engineer
Central Civil Division No-III
PAK PWD, Quetta

PID(Q)33/23

اطلاع عام (ضرورت مکان برائے کراچی)

دعوت عامیاتی آڈیٹ اور مہیاں کیلئے فراہم کرنے والی کمپنیوں کو سروس فراہم کرنے کے لیے دعوت ہے۔

مختصر طور پر: کراچی میں کراچی کی حکومت کے لیے خدمات فراہم کرنے والی کمپنیوں کو سروس فراہم کرنے کے لیے دعوت ہے۔

پتہ: کراچی، پاکستان۔

تاریخ: 10-08-2023

081-9201841 081-9203378

PRQ No. 167 /20-07-2023

Speakers say: SCO member states unite to promote “Shanghai Spirit” for global progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the face of various challenges confronting countries in the region and across the globe, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are united to promote the “Shanghai Spirit” for Global progress and prosperity.

These views were expressed by speakers during the Webinar on “SCO Summit 2023: Implications, Challenges, and Future Prospects.” The event was organized by the Pakistan-SCO Friendship Forum and the Center of SCO Studies,

Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS)

During the webinar, speakers highlighted the significance of people-to-people collaboration and collective efforts in finding effective solutions to complex global challenges, including climate change, extremism, technological advancements, and economic stability.

They emphasized that through collaborative action, the SCO member states have the power to create a more interconnected and sustainable future.

The President of IPDS, Dr. Farhat Asif, underscored the importance of the webinar and the center’s vision to promote research, cooperation, and people-to-people ties within the SCO.

Throughout the event, discussions revolved around analyzing the challenges and prospects faced during the SCO summit, with a strong emphasis on promoting the “Shanghai Spirit” by fostering stronger connections among people.

The webinar also emphasized the need for field

cooperation and enhanced community collaboration to address challenges, as proposed by Kang Jie from the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS).

Kabuljon Sabirov, Director of the SCO Centre for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan, advocated for essential initiatives such as a unified corridor map, climate change coordination, tourism development, and collaborative measures to counter regional challenges, all aimed at fostering regional connectivity, peace, and stability.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with former president FPCI Abdul Rauf son Aurangzeb Rauf and daughter of PML-leader Sheikh Arslan after wedding ceremony during visit at Abdul Rauf residence.



Maulana Abdul Wasay, Federal Minister for Housing and Works chaired executive board meetings of the Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF) and Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) in Islamabad

No escape for PTI chairman even if Azam Khan retracts from his confession: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman was guilty of ‘making public an official secret document’ as he exploited the ‘cipher’ for political point scoring.

Addressing a press conference, he said the former prime minister would have no escape, even if his principal secretary

Azam Khan retracted from his confessional statement on that count.

The PTI chairman, he added in a sheer violation of the Official Secrets Act, waved the cipher in a public meeting in the Federal Capital and continued the practice across the country.

He persistently alleged that the United States had conspired against his government and later claimed that the cipher had

been misplaced, Musadik said. Whether misplacing an official secret document was a trivial matter, he questioned. In accordance with the law, he said, the punishment for making a secret document public was 17 years imprisonment and for misplacing three years.

He said the PTI chief had been claiming that his government was removed due to a US conspiracy, and at the same time was seeking help from Washington.

He said the PTI chief had hired a lobbyist in the US who always conspired against the nuclear weapons of Pakistan.

Javed Latif demands action against 9th May facilitators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal minister and senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mian Javed Latif Thursday said that if the mastermind of May 9 gets any concession, and urges all political parties to revive the nation’s confidence.

“The May 9 day is the blackest chapter in the 75 years’ history of Pakistan, and “it brought shame to us across the globe”, he said while talking to a Private news channel.

pushed to the wall, but they faced all the ordeals and never thought to mount any attack on any civilian or military installation.

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) has lost popularity among public for promoting uncivilized language, adding, PTI had also been involved in spreading unethical culture in the society.

To another query, he said after May 9 incident the delayed elections are not in favor of the country, adding, elections in the



“Our nation knows how to protect the honour of their martyrs, he said, adding, the tragic is heart-rending events of May 9 are a wake-up call for us and we need to show unity”.

Replying a query, he replied that during the previous tenure of the PTI, the entire opposition was

country would be held on time. He said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership faced jails even in tough situations, but never raised hue and cry like PTI chairman.

There were many people in the PTI who did not support the politics of its leadership, he added.

HEC-RWN seminar stresses steps to promote socio-religious harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Resilient Women Network (RWN) jointly organised a seminar titled Social Cohesion and Inclusivity on promoting socio-religious harmony in educational institutions.

The seminar attended by eminent parliamentarians and academicians stressed the need for taking practical steps to encourage activities that promote family values, the ability to empathise and encourage tolerance in all spheres of life.

On the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and Member of National Assembly Dr. Nafisa Shah emphasised promoting diversity in society so as to spread the true teachings of Islam in the world. They were of the

view that through diversity and tolerance, the vision of Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah can be turned into a reality.

The roundtable participants reiterated that both parents and teachers must work together in the upbringing of students. They emphasised the need to make the young generation aware of the gap being created by the rising trend of intolerance and non-acceptance of one another in society.

The vice-chancellors assured HEC and RWN of full cooperation on behalf of their institutions in the promotion of inclusivity, harmony, tolerance, and cohesion on their campuses.

Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and Chairperson RWN Asia Nasir also expressed their views.

Religious scholars commemorate Hazrat Umar’s martyrdom day highlighting his achievements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ulama and Mashaykh from all corners of the country on Thursday gathered to observe the solemn day of the Martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (Radhi Allah Anho) with unwavering religious fervor.

The commemoration, which took place on the first day of Muharram, saw numerous religious gatherings organized across the country, including in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The purpose of these gatherings was to remember and reflect upon the life and sacrifice of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), the second caliph of Islam, and a

revered figure in Islamic history. Born in the year 584 CE in the city of Makkah, Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), also known as Umar ibn al-Khattab, embraced Islam during the early years of the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Throughout his life, he played a significant role in the development and propagation of Islam. Following the passing of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), he assumed the mantle of leadership as the second caliph and exhibited wisdom and fortitude in his responsibilities.

Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman and Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, shed light on the numerous achievements of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA).

He stated that his martyrdom had a profound impact on the Muslim Ummah, however, despite the grief of losing their beloved leader, the Muslims remained united and steadfast in their commitment to the principles of Islam, fostering a sense of community and solidarity among believers.

He emphasized

the late caliph’s dedication to education was also highlighted by Ashrafi, noting that he established schools and institutions to promote learning and his martyrdom inspired a renewed commitment to knowledge and scholarship within the Muslim community.

He said the principles and leadership style of Hazrat Umar (RA) continued to inspire future Muslim leaders, guiding them in their governance and decision-making.

As the Muslim Ummah commemorates the martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) on the first day of Muharram.

During his caliphate, he said the Islamic Empire experienced significant territorial expansion, with his successors continuing his legacy by further spreading Islam to distant lands.

Furthermore, he said Hazrat Umar’s (RA) caliphate played a crucial role in the codification of Islamic law and jurisprudence, with his rulings serving as the foundation for the development of the Shariah.

He emphasized

Toshakhana case IHC issues written order on chairman PTI petition against trial court decision

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued written order on the petition of chairman PTI against the decision of trial court for declaring Toshakhana criminal case maintainable.

IHC Chief Justice (CJ) Amir Farooq issued the written order.

It has been said in the order the counsel for the petitioner said in his arguments this is second round

of review. In the first phase this learned court accepted chairman PTI plea. According to counsel for the petitioner the learned court sent back the matter to trial court with 8 legal questions. The petitioner is of the view trial court announced the decision before the time given by IHC.

This is too stance of the petitioner proper opportunity was not given to him for hearing in trial court.

3-day training of master trainers concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 3-day Training of Lead Trainers (ToLT) for the Training of Master Trainers (Polling Personnel) has been concluded on Thursday. The training was conducted at Pakistan’s Electoral Academy for Democratic Practices, Research and Management (PADRM) in ECP Secretariat Islamabad for the upcoming general elections.

Twenty officers from ECP were imparted training as lead trainers.



ISLAMABAD: Rana Tanveer inaugurated 400KW Solar System at main campus of Allama Iqbal Open University.

Khan’s ego put diplomatic relations at stake, split his own party: Qaiser Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Thursday lashed out that the national economy was ruined, diplomatic relations were at stake due to the ego of Imran Khan during his four-year rule and his own party was being split now.

“PTI government did nothing for the welfare of poor masses during the four years in the government”, he said while talking to a Private News Channel.

The economy was in a downward trajectory when the PML-N led-government took over last year, he said, adding, during the last 15 months due to the personal efforts and vision

of the Prime Minister, now the economic situation is much under control. Replying to a question, he said the coalition government after coming into power diverted all its attention on putting the economy back on track, adding, the PTI regime’s deviation from the IMF agreement resulted in the delay of the program.

The current government is trying its best to provide relief to the masses where the previous regime did nothing for the poor masses, he added. He urged all political parties must realize that the bailout package is a deal between the IMF and the state of Pakistan and the new government will have to honor it.

SSDO organizes dialogue on ‘Combating Child Trafficking and Bonded Labour’

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) here on Thursday organized a successful national dialogue on ‘Child Trafficking in Persons and Bonded Labor’.

In collaboration with the US State Department, the dialogue aimed to address the critical issue of child trafficking and bonded labor in Pakistan.

The event focused on strengthening partnerships among stakeholders, promoting human-centered approaches to prevent child trafficking, and developing a National Referral System for victim protection and rehabilitation.

The national dialogue provided an exceptional platform for various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, law enforcement authorities, international partners, academia, and the media to come together and collectively address the multifaceted challenges posed by child trafficking and bonded labor.

The conference featured insightful speeches from key figures in the field, including the Chairperson of Punjab’s Child Protection Bureau, the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC), the Additional Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and the Director-General of the National Police Bureau.

Counselor of Cultural Affairs at the US State Department, Brad Parker, also spoke at the event.

Alongside U.S. State Department representatives, INL Acting Director, INL Gender, Security and Law Advisor participated actively during the dialogue.

In June 2023, the U.S. Secretary of State presented Pakistani Police Officer, Zaheer Ahmed, Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Hero Award for his

instrumental role in guiding the Government of Pakistan to implement anti-TIP laws and reforms, capacity building, and training initiatives that were instrumental in Pakistan’s promotion from TIP Tier 2 watchlist to Tier 2 in 2022 when he was the Director of Federal Investigative Agency’s Anti-Human Smuggling Unit. Secretary Blinken presented Ahmed the award on June 15th during the 2023 TIP report launch ceremony. Ahmed and his fellow TIP heroes participated in the TIP-focused U.S. International Visitor Leadership Program. In addition to speeches, the event included panel discussions, a documentary screening, and breakout sessions, enhancing the depth and impact of the discussions. Minister of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Kundi, emphasized on the occasion the challenges faced in curbing child trafficking.

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ISLAMABAD: Police Personnel stops the bikers at D-chowk, following the instructions as authorities imposes ban on the entry of Motorcycles to Constitution Avenue till 10th Muharram-ul-Harram in Federal Capital.

Police launch massive crackdown on drug peddlers in Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police conducted an operation within the jurisdiction of the Phulgran police station and arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

The arrested accused were identified as Shahid Mehmood, Pervez Akhtar, Zaheen Pervez, Ghulab Hussain, Manzoor Hussain, Muhammad Imran, Muhammad Ramzan, Muhammad Ishtaiq, Khawar Ishtaiq, Muhammad Rizwan, Muhammad Waqas, Jabbar Ahmed and Babar Hussain.

The CPO/DIG (Operations), Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, emphasized the continuous commitment to transforming Islamabad into a drug-free city.

During the search operation, police teams arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers, and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the crackdown on drug peddlers and liquor sellers aims to create a drug-free environment in the city and to safeguard the future of the young generation.

During the operation, numerous suspicious vehicles and individuals were thoroughly inspected, leading to the identification of several key individuals in-



ISLAMABAD: Group photo with Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi during seminar on National Dialogue on Child Trafficking & Bonded Labor

Friday July 21, 2023

IMF report

The IMF's staff report on its new, short-term bailout loan of \$3bn for Pakistan is a damning indictment of the Shehbaz Sharif government's economic and financial policies that deepened the trust gap between Islamabad and the lender, and pushed the country towards the precipice in the last nine months. Policy missteps and breach of the previous Extended Fund Facility programme had compelled the lender to halt the disbursement of funds, closing the door on other multilateral and bilateral financing.

The IMF document, released on Tuesday, also spells out the programme's goals, many of which, such as increased energy prices, will directly burden the people. It blames the finance ministry and State Bank for their frequent tinkering with the market-based exchange rate mechanism, leading to the growth of a large foreign exchange black market. It is also critical of the central bank for resisting a timely increase in interest rates. That is not all. The report points out that the government balked at maintaining fiscal discipline, cutting non-essential spending, broadening the tax net, controlling the drivers of the power sector's circular debt, and improving SOE governance.

In view of its experience with Pakistani authorities, the IMF has warned that continuation of the new programme will depend on the implementation of fiscal discipline, a return to a market-determined exchange rate and proper functioning of the foreign exchange market, a tight monetary policy aimed at disinflation, and progress on structural reforms, particularly with regard to the energy sector, SOEs and climate resilience.

The report also cautions against the "exceptionally high" downside risks to the Stand-by Arrangement goals emanating from a tense political environment and potential deviation from agreed policies. Such risks could undermine the programme's implementation, and jeopardise macro-financial and external stability and debt sustainability, leading Pakistan to seek foreign debt restructuring.

Additionally, it says that external financing risks remain high, and delays in disbursement of external financing from IFIs and bilateral creditors would endanger the fragile external balance given limited buffers. Spillovers from Russia's invasion of Ukraine through high food and fuel prices, and tighter global financial conditions continue to put pressure on the budget.

Highlighting Pakistan's large gross financing needs of \$28.3bn, including the \$6.4bn current account deficit, during this fiscal year, it stresses that multilateral and bilateral support will remain critical for Pakistan beyond the upcoming elections and the SBA.

It is a foregone conclusion that the next government will need another, longer-term IMF programme to resolve structural challenges and meet high external debt obligations over the next few years. For that to happen, the country has to achieve the SBA goals, come what may.



Amber Darr

The three constitutions adopted by Pakistan since its creation in 1947, despite considerable differences among them, all declare the state's commitment to upholding the principles and values of Islam and to taking all necessary steps to enable Muslims to lead their lives according to Islamic teachings and requirements.

To this end, the constitutions also recognise the significance of redesigning the Pakistani legal system along Islamic lines. Interestingly, however, even in its eighth decade, Pakistan appears not to have fully reconciled the tussle between secular and Islamic values.

The relevant provisions of the 1956, 1962 and 1973 constitutions provide a good starting point for understanding the scope of Pakistan's constitutional

commitment to Islamisation. The 1956 constitution called for "an Islamic way of life" (Article 25) only as a principle of policy. However, it did bar the enactment of laws "repugnant to the injunctions of Islam" (Article 198) while largely retaining the institutional infrastructure of the Government of India Act, 1935, and following the Universal Declaration of Rights in stipulating the fundamental rights of Pakistani citizens.

The only Islamic institution it mandated was "an organisation for Islamic research and instruction" (Article 197), however, it did not clarify how research conducted by this organisation would feed back into the workings of the state.

The 1962 constitution while largely reproducing the Islamic provisions of the 1956 constitution relegated the provision barring the enactment of laws repugnant to the injunctions of Islam to a principle of policy (Article 1A) and replaced the organisation for Islamic research with the "Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology" to recommend appropriate Islamic

laws and policies to the government and to the legislature (Articles 199-206).

It was the 1973 Constitution, as originally formulated, that first declared Islam to be the state religion (Article 2); reinstated the injunction barring enactment of laws repugnant to Islam as an enforceable provision (Article 227) and proposed the Council of Islamic Ideology (Articles 228-231) with members from the superior judiciary as well as Islamic scholars, to act as a bridge between the secular and Islamic legal values.

However, it was only under the Zia regime that the Pakistani legal system became the primary focus of the Islamisation project. The year 1979 saw the promulgation of the Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance, the introduction of additional blasphemy provisions in the Pakistan Penal Code and the creation of Islamic benches in the superior courts and 1980 the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance and the establishment of the Federal Shariat Court (Articles 203A-203J) comprising exclusively of Muslim judges albeit with the limited man-

date of evaluating the Islamic-ness of laws and the legality of decisions enforcing Hudood.

However, decisions of the FSC remained appealable to the secular Supreme Court thereby rendering the FSC subordinate to the Supreme Court. By 1984 the rules of evidence were also Islamised under the Qanun-i-Shahadat Order 1984.

The Islamisation of the legal system continued well beyond the Zia era. Ghulam Ishaq Khan promulgated the Qisas and Diyat Ordinance 1990; Benazir Bhutto introduced the Nifaz-i-Nizam-i-Sharia Regulation 1994; Nawaz Sharif promulgated the Shari-Nizam-i-Adl Regulation 1999, the Enforcement of Shariat Act 1991 and further tightened the law against blasphemy while Asif Ali Zardari ratified the Nizam-i-Adl Regulation in 2009.

Even today, laws perceived to be contrary to Islamic values are regularly challenged before the FSC (such as the Transgender Persons Act 2018) or are rejected by the legislature (such as the Domestic Violence Bill 2020) or are retained despite repeated calls for their repeal or re-

consideration from civil society (such as the blasphemy laws).

Interestingly, however, judges appointed to the secular courts in Pakistan are still not required to be qualified to rule on complex matters of the Sharia. Ideally this would mean that the Supreme Court would defer to the FSC or the Council of Islamic Ideology on religious matters, as it did for instance in its 2002 review judgement in the riba case and its 2005 judgement in the hisba case.

In reality, however, it has resulted in the Supreme Court invoking Islam to bolster its constitutional arguments, for instance, in its 2012 judgement in the Anita Turab case and in its 2014 judgement affirming the rights of minorities to practise their religion freely, or even inciting Quranic verses in interpreting legal provisions, for instance, in its 2015 Supreme Court judgement in the Aasia Bibi case and in its 2017 judgement in the Panama Papers case. Interestingly, however, even as Islamic principles have permeated legal decision-making at the highest level in Pakistan, the country has been besieged by calls for

even greater Islamisation. Some of these calls have come from academics; for instance, Prof Fazlur Rahman of the University of Chicago criticised the 1973 Constitution for not being Islamic enough. Others, however, have come from grassroots religious organisations, for instance, the Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammadi whose call for the establishment of Sharia courts in the tribal areas in time, gave way to the Afghan Taliban. Others still have come from private persons who have resorted to religious vigilantism, allegedly to uphold the values of Islam but often only to settle personal scores.

In the 75 years of its existence, Pakistan's Islamisation project has gone from being aspirational, to being haphazardly institutionalised, to becoming gradually personalised, even privatised. In all these phases, those who have acted in the name of Islam have claimed to draw legitimacy from the will of the people who it is said wish to have their lives ordered in accordance with the injunctions of Islam. -- Courtesy Dawn

Where should young people go?



Kamila Hyat

Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world. This is hardly good news for a nation that struggles to feed at least a third of its population with the resources it has. Child malnutrition and stunting is extremely high. In Sindh, stunting has affected almost 50 per cent of the children.

This year, Pakistan conducted its first-ever digital census. The country's chief census commissioner tells us that our population stands at 249,566,743. This is obviously far too many. And though there are regions which are relatively sparse in population, this really does not help given how urban centres and other parts of the country where amenities, opportunity and employment exist are overcrowded.

Over 58.7 per cent of the total population are young people. For some

countries, this would mean something to celebrate, but Pakistan has created a situation where there is very little for our youth to do. Yes, the best can get into reputable institutions such as Lums, the IBA, GIK, etc that hold a promise of jobs. But for the majority, the future is limited to secondary education, if any at all and only a few manage to complete higher education. The state of our higher education has been commented on several times by top educationists who point out the levels of plagiarism in PhD papers and the poor standards of output from students putting out dissertations at this level. We ask then: what is to become of our youth?

Given the way things stand, it is hardly surprising that we see a rise in street crime, most notably in Karachi but also in other cities. Car and mobile phone snatching, ATM theft and other financial scams have become the norm. Most people are desperate for money. They simply do not have the training required to acquire jobs. In comparison to this, young people of India have access to countless opportunities that allow them to keep growing. India's networks of IITs,

which now recruit from around the world, have given the Indian youth a huge amount of prestige, and brought top companies to India to look for graduates who can then head top organizations in the fields of IT, computer science, etc.

We of course did not think of this way back when our country was born. As a result, we are now in a situation where every woman in the country gives birth to an average of 3.6 children, the highest average in South Asia. This can be compared to the two children, which is the average for Indian women. We need to halt the population growth and this can only happen through a distinct change in policy.

In the first place, we need to provide young people in schools with the right education at the right level delivered in the correct fashion to help them understand that more children will not benefit them, the children who are born to them or the country. We need to be far more open about the means and ways for accessing contraception for both men and women.

For women in particular, lack of access to contraception is said to be one of the main reasons why they continue to conceive chil-

dren and go into an average that nears three per household even today. The policies have been badly flawed since the time Pakistan was created, and they remain flawed today.

In the meantime, we also need to think about what to do with the young people who are now present in the country. We cannot simply wish them away. Nor can we continue to see the repeat of the Greece boat tragedy where hundreds of Pakistan lost their lives after the ship carrying them to Italy sank off the coast of Greece. Some future has to be found for them.

There is no point in suggesting that they set up startups or other small businesses. Yes, it may be possible for some to consider setting up vending carts or other similar enterprises. But many who are more educated would wish to do more than this, given the money invested by their families in the years of learning. The question for the country then is what to do with these youngsters. Perhaps we need to hold a forum and bring in professors and students from top institutions to suggest what kind of enterprises can be set up to employ young people at all levels and give

them some kind of future in the country. At present they appear to have none. Too many of them are aware of this. And this, of course, is the reason why more left the country in 2022 than in the previous year. The fact that so many are willing to leave illegally after paying out millions of rupees to agents also points to the fact that the young know they do not have a future here.

Other countries have come up with solutions to solve the same problem that Pakistan faces. Bangladesh for example has initiated a massive scheme of micro-credit especially for women and young people to create jobs and supplement family incomes. Other countries have found ways to ensure young people do not remain jobless and unemployed for year after year. In some nations, there have been schemes to train youngsters as chefs, caterers, paramedics, and teachers to improve their skills.

We will need to come up with innovative methods to try and find means to make young people, who have a limited set of skills and a very limited horizon, more versatile so that they can easily land decent jobs. These

schemes must also extend to the rural area of the country and more far-flung places where young people can be trained as guides, rescue workers, travel companions who can take groups out on tours in organized car journeys, and so on. There is plenty of potential, it just needs to be built upon. The reality is that we have extremely talented young people amongst us. But unfortunately they have no opportunity to display their skills or intelligence. With good training and better vocational education, many could go into fields like engineering or help run factories and other similar places. This is also one factor hampering the entry of business from overseas into the country. The reality is that nations like Bangladesh and Vietnam have more educated, trained and skilled youth able to run workshops and similar outfits compared to us. For this reason, outside nations looking to set up businesses in poorer countries, mainly to make use of cheap labour, choose our neighbouring countries. We need to look into this problem as a crisis. -- Courtesy TheNews

A rail link to reshape the region

By Qamar Bashir

Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan have signed an agreement to build a 760-kilometer-long (472-mile-long) railway track connecting the three nations. The railroad would travel from Termez, Uzbekistan to Kharlachi, Pakistan via Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2027 at a cost of \$2.8 billion. The success of the rail link will depend on a number of factors, including the political stability of the region, the availability of financing and the continued, unconditional, and willing cooperation of the three countries. Nonetheless, the potential advantages of the rail link are substantial, and the initiative has the potential to transform the region.

The concept of a rail connection between Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan dates back many years. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union proposed constructing a railroad connecting the three nations. Due to the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, however, the project was never completed. The ratification of the agreement on July 18 in Islamabad, in the presence of "high-ranking" railway officials from the three countries, brought the age-old concept to fruition. According to plan, the rail route will traverse Termez, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif and Logar provinces, and conclude in Pakistan via the Kharlachi border crossing in the Kurram tribal district near the Afghan border.

Reportedly, the financing for this 760 km railway track has not yet been finalized, however, the

World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have all expressed interest in lending support to the project, but no formal commitments have been made. Russia has also said that it would be willing to assist in laying down the railway and supplying locomotives and rolling stock, provided the project is able to attract fundings. In the absence of any firm commitments from international financial institutions, it is possible that the signatory countries will have to fund it themselves which seems uphill task keeping in view the dilapidated financial outlook of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, but if financial arrangements are made, it would be a major boost to regional trade and economic development.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2027, and by 2030, trains will be able to transport up to 15 million tonnes of products annually. The line will facilitate both passenger and freight services, reduce cargo delivery periods between Uzbekistan and Pakistan by approximately five days and transport costs by at least 40 percent. With the signing of the protocol, it would begin the phases of meticulous planning, resource allocation, and project implementation, as well as a concerted, coordinated efforts to establish robust regional connectivity.

The project's strength rests in its capacity to stimulate regional trade and economic growth, generate employment, and provide cost-effective industrial raw ma-

terials and utilities to enhance the competitiveness of industrial services and agricultural outputs. The project is expensive and may be difficult to finance, is likely to encounter security challenges, particularly while passing through Afghanistan, and may require years to complete. It will create numerous opportunities, including the possibility of linking with the Gwadar port, which would provide Central Asian countries with access to a warm-water port, and extending to other nations in the region. It may also face hazards such as political instability in one or more of the involved countries and imminent economic challenges, such as a decline in global trade and a dearth of export substitutes.

This project would provide Pakistan with an efficient and time-saving way to export its agricultural products, such as wheat, sugar, rice, maize, and vegetables and fruits such as apples, oranges, tomatoes, and potatoes, dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, meat and poultry, such as beef, chicken, and lamb, and a variety of processed food products, including canned food, spices, frozen food, and snacks. Pakistan can export cotton, wool, and silk in the textile industry, as well as a variety of home appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and electronics besides sports goods and surgical instruments.

Uzbekistan is a major producer of cotton, which is used to create textiles such as clothing, home furnishings, and other products. In addition to cotton,

Uzbekistan also produces grapes, melons, and tomatoes. In addition, it is a significant producer of meat and dairy products, including beef, lamb, and milk. It grows wheat and other cereal grains. It also produces gold, silver, and copper, among other minerals. It has a developing manufacturing sector and produces a range of appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, and washing machines, as well as mobile phones, computers, and televisions, as well as a range of construction materials, including cement, steel, and lumber.

Afghanistan's mineral wealth allows it to export copper, iron, gold, and lithium for use as basic materials in the production of finished goods. In addition to being a significant producer of agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables, it can also export carpets and other similar items. Afghanistan has oil and gas reserves that could be used to produce gasoline, diesel, and aviation fuel for export to Pakistan and Uzbekistan, where they could be used to fuel automobiles, generators, and other machinery. The rail link could also be connected to the strategically located Gwadar port in Pakistan for the benefit of the entire region and the globe by giving Central Asian countries access to a warm-water port and giving Pakistan a new route into Central Asia and beyond. Once fully operational, it would help reduce poverty by creating a significant number of employment opportunities in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the rail link, and its increased trade and transportation efficiency would

make it more attractive to investors.

The signing of the contract occurs at an important time. The somewhat shaky peace in Afghanistan may have been a major factor in the other two countries' decision to move forward with the project, despite the fact that other nations of the world may view it with skepticism due to the unrecognized status of the interim Afghan government and its deliberate refusal to adhere to the Doha Agreement. Nonetheless, the region is presently experiencing a period of relative peace and stability, which has made the signing of this and other high-value projects such as CASA 1000 and TAPI gas pipeline possible. The success of these essential initiatives will establish a regional ecosystem to promote economic industrial, trade and investments.

The success of the project will also depend on the strong political will of the states and should not be affected by the change of governments in the respective countries, the allocation of sufficient and timely resources to it, and the hiring of credible, experienced, and resourceful contractors who have the ability, expertise, and resources to adhere to the project's timelines in letter and spirit. Importantly, the success of the project would largely depend on the security and safety of the entire region, the eradication of terrorism from all countries, the destruction of terrorist safe havens, especially in Afghanistan, and the creation of a law and order situation that ensures the safe, secure, and effortless movement of goods

along the route and to its destinations.

The security situation in Afghanistan will be the most difficult barrier for this project. Contrary to the Doha Agreement, Afghanistan is providing safe havens to over 6000 fully armed and trained Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists who are carrying out terrorist attacks all along the border, putting the lives and properties of people living in border areas in great danger and in constant state of fear. They have also martyred scores of civilians and security personnel in recent days, prompting the Army Chief to warn Afghanistan to eliminate these terrorist groups which have ransomed the security and stability of the entire region. These terrorist groups pose a significant risk to all such projects traveling through Afghanistan, necessitating the Afghan government's efforts to rid the country of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

The donor agencies' commitment of huge funds will also be contingent on the security and safety and establishment of law and order in Afghanistan, in the absence of which the donor agencies will naturally shy away from making any commitment for provision of funds, and one does not need rocket science to understand that cash starved Afghanistan and Pakistan are unable to find this initiative with their own funds. With Afghanistan's security issues resolved, the project makes a lot of economic sense. -- The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC

CM visits Nullah Lai to inspect water situation

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Nullah Lai at Rawalpindi to monitor water flow near Katarian Bridge and inspected surrounding localities and issued necessary directions to the administration in this regard.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaqat Ali Chattha briefed the CM about water situation in Nullah Lai.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that more rain has been forecasted till July 23rd, adding that all concerned departments should remain alert, said a handout issued here.

He directed that dewatering pumps and heavy machinery should remain fully functional and all relevant staff should remain present on their

duties and evacuation of people should be the foremost priority in case of any untoward situation.

Commissioner Rawalpindi apprised the CM that 205 mm rainfall occurred in Rawalpindi on Wednesday however water from banks of Nullah Lai did not spill over. The maximum level of water at Katarian remained at 19 feet.

CM Mohsin Naqvi while talking to the media said that Rawalpindi administration did a commendable work despite unusual downpour, adding that he has paid a visit to encourage the administration. The city received 205 mm rainfall as funds amounting to Rs.120 million are being spent on the cleanliness of nullahs in Rawalpindi, he added.

Mohsin Naqvi said the government would

make an endeavour to launch a project so that the problem of Nullah Lai could be resolved on permanent basis. An operation against encroachments surrounding nullahs is underway, he remarked.

To a question, the caretaker CM said the Punjab government is taking measures to improve treatment facilities in the hospitals of Punjab including Rawalpindi. Funds for hospitals have been allocated whereas more funds to other hospitals would be provided within one week, he added. He outlined that all necessary resources are being assured for other projects of Rawalpindi. Provincial Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, RPO, CPO Rawalpindi, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were also present.



RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Liaqat Ali Chattha briefs the caretaker CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi during the visit of Katarian Bridge in City.

PPP-led govt giving permanent solution to city's problems: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the government of Pakistan People's Party is giving a permanent solution to the city's long-standing problems.

Korangi Causeway used to get flooded during rains, so it was decided to construct a six-lane 2.30 km long overhead bridge here at a cost of over Rs 4.5 billion, which will solve a long-standing problem in Karachi, he expressed these views on Thursday while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the construction of the bridge on the Korangi Causeway.

The Mayor Karachi said that we thank PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for that he encouraged us to work even in difficult situations and giving hope to the people.

The city will see a marked change within the next four years as, the People's Party is doing work in every area of the city and, by ending the politics of criticism and discrimination, they are only talking about progress and development, he said.

Deputy Mayor

Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Town Chairman of the People's Party and other leaders, Farazur Rehman, Chairman of the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry and other industrialists were also present on the occasion.

The Mayor Karachi said that during the rains in the past, the Korangi causeway was not usable for several days due to which especially industrialists, workers and students had to face severe problems.

It always happened that the road was rebuilt temporarily but we decided that this is not a sustainable solution to the problem and an overhead bridge is the real solution so we have started work on it and will complete it within a year.

He said that those who say that the Pakistan People's Party does not spend money on Karachi should see that the Sindh government has approved four and a half billion rupees for this project. This is the answer to those who ask how the People's Party made its mayor, deputy mayor and

chairman in 13 towns in Karachi, he said.

He said that every worker of people's Party is working for city and people are seeing all this due to which the people's trust is increasing on the leadership of the People's Party. We want to work together with other parties in all 25 towns of Karachi, because if this city runs, then the whole country runs, we all have a responsibility to serve Karachi and improve its image, he said.

The Mayor of Karachi said that the government is aware of the hardships of the people and wants to provide relief to them as soon as possible.

He said that the sanitation situation in Korangi has already improved and efforts are underway to improve it further. We want to serve the people and connect hearts, our one-point agenda is to serve Karachi as much as possible, he said. He said that the development process in the city is going on, work is being done on the flyover and underpass at Johar Chowrangi.

ANP expressed concern over recent wave of terrorism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party Provincial President Aimal Wali Khan on Thursday expressed concerns over three consecutive terrorists' attacks on police and FC in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last three days.

In a statement issued here he said that the suicide attack on FC vehicle in Hayatabad, target killing of two police officials in Regi area of Peshawar and suicide attack on Tehsil Compound in Bara district were strongly condemnable and matter of grave concern.

He said that the terrorists were targeting the police and the general

public in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with full force while the business community were also receiving calls for ransom due to which the residents of the province were feeling insecure.

He said that strict action should be taken against those who were calling the terrorists fighters and brought them back under secret agreement, adding that exemplary punishment should be given to the perpetrators of the recent attacks. The ANP leader expressed grief over the losses of precious lives in the terrorist attack and sympathized with the bereaved families.



GILGIT: Massive traffic jam after landslide near Shingus Paari at Juglot-Skardu Road (JSR).

EIDHC project launched to provide best treatment to diabetic patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir, on Thursday launched the Expanded Integrated Diabetes-Hypertension Care (EIDHC) Project including foot care in 171 Rural Health Centers (RHCs) located in 20 districts of Punjab.

According to a handout issued here, the programme was being implemented by National Communicable Diseases Control Programme and Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department in collaboration with Association for Social Development (ASD).

Giving details of the project, the minister told

that foot care and suitable footwear intrusion would help prevent foot complications to happen besides better management of any severe foot condition that happens in diabetes patients. He informed that 20 District Headquarters Hospitals would also be enabled for secondary-level diabetes foot care under this programme. The project was being executed in districts Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Khushab, Sangodha, Shekhpura, Nankana Sahib, Jhang, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Okara, Attock, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Narawal, Multan, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Chiniot and Mandi Bahauddin.

Providing patients with facilities at govt hospitals top priority: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram has said that the patients who come to the public sector hospitals for treatment are the first priority for the government.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a facilitation centre, established at Kot Khawaja Saeed Teaching Hospital (KKSH), here on Thursday. He said that various government hospitals were being visited on the instructions of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

He said that every patient who comes to the government hospitals was like a VIP [very important person] for the hospital administration. He said that the KKSH would make it easier for patients to get treatment without botheration.

He said that the responsibility of motorcycle parking outside the KKSH would be handed over to the Lahore Parking Company to facilitate citizens. He said that the laboratory of the KKSH would also be revamped.



HYDERABAD: People busy in filling water cane from filter plant at Latifabad.

ECNEC approves Rs 80bn Shangla Expressway: Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday said that Shangla Expressway was approved by ECNEC that would usher a new era of progress and prosperity in the area after its completion.

In a statement, the adviser said that a high level meeting of the ECNEC with Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar in chair was held today in which the Malaysia Commission and National Highway Authority presented the Shangla Expressway project.

After a long discussion, Shangla Expressway was approved. The cost of the

mega project is Rs80 billion having 48th kilometer length including 14 bridges and five tunnels.

Besides promoting tourism, economy and industrialization, the project would serve as an alternative route for CPEC.

Amir Muqam thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his team besides chairman National Highway Authority for taking special interest in the project.

He said it was another gift of Pakistan Muslim League N for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Pakistani security officials and victims' relatives attend the funeral ceremony of two police personnel, who were killed when militants opened fire at a checkpoint in the Regi Model Town neighborhood.

Amir Mir lays foundation stone of Information Complex

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Information, Culture and Local Government Amir Mir said that the first phase of the Information Complex would be constructed during the current financial year which would be completed at a cost of Rs 100 million.

He said that the Complex would be the first field office of the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) which would have its own state-of-the-art building.

He was addressing at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Information Complex here Thursday.

Amir Mir said that modern facilities were being provided to the field offices of DGPR and it would help further

strengthen the bridge between the people and the government.

Rawalpindi Directorate is functioning as a media liaison office in the federal capital, Amir Mir said.

He told that the Complex would have a spacious press conference hall which would also have a social media studio, a state-of-the-art newsroom and an electronic media monitoring system.

Provincial Minister for Auqaf, Religious Affairs and Housing Barrister Azfar Ali and Provincial Education Minister, Mansoor Qadir were also present on the occasion. Earlier, the officers of DGPR gave a detailed briefing to the Provincial Minister Amir Mir about the Complex.

KPCM inquires after health of injured cops of terror attacks

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here on Thursday visited Hayatabad Medical Complex and inquired after the health of the injured police personnel of terror attacks in Peshawar and Khyber.

The chief minister strongly condemned the attack on Regi check post and Bara blast.

Azam Khan was saddened by the martyrdom of police personnel in these heartbreaking incidents. He said that the government and all institutions were taking steps to prevent such incidents.

He said that Jawans of the security forces were sacrificing their lives to protect the innocent lives and the nation was paying homage to the sacrifices of the martyrs.

Azam Khan directed to provide the best medical facilities to the injured.

He also presented flowers to each injured and assured full support of the government to them.

Feroze condemns blast at Tehsil compound Bara

PESHAWAR (Online): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has strongly condemned the explosion in Tehsil Compound Bara.

He said that no religion allows to play with the blood of innocent people. The caretaker provincial minister expressed his condolences to the family members of martyred police officer Tayyab and said that the bravery and sacrifice of Tayyab will always be remembered.

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have made immense sacrifices in establishing peace in the province.

The sacrifices of security forces will be written in golden words in history. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that the policemen showed great bravery and stopped the attackers outside the police station and killed them. If the attackers entered the police station, there would be a huge damage. He said that the investigation of the incident and the identification of the two dead suicide attackers is in process and after getting the investigation report, strict action will be initiated against the anti-state elements and will be dealt with iron hands and in any case.



LAHORE: Passengers are suffering at Railway Station due to the delay of trains to their timing, which needs the attention of concern authorities.

Working of Punjab Police developed on modern technology: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the working of Punjab Police has been developed on modern technology through software, applications and other programs.

He expressed these views while talking to the under-training officers participating in the 37th Mid-Career Management Course who came on a study visit to the Central Police Office, here on Thursday.

He said police service centers across the province have provided fast and efficient service to the citizens.

The IG Punjab said that equal attention and provision of additional resources have been ensured for anti-crime

operations as well as investigations.

Thousands of officers have been promoted according to the merit and seniority to raise the morale of the police force, he added. Dr. Usman Anwar further said that the health screening of the force is complete, vaccination is ongoing, bravery medals are being launched for successful completion of dangerous operations.

The delegation from National Institute of Management Karachi was informed about the working and professional affairs of Punjab Police.

Dr. Usman Anwar informed the training officers of the delegation about service delivery and recent anti-crime measures.

KU Syndicate by-election 2023

KARACHI (APP): The by-election to the seat of the syndicate from the constituency of Karachi University's associate professors was held at the audio visual centre of the faculty of arts on Thursday.

The KU Registrar, who was also the Returning Officer of the by-elections, Professor Dr Imran Ahmed Siddiqui shared that Dr Riaz Ahmed from the department of applied chemistry and chemical technology secured 37 votes and was elected as a member KU Syndicate. Meanwhile, he mentioned that Dr Muhammad Naeem Khan from the Department of Physics got 14 votes, another candidate Dr Muhammad Ali of the political science department had 18 votes and Dr Afshan from pharmacology managed to get only one vote.



KARACHI: Large number of the candidates are busy in solving their paper during the entry test for the Free I.T Course at Governor House.



BAHAWALPUR: Floodwater forced people to travel in overloaded boats along with motorcycles in Patan Mangwani Mouza.

Baloch chairs meeting to review reconstruction progress of damaged houses

NAWABSHAH (APP): Commissioner SBA Muhammad Abbas Baloch chaired a meeting to overview the progress of reconstruction of houses damaged due to previous rains.

In his address, the commissioner said that the Sindh Government is providing support for the reconstruction of houses damaged due to rains in order to provide relief to affected house owners.

He directed representatives of social organizations SAFCO and NSRP to expedite the verification work of

house owners submitted by revenue officials of all the districts and the data shall be submitted online in order to provide support at the earliest. Commissioner instructed all three deputy commissioners to expedite steps to be taken for the survey of damaged houses and to resolve issues of online data submission.

Briefing the Commissioner, District

Manager SAFCO Abdul Samad Phulpoto informed that verification of damaged houses of Shaheed Benazirabad and Naushehro Feroze district is in progress for online submission.

He said that under the scheme the owners' of 2200 houses of District SBA and 3100 houses of N Feroze have been provided a support amount of Rs 75000 as first installment through their bank accounts. District Manager NRSP Sanghar Junaid Ahmed informed that a target of 56000 damaged houses is fixed for Sanghar District out of which

547 damaged houses were paid the support amount while work is in progress for payment of support amount to other affected persons.

He informed that Rs 75000 as first installment, Rs one lac as second and third installment and Rs 25000 would be paid as fourth and final installment.

Speakers at Houston conference call for boosting US-Pakistan economic ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Speakers at a 'Conference on Diplomacy for Development', held in Houston, Texas, called for deepening the economic relationship between Pakistan and the United States in order to bring the two countries even closer together.

The Conference was organized by the International Academy of Letters USA, the Rupani Foundation, and the Ismaili Council for the South Western USA.

Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, and the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Elizabeth Horst, jointly chaired a session on the "Role of Trade Diplomacy in Pakistan-US relations". The session was attended by thirty-five prominent Pak-American businessmen, professionals and area experts having successful

business ventures and who are also investing in different projects in Pakistan, according to a press release of the Pakistan embassy.

Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, a businessman, underscored the importance of investment in education and health sector which he said was critical in enhancing productivity of the young population.

Dr. Azeem-ud-Din, a pediatric hematologist-oncologist in Houston, highlighted his efforts in promoting and projecting Islamic art. He emphasized the need for greater efforts to introduce Pakistan, its culture and its products to the US audience.

Muhammad Saeed Sheikh, President, Houston Karachi Sister City Association, underscored the need for greater exchanges, especially trade delegations between Pakistan and the US for building strong linkages between the business communities of the two countries.

Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation and the Ibn-e-Sina Foundation, called for putting greater focus on 'impact investment'. He briefed the participant about GB Invest initiative which aims at promoting investments in Gilgit Baltistan, ar region most suited for 'impact investment'.

Ilyas Baig, also a businessman, appreciated the establishment of Special Facilitation Investment Council which he said was critical for improving investment climate. Mohsin Siddiqui, Oil and Gas sector expert, underscored the need for ensuring rule of law and providing necessary support and facilitation to businesses coming from the United States.

Ms. Mehnaz Zaidi highlighted the importance of ensuring greater female participation in the workforce and providing them with more opportunities to emerge as successful entrepreneurs.



LARKANA: A vendor arranging fresh dates to attract the customers at Miro Khan Road.

Energy sector reforms need of hour: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Energy Economy Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday said that PML-N-led coalition government over the last year had launched several important development initiatives in diverse sectors including the energy sector for the well-being of the people and stressed comprehensive power reforms.

The government had given clear directions to all power distribution companies to ensure accurate billing and to avoid overcharging the consumers, he said while talking to a Private News channel.

The government had devised a plan and

submitted recommendations for reforms in power distribution companies to control the Theft of energy, he added.

"The government is focusing to bring reforms along with deregulation of the energy sector in a bid to put the country on a sustainable path leading towards economic sovereignty," he added.

He further mentioned that during the previous PML-N government, efforts were made for the production of cheap hydel electricity, which were long-term measures to generate affordable power in the country but unfortunately, those projects were delayed by the last government.



QUETTA: Pakistan Coal Association Chairman Haji Ismail Domer addressing a press conference.

Telenor Pakistan reports 10% revenue growth in Q2 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Pakistan achieved significant success in the second quarter (Q2) of 2023, posting a remarkable 10 per cent growth in revenue, reaching the impressive Rs. 29.4 billion mark compared to Rs. 26.7 billion in the same period last year.

Telenor in a news release here on Thursday said that its service revenue increased by 4 percent, primarily due to improved data monetization.

Revenues witnessed a

negative impact due to decreased subscription base during the quarter compared to last year.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) improved by 8 percent due to higher service revenues and revenues from incoming international interconnect traffic.

Telenor's wholesale and other mobile revenues reached Rs. 6.16 billion during Q2 2023, up from Rs. 4.22 billion.

Gold rates decrease Rs 5,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 5,300 and was sold at Rs 221,100 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 226,400 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs4,544 to Rs 189,558 from Rs 194,102 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 173,761 from Rs 177,926, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver and 10-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2900 and Rs 2485.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$05 to \$1,978 from \$1,973, the Association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, Gaschem Warnow and Gas Zeus, carrying Container, Chemicals and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday. Meanwhile three more ships, CMA CGM Ivanhoe, IVS Okudogo and San Antonio also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours. A total of 09 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, Maersk Kinloss, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Greenwich, Gaschem Warnow and Milaha Pelepas sailed out to sea on Thursday morning, while another ship, 'Bum Shin' is expected to sail on same day. Cargo throughput of 125,596 tonnes, comprising 61,846 tonnes imports Cargo and 63,750 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,527 Containers (777 TEUs Imports).



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

Word Bank, FBR reviews progress on PRR Project

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine and the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad held a meeting on Thursday at FBR Headquarters to review the progress of the Pakistan Raises Revenue (PRR) Program during the last financial year.

The World Bank team included the Operations Manager Gailius Draugelis, the Lead Country Economist Tobias Haque, the Senior Economist Lucy Pan, the Public Sector Specialist Irum Touqeer, and the Manager Shahib Ali Mohib.

Member Reforms, FBR, Ardesher Tariq and members of the project team were also present in the meeting, said a press release issued here.

It was noted that during the four years of the project, significant achievements have been made for sustainable revenue mobilization, taxpayer facilitation, and reducing the cost of doing business under the PRRP.

In particular, the

harmonization of Sales Tax laws and procedures among provinces and the federal government was a landmark achievement with benefits for taxpayers and all revenue authorities.

Other key achievements include reducing cost of doing business by reduction in withholding lines from 58 to 33, increase in imports and exports through the green channel from 35% to 66% and broadening of tax base. During the meeting, it was stressed that all efforts should be made for achieving the next objective of launching of Single Portal to facilitate Sales Tax Return filing.

It may be noted that FBR has been publishing detailed tax expenditure reports to improve transparency.

Both sides agreed to continue the focus on the upgradation of IT infrastructure and automation of FBR and for timely completion of project targets. Asim Ahmad highly appreciated the contributions and efforts put in by the teams on both sides.

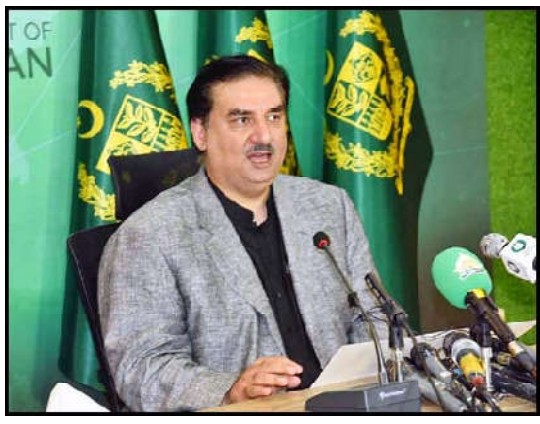
Dar reviews progress on outsourcing of airports' operations

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee to review the progress of work related to outsourcing of airports' operations, at Finance Division, today.

Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Law & Justice Azam Nazir Tarar, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Aviation,

CEO Public Private Partnership Authority, DG Pakistan CAA, IFC team and other government officials attended the meeting.

IFC, transaction advisor apprised the meeting of the progress on the working. The meeting unanimously decided and allowed Ministry of Aviation to proceed further for tendering of the outsourcing of the first airport i.e. Islamabad Airport in order to improve service delivery in line with the best industry practices.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan addressing a press conference.

Huawei to roll out 5.5G network equipment next year

BEIJING (APP): Huawei Technologies Co will launch a complete set of commercial 5.5G network equipment next year, as part of a broader push to speed up the evolution of 5G and kick off the 5.5G era for the information and communications technology industry.

"The plan comes amid rapid progress in 5G deployment over the past four years that is already yielding significant financial gains, experts said, adding that the fast-approaching 5.5G will be a key milestone in 5G evolution," China Daily reported.

Huawei proposed the concept of a "5.5G Era" to protect telecom operators' investment in 5G and improve network performance by 10 times.

"The 5.5G era will feature 10-gigabit peak downlink speeds and gigabit peak uplink speeds to meet increasingly diverse service requirements. It will also use new technologies like passive Internet of Things to unlock a market of 100 billion IoT connections."

"With a clearly defined standardization schedule, the 5.5G Era is already poised for technological

Senate body on Finance meets Finance Bill 2022-23 empowers bureaucracy to formulate zero taxation regime

Senate body briefed on 55 recommendations for Financial Budget, 2023

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance met on Thursday under the Chairmanship of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla here at the Parliament House.

The committee received briefing on the inclusion of Budget recommendation of the Senate in the Budget 2023-24.

It was briefed that the Finance Division budget wing received 55 recommendations for Financial Budget 2023 from the Senate

Committee, however, most of recommendations were related to Federal Board of revenue.

The Ministry briefed that recommendations related to Privatization of loss making enterprises, increased budget allocation for health sector, funds for rehabilitation of flood victims, availability of food items at subsidized rates, rise in TV Fee from 35 to 50 RPs and mechanism for subsidies on fertilizers, solar energy production and daily food items were fully adopted, however the

Ministry partially adopted recommendations such as grant of tax holidays to export industry, laptops schemes etc, explaining that government is providing all necessary support to IT sector and export oriented industries.

While vetting upon the recommendations adopted by the Revenue Division it was observed by the committee that many of the recommendations were agreed upon except those which were intervened by the IMF.

PSX gains 303.20 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 303.20 points, a positive change of 0.67 percent, closing at 45,398.31 points against 45,095.11 points the previous trading day.

A total of 464,226,100 shares were traded during the day as compared to 245,453,654 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10.104 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 344 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 227 of them recorded gains and 90 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 185,190,828 shares at Rs 1.43 per share; Bank of Punjab with 19,500,000 shares at Rs.4.20 per share and K-Electric with 15,889,256 shares at Rs.2.01 per share. Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 61.00 per share price, closing at Rs 1295.00, whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas Sugar with an Rs 29.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 150.00. Colgate Palm witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 112.38 per share closing at Rs 1386.05.

KP Petroleum dealers warns to shut down petrol pumps on July 22

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Petroleum Dealers and Carriage Association on Thursday warned to shut down petrol pumps across the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on July 22.

In a statement issued here, the association said that if their demands were not fulfilled then they would go to any extent including strike and protest. They demanded that their margin should be increased in proportion to the current inflation, adding that despite an increase in the interest rate their margin rate at the petrol pump kept frozen.

They warned that as per the decision of the central leadership, the petrol pumps would remain closed for an indefinite period.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik addressing the press conference.

FTO launches helpline to address taxpayer grievances countrywide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah on Thursday launched a helpline to guide, facilitate and address the genuine grievances of the aggrieved taxpayers without loss of time especially the business community on top priority across the country. Addressing the orientation and awareness session of the business community Coordinator to FTO Meher Kashif Younis and Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, said "The FTO has been endeavoring for redressing grievances of the aggrieved tax-payers in the wake of maladministration of the tax functionaries of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)." "The helpline will fully ensure uninterrupted speedy and free-of-cost

relief to the aggrieved taxpayers. In this regard, the FTO has launched a public awareness campaign to reach out to the existing and prospective taxpayers for building their confidence to fulfill their national obligation by paying due taxes timely in national exchequer." He said, "The FTO secretariat has developed and launched CMIS software for the convenience of taxpayers. Communication with the complainants through short code SMS service has also been initiated." He said, "Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has approved the mobile short code 9386 and also developed a monitoring dashboard aided with graphical representations of data for the FTO.



QUETTA: A laborer carries vehicles spare parts on his handcart passing towards his destination to earn his livelihood for support his family, at Double road in Quetta.

SAARC chamber urges Afghan Taliban to fulfill commitment for peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday urged the Afghan Taliban to fulfill their commitment made in Doha, with the goal of promoting peace in the region, specifically between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and preventing the use of Afghan soil against Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Hukhrar Ali Malik said that the Doha agreement, signed between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020, outlined various commitments from both

sides, said a news release issued here. One key aspect of the agreement was the Taliban's assurance that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by any group or individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan, he added.

By urging the Taliban to honor this commitment, octogenarian trade leader of South Asia is emphasizing the significance of stability and cooperation between Muslim nations.

By preventing Afghan soil from being utilized for activities that could harm Pakistan, he believes that both countries can work towards maintaining peace in the region.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House.

China's Xi Jinping meets with Henry Kissinger in Beijing

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Chinese President Xi Jinping met with veteran U.S. diplomat Henry Kissinger in Beijing on Thursday, calling him an "old friend." Chinese state media reported.

Xi said the visit by Kissinger, who has been to China more than 100 times and recently turned 100, had special significance because of the two "hundreds." Kissinger, who was Richard Nixon's national security adviser, made a secret trip to China to 1971 that laid the groundwork for a historic trip by the president the following year and the formalization of relations between the United States and China in 1979. "It not only changed the

two countries, but also changed the world," Xi said, according to the state-run broadcaster CCTV. Xi said the Chinese people value their country's friendship with Kissinger and the U.S. "We will never forget our old friend and your historic contribution to promoting the development of Sino-U.S. relations and enhancing the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples," he said.

Kissinger said it was a "great honor" to visit China again, noting that his meeting with Xi at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where many important diplomatic events are held, was the same place where he met in 1971 with Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier at the time. "The relationship be-

tween the two countries is related to world peace and the progress of human society," Kissinger said, according to CCTV.

The U.S. and China, now the world's two largest economies, have recently experienced some of their worst relations since diplomatic ties were established amid disputes over trade, human rights and the status of Taiwan, a self-governing island that Beijing claims as its territory. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said this week that the Biden administration was aware of Kissinger's visit to China but that he was acting "under his own volition, not acting on behalf of the United States government."



Emergency services personnel work at the site of a building that was damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

More than 40 nations interested in joining BRICS - South Africa

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: More than 40 countries have expressed interest in joining the BRICS group of nations, South Africa's top diplomat in charge of relations with the bloc said on Thursday.

Anil Sooklal and officials from the department of foreign affairs were addressing journalists in the main commercial city of Johannesburg, a day after South Africa confirmed Russia's Vladimir Putin would not attend the BRICS summit due to take place on Aug. 22-24.

The question of how far and fast to expand the club - centred around Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - is top of the agenda at the summit of nations seeking to offset to the perceived hegemony of the U.S.-led West in global affairs. Aside from the 22 coun-

tries that had formally asked to join, Sooklal said there was "an equal number of countries that have informally expressed interest in becoming BRICS members... (including) all the major global south countries". South African officials want BRICS to become a champion of the developing world, and Argentina, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros, Gabon, and Kazakhstan have all expressed interest.

South Africa had faced a dilemma in hosting the summit. As a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which issued a warrant against Putin in March, it would be obliged to arrest the Russian president if he attended for alleged war crimes by Russia during its invasion of Ukraine, charges Putin denies.

Japanese, US, & S. Korean officials condemn the North's weapons plans but urge dialogue

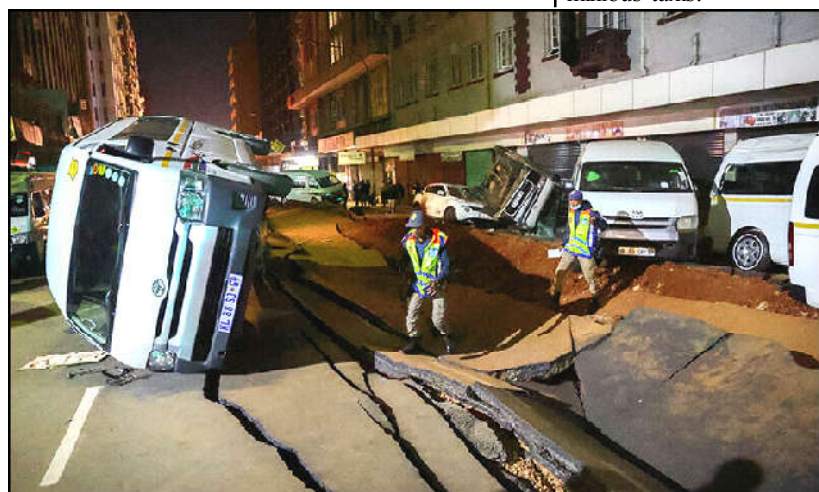
Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Senior officials from Japan, the U.S. and South Korea condemned North Korea over its recent ICBM-class ballistic missile launches and vowed to step up their trilateral cooperation to strengthen deterrence and sanctions against the North, while stressing the need for dialogue with Pyongyang.

Their meeting Thursday in the central Japanese city of Kanazawa comes days after North Korea's solid-fuel ICBM launch last week, which landed in the water off the western coast of Japan's northern main island of Hokkaido and one day after the launch of two missiles on Wednesday.

The U.S. special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, also said that the United States was "working hard" to gather information about an

American soldier who fled to the North earlier this month. The U.S. was seeking to ensure his safety and return him home, Kim said.

Private 2nd Class Travis King, 23, had been held in South Korea on assault charges and was released on July 10 after serving his time. He was taken to the airport Monday but did not board his flight home. Instead, he joined a tourist trip to the border and bolted to the North Korean side, Kim said. He and his Japanese counterpart, Takehiro Funakoshi, director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau at the Foreign Ministry, and South Korea's Kim Gunn, Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, were to also discuss their leaders' summit planned for next month in the United States.



Police officers inspect damaged cars and the road after a suspected gas explosion injured people and caused significant damage, in the central business district of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Iran warns against unloading Iranian oil from seized tanker

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran would retaliate against any oil company unloading Iranian oil from a seized tanker, the Revolutionary Guards' navy commander Alireza Tangsiri said on Thursday, according to state media.

In April, the U.S. confiscated Iranian oil on a tanker at sea in a sanctions enforcement operation, according to a maritime security firm.

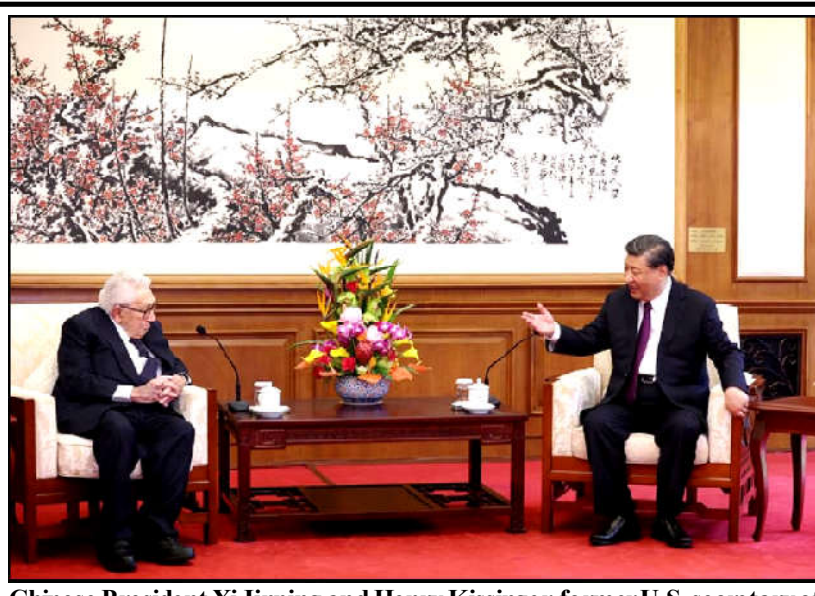
Tangsiri added that Tehran would hold Washington responsible for allowing the unloading of the tanker's content.

Sources familiar with the matter, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue, had said Washington took control of the oil cargo aboard the Marshall Islands tanker Suez Rajan after securing an earlier court order.

One dead, 48 injured in unexplained Johannesburg blast

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: A body was found in central Johannesburg early on Thursday after an unexplained blast ripped through a busy street at rush hour the previous evening, the emergency services said.

The explosion blew a hole in the road and gouged out cracks, skittling pedestrians and cars. "In the early hours of this morning, we managed to recover a body of a male person on site where the explosion occurred," Emergency Management Services spokesman Robert Mulauzi said. Panyaza Lesufi, the premier of Johannesburg's Gauteng province, told a media briefing that 48 people were injured. Witnesses reported chemical odours and escaping vapours after the powerful blast, which overturned vehicles, including minibuses.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, attend a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China.

Iraq expels Sweden envoy after another act of Holy Quran's desecration in Stockholm

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq on Thursday expelled Sweden's ambassador after a man stomped on a copy of the Holy Quran at a Stockholm demonstration just hours after the Swedish embassy in Baghdad was torched over the planned protest.

Sweden-based Iraqi refugee Salwan Momika, 37, stomped and kicked the Holy Quran but left the protest without burning it, just weeks after he set fire to pages of the holy book

outside Stockholm's main mosque. Sweden and other European countries have previously seen protests where far-right and other activists, citing free speech protections, damage or destroy religious symbols or books, commonly sparking protests and heightening diplomatic tensions.

Around the time of Thursday's protest in Stockholm, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani "instructed the Swedish ambassador in Baghdad to leave Iraqi ter-

ritory", according to a statement by his office.

It said the decision was "prompted by the Swedish government's repeated permission for the burning of the [Holy] Quran, insulting Islamic sanctities and the burning of the Iraqi flag".

Overnight protesters had breached and set fires within the compound of the Swedish embassy in Baghdad and clashed with riot police, prompting an emergency meeting with the prime minister.

Modi says India 'shamed' after video shows mob parading women naked

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that the country has been "shamed" by a video showing a mob parading two women naked in a north-eastern state where ethnic violence has claimed at least 120 lives.

Speaking publicly about the Manipur clashes for the first time since they erupted in May, Modi said his "heart is filled with pain and anger".

"The Manipur incident is shameful for any civilised society," Modi told reporters. "It has

shamed the whole nation." The video clip showed two women walking naked along a street and being jeered and harassed by a mob in the state, where the authorities have imposed an internet shutdown. It was reportedly filmed in early May but went viral on social media on Wednesday.

The violence in Manipur, prompted by a dispute over access to government jobs and other perks, has seen homes and churches torched, with tens of thousands of people fleeing to government-run camps.

China, Russia begin joint drills in Sea of Japan, Chinese state media report

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Russia have begun their joint naval and air drills in the Sea of Japan, Chinese state media CCTV reported on Thursday.

The two sides will mainly focus on sea and air escorts, deterrence and repulsion, anchorage defence and other courses to carry out drills, CCTV reported.

"The joint exercises will test the ability of the Chinese and Russian armies to integrate joint operations in distant waters," it added.



Protesters clash with security forces members as they gather near the Swedish embassy in Baghdad hours after the embassy was stormed and set on fire ahead of an expected Holy Quran burning in Stockholm, in Baghdad.

Ten dead, some trapped in landslide in India after heavy rain

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Rescue workers in India battled difficult terrain and bad weather on Thursday as they searched for survivors of a landslide that killed at least 10 people in a mountain village after incessant rain soaked the slopes, officials said.

A wave of extreme heat, wildfires, torrential rain and flooding has wreaked havoc around the world in recent days, raising new fears about the pace of climate change.

The land gave way in the middle of the night in the remote hamlet of

Irshalwadi, in the western state of Maharashtra, about 60 km (37 miles) from Mumbai, officials said.

Ten bodies had been recovered and more than 80 people had been rescued, but it was estimated that at least 225 people lived in the hamlet, the state's deputy chief minister, Devendra Fadnis, told the state assembly. Initial reports said about 100 people were feared trapped under the debris and rescue workers were struggling in heavy rain and fog to find survivors nearly 12 hours after the disaster, a Reuters witness and media reported.

US bans 14 Iraqi banks in crackdown on Iran dollar trade -WSJ

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States has barred 14 Iraqi banks from conducting dollar transactions, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing U.S. officials.

The ban, which was imposed by the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, is part of a crackdown on the siphoning of U.S. currency to Iran, the report said.

that the Iraqi banks engaged in money laundering and fraudulent transactions, some of which may have involved sanctioned individuals and raised concerns that Iran could benefit, the newspaper said.

"We have strong reason to suspect that at least some of these laundered funds could end up going to benefit either designated individuals or individuals who could be designated," a senior U.S. official was quoted as saying by the Journal.

700 get prison terms over riots in France

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: More than 700 people have been sentenced to prison over riots in France late last month, the country's justice minister said on Wednesday, lauding the "firm" response of magistrates.

In total, 1,278 verdicts have been handed down, with over 95 per cent of defendants convicted on a range of charges from vandalism to attacking police officers. Six hundred people have already been jailed. "It was extremely important to have a response that was firm and systematic."

Millions hit by extreme heat on three continents

Monitoring Desk
ATHENS: Millions of people across three continents suffered a sustained spell of heat on Wednesday as fires raged, health worries mounted and temperature records tumbled.

Experts pointed the finger at climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels, saying global warming had a key role in destructive weather.

Governments issued safety warnings, including in Greece which was among the nations battling wildfires. The heatwaves across Europe and the globe are "not one single phenomenon but several acting at the same time", said Robert Vautard, director of France's Pierre-Simon Laplace climate institute.

Russia bombards Ukraine ports, threatens ships, jolting world grain markets

Monitoring Desk
MYKOLAIV: Russia jolted world grain markets with an escalation in the Black Sea, mounting a third straight night of air strikes on Ukrainian ports and issuing a threat against Ukraine-bound vessels to which Kyiv responded in kind.

At least 27 civilians were reported hurt in the air strikes on the ports, which set buildings ablaze and damaged China's consulate in Odesa.

The United States said Russia's warning to ships indicated Moscow might attack vessels at sea following Moscow's withdrawal this week from a U.N.-

brokered deal to let Ukraine export grain. The signals that Russia was willing to use force to reimpose the blockade of one of the world's biggest food exporters set global prices soaring.

Moscow says it will not participate in the year-old grain deal without better terms for its own food and fertiliser sales. The United Nations says Russia's decision threatens food security for the world's poorest people. Kyiv is hoping to resume exports without Russia's participation. But no ships have sailed from its ports since Moscow pulled out of the deal on Monday.

North Korea threatens nuclear retaliation over U.S. displays of military force

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea said on Thursday that the deployment of U.S. weapons like aircraft carriers, bombers, or missile submarines in South Korea could meet the conditions for its use of nuclear weapons, state media KCNA reported, citing a statement by the country's defense minister Kang Sun Nam.

The comments raise the stakes as each side steps up displays of military force in a standoff over the isolated country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

The defense minister's statement also accused the United States and South Korea of escalating tensions in the region while criticizing the first meeting by their nuclear consultative group.

"The ever-increasing visibility of the deployment of the strategic nuclear submarine and other strategic assets may fall under the conditions of the use of nuclear weapons specified in the DPRK law," the statement said.

DPRK is short for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The remark is aimed at the Ohio-class U.S. nuclear-powered submarine which arrived at a port in the southern city of Busan earlier this week.

"The phase of a military clash on the Korean peninsula has surfaced as a dangerous reality," the KCNA report added.

The report comes after a U.S. soldier crossed the border into North Korea on Tuesday at a time of heightened tension between the two Koreas and the United States.

North Korea has yet to comment on the incident involving the U.S. soldier.

Last year, the reclusive state codified a new, expansive nuclear law declaring its status as a nuclear-armed state "irreversible."

"The utmost significance of legislating nuclear weapons policy is to draw an irrevocable line so that there can be no bargaining over our nuclear weapons."

US Senate considers sweeping defense bill, heads for showdown with House

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Leaders of the U.S. Senate said on Wednesday they expected a sweeping defense policy bill to pass the chamber with strong bipartisan support, which could mean a clash with a largely party-line bill approved by the House of Representatives.

Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Republican leader Mitch McConnell told weekly news conferences they expected members from both parties to back the Senate version of the must-pass National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA. The NDAA is one of the few major bills Congress passes every year, governing everything from pay raises for the troops to purchases of ships and aircraft. The fiscal 2024 bill authorizes a record \$886 billion in spending.

The House passed its NDAA on Friday by a narrow 219-210, after Republicans added culturally conservative amendments ad-

ressing hot-button social issues. The vote was almost entirely along party lines, a departure from typical bipartisan support for a bill that has passed every year since 1961.

For example, the Republican-controlled House approved an amendment that would reverse a Pentagon policy of reimbursing expenses for service members who travel to obtain an abortion. That would not win the approval of the Democratic-controlled Senate, where a majority of lawmakers, including some Republicans, support abortion rights.

"In the House, there's all kinds of partisan divisions. There's no votes by Democrats and Republicans," Schumer said. "Compare that to the Senate, where bipartisanship is working well and smoothly. The contrast is glaring, and we hope, hope, hope, that the House takes a lesson from the Senate and works in a productive way so we can pass these important bills."

Thailand to hold vote on PM next week as Pita's hopes fade

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: Thailand's parliament will hold another vote for a prime minister next week which cannot include the leader of election winners Move Forward, a deputy speaker said on Thursday, after rivals derailed his bid by blocking his re-nomination. Parliament's move to deny Pita Limjaroenrat after a marathon debate on his eligibility on Wednesday sparked protests, as a post-election crisis deepens two months after his party's surprise election triumph over military-backed rivals. "A candidate can only be nominated once in each parliamentary session," Deputy House Speaker Pichet Chuamuanphan told Reuters on Thursday.

Pita, 42, had faced resistance from conservative, royalist rivals determined to stop Move Forward from forming a government and pursuing its anti-establishment policy agenda. He was dealt a double blow on Wednesday when parliament denied him a second attempt at the premiership and the Constitutional

Court suspended him as lawmaker after accepting a case alleging he held shares in a media company in violation of election laws. He insists no rules were broken. Those moves were the latest twist in Thailand's long running battle between pro-democracy forces that win elections and a powerful nexus of influential conservatives, royalists and generals determined to stop them.

Pita was ultimately thwarted in the bicameral parliament by a 250-member Senate that was appointed by the military.

"Why should we bother to vote when the Senate is there to obstruct everything? Are 14 million votes meaningless compared to just 250 people?"

Wilansini Sakaew, 21, said at a protest late on Wednesday. Thailand's baht appreciated by as much as 1.7% against the dollar on Thursday - an over two-month high - as investor sentiment improved on expectation that the deadlock on the premiership might soon end.

“GoB’s initiatives aimed at improving quality of life & moving on to end backwardness of Balochistan”

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has taken series of initiatives with the aim to getting better the quality of life of people and moving on to end the longstanding backwardness from the province.

The Chief Minister has given the impression from his every act that the provincial government has come into being because of the power of public, and that he is answerable to them for his every action and deed.

This was mentioned in an official hand out issued here on Wednesday night.

According to the hand out, list of the important initiatives taken in the public interest by the provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus

Bizenjo is quite long. The Chief Minister has always given the impression of public Chief Minister from his actions, and his positive gesture is also being acclaimed. Not only this, the steps being taken by the Chief Minister are also getting much appreciation.

In the official hand out, certain important initiatives taken by provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Bizenjo have been referred.

These are included: release of grant in aid of Rs. 2.5 billion for universities of the province, conducting of free and fair local government elections, timely relief and rehabilitation of the flood affectees of the province, digital population and housing census in peaceful manner, holding of National Games after 19 years and PSL’s exhibitionary match for the first time, residential colony for journalists and establishment of Hawkers Welfare Fund, residential colony for fishermen, giving status of labour to the fishermen, status of special district to Gwadar, practical steps for payment of arrears against PPL, payment of Rs. 2.5 billion to the province from Saindak Metal Limited, setting up of Endowment Fund for youth skill development, grant-in-aid for the bar councils and bar associations, establishment of border trade, making permanent to the internee teachers, nomination of the vice chancellors of the public sector universities on recommendation of search committee under the administration of provincial Higher Education department, appointment of government teachers in their respective districts, operationalization of the non-effective schools.

operation under multi threat environment. The induction of ships in PN Fleet will significantly enhance the Combat Readiness of Pakistan Navy. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region.



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Labour Federation are holding protest demonstration against IMF Policies and massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking.

Pak Navy inducts two modern naval ships in national fleet

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Navy Thursday inducted two newly constructed Type 054A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN into the national fleet.

The induction ceremony of two newly constructed Type 54 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN was held here at Karachi.

Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif attended the ceremony as Chief Guest who was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on arrival at PN Dockyard, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors having capability to undertake naval



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a group photo with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi and ship crew during induction ceremony of two newly constructed PNS Shahjahan & Tippu Sultan held at Karachi.

Enhancing education standards primary aim of EPC: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here on Thursday said that the primary aim of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus established in the Senate was to foster collaboration among provinces, federation and educational institutions to enhance education standards in the country.

Addressing a seminar on education jointly organized by the Education Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), he said, “The purpose of setting up the education caucus in the Senate is to foster dialogue and cooperation, creating a collaborative approach towards enhancing education standards in Pakistan.”

The event brought together representatives and experts in the field of education.

The Chairman Senate expressed the hope that friendly countries and organizations, including Japan, would extend technical support to bolster the education sector in Pakistan. He acknowledged the significance of learning from Japan’s development experiences and encouraged sending teachers abroad for training and exposure to enrich their knowledge.

“Knowledge is the real jewel, and education goes beyond mere degrees and certificates. We must invest in skill development for our children, and identify the reasons behind our lag in the education domain,” he added.

He stressed the importance of investing in teacher recruitment, training, professional development and curriculum reforms to promote digital literacy.

The Chairman also

highlighted the need to explore alternative and innovative educational models to further advance the education landscape in the country.

Sanjrani urged all participants to actively identify current challenges and obstacles facing the education system and work collaboratively to overcome them. He expressed gratitude to all stakeholders, particularly the Education Parliamentarians Caucus, JICA, PIPS, and other contributing organizations for their efforts in organizing the seminar and promoting educational development in Pakistan. Senator Sana Jamali, the Convener of Education in her speech expressed her immense pleasure and gratitude for the strong collaboration between EPC and JICA, emphasizing the urgent need to address the critical issue of “Empowering Pakistan’s Future through Education.”

Attempt being made to put Balochistan democratic forces against wall: Agha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch Thursday urged the Federal Government, provincial government, military leadership and journalists to play a positive role in resolving the issue of terrorism in Balochistan. He was addressing a press conference today along with Minister of State Hashim Notezai, Member of Balochistan Assembly Miss Shakeela Naveed and other BNP leaders.

Expressing his grave concern over the situation in Khuzdar and Wadh, the minister, who is also Central Information Secretary of Balochistan National Party (BNP), said mortars and shells were being fired at schools and colleges in those areas.

“Due to such terrorist activities, mass graves were discovered in Tutak in 2015,” he added.

Agha Hassan Baloch said several cases were registered against Shafiq Mengal as he was responsible for the terrorist acts but he had not been caught as yet while the complainants were beaten and threatened. He said many journalists and levies officials had been martyred, women kidnapped and 94 political workers subjected to target killing but the provincial government did not take any action.

The minister said he had raised his voice at every forum including the Parliament, besides contacting the country’s leadership on the matter.

Responding to a question, Agha Hassan Baloch said an attempt was being made to put the democratic forces of Balochistan against the wall. He also criticized the newly formed political party “BAP” and said the party was formed overnight comprising over dummy leaders with preparing its manifesto the very next day.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch, flanked by Mr. Hashim Notezai Minister of State for Energy addressing a press conference at National Press Club.

Dastagir says: Imran violated Official Secrets Act of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan Thursday believed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan violated the Official Secrets Act of Pakistan by disclosing the cipher in public, alleging that US had conspired against his government.

“The former Prime Minister (Imran Khan) has violated the Secrets Act of Pakistan. He had also breached his oath to the constitution by disclosing a secret document (cipher) in public,” he said in a press conference here.

Dastgir was of the view that when a Prime Minister took an oath it stated he would not disclose anything secret.

“Imran violated rule of

law, people and country, just for his political gains.

The PTI chairman destroyed Pakistan’s diplomatic relations with other countries,” the minister said. He said receiving cipher from different countries and calling their ambassadors to discuss on the subject were a routine matter, but the former prime minister painted the US cipher for his political gains.

“Now the other countries have warned their officials not to share anything with Pakistani diplomats as it can be waved in public just like Imran disclosed the cipher in the public gathering. “We brought vote of no confidence against the PTI chief but we are still trying to bring the diplomatic relations back on track which he destroyed,” he said.



QUETTA: MPAs Qadir Ali Nail and Mubeen Khilji meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engineer Abdul Kareem Jamali at QESCO Headquarter.

Siraj stresses need for eliminating the usury from the country

SAF DARABAD (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq on Thursday stressed the need for eliminating the usury from the country. Addressing a public gathering, Siraj ruded: “Despite the British rulers leaving the country, the system of usury is pretty much still in place.”

“Sadly, the country does not yet have a functioning justice system. Every single person in the country is the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) slave,” the JI

emir lamented. He took a jibe at the political opponents, asserting, “Both the previous and current rulers have dragged the country into loans from the international lenders.” Entire economic system of a country created to practice Islam based on the 1939 Usury Act enforced by British Colonists, and government has been violating the repeated recommendations of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and the decision of FSC to jacking up the rate of interest continuously.

Moen-jo-Daro express restored

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has restored Moen-jo-Daro Express traveling from Kotri to Rohri here Thursday.

Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khuwaja Saad Rafique had announced plans to restore the train.

Railway authorities in compliance with the directives of the Federal Minister have restored passenger train after necessary maintenance and renovation.

In this connection, a simple but impressive ceremony was held at Kotri Railway station where Divisional Superintendent Karachi Muhammad Nasir Khakheli inaugurated the train after cutting the ribbon and offering dua. Moen-jo-Daro train was beautifully decorated on the occasion. Federal Minister for Railways Khuwaja Saad Rafique on the occasion addressed on video link.

Chairman Pakistan Railway Syed Mazhar Ali Shah was also accompanied by him.

Govt decides to charge radio fee of Rs 15 through electricity bills

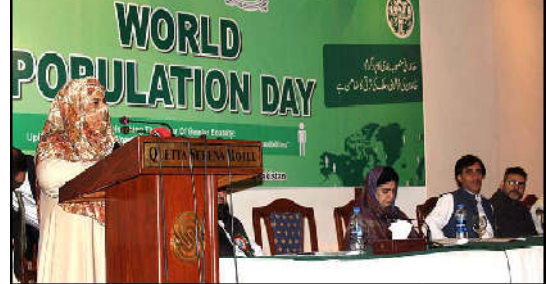
ISLAMABAD (Online): Government has decided to charge radio fee to the tune of Rs 15 through electricity bills.

The finance ministry authorities have disclosed radio fee will also be included in electricity bills along with TV fee.

Information ministry has worked out summary in this regard.

Now both TV fee amounting to Rs 35 and radio fee amounting to Rs 15 will be included in electricity bills.

This step has been taken on the recommendation of Senate committee.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Science and Information Technology Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi addressing at ceremony regarding World Population Day.

Court acquits PM Shehbaz, others in NAB reference

LAHORE (APP): An accountability court on Thursday acquitted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, his son Hamza Shehbaz, and others in assets beyond means and money laundering reference, filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

PM Shehbaz’s wife Nusrat, daughter Javeria Ali were also included among the acquitted persons besides Rashid Karamat, Muhammad Usman, Masroor Anwar, Nisar Ahmad, Shoaib Qamar,

Qasim Qayyum, Ali Ahmad, Rana Nauman and others. Accountability Court Judge Qamaruz Zaman announced the verdict while allowing acquittal applications of PM Shehbaz and 11 others. The court also ordered to defreeze all assets of the acquitted persons. Earlier, in his final arguments, the defence counsel argued that all assets of his clients were declared with the Federal Board of Revenue and the bureau failed to produce any evidence against them.



QUETTA: Members of Sunni Ulema Council are holding a rally in connection of first Muharram-ul-Haram the day of Martyrdom of 2nd Muslim Caliph Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.A.).

Security forces patrolling continues: Two private check posts removed on national highway in Wadh

Independent Report
QUETTA: The efforts are being made by the district administration and law enforcement agencies to normalize the otherwise tense situation in Wadh area of Khuzdar.

In this regard, the patrolling of security forces is continued constantly in the Wadh area and national highway. While on the other hand, two check posts set up privately on two sides of the national highway in Wadh have been removed.

The patrolling is being led by Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar, Captain (Retd) Jamil Ahmed, DIG Police Khuzdar, Pervez Umrani, FC commandant,

Colonel Hafiz Kashif and SSP Khuzdar Fahad Khosa.

According to an official hand out issued here, it is an endeavour of the administration to normalize the situation. The efforts are also being made to stop the two-side firing and improve law and order in the area.

On the other hand, the contacts are also being made with both the groups to resolve the issue.

In the meantime, two private check posts set up by the tribal groups on the highway have been removed and the check posts of Balochistan constabulary and Levies are being set up there.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaifi presides over the meeting to review outstanding dues of QESCO.

Nawab Raisani inaugurates 10-bedded ICU in Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Hospital

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and former Chief Minister,



Chief of Sarawan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani visited the Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital Mastung on Thursday.

During the visit, Nawab Aslam Raisani inaugurated the newly built 10-bedded ICU/CCU in the Hospital.

The Chief Executive Officer of Hospital, Dr. Saeed Ahmed Mirwani briefed Nawab Raisani and media representatives

about the overall functioning and progress of the hospital.

It was informed that a

master plan has been prepared for making the Hospital at international level. The plan included extension of the hospital from existing 50-bedded to 200 beds, establishment of new trauma center, operation theatre and modern eye theater. Moreover, the hospital would also be equipped with modern facilities, it was informed further adding that the work on expansion of the hospital would be started soon.

Four women among 12 medical officers recruited for 11 Balochistan’ jails

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Department appointed 12 medical officers (BPS-17) including four lady medical officers for various jails of the province on an ad-hoc basis.

The Health Department source on Thursday told APP that these appointments were made by Health Department in order to provide health facilities to prisoners in respective jails of Balochistan saying that prisoners were deprived of health care facilities for a long time in the jails.

The source further said that prisoners’ patients had shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment in the past saying that Balochistan Govt took initiatives and recruited medical officers for 11 jails of the province so that prisoners would not face difficulties during medical aid.



QUETTA: Members of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) are holding protest demonstration against unrest law and order situation in city, outside Balochistan Assembly building.

Govt drops bombshell of electricity

ISLAMABAD (Online): Once again shock of expensive electricity has been given to inflation stricken people by increasing electricity rates.

The price of electricity has been increased by Rs 1.90 per unit.

NEpra has issued the approval notification under the head of fuel price adjustment for May.

According to notification, the hike in tariff will be applicable on the bills for the month of July.

Increase in cost of electricity will not be applicable to life line and K-electric consumers.

CCP had requested an increase of RS 2.05 per unit.

NEpra had heard the request on July 5th.

It is to remember that the Central Power Chasing Agency had submitted a complaint to NEpra for increasing the price of electricity just a few days after the largest hike in the country’s history in the basic electricity tariff.

Steps for anti-polio drive reviewed in Hub

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hub Zahid Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the anti-polio drive to be started from August 01.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Hub District Health Officer (DHO) Hub, National Staff Transmission Officer Polio Hub, Lasbela officials from relevant government departments. The participants of the meeting discussed the past achievements of SNID Polio and making the micro plan more effective. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Hub Zahid Khan said that polio was a national cause for its success, and the relevant responsible officers must participate in training before polio campaign. He said that in addition to keeping an eye on the work of polio monitors, area in-charges and officials in the last polio campaign in Hab-ko, Vandra, Kharhena, Pathra, the Union Council would have to ensure the safety.