

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Quetta

Ph: 284 1470 / 284 1473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vol XXIV No. 315, Zil Hajj 18, 1444 AH Friday July 07, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs. 15

Asks Sweden to clarify position on Holy Quran desecration Joint sitting of Parliament condemns desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden

Holy Quran's desecration, an attempt to beget Muslim-Christian hostility; warns against any recurrence: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The joint sitting of the Parliament on Thursday strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and called upon the international community to take serious action to prevent such incidents in the future.

They were addressing on a motion moved by Federal Minister for Human Rights, Riaz Hussain Pizada on the situation arising out of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden in the joint sitting of the Parliament, which was

chaired by Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf.

Parliamentarians from the government and the opposition sides expressed deep distress over the incident, stating that Muslims worldwide have been profoundly hurt by this disgraceful act.

They emphasized that no civilized society should permit the provocation and disrespect of religious sentiments under the guise of freedom of expression. They urged the international community to ad-

dress this tragic incident and take effective measures to prevent similar occurrences.

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz Ahmad strongly condemned the incident and said that the entire nation was united on this matter. He said that every forum should be used to raise the voice against this wrong act.

He said that although it was an individual act, but the government of the concerned country should take strict action against that person. He said that every

Pakistani would participate in peaceful protests on Friday against the incident.

He praised the decision to convene an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in response to the incident.

Opposition Leader in Senate, Senator Dr Shahzad Waseem said that such act will increase the feeling of abhorrence among various communities of the world and urged to control such incidents. He added that the Muslims living in different

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, UAE's President-designate for COP28 Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Federal Minister for climate change Ms Sherry Rehman displaying COP28's wrist band as a display of commitment to climate change agency



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Faisal Al-Thani called on President Dr Arif Alvi at Awwan-e-Sadr

Pakistan desirous of improving ties with US: PM Shahbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Pakistan desired to improve its bilateral relations with the United States in diverse fields.

Addressing a ceremony for the celebration of the 247th Independence Day of the United States of America, he said Pakistan and the US had made serious efforts to mend their ties putting aside any misgivings and misunderstandings, and now the relations were back to normal.

He assured of his personal efforts as head of the government and as a Pakistani to cultivate better and stronger relations with the United States on the basis of mutual trust and respect.

"Over the last 75 years,

our relations have ups and downs but on the whole we have been very good friends."

He said the United States was the largest trading partner of Pakistan and also a steadfast partner in the war against terrorism.

In the fight against terrorism, Pakistan lost 80,000 people from all walks of life and this unparalleled sacrifice explained Pakistan's commitment and US had been a great supporter and partner in this fight, he remarked.

He said about five years ago when Pakistan was facing serious power outages, the then government established 5000 megawatts of LNG-based power plants and the entire equipment was brought from the United States.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a ceremony of the celebration of the 247th Independence Day of the United States of America

PML-N Quaid's acquittal exposes last PTI regime's political vendetta: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that acquittal of three-elected prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif in the plot allotment reference by an accountability court in Lahore clearly showed a political vendetta of the last PTI regime.

Addressing a press conference, she said the plots allotment case related to the tenure when Nawaz Sharif

was the chief minister of Punjab.

She said the owner of a leading media house was arrested in a fake case just to pressurize the media to toe the line of the then rulers. Similarly, journalists were arrested and targeted only to curb dissent views, and on that account the then prime minister was given the title of a 'predator' at international level.

She said today's verdict of the accountability

Continued on page 2

Monsoon rains: PDMA on high alert: DG

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Balochistan is on high alert to cope with the moon soon heavy rains that will start lashing parts of the province on July 5th, 2023.

"The deputy commissioners of all districts have been provided with necessary relief items on the directives of chief minister

Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizinjio, said Director General PDMA Jhanzaib Khan on Thursday.

Heavy downpour, gusty winds and thunderstorm is expected to lash the majority of the regions of the province including Barkhan, Loralai, Sibi, Naseerabad, Kalat, Zhoob, Lasbella, Awaran and Musakhail.

President for boosting Pak-Qatar economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said Pakistan wanted to expand trade and investment relations with Qatar and translate the brotherly relations into mutually beneficial economic ties.

"Pakistan desires a partnership with Qatar in the energy sector and looks forward to Qatar investments in various sectors of the economy", he said in a meeting with the outgoing Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Faisal Al-Thani, here at the Awwan-e-Sadr.

The president appreciated the Government of Qatar for hosting the Pakistani diaspora which served as a strong bridge between the two brotherly countries.

He expressed the hope that Qatar would increase the number of skilled Pakistani workers and would open more visa facilities in Pakistan. He lauded the leadership of Qatar for making efforts against Islamophobia, adding that the Islamic world needed to make collective efforts against the rising tide of Islamophobia in the world.

Court summons Imran Khan in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District & Sessions Court Islamabad on Thursday summoned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman on July 10, in the Toshakhana criminal case and also sought arguments on the maintainability of the complaint lodged by the District Election Commissioner.

Additional District and Session Judge Hamayun Dilawar heard the matter regarding the admissibility of the case in light of the direction of Islamabad High Court.

Imran Khan's lawyer Barrister Gohar Ali adopted the stance that the case was fixed for hearing on July 8. His client could not appear before the court today as he had to appear before the Lahore High Court (LHC), he said and prayed the court to grant any next date after July 10 for further proceedings.

Jehangir Tareen's brother 'commits suicide'

LAHORE (APP): Alamgir Khan Tareen, a brother of Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Khan Tareen, allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself in his head with a pistol at his residence in Gulberg area, here on Thursday. Alamgir Tareen was the owner and managing director of the Multan Sultans PSL franchise.

Police said the 62-year-old lived alone. They said the crime scene had been sealed and the pistol he used for allegedly committing suicide recovered. The process of collecting fingerprints and other evidence was under way, they added. The reason behind the suicide could not be ascertained in the initial investigation.

CM expresses satisfaction over peaceful holding of last phase of LG elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo said that there is a key role of effective local bodies governments in transferring the powers to the lower level and the local bodies elections reflect the continuity of the democratic behaviours. He also said that the very objective of the local bodies elections is to empower the people at local level.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister extended congratulations to the newly elected district councils chairman and vice chairman of the district councils.

He also appreciated performance of the administration, levies and police for making excellent arrangements and providing

best security for the elections of district councils.

Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo said that there is a key role of effective local bodies governments in transferring the powers to the lower level and the local bodies elections reflect the continuity of the democratic behaviours. He also said that the very objective of the local bodies elections is to empower the people at local level.

He said that we conducted the peaceful local government elections in the province and proved by providing the necessary security for the purpose that this province is heading towards the sustainable peace now.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor Bolan University of Medical & Health Sciences Prof. Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Lehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Discipline can't be maintained in society without rule of law, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that it is necessary to maintain discipline for ensuring rule of law in the society as discipline can't be upheld without rule of law.

He said that the formation of civilized society is conditional with equal enforcement of law in the society. The dignity of public friendly law is that both powerful and weak are equal.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Governor Balochistan while speaking to different delegations who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that supremacy of law and justice can ensure new destinations and course of the cruelty and exploitation-free society.

In this regard, heavy

Continued on page 2

PTI govt forced NAB to file plot allotment reference against Nawaz: detailed verdict

LAHORE (INP): The Accountability Court of Lahore has issued a detailed verdict in the acquittal of former premier Nawaz Sharif's plot allotment case.

A copy of the detailed verdict explains how Nawaz Sharif's proclaimed offender status ended and under which law he has been given relief.

The verdict states that according to the record, the PML-N supremo was tar-

getted over political revenge.

The former government forced the National Accountability Bureau to institute a reference against Nawaz Sharif, it stated further. The court orders the acquittal of three-time elected prime minister Nawaz Sharif of charges in the case.

An amicus curiae said the same relief should be

Continued on page 2

PM extends Pakistan's full support to UAE hosting COP28 summit

Woos UAE investment in alternative energy as both countries sign MoU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended Pakistan's full support to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the country was set to host COP28 summit in Dubai from November 30 to December 12 this year.

The prime minister, in a meeting with President-designate of COP-28 and UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change, Minister for Industries and Technologies and Chairman Masdar Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber and his delegation, conveyed best wishes to the leadership of UAE for

the success of the event.

Welcoming Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, the prime minister underscored the importance of high level exchanges and felicitated him on his appointment as President-designate COP28.

He expressed full confidence in Dr. Jaber's stewardship of this important global conference.

Appreciating UAE's efforts in combating climate change and developing renewable energy projects, the prime minister thanked the Emirates for its support during last year's devastating floods in Pakistan.

He also thanked the UAE for its vital support to Pakistan which has been critical in reaching staff level agreement with the IMF.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also briefed the delegation about the Special Investment Facilitation Council established by the government aimed at providing facilitating the foreign investors in diverse sectors.

He also shared details of the 10,000 MW solar energy projects for which a road show was already held in Dubai.

Continued on page 2

Army major martyred in gunfire with terrorists in Khyber: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (Online): On night 05/06 July 23, Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation on reported presence of terrorists, in general area Shakhas, Khyber District.

While establishment of blocking positions to cut the escape routes of terrorists was underway, a party of terrorists was spotted by Major Abdullah who was leading the operation from the front.

As a result of heavy exchange of fire, the brave son of the nation Major Mian Abdullah Shah (age 33 years, resident of Kohat) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

Three terrorists and their facilitators were apprehended. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate the terrorists present in the area.

Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Landslide kills eight children in Shangla

PESHAWAR (APP): Eight children died and one was injured after fell on them while playing at Shangla district. Police said the tragic incident occurred at Koz Kallay village at tehsil Martung where children busy in the game came under a huge landslide.

Police and rescue workers rushed to the spot and retrieved eight bodies and one injured from the rubble. The dead identified are Ayaz, Zafar, Azmatullah, Haras, Rehmat, Raza, Sajwal and others.

CJ BHC pays surprise visit of central Jail Mach; inspects facilities for prisoners

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Justice, Balochistan High Court (BHC), Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan paid surprise visit to the central Jail Mach on Thursday.

Also accompanied with him was the Judge, BHC, Mr. Justice Zaheeruddin Kakar. Upon reaching Mach jail, the administration arranged visit of the Jail barracks and other sections. The Chief Justice was also briefed about the overall situation of the jail.

He also met the pris-

ture of issues.

Meanwhile, he also inspected the quality of meal being served to the prisoners. He, however, expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made for cleanliness in the Jail.

He was informed that no doctor is posted in the ward of Jail, therefore, the civil hospital is to be approached for treatment of the prisoners.

He directed to contract the Health department for posting a doctor in the Jail on permanent basis. He also



inspected the library estab-

lished in the Mach jail.

He said that Prisoners are also part of our society as such there is a dire need to make them useful citizens.

Last phase of LG polls completes with election of chairman & vice chairman of 35 district councils

Independent Report

QUETTA: The last phase of Local Government (LG) elections was completed with oath taking of members of the district councils and election of their chairman and vice chairman in 35 districts of Balochistan on Thursday. Over 1200 elected members of the district councils including chairman of rural union councils and those elected on reserved seats used their right of franchise for election of the chairman and vice chairman of district councils.

The process of oath taking of the district council members and polling for election of their chairman and vice chairman was started at around 08:00 PM and remained continued till 04:00 PM without any break.

Earlier, the returning officers of concerned districts administered oath to the

members of district councils. While the process of oath taking and election got started as per schedule and that somehow at the given time, but it started hours late in some districts. Later, the newly elected chairman and district chairman took oath of their respective offices.

Tough security measures were adopted on occasion of the oath taking and election of the chairman and vice chairman of district councils in all 35 districts.

Section 144 was also imposed to ensure peace in the districts with additional deployment of police, levies and other law enforcers in the sensitive districts.

It may be mentioned here that control rooms were set up in Election commission of Pakistan secretariat Islamabad and Provincial Election Commissioner office Quetta.



QUETTA: Principal Secretary of Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Gichki giving away appointment orders on deceased quota



ISLAMABAD: President Designate COP28 and Minister for Industries & Technologies of UAE Dr Sultan Al Jaber call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan slams UN report for not recording plight of occupied Palestinian, Kashmiri children

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has criticized the United Nations for not listing the two "blatant" situations of foreign occupation, perpetrated by Israel and India, in its report on "Children and Armed Conflict", calling the omission the "most visible anomaly" in the document.

Speaking in the UN Security Council, which met under U.K.'s presidency, Ambassador Munir Akram highlighted the immense suffering of children under foreign occupation, saying they suffer "horrible experiences".

"This is, therefore the most visible anomaly in the report that the two blatant situations of foreign occupations perpetrated by Israel on one hand and by India in Jammu and Kashmir on the other, are not listed in the report and are given a free pass," the Pakistani envoy told the 15-member Council on Wednesday.

Last year, 27,180 grave violations were committed against children caught up in war - the highest number ever verified by the UN, according to Virginia Gamba, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, who presented her latest annual report.

In his remarks, Amba-

sador Akram said the fact that 1 in 6 of the world's children lives in areas affected by conflict required that more must be done to ensure their safety, welfare and prosperity.

Specifically referring to the "suppression" of the children of Jammu and Kashmir by the Indian occupation forces, he said that an entire generation of Kashmiri children has grown up in a climate of unspeakable fear, violence and repression that has further aggravated since 05 August 2019, when India unilaterally annexed the occupied and disputed territory.

"We still remember the gut-wrenching picture of a three-year-old Kashmiri boy sitting in shock on the dead body of his grandfather after he was killed by the Indian forces," the Pakistani envoy said in an emotionally charged voice.

Ambassador Akram said an estimated 13,000 Kashmiri children and youth have been captured by India's 900,000 occupation forces, while thousands of innocent Kashmiris, including women and children, have been killed in staged search operations to extract confessions or secure commitments not to participate in Kashmir's struggle for self-determination.

However PPP had suggested the name of Zaka Ashraf for Chairman PCB.

Zaka Ashraf takes charge as new Chairman PCB

LAHORE (Online): New Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Zaka Ashraf has taken charge of his office.

After taking charge, Chaudhary Zaka Ashraf reached the PCB headquarters where Zaka Ashraf was received by senior officials of board.

The paper work of taking charge of Zaka Ashraf has been completed and he was also seen mixing with staff of PCB.

The first meeting of PCB new management committee will be held at the National Cricket Academy.

The future strategy of cricket board will be decided in the meeting.

It is pertinent to say that the new management committee of Pakistan Cricket board (PCB) has been formed for 4 months which will look monitor the matters of cricket board including ICC.

PCB management committee consisting of 10 members includes Kaleem Ullah Khan, Ishaq Akhtar, Musadiq Islam, Azmat Parvez, Zaheer Abbas, Khuram Somru, Khawaja Nadeem, Mustafa Ramde and Zulfiqar Malik.

Before Zaka Ashraf, Najam Sethi was running the matters of Pakistan Cricket Board.

However PPP had suggested the name of Zaka Ashraf for Chairman PCB.

Pakistan's current crises emanate from conspiracy to oust Nawaz Sharif: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the series of current crises confronting Pakistan started from the conspiracy to oust Nawaz Sharif from the government and bring Imran Khan to rule at any cost.

The prime minister, in a tweet, said the recent revelations by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's senior lawyer and a journalist about how Nawaz Sharif was deliberately framed in the Panama Papers with an objective to oust him from government and banning from politics was what they knew from the very first day.

"However, these re-

lations are very important even now because the truth is coming out bit by bit," the prime minister wrote on Twitter.

He said in the whole process of ousting Nawaz Sharif and bringing Imran Khan to rule, Pakistan had suffered huge losses, democratic evolution was hindered and the economy was severely affected.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that rectification of the actions taken against Nawaz Sharif was very important to improve the situation.

"Alhamdulillah, I am proud that my leader stood for the right in history and got vindicated," he remarked.

PML-N Quaid's acquittal...

Continued from page 1
court was an eye-opener for those who had blindly followed the fake narrative of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

She said in the so-called illegal plots allotment reference it was alleged that Nawaz Sharif as Punjab chief minister had specifically favoured Mir Shakeelur Rehman to manage favourable media coverage.

She said under the 'NAB-Niaz nexus', the National Accountability Bureau was given the task to target political opponents of the PTI chief.

The minister said today, the accountability court had affirmed that Nawaz Sharif was targeted to have political revenge. The court also noted that no evidence of corruption was found against the PML-N Quaid, which led to his honourable acquittal.

It was also pointed out that no legal requirements were fulfilled for declaring Nawaz Sharif as an absconder, she said, adding the process to target the PML-N chief and his family had commenced with changing 'Panama to Iqama'.

The minister opined that the objective of Asset Recovery Unit was to target and victimize the PTI chief's political opponents, and gag the media. Now it was the divine justice that Shahzad Akbar had no courage to face the public on that count.

PTI govt forced NAB to...

Continued from page 1
given to Nawaz that has been given to the main suspects in the case, according to the verdict.

A proclaimed offender also deserves the same punishment or relief that a central accused does, the verdict said.

It further said the proceedings to declare Nawaz Sharif a proclaimed offender were not in accordance with the law.

In light of the Supreme Court's decision, Nawaz Sharif should have also got the same relief that was given to the other accused.

The National Accountability Bureau and the revenue board order to un-

freeze the properties of the shareholders in Nawaz's properties, the verdict stated. A copy of the court order should be dispatched to the NAB chairman and others, it directed.

According to the amicus curiae, the proper procedure was not followed for declaring Nawaz Sharif a proclaimed offender.

The shareholders of Nawaz Sharif's properties filed objections to the freezing of their properties.

The court had appointed senior prosecutor Hafiz Asadullah as an amicus curia in the plot allotment reference against PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif.

CPEC signature project in China-Pakistan cooperation in new era: Wang Wenbin

BEIJING (APP): The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a signature project in cooperation between China and Pakistan in the new era and a pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping a decade ago, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Thursday.

"CPEC is a signature project in China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era and a pilot project in the Belt and Road cooperation. This year marks its 10th anniversary," he said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while addressing a ceremony to mark a decade of the signing of the CPEC framework, said that

the CPEC has been playing a pivotal role in transforming Pakistan's economic landscape and the mega project helped Pakistan progress in the region and beyond.

The spokesperson said that with the CPEC as the center, the two sides have established a cooperation framework with ports and transportation infrastructure, energy and industry.

The project has been flourishing and generated a large amount of direct investment, created many jobs and brought highways and power generation and transmission infrastructure to Pakistan and contributing to the country's development and regional connectivity, he added.

Wang Wenbin said the two countries are also cooperating in ag-

riculture, science, technology, information technology and social wellbeing.

"Going forward, we will continue to work for the high-quality development of CPEC and contribute to China Pakistan and regional development," he added.

It may be mentioned here that CPEC enters a significant milestone as it celebrates a decade of remarkable achievements in fostering economic growth, infrastructure development and regional connectivity.

Launched in 2013, CPEC is a corridor linking the Gwadar port in southwestern Pakistan with Kashgar in north-west China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport and industrial cooperation.



QUETTA: A delegation of Kucklak led by tribal leader Char Gul meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

PM extends Pakistan's full support...

Continued from page 1
Dr. Sultan Al Jaber conveyed the greetings and best wishes of the UAE leadership to the prime minister.

He showed keen interest to enhance partnership with Pakistan in all domains and emphasized UAE's leadership directions to him to further improve collaboration with Pakistan in the renewable energy sector that would help boost energy security for Pakistan.

The visiting dignitary underscored that they viewed Pakistan as an important partner in climate change discourse and appreciated Pakistan's active role in climate change diplomacy.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Mussadik Malik, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and senior officials attended the meeting.

An MoU for development of renewable energy projects in Pakistan was also signed by both sides.

The prime minister witnessed the signing ceremony while Secretary Power Division Rashid Mahmood Langrial and Undersecretary of Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure of UAE Sharif Olama signed on behalf of their respective sides.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday urged the companies from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to exploit Pakistan's potential in the alternative energy sector, citing his government's plan to generate 10,000 megawatt of solar energy.

The prime minister, in his remarks at a signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding (MoU)

with the UAE for development of renewable energy projects in Pakistan, said it was an opportunity for bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

Secretary Power Division Rashid Mahmood Langrial and Undersecretary of Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure of UAE Sharif Olama signed the MoU as the prime minister and visiting Prime Minister Designate COP28 and Minister for Industries and Technologies of UAE Sultan Al Jaber witnessed the ceremony.

The prime minister said his government was ready to give a detailed presentation to the UAE firms on Pakistan's potential and his government's policies in the alternative energy, including the 10,000 MW solar energy generation project.

He said Pakistan was rich with "wonderful sunrays" in Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He expressed the resolve that his government would make all-out efforts

to convert the MoU into agreement and for its swift realisation.

The prime minister also thanked the UAE for inviting Pakistan to the COP28 to be held in the Emirates by end of this year.

He particularly thanked UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for the "valuable and timely" support to Pakistan, particularly in arriving a deal with the International Monetary Fund.

Conveying thanks on behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan to the UAE leadership, the prime minister said the cooperation by China, UAE and Saudi Arabia had played a key role for Pakistan to reach the crucial deal with the IMF.

In his remarks, Minister for Industries and Technologies of UAE Sultan Al Jaber thanked the prime minister for the warm hospitality and conveyed the UAE president's "high respect and appreciation" to the prime minister and his government.

Discipline can't be maintained...

Continued from page 1

responsibility rests with all law enforcement agencies especially district administration to take measures for elimination of society evils and protection of life and property of the masses besides improving the overall law and order situation all over the province.

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar made it clear that we have to make the marginalized and poor segments of the society that the law is their protector. Rather, the practical steps would have to be taken to keep the influential people in the ambit of law.

The Governor on the

occasion exhorted on the progressive and enlightened people to play their wholehearted role for promotion of democratic behavior, create respect for difference of opinion and highlight the human dignity.

He also urged the government to ensure elimination of crimes, take action against narcotics sellers and safety of the people on the national highways besides becoming voice of the voiceless people.

He expressed the hope that all the government high ups and institutions would continue to play their role for development and prosperity of the country and nation.



QUETTA: Former Federal Secretary Sardar Ijaz Ahmed Jaffar meeting with Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Gichki

Joint sitting of Parliament condemns....

Continued from page 1

parts of the world strongly condemned the incident.

He said that similar incidents already occurred in some countries and demanded to stop happening of such incidents. He said that playing with the sentiments of Muslims on the name of freedom of expression is absolutely deplorable.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said that holding of joint sitting of the Parliament was a good step to give a message to the world that the entire nation was united on this incident. He said that Muslims respect other religions in accordance with Islamic teachings and expect reciprocity from followers of other faiths for global peace.

He stressed that promoting interfaith harmony among nations was essential for ensuring international peace.

He called upon the international community to take notice and strict action against those responsible. He said that our protests should be held peacefully following the teachings of Islam.

Federal Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mehmood strongly condemned the anti-Islam act considering it highly unjustifiable. He called for the perpetrator of this heinous crime to be brought to justice. He said that freedom of expression should not be used as a means to hurt religious sentiments.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the desecration of Holy Quran was an attempt to create animosity between the Muslims and Christians and any recur-

rence of such condemnable act, would in no way be tolerated.

The prime minister, in his address to the joint sitting of the parliament, urged the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to convene an urgent session to invite the Muslim world leaders, adopt a condemnatory resolution and also warn the Swedish individuals and such individuals against the recurrence of such condemnable acts.

Her urged the National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to form a committee with a mandate to formulate recommendations for their onward dissemination to the world including international organisations so that such acts could be averted.

He said as per their belief, Muslims revered all religions and revealed books including the Bible as Holy Quran ordained patience and harmony.

He said despite that, such deliberate Islamophobia acts were being carried out to pit Muslims against Christians.

He said that despite their belated condemnation, the Swedish government would have to clarify its position as to why they allowed such an act under the protection of their police on the day when the Muslims were celebrating Eid-ul-Azha.

The prime minister urged the parliamentarians to condemn the act of Swedish police and make it clear that the Muslims could even sacrifice their lives to protect the sanctity of the Holy Quran.

He said the peaceful protests should not be

construed as weakness and that no one should complain about the consequences if such condemnable actions were repeated.

He said as the country would observe the Sanctity of Holy Quran Day on Friday, the whole nation should stage rallies across the country to condemn the desecration of Holy Quran and convey their sentiments to the world.

Calling for using all political and legal options to avert recurrence of such acts, the prime minister also

thanked the OIC for convening a special meeting in which they also adopted a condemnatory resolution and put forward suggestions.

He said Pakistan was not against the freedom of speech but no one had the right to desecrate any one's belief or fan hatred in this garb.



KARACHI: Members of Sindh Balochistan Art and Drawing Teachers Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Karachi press club

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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 2022-23 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: 27-07-2023 (Office Hours)
- Issuance of Bidding documents on: 31-07-2023 (Office Hours)
- Submission of Bids on: 01-08-2023 (till 12.00 PM)
- Opening of Bids on: 01-08-2023 (at 1.00 PM)

S. No	Name of works	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Cost of Tender
1	Construction of Internal roads in Quetta.(Package-II)	37857702/-	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
2	Construction of 24KM Black top road in Nawab Killa, Killa Kotwal and surrounding areas of Nawab Killa Killa Kotwal District Quetta. (Package-II)	58964880/-	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
3	Construction of Internal Black Top roads at Tehsil and District Chaman.	310923323/-	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
4	Improvement of Sewerage system Tuff tiles and Black top in different areas of District Quetta.	96398015/-	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
5	Construction of Internal roads in Kuchlak and surrounding areas District Quetta.	252797468/-	03% of Bid amount	5000.00
6	Construction of Internal roads at Panjpai, Aghbarg, Chashma & surrounding areas of District Quetta.	238488017/-	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:
i. Submission of Bids on: 08-08-2023 (till 12.00 PM)
ii. Opening of Bids on: 08-08-2023 (at 1.00 PM)

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

(AMINULLAH KHAN) Executive Engr:
Central Civil Division No-III
PAK PWD, Quetta

PID(Q)02/23

Senate body urges Swift resolution for law students' examination issue

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training convened today at the Parliament House, under the chairmanship of Senator Irfan Siddiqui.

The session commenced with a discussion on the compliance report submitted by the Vice-Chancellor regarding the decisions and recommendations made during the previous meeting on June 8, 2023, concerning the "ex-

amination issue faced by Law students at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan." The Vice-Chancellor of BZU Multan informed the committee that an internal committee had been established to address the longstanding problem encountered by these students. The Vice-Chancellor pledged to present the findings of the internal committee within 15 days. However, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, the Chairman of the Standing Committee, expressed grave concern over the de-

lay in resolving the matter and decided to form a sub-committee led by Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmed to expedite the resolution process.

Furthermore, the committee discussed the compliance report submitted by the Ministry regarding the state of Chairs abroad, providing comprehensive details such as the number of chairs, vacant positions, duration of vacancies, and the reasons behind them. Ministry officials informed the com-

mittee that the process of filling the vacant Chair in Uzbekistan was nearing completion. However, no candidate met the requirements for appointment as the Chair in Iran. Discussions were underway with Columbia University to overcome the challenges hindering the appointment of a Chair there. The Chairman directed the ministry to provide a university-wise breakdown of the vacant chairs abroad, along with reasons for the prolonged vacancies.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a group photo with delegation of Gujjar Khan Bar Council at Parliament House.



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar.

Evacuee trust property review case: SC rejects lawyer objections regarding application of review of judgment act

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected all the objections of lawyer pertaining to application of review of judgment act in Evacuee Trust Property review case.

The court has maintained the applicability of review of judgment act is for the cases under 184/3.

On giving arguments by prosecution counsel on applicability of review of judgment act in the case under hearing Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan remarked you got adjourned a case yesterday and today we have to resolve this issue.

A two members bench of SC comprising justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Ayesha Malik took up the case for hearing Thursday.

During the hearing of case counsel Mumir Paracha argued 184(3) is mentioned in two clauses of review of judgment act.

The other clauses of act will be applicable to all review cases.

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan remarked it is not mentioned anywhere in the act this will be applicable to the cases which come in appeals. Tell us why it is not mentioned about applicability of 175 in other clauses. Enacting the law is aimed at protecting the basic rights.

He directed the counsel to give arguments on the merit of the case.

He raised the question can every minister of the federal government allot

the land this way. There is law in the country and not monarchy. state property is not "maal-e-ghanimat" that minister distributes it this way.

Laws and regulations are made for protection of properties. In this case neither minister was authorized nor was the legal way adopted.

Justice Ayesha Malik remarked review of judgment act is not related to other cases except 184(3). If plea of counsel is accepted then how can the minister of social welfare distribute land related to Evacuee trust property. If your plea is accepted then driver of federal government will be able to allot land of evacuee trust property.

Pakistan seeks transformative global reset at COP28: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday said Pakistan sought a transformative global reset at the 28th conference of the parties meeting (COP-28) to be held in Dubai. "Developing countries like Pakistan need a global re-set of the financial system to meet their growing climate resilience needs. I am encouraged to see that the COP28 Presidency is looking towards "leaving no one behind" as we go into a crucial Global Stocktake at the end of the year. Under the leadership of the incoming president, Sultan Al Jaber, there is an

opportunity to not just shift the wall of distrust that has been built around such negotiations but also to bridge the gap between the Global North and the South. Actions at this particular COP are going to signal crucial bend in the path to our collective futures, and to try more realistically to build common ground, and invest in new thinking as well as tools to shift the needle on global goals that are drifting further and further away from meeting Paris goals," stated Senator Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination during a high-level meeting with a delegation led by Sultan Ahmed

Al Jaber, President-designate of COP28 and UAE's Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology at the Climate Ministry, a news release said. Minister Al Jaber expressed gratitude to Minister Rehman for her invitation to visit Pakistan and acknowledged Pakistan's leadership in representing the Global South during COP27, noting the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, which enhanced the vulnerable countries' stake in climate negotiation processes. He anticipated direct engagement and continuous support from Pakistan as the UAE prepares for COP28, highlighting that Pakistan is not just a great friend of the UAE.

PM, Dr. Fowzia Siddiqui discuss Dr Aafia case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Dr. Fowzia Siddiqui here on Thursday and discussed issues related to Dr Aafia Siddiqui.

This was the second meeting of the Prime Minister with Dr. Fowzia within the last three months. Earlier, the Prime Minister had met Dr. Fowzia before she departed for the U.S. to meet Dr. Aafia Siddiqui at the FMC Prison.

Dr. Fowzia thanked

visa for my visit, you have laid the foundation of the release of Dr. Aafia," said Dr. Fowzia.

She added that this was her first opportunity to meet her sister since she was imprisoned nearly fifteen years ago and was able to meet her for three consecutive days.

She briefed the prime minister about the steps she planned to pursue for the expeditious release of Dr. Aafia. The prime minister listened empathetically as Dr. Fowzia narrated the



the Prime Minister for his leadership and the cooperation that had been extended to her on his directions by the Foreign Ministry for assisting her secure US visa and arranging her meetings with Dr. Aafia in the U.S. prison. "By extending support to me in obtaining U.S.

impressions of her meeting with her sister Dr. Aafia. He emphasized that the government remained committed to extend fullest cooperation to her in the struggle to pursue justice for her sister and will make every effort to ensure the well-being and release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui.

Pak fully committed to implement Indus Water Treaty: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan remained fully committed to the implementation of Indus Water Treaty, including its dispute settlement mechanism, said Foreign Office spokesperson here on Thursday.

While responding to media queries concerning the decision by the Court of Arbitration in the Hague on the question of its competence to hear Pakistan-India water disputes, the spokesperson said, "the Government of Pakistan is in receipt of the Award of the Court of Arbitration,

addressing its competence and the way forward on the disputes between Pakistan and India concerning the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Projects; and, wider questions of the interpretation and application of the Indus Waters Treaty." The court had upheld its competence and determined that it will now move forward to address the issues in dispute, she added. She said, "the Indus Waters Treaty is a foundational agreement between Pakistan and India on water sharing.

Mariyum grieved over demise of PFUJ President Butt's mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Thursday expressed deep grief over the death of the mother of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists President Afzal Butt.

In a condolence message, she expressed condolences with Afzal Butt and his family.

The minister said that a mother's death was a great tragedy and she shared the sorrow of the grieving family.

She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family.

Gandhara Symposium to start from July 11

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-day Gandhara Symposium 2023 to celebrate the rich Buddhist heritage and traditions, is scheduled to be held from July 11 in a local hotel.

The event would be jointly organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, Directorate of Archeology and Museums KP and Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), said a press release issued here Thursday.

Experts and scholars from various walks of life would participate in the Symposium.

COMSTECH expert visits Lab in Mauritania to audit equipment

ISLAMABAD (APP): An expert from COMSTECH-OIC standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation, Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi visited a laboratory in Mauritania to audit equipment.

The expert was invited by the National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to conduct an audit of the laboratory equipment for the Agency's laboratory in the faculty of science, University of Nouakchott, said a message received here Hussain surveyed the Biobase fume hood, PCR machine, acid purification unit, NMR instrument, and thermal analyzer and fixed various issues. As a result, all of the equipment is functional now.

Hussain trained the end users at the laboratories to properly handle and care for the equipment.

In the second phase, the installation of atomic absorption spectrophotometer, high-performance liquid chromatography unit,



ISLAMABAD: Chairman HE CDr. Mukhtar Ahmed called on Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani at Parliament House.

AIOU holds Int'l roundtable conference with Russian University

ISLAMABAD (APP): A one-day online international roundtable conference was held between Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Ural State Pedagogical University (USPU) of Russia on "Educational Systems of Russia and Pakistan: Possibilities and Opportunities". Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood presided over the conference. Speaking on this occasion, Dr Nasir Mahmood said that AIOU was keen to further expand its relations with all international universities including Russia in the field of education and research.

He informed that hundreds of Pakistani students have expressed their interest in the Russian language program offered by AIOU recently. He said that Pakistan and Russia have different educational systems due to their unique historical and political contexts and we need to benefit from each others.

PAC directs FIA to investigate problems faced by Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday directed the Federal Investigating Agency (FIA) to investigate the matters pertaining to problems and difficulties faced by the Pakistani Hajj pilgrims during this year.

Chairing the PAC meeting, Chairman of the Committee Noor Alam Khan directed the authorities concerned of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony to provide an elaborate response on why Pakistani pilgrims had confronted inconveniences during the

Haji 2023.

The Committee expressed its resentment over the absence of the Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs in the meeting and directed him to attend the next meeting.

Meanwhile, Noor Alam Khan took notice of the breach of citizens' data in the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and directed the Interior Ministry to constitute an investigation team comprising Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), FIA and Military Intelligence officials to probe the issue.

Senate body maintained SC has nothing to do with the management of PIA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Aviation was held at Parliament House on Thursday with Senator Hidayatullah in Chair.

The Senate Committee adopted the report of Sub-Committee constituted to resolve the issues of Pilot licences. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla termed the Former Aviation Minister claimed of "fake pilots" as an ill advised and stated that it has served a big blow to PIA and the country globally. He suggested that Civil Aviation Authority should resolve the matter in the ambit of its rules without the interference of FIA and Court.

The Senate body was

briefed on the details of flights cancelled from all airports of Baluchistan in the last two months. PIA officials apprised that 49 flights were delayed in the month of April and 9 flights were delayed in June. However, the delayed occurred due to financial and crew constraints and the flights will be normalised after the completion of Hajj operation, Officials assured. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla suggested that PIA should engage private airlines so that the passengers could be accommodated. The Committee recommended the PIA to draft a viable flight plan for Baluchistan and decided to invite the private airlines in the next meeting.

Canadian HC calls on Law Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar.

According to the spokesperson of the Ministry, both sides discussed the long term benefits of partnership and cooperation between Canada and Pakistan in terms of mining projects in Balochistan.

The Canadian High Commissioner appreciated the Balochistan government for aiding, facilitating and cooperating in the mining projects with Barrick Gold Corporation. She said

that steps towards the development of the region through renewable energy projects were also commendable.

While discussing civilian trials under the Army Act, the law minister explained that the Act and rules made thereunder were guaranteeing the rights of the accused such as engaging a counsel of his choice to engage, the right to have access to family members or friends and right to file an appeal etc. Individuals have also the right to move constitutional courts against the judgments of the military court, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to expand Islamabad Expressway during development in Federal Capital.

Friday July 07, 2023

SCO anticlimax

The SCO has the potential to become one of the world's most prosperous and powerful economic and geopolitical blocs, considering its vast geographic scope and the large population of its member states. However, to achieve these goals, irritants between member states must be resolved in a satisfactory manner. Clearly, as the virtual SCO Council of Heads of State summit, hosted by India on Tuesday showed, there are many miles to go before the bloc can achieve its full potential. Bilateral disputes overshadowed the promise of multilateral cooperation, with the host nation using the platform to take a swipe at geopolitical adversaries within the SCO.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's thinly veiled critique of both Pakistan and China during his address was a reminder of the internal challenges that confront the bloc.

There was, of course, little hope that the SCO summit could have provided a platform for Pakistan-India dialogue on the sidelines. Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's frosty reception in Goa earlier in the year under the aegis of the SCO foreign ministers' moot was a sign that the welcome for Shehbaz Sharif was unlikely to be any warmer. Perhaps that is one reason why India chose to go virtual and avoid any personal interaction between Mr Sharif and Mr Modi, though there is also widespread conjecture that India opted to hold the summit online to avoid hosting Vladimir Putin.

Mr Modi sang a familiar tune, calling for an end to 'cross-border terrorism', while also targeting CPEC by saying that connectivity schemes should "respect sovereignty", in an oblique reference to the megaproject's passage through Gilgit-Baltistan.

PM Sharif paid Mr Modi back in the same coin, cautioning against the dangers of "violent ultra-nationalism" and criticising the use of terrorism for diplomatic point-scoring.

It is a rule of thumb that multilateral fora should not be used to settle bilateral scores. If anything, these bodies should provide a conducive atmosphere that can help resolve stubborn regional disputes.

Unfortunately, India's current leadership has shown that both bilaterally and at multilateral platforms, it is not serious about engaging Pakistan in a dialogue for peace. Instead, the BJP regime is more interested in isolating this country by using familiar, tired tropes.

If this attitude persists, little will change where hostility in the subcontinent is concerned, and perhaps another generation will be condemned to live in perpetual confrontation. Terrorism, climate change, poverty and disease are all common problems that can be confronted bilaterally and through the SCO, if India chooses to shun its rigidity.

Where the SCO itself is concerned, it can be turned into a Eurasian behemoth driving growth in the entire region and the wider world. However, unless the irritants between its member states are resolved, it will remain but a talk shop, much like Saarc has become.



Faisal Siddiqi

The political violence witnessed from May 9 to May 11, 2023, is a subject of much controversy. For the establishment, it was an attack on the state. For PDM and its aligned parties, it was proof that the PTI is not a democratic political party. For the PTI, it was a conspiracy to dismantle it.

Therefore, on the one hand, the ruling coalition government and the state institutions have either justified, or kept silent, about the grave violations of fundamental rights, defiance of superior courts orders, subversion of democratic constitutionalism and repression of a free media in their quest to dismantle the PTI, on the pretext of safeguarding the state.

On the other hand, despite its authoritarian politics and past collusion with

the establishment, the PTI has, paradoxically, now become the torch-bearer of fundamental rights, anti-establishment democratic constitutionalism and press freedom.

Who is right in this battle between state survival and democratic constitutionalism?

Leviathan strikes back: Faced with the English Civil War in the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes, through his classical text Leviathan, responded with a simple theory of governance — only a strong state can save us from anarchy and violence. In other words, before any democracy or constitutionalism or fundamental rights, there must be order based on obedience to state authority derived from its monopoly over violence.

How should the Pakistani state have reacted to the events which culminated in the political violence of May 9, which involved abuse against, and efforts to question, the legitimacy of the military and intelligence leadership, along with a campaign to create divisions within the armed forces, violence against the coercive arms of the state, ie, police and armed forces, and label-

ing of the prevailing political system and political parties opposed to the PTI as foreign agents?

Hobbes would have approved of the state's reaction to the May 9 political violence because, if there is anything worse than a military coup against a constitutional order, it is a coup within the armed forces.

Regardless of our complete unacceptability of the military coups by Ayub, Yahya, Zia and Musharraf and the continuing political dominance of the establishment, the saving grace in this country is the unity of command of the armed forces. The alternative to this unity of command is nightmarishly scary, ie, present-day Sudan, Libya and Yemen and all the African military civil wars of the last and this century.

But all successful modern states have also shown that Hobbes's philosophy of order has to be combined with John Mill's theory of rights. In other words, coercion has to be balanced and legitimised by consent based on rights and welfare.

Coercion and consent: As the Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci has ex-

plained, no ruling elite, including authoritarian regimes, can rule only on the basis of fear based on coercion, and legitimacy based on patriotism.

For example, all three previous military dictatorships of Ayub, Zia and Musharraf lasted for years because their rule was also based on implied consent of the masses, which was derived from relative economic growth (based on foreign aid) and a semi-successful propaganda ideology — ie, development for Ayub, Islam for Zia and enlightened moderation for Musharraf.

Pakistan is a huge country of over 240 million people, mostly young men and women, who have an insatiable urge to be prosperous, but in the current times, this unfulfilled urge is fuelled by sociopolitical narratives through social media, resulting in anger and rage.

Although there is nothing unusual about the Pakistani state's authoritarian response to May 9 violence, its objective to dismantle a popular political party and subvert judicial decisions are completely disproportionate, wrong and counterproductive for the following

reasons. Firstly, the 2007 judicial-lawyers movement, the PTM movement, the present Baloch insurgency and the May 9 political violence have much in common — they are middle class, urban, women have a role, and there is rage without pragmatic solutions. This anger and rage cannot be crushed through coercion and seduced through patriotism.

Secondly, political mobilisation in Punjab, and Lahore in particular, has always succeeded (eg, 1968-9, 1977 and 2007-2009), and repressive tactics tested in Sindh, Balochistan and KP will not necessarily work in Punjab.

Thirdly, legitimacy based on coercion and patriotism in a period of stagflation will not succeed. Propaganda and coercion don't gel well with empty stomachs.

Fourthly, nobody relies on television for their political views and information. Propaganda on TV achieves little legitimacy.

Fifthly, can this state open up another front against a popular political party, when already it is faced with two insurgen-

cies, ie, TTP and Baloch insurgents, and a hostile geopolitical neighbourhood? In short, a strategy based on coercion and patriotism to control politics and judiciary will not work. The sword (coercive power) must tolerate and coexist with the people (politics) and the pen (judiciary).

Indonesian path: In order to avoid chaos and global humiliation, the only rational path open for this establishment-dominated state is the Indonesian path to democratic constitutionalism. Indonesia and Pakistan have remarkable similarities: Indonesia also achieved independence in the 1940s; it was a military dictatorship from 1967 to 1998; its military establishment had institutional economic interest and was deeply involved in Indonesia's sociopolitical development; it is a geographically and ethnically diverse country, and the world's most populous Muslim country; it has experienced tensions between Islam and modernity; and lastly, there are secessionist movements in Indonesia. — Courtesy Dawn

Who will lead Pakistan?



Dr Shahnaz Khan

Pakistan is caught in the vortex of multiple crises: economic, political, governance and institutional. The political discourse has become increasingly divisive and intolerant and the trust deficit between people and state institutions has reached new lows. The threat of terrorism is getting worse. And there are major geopolitical shifts, with China and the US competing for influence and resources, putting Pakistan in a difficult position. However, the most acute, most important and most challenging issue is the crisis of political leadership.

They say politics is the art of making possible what is necessary. In Pakistan, politics is the art of acquiring the seat of power by any means possible and holding on to it for as long as possible.

Political leadership does not mean winning elections, holding large jalsas, having street power or the art of wheeling and dealing. It does not even mean being informed or having technical and management skills.

Leadership requires empathy more than anything else. It requires a vision with the ability to see into the future, finding and implementing solutions to complex problems. It means developing future leaders by empowering, encouraging and opening the doors for all who want to enter the political arena. It means to be at the forefront when it is time to sacrifice and at the end of line when it is time for personal material gains.

Do we see anyone meeting these criteria among the current ruling class? Even though Pakistan has been blessed with an abundance of natural resources, it has never had strong political leadership. The question is, why is that so? The answer lies in what the late Kofi Annan said, "Politics is too important to be left only to politicians. Democracy depends on lively participation of organized civil society in political life."

In Pakistan platforms like trade unions and student

unions which were once used for organized participation in politics — and as training grounds for people at the grassroots level to understand and educate themselves about the issues and then enter mainstream politics — were intentionally and systematically dismantled very early. Of course, dictators had a role in this but even during civilian rule, the trend was not reversed. In fact all political parties/leaders happily continued the policies of dictators in this matter.

These platforms were replaced by NGOs and charity/welfare organizations which were politically impotent and promoted the narrative that 'doing good' can only be done through charity and that this is the solution to the country's problems.

The local government system which acts as the springboard for entry into politics at the grassroots level has been made completely ineffective. The result is what we are seeing now — a politically naive people gullible for populist slogans, emotional narratives and a target for misuse of religious sentiments. Instead of having confidence in their strength, they wait

for a strong man who will save them from the clutches of some vague, ill-defined evil forces. Thus a populist leader who offers simple solutions to complex problems and makes empty threats to perceived enemies is seen as a messiah. This is what happened in the past few years and has culminated in the events of May 9, 2023.

So, where do we go from here? The short-term goal is to get out of the economic mess we are in. We all know what needs to be done but it is not being done because it is contrary to the interests of most so-called leaders. If there ever was a country in dire need of an honest and sincere political leadership, it is Pakistan.

Pakistan needs a leader who is willing to become a role model for the rest by giving up all perks, making tough economic decisions which will adversely affect him/her and who can stand on the moral high ground. A nation increasingly burdened by inflation, poverty and joblessness will stand behind such a leader and may be willing to forgive the past excesses.

But this will require making tough decisions, starting a pathway for an

inclusive economic system, where all share the fruits of good times as well as the losses incurred when the economy is not in the best shape. No nation can become great where only a few are wealthy while the rest struggle to just survive.

The long-term goal should be to increase human capital, without which progress is not possible. The World Bank report — the Pakistan Human Capital Review — documents and quantifies the country's human capital crisis. Pakistan's Human Capital Index (HCI) is 0.41 which is lowest in the region. The South Asian region's average is 0.48 with Bangladesh at 0.46 and Nepal at 0.49. Even the most economically advantaged groups in Pakistan have lower HCI compared to peer countries.

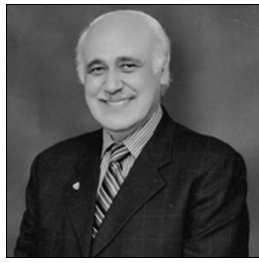
According to the World Bank, "if Pakistan improves both its human capital and its use of human capital, its GDP per capita could rise by 144 per cent." For that it has to control population growth, increase investment in education and healthcare and empower women increas-

ing their participation in the job market. Developing human capital needs comprehensive plan beyond laptop schemes, scholarship programmes, etc.

Is there a leader who is up to this challenge? Is there someone who has empathy for millions in this country whose lives are no better than animals — who has the vision and ability to find solutions to complex problems? Is there someone who is confident enough to not be threatened by new emerging leaders and who will open the doors of opportunity for them? Is there someone willing to change the economic structure so all stakeholders reap the benefits, and become the role model for that? Who will lead by example — someone who will sacrifice their personal interests for the greater good?

History has put this burden on the shoulders of the current leaders of state institutions, the men who hold the future of this country in their hands. How they negotiate through this complex maze of problems and its outcome will determine their place in history. — Courtesy TheNews

Rama's sandals



F.S. Aijazuddin

Prime Minister Narendra Modi should seriously consider visiting Islamabad soon. He will find a number of kindred Ramabhakts there.

For those unfamiliar with the Hindu epic Ramayana, Rama (the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu), surrendered his kingdom in obedience to a rash promise made by his father, King Dasaratha. Rama quit the royal capital of Ayodhya and went into exile for 14 years, entrusting the administration of his kingdom to his younger half-brother, Bharata.

Pleading unworthiness, Bharata nevertheless agreed but asked Rama for his sandals to be placed on the vacant throne. He declared to the people of Ayodhya: "Accept the sandals as symbols of the feet of the Exalted One! Through these sandals belonging to my superior shall righteousness be established in the kingdom [...]. When he comes once more to Ayodhya, I shall fasten them to his feet, and, casting my burden upon him, in making over the kingdom to him, I shall serve him."

In Pakistan's politics, there are too many examples of such political surrogacy for them not to be interpreted as a pattern.

The pre-eminent case is the Sharif brothers. The elder brother, Nawaz Sharif, went into exile in 2019, leaving his younger brother, Shehbaz Sharif, to administer their PML-N on his behalf. Even though Shehbaz is now prime minister in his own right, following Inran Khan's ouster through a no-

confidence motion, he still holds out as he is acting only as his brother's proxy, waiting for his return before returning the prime ministership to him.

Many suspect that Nawaz Sharif may not want to become a fourth-term prime minister. Others question Shehbaz Sharif's altruistic intentions. He seems to be enjoying the perks of his position too much to hand them over without a frown.

At another level, both would like to see themselves succeeded later rather than sooner by their children — Nawaz by Maryam and Shehbaz by Hanza.

In the PPP, Asif Ali Zardari, who served as Pakistan's president, is content to dumb-down as an MNA and share the steering wheel of the party with his son and Benazir's heir, Bilawal. It may be too early for him to negotiate the prime ministership for his son before the next general election. He might conceivably expect it as their share of the post-election spoils.

In the Aiwan-i-Sadr, the incumbent has never pretended to be anything more than Inran Khan's sandals — a PTI apparatchik, there to do his leader's bidding.

Within the PTI, the decimation of its top hierarchy (one can hardly call it 'leadership', so precipitous and callous was their betrayal) has left its senior vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi as its reluctant spokesman. He is yet to be anointed successor pro temp by Inran Khan. For the time being, he seems to be content to use his leader's sandals as the symbol of absent authority.

Peripheral political parties like the PML-Q struggle to secure a foothold of relevance for their sons or nephews. The newest party — Jahangir Tareen's Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party — was established as recently as June 2023. Tareen, exiled by law from politics, as IPP's patron-in-chief

nominated Aleem Khan as its first president and accommodated other escapees from the PTI in senior positions. To those with experience of such makeshift hotchpotch, the IPP appears to its opponents less a fearsome adversary than a war-weary 'forlorn hope'.

The battle for power in the next general elections is strangely reminiscent of the recent shenanigans in the Ukraine. There, Putin's bulldog mercenary, Yevgeny Prigozhin, threatened to bite the hand that had been feeding him, unless his master fed him some more. Then, reportedly bought off by Putin with uncountable millions, Prigozhin suddenly abandoned his march on Moscow and, decamping to Belarus, betrayed his cannon-fodder mercenaries in the field.

One is reminded of Leon Trotsky's cutting observation about the French intellectual poseur André Malraux: "Malraux is organically incapable of moral independence; he was born biddable."

The outcome of the next general elections will depend not on electables, but on biddables. It is rumoured that, already, the two major parties within the ruling PDM alliance are squabbling over the trillions they can divert from the state treasury into their war chests. Democracy comes at a price, and the price for these swing constituencies is still under negotiation.

The recent helicopter trip to Parachinar by the civilian and military leadership together to celebrate Eid with the jawans defending the extremities of our country was more than a joint tribute to their bravery. The optics emphasised one thing: the present PDM coalition government (as long as it lasts), and its successor (however long that lasts) will have to be the Bharata in the civil-establishment relationship. Rama's ever-present sandals remain more than a metaphor. — Courtesy Dawn

Pardon my French



Rafia Zakaria

I have never felt as uncomfortable and scrutinised in any European capital as I have in Paris, where many white people exude silent belligerence.

I wasn't surprised, then, by the video of a French policeman shooting a teenager of Algerian descent during a routine traffic stop. The teenager was 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk. In the days following the fatal shooting, thousands of rioters took to the streets of France and burned down shops and cars. The protesters said they identified with the teenager because they too had faced persecution by the police. The incident seems to have brought France's racism towards Muslims and other non-white immigrants to the forefront.

A huge crowd of French Muslims attended the funeral prayers of Merzouk, whose family members were protected by security guards provided by the mosque at which they were held. In an illustrative irony, no police officers were present at the large public event, even though 45,000 of them had been mobilised to go after rioters following his death. France has a large Muslim population, but their existence seems to be ignored by the state.

Some of those attending the funeral prayers pointed out to the media that had there not been a video of the incident, Merzouk's death, like so many others at the hands of an overzealous, brutal

French police, would have been ignored.

For its part, the Macron government has acted with the same wrongheadedness as the administrations before it. As rioters began to destroy government property and stores and started to attack police officers, government officials began to condemn the loss of property rather than the core reason behind the riots. Property losses and injuries to policemen were dragged to the centre of the debate rather than the animosity that state instruments show towards those of Algerian and Moroccan descent in France. This has only whetted the destructive appetites of the rioters, who see the response as yet another example of a white-dominated French state ignoring the pressing problems faced by French Muslims of Algerian and Moroccan origin.

Soon after Merzouk was killed, the protests had spread all across France. In one incident, rioters began to target the homes of mayors seen as colluding with the government. The home of the mayor of L'Hay-les-Roses — a usually quiet area — was targeted. The mayor's family was injured when rioters rammed their car through the gate of the residence, set the vehicle on fire and launched fireworks. The French association of mayors has become even more vocal about quelling the protests.

At a meeting with French officials on July 4, Macron hoped to "start the painstaking, long-term work needed to understand the deeper reasons" behind the events. It is difficult to establish if he meant this as a delaying tactic where the obvious racism of state officials towards the Muslim minority can continue to be ignored until later. Even if he was sincere about wanting to understand the problem, the fact that he does

not understand it yet is depressing enough. If anything, it reveals just how oblivious the French majority is to the lives of French Muslims living amongst them for decades. The fact that the country's top political official thinks that there is a need for further research to understand a very basic story of racism and abuse of power is alarming.

Only a few weeks have passed since hundreds of Pakistanis died while being smuggled to Europe on a fishing boat. It truly hurts the heart to realise that young people from Pakistan are quite literally putting their lives at risk to get to European countries, including France, where it is almost guaranteed that they will be treated poorly, exploited, perhaps even killed as non-white immigrants. And yet it appears that these migrant flows from an inflation-wracked, climate change-battered, and politically stunted Pakistan will increase.

One of the biggest gripes the mainstream middle-class French have against the poverty-stricken French Muslims of the suburbs is that they take advantage of the social welfare state set up after World War II. These immigrants should not be milking the government in this way is the refrain. It is a clever trick, because the real sentiment behind it is that the social welfare system should only benefit good white people (the real French) and not the immigrants.

It is quite likely that as more migrants pour into European countries, the now quaint-sounding liberal values of freedom, equality and brotherhood will be done away with altogether. In their place will be some formula that permits racist European states to limit government benefits to non-white people. — Courtesy Dawn

Ahsan Iqbal says: Teachers play key role in country's development

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Thursday that it was responsibility of the government to provide facilities to universities' students at par with the international standards.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of 'strengthening of Main campus' of the University of Education here, he said that he had visited different sections of the university and observed that all facilities required for research were available like the facilities provided to any top ranked universities of Europe. He further said the government could only provide good infrastructure and it was a job of teachers and students to achieve desired results from the world-class available facilities. In 2013 when the PML-N came into power, the country was facing a lot of challenges but during the

tough situation dedicated efforts were made to turnaround the country, he said and added that unfortunately the country's development process was hindered in 2018. He said all projects which were initiated by the PML-N for strengthening the country were scandalized and stopped. He lamented that during the last four years no short, medium or long term development plan was given.

He said that due to conducive environment in 2017 and 2018, the entire world was interested in making investments in Pakistan. He said that past government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf made agreement with the IMF and later violated it which created a lot of problems for the country. He said, "There is a need to learn what is difference between politics and country's interest."

He said that if nation would be divided then country's progress and prosperity was not possible. Ahsan Iqbal said that with the grace of Allah Almighty, once again the world was reposing confidence in Pakistan.

He said that focus should be on developing brain power instead of muscle power as the future of any country was based on innovations made in classrooms and laboratories. The US-Pakistan knowledge Corridor initiative was taken under which scholarships were given to 10,000 PhDs in top 100 American universities, he added. He said the country's future was linked with universities and they should not only focus on providing education but also on research, innovation, academia and industrial linkages, community service, technologically enabled.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning and Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal is inaugurating the project of University of Education College.

Naqvi visits Ganga Ram Hospital to inquire about injured

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to inquire about the injured due to collapse of a building's roof, caused by the falling of a wall from an adjacent building.

Mohsin Naqvi directed the Medical Superintendent to ensure comprehensive care and treatment for the injured, expressing his prayers for their swift recovery. He instructed the hospital administration to provide necessary medical assistance to the injured. Addressing the media after the visit, Mohsin Naqvi announced that an investigation would be launched against the owners of the wedding hall

responsible for wall collapse. As many as 14 people, four of whom are in critical condition, were brought to Ganga Ram Hospital after the incident. He assured that appropriate action will be taken against those found responsible. In light of various incidents caused by heavy rainfall, financial assistance will be provided to the families of the deceased, and the injured will receive free medical treatment, he added.

Mohsin Naqvi commended efforts of the highly competent team of doctors at the hospital, who were diligently providing treatment to the injured and Provincial Minister Dr Javed Akram was personally

supervising their care. If necessary, the injured will be referred to other hospitals for treatment, he added.

Emphasizing that the city's drainage situation was under control, Mohsin Naqvi assigned provincial ministers to monitor rainfall and potential flooding in their respective divisions. Instructions have been issued to all commissioners and deputy commissioners to take necessary measures in response to possible flooding. He said eight provincial secretaries were monitoring the performance of WASA and water drainage in their respective zones as they remained present in the field to supervise activities.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi arrives at Mozang Teaching Hospital to examine the condition of injured during fallen of shelter incident during rain, in Provincial Capital.

Minister says: Scammers of medicines not deserve leniency

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram has said that scammers do not deserve any leniency for corruption in medicines procured for patients for the government hospitals.

He was chairing a meeting held at Durbar Hall of the Civil Secretariat here on Thursday. Caretaker Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Dr. Jamal Nasir also participated in the meeting through video link conference from Rawalpindi. Dr Javed said that drug courts played a

major role in hearing cases related to drugs in the province, adding that the health department was fully following up the cases against the accused in the drug courts.

The minister said that the suggestions and recommendations of the special committee for the salary and allowances of the chairman Drugs Courts Punjab would be taken into consideration. He discussed the important issues for the salary and allowances of the chairman Drug Courts Punjab with the stakeholders.

Four persons of family killed in roof collapsed incident

LAHORE (APP): Four persons of a family were killed and a child injured after the roof of their house collapsed at Bandia Wala Pul, Chung Amersidhu during heavy rain here on Thursday.

Police said that persons were sleeping in a room when suddenly roof of the house collapsed. As a result the persons came under the debris.

On information, Rescue 1122 vehicles reached the spot and started rescue operation. The rescuers took the bodies and injured persons from construction structure. The dead have been identified Javed Iqbal (40), Zara Javed (6), Aimon Javed (4) and Azan Javed (8). While injured Kainat Javed (10) shifted to Lahore General Hospital.

Sharjeel condemns attack on check post in Mir Ali

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon has strongly condemned the attack on the check post in Mir Ali, expressing deep sorrow over the martyrdom of both security personnel and a child.

Sharjeel Inam Memon also expressed profound sorrow and remorse for the martyrdom of Major Mian Abdullah Shah during the operation against terrorists in the Shikar area of Khyber.

CTP issue over 1500 fine tickets for not using helmets

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) under their ongoing campaign against motorcyclists not using safety helmets have issued 1500 fine tickets.

According to a CTP spokesman, CTP on the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan was acting according to the law against the rules violators.

He informed that CTP had also launched an awareness campaign about the use of safety helmets among motorcyclists.

Governor Punjab visits Akhwat University

KASUR (APP): Governor Punjab Baligh-ur-Rehman visited Akhwat University, Mustafabad here on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kasur Muhammad Arshad Bhatti, Founder of Akhwat University Dr. Amjad Saqib welcomed the Governor Punjab.

Governor Punjab Baligh-ur-Rehman inaugurated the Information Technology (IT) center and visited various departments of the

university. While addressing the ceremony, he said that the model of Akhwat was a great example of welfare work. Students of all the provinces were studying in this institution. He said that digital skills were important in modern education and Akhwat university was doing commendable work. On the occasion, District Police Officer (DPO) Kasur Tariq Aziz Sindh and other officers concerned were present.

Eight drug peddlers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up eight accused on recovery of over three kg charras and 26 liters liquor.

According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad, Bani, Taxila, Rattaamral, R.A. Bazar, Airport and Kalar Syedan police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and held Farhana Imtiaz, a female drug peddler.



PESHAWAR: Pak Council of World Religions Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman, Qari Roohullah Madani addresses to media persons during press conference, at Peshawar press club.

WHO urged to highlight importance of polio vaccination in Swat

SWAT (APP): Speakers at a workshop held here the other day urged journalists to highlight the importance of vaccination and remove misconceptions about polio vaccine to save children from the crippling disease.

The daylong workshop was organized by WHO Pakhtunkhwa in a local hotel here on Thursday. The event was attended by District Health Officer Swat Muhammad Saleem Khan, WHO Malakand Division coordinator Dr Khawaja Irfan and journalists of Swat Press Club.

The speakers said that fair media reports on health issues including

polio eradication initiative would educate the public about the significance of vaccination that would help the government to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Dr Khawaja Irfan said that currently, only Pakistan and Afghanistan have reported cases of the polio virus, making it crucial for the two countries to work together to eradicate the disease.

He said that the media should educate people about essential immunization services of the government to protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases and bring down morbidity.

Police conduct search operations in different areas

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted search operations in Transformer Chowk and Mohalla Shah Chan Chiragh in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad and Banni police stations, said a police spokesman here on Thursday.

ATC awards 30-year jail to terrorist

SARGODHA (APP): Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Nadeem Tahir Syed awarded 30-year imprisonment to a man in an explosive material recovery case.

The court sources said on Thursday that a Counter-Terrorist Department (CTD) team had conducted raid and arrested an accused Tahir Mehmood on March 27, 2023 and recovered explosive material and a pistol from his possession.

The police registered a case against the accused under the Terrorism Act and presented challan in the court of ATC Sargodha.



RAWALPINDI: Labourers busy in construction work underway on the collapsed bridge at Swan near High Court.

AJK govt taking steps on war footing to deal with any situation in monsoon

MIRPUR (APP): AJK Government has directed officials and heads of the nation-building institutions including the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) to devise a comprehensive strategy, on war footings, to deal with any situation during the just-started monsoon season, official sources said.

The sources told APP here on Thursday that the State authorities have decided to call for maintaining an early warning system in place during the monsoon.

All the concerned departments have been directed to remain alert and vigilant for playing their effective role during the monsoon season and

demolish all illegal encroachments along with the rivers and streams and clear the waterways in all the cities just before the full monsoon season.

"An early and rapid information system must be set in place so that the people living in the low-lying areas should get immediate information about the flood situation", the government directed the related State functionaries including the Divisional and district administrations across the State. Following many impending additional rains during the season in the region, authorities have decided to enhance and improve the capacity of the SDMA to deal with any eventuality during monsoon in the region.



GARHI KHUDABUX: PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Faryal Talpur are showering rose petals and offers Fateha for the peace of departed soul of Benazir Bhutto during their visit to Bhutto Mausoleums in Garhi Khuda Bux.

Sharjeel for diverting all energies to complete BRT Red Line in time

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon on Thursday underscored the need to divert all energies for completing Red Line BRT Project at the earliest. The minister presiding over a meeting to review the progress and challenges faced by Red Line BRT project, said that efforts of all stakeholders were required for early completion of the BRT project. He further instructed to take steps for ensuring that the citizens did not face any inconvenience during the ongoing construction work on the project.

He directed to leave no stone unturned for resolving issues being

faced in the Red Line BRT project as millions of people of Karachi would be benefited from the project. The meeting also discussed the progress in construction work of the Tank Chowk to Safooran Chowranghi underpass being constructed as a part of the BRT Red Line project. A committee was also formed in the meeting to monitor and review the progress of work on the Red Line BRT project on a daily basis. The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport Salim Rajput, CEO Trans Karachi Tufail Palijo, Chairman BOD Trans Karachi Suresh Lodhi, MD Sindh Mass Transit Authority Kamal Dayo.

DC tells delegation Sialkot population is 4.4mln now

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sialkot Adnan Mehmood Awan said that in the recent census, the population of Sialkot district has reached 4.4 million people, the ratio of increase in population is 2.8 per cent.

Keeping in view the needs of the population of Sialkot district, the process of urban planning is going on, through which land will be zoned for agricultural, industrial and residential purposes. He was addressing under-training officers of the 33rd senior management course of the

National Institute of Management (NIM), Lahore and DC Office Complex, Sialkot. Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs), Assistant Commissioners (ACs), Education, Health, Agriculture, Development officers were also present. DC Adnan said that Sialkot district was facing the threat of floods due to Chenab river flooding. He said that the district administration, rescue and relief departments are on alert and planning had been completed for setting up 22 relief camps in different areas.



MULTAN: Fire extinguishers are busy in dousing a fire that erupted at a chemical factory, in Multan.

CTD arrests 177 suspects in 901 IBOs this year

LAHORE (APP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted 901 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in various districts of Punjab including Lahore this year, and arrested 177 suspects.

A CTD spokesperson said here on Thursday, 142 first information reports (FIRs) were registered against the accused. The arrested accused also included three most wanted terrorists belonging to banned organisations.

The spokesman said the CTD eliminated 114 networks of criminals involved in terrorist operations, planning and support, while a large number of suicide jackets, rockets, hand-grenades, detonators, improvised

explosive devices (IEDs), and explosive material were recovered from the alleged terrorists. Similarly, pistols, ball-bearing boxes, bullets, safety fuses, prima cards, laptops, mobiles and other material including banned books, magazines, pamphlets were also recovered. The CTD teams foiled 13 planned terrorist attacks and arrested the accused. The teams also arrested seven most wanted proclaimed offenders and two court absconders. Cyber-tracing of 1,030 accounts on the social media was done, 4,078 sites and pages involved in promoting hateful and objectionable content were blocked and the CTD issued 241 special information.

Asif Zardari visits Mausoleum of martyrs of Bhutto's family

LARKANA (APP): Former President and Co-Chairman of PPP Asif Ali Zardari along with his Sister and President PPP (Women Wing) Pakistan MPA Faryal Talpur visited on Thursday the mausoleum of the martyrs of Bhutto's family at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.

Asif Ali Zardari visited the grave of former prime minister and chairperson of PPP Shaheed Mohtarma

Benazir Bhutto and laid a floral wreath at the grave and offered "Fateha". He along with Faryal Talpur also visited the graves of founder-chairman of PPP Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Madar-e-Jamhooriyat late Begum Nusrat Bhutto, late Shireen Amir Begum, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shaheed Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and laid floral wreaths and offered Fateha.



FAISALABAD: Chinese delegation head Wu Yuelang presents traditional art to VCUAF Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan during his visit University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

28 gangs busted during last six months

MULTAN (APP): Police, during the last six months, busted 28 criminal gangs from different areas and arrested 78 criminals besides recovering looted valuables worth over Rs 20 million from their possessions. According to a police spokesman on Thursday, under the supervision of City Police Officer (CPO) Mansoor-Ul-Haq Rana, the police launched daily base operations against criminals with the vision to make the

district crime free. "The police have arrested 58 criminals involved in murder cases, solved 26 blind murder cases, 157 criminals of attempt to murder, 18 of robbery-cum-murder, 139 of dacoity, 1697 of sexual robbery, 63 of sexual assault, 69 criminals of sexual assault of minor girls, 274 of kidnapping, 41 of theft, 811 of vehicle theft and 19 criminals of cattle theft cases have been arrested during last six months, he informed.

China proposes SCO members to expand digital currency settlements

BEIJING (APP): China has proposed to expand cooperation on sovereign digital currency among member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Experts have said that the proposal will elevate the transaction efficiency among SCO members.

In addition to the expanded cooperation on using sovereign digital currencies, the Chinese side also suggested that SCO to scale up local currency settlement between SCO members and promote the establishment of an SCO development bank.

The trade among SCO members can be expanded with higher efficiency through the increasing adoption of sovereign digital currency as enterprises can lower

potential risks resulting from geopolitical factors and the fluctuation in the US dollar exchange rate, Wang Peng, a research fellow at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times. As a major SCO member, China has been implementing targeted efforts to boost the use of yuan in cross-border settlement.

In January 2023, a cross-border trade center was established at China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area (SCODA) in Qingdao, East China's Shandong Province, where enterprises can choose to settle their international trade with SCO members in the yuan.

Lu Wei, a representative from SCODA, said in a statement sent to the

Global Times that the trade center can effectively reduce companies' settlement cost while avoiding the risks incurred by frequent exchange rates turbulences.

By the end of June, the trade center of SCODA has facilitated 24.29 billion yuan (\$3.35 billion) worth of cross-border settlement. The center processed 3.84 billion yuan in cross-border financing using the yuan, with 1.25 billion yuan coming from overseas markets, according to SCODA.

SCODA also revealed that demonstration area will set an innovation lab targeting China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, aiming to expand the utility of the system among SCO members and the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative.



ISLAMABAD: Andreas Ferrarese the Italian Ambassador in Pakistan and Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs in a group photo after signs the Exchange of Letters as Pakistan and Italy extend Pakistan's Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSAs) timeline until December 2024, at the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

PTI govt left biggest trade deficit in country's history, damaged economy: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator for Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday lashed out at the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was responsible for damaging the economic sector and left biggest trade deficit in the country's history.

"PTI government brought the country on the verge of bankruptcy but the PDM-led government saved it from the default", he said while talking to a private news channel.

He further blamed that the political instability created by chairman PTI has also caused irreparable damage to the country's economy adding that the economy is in dire need of reforms which will be directly related to political stability as well.

Replying to a

question, he replied that we need to learn from our past mistakes and devise medium and long-term policies to improve the economy, adding, economic indicators are constantly improving after the signing of the staff-level agreement with the IMF.

The trust of domestic as well as foreign investors in Pakistan's economy will no w enhance, he said, adding, the IMF agreement will also open the door to external financing, including funding from bilateral and multilateral institutions and individual investors.

IMF deal was the need of the hour, he said, adding, the conspiracies of some inimical forces did not succeed and that it was very important for Pakistan to get the IMF program as it will help achieve financial discipline.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 626 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 626.01 points, a positive change of 1.44 percent, closing at 44,178.85 points against 43,552.84 points the previous trading day.

A total of 297,822,139 shares were traded during the day as compared to 351,181,910 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.12.428 billion against Rs.12.014 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 335 companies transacted their shares in the stock market;

200 of them recorded gains and 112 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 28,845,201 shares at Rs.1.21 per share; Pak Elektron with 16,169,219 shares at Rs.10.66 per share and Pak Petroleum with 14,126,634 shares at Rs.67.24 per share.

Mehmood Text witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.43.15 per share price, closing at Rs.725.00, whereas the runner-up was Shield Corp with an Rs.21.97 rise in its per share price to Rs.314.86.



MULTAN: A trader selling seasonal fruit mango at Fruit Market.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves rise to \$9.74b

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan rise to US\$ 9,745.5 million while reserves held by the central bank reached US\$ 4,462.7 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves held by the central bank increased by US\$ 393 million to US\$ 4,462.7 million 'mainly due to receipt of official GoP inflows' as of June 30, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,282.8 million, it added.

In the previous week ending on June 23, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 9,340.8 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were US\$ 4,069.9 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were US\$ 5,270.9 million.

Gold prices up by Rs1,800

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,800 and was sold at Rs 207,800 on Thursday against its sale at Rs. 206,000 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,543 to Rs178,155 from Rs 176,612 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 163,309 from Rs161,894, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs 2480 and Rs 2,126.20 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$23 to \$1905 from \$1928, the association reported.



Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on restructuring of PIA at Finance Division.

Dar seeks early legislation for quick resumption of PIA flights to USA, UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday instructed the relevant authorities to bring forward appropriate legislation as soon as possible to ensure quick resumption of PIA flights to the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK).

The minister was chairing a meeting on matters related to the Civil Aviation Division (CAA) and the Airport Security Force (ASF), according to a Finance Ministry press release. Earlier, the minister was briefed on the issues being faced by the aviation

sector pertaining to regulation, service provision, and security functions. The meeting discussed various legal solutions available and the necessary amendments required in the aviation laws/ordinances in order to enhance the capacity in the aviation sector and to make it compatible with the international standards.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Raique; Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar; Federal Minister for Law & Justice Azam Nazir Tarar; SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa also present.

Naqvi presides over ceremony for providing skill courses to inmates

Independent Report LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over an agreement signing ceremony between the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and the Punjab Prisons Department aimed to facilitate technical courses for prisoners in 10 additional jails across the province. The agreement was signed by the Chief Operating Officer of TEVTA Ahmad Khawar Shahzad and IG Prisons Farooq Nazir, at the CM office.

Under this agreement, a total of 16 skill-based courses will be organized in Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Pakpattan,

Okara, Jhang, Sargodha, Vehari, Toba Tek Singh, and Layyah jails. Upon successful completion of these courses, which typically last between 3 to 6 months, the inmates will receive certificates to support their reintegration into society.

The courses will cover a wide range of skills, including electrical work, welding, plumbing, motorcycle mechanics, fashion design, and computer applications.

During the event, the COO TEVTA highlighted that each course can accommodate up to 25 detainees. It was mentioned that TEVTA had already provided training to 20,000 inmates.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Abadgar Ittehad President Nawaz Zubir Ahmed Talpur addressing a press conference at HPC.

Baligh initiates joint research to improve crop quality, boost agri production

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: On the special direction of Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman, Chinese scientists, Punjab University and Guard Agriculture Research and Services will collaborate on modern research to develop the best quality seeds of rice, cotton, and wheat crops to boost agricultural production and meet the ever-increasing food needs of the growing population.

Vice Chancellor Punjab University Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood has already notified a high powered academia industrial linkage committee comprising Prof

Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed, head of Plant Breeding and Genetics Department Dr Nasim Ahmad Yasin, Dr Abdul Qayyum Rao and Prof Dr Shakil Ahmad, Director ORIC with Shahzad Ali Malik, Sitara-I-Intiaz, as its Convenor, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Chairman, Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association Shahzad Ali Malik, while chairing the preliminary meeting of the committee, expressed his solemn resolve to promote the linkage and assured full cooperation from his company and collaboration with Chinese scientists.

IMF board to give approval of Pakistan loan within days: PEW

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan on Thursday hoped that few days are left for the meeting of the Executive Board of the IMF for the review and possible ratification of the Staff Level Agreement with Pakistan.

In a statement issued here, he said that the IMF's Executive Board's meeting scheduled to be held on July 12, during which there was a strong possibility of approving a loan of three billion dollars and releasing

the first instalment of one billion and ten crore dollars. Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan said that the approval of IMF loan will open the way for more loans and investments for Pakistan, which will improve the situation.

The government should start a diplomatic campaign to get the international community and friendly countries to implement their commitments in addition to obtaining new loans, he concluded.

Pakistan, Italy extend PIDSAs timeline until December 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Italy have reached an agreement to extend the timeline of the Pakistan-Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSAs) through the Exchange of Letters (EoL).

Mr. Andreas Ferrarese, the Italian Ambassador in Pakistan and Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the EoL and extended the timeline of the PIDSAs up to December 31, 2024, on the same procedures, modalities, terms, and conditions as defined in the signed Agreement dated November 4, 2006, between Pakistan and Italy, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

During the extension period, the remaining activities of PIDSAs will be completed i.e. the remaining debt will be

cancelled, completion of ongoing PIDSAs projects, handing/taking over of assets, impact evaluation of the PIDSAs Programme, and final report of the PIDSAs Programme.

The Government of Pakistan and the Government of Italy had signed an agreement for Development Swap, on November 4, 2006, which came into force in 2009. Approximately \$100 million (US \$26.52 million & Euro 58.74 million) equivalent to PKR 8.276 billion of Pakistan's debt owed to Italy is to be swapped for expenditure on development projects around the country on Health, Education, Agriculture, and Environment, Micro Credit Schemes, Poverty Alleviation, Rural Development and Infrastructure.

Management Committee (MC) is the highest decision-making body of Pakistan Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSAs), co-chaired by H.E. the Italian Ambassador and Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs along with representatives of the Federal and Provincial Governments. To date, 48 projects have been approved and funded by PIDSAs, out of which 45 projects have been completed and 3 are in progress.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs thanked the Government of the Republic of Italy for providing assistance under the Debt Swap Agreement and other Technical Assistance and emphasized further enhancing the bilateral ties between the two countries.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Lisbon, Eva Usuki and Milaha Ras Lafan carrying Containers, LNG and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Pakistan Port Gas Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Southern Anoa and Seaspan Beacon with Palm oil and Containers also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two container ships 'Maersk Pelepas and MSC Lisbon' sailed out to sea on Thursday morning and four more ships, Eva Usuki, N-Orhan, Huang Shan and Yakul Silver are expected to sail on the same day. The cargo throughput of 128,071 tonnes, comprising 109,048 tonnes imports Cargo and 19,023 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,959 Containers (1,840 TEUs Imports and 1,119 TEUs export) was handled at the port.

Amin vows to address IT, Telecom issues, safeguard user rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Amin Ul Haque on Thursday made a firm commitment to tackle the challenges faced by the Information Technology and Telecom industry while ensuring the protection of cellular users' rights.

During a meeting with Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of telecom companies, namely Ufone, Jazz, and Telenor, the minister recognized the need for striking a balance between service providers and users.

He assured the CEOs of his dedicated efforts to resolve the issues plaguing the IT industry.

Additionally, the minister emphasized the active measures being taken to settle these matters through relevant forums, aiming for positive outcomes.

Furthermore, Syed Amin Ul Haque chaired a Universal Service Fund (USF) Policy meeting, where the USF Company's annual budget of Rs 18,036 million for FY

2023-24 was approved. The meeting was attended by high-ranking officials from the IT sector, including the Secretary IT and representatives from the Cabinet Division and Finance Ministry. The CEO of USF briefed the chair about the ongoing projects.

The minister also presided over the Policy Committee meeting of the Research & Development Fund. The CEO of Ignite, a government-owned technology innovation organization, presented various future projects during the meeting. The annual budget of Ignite for FY 2023-24, amounting to Rs 3,206 million, was approved.

Syed Amin Ul Haque highlighted the challenges faced by telecom companies in importing equipment and upgrading systems due to limited Letters of Credit (LCs), causing delays in completing USF's ongoing projects. The minister assured his commitment to addressing this issue and finding suitable solutions.



Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque chairing policy Committee meeting of Research & Development Fund in Islamabad.

China's services trade sustains growth in first 5 months

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's services trade sustained its growth momentum in the first five months of the year, official data showed Thursday.

The country's services trade reached nearly 2.61 trillion yuan (about 362 billion U.S. dollars) from January to May, up 10.2 percent year on year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed. Trade in knowledge-intensive services expanded 13.6 percent year on year to exceed 1.12 trillion yuan in the period, the data showed. The figure accounted for 43.1 percent of the country's total volume of services trade, up 1.3 percentage points from the same period last year. Travels services saw a notable recovery during the period, with trade in this sector.

Kashif highlights potential benefits of barter trade

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Executive Officer, Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday said that barter trade among Russia, Iran and Afghanistan would hold several potential benefits and significance for these countries.

Presiding over the PFC Board of Directors meeting, he said that this wise and timely epoch making decision of Pakistan would promote regional integration and economic cooperation by leveraging their geographic proximity. Russia, Iran, and Afghanistan can enhance trade routes, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges, leading to a more integrated regional economy, he said.

Kashif Ashfaq said that it would help further

strengthen economic ties and promote cooperation among these countries and facilitate the exchange of goods and services without necessarily involving traditional currency transactions. It will also be particularly useful for the countries facing financial constraints or limited access to global financial systems, he said and added that barter trade would serve as an alternative mechanism for conducting business when traditional financial channels were restricted and in addition to bypassing monetary transactions, these countries can continue trading despite the sanctions shocks. The PFC head said it can help address trade imbalances between these countries that promotes mutual benefits and foster economic equilibrium.

Wagner chief Prigozhin is in Russia weeks after mutiny, president of Belarus says

Monitoring Desk
MINSK: Russian mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin is in St. Petersburg and his Wagner troops have remained at the camps where they had stayed before a short-lived mutiny against Moscow, the president of Belarus said Thursday.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko helped broker a deal for Prigozhin to end his rebellion on June 24 in exchange for amnesty and security guarantees for himself and his soldiers and permission to move to Belarus.

However, few details of the agreement have emerged, and the whereabouts and futures of the Wagner company's chief and his private army have remained unclear. The Kremlin has refused to comment on Prigozhin's location or movements since the abortive revolt.

After saying last week that Prigozhin was in Belarus, Lukashenko told

international reporters Thursday that the mercenary leader was in St. Petersburg and Wagner's troops still were at their camps.

He did not specify the location of the camps, but Prigozhin's mercenaries fought alongside Russian forces in eastern Ukraine before their revolt.

Lukashenko said (his government offered Wagner, a private military contractor founded by Prigozhin, the use of Belarusian military camps but the company had not made a final decision.

Asked if Prigozhin and his mercenaries were going to move to Belarus, Lukashenko answered evasively that it would depend on the decisions of the Wagner chief and the Russian government. The Belarusian leader said he doesn't think Wagner's presence in Belarus could lead to the destabilization of his country.

During their short re-

volt, they quickly swept over the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and captured military headquarters there before marching on the Russian capital. Prigozhin described it as a "march of justice" to oust the Russian defense minister and the General Staff chief.

Prigozhin claimed his troops had come within about 200 kilometers (about 125 miles) of Moscow when he ordered them to stop the advance under the deal brokered by Lukashenko.

The abortive rebellion represented the biggest threat to Russian President Vladimir Putin in his more than two decades in power and exposed the Kremlin's weakness, eroding Putin's authority.

The Wagner fighters faced little resistance, smashing occasional roadblocks and downing at least six helicopters and a command post aircraft, killing at least 10 airmen.



United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken, center, plays a steel pan accompanied by musician Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe and Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader of the U.S House of Representatives at the HADCO Phase II Pan Groove panyard in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Death toll rises to 29 in Mexico bus plunge

Monitoring Desk
OAXACA: At least 29 people were killed in Mexico when a passenger bus careened off a mountain road and plummeted into a ravine in the southern state of Oaxaca, the state prosecutor told AFP.

"The figures we have 12 hours after the rescue work began are 29 people dead and 19 injured," Bernardo Rodriguez Alamilla said by telephone. Images from the scene

showed the mangled wreckage of the vehicle lying on its side at the bottom of a steep cliff as rescuers worked nearby.

Fifteen women died, two of them while receiving hospital care, as well as 13 men and a child, the prosecutor said.

The first official report set the number of fatalities at 27 and the number of wounded at 17.

An investigation has been launched into the cause

of the accident, with early indications suggesting mechanical failure.

At least six of the injured were unconscious and in serious condition when they were rushed to hospital, according to the civil protection agency.

The bus, operated by a local transport company, had left the capital Mexico City on Tuesday night and was heading for the town of Santiago de Yosondua, authorities said.

Iran says it had court order to seize Chevron tanker

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran said on Thursday it had a court order to seize a tanker in Gulf waters a day earlier after it collided with an Iranian vessel, one of two tankers the U.S. Navy said it prevented Iran from commandeering.

The Richmond Voyager, a Bahamas-flagged oil tanker, had collided with an Iranian vessel and the Iranian navy had a court order to seize it, the Maritime Search and Rescue Center of Iran's Hormozgan Province told the official IRINN news agency.

The U.S. Navy said it sent guided-missile de-

stroyer USS McFaul to respond to a distress call from the Richmond Voyager off the coast of Oman in international waters. It said Iranian authorities had asked the tanker to stop and had fired shots but the Iranian navy vessel departed when McFaul arrived.

Iran said the Richmond Voyager's collision with an Iranian ship carrying seven crew members had injured five people and caused flooding on board, and that the tanker had not stopped after the incident. The Iranian ship's owner then requested the tanker be seized, IRINN said.

Twitter rival Threads crosses 10 million users within hours of launch

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: More than 10 million people have signed up to Threads, Meta's rival to Twitter, within the first few hours of its launch, the company's CEO Mark Zuckerberg said on Thursday.

The app went live on Apple and Android app stores in 100 countries at 23:00 GMT on Wednesday, and will run with no ads for now, but its release in Europe has been delayed over data privacy concerns.



Mangled wreckage of bus lying on its side at the bottom of cliff.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy says sought Western weapons to start counteroffensive soon

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy told CNN he wanted a counter-offensive against occupying Russian forces to have started sooner than it did in June and that he had urged Western allies to quicken the supply of weapons for that mission, according to excerpts via a translator released on Wednesday.

"I wanted our counter-offensive to happen much earlier, because everyone understood that if the counteroffensive unfolds later, then a bigger part of our territory will be mined," Zelenskiy said. "We give our enemy the time and possibility to place more mines and prepare their defensive lines."

He said difficulties in the battlefield had led to Ukrainian forces slowing down the counteroffen-

sive, which is aimed at reclaiming territory in eastern and southern Ukraine seized by Russia since its February 2022 invasion began.

The Ukrainian leader has consistently pushed the United States and other Western allies to supply his armed forces with more sophisticated weaponry, such as U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets and longer range missiles.

He did so again in the CNN interview while also thanking Washington and the European allies for their support.

"It's not even about the Ukrainian advantage in the sky over the Russians," Zelenskiy said. "This is only about being equal. F-16s help not only those on the battlefield to move forward. It is simply very difficult without cover from the air."

UAE pledges \$15 million to help rebuild occupied West Bank camp hard hit by Israeli offensive

Monitoring Desk
TEL AVIV: The United Arab Emirates pledged Thursday to give \$15 million to help rebuild the Jenin refugee camp after the most intense Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank in nearly two decades.

The funding promise comes after the two-day offensive destroyed the camp's narrow roads and alleyways. The operation, meant to crack down on Palestinian militants after a series of recent attacks on Israelis, sent thousands of people fleeing their homes. Twelve Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed in the fighting.

The UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported that the money would be granted to UNRWA, the U.N. agency that assists Palestinian refugees.

UK special forces under inquiry for Afghan war crimes

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's defence minister on Wednesday said allegations of unlawful killings in Afghanistan being examined by an independent inquiry relate to UK special forces.

The inquiry which opened in March was "now reaching the stage of substantive hearings, and I can confirm that the allegations relate to the conduct of UK Special Forces", Ben Wallace told parliament in a written statement.

Wallace said the confirmation of special forces involvement was made only "in the exceptional circumstances of this inquiry".

The inquiry is looking at a number of detention operations between 2010 and 2013 and how allegations of wrongdoing were investigated by military police, in particular, whether there were any cover-ups.

It is being led by senior judge Charles Haddon-Cave, who has said it is important wrongdoing be "referred to the relevant authorities for investigation" while "those who have done nothing wrong should rightly have the cloud of suspicion lifted from them". Haddon-Cave said on Wednesday that he had recently visited the office of the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, although he did not elaborate.

Other countries' special forces have also faced allegations of unlawful killings in Afghanistan.

In Australia, a 2020 military investigation found special forces personnel "unlawfully killed" 39 Afghan civilians and prisoners, revealing allegations of summary executions, body count competitions and torture by Australian forces.

French police probing death during Marseille riots

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Authorities on Wednesday probed the death of a man who may have been felled by a police rubber bullet during riots in Marseille, as France counts the cost of its most intense urban violence in nearly two decades.

Prosecutors in Marseille, a southern port wracked by some of the worst clashes, said a 27-year-old man riding a scooter had been found dead overnight Saturday to Sunday and was believed to have suffered a heart attack.

Prosecutor Dominique Laurens said he had opened an investigation into "a death involving the use of a weapon" that appeared to be consistent with a projectile known as a "flashball".



Palestinians inspect a damaged house in the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank.

Biden is heading to South Carolina to show his economic agenda is keeping even red states humming

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden is heading to South Carolina on Thursday to make the case that economic measures he pushed through Congress despite stiff Republican opposition are helping to keep the deep red state — and others that voted for Donald Trump in 2020 — humming.

Ahead of Biden's visit to a state that he lost by nearly 12 percentage points in 2020, White House officials argued that if Republicans had their way, South Carolina, like many other Republican-controlled states, would have lost out

on billions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs.

Biden will use his visit to showcase a new clean energy manufacturing partnership between solar firm Enphase Energy and manufacturer Flex Ltd. that is projected to create 600 jobs in the state and 1,200 more throughout the country.

Enphase, which is making a \$60 million investment to open up six new manufacturing lines, including two in South Carolina, is benefiting from tax incentives included in Biden's \$370 billion Inflation Reduction Act that passed last August.

Scholars urge Taliban to remove curbs on women

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Religious scholars from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Indonesia are trying to convince Afghanistan's Taliban rulers that Islam does not ban women from going to school or work, says the UN mission chief in Afghanistan. In an interview with UN News, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) acting chief Markus Pöztel said the United Nations should work as a "bridge builder" in a very complex setting.

Record-breaking storm batters Netherlands, kills two

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: A record-breaking summer storm hammered the Netherlands and Germany on Wednesday, killing two people and throwing international air and rail travel into chaos.

Storm Poly packed howling winds of up to 146 km/h, toppling trees and forcing the cancellation of 400 flights from Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, one of Europe's busiest hubs. Meteorologists said the storm was the strongest on record to hit the Netherlands in the summer months and issued a rare "code red" warning for millions of people in the low-lying nation to stay indoors.

Study says drinking water from nearly half of US faucets contains potentially harmful chemicals

Monitoring Desk
TRAVERSE CITY: Drinking water from nearly half of U.S. faucets likely contains "forever chemicals" that may cause cancer and other health problems, according to a government study released Wednesday.

The synthetic compounds known collectively as PFAS are contaminating drinking water to varying extents in large cities and small towns — and in private wells and public systems, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Researchers described the study as the first nationwide effort to test for

PFAS in tap water from private sources in addition to regulated ones. It builds on previous scientific findings that the chemicals are widespread, showing up in consumer products as diverse as nonstick pans, food packaging and water-resistant clothing and making their way into water supplies. Because the USGS is a scientific research agency, the report makes no policy recommendations. But the information "can be used to evaluate risk of exposure and inform decisions about whether or not you want to treat your drinking water.

China hosts Russian warships that passed by Taiwan, Japan

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China hosted two Russian warships that had earlier sailed past Taiwan and Japan, and the vessels are expected to hold a joint drill with the Chinese navy during their visit, demonstrating the enduring military cooperation between the two countries.

The two frigates - Gromkiy and Sovershemiy - made port at the financial hub of Shanghai on Wednesday, Chinese state television reported. Both vessels belong to Russia's Pacific Fleet, headquartered in Vladivostok.

During their seven-day visit, the ships will conduct naval drills with the Chinese navy in Shanghai, that will include practices on formation movements, communication and sea rescues, according to

the report. The same ships, which belong to the Pacific fleet of the Russian Navy, passed through waters near democratically governed Taiwan at the end of June. They later sailed past Japan's Okinawa islands, the site of a major U.S. military base, earlier this month.

The passage prompted Japan to dispatch vessels to monitor their movements while Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory, deployed an aircraft and also ships to keep watch over their transit. At the end of China's President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in March, the two leaders issued a joint statement which contained familiar accusations against the West — that Washington was undermining global stability.

Toxic gas leak in South Africa has killed 16 people, including 3 children, police say

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: At least 16 people, including three children, were killed by a leak of a toxic nitrate gas being used by illegal miners to process gold in a settlement of closely packed metalshacks, South African police and local officials said late Wednesday.

Emergency services initially announced that as many as 24 people might be dead in the Angeb settlement in Boksburg, a city on the eastern outskirts of Johannesburg. But police and Gauteng Province Premier Panyaza Lesufi later said the number of deaths had been confirmed as 16 after a recount of the bodies.

"It's not a nice scene at all ... It's painful, emotionally draining and tragic," Lesufi, who visited the scene, was quoted as saying in news reports.

Teams were searching the area looking for other casualties deep into the night. The bodies of the victims remained lying on the ground hours after the leak was reported around 8 pm

as emergency services waited for forensic investigators and pathologists to arrive to process the scene. The bodies were still there at 3 am. "We can't move anybody. The bodies are still where they are on the ground," said emergency services spokesman William Ntladi.

A forensic investigator was seen covering the body of a small child with a blanket. Another body could be seen covered in a white cloth with a shoe sticking out. It lay under a strip of yellow police tape cordoning off the area.

Police said the three children killed were aged 1, 6 and 15. Two people were taken to the hospital for treatment, police said.

Boksburg is the city where 41 people died after a truck carrying liquefied petroleum gas got stuck under a bridge and exploded on Christmas Eve.

Ntladi said Wednesday's deaths were caused by a nitrate gas that leaked from a gas cylinder being kept in a shack.

Russia, Ukraine differ in accounts of fighting near Bakhmut

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday its forces had struck three Ukrainian army groups near Bakhmut, but Kyiv said its forces, despite limited control in the long-contested city, had the Russians all but pinned down.

Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister, Hanna Malah, also reported fierce fighting further north around the town of Lyman, recaptured by Ukrainian forces late last year.

Russia's Wagner mercenary group captured the shattered eastern city of Bakhmut in May after 10 months of fighting.

The Russian army in the area has since come under fierce pressure from Ukrainian forces who threaten to encircle it.

The Russian defence ministry made no comment in its daily briefing on reports that Russian forces had retreated from the vil-

lage of Klischchiivka, just southwest of Bakhmut. A Russian-installed official in eastern Ukraine denied the reports.

Ukraine has said its forces have had "partial success" in the Klischchiivka area.

Russia's RIA news agency cited a Russian army source as saying that Moscow's forces had repelled a Ukrainian attack there without retreating and were finishing off remaining Ukrainian troops in the area.

Ukrainian military analyst Oleskandr Musiyenko said securing Klischchiivka was "important as it would lead to the liberation of Bakhmut itself."

"It would open communications and eliminate their (Russian) supply routes," he told Ukraine's NV Radio. "It also gives access to heights from which Ukrainian artillery can better operate."

Guantanamo detainees tell first independent visitor about scars from torture and hopes to leave

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: At the US detention center at Guantanamo Bay, the aging men known by their serial numbers arrived at the meeting shackled. Every single one told the visitor — for many the first independent person they had talked to in 20 years — "You came too late."

But they still talked, about the scant contacts with their families, their many health problems, the psychological and physical scars of the torture and abuse they experienced, and their hopes of leaving and reuniting with loved ones.

For the first time since the facility in Cuba opened in 2002, a US president had allowed a United Nations independent investigator, Fionnuala Ni Aolain, to visit. She said in an interview with The Associated Press that it's true she came too late, because a total of 780 Muslim men were detained there following the 9/11 terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people, and today there are just 30

remaining. The United Nations had tried for many years to send an independent investigator, but was turned down by the administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Ni Aolain praised President Joe Biden's administration for allowing "critical voices" into the facility. And she expressed hope other governments that have barred UN special investigators will follow Biden's example.

The Belfast-born law professor said she believes the cross-section of "high-value" and "non-high-value" detainees she met with — the Biden administration gave her free rein to talk to anyone — "recognized the importance of sitting in a room with me." "I think there was a shared understanding that at this point, with only 30 of them left, while I can make recommendations and they will hopefully substantially change the day-to-day experience of these men, the vast majority of their lives was lived in a context where people like myself.



A man walks his dog by uprooted trees following a storm in Haarlem, the Netherlands.



TORGHAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif laying the foundation stone of the RCC Bridge on the River Indus that will connect Torghar with Buner District, Torghar, KP.

High-time for nation, State institutions to unitedly act for country's progress: PM

PM directs for speedy work of Rs 24 bln mega projects for Torghar-Buner road connectivity

TORGHAR, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said it was high-time for the nation and the State institutions to join hands in making the country progress.

The prime minister said it was the responsibility of the government, judiciary, armed forces and the people to act in unison for ensuring development of the country.

He was addressing the local elders in Torghar after

laying foundation-stone of Torghar-Buner Highway, the Buner-Karakar Link Tunnel and Torghar-Buner RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) bridge.

The prime minister highlighted the significance of unity, hard work and dedication by the nation to make the future of Pakistan brighter.

He said Pakistan recently faced financial challenges and got a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund to

avert default. He mentioned in this regard the supportive role of army chief General Asim Munir for clinching the \$3 billion deal with the global lender.

He expressed confidence that Pakistan would soon gain a significant place in the comity of nations.

PM Sharif said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was blessed with natural resources, however stressed the need for exploring the avenues of development for the benefit of

people. The prime minister acknowledged the sacrifices of the forefathers of the locals who donated their lands during the formation of Pakistan 70 years ago.

He regretted the apathy of political leaders in the past, who neglected the area and did not make efforts to mainstream it in the journey of national development. He emphasized giving opportunity to the locals to help them prosper in educational and professional fields.

UAE striving for all-inclusive platform at COP-28 for unified global climate action: Al Jaber

ISLAMABAD (APP): President-designate of COP-28 and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister for Industry & Advanced Technologies, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber on Thursday said the UAE was striving to ensure that the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC meeting, to be hosted by Dubai this year was ensured as an all-inclusive platform for unified global action.

The UAE Minister made these remarks during a talk held here at the Foreign Service Academy (FSA) flanked by Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Pakistan Senator Sherry Rehman and Director General, FSA Ambassador Mazhar Javed.

Sultan Al Jaber

thanked the government of Pakistan and FSA and the Minister for Climate Change for facilitating his visit. He expressed that he had assumed the task of COP-28's presidency with humility and a deep sense of responsibility.

"Over the last few months, I have had the opportunity to engage with all stakeholders from all over the world including businesses, governments, students, and scientists etc."

He added that during all the engagements he convened the discussion for all inclusive platform. "The voices were most resonating of the people at the forefront of the climate change. The sad reality is that climate change is having profound impact on the lives

of those people. Last year floods in Pakistan, almost affected 33 million people, caused over 1700 deaths, and billions of dollars losses in infrastructure," the UAE Minister said.

He mentioned that it was imperative to allow the affected communities' voices to be heard and respond to their queries who were facing climate change and come up with result-oriented outcomes. The COP process has evolved over the years and become politically charged and a comprehensive forum, he said, adding, "In about 148 days from today UAE will host COP-28 in Dubai. This is going to be the first ever official assessment of how world acted upon Paris Agreement."



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Kalat Munir Ahmed Durrani meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Election of chairman and vice chairman: Candidates elected unopposed in Gwadar, Harnai, Kharan and Hub district councils

Independent Report QUETTA: The candidates contesting election for the slots of chairman and vice chairman of district councils of Gwadar, Harnai and Kharan were elected unopposed on Thursday.

According to the informal announcement made by the concerned returning officers, Syed Maiyar Jan Noori of the Noori Panel and Hot Naimatullah were elected as chairman and vice chairman of district council Gwadar respectively. Both the candidates were having the support of Balochistan National Party (BNP). Similarly, Malik Abdul Salam Abdalani and Malik Amal Khan Tareen were elected unopposed as the chairman and vice chairman of district council

Hamai respectively. Both the candidates were having affiliation with Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP).

While from Kharan district council, Mir Muhammad Juma Kubdani and Mir Mohsin Zahir were elected as the chairman and vice chairman of Kharan district council respectively.

Jumma Kubdani was the candidate of BNP and Mohsin Zahir was candidate of JUL. They were also elected unopposed as no other filed nomination papers against them.

Moreover, Ibrahim Doda and Kamal Muhammad Hassani were elected unopposed as chairman and vice chairman of Hub district council.



QUETTA: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Muhammad Anwar Kakar presiding over a meeting of officers of concerned departments regarding monsoon rains

Azerbaijan President's Advisor calls on Air Chief, lauds PAF professionalism

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high level defence delegation headed by Advisor to the President of Azerbaijan, Khalid Ahadov called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaher Ahmed Baber Sidhu here on Thursday and lauded the historic and exemplary professionalism demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

The meeting underscored discussion on several key areas of mutual interest and regional developments, a PAF news release said. During the meeting, the Chief of the Air Staff shared his vision of modernizing PAF's capabilities to achieve operational excellence in air, space and cyber domains.

The Air Chief emphasized the longstanding religious, cultural and historical

ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which are exemplified through robust bilateral relations.

He also reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties in military-to-military cooperation and the training domain. Chief of the Air Staff further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic and defence relationship with Azerbaijan which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability." The Advisor to the President of Azerbaijan praised the PAF's notable progress in developing a thriving domestic capability in the aviation industry. The visiting dignitary reaffirmed that Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoy deep rooted cordial relations and wished to further enhance the existing ties.

Religious scholars condemn burning of Holy Quran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent scholars, intellectuals, and leaders representing various schools of thought and religious denominations from across the country on Thursday strongly condemned the recent incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden.

In a joint statement, they expressed their outrage and announced that on upcoming Friday would be observed as 'Quran Sanctity Day'.

They called for peaceful protests and condemnation of the incident in all mosques, emphasizing the need for swift action against the blasphemous act.

Demonstrate complete solidarity with Muslims: Bishop Khalid, others strongly flay desecration of Holy Qura'an in Sweden

Independent Report QUETTA: The prominent Christian minority religious leaders including Bishop Khalid Rehmat, Pastor Simon Bashir and others have strongly condemned the incident of desecration of Holy Qura'an in Sweden.

While addressing a press conference here on Thursday morning, Bishop Khalid Rehmat and others said that we strongly condemn the incident of desecration of Holy Qura'an and its burning in strongest words.

Bishop Khalid also described the desecration of Holy Qura'an as totally unacceptable, blasphemous and sacrilegious.

He expressed complete solidarity with the Muslim brethren and sisters over the most condemnable act. He said that the incident is totally intolerable.

Bishop Khalid Rehmat demanded of the world rights organizations to give exemplary punishment to the miscreants involved in the sorrowful act.



HUB: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Lasbela Deputy Secretary General, Maulana Shah Muhammad Siddiqi addressing a Press Conference.

Langove condemns suicide attack at security forces in Miran Shah

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has strongly condemned the suicide attack at the security forces in Miran Shah area of North Waziristan.

In a condemnation statement issued here the other day, the Provincial Minister paid homage to the martyr security personnel in the terrorist attack.

He expressed sympathy and condolence with

the bereaved families of those martyred in the attack.

The Minister Home made pledge to continue war against terrorism until the peace is completely restored in the country.

He said that we are indebted to our brave security personnel who have been embracing martyrdom in the war against terrorism.

He also applauded the role of security forces who are playing pivotal role in elimination of terrorism.

New policy of sugar permit reduces rate & smuggling, says Sugar Association

Independent Report QUETTA: The office bearers of Balochistan Sugar Association (BSA) have stated that new policy of sugar permit has brought down the rate of sugar and its smuggling to great extent.

In a joint statement issued here on Thursday, the office bearers of BSA including its President Najebeullah Khan, senior vice President, Malik Zada Yahya Kakar, vice President, Sajan Kora and other members of executive have

stated that while the rate and smuggling of sugar has been reduced with introduction of new sugar permit policy, it has also increased the revenue at the national and provincial level.

They said that the traders community have to improve the country's economy through legal means instead of the smuggling together with the government. They commended that the sugar permit policy has made it possible to rationalize the price of sugar and its timely supply.



QUETTA: Bishop Khalid Rahmat holds protest along with others outside Press club to condemn the desecration of Quran Pak in Sweden.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik presiding Flood Management Conference.

CM takes notice of reports of increase in prices of flour; directs to bring stability

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has taken notice of the reports of increase in prices of flour in Quetta and different other parts of the province and directed the Food department and district administration to take steps to bring stability in the prices of flour in their respective areas.

According to an official hand out issued here on Wednesday night, the Chief Minister said that the provision of flour would be ensured to the general public at the prescribed rates in

the province. The Chief Minister particularly directed the Commissioner Naseerabad and Deputy Inspector General of Police to ensure implementation on the ban imposed on carrying/transportation of the wheat out of the division.

He also directed to submit a report about the steps taken in this regard.

Moreover, the Chief Minister described the achievement of target of purchase of wheat by the Food department for the current year. He said that the people would get relief with this success.

Mr. Bizenjo highly

appreciated performance of Food Department saying that its performance remained excellent under leadership of Minister Food, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai.

He said that the Provincial Minister Food and his team's performance remained excellent when it comes to talk about purchase of wheat in transparent manner.

The Chief Minister expressed the hope that neither there would be any shortage of flour with availability of wheat this year nor profiteers would have the chance to fleece the people.

Alvi appoints Justice M. Ibrahim as acting PHC chief justice

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday appointed Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan as the Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court.

The president made the appointment as the seat fell vacant after the elevation of Chief Justice Musarrat Hilali to the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan is the senior most judge of the Peshawar High Court.

The president made the appointment under Article 196 of the Constitution, till the appointment of a new chief justice.

APNA is playing role of strong bridge in US, Pak relations

WASHINGTON (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has said Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APNA) is playing the role of a strong bridge in Pakistan and the US relations.

In a series of tweets, on the occasion of 46th Annual Summer Convention of APNA being held in Dallas Texas, he said APNA has always stood with Pakistan in every difficult time.

Four quacks held for running dental clinics

QUETTA (APP): Assistant Commissioner Quetta City Atta-ul-Munim on Thursday arrested four quacks running a dental clinic without any requisite license.

"Acting on a complaint, four quacks were nabbed from the Bacha Khan Chowk of the provincial capital," AC Quetta said.

The unskilled and unauthorized persons impersonating the dentists had set up their clinics along the road. They have been sent to jail, soon after their arrest.

AC Quetta while reiterating government resolve said that stern action will be taken against those playing with the lives of the people.

He called upon the people to inform quacks so that immediate action may be taken against them.

Balochistan govt plans to set up climate change research institute

QUETTA (APP): The provincial government has decided to set up Balochistan Comprehensive Environment and Climate Change Research Institute to conduct research for the protection of the environment.

The environmental research institute will help identify and contain the toxic contaminants affecting the quality of water, soil, and air in the province, an official of Balochistan government said.

It will also provide researchers with a platform to conduct analysis on the effects of industrial waste and its impacts on the environment by using modern tools and technologies, he added.

He said the Balochistan government has decided to set up a climate change unit under the

regulation of the Environmental Protection Agency to work on the minimizing effects of climate change in the province.

The government has stepped up its efforts to ensure strict implementation of the Environmental Protection Act 2012 to protect the environment and to monitor the compliance of environmental laws at development sites. The official said the government has purchased Ambient Air Mobile Monitoring Stations to analyze the air quality index in Hub and Gwadar and curb air pollution. The Environment Protection Department is conducting a feasibility study on solid waste management to resolve the issue on permanent bases and protect.



NASEERABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ayesha Zehri visiting a polling station during Local Bodies elections

CPEC an inclusive platform for 3rd parties to benefit from investment opportunities: FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday reiterated that being an important node in cross regional connectivity, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was an inclusive and open platform for interested third parties to benefit from investment opportunities in its priority areas like industry, agriculture, IT, science and technology, oil and gas sectors. The Foreign Office spokespersons on Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in her weekly press briefing, said that both Pakistan and China remained committed to continue expansion and development of CPEC to promote win-win connectivity, development and mutual prosperity.

"We will continue to push forward all CPEC projects in a safe, smooth, and high-quality manner, promoting cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, investment, industry, agriculture, health, and science and technology," she remarked. She said Pakistan and China were celebrating the 10th anniversary of CPEC which was an important pillar of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China.

The spokesperson recounted that the people of Pakistan had witnessed the remarkable achievements and fruits of high-quality development stimulated by CPEC since its inauguration in 2013. "Under the first phase of CPEC, China invested around US\$ 25.4 billion in Pakistan, primarily in energy and transport infrastructure sectors. CPEC projects have added: 8000 MWs of energy to the national grid; 510 km of highways; 932 km of road networks; and 820 km.