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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with members of the Federal Cabinet.

No meaningful engagement with India unless revocation of illegal, unilateral steps on IIOJK: FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday reiterated that Pakistan's stance on its relations with India was very clear and consistent, unless it revoked its illegal and unilateral acts of 2019 over the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), there was no space to meaningful engagement.

He said that India had not only violated the international laws and the United Nations Security Council resolutions, but also the bilateral agreements between the two countries. "There is no space left for Pakistan to meaningfully engage with India," the foreign minister maintained while addressing a presser to highlight the achievements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during his tenure.

The foreign minister, replying to a query, said that he went to Goa, India to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(SCO) meeting despite serious reservations and carrying head money, to present Pakistan's stance and tried to utilize the space available to pronounce Pakistan's interests.

He said due to his participation in the SCO meeting where he presented Pakistan's stance clearly, India went on the back foot and held the SCO heads of states summit virtually.

About sending Pakistan national team to contest the ICC Cricket World Cup in India, he said contrary to India's indulgence in immature acts, Pakistan always maintained that there should be a difference between politics and sports, adding that they still had security concerns as the security of the national team could not be compromised; and they had conveyed such to the International Cricket Council (ICC) and India.

The foreign minister, to another question, said that Pakistan was not interested in the bloc poli-

tics and did not want to be part of any polar world because they wanted to serve their 224 million population, and if they were drawn into others' interests, then they would be distracted.

The foreign minister, responding to a question about Afghanistan, said that certain opinions were being formed across the world on the basis of ground realities.

If they wanted diplomatic recognition, the Afghan interim government would have to address the international concerns, but if they continued with their statements, it would create complications and the Afghan people would continue to suffer, he added.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said that after the fall of Kabul, there was a sharp spike in terrorist incidents in Pakistan and stressed that cooperation and engagement between the two countries was necessary to tackle the issue.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar giving away shield to Senior Director Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan Syed Munnawar Shah Hashmi on best performance

Governor calls for creating balance in salaries and incentives of govt. employees of equal grade

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to create balanced in salaries and incentives of the government employees serving in equal grade.

He said that disparity found in salaries and allowances of the officers and employees working in similar grade in different departments is causing sense of deprivation among the employees of attached departments.

This issue needs an immediate attention, maintained the Governor while speaking to a delegation comprising the office bearers of Federation of Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association, who called on him here at the Governor House on

Wednesday. The Governor stressed that it is very necessary to ensure merit in promotions and recruitments of the government officers and other employees.

He made it clear that the higher civil servants can ensure elimination of safarish culture and nepotism. He also said that heavy responsibilities rest with the officers in becoming voice of the voiceless people of society besides establishing good governance. He said that the institutions and laws are framed for welfare of the masses, therefore, the civil servants should perform their responsibilities honestly.

He said that the performance of each and every institutions should also be seen on ground instead of mere paper work.



QUETTA: Police officials inspect the site of incident at Joint road where miscreants threw a hand grenade

Toshakhana case IHC rejects IK plea for immediate suspension of his conviction

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while rejecting chairman PTI plea for immediate suspension of his conviction in Toshakhana case has issued notice on the petition regarding suspension of conviction.

The petition filed by chairman PTI seeking suspension of his conviction in Toshakhana case and suspension of trial court verdict came up for hearing before a division bench of IHC comprising Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amir Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri Wednesday.

The court while rejecting plea of chairman PTI for immediate suspension of his conviction issued notice on the petition.

CJ IHC ordered that the record of the case be also called.

Three terrorists killed in Zhob

ZHOB (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) brought down three 'terrorists' of a banned outfit during the wee hours of Wednesday in Balochistan.

According to the CTD spokesperson, the operation was conducted by Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) team in Zhob district of Balochistan province on the intelligence information regarding the presence of highly wanted 'terrorists'.

Seeing the CTD team, the 'terrorists' opened fire and in an exchange of fire three of them were killed while two policemen also sustained injuries. On June 10, two alleged terrorists belonging to a banned outfit were apprehended in a raid by Counter-Terrorism Department from Bhakkar.

According to details, the detained individuals whose names have been revealed to be Muhammad Ullah and Fazal Razzaq were involved in questionable activities, said a CTD spokesperson.

Pakistan to be made economically stable via joint efforts, says PM

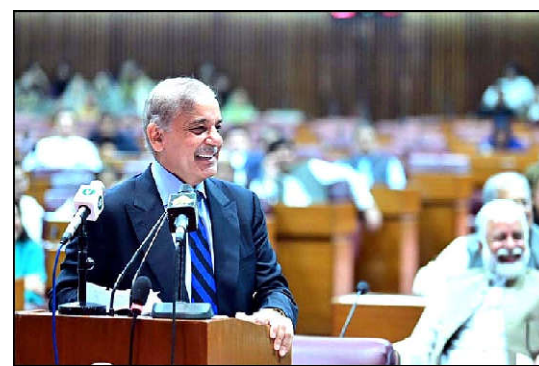
Thanks who's who of political parties for support, guidance; Terms tenure 'most difficult test of life'; Lauds coalition partners for showing maturity & sincerity for bringing economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, in his farewell address to the National Assembly, expressed heartfelt gratitude to a diverse array of political parties, underscoring their pivotal support and guidance during the challenging term of 16 months.

Just hours before sending advice to President Dr Arif Alvi for the dissolution of the National Assembly, the prime minister told the House that the 16-month

tenure was the shortest ever period for a government particularly when compared to the plethora of issues inherited from the previous regime.

He said besides other unsuitable conditions, the coalition government also had to face other massive challenges like the worst floods and the signing of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) deal which was breached by the previous government to hurt national integrity.



He said through its poor conduct and episodes like the "cipher drama" the previous government undermined foreign relations, including with the United States, besides carrying out defamatory propaganda against political opponents.

"This is the painful story of the previous government's four years... During our 16 months, the incumbent government did not victimise anyone. Today, if a party leader has been punished, we are in no way happy over that. One should have the fear of Allah. There is no question of distribution of sweets (to rejoice the punishment)," he remarked.

PEMRA amendment bill sails through Senate, NA

Thorough consultations held with all stakeholders during preparation of PEMRA Amendment Bill: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate and the National Assembly on Wednesday approved the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which was retracted by the federal government earlier this week, with a majority vote.

Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb proposed the bill and highlighted her role in initiating

the process to amend the PEMRA Ordinance, which involved a year-long consultation and the incorporation of three important clauses.

According to Marriyum Aurangzeb, the 2023 PEMRA Bill safeguards the rights of media workers and journalists. This is because the bill mandates all media house owners to settle their outstanding dues, including salaries, within a two-month timeframe.

Minister Home takes notice of Joint road attack: Terrorists have no other option but to surrender before writ of state, asserts Langove

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has taken notice of the hand grenade attack on Joint Road in Quetta on Wednesday.

According to an official hand out issued here soon after the attack, the Minister Home expressed sorrow over the injuries caused to six persons in the attack.

Mir Ziaullah Langove sought report from the con-

cerned high ups. He asserted that such cowardly attacks can't down our morale.

He said that terrorists have no other chance but to surrender before the writ of state. The Minister prayed for early recovery of those injured in the attack.

It may be mentioned here six persons including two police cops and one female were injured in hand grenade attack occurred on Joint road on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, talking with Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Eng. Waleed bin Abdulkarim Al-Khurajji after the meeting at Ministry of foreign Affairs in Federal Capital.

Two police cops, a female among six injured in hand grenade attack in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: At least six persons including two police personnel and a female were injured in hand grenade attack on Joint Road, Quetta on Wednesday.

According to the police sources, some unknown miscreants hurled a hand grenade apparently at a push cart. As the explosive device went off with a big bang, it caused injuries to two police cops as well as a female and three other passersby.

The area police and rescue teams rushed towards the spot and immediately shifted the injured of blast to the civil hospital.

Two security personnel martyred in firing

KALAT (Online): Two security personnel have embraced martyrdom in firing by unidentified armed men and 1 pedestrian was injured in Mangchar.

According to details, security officer Mohammad Sajjad and Bacha Rehman died on the

scene while pedestrian Abdul Hakeem was injured in firing near Mangchar Chouhan Bazaar area of Kalat.

Dead bodies were handed over to their heirs after necessary formalities. Further action is being taken by relevant authorities.



JHELUM: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir visited Tilla Field Firing Ranges, witnessed Live Fire and maneuvers of the advanced VT-4 tanks, shoot and scoot capabilities of long range SH-15 artillery guns and innovative equipment display, near Jhelum.

Electricity tariff increased by Rs. 1.81

ISLAMABAD (Online): Electricity tariff for people of Karachi has been increased by RS 2.31 per unit and RS 1.81 for government distribution companies.

Notification for increase in monthly fuel price adjustment for 1 month has also been issued.

An additional burden of RS 4.30 billion will be shifted to Karachi consumers while RS 24 billion will be on DISCOS consumers.

Electricity prices have been increased for consumers across country.

Visits Tilla Field Firing Ranges near Jhelum Pakistan Army alive to existing, emerging challenges: COAS

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday appreciated high degree of professionalism, battle worthiness and offensive spirit displayed by the troops of the Strike Corps.

The Army Chief visited Tilla Field Firing Ranges near Jhelum and witnessed Live Fire and manoeuvres of the advanced VT-4 tanks, shoot and scoot capabilities of long range

SH-15 artillery guns and innovative equipment display, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS appreciated combat proficiency of the crews and their mastery over state-of-the-art weaponry. He remarked, "Pakistan Army was alive to the existing and emerging challenges and possessed the wherewithal to thwart nefarious designs of its adversaries through the entire gamut of threat".

THANK YOU PRIME MINISTER SHEHBAZ SHARIF, INFORMATION MINISTER MARRIYUM AURANGZEB AND LAW MINISTER AZAM NAZEER TARAR

FOR LISTENING TO AND ACCEPTING THE DEMANDS OF MEDIA BODIES.

The PEMRA amendment act 2023 was a result of collective discussions between AEMEND, CPNE, PFUJ, PBA, APNS and MOI. The bill is a step in the right direction. The bill has resolved some of the longstanding issues of electronic media workers and the broadcast industry. For instance to alleviate media workers salary delays, government advertisements have now become conditional upon workers getting their dues paid on time. All media organizations agreed to these changes.

At the same time in this bill the Government has voluntarily given up its right to appoint The Chairman of PEMRA and now Chairman PEMRA will be appointed by the Parliament, this is a step to make PEMRA more independent. To address fake news, Broadcasters, Journalists and the Government have agreed to a definition and changes in the law to discourage it.

More consensus building initiatives like these are required to make media laws better in the country where freedom of speech has been curbed by successive governments. But this bill is a step in the right direction.

We thank Honorable Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for encouraging Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb for facilitating industry stakeholders to agree on these changes.



Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Old politics

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's farewell address to the National Assembly after his first stint as an elected representative has given voice to the feelings of general despair being felt by the silenced masses, but also invited renewed criticism of the 'dynastic' style of politics espoused by certain democratic parties. Addressing his father, PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, and the PML-N supremo, Nawaz Sharif, Mr Bhutto-Zardari expressed regret at the way Pakistani politics continues to be conducted, complaining that the two 'senior politicians' may have condemned the new lot to suffer for the next 30 years what they had suffered over the past three decades.

He seemed to be speaking with reference to the events of these past few weeks, which have seen parliament reduced to a rubber stamp for a seemingly endless stream of bad legislation, as well as the start of a new cycle of political victimisation that culminated with the incarceration of the PTI chief.

Though it was a smaller excerpt of his speech that ignited heated debate on social media, Mr Bhutto-Zardari's remarks, in general, were otherwise praiseworthy for their astuteness. He spoke of the need for dialogue and a new charter of democracy; for institutions to function within their domains; for the rules of the game to be defined; and for the powerful to not continue to ignore the needs of two-thirds of the population, which comprises people below the age of 30.

The PPP chairman was also candid in admitting that although the outgoing government may have seized power last April through a constitutional manoeuvre, it failed to keep institutions within their constitutional domains over the next 16 months.

Such clarity of thought in the upcoming generation of political leaders would give one hope that all is not lost. But, and perhaps rightly so, many were left outraged when he beseeched Messrs Zardari and Sharif to "make politics easier for me and Maryam Sharif".

He may have been addressing the two seniors as a child might their parents, possibly for some added pathos, but it seems Mr Bhutto-Zardari hasn't fully read the nation's mood. At a time when faith in the democratic system is rapidly evaporating, and the people have been left disenfranchised, the suggestion that political power is an inheritance to be shared between the Sharifs and Zardaris was bound to raise hackles.

There is no dearth of able, forward-looking politicians in Pakistan, and it must be unacceptable to any democratically inclined person that their chances of being chief executive should be automatically limited by an accident of birth.

It may well be that the scions of our political dynasties are capable politicians in their own right, but 'level playing fields' cannot just be for contests between a handful of families.

Electoral fantasy



Mahir Ali

Will the dissolution of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies be accompanied by the announcement of an election date? There has been considerable speculation of late around the controversial new census and its electoral implications, much of it suggesting that the voting ritual is very likely to be delayed for some months beyond the constitutionally ordained 90-day time frame.

The composition of the caretaker government that will 'rule' Pakistan in the interim has also been a tightly guarded secret. Arguably, the bigger question is whether any of this matters. An American witticism from decades ago, long before there were memes, went something like: it doesn't matter who you vote for, the government always gets in.

In the Pakistani context, that sense — and the dominance of the two family firms masquerading as political parties — partially helped propel Imran Khan to the fore as a possible alternative, with substantial military assistance. The help he required to cobble together a parliamentary majority after his party gained less than a third of the popular vote in 2018 was readily provided. And when it was withdrawn last year, the coalition inevitably crumbled. During his truncated tenure as prime minister, he frequently boasted of being 'on the same page' as the military hierarchy, but was apparently taken aback when straying off-

script entailed being ruthlessly cut down to size. But then, one of the biggest problems with Imran Khan is that he seems to assume everything is about him, conveniently overlooking the fact that his promise of a 'naya Pakistan' came to naught, because it turned out to have no substance.

His fairly abysmal record in government does not measure up to his self-ordained status as an outstanding democrat. And it's absolutely no good, in the aftermath, to blame almost everything that went wrong — the reinforced repression that stretched from political opponents to freedom of expression — on the uniformed elite with which he willfully collaborated. In recent interviews with foreign media outlets — after a ban was surreptitiously imposed on his engagement with the local variant — he continued to spout a great deal of nonsense, much of which went unchallenged. It's not incorrect to describe Nawaz Sharif's political incarnation as a military-ordained phenomenon under Ziaul Haq's regime, although there's never any mention of the ISI role in forming the IJI coalition with the aim of thwarting the PPP's legitimate claim to power under Benazir Bhutto. Perhaps because it cuts too close to the bone in the case of the PTI.

Similarly, he routinely relates Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's pre-eminence in the Ayub regime to his party's electoral successes in 1970, implying it was a military creation, without ever bothering to point out that ZAB's popularity was closely correlated to his decision to break away from the Ayub dictatorship. Bhutto's subsequent ties with the military are indeed murky, but not subservient.

An even more obvious story that Khan perpetuates is that the arrests of his party's female supporters was "the first time in Pakistan's history" that women have been taken into custody for political reasons. Is he really that ignorant about Pakistan's past? Tellingly, he never mentions the Zia era — and no one ever seems to ask him about his key mentor as a political novice, Gen Hamid Gul.

None of this is intended to suggest that just because political persecution has long been the norm in Pakistan, it is in any way justified in the case of the failed PTI experiment. The imprisonment of a previous prime minister is merely part of a pattern, and this particular prisoner's hypocrisy doesn't necessarily make it more palatable.

The far bigger question in relation to the next elections, whenever they take place, is not who will win or who might be excluded but, rather: what difference will it make? Let's imagine for a mad moment that the PTI were to return to power without a hybrid setup. Can anyone in their right mind imagine that might offer some kind of a solution to Pakistan's political malaise and economic dysfunction? That the alternatives are almost equally dire does not detract from the validity of the query. It may well be that understandable concern about the timing of the election is misplaced. The point is, whenever it is held, and regardless of who is permitted to participate — or, for that matter, favoured over others — how exactly will the future be any different from the abysmal present? Khan recently told Stephen Sackur on BBC's Hard Talk that the "only solution" for Pakistan is "free and fair elections". That phenomenon has not been witnessed since 1970, and it's unlikely to be repeated. But even if it were, given the nature of the leading contenders, where on earth could it possibly lead? -- Courtesy Dawn

The Xiaoping model

Hassan Baig

Pakistan is passing through difficult and unprecedented times. We are facing enormous difficulties with a clear lack of resources, overpopulation, widespread poverty, a huge debt burden, no savings, an uncompetitive industry, abundant raw labour, lack of technology and a political crisis. This was the situation China faced in 1949-1976 (the Maoist period), but then came visionary leader and statesman Deng Xiaoping in 1978, who literally changed everything for good in China. Pakistan needs a leader of the quality and caliber of Xiaoping to transform the country and society.

The architect of modern China is Deng Xiaoping. What he did was a departure from past policies to introduce a new set of indigenous policies most suitable for China, especially introducing business reforms by accommodating the private sector in the development process. He brought a new Chinese economic development model by introducing market-economy reforms that proved to be a great leap forward for China. Pakistan also needs a dynamic visionary leadership like Xiaoping to introduce new economic reforms most suitable for its development, as we see a continuous and perpetual downslide of our economy due to a wrong set of policies and priorities.

China initially targeted four priority sectors — agriculture, industry, defense, science and technology — as part of modernization to improve uplift the economy. Pakistan also needs to initially focus on these sectors to transform and revolutionize its economy. Unlike China in the early

1970s, Pakistan already has a public-private partnership model to develop and grow.

That model must be utilized in a more coherent and consistent way as part of its policy paradigm. That would lay a strong foundation to get robust economic growth to get rid of poverty and the heavy burden of debts and loans. It would also pave the way to enhance exports with a lot of investment in these sectors. Initially, the opportunity can be materialized with the help and support of China (through CPEC) and Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar, which are showing an interest in investing in these sectors. That needs to be capitalized.

First of all, let's take up the issue of agricultural modernization that needs to be prioritized as a step towards corporate farming. The armed forces have already taken up a project to cultivate barren government lands in far-flung areas to convert them for corporate farming. Friendly Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also expressed an interest in taking up the green project of agriculture farming if they are provided land on certain terms and conditions.

The US-Pak Green Alliance is all-out for supporting agriculture innovation as part of its climate advocacy project. The second phase of CPEC also indicates agriculture as a life-line project for a sustainable Pakistan, providing livelihood for rural communities.

Phase 2 of CPEC has brought a message, as conveyed by China's Vice Premier He Lifeng's recent visit, heralding cooperation in the field of agriculture, rural revitalization and green de-

velopment. Pakistan can achieve prosperity and development through an inclusive growth model by investing more into the agriculture sector for rural communities.

The message from Chinese President Xi Jinping is a great hope for a sustainable and developed Pakistan through the opportunities provided by CPEC's Phase 2. It is, in fact, poised to provide an immediate opportunity to address the pressing needs of the country, further paving the way to long-term development. The transfer of technology through the second phase of CPEC will go a long way in achieving self-sustainability in the field of modern agriculture farming.

The Chinese economic development model introduced by the great Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s is, in fact, a great guide for developing countries like Pakistan. But one of the most important factors was a stable political system in China. That provides a conducive atmosphere, facilitating investment for economic development.

A stable political system is important, missing in the case of Pakistan.

A fragile economy cannot afford a politically weak, polarized, and fragmented society, which is detrimental and disastrous for economic growth and development. Pakistan immediately needs to go for elections to put in place a stable political government to achieve the target of high economic growth and development. All the four priority areas and sectors of the economy discussed in this article are important to follow as a first step to achieve the aim of high GDP growth and economic development. -- Courtesy TheNews

Commerce News

Ahsan urges industrialists to benefit from universities' R&D expertise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday urged the private sector to utilize the Research and Development (R&D) services and expertise of universities for their businesses' technological advancement to compete in international markets.

"I urge the private sector to collaborate with universities in all technological advancements to get the benefit of their R&D labs to meet international standards and increase the country's exports," he said addressing the launching ceremony of the Venture Capital Fund (VCF).

The minister said Rs

5 billion had been allocated under the initiative aimed at creating a conducive environment for the promotion of investment in digital technology. "Pakistan's future depends on matching the pace of digital technology."

The minister urged for establishing industry-academia linkages with private sector universities paving the way for development through applied research, adding development was not possible without increasing exports.

Highlighting the importance of producing quality and skilled human resources in achieving national prosperity and development goals, the minister said the incumbent government increased the develop-

ment budget of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) from Rs26 billion to Rs70 billion, which was almost 135 per cent unprecedented hike. Making a comparison, Ahsan Iqbal said the tertiary education rate in the world stood at around 40 per cent, India at 31 per cent, Bangladesh at 25 per cent and Pakistan, unfortunately, stand at 13 per cent only.

"We have to impart higher education to our youth besides equipping them with technological advancements," he said while declaring the country's 'youth a nuclear asset' in the economic field.

The minister said the country had the potential to become one of the lead-

ing and fastest-growing economies in the world in 10-15 years by ensuring peace, stability, and continuity of policies. "No country in the world has attained success in development without a decade of stability." Recounting the government's initiatives to match the technological changes taking place in the world, he said it established national centres for artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data cloud computing, automation and robotics. Besides, the minister said, a national centre for quantum computing had been set up laying a 'future foundation' for information technology infrastructure to contest the development pace at the international level.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal along with Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja launching Venture Capital Fund at Ministry of Planning.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Muhammad Zaman Mulla Khalil, Secretary General NBP Trade Unions Federation Pakistan, Syed Jahangir, Chairman NBPTUFP, Akhtar Ali Khan, President NBPTUFP, Anwar Shah, Joint Secretary NBPTUFP and Tariq Hussain, General Secretary NBP Employees Union (CHA) Balochistan during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad

Lucky cement achieves record-breaking profit in Fiscal Year 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lucky Cement Limited has achieved a significant milestone by announcing an all-time high consolidated profit after tax of Rs. 59.5 billion for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023 with Rs. 10.8 billion attributed to non-controlling interests. This marks an impressive 63.5% surge compared to the same period last year, translating to an EPS of Rs. 152.97 said a news

release. The remarkable increase in profit includes gain on disposal made by Lucky Core Industries, a subsidiary company of approximately 26.5% of the issued and paid-up share capital of NutriCo Moringa (Private) limited resulting in an after-tax gain of Rs. 9.6 billion.

In response to inquiries about the financial results for the year ended June 30, 2023.

PTA takes action against illegal internet service providers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has conducted a raid against an illegal internet service provider situated on Walton Road, Lahore.

According to a news release, an operational internet setup was discovered, being operated without valid license.

Senate body directed FBR to investigate, promptly resolve issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue Wednesday directed the FBR to investigate and promptly resolve the issue. A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue was held, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla in Chair, said a press release issued here.

The Senate body was briefed on claims of refund by M/S Kolachee Int (Pvt.) Ltd. Representatives of M/S apprised that a refund application was submitted in

FBR some 4 years ago for the supply of unfinished goods to the textile sector which falls within five zero-rated sectors. However, the FBR has rejected the application, stating that the taxpayer has to provide evidence for the claimed supplies. The Senate Committee deliberated on the selective opening of LCs to import EV cars in the country. Muhammad Akhtar Javed, Executive Director SBP, apprised that one window was provided in December to facilitate port clearance.

Khurshheed inaugurates power resumption at NJHP

LAHORE (APP): Subsequent to completion of restoration works in the tail race tunnel, Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) has resumed electricity generation. Federal Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah visited Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project and resumed the electricity generation by pressing the button, WAPDA spokesman told media here on Wednesday.

The minister also unveiled a plaque to mark resumption of electricity gen-

eration from the project. At present, Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project is providing 969 MW to the National Grid. The Federal Minister had a detailed visit of the Control Room and the Power House. Federal Secretary Water Resources Hassan Nasir Jami, Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), and Joint Secretary Water, Ministry of Water Resources, Syed Mehar Ali Shah also accompanied the Federal Minister.

Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah commended the efforts made by WAPDA, the

project team, the consultants and the contractors for resumption of electricity generation from the project. Chief Executive Officer Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project, Project Director, representatives of the consultants and the contractors were also present on the occasion.

The Federal Minister was briefed that electricity generation from Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project had to suspend in July 2022 due to blockage in the tail race tunnel caused by collapse of a part of its tail race tunnel.

Economic revival: a key area PM Sharif Govt to proud of

PESHAWAR (APP): Besides successfully overcoming the monster challenge of floods and improving bilateral relations with countries, the PMLN-led coalition government has been succeeded to bring the economy back on the right track and saving the country from an economic default in its 16-month rule.

Financial and economic experts said that the revival of IMF agreement was a big achievement of the 16-month government of Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif that has not only saved the country's from bankruptcy and economic default but also restored the confidence of international monetary institutions to invest in Pakistan.

Muhammad Naem, Professor of the Economics Department, University of Swabi said that saving the country from bankruptcy, IMF agreement and Economic Revival Plan (ERP), was one of the key achievements on the economic front of Prime Min-

ister Shehbaz Sharif Govt. He said that \$3 billion stand-by agreement with International Monetary Fund has helped Pakistan on economic, financial, investment and bilateral fronts and its trickled-down effects started with the rise of rupee value against the dollar and price stability in the open market. He said the economic revival plan was another achievement of the government that envisages capitalizing the country's untapped potential in key sectors of defence produc-

tion, agricultural, livestock, minerals & mining, IT and energy through indigenous development as well as investments especially from friendly countries.

Dr Muhammad Naem said the government has taken a bold step pertaining to establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to act as a single window interface for the potential investors and to adopt a unified approach. He said SIFC would shorten hitherto cumbersome and lengthy business pro-

cesses through a cooperative and collaborative approach with representation of all stakeholders besides creating horizontal-vertical synergy between federation and provinces. He said it would help facilitating timely decision making and avoiding duplication of effort besides ensuring swift projects implementation. Work on CPEC projects were expedited during PMLN led Government and second phase of CPEC was launched which magnified present Govt investment friendly policies.

Governor terms educated youth valuable asset, laptops distributes among students

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Governor Punjab Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman has said that the educated young generation was our valuable asset. Education, training and character building of the young generation are the guarantee of a bright future, he said while addressing the ceremony of giving laptops to meritorious students at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) on Wednesday.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor of the IUB Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, former parliamentarians Begum Parveen Masood Bhatti, Fauzia Ayub Qureshi, Hasina Naz, Khalid Mehmood Jajja, Afzal Gill, Vice Chancellor of the Cholistan University of Animal Sciences

Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Vice Chancellor Sadiq College Women University Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz, Vice Chancellor of the University of Gujrat Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mushahid Anwar, teachers and students were present.

The Governor said that during the previous tenure of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, more than 0.5 million laptops were given to deserving students on merit. This scheme has been relaunched and this month more than 3000 students of the IUB will be given laptops on merit, he expressed. He said that the superiority of merit was the distinction of the Pakistan Muslim League (N). He said that PTI used the

youth generation to promote hatred, adding, we will not allow the spread of hatred among the people of Pakistan through social media. He said that laptops had been provided to the youth on merit and their political affiliation was with any party.

The Governor Punjab said that according to the report of Transparency International, corruption had increased during the tenure of PTI. He said that the issue of the IUB had been exaggerated on social media. Associating dirty videos on social media with the University without research is hurtful, he said and added that a high-level investigation was being conducted on all aspects of the University's financial affairs, drugs and harassment.



PESHAWAR: Pakistan flags, bunting, printed shirts and other items are being selling on roadside stall in connection of Independence Day of Pakistan coming ahead, at Saddar road.

PML-N saved country from default: Hassan

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister Khawaja Ahmad Hassan on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team worked hard day and night to strengthen economy of the country and saved it from default.

Addressing a press conference after farewell meeting with heads of the local departments and staff at his office at Aiwan-e-Iqbal, he said the prime minister took difficult decisions and saved the coun-

try from default.

He said it was not an easy task to run a coalition government but the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) took the challenge and worked day and night for progress and prosperity of the country, adding that the government also took solid measures for the welfare of people.

The PM's coordinator said: "As a part of PM Shehbaz Sharif's team, he has tried to meet the vision of Prime Minister.

FPCCI strongly condemned desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden

KARACHI (APP): The president Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI) Irfan Iqbal Sheikh on Wednesday strongly condemned the utterly unacceptable, blasphemous and intolerable incident of desecration of the Holy Quran.

The business community collectively and strongly demands that the government of Pakistan should engage the Swedish government at the highest-level and convey our protest vociferously, unequivocally and categorically, FPCCI president said in a statement.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh maintained that the business community is the most peace-loving and law-abiding community; but, we cannot tolerate any such blasphemous incidents and the sanctity of our beloved religion comes first before any other interests.



BAHAWALPUR: Governor of the Punjab Engr. Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman Distributing Laptops to students at the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Program Ceremony at the Islamia University Bahawalpur.

Economic development must for country's prosperity: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi said that economic development was must for any country's prosperity.

During a visit to a private security office here Wednesday, he said that the restoration of the international community's confidence and promotion of foreign investment was needed for economic development.

He said that the founder leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave

priority to the economic prosperity of the people. He said the "Roti, Kapra aur Makan" was not just a slogan but a vision.

He said that former president Asif Ali Zardari had laid the foundation stone of the mega project China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the same vision, adding that the CPEC project had started the process of changing the country's destiny.

Likewise, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is also a mission of economic prosperity at the grass-roots level, he maintained.

Faisal Kundi mentioned that PPP Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was promoting a positive image of Pakistan at the international level following the vision of his grandfather.

Former President of District Bar Association Quazir Khan Miankhal, President of Anjuman Tajran eastern Circular Road Chaudhry Jameel Ahmed, PPP City President Seth Fazlur Rehman Baloch, Shafiullah Kundi, Farhan Leghari and State Life Building Dera in-charge Muhammad Sajid were also present on this occasion.

Court issues notice Proceedings against members of assembly involved in not showing gifts in assets

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued notice to Election Commission (EC) and other respondents on the petition seeking proceedings against all the members of assembly who have not shown Toshakhana gifts in their assets.

The petition filed by Nadeem Sarwar advocate came up for hearing before a single bench of LHC led by Justice Rahil Kamran here Wednesday.

The petitioner took the plea in the petition that chairman PTI was awarded three years punishment on Election Commission (EC) plea.

Corruption case: Court remands Moonis' secretary in NAB custody

LAHORE (APP): An accountability court on Wednesday handed over Sohail Asghar Awan, the secretary of former federal minister Moonis Elahi, to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on physical remand till August 16 in a corruption case.

Earlier, the NAB officials produced Sohail Asghar Awan before Accountability Court Judge Zubair Shahzad Kiyani. The officials submitted that the accused was involved in corruption.

The Chief Executive PCP Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas and Dean Faculty of Mechanical Industrial and Chemical Engineering UET Prof Dr. Sahar Noor signed the document in the presence of senior officials of PCP and UET Peshawar.

Prof. Dr Sahar Noor said, UET has initiated a number of projects funded by PCP in which the design of Smart Active Folding Wheel Chair (SMACT) holds special significance in terms of its efficient design and economical aspects. Under the project, 500 SMACT

KP Caretaker CM launches monsoon tree plantation campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): The caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Wednesday launched Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2023 by planting a sapling on the lawn of Chief Minister's House Peshawar. Provincial caretaker cabinet members Bakht Nawaz Khan, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel and relevant higher authorities of the forest department were also present on the occasion.

Briefing the chief minister about the monsoon plantation drive, he was told that

during the campaign, more than 13 million saplings will be planted across the province. The chief minister was also informed that under the 10 billion tree project, the total area of forests in the province has been increased by 6.3 per cent. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister lauded the efforts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa forest and wildlife department in promoting tree plantation and their preservation adding that it is gratifying that the Forest Department is taking result-oriented steps under a comprehensive strategy to this effect.



LAHORE: Canadian High Commissioner Ms. Leslie Scanlon meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi

MoU inked between PCP, UET Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) and the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar here on Wednesday.

The Chief Executive PCP Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas and Dean Faculty of Mechanical Industrial and Chemical Engineering UET Prof Dr. Sahar Noor signed the document in the presence of senior officials of PCP and UET Peshawar.

Prof. Dr Sahar Noor said, UET has initiated a number of projects funded by PCP in which the design of Smart Active Folding Wheel Chair (SMACT) holds special significance in terms of its efficient design and economical aspects. Under the project, 500 SMACT

Wheelchairs have been provided to the Physical Rehab Centers across Pakistan by the PCP.

He said, another flagship project, "Design of Supportive Devices" is also in the final stages of completion, funded by the Pakistan Science Foundation and PCP while the work on related projects for improving the wheel chair such as its braking system, footrest and designing of Trike (extension of SMACT wheel chairs) is also planned in future.

He expressed his utmost satisfaction over the fact that PCP, is a well reputed organisation of its kind in Pakistan and UET Peshawar will leave no stone unturned to do applied research in the field as part of its policy for knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

International News

Syria's Assad blames Turkey's Erdogan for violence in Syria, insists on pullout of Turkish troops

BEIRUT: Syria's President Bashar Assad slammed Turkey in comments published Wednesday, blaming Ankara for the uptick in violence in his war-torn country and insisting on the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syria.

Assad spoke in an interview with Sky News Arabia, his first interview with a foreign media outlet in months. The interview is to be fully aired later on Wednesday but Sky News Arabia released some excerpts ahead of the broadcast.

Turkey is a main backer of armed opposition fighters who have been trying to remove Assad

from power and has carried out three major incursions into northern Syria since 2016. Turkish forces control parts of northern Syria.

Assad, who is backed by Russia and Iran, has managed over the past few years to retake most of the territory with the help of his allies, and turn the tide of war in his favor. Syrian rebels and Turkey-backed opposition forces now only hold a small northwestern corner of Syria, where fighting and violence have persisted.

"Terrorism in Syria is made in Turkey," Assad said. He also denied rumors of an upcoming meeting between him and his

Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan despite meetings between Turkey and Syria's defense and foreign ministers under Russian and Iranian mediation to restore strained ties.

Damascus maintains that Ankara must put forward a timetable for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Syria in order to normalize relations. In May, the ministers agreed to set up a "roadmap" to improve relations.

"Erdogan's objective in meeting me is to legitimize the Turkish occupation in Syria," Assad said in Wednesday's interview. "Why should I and Erdogan meet? To have soft drinks?"

Rahul Gandhi slams Indian government inaction on Manipur violence

NEW DELHI: India's opposition leader Rahul Gandhi condemned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inaction over deadly ethnic conflict in the country's northeast on Wednesday, in his first parliamentary speech since his defamation conviction was suspended.

Modi's administration is being forced this week to defend its conduct over violence in Manipur

state that has killed at least 120 people. Gandhi's fiery address to the chamber was part of a no-confidence debate demanding the government's resignation for letting the unrest fester for months.

"You are throwing kerosene in the whole country. You threw kerosene in Manipur, and lit a spark," Gandhi said, with cheers from supporters and jeers from rival lawmakers.

Over 90 reporters questioned in Iran since Amini protests

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities have questioned or arrested over 90 journalists since nationwide protests rocked the Islamic republic last year, local media reported on Tuesday. Mass demonstrations erupted in September 2022 following the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian-Kurd Mahsa Amini. Hundreds of people including security forces were killed and thousands arrested over their participation.

According to RT, the incident occurred within the premises of the Zagorsk Optical-Mechanical Plant — a designing and manufacturing optical and electronic equipment company



Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey declares a state of emergency in Boston, citing the influx of migrants to the state in need of shelter.

Blast in Russian factory injures 52 people with 5 others feared under debris

MOSCOW: As many as 52 people were forced to seek medical assistance including three in critical condition after a power blast rocked a factory just outside the Russian capital city of Moscow Wednesday, authorities said.

According to RT, the incident occurred within the premises of the Zagorsk Optical-Mechanical Plant — a designing and manufacturing optical and electronic equipment company

— and the preliminary findings show that the blast originated in the pyrotechnics warehouse.

Andrey Vorobyev, the Governor of the Moscow Region said that the blast inflicted injuries upon 31 individuals, with three of them critical, later increasing the number of injured to 43.

He further stated that they were taken to a local hospital, with six of them suffering burns and head injuries, and are being

treated in intensive care. He further noted that a total of 52 people sought medical assistance after the blast, adding that five people may still be trapped under the rubble.

In response to the situation, a comprehensive mass evacuation plan has been set in motion, encompassing all facilities within the factory's vicinity.

Local media showed smoke ascending from the factory, casting a shadow over nearby structures.

33 dead, 18 still missing after record Beijing rains: officials

BEIJING: Thirty-three people have been confirmed dead and 18 are still missing after Beijing's heaviest rains on record, officials said on Wednesday.

China's capital has been hit by record downpours in recent weeks, damaging infrastructure and deluging swathes of the city's suburbs and surrounding areas.

Officials said on Wednesday that 33 had died in the recent bad weather in Beijing, mainly by flooding

and buildings collapsing, almost three times the figure given by officials last Tuesday. "I would like to express my deep condolences to those who died in the line of duty and the unfortunate victims," Xia Linmao, Beijing's vice mayor, told a press conference, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Scores have died in the floods across northern China, with Beijing on Friday saying 147 deaths or disappearances last month were caused by natural disasters.

Iran says it has obtained supersonic cruise missile technology- Tasnim

DUBAI: Iran has obtained the technology to build a supersonic cruise missile which is still under test, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

The announcement comes amid rising tensions with the U.S. in the Gulf and following the unveiling last week of new vessels equipped with 600-km range missiles. "This missile, which is a new generation of Iranian-made cruise missiles,

US vows to keep Syria's chemical weapons program in UN spotlight over Russian & Chinese opposition

MONITORING DESK UNITED NATIONS: The United States and its allies vowed Tuesday to keep Syria's failure to account for its chemical weapons program in the spotlight at the U.N. Security Council every month despite opposition from Russia and China.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council Syrian President Bashar Assad's government "has repeatedly lied to the international community" and to investigators from the international chemical weapons watchdog, which has confirmed that it used these banned weapons on at least nine occasions.

She said the Biden administration will continue to demand a full accounting from Syria as it pledged after joining the

Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2013, when it was pressed by its close ally Russia following a deadly chemical weapons attack in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta, which the West blamed on Damascus.

For the first time, Russia and China refused to speak at the monthly meeting on the Syria chemical weapons issue, saying they are repetitive and should be cut back.

Syria's minister counsellor Alhakan Dandy did speak, saying his country was surprised at this month's meeting "given that there have been no developments that would require it," other than what he called continuous attempts by the United States "to exploit the chemical weapons file to serve their agenda of hostility against Syria."

South Korea says Myanmar arms ban in place after U.N. concern

MONITORING DESK SEOUL: South Korea said on Wednesday its ban on the sale of arms to Myanmar remained in place even though it had invited an envoy appointed by its military rulers to an event promoting the sale of weapons.

Thomas Andrews, U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, had expressed "extreme concern" that the Myanmar ambassador, Thant Sin, attended the event hosted by South Korea's foreign ministry in May, saying it had legitimised the junta and raised doubts about South Korea's ban.

Myanmar has been in crisis since the military ousted an elected government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, with most Western governments isolating the generals and cutting off arms sales but others, including Russia and China, maintaining close relations.

"Our government has been still strictly implementing countermeasures against Myanmar since they were announced shortly after the outbreak of the crisis, including a ban on exports of military supplies, and there is no change in this position," the South Korean ministry said in a statement.

Andrews had said in a letter to South Korea's diplomatic mission in Geneva that the envoy's "participation in the event legitimises an illegal and brutal military junta".

The invitation to Thant Sin also "raises doubts" about South Korea's ban on arms exports to Myanmar and could imply its intention to permit the sale, despite the junta's responsibility for attacks on civilians, Andrews said.



Thailand alliance expands in new effort to form government.

CJ IHC says: Who ordered to send Imran to Attock jail instead of Adiala Jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has sought reply from federation and Punjab government about facilities in jail for PTI chairman and his shifting to jail.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amir Farooq has remarked who ordered to send PTI chairman to District Jail Attock instead of Adiala Jail. The petition filed by chairman PTI seeking his shifting from district jail Attock to Adiala jail came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by CJ IHC Amir Farooq here Wednesday.

PTI chairman has filed petition seeking

court's order for providing a class in jail, his medical check up by his personal physician Dr Faisal besides allowing him to meet his legal team, members of family and senior leadership of party. Sher Afzal Marwat advocate appeared in the court on behalf of the petitioner.

He took the plea the court had ordered a day before for arranging meeting with PTI chairman but permission was not given to meet PTI chairman despite court's orders.

CJ IHC inquired did they tell any reason for not arranging meeting with PTI chairman.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique briefing on insightful interactive discussion with the media personnel at local hotel.

GoB approves increase in special conveyance allowance of disabled employees

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has given approval to the increase in special conveyance allowance of the provincial government employees with disabilities.

According to an official hand out issued here on Wednesday, the approval was given in the special conveyance allowance of the employees with disabilities with advance approval of the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo.

The provincial Finance Department has increased the special conveyance allowance to Rs. 4,000/- from Rs. 2,000 monthly.

It may be mentioned here that the special allowance would be given to the employees who have been recruited on the quota of disabled employees.

Similarly, the employees would also be entitled to draw the special conveyance allowance who were declared disabled by any authorized medical board.

Speaker Balochistan Assembly gets 209yr old laws for library

QUETTA (APP): Parliamentary Secretary Law and Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi on Wednesday handed over six volumes of 209 years old

occasion. Speaker, Balochistan Assembly hailed Parliamentary Secretary and the Law Department for compiling the two hundred and



laws to Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali for the library of the provincial assembly.

Deputy Speaker Sardar Babar Musa Khail, Secretary Balochistan Assembly Tahir Shah Kakar were also present on the

nine-year-old laws and updating them on the website of the Law Department.

"It was indeed a very difficult task to consolidate the laws based on more than two centuries of history, Jan Jamali said, adding that it will always be remembered.

Dr. Naem for creating awareness among mothers' milk vital for children

QUETTA (APP): Director Nutrition Program, Dr. Naem Zarkoon on Wednesday said that stakeholders, scholars and civil society members have to play their role to promote awareness among mothers' milk importance for children.

Highlighting the benefits of breast milk of mother, he said that healthy and energetic children were the foundation of a healthy society saying that there was a need to raise awareness about the importance of mother's milk.

Dr. Naem said that the price of mother's milk could not be put in the world adding that every mother wanted to

breastfeed her baby to make him a healthy citizen.

"The newborn baby should be given breast milk immediately after birth. The baby would be exclusively breastfed until the age of six, do not even give water", he said. He further said that as soon as the baby was born, breast milk should be fed to the newborn within the first hour while yellow thick milk was full of immune components, it was very useful and healthy for the baby. The Dr. Naem said that children across the country were severely deficient in iron and vitamins saying more than half of Pakistan's children were being suffered from hidden malnutrition.



QUETTA: Communist Party Pakistan hold protest outside Quetta Press Club.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a ceremony regarding Special Incentives Package for Overseas Pakistanis.

ECNEC approves various national development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), which approved various national development projects.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Special Assistant of the Prime Minister on Finance Tariq Bajwa, secretaries and other senior officers from the federal ministries and provincial departments attended the meeting, a Finance Ministry press release said.

ECNEC approved a World Bank-funded project of the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives titled "Resilient Housing Reconstruction and Restoration in all districts of Balochistan at a cost of Rs. 43,400 million. The project would be executed by the Government of Balochistan through Federal PMU & provincial PUI to support communities to reconstruct

their houses affected by floods in 2022 in the province. The entire cost will be borne by the Federal Government.

The Committee also considered a project of the Board of Revenue (BoR) regarding the "Punjab Urban Land Systems Enhancement Project (PULSE)" at an updated cost of Rs 26,440,704 million, to be fully financed by the World Bank. The project is to be executed by the Punjab Board of Revenue (BoR) through Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) in the Punjab province.

A project of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan titled "Establishment of Regional Grids in Gilgit-Baltistan Phase-I (Revised)" was also approved with rationalized scope and cost of Rs. 9,148,509 million with FEC of Rs 1,679,274 million.

The project would be executed by W&P Dept, Gilgit-Baltistan in Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu districts.

The Ministry of Communication submitted a summary regarding the

project "Dualization of road from Chistan to Chak No 46/3R via Dahmawala (41.154 km) including two-lane link road from Dahmawala to Chaki 175m (4.859 km)" to be executed in the Bahawalpur District of the Punjab province by the National Highway Authority and the Ministry of Communications. The project was approved by ECNEC at a total cost of Rs. 8,962,982 million without FEC on a 50:50 cost-sharing basis between the Federal Government and the Government of Punjab with the condition of confirmation of Punjab Government cost share.

A project submitted by the Ministry of Water Resources, namely "Construction of Awaram Dam (Revised)" was also accorded approval by ECNEC at a cost of Rs. 23,579,263 without FEC. It would be executed in the Awaram District of Balochistan by the provincial Irrigation Department. The would be financed by federal and provincial governments on an 80:20 cost-sharing basis.



QUETTA: A delegation comprising the office bearers of Federation of Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association meeting with Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Hanza Shafqat promoted in Grade-20

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) officer, serving in Grade-19, Muhammad Hanza Shafqat has been promoted in the Grade-20.

According to an official notification issued here by the Establishment Division, the promotion has been granted on recommendation of the Federal Selection Board.

It may be mentioned here that Muhammad Shafqat has been serving as Secretary Information Department, Government of Balochistan.

Shahzain Bugti pays farewell visit to ANF Headquarters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti here on Wednesday paid a farewell visit to Anti-Narcotics Control (ANF) Headquarters.

Director General (DG) ANF Major General Mohammad Aneeq ur Rehman Malik, Hilal Imtiaz (Military) welcomed the Federal Minister. Other senior officers of ANF were also present on the occasion.

Appreciating the performance of all departments of the institution, the minister expressed satisfaction and good wishes.

The DG ANF also presented a souvenir to Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti.

Qadri bids adieu to politics

LONDON (Online): Chief of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) Dr Tahir ul Qadri has announced to quit politics.

He made this announcement during a press conference here in London. He expressed his views with reference to his political future. Announcing to quit politics on this occasion he said he has discharged his obligation. I am now satisfied. He went on to say "I made calls to 22 crores people. My workers were martyred. In Islamabad I gave call every day that if you don't rise up today then you will never be able to rise.

Rana Sanaullah hails Iraqi government to facilitate Pak pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday appreciated the Government of Iraq for making special arrangements for Pakistani visitors to holy places. The minister during his recent visit to Iraq, had requested the government for special arrangements for the pilgrims who face difficulties visiting holy places in Iraq, a news release said.

The government of Iraq on his request increased the quota of pilgrims up to one hundred thousand and issuance of 30 days free visa to the pilgrims. Earlier the pilgrims were given 15 days paid visa.

Pakistani pilgrims would be allowed to enter Iraq through Baghdad and Al-Najaf Airports and Al-Saib port through while the government of Iraq uplifts the restriction of entry and exit from one airport.



GILGIT: People crossing the blocked road on Juglot Skardu Road after land sliding near Rondou area.

Stable, consistent political environment crucial to ensure progress: Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah on Wednesday underscored the need for a more stable and consistent political environment to ensure the progress of the nation.

In his address during the farewell session of the National Assembly, he highlighted Pakistan's unique history of constitution-making and dissolution. He emphasized that the constitution of the country was not followed, fostering a sense of complexity in its governance.

Minister Khurshid Shah drew attention to the period spanning from 1988 to 1997 when successive assemblies were elected and subsequently dissolved. He underscored the need for a more stable and consistent

political environment to ensure the nation's progress.

Shah paid tribute to the memory of the revered martyr, Benazir Bhutto, attributing her sacrifice to the preservation of the very house he was addressing. He revealed that, in pursuit of restoring the democratic system, the government had extended support even to individuals and groups they initially did not intend to support.

Moreover, the Minister underscored the achievement of the present assembly in completing a full five-year term. He urged fellow legislators and citizens alike to introspect about the gains and losses experienced during this time, encouraging a collective understanding of the nation's trajectory.

PM announces package to facilitate Overseas Pakistanis with multiple initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday announced a package to facilitate overseas Pakistanis with multiple initiatives and expressed optimism that the upcoming government would continue its implementation.

The prime minister, on the occasion, said that Pakistani diaspora had been living in different parts of the world, and on the basis of their hard work, contributions and innovations, they had earned fame for the country.

Underlining the need to facilitate them without wasting time, he said such initiatives would provide overseas Pakistanis a sort of encouragement.

"They are the great ambassadors of Pakistan. An if provided with the skill development training with certifications from the global companies, the Pa-

kistani manpower can further supplement the valuable remittances being sent to the country," he added.

In the Gulf and Europe, the prime minister said, there was a huge market for skilled labour, adding if the models and the patterns used by certain countries to train their manpower, were adopted in Pakistan, they could equip their manpower properly to meet growing modern-day requirements across the world.

The prime minister announced the package for overseas Pakistanis which included establishment of special courts to resolve the property issues faced by the expatriates, one such was being set up in Islamabad which would be replicated in other provinces, establishment of hot lines in the offices under all the chief secretaries and the ICT chief commissioner,

setting up Overseas Commission in all provinces, reservation of 10 percent quota for the overseas Pakistanis in all public sector housing projects with 5 percent rebate in case of foreign exchange payment, establishment of dedicated counters at all airports of the country, awarding top ten overseas Pakistan who contributed remittances, allocation of 5 percent seats in the professional public sector educational institutes across Pakistan, need-based scholarship to the overseas Pakistan in the pursuit of higher education, dedicated national saving schemes at attractive rates and linking of NADRA central system at the union levels for various facilities and increasing number of camp offices for attestation of documents, online biometric verification and auto removal of blacklist passports etc.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired today meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), which approved various national development projects.

Senate passes resolution demanding timely elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Wednesday passed a unanimous resolution, presented by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed of Jamaat-e-Islami stressing the constitutional mandate for timely elections in the country.

According to the resolution, the Supreme Court of Pakistan reiterated the foundational principles of the state's Constitution and stressed the paramount authority of Allah Almighty over the entire universe.

In a landmark decision, the Court emphasized that the governance of Pakistan operates within the confines of Allah's prescribed limits, with elected representatives serving as custodians of this sacred trust.

The ruling highlighted the meticulous procedural

framework outlined in the Constitution for the selection of elected officials, underscoring the necessity for adherence to these guidelines across all government bodies.

The resolution said the Constitution mandates a detailed and mandatory procedure for the election of representatives, which applies to all institutions within Pakistan's administrative structure.

Further reinforcing the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the tenure of national and provincial assemblies, as outlined in Article 224 of the Constitution, necessitates the timely conduct of elections upon completion of their term. This provision safeguards the integrity of the electoral process

and ensures the continuity of representative governance.

The Court's ruling clarified that individuals or entities possess only the authority granted to them by the Constitution or the law, as per Article 4. The supervisory role of the caretaker government established after the dissolution of assemblies, as defined in Article 230 of the Elections Act of 2018, is limited to routine decisions during the interregnum and does not extend to major policy decisions.

The resolution said the Supreme Court underscored that the responsibility for organizing elections within the prescribed timeframe, as stipulated in Article 224, lies squarely with the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Imran's govt wrong policies brought Pak to brink of default: Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz while appreciating prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team for bringing back the country from the verge of default on Wednesday said that wrong policies of Imran Khan-led government had brought the country to the brink of default.

In his farewell address at the National Assembly, he said no doubt he contested the election on the PTI ticket but he and some other colleagues opposed the wrong policies of Imran Khan and parted way with PTI. Even Deputy Commissioners and District Police Officers were being posted in Punjab after taking bribes by CM Usman Buzdar and Farah Gogi, he said.

AJK President advises LBs members to adopt motto "public service"

MIRPUR AJK (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that local body representatives should make public service as their motto. The AJK president expressed these views while talking to Mayor Mirpur Chaudhry Usman Khalid, who called on him on Wednesday.

Barrister Chaudhry said that after holding the local body elections in Azad Kashmir, the power has now shifted to the lower level. "Since the power has been transferred to the grassroots level, the onus of responsibility to serve the masses and address their problems lies with the elected representatives of the local government.



QUETTA: CEO Aid Adil Jahangir, President Quetta Press Club and other at launching ceremony of Right to Information Balochistan Act 2021.

Govt. land of worth millions of rupees evacuated from land grabbers in Hub

Independent Report
QUETTA: The district administration has evacuated the government land of worth millions of rupees from the land grabbers in Hub on Wednesday.

According to the official reports reaching here, the grand operation against encroachment was launched under leadership of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Hub, Syed Yasin Akhtar and Assistant Commissioner Hub, Syed Samiullah.

Kakar reviews issues faced by medical colleges

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Isfand Yar Khan Kakar on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the issues faced by the medical colleges of Balochistan.

The principals of the medical colleges including Prof. Dr. Shabir Ahmed Lehri Vice Chancellor BUMHS, Dr. Tehmina Asad Executive Member PMDC, Prof. Dr. Samad Gichki Principal JMC and Prof. Dr. Afzal Khaliq Principal MMC attended the meeting.

They thoroughly briefed the secretary health about the problems faced

here that the operation was carried out on directives of the Deputy Commissioner Hub.

The encroachments established on the official land were also removed through the Heavy machinery.

Moreover, the depots of the illegal petrol pumps set up at Hub bypass were also demolished.

The district administration has warned that no one would be allowed to establish encroachments on the government land.

by the medical colleges of Balochistan.

Addressing the participants, the secretary said that steps are underway to provide modern medical facilities to the medical colleges at the district level in Balochistan.

The functioning of medical colleges will not only reduce the burden of patients on the hospitals of Quetta, but the people of Balochistan will have access to treatment facilities at their doorstep, he said.

The secretary assured the head of the colleges of early resolution of the issues on priority basis.