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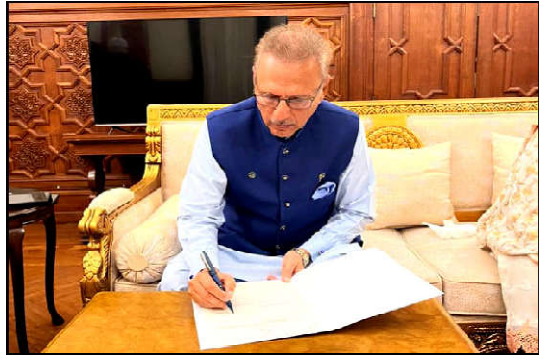
Vol. XIII No. 237 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Thursday August 10, 2023, Muharramul Haram 22, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

President dissolves National Assembly on PM advice

Dr. Alvi dissolved the lower house of parliament under the Article 58(1) of the Constitution

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi approved the summary for dissolving the National Assembly (NA) at midnight on Wednesday at outgoing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's advice, marking an end to the current government's tenure. The notification for the dissolution of the assembly



was issued by the Aiwani-Sadr, which said the NA was dissolved under Article 58 of the Constitution. According to Article 58 of the Constitution, if the

president fails to dissolve the assembly within 48 hours after the PM has recommended so, the assembly automatically stands dissolved. Earlier in a state-

ment, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi confirmed the development, saying that the elected government has completed its 5-year constitutional term. The parliamentary affairs ministry will issue a notification on the approval of the summary and the formation of the caretaker government, he added. Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz and Leader of the Opposition in NA now have three days as per the Constitution to finalise a name for the caretaker prime minister.



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

Farewell address at National Assembly

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 pre-

vious 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. Reiterating the condemnation of the May 9 arson, the prime minister said it would be remembered as the Black Day in history as it marked the "worst conspiracy" against the state of Pakistan, the Pakistan Army and Chief of Army Staff, as well as those who sacrificed their lives to safeguard the nation. He said the House should again take notice of that heart-wrenching incident and also pass another resolution to condemn it.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the House that he would send the advice for National Assembly's dissolution on Wednesday night. He said that he would meet Opposition Leader Raja Riaz to hold a consultation to finalise the name of the interim prime minister. "These 16 months were the toughest trial of my life during my 38 years of political career when the country was faced with inflation, skyrocketing oil prices, and political turmoil.



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 scout 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 scout capabilities of long range SH-15 artillery guns and innovative equipment display, an Inter Ser-

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.

Asif terms economic stability biggest challenge after next general elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday said economic stability would be the biggest challenge for the upcoming government after the general elections. In his farewell speech at the National Assembly, he said the country witnessed stability after November 2022 and further stability will come after the next general elections, he said. The minister stressed the need for collective efforts to put Pakistan on the path of economic stability by utilizing its own resources instead of relying on foreign loans. Pakistan has sufficient resources for attaining self-sufficiency, he said. He also passionately appealed to the judiciary to take up the pending tax cases of FBR worth Rs 2670 billion. Had the half of the amount recovered, we would not need to go the IMF or other lending agency for borrowing loans, he said. He also requested for vacating stays granted by various courts several years ago into spectrum related cases worth over \$ 1.5 billion.

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 over 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 Minis-



try 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.

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 con-

sultation 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. Marriyum Aurangzeb conveyed that the Parliament now holds the authority to appoint the PEMRA

Chairman. This proposal swiftly garnered endorsement from the Prime Minister during the committee meeting. Additionally, she contrasted the earlier PEMRA Ordinance of 2002, wherein the Chairman of PEMRA held significant authority over channels, suspensions, licenses, and program suspensions. In comparison, the present bill reallocated this power, empowering the Council of Authority and incorporating a mechanism for appeals from those who feel aggrieved.

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 witicism 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 — that 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 the 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 — 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 development. 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 Morinaga (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 a refund application was provided in December to facilitate port clearance.

Khursheed 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 Khursheed 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 Khursheed Ahmed Shah commended the efforts made by WAPDA, the project team, the consultants and the contractors for resumption of electricity generation of 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 Minister

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 processes 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.

Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Vice Chancellor Sadiq College Women University Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Saqia 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 re-launched 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.



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.

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.

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.

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



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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, 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 north-western corner of Syria, where fighting and violence have persisted.

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.

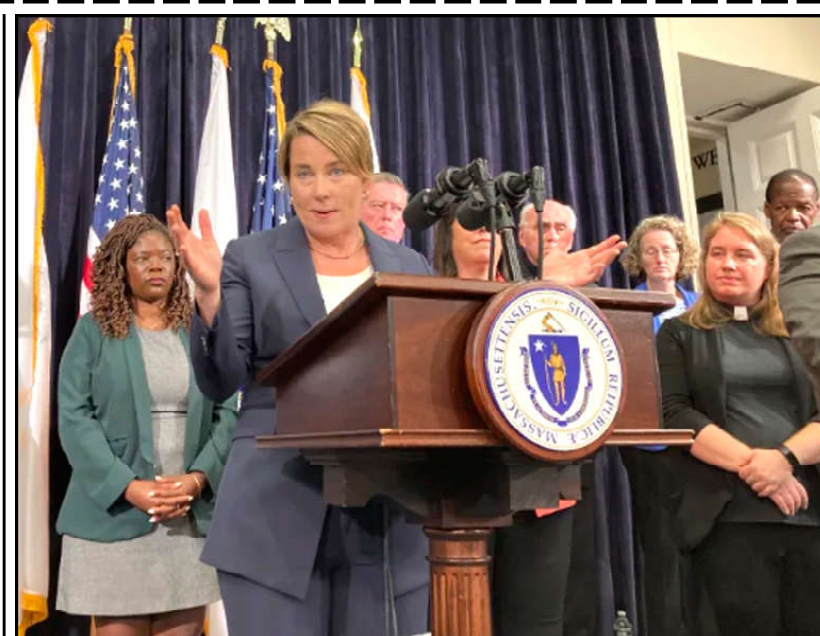
Rahul Gandhi slams Indian government inaction on Manipur violence

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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

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 legitimized the junta and raised doubts about South Korea's ban.

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.

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.



Thailand alliance expands in new effort to form government.

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 hotlines in the offices under all the chief secretaries and 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 of 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.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, High Commissioner of Malaysia Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, and other ambassadors of ASEAN countries cutting the cake during the 56th Anniversary of the ASEAN Day Celebration at a local hotel.

Jazz, UNDP extend collaboration to promote women-led social innovation in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's largest digital operator, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have launched the Women Initiative in Social Entrepreneurship (WISE) to promote women-led social innovation in Pakistan.

The WISE Bootcamps, registrations for which are open now, aim to empower 400 women social entrepreneurs across 12 cities of Pakistan with essential business knowledge and skills to manage sustainable social enterprises, says the press release.

To strengthen the start-up ecosystem in Pakistan, in 2020, Jazz and UNDP partnered to launch SDG Bootcamps to promote social innovation and entrepreneurship by youth in Pakistan. The SDG Bootcamps engaged 401 participants, 40% of them being women entrepreneurs. The solutions addressed by these enterprises included climate action, health, and digital transformation. Continuing the partnership – and with implementation through the School of Lead-

ership Foundation (SoLF) – the WISE Bootcamps will focus on strengthening Pakistan's women social entrepreneurs.

"WISE is aimed at empowering Pakistani women by creating opportunities for financial and digital inclusion for the women and youth," said Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz. "This outcome resonates well with Jazz's purpose of improving the lives and livelihoods of women in Pakistan through technology. We hope that women-led businesses in WISE will address unique challenges and create innovative solutions that positively impact their communities and beyond."

"Digital space in Pakistan must be a place for gender equality, for social and economic empowerment and inclusion. Knowledge and skills of technology and innovative entrepreneurship are all part of this ecosystem. If we get it right, development indicators of inclusion and gender equality will achieve their positive trajectory," remarked Samuel Rizk.

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 Muhammad 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.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to discuss the project of setting up an Olympic Village in Islamabad.

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 PIU 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 Dahnawala (41.154 km) including two-lane link road from Dahmawala to Chaki 175m (4.859 km)" to be executed in the Bahawalnagar 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 Awaran District of Balochistan by the provincial Irrigation Department. The would be financed by federal and provincial governments on an 80:20 cost-sharing basis.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Scemez Ezdi, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Govt approves new National Aviation Policy -2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Wednesday said that the federal government has approved the new National Aviation Policy -2023 to help reviving the national carrier and promoting public-private joint ventures.

Addressing a press conference, the minister expressed the hope that under this new policy all missing aspects will be covered and private investors will be encouraged to invest in

this sector.

He said that the policy will also help in promotion of the domestic aviation industry, attract private investment for the management and development of new airports, increasing facilities for passengers, improving consumers' protection and encouraging aviation sector.

He said that the privatization or public-private investment is the only option to improve the standard of aviation sector in

Pakistan as attracting international brands is not possible when the sector is working in limited resources. He said that the capturing the business of international brands is the need of the hours to increase business activities at country's airports to increase revenue generation.

He said that the Islamabad Airport was being outsourced through international competitive bidding for 15 years but no employee would lose job.

CPEC to contribute peace, prosperity in region: Chinese CG

KARACHI (APP): Chinese Consul General in Karachi Yang Yundong, on Wednesday, said that future of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is very promising and it will greatly contribute to peace and prosperity of both countries as well as the region.

The Chinese CG, while addressing a press conference along with Commercial Counselor Yang Guangyuan here, expressed the hope that CPEC will embrace a brighter and more splendid next decade propelling the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership of both countries to new heights.

Since launch of CPEC in 2013, China and Pakistan have been advancing the project under the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and

shared benefits, and have achieved several early harvests, he said and observed that it has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration.

Highlighting the major achievement of CPEC in ten years, he informed that 36 projects have been completed or are under construction, which has brought \$ 25.4 billion of direct investment to Pakistan, achieving cumulative revenue of \$17.55 billion, cumulative tax payments of \$2.12 billion, creating 236,000 job opportunities.

It helped add 8,000 megawatts of electricity, 510 kilometres of highways, and 886 km of national core transmission lines, he added.

IHC seeks comments on petition for delimitation of constituencies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday served notices to respondents in a petition seeking to hold delimitation of constituencies under the results of fresh census in the country.

The court sought comments from Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and federal government against the petition and adjourned further hearing.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by a citizen Muhammad Ashraf regarding the aforesaid matter. The petitioner prayed the court to issue orders for holding delimitation of constituencies across the country.

CJHC 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.

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.

Both the government decided to take stern action against the tour operators charging extra fees from pilgrims whereas both countries will regulate the tourism companies to ensure better provision of facilities to the visitors. Pakistan's embassy in Iraq will make arrangements to control the issue of overstaying at the end of the visa whereas Pakistani investors would be issued electronic visas. The minister thanked the government of Iraq for the special arrangement on his request and said that such steps would strengthen.

17 students complete internship program with Islamabad Capital Police

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: 17 students from Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Science and Technology (SZABIST) and Capital University of science and technology (CUST) completed their internship with the Islamabad Capital Police, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the Islamabad capital police are acquainting citizens and students about traffic rules through various programmes. Undersuch a programme, a batch of SZABIST and CUST University students completed

policing in the city. "The young generation is our asset and their cooperation as well as responsible attitude is crucial for a safe road environment in the city," he said.

The concluding ceremony was attended by University students as well as officials from the education wing of Islamabad Capital Police. The CTO Islamabad distributed certificates among the students and hoped that they would further educate and brief their fellows and family members about road safety rules and hoped that a disciplinary traffic system could be ensured through cooperation of the young generation.

In the end, he further



their internship spanning 65 hours.

Addressing the concluding ceremony, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that efforts were underway to promote friendly

said that those completing such programmes with the Islamabad capital police were brand ambassadors and were entrusted with the task to cooperate in ensuring a safe road environment in the city.

IWMB, CDA at odds in Senate body over golf course construction in MHP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Wednesday came at a disagreement over the matter of construction of the golf course at the land of Margalla Hills National Park.

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change chaired by Senator Scemez Ezdi along with committee members expressed their deep concerns about the encroachment on the National Park's land in the federal capital.

A comprehensive update was furnished to the committee regarding the news of a golf course construction within Margalla Hills National Park (MHPN) near Sinyari village.

Chairperson, IWMB, Rina Saeed Stated that ongoing demarcation of the National Park Boundary was following court directives, adding that 138 acres of land had purportedly been allocated by CDA for the golf course construction, a move contested as encroaching upon Margalla National Park Land.



ISLAMABAD: A female traffic police warden is performing her duty at D-Chowk as the authorities appointed new crew to implement traffic rules effectively in Federal Capital.