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Country's economic indicators improving Nawaz fires broadside at Imran, facilitators after re-election as PML-N president

Ex-PM vehemently criticises decision by former chief justice Saqib Nisar, declaring it has been discarded as 'trash'; Nawaz's love, services to nation made him party President again: PM Shehbaz



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif congratulates former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on being elected unopposed as President of PML-N in Lahore.

LAHORE (Agencies): Former prime minister and newly elected President of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Nawaz Sharif, has once again accused Imran Khan

of relying on military support for his political ascent. Sharif was elected unopposed as the president of the ruling party earlier today, coincidentally, the same day Pakistan con-

ducted nuclear tests in 1998 during the PML-N's second term in government. "Imran Khan started his politics on the shoulders of the army. I personally approached him for collaboration, and he agreed, but then planned protests from London with a general, a cleric from Canada, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, and others. Protests began, and I was asked to resign. I said do whatever you want; Nawaz Sharif never resigns," he remarked while addressing the party's general council meeting, where Sharif's presidency was confirmed on Tuesday.

Sharif quoted former ISI chief General (ret'd) Zaheerul Islam, saying he had said they tried differ-

ent government, Shahid Rind.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing a press conference at CM Secretariat regarding the decision taken of posts in education department and other issues.

Going to announce result of tests conducted by SBKWU: All recruitments to be made in all departments on contract basis, merit to prevail, declares CM

"Provincial budget for next financial year to be presented on June 21 or 22; leaves of officers and staff of Finance, P&D departments cancelled; graph of non-development budget increasing at fast pace"

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has categorically declared that all the recruitments would be made in all government departments on contract basis, and adding he assured that merit would prevail at all cost.

The Chief Minister was addressing a hurriedly called press conference at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday.

He was flanked by the Provincial Ministers Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Mir Ali Madad Jatak, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, MPA Zamarak Khan Achakzai and spokesman of provin-

cial government, Shahid Rind. He said that we had received certain complaints about selling of the jobs in different departments, but there were no solid evidences about the issue.

However, we have firm commitment to ensure merit in recruitments to be made in future.

Referring the tests conducted for teachers under the SBK women university, the Chief Minister announced that we are going to announce result of the tests conducted already.

He said that merit would prevail in the recruitments, and in this regard, a committee comprising se-

nior bureaucrats would conduct interviews of the successful candidates.

He reiterated his government's resolve to bring reforms in the education sector saying that the teachers would be appointed on merit.

He said that if we made compromise on recruitment of the teachers violating merit, then we would ruin our future generation.

Referring the next financial year's budget, the Chief Minister announced we are going to present the province's budget for the year 2024-25 on June 21 or 22.

In this regard, we have cancelled leaves of all the

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PM for minimum load-shedding for public relief in sizzling summer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to minimise the ongoing load-shedding in different areas through better load management, considering the public relief in sizzling weather.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting on load management and power theft, reiterated that the government would deal strictly with the power thieves and the ongoing mission against them would be taken to the logical end.

Vowing to hold a monthly review of the power theft situation, he asked the provincial governments, law enforcement agencies and other departments to extend their support in the anti-power theft drive in the national interest and for the country's progress.

The prime minister told the participants of the meeting that the govern-

ment in no way would tolerate the over-billing.

He directed to accelerate the privatisation process of the power distribution companies by engaging the experts and formulate a strategy to solarise the tube wells in Balochistan.

During the briefing on load management and power theft issue, it was told that under a joint strategy formulated following a conversation between

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and federal minister for power, it had been agreed to reduce load shedding and line losses and ensure recovery of dues from defaulters in the province.

It was told that areas with more power theft and line losses and low recovery rate were being subjected to load shedding and that the upgradation of the south-north power transmission line would help improve the system.



OTTAWA: Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Senior Judge SC of Pakistan meeting with Chief Justice of Canada Honorable Richard Wagner.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on Electricity Supply Load Management and Anti-Power Theft Campaign.

Gulf created between State & youth thru wrong narrative:

CM pledges to foil all types of conspiracies against Pakistan

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti states process of dialogue to remain continued; ready for talks with them at every forum

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has made pledge to foil all types of conspiracies against Pakistan.

He said that the conspiracies were hatched for dividing nation on the basis of religion and linguistic besides terrorism. However, the Pak armed forces and nation foiled all kinds of conspiracies against the country through national unity and solidarity.

He said that it is everyone's democratic right to have individual opinion in a healthy society. However, it is necessary to analyze the personal opinion on the scale of ground reality and truth. Besides, the deep verification of any

popular narrative is very essential.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Chief Minister while addressing the closing ceremony of 13th National Security Workshop-Balochistan here on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister maintained that the world went towards social media platform after making preparation in advance globally. But on the other hand, the social media divided our nation without mature conscience in the social values, he regretfully pointed out.

He on the occasion went on to say that the gulf was created between the State and youth through wrong narrative.

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Honorary CG of Germany meets CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Honorary Consul General of Germany based in Quetta, Mir Murad Baloch met Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti in Quetta. During the meeting, they discussed the region's overall situation, ongoing development projects, and Germany's efforts in education, health, and clean water for the people of Balochistan.

The Chief Minister emphasized the need for international organizations' support for the province's welfare. He commended Germany's assistance in various sectors and highlighted the importance of cooperation in education, health, and clean water supply. He noted that Germany's expertise could enhance the capacity of local officials and impart modern skills to the younger generation.

The Chief Minister also pointed out the potential for development in sectors like information technology, minerals, livestock, and education.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail in a group photo with participants of 13th National Workshop Balochistan

Governor directs Provincial Ombudsman to improve functionality

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has directed to the Provincial Ombudsman to take concrete measures for making his institution fully functional and improve its performance further at division level.

The Governor was of the strong view that there is a dire need to improve performance of the institutions instead of establishing their branches.

The Governor was speaking to the Provincial Ombudsman, Nazir Muhammad Baloch who called on him at the Governor's House on Tuesday.

The Provincial Ombudsman presented annual performance report of the Ombudsman's secretariat.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Governor said that the Provincial Ombudsman's secretariat is an important source of dispensation of timely and inexpensive justice to the people. Therefore, it should be made more effective at the division level, adding he stressed. He said that it is better to improve performance of the institutions further instead of establishing their branches so as to increase confidence of the people on them.

He also stressed the need to build capacity of the officers and employees in order to ensure transparent system.

He also urged the Provincial Ombudsman to focus on holding open katchehris (court), paying surprise visits and holding seminars for creation of awareness among the masses.

Pakistan Navy foils major drug smuggling bid in North Arabian Sea

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Aslat on Tuesday seized a large quantity of narcotics in the North Arabian Sea during a regional maritime security patrol.

The seized drugs were worth thousands of dollars in the international market, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The successful operation against drug smuggling was the result of effective surveillance at sea by Pakistan Navy, it added.

Naval warships of Pakistan Navy regularly per-

form duties on Regional Maritime Security Patrol to prevent drug smuggling, piracy and human trafficking at sea, the ISPR said.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday commended the efforts of Pakistan Navy in thwarting narcotics smuggling attempt in the Northern Arabian Sea. The prime minister appreciated the crew members including officers and Jawans of PNS Aslat for intercepting the vessel used for drug smuggling, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Grand rallies taken out as 26th Youm-e-Takbeer celebrated in Quetta, other parts befittingly

Independent Report

QUETTA: Grand rallies were taken out and programmes held to mark the 26th Youm-e-Takbeer in Quetta and different other parts of Balochistan on Tuesday.

The rallies were taken out from different parts of the metropolis including Airport Road, Sariab road and Nawab Killi.

The Provincial Minister, Bakht Muhammad Kakar led the rally taken out from the Nawab Killi

while Provincial Minister Ali Madad Jatak headed the rally taken out from Sariab road. Similarly, MPA Zarak Khan Mandokhail led the rally from Airport road.

The participants of all rallies gathered at the Unity chowk where grand gathering was held.

They were carrying national as well as their parties flags and raising slogans in favour of their leaders who played key role for the nuclear blasts.

Similar rallies were also

taken out in different districts of the province.

Balochistan Minister for Agriculture Ali Madad Jatak said that the entire nation is celebrating Youm-e-Takbeer with zeal and enthusiasm, thanks to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to make Pakistan a nuclear-armed nation.

He expressed these views while addressing a rally on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer. A rally

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QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Haji Ali Madad Jattak, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Parliamentary Secretary Meena Majeed Baloch, Shamal Khan Mandokhail, Farid Raisani and other addressing participants of a rally in connection with Youm-e-Takbeer in front of Balochistan Assembly

Pakistan outplay Australia in first volleyball match

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan downed Australia in the first match of the Sarsabz Volleyball Series 2024 here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Tuesday.

Pakistan beat Australia by 3-0 with sets points are 25-22, 25-22, 25-20 in the first game of the three match series. This was the first time that Australian volleyball team was visiting Pakistan.

Pakistan's win was a testament of the hard work and preparation of the players, who demonstrated exceptional teamwork and strategy on the court.

The victory has set a positive tone for the series and has energized the fans and supporters of volleyball in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, expressed his pride and satisfaction with the team's performance.

"This victory is a great achievement for our team and a reflection of the dedication and effort put in by our players and coaching staff. It is also a momentous occasion for the PVF, as we continue to promote and develop volleyball in Pakistan."

The Sarsabz Volleyball Series 2024, featuring three matches between Pakistan and Australia, promises to deliver more exciting volleyball action.

The second match of the series was scheduled for Wednesday (May 29)

while third on May 30.

This series was not only an opportunity for the Pakistani team to showcase their talent but also a significant step in strengthening international sports relations and fostering a competitive spirit among athletes.

Murad Jehan was leading the Green-shirts in the series along with Muhammad Kasheef Naveed appointed as Vice-Captain while Waleed Khan, Murad Khan, Aimal Khan, Usman Faryad Ali, Fakhr Ud Din, Afaq Khan, Abdul Zaheer, Musawer Khan, Muhammad Hamad, Haider Ali, Nasir Ali and Muhammad Yaseen will be part of fourteen members Pakistan squad.

PM takes notice of fire erupted again at Margalla Hills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday took notice of the fire which erupted again at the Margalla Hills, instructing the authorities concerned to extinguish it before spreading further.

The prime minister asked the relevant departments to immediately mobilize their teams to control the fire which broke out again a day after it was extinguished through a joint operation by the Pakistan Army, NDMA, Islamabad administration and the climate change ministry.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also directed the departments concerned to control the fire by ensuring the safety of human lives.



QUETTA: A rally passing through Koyla Patahk organized to observe Youm-e-Takbeer.

Rana pays tribute to nation's heroes on Youm-e-Takbeer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industry, Production, and Food Security, Rana Tanveer on Tuesday paid tribute to the nation's heroes on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer.

"I pay tribute to the senior leadership of Pakistan Muslim League, especially former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, senior military leadership and scientists of Pakistan," said Rana Tanveer.

According to the Ministry of Industry statement, due to his determined will and courage, the defense of Pakistan became impregnable for ever.

He said that Pakistan's political, military, and scientific leadership came together to achieve this milestone, making May 28 a proud day for the nation.

Pakistan has crossed an important milestone in the face of constant defense threats. Today is definitely a proud day for us, as our dear country has emerged as a nuclear power on the map of the world, he added.

Rana Tanveer emphasized that Youm-e-Takbeer symbolizes the power of unity and strong will, enabling the nation to overcome external and internal challenges.

CM pledges to foil all...

Continued from page 1

But, at the same time, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we would continue process of dialogue with our youth saying that we are ready to hold talks with youngsters with arguments at every forum.

He also said that we would not leave the youth in isolation, rather would pay hearing to them at every level.

Referring the National Workshop Balochistan, Chief Minister said that the real concept of the province

was made clear at the national level through the National Workshop.

He said that the participants of the National Workshop from all provinces got acquainted about the ground realities of Balochistan.

He assured that the provincial government would continue to encourage the activities based on the guidance of youth.

Later, he distributed certificates among participants of the National Workshop Balochistan.

Nawaz fires broadside at Imran...

Continued from page 1

ent parties and allowed a third force, which they thought could deliver. He said that that force appeared in PTL. "Imran Khan should clarify if he was not the third force, then who was?"

Challenging Khan, Sharif declared, "If you were not the third force, I promise to retire from politics. Your politics and the ousting of our government were founded with their help. You derailed democracy on their behalf. It was during the PTT's protests in Islamabad where it was said Nawaz Sharif would be dragged out of the PM House with a rope around his neck. This was the umpire's finger that Imran Khan frequently referred to."

Sharif urged Khan to answer these questions before he could be engaged in a dialogue with the government. "We are of May 28, not May 9. When Bill Clinton offered \$5 billion to avoid nuclear tests, we refused and rejected the offer of \$5 billion of that time."

Sharif also vehemently criticised the decision by former chief justice Saqib Nisar, declaring it has been discarded as "trash."

"Saqib Nisar removed me from the party presidency for life. Today, people have thrown his decision into the dustbin. Summon those who declared that Nawaz Sharif would be permanently removed, yet here I stand before you once again," he stated.

Sharif questioned the basis of the verdict against him, citing, "What was the decision against me? Not taking a salary from my son? I did not take a salary from my son; I did not ask for one from your son either."

He congratulated his party members and brother Shehbaz Sharif for steadfastly holding on to the party banner through thick and thin.

Nawaz Sharif alleged that many forces had tried to harm his relationship with his brother and the PML-N supporters but

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif continued to stay loyal.

The PML-N President claimed that many years ago his brother was offered the prime minister's seat on the condition of sidelining Nawaz but Shehbaz Sharif rejected the offer.

Earlier former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was once again elected unopposed as president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) after six years.

The party's Chief Election Commissioner Rana Sanaullah made the announcement about the election results in a general council meeting of the party held at a local hotel on Tuesday.

On this occasion, Rana Sanaullah said that he was going to present the proceedings that took place for the post of party president. He stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif tendered his resignation from the position of party president on May 11, 2024, mentioning reasons for his resignation and explaining that in 2017, under a conspiracy, Nawaz Sharif was removed and false cases were made against him.

"Shehbaz Sharif further said that he wanted to entrust the party leadership back to Nawaz Sharif as all fake cases against him have come to an end," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has once again been elected unopposed as the President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz because of his great love and services to the people of Pakistan.

Artifacts returned to Taxila Museum after year-long exhibition in China

WAH (APP): Sixteen artifacts from the Taxila Museum have returned to Pakistan after a year-long exhibition tour across various museums in China on Tuesday.

As per details, these historical treasures, including sculptures, coins, and pottery, were part of a cultural exchange program designed to showcase the rich heritage of the ancient Gandhara civilization to an international audience.

Anjum Javaid, Deputy Director of the Punjab Department of Archaeology, stated that the

artifacts were displayed in several prominent Chinese museums, including the National Museum of China in Beijing and the Shanghai Museum.

The exhibition attracted significant attention from both visitors and scholars, highlighting the artistic and cultural achievements of ancient Taxila and strengthening cultural ties between Pakistan and China.

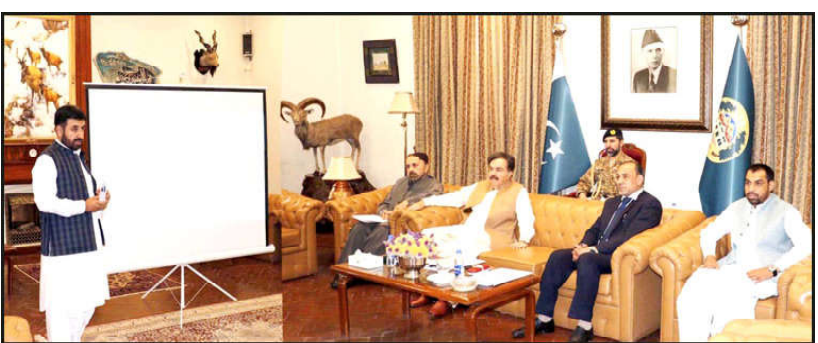
Upon their return, the artifacts underwent a thorough inspection to ensure their condition remained pristine. The Directorate General of Archaeology

Punjab, the main custodian of the Taxila Museum, oversaw this process.

The artifacts have now been reinstated in their original showcases at the museum, continuing to be an integral part of the collection.

Javaid also mentioned that the museum has implemented enhanced security and preservation measures to safeguard these antiquities.

This ensures that they remain accessible to the public and researchers while being protected for future generations.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail being briefed about Provincial Ombudsman

Unveiling trophy of Inter Provincial Women's Softball C'ship held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Tuesday said providing equal opportunities to women players in sports, would not only empower them, but also pave new horizons for future generations.

He expressed these views while unveiling the trophy of the 1st PNSC Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship in a grand ceremony held at the Sindh Governor House, said a press release.

Hosting the Inter-Provincial Women Softball Championship was an honor for Sindh, as this championship would further promote equality and mutual respect between the provinces, he said.

Softball Federation of Pakistan President, Asif Azeem, Senior Vice President Dr. Farhan Aza, Vice President Tehmina Asif, PNSC General Manager Admin Commodore Masood ul Hasan, Assistant Manager Admin Ayesha Leena were also

present on the occasion. Tessori said as Governor of Sindh, he was proud that Sindh is hosting the first women's softball championship at the inter-provincial level.

This event will promote equality, mutual respect and the national unity across the country. The passion for softball among women of Sindh will grow through this championship despite bringing new talent to Sindh, he said and assured Sindh Softball Association (SSA) of all-out support for hosting the championship.

President Softball Federation of Pakistan Asif Azeem said that the patronage of softball by the Governor of Sindh was welcome note for this game.

The opening ceremony of the championship will be held at KPT Football Stadium, Karachi on May 30, while the final of the championship would be played on June 1, he said.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Mir Abdul Majeed Badini and MPA Maulana Hidayatur Rehman meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti

Hearing of NAB amendment case to take place on May 30

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hearing of NAB amendment case will take place on May 30 in Supreme Court (SC).

Call up notices have been issued to the respondents.

PTI founder Imran Khan will appear through video link.

A five members larger bench of SC presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case.

During previous hearing counsel for federal government Makhdoom Ali Khan had given arguments on appeal.

PTI founder had appeared in the court through video link during previous hearing. The court has already directed to present

PTI founder through video link in next hearing.

KP has requested the court to show next hearing live.

The plea by KP government was filed through additional advocate general Syed Kausar Ali Shah in the beginning of this week.

The plea said that hearing of cases of public interest are made live stream from bench one. The hearing of appeals of NAB amendment case has not been made live stream. It is discriminatory treatment. It is requested that order be issued for live streaming the hearing of the case.

Next hearing was to be held on June 05 but it is being held on May 30.

All recruitments...

Continued from page 1

officers of Finance and Planning and Development departments, he added.

He also said that the graph of non-development budget is increasing at fast pace, and if the process remained continued, then we would not be having amount for the development expenditures in near future.

About the issue of long-time power load shedding, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti regrettably pointed out that the 52 degree Celsius temperature has been recorded in the province, but the electricity is being supplied for two or three hours in the interior province.

He mentioned that he has written a letter to the Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif on the issue of power load shedding in the province.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for P&D Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Provincial Advisor Industries Mir Ali Hassan Zehri presiding over a meeting regarding Hub Development Project

Grand rallies taken out as 26th Youm-e-Takbeer...

Continued from page 1

was taken out from Sariab Road under the leadership of Provincial Minister Ali Madad Jattak, in which a large number of people participated.

Addressing the participants of the rally, he said that the successful nuclear test at Chagai on this day in 1998, restored the balance of power in the region.

He paid tribute to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto whom he called the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme, for his strategic foresight and unwavering commitment to the cause. The provincial leader quoted Zulfiqar Bhutto who said we will eat grass even go hungry but we will make Pakistan a nuclear power.

He said that this is a memorable day and Pakistan has the honor of becoming the first nuclear power in the Muslim world and seventh in the world.

On May 28, 1998, Pakistan responded to India's nuclear explosions. He said when the greatness of Pakistan was announced from the mountains of Balochistan, the ambitions of the enemy were crushed.

Balochistan Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development, Bakht Muhammad Kakar on this day, the entire nation has paid tribute to the services of eminent engineers, scientists and military leadership who gifted a nuclear program on May 28, 1998 that rendered the nation's defense unbeatable.

Bakht Kakar said that

the nuclear tests made Pakistan's defense and security unbeatable and the arrogance of the enemy was also fall behind.

He said that the 26th anniversary of nuclear tests is being celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm on the occasion of the historic day of Takbeer Day across Balochistan. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the rally on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer.

Bakht Kakar said that the enemy did not want Pakistan to become a nuclear power and having a strong defense system but there is no one who can look at the country with a bad eye.

He said it is imperative to work together to make national defense impregnable through economic development.

He paid tribute to the personnel of Pakistan Army and security forces who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country and thanks to them, as the entire nation sleeps peacefully. Kakar said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Bhutto is the creator of the nuclear program of Pakistan and the entire nation pays homage to him.

He said that the nuclear program is a great gift of the leader of the people, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, to the nation.

On the occasion, he shared the quote of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto "We (Pakistan) will eat grass, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own (Atom bomb)... We have no other choice!"

Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA), Meena Majeed on Tuesday congratulated the entire nation on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer.

She said that the May 28 was an unforgettable day in Pakistani history.

He expressed these thoughts while addressing the rally participants on Zarghoon Road outside the Assembly.

A large number of people were present on this occasion.

Member of Provincial Assembly Meena Majeed said that the day of May 28 would be written in golden letters in the history of the country saying that the nuclear capability has made Pakistan's defense impregnable.

Today, Pakistan has become the first nuclear power in the Islamic world and the seventh nuclear power in the world, and the entire nation was thankful to Allah.

Today she reiterates her determination that we would not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the protection of Pakistan's geographical and ideological borders, she said.

The rally was accumulated at the Balochistan Assembly after marching different routes with aim to observe Youm-e-Takbeer.

A large number of people including Pakistan People Party (PPP)'s workers and citizens participated in the rally and people raised slogans in favour of Pakistan Army and the country.



KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Ship ASLAT seizes narcotics in the North Arabian Sea during Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP).

TENDER NOTICE

The BALOCHISTAN FOOD AUTHORITY invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-232405437901 Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee Rs.2000/-**

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Manufactured Vehicles & Accessories	3%

(Total Item(s) Count: 1)

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 10,000,000 in Previous 3 Years. Turn over of at least 10,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is not permissible. Submission of the required Bid Security in case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive. Submission of the required Bidding document Fee. Undertaking Required. Sales, Service and Spare Parts Facility Required. Dealer Authorization Required. Name of Balochistan Food Authority UBL Jinnah Road Quetta FAF 010900257996631.

Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk Issuance of tender Documents: Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk Last Date of bid submission: Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 12 June, 2024 till 11:30 AM through supplier dashboard. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:30 PM on EPPS System Address: Spinnay Road Near Food Godam Quetta Phone no: 0819213574 Email: admin@bfa.gov.pk

DIRECTOR
BALOCHISTAN FOOD AUTHORITY

AB No.509/28-5-2024
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Govt can boost revenues by 40bln with optimized tobacco taxation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health advocates have proposed a 40 per cent increase in taxes on tobacco products in Pakistan to reduce consumption, increase revenue and bridge the gap in health costs associated with smoking.

This proposed increase would translate into a substantial rise in government revenue, estimated to reach Rs336 billion from the current Rs240 billion. The intervention would also significantly impact health costs associated with smoking, projected to be reduced from Rs615 billion to Rs418.2 billion, effectively reducing the gap between revenue and health

costs to Rs82 billion.

Mr Murtaza Solangi, Former Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan, said all stakeholders must cast their differences aside and unite to protect our children and youth from an industry which is causing billions of losses to the national exchequer. Increasing tobacco taxes is such a step which should be regularly implemented.

The low cigarette prices are the reason why children and young people initiate smoking. He added, that smoking-related illnesses and deaths incur substantial economic costs in Pakistan's GDP every year.

These increasing health cost burdens encompass health-care expenses, productivity losses due to illness and premature death, as well as other indirect economic impacts.

Malik Imran Ahmad, Country Head Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK) said that the effectiveness of high tobacco taxation as a vital measure in combating tobacco consumption, as advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The industry can absorb at least a 40% increase in taxes, and the IMF and World Bank have recommended Pakistan introduce a single-tier tax structure for

cigarettes.

Despite efforts to increase taxes, low cigarette prices persist, contributing to sustained high consumption levels. By adopting these reforms, Pakistan can make cigarette taxation more effective and align it more closely with international best practices.

He further added that the cigarette prices in Pakistan are still cheaper than in many parts of the world. By utilizing price comparison as a reference point, policy-makers can better understand market dynamics and assess the potential of tax hikes on consumer behavior and government revenue.



ISLAMABAD: People hanging on the passenger van risking their lives at Satra Meel area on the outskirts of Islamabad, need the attention of the concerned authorities.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi shaking hands with the personnel of Emergency Services at CDA Headquarters.

Hurriyat AJK says: Pakistan's nuclear explosion destroyed India's pride

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Azad Jammu Kashmir organized a function in commemoration of 'Takbeer Day' here on Tuesday. According to Kashmir Media Service, speakers on the occasion praised Pakistan's nuclear capability, stating that it had destroyed India's pride and arrogance by conducting six nuclear explosions in response to India's five nuclear explosions 26 years ago. They also credited Pakistan's nuclear capability for forcing India to stay within its limits and preventing it from hurling threats against Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The speakers said that the so-called elections in IIOJK in the presence of ten lac Indian troops cannot be a substitute for plebiscite to be conducted

under the auspices of the United Nations. They said that the Modi government was using election dramas to divert attention of the international community from the prevailing dire situation in the territory. They added that all basic rights of the Kashmiris had been usurped and Indian state terrorism was at its peak in Kashmir. The speakers maintained that the Kashmiris were not fighting for elections but for their birthright, the right of self-determination and that they would continue their struggle till accomplishment of the goal. They urged the international community to shun its double standards, take notice of India's expansionist designs and pressurize it to let the Kashmiris decide their political future in line with the relevant Security Council.



ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, addressing at Report Launch ceremony on "Optimizing Tobacco Taxation in Pakistan" organized by SPARC.

DIG Operations holds meeting with Traffic police officials

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Ali Raza chaired a meeting at Traffic Police Headquarters, the meeting was attended by SSP Traffic Muhammad Sarfraz Virk and zonal DSPs.

On this occasion, DIG Operations Islamabad emphasized the importance of providing better travel facilities and maintaining smooth traffic flow throughout the city. He stressed that officers must perform their duties efficiently while adhering to the law.

taken against unlicensed drivers.

During the meeting, DIG Operations issued directives to police officers to focus on traffic-related public facilities for public convenience.

Mobile services related to traffic police should be provided at educational institutions and important locations, and illegal parking at key commercial spots should be eliminated, he added.

He further directed that the Islamabad Traffic Police FM Radio be made more active, the welfare of officers on duty on the



roads be improved, and the performance of outstanding officers should be encouraged. Ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and property and maintaining smooth traffic flow in the federal capital are among our top priorities, he maintained.

roads be improved, and the performance of outstanding officers should be encouraged. Ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and property and maintaining smooth traffic flow in the federal capital are among our top priorities, he maintained.

NDMA warns of deceptive website FERU

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday warned the masses to be aware of a website titled "FEDERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE UNIT-PAKISTAN" which was falsely representing the organisation.

The website has been unlawfully advertising job vacancies and soliciting application processing fees, a news release said.

"We strongly advise public to exercise due diligence and verify the legitimacy of any employment offers through NDMA'S official website and other contact channels. <http://www.ndma.gov.pk/>

The official website of NDMA Pak is the sole source of authentic information regarding job opportunities and other relevant information," the NDMA said.

The NDMA appreciated public cooperation in remaining vigilant against such practices.

Hearing of recovery of missing poet case today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hearing of recovery of missing poet Ahmad Farhad case will be held today (Wednesday) in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Its live streaming will be made. The sector commander was summoned to appear before the court in person.

IHC has issued written order of hearing of missing Baloch students case.

It has been said in the written order that Attorney General (AG) has assured every person about whom it is alleged to have gone missing will reach his family at every cost.

Hearing of contempt of court case on letter of Justice Mohsin on 30th

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hearing of contempt of court case on the letter of justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani will be held on May 30 (Thursday).

Senior journalist Hamid Mir, president PFUJ, senior lawyer Ahmar Bilal Sufi and Said Ahmad Hassan Shah will appear as amici curiae.

A larger bench of IHC comprising Chief Justice (CJ) Islamabad High Court (IHC) Aamir Farooq, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir will hear the case.

This bench had issued written order for hearing contempt of court case.

IHC had said in its order that PEMRA should prepare transcript of interviews of Waqas Malik and file it in the court before next hearing.

Naqvi announces five initiatives to provide relief to residents of Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday during his visit to Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters announced five initiatives with the aim to facilitate and provide best and fastest services for the residents of Islamabad.

He announced to launch of Capital Emergency Services in Islamabad and establishment of Capital Waste Management Company in Islamabad besides, establishment of Capital Safe City Authority, establishment of CBD Islamabad and Capital WASA will be built for the convenience of the citizens

of Islamabad.

Mohsin Naqvi assigned the task to Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa to expedite the projects.

"Inshallah soon Islamabad will be made a model city," said Mohsin Naqvi.

During his visit to CDA headquarters, the minister met the staff of Ambulance 1122 and Fire Brigade and urged them to perform their duties diligently.

He directed to merge Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Water Rescue Services under Capital Emergency Services.



Youm-e-Takbeer day of national pride, courage, determination: Zafar

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday said that Youm-e-Takbeer is a day of national pride, courage and determination.

In a press statement, he said that May 28, 1998, is celebrated as the day when Pakistan became the first nuclear power of the Islamic world.

It's a day to renew our commitment to defending our country and our freedom, he said adding that the government has declared May 28th as a national holiday to commemorate this achievement.

The day marks the failure of external and internal enemies' evil plans against Pakistan, he said adding that the nuclear tests ensured the country's regional integrity, independence and sovereignty. He said that business community will continue to contribute in national building and economic development of the country.

He also expressed his firm commitment to support the efforts of the government and armed forces of the country for economic uplift and social prosperity. He said that a strong and stable economy was prerequisites for further strengthening the defence capabilities. Ahsan Zafar also lauded the efforts of all those who contributed in making Pakistan as an nuclear power.



Speakers say: Anti-state elements seeking to sabotage Pakistan's emotional attachment to Kashmiries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers here on Tuesday at a seminar expressed their views regarding the ongoing freedom movement in Occupied Kashmir, they said that the anti-state elements in Azad Kashmir are seeking to sabotage Pakistan's emotional attachment to Kashmiris and their struggle for Kashmiris.

Jammu Kashmir Students Organization of International Islamic University Islamabad organized Kashmir Festival and Kashmir Conference at Shah Abdul-Lateef Bhattai Auditorium here in which political and Hurriyat leaders of Azad Jammu Kashmir and Occupied Jammu Kashmir participated, said a press release.

Among these leaders are Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman of Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Chief Guest of Friends of Kashmir International, Hurriyat Leader Abdul Hameed Lone, Hurriyat Leader Syed Manzoor Ahmad Shah, Senior Journalist Abid Abbasi, Mujahid Geelani and prominent socialites of Islamabad, Entrepreneur Sardar Yasir Ilyas participated.

The speakers said that the mission of the zealous people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir is to support the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir against the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India and the fulfillment of our struggle is the struggle of Pakistan.

Hurriyat leader Abdul Hameed Lone said that India's conspiracies against Pakistan will be resisted and our struggle will continue until the people of Jammu and Kashmir get justice.

He said that India should think a hundred times before attacking Azad Kashmir and if India does such an act, then India will have to suffer severe punishment. He said that since 2010, Modi is actually fooling the Indian people and this rhetoric and threats are only for power. Abdul Hameed Lone said that every citizen of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a soldier of Pakistan without uniform.

He said that citizens will be able to avail emergency services by calling at Rescue 1122 in case of any emergency and a unified emergency control room will be established in CDA for live tracking of vehicles through GPS.

He directed to pay special attention on the staff training of staff while ordering for setting up new emergency services 1122 stations in the city.

He also directed to fill the sanctioned vacant positions in Capital Development Authority (CDA) on merit while the number of ambulances may also be increased in Islamabad, he added.

13 drug peddlers held; huge cache of narcotics recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has launched a special "Nasha Ab Nah" movement to eradicate narcotics and keep youngsters safe from the curse of narcotics.

A public relations officer on Tuesday said that, during the last 24 hours, the Islamabad Police apprehended 13 drug peddlers from different areas of the city and recovered a huge cache of drugs from their possession.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Sana Ullah and Bakhtawar Khan, and recovered 1,045 grams of heroin from their possession.

IRSA releases 341,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 341,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 379,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.93 feet and was 69.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow each in the dam was recorded as 152,400 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1184.50 feet, which was 134.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

DG Hajj highlights measures to facilitate pilgrims in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General Hajj Abdul Wahab Soomro said on Tuesday that numerous steps were being taken to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims during their stay in Saudi Arabia. Talking to Pakistan Television News in Makkah, he emphasized the timely acquisition of space for pilgrims in Mina and the availability of train services to transport them to Mashayer.

This year, over sixteen thousand pilgrims have opted for a new short Hajj package introduced by the government, designed for those wishing to complete

Syed Ali Raza assumes charge as DIG Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, Syed Ali Raza took charge of his post as DIG Islamabad he was previously posted as SSP (Operations) Lahore. After taking charge of his post as DIG Islamabad, he visited the branches and held an introductory meeting with the staff. While addressing the officers Syed Ali Raza has stated that we all were duty-bound to uphold the rule of law, protect the life and property of the common citizens.

He made it clear that if anyone thinks that he will misuse the power of uniform, it will not be acceptable. "All of us together as a team will play our role in making this city a cradle of peace in this best environment" he affirmed.

Moreover, DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza



"It should be clear to all that we all have to uphold the rule of law, protect the life and property of the common citizens."

CDA implements efficiency, discipline rules for improved governance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa has approved the new Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 2020 to ensure transparency and streamline procedures within the civic body.

The rules aim to expedite inquiries and disciplinary actions, addressing delays.

Approval was granted during a headquarters meeting that assessed the Administration Wing's performance, encompassing Human Resource Development, Discipline Directorate, and other units.

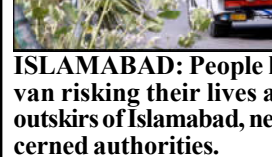
Chairman CDA emphasized implementing a reward and punishment system to enhance service delivery and overall employee performance. He highlighted the adoption of Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 2020, to ensure swift conclusion of inquiries and disciplinary proceedings, emphasizing strict accountability.

The Chairman was informed that currently, there is no set timeframe for concluding proceedings, leading to prolonged cases. He stated that the new rules will establish clear timelines for each step and hold inquiry officers accountable for delays in finalizing inquiries.

The Chairman of CDA was briefed that the Discipline Directorate is actively handling inquiries. Nearly 60 inquiries have been concluded in the last 4 to 5 months, with 55 new inquiries initiated during the same period.

Over the past three years, 998 inquiries and disciplinary proceedings against CDA officers and officials have concluded. Among them, 103 officers and officials faced major penalties, such as dismissal, compulsory retirement, and demotion.

The Accounts Officer and Cashier of the Land Payment Section were dismissed for their roles in a fake payment scam. Additionally, 631 officers and officials faced minor penalties for inefficiency and misconduct, including the withholding of annual increments.



ISLAMABAD: People hanging on the passenger van risking their lives at Satra Meel area on the outskirts of Islamabad, need the attention of the concerned authorities.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Wednesday May 29, 2024

Afghan puzzle

When it comes to counterterrorism cooperation with the Afghan Taliban, we are moving in circles. While the authorities say that anti-Pakistan terrorists have havens in Afghanistan — particularly the banned TTP — Kabul's de facto rulers insist this is not the case.

The Taliban position, however, is difficult to believe in the face of evidence that various militant groups are indeed active in Afghanistan. Once more, the state has raised the issue of cross-border militancy, with the interior minister and Nacta chief telling a presser on Sunday that the TTP, backed by "enemy intelligence agencies", were responsible for the deadly March attack in Bisham in which five Chinese workers and one local were killed. The military had issued a similar statement a few weeks ago. Mohsin Naqvi called on the Afghan Taliban to prosecute the suspected terrorists, "or hand them to us". The interior czar did not rule out unilateral action if Kabul failed to act.

Several attempts have been made to take up the TTP issue with the Afghan Taliban, but the results have not been positive. For example, the matter has been discussed using official channels, while delegations of ulema and tribal elders have been dispatched to Kabul to communicate Pakistan's concerns. The state has also taken cross-border armed action after TTP terrorist attacks targeted Pakistani troops.

Yet, none of these measures has resulted in a cessation of terrorist violence. Therefore, different approaches are required. Unfortunately, there are few good options, and the authorities will have to work with the Afghan Taliban.

Expecting the Afghans to crush the TTP is an unrealistic expectation, as Kabul's rulers are not likely to take armed action against their ideological comrades, particularly if the Kandahar-based Taliban leadership has anything to say about it. Pakistan should, instead, demand that TTP fighters be relocated far from the border, and insist that the Taliban should take full responsibility to ensure no terrorist group is able to stage cross-border attacks.

Moreover, the Central Asian states have aired similar concerns about Afghanistan-based terrorist groups. Pakistan should work with these states, as well as China, Russia, and Iran, to pressure the Taliban into taking effective CT moves. The Taliban are particularly keen to attract Chinese investment due to their global isolation. Islamabad should coordinate with Beijing to ensure that investments are made only if the Taliban take concrete CT steps.

While the Taliban should do more to prevent cross-border terrorism, Pakistan must also ensure that internally, no space is available to the militants and their sympathisers. In the recent presser, the Nacta head listed numerous Pakistani suspects who had played a key role in the Bisham attack. Unless these elements are neutralised, it will not be possible to have the upper hand over terrorist groups.

Arifa Noor

Feb 8 seems a lifetime away for those of us in the television business. New stories, new crises, the latest headlines have given us a form of ADD. We move on to new excitements with the passing of every minute, or the appearance of 'breaking news' on channels. But move outside of the television screens and it seems people are still wondering what happened on that day. How did we get the result we did and how did those who were commenting on it, get it wrong — in case anyone is willing to admit they made an incorrect prediction?

Of course, this is not to say that people were not aware of the situation — the wave of popularity for one side and the lack of support for the other. But that this would translate into the elections result it did (till the night of Feb 8) is perhaps what took many aback. Perhaps this was so because the old assumptions no longer hold and, consequently, neither do our analyses, which we

tend to build on the basis of certain assumptions.

When it comes to elections, those in my profession, at least, tend to work with some set assumptions, such as the voter in Punjab tends to vote with the hawa. Or that the hawa can be managed by sending signals as to which party is the favoured one, and that once the voters have decided which way the hawa is blowing, the 'blocs' or dharras interested in getting their gas connections, or roads fixed would make the right decisions. In all of this, there are few 'individual voters' who exercise free choice. (To some extent, these assumptions didn't hold for 2018 either, which is why the famous RTS and its collapse has become political folklore.)

Along with this comes the second set of assumptions about what political parties need — in addition to the hawa — to win: election campaigns on the ground, and candidates who are available and 'electable', ie, they can reach the electorate, spend the money and organise the logistics

to get voters to the polling station. This is what we called election day science, and a party which just wasn't allowed to do any of this was surely not going to win.

Working with the old assumptions, the conclusion was that the PML-N would win while the PTI wouldn't. But many of us were proved wrong because the assumptions on which we projected forward no longer hold true. The voters' behaviour has changed. This may seem like a stale argument to make three months after an election but, bear with me, I do have a point to make.

If old assumptions don't hold for the electoral exercise, they may not hold true for other long accepted political beliefs either. It is a question worth exploring. Take, for instance, the idea that political forces in dialogue with each other strengthens democracy and pushes back the establishment.

This, too, was based on assumptions, which no longer exist. The first and foremost of these was that such dialogues hap-

pened at times when all genuine political forces were out in the cold. And that they all had something to gain from this effort — as on the other side, there was a dictator aligned with a king's party, which had been put together artificially.

Second, the point of such an alliance was to not simply come together but to do so to challenge, and eventually force a change in, the set-up as it existed then.

Within this larger context, a dialogue between the three main parties, the PTI, PML-N and PPP, doesn't really offer a similar parallel. For of the three, two may not want to change the status quo; perhaps if such a dialogue had taken place before the election, it might have offered some space for a new agreement on how to proceed once the results came in. However, now that the governments have been formed, these three no longer have much in common in terms of immediate goals because of the contested election results.

But there is another, perhaps more critical, is-

sue: the creeping control over the legislatures and parties. This has been true for some time and has meant that parties, once they are in the assemblies, regardless of whether they are the BAP, PTI, PML-N, MQM or PML-N, don't appear to be pushing for creating more democratic space. One can simply consider the legislative record of the parties in power during the PTI tenure as well as the PDM. Or even the manner in which the PDM fell apart or how the PPP and PML-N came together suddenly, after months of estrangement, in a move which culminated in the vote of no-confidence.

Parties were able to operate with far more space back in, say, 2007, when Benazir Bhutto was able to confront Musharraf despite having returned to Pakistan after striking a deal with him. Also, the PML-N and PPP, despite their confrontational politics, were able to cooperate on the 18th Amendment (to argue that this was because they had agreed to 'coexist' is not en-

tirely accurate). To assume that all of this will change if the parties sit down together is perhaps too optimistic. After all, a similar assumption underlay the vote of no-confidence but the events since have proven matters otherwise; in those days, the PTI was pointed out to be the latest version of PML-Q, while the PPP and PML-N were seen as if they were still in their 2007 avatars.

However, it is important to point out that this is no pitch against a political dialogue. Not at all.

At the end of the day, a dialogue and negotiations are the best way forward out of any crisis, rather than constant confrontation. But we should be wary of assuming that a dialogue as it happened in the past will open up political space as then.

The older assumptions no longer hold true in one case; they might not in another. We face a more complicated scenario and the answers may also be not as simple. -- Courtesy Dawn

Why Modi claims he has won

Jawed Naqvi

Fifty-Seven races are still to be decided on Saturday, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi says he has already won a thumping majority. Let's see the mind more than the logic at work here.

It was Jawaharlal Nehru's 60th death anniversary on Monday. His grandson Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21 during an election campaign in 1991. Rajiv was the last member of the Nehru-Gandhi family to be prime minister. All said and done, there was civility in the electoral discourse under their watch even if the battles were bitterly fought.

Narendra Modi, like his inspiration Donald Trump, has deliberately vulgarised India's political discourse, and how. As the longest Indian elections tundra towards the last punishing phase in the scalding heat devouring much of the country, one is reminded of the most pivotal and brilliantly short March 16-20 polls Indira Gandhi ordered in 1977. There were 542 seats in

the fray even then, but polling was not stretched over 44 days of hate-filled name-calling as is happening today.

Indira Gandhi made the announcement on Jan 18, and leading opposition groups met on Jan 20 to create the Janata Party. There were no invectives hurled from either side during the unblemished polls. If we must find a reason for this general civility, it could be simply that the leaders were nicer and perhaps also because the elections were held when the emergency was still on. It ended only on March 21, the day after the polls were completed.

Had she wished, Mrs Gandhi could have held on to power after the results went against her, the emergency statutes ensuring her unbridled hold on the levers of government. But the transfer of power was silken smooth, and if there was a problem it was the infamous jostling for the top job among senior Janata Party leaders.

In hindsight, it seems the Janata Party was cobbled hurriedly by

groups who had otherwise little in common. The unstated reason for the rushed and short-lived adoption of a single-party emblem leading to the merger of most non-communist northern parties into a single unit, stemmed from a mortal fear based on a technical worry. Had they fought the elections separately, Mrs Gandhi as the likely leader of the single largest party would be called to stake a claim as per convention. Indeed, she ended with a no mean tally of 154 seats, which would have been higher than any individual party against her.

The question is, would she have taken advantage of the offer? She wouldn't, and a good clue to her response came in 1989 when Rajiv Gandhi lost his humongous 400-plus majority of 1984. The Congress got 197 seats and its closest rival, the Janata Dal, managed just 143. The BJP, aided by communists and centrists, catapulted from two seats in 1984 to 85, enough to spur L.K. Advani's imminent

march on Ayodhya.

Rajiv Gandhi remains unique in turning down the prime ministerial offer as the head of the single largest party. He stated, instead, that the fractured mandate was not for him. It remains a remarkable act of parliamentary propriety, more so when compared to the 1996 elections and Atal Bihari Vajpayee's lurch for power in a fractured verdict.

That year, the BJP, headed by Vajpayee, for the first time became the single largest party, winning 161 seats in the Lok Sabha, but with next to no hope of gaining a majority of 272 seats. P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress struggled at 140. The way the House was stacked, Vajpayee's defeat in the mandatory trust vote was imminent. Yet he happily took power for all of the 13 days that president Shankar Dayal Sharma gave him to prove his majority. The 13 days would become a blot on parliamentary ethics, to be unstaged only by Modi's communal politics.

With no hope of winning the vote of con-

fidence, the Vajpayee government tore up the rule book and signed the infamous Enron deal in which the US power company was given scandalous and eventually suicidal financial guarantees to set up a gas-run power plant in Maharashtra.

The project was doomed to fail, and tomes were to be written about the alleged financial scandals it spawned. But it gave the BJP a ruse to signal to Washington the arrival of India's oldest pro-US party at the helm. Vajpayee's 1998 nuclear tests saw more crude messaging to the US than India was ready to be an ally in its anti-China project.

Vajpayee resigned without facing the vote but not before giving a long lecture on democratic propriety. Indian democracy, however, recovered from the setback to see one of its more memorable occasions of pride laced in rare selflessness. Like Julius Caesar, communist leader Jyoti Basu was offered the crown which he politely turned down. Unlike Vajpayee, Basu was prom-

ised the support of a substantial secular bloc but he was bound by his party's fiat against taking the oath of office. He would go on to describe the CPI-M's decision as a historic blunder.

The claim of having won a third term even before the elections are over, fits with the emasculation of India's democratic heft Modi has supervised. Leave alone the lumpenisation of language gleaned from his Trump-like election speeches, there is a more serious worry doing the rounds. Several well-regarded election analysts are not sanguine that Mr Modi would get a clear majority. They also fear that he would not relinquish power as Indira Gandhi did if he loses.

Desperation to stick to power is evident from his juggling of the election commission and low-calibre messaging to voters. Subhash Chandra Bose was a freedom fighter who famously said: "You give me blood, I'll give you freedom." What does Mr Modi tell the most impoverished section of the electorate? "I gave you five kilogrammes of rice. It's your turn to give me your vote."

More difficult now

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Sustaining hegemony over the masses has been a key aim and challenge for our elitist state. This exercise has caused endless political instability and insecurity, given the fightback by the people and the power tussles among elite ethnicities, classes and institutions.

The top gun position shifted often in the first decade: institutionally from the Muslim League to the bureaucracy, to the military; ethnically from Mohajirs to Punjabis; and from a mixed class clique to the middle class. The coordinates of raw power soon became conservative, older, male, military, elitist, Sunni, upper class and Punjab.

Since 1958, the unelected clique has kept its hegemony via close ties with global patrons, co-opting political and state elites, rigging politics and demolishing mass dissent, with religion and Kashmir as rallying narratives. It ruled unelected via large one-window but odious US aid: money, arms, veto cover, markets, technology, and multilateral loans. Linked to US security aims, it helped keep politicians out but caused violence too.

As US aid ebbed, it courted politicians to quell dissent and ruled covertly. The elected eras kept growing given the growing internal and external binds against autocracy. The first was from 1972 to 1977 with one (free) election. The second was from 1985 to 1999 with only one of five elections deemed fair (1988) and each assembly nixed early. The third is from 2002 to now, with two free elections (2008 and 2013) out of five. Four assemblies reached term but not the prime ministers,

reflecting minor democratic gains. The early dismissals were due to civilian forays into what the establishment considered its own affairs, policy tiffs and claimed misrule. They were carried out via coups, no-trust votes, presidential powers, and forced exits. The mode and strength of covert rule varied, focusing on security and external policy from 2008-18 but more intrusively politics and economics as well after 2018, erasing all democratic gains. Both eras saw big tiffs with out-of-sync civilians, with Nawaz Sharif to the establishment's left and Imran Khan to its right on the US, India, Taliban, etc.

State elements now face a unique challenge in sustaining their hegemony. Cosy ties with the US are over and other powers (China and Saudi Arabia) can't provide large, one-window aid. Arch-enemy India is now a global power and dwarfs our geo-economic powers. Global sanctions have cut the ability to deploy jihadis. State elements have partially lost their narrative as the custodians of national piety and patriotism as Imran Khan acts as a stauncher custodian.

There are hostile extremist states on three sides matching our insurgencies in KP and Balochistan. The economy is unusually bad. Yet its residual powers are formidable — arms, agents, businesses — and keep all parties subservient.

The divorce with the PTI has created an elite-middle-class alliance against older parties: middle-class parties (led by the PTI), media anchors, professional classes, expats and sections of the judiciary, bu-

reaucracy, and reportedly even the ranks. Moreover, the insurgents are largely middle class. Smaller middle-class parties had existed for long, like religious ones and the MQM. But the advent of social media has aided the rise of a pan-Pakistan middle-class party popular in all core regions: upper Punjab, Peshawar valley and Karachi and even beyond. But this party's governance and democratic records are poor too, like the older elite parties.

These trends are forcing elements of the state to resort to desperate ways of retaining its hegemony as its options dwindle: mutually conflicting ties with multiple global patrons to scavenge various bits of key aid, new docile elected allies, cruder rigging and gagging, not too covert co-governance in more domains and using force even in core regions against dissident elite-middle-class allies. Even so, this hybrid set-up remains divided and inept and may not survive, let alone thrive.

What options will unelected forces use if they fail? More force, overt rule or technocracy? But these won't succeed and will, in fact, upend critical Western support. So, good governance eludes all elite factions. Governance can only improve by nixing elite politics for organic pro-poor politics.

Can society tame this unelected being? It may need a joint effort to overpower the flailing behemoth.

So, we enter a new phase of high turbulence: economic volatility, political instability, and high insecurity. Passengers must fasten their seat belts, if they have one, as the captain won't turn on the signs. --Courtesy Dawn

Methane moment

Jamil Ahmad

Methane gas is the second largest contributor to climate change. Methane emissions, caused by human activities, account for roughly a third of the current global warming and are over 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the near term. A steady rise in methane concentrations in the atmosphere is, therefore, worrisome. Methane's atmospheric concentration has more than doubled since pre-industrial times; it is second only to carbon dioxide in driving climate change during the industrial era.

Human-caused emissions of methane come from landfills and waste, coal mining, oil and gas systems, and agriculture — including livestock. While methane is a far more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, its lifespan in the atmosphere is much shorter. This means that reductions in methane made now can deliver immediate progress to slow the current rate of warming as we decarbonise.

Carbon dioxide historically received greater attention as the major contributor to global warming. This approach hindered policymakers from paying heed to controlling non-CO2 greenhouse gases, particularly methane. This is now changing. Having remained feeble for long, international efforts to lessen methane emissions have gained momentum.

Some of the key reasons why policymaking has been handicapped — such as lack of financial resources, scientific knowledge, and credible data — are finally being prioritised internationally and in national policies. Methane receives merely two per cent of the global climate finance.

The Global Methane

Pledge launched in 2021 at COP26 brought together countries to reduce methane emissions 30pc by 2030. Pakistan also joined the initiative. More than 150 governments are participating.

UNEP has built a support system to empower countries to meet the pledge's goal, including via methane policy roadmaps, through its Climate and Clean Air Coalition. In addition, UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory is bridging gaps in scientific data on the sources and scale of methane.

Additional national actions and funding pledges announced at COP28 in Dubai last year placed methane firmly in the spotlight. Donors committed \$1 billion in grant funding to assist low- and middle-income countries reduce methane emissions.

Overall financing for methane reduction increased from \$11.6bn in 2020 to \$13.7bn in 2022, according to a report by the Climate Policy Initiative. Even this amount is insufficient. For the effective abatement of methane, the world will need \$48bn annually by 2030 — more than a threefold increase from current levels.

Private sector and industry have also stepped in. In Dubai last year, more than 50 top oil and gas companies announced new steps to reduce methane in their operations. This sector emits about 35pc of human-caused methane, second only to the agriculture sector's 40pc. Its commitments must be matched by credible data provided by the likes of UNEP's Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0.

Deeper and concerted action in these sectors will be a very cost-effective way to complement climate action and lift the SDGs out of trouble. One

useful and win-win option is to capture methane from waste and landfills for use as a fuel, reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

Methane emissions in Pakistan have increased by about 2pc annually since 1990, doubling over this period and putting the country among the top 10 methane emitters globally, thus aggravating its ambient air quality. Agricul-ture, and landfill acco-unt for most of Pakistan's methane emissions. Pakistan's climate change and clean air policies identify actions on short-lived climate pollutants as an important action area. At the national and provincial scale, Pakistan is identifying short-lived SCLP mitigation actions that will maximise climate and clean-air benefits. Including an SCLP emission reduction target in the updated Nationally Determined Contributions for Pakistan by 2025 is key to unlocking climate finance for multiple benefits. Additionally, a methane specific time-bound strategy developed as part of the country's climate policy will be necessary to control air pollution and move swiftly on implementing the Paris accord.

As the world continues to hit deadly climate milestones, it is high time for a serious conversation on how to accelerate action to reduce often-overlooked and high-emitting super pollutants. Controlling methane is a cost-effective way to help reduce global warming and keep hopes alive for the Paris target of keeping the rise in world temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius. As the world enters the final stretch towards meeting the 2030 agenda, capturing the methane moment will instil vigour into efforts to deliver the SDGs and offer the best chance of avoiding the worst of the climate crisis. --Courtesy Dawn

Political stability in the country the need of hour: Punjab Governor

PPP delegations meet governor, congratulate on assuming charge

Independent Report

LAHORE: Various delegations of Pakistan Peoples' Party Central Punjab met with Governor Punjab met all the people one by one and listened to their problems. Secretary Information Shahzad Saeed Cheema and Secretary Records and Events Ahsan Rizvi were also present during the meeting. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider said that political stability in the

country was the need of the hour. He added that everyone has to play a positive role for the betterment of the country. He said that the vision of our leadership is the prosperity of the people and a stable Pakistan. He said that fulfillment of his constitutional obligations and betterment of Punjab province was among his top priorities. Governor Punjab further said that he

rose to this position by dint of hard work and struggle. He added that he was well aware of the problems of working class. He said that the doors of Governor House are always open for the workers and the people of Punjab. Meanwhile, Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in his statement regarding Youm-e-Takbeer stated that May 28 was a big day in the history of Pakistan.

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LAHORE: Various delegations of Pakistan Peoples' Party Central Punjab in a group photo with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan after meeting at Governor House.



SHIGAR: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting of Religious Scholars during his visit.

Nasir Shah says: Bhutto's dream of making Pakistan a nuclear power fulfilled by Nawaz Sharif

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Energy, Development and Planning Sindh Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Tuesday, said that PPP's Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's dream of making Pakistan a nuclear power has been fulfilled by Nawaz Sharif and Pakistani nation will always remember the feat of both of them.

courage and innovation as well. Nasir Shah termed the Youm-e-Takbeer as a day signifying bravery, national honor and determination said that on this day defense capabilities of the motherland were made impregnable by nuclear tests.

CM Sindh felicitates nation on Youm-e-Takbeer

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Tuesday, felicitated the nation on 'Youm-e-Takbeer' and said that it is a manifestation of collective efforts of all aspects of national strength.

On May 28, 1998, Pakistan has unleashed its nuclear power on its enemies and became the first nuclear power among the Islamic countries and the seventh in the world, he said adding that it is the day of guaranteeing the balance of power in the region and today our beloved homeland Pakistan is invincible.

The minister said that Pakistan's nuclear assets are in safe and strong hands as the armed forces of Pakistan have full capacity and strength to defend the country, nation and its nuclear assets.

The Sindh CM, in his message on 'Youm-e-Takbeer', also paid tribute to the leadership, people and armed forces of Pakistan who played significant role in making the mother-land a nuclear power. Murad Shah said that Former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the founder of Pakistan's nuclear program who laid the foundation of a program aimed at making Pakistan a nuclear power to maintain peace and deterrence in the region.

Minister Health inaugurates 250 KW solarization project at Women & Children Hospital

PESHAWAR: Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday inaugurated a 250 KW solarization project at the Women and Children Hospital in Charsadda, completed at a cost of Rs68 million with the support of UNICEF.

Shah highlighted the significance of this project, emphasizing that it is not only crucial for the healthcare sector but also a vital step towards acquiring green energy in the context of climate change. He stated that the solarization of hospitals will help address the energy crisis and meet the challenges posed by climate change.

Two killed, three injured in road mishaps

BUREWALA (APP): At least two persons including a minor kid were killed while three others sustained injuries in two separate road incidents.

According to details, two persons on a motorcycle were taking turn when suddenly an overspeeding Vehari bounded bus ran over them near Multan road.

This project will ensure an uninterrupted power supply to the maternity and neonatal care wards, as well as the oxygen production plant. The inauguration ceremony was attended by several notable figures, including MPA PK-64 Ifthikhar Ullah, Director General Health Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Additional Director General Dr. Shahid Younis, District Health Officer Charsadda, Chief of UNICEF Peshawar Mr. Radoslaw Rzechak, UNICEF KP Health Team Lead, Dr. Inamullah.

As a result, 65-year-old Ghulam Ali died on the spot while woman sustained serious injuries. The bus driver managed to escape from there. In another incident, two motorcycles collided near Tufailabad Arifwala Road and were crushed by a trailer coming from behind. As a result, three-year-old child Imran died on the spot while his mother Abida Parveen, and another motorcyclist Rana Akmal sustained injuries.

Rescue teams shifted the injured to a hospital while police concerned were busy interrogating into the incidents.

Fund raising event held in Karachi for Gaza affectees

KARACHI (APP): Al-Khidmat Foundation, in collaboration with Justice of Peace and Sahar Foundation organized a fund raising event for collecting donations for support of Gaza affectees who were subject to Israeli atrocities since last several months.

President Al-Khidmat Foundation Dr Hafez-ur-Rehman addressing the event said that more than 34 thousand innocent people were killed in Palestine and hundreds of thousands left without shelter, food and water.

Speaking to the media after the ceremony, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali

Director General Health Services, UNICEF Field office and UNICEF Health Team Lead also spoke on the occasion adding that this initiative is a significant step towards providing sustainable green energy and quality healthcare services.

He said this during a fund raising event organized by Chairman Sehara Foundation and Justice of Peace, Danish Aman, Zahid Hameed & Friends of Al-Khidmat. It was also attended by Dost Muhammad Rahimoon, Sindh Minister for Environment, climate change & coastal development department MPA, Barrister Hallar Wassan, Additional I.G. (AIG) Police Javed Alam Adho, and elite of the city.

Ecotourism flourishes in Kalam following increase of temperature

KALAM (APP): Providing meal and cold water to tourists, Haji Ehsan Ullah (28), a resident of Osho village near Kalam while talking to APP.

He said domestic tourists prefer small hotels and inns due to its affordable prices than expansive hotels at Kalam and majority of his villagers had opened their rest houses for accommodations of the tourists.

Ehsan said that he provides free meal and water to tourists and obtain only Rs1500 rent for 24 hours stay. "I came from Wapda Town Peshawar to spend few days in pleasant weather of Kalam," said

Kaiser Khan, a retired Wapda employee while talking to APP. Impressed by the hospitality of locals, he said that guest houses at Kalam were more economical then hotels and urged people here in large numbers to enjoy trout fish and paragliding besides rivers rafting.

Although local tourism had flourished visibly in recent years at Swat yet unfortunately these bounties remained untapped to the maximum due to multiple reasons like insufficient projection, facilities for tourism and law and order situation in the past.

Since Pakistan has a meager share in global revenue earning from tourism, the experts believe that if the government fully employs the latest digital techniques and social media to highlight these hidden destinations, it can earn billions of dollars annually.



KARACHI: Supporters of the Pakistani religious group "Jamaat-e-Islami" protest the continued bombing of Gaza Israeli air strikes on tents housing displaced people in Rafah, Gaza, in Karachi.

MPAs call on CM Maryam, discuss development needs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) from different districts, in order to discuss development needs and public issues of their respective constituencies.

The CM apprised the visiting public representatives about various government initiatives meant to ensure welfare and ease of common man. She said that food prices would come down further, because they are creating a separate system for price control and other related issues.

She added whenever the PML-N comes to power, rates of food items fall down. She noted on the contrary, some people in the past used to say that they did not come to power for potatoes and onions.

The CM said that she reviewed plots in the villages for the purpose. Currently, they are reviewing plots in the villages for the purpose. The CM said that other countries including China are contacting Nawaz Sharif for IT City. She directed the visiting members of the Provincial Assembly to maintain close contact with the common man.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also apprised that a big Kisan Card project is coming for the farmers of Punjab, saying that now farmers will be given subsidy directly. She highlighted that it has been proposed to the Federal government to reduce import duty on agricultural machinery and tractors etc.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also briefed them that they will bring hybrid buses to the city, besides giving motor bikes to the youth. She added a loan proposal is also under consideration for building a house on a 2-4 marla plot. Moreover, they will make houses for the homeless people. Earlier, she also listened to their suggestions and recommendations for resolving the public issues.

Youm-e-Takbeer rally held in Dera

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A rally was held on Tuesday to observe Youm-e-Takbeer anniversary of the nuclear tests conducted on May 28, 1998. Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Arshad led the rally in which government officials, civil society members, political party representatives, and social leaders participated, waving national flags and chanting slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Youm-e-Takbeer Zindabad". The rally commenced from the Deputy Commissioner's Office with participants and culminated after reaching Yadgar Chowk.



KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses the Press Conference regarding celebration of Youm-e-Takbeer.

Traffic accident claims 4 deaths in Peshawar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Four people died and 2 were seriously injured on Thursday due to a traffic accident near ring road Peshawar.

According to the private news channel, the accident took place when two vehicles collided due to over speeding. The rescue team reached the spot immediately after receiving the information about the accident and shifted the dead bodies and the injured to the hospital.

The police have started investigation after inspecting the crime scene.



LAHORE: General (ret'd) Abdul Qayyum addressing the Takbeer Day ceremony at Provincial Capital.

PML-N working day & night for development of country: Minister

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafiq has said that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Federal and Punjab government are working day and night for the development and prosperity of the country and the nation.

History is a witness that whenever Muhammad Nawaz Sharif came into power, the country became stronger economically, ideologically and geographically.

He expressed these views while speaking at a special guest at Kissan Mela 2024 in Koriky of Pasur tehsil. Member Provincial Assembly Chaudhry Naveed Ashraf, former Vice Chairman District Council Chaudhry Jameel Ashraf, Dawood Bukhari besides dignitaries of the area were present in large numbers.

General (ret'd) Abdul Qayyum addressing the Takbeer Day ceremony at Provincial Capital.

The Minister said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is carrying forward the vision of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and serving the people of the province. He said that for the first time in the country's history, the Punjab government is going to introduce such a local government system that will provide modern sanitation facilities to the people living in the villages and the garbage will be collected and recycled to reuse. Energy will be generated from decomposite fertilizers and residual waste. Provincial Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq said that the land of Punjab is the guardian of living traditions.

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Chairman WAPDA reviews progress on Tarbela 5th exten. project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) reviewed progress on Tarbela 5th Extension during his visit to the Project, being constructed at Tunnel No. 5 of Tarbela Dam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Chairman inspected construction activities on various sites, which also include the raised intake, the powerhouse and the tunnel, said a press release.

Representatives of the Consultants and the Contractors briefed the Chairman about site-wise progress achieved so far.

After the site visit, the Chairman also presided over a meeting at the Project office. A detailed presentation was made about the key components of the Project. It was briefed that construction activities are being carried out simultaneously in all five areas i.e. intake,

penstock and outlet, powerhouse, tail race culvert and canal and switch yard.

The implementation plan, comprising important benchmarks and their timelines, was also discussed in detail during the meeting. Addressing the meeting, the Chairman said the pace of work needs to be expedited on the Project to start electricity generation in 2025-26.

He directed the Contractor to deploy additional resources to meet the timelines stipulated in the implementation plan.

Adhering to the specified standards is a must to ensure the quality of work on the Project, the Chairman said.

Member Water, Member Power, Advisor Projects, Advisor Tarbela Dam, GM (Coordination & Monitoring) Water, GM Tarbela Dam, GM (Power) Tarbela, Project Directors

Tarbela 4th and 5th Extension and Chief Engineer (Operation & Maintenance) Tarbela 4th Extension were also present on the occasion.

Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project is a component of the green, clean and least-cost energy generation plan of WAPDA. World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are providing financial assistance for the construction of the Project to the tune of US\$ 390 million and US\$ 300 million respectively.

The generation capacity of the Project stands at 1530 MW with three generating units of 510 MW each. The Project will provide 1.347 billion units of hydel electricity to the National Grid annually. Once the 5th Extension is completed, the installed capacity at Tarbela Dam will increase from 4888 MW to 6418 MW.



FAISALABAD: The oath ceremony of newly elected officials of Anjuman Tajran Rajbah Road, held in the city.

Pakistan, Cambodia sign MoU on trade, investment promotion

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and Cambodia on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a joint trade committee.

The deal was inked in Phnom Penh between Cambodian Minister of Commerce Cham Nimul and Pakistani Ambassador to Cambodia Zaeheruddin Babar Thaheem. Xinhua reported while quoting a news release from Cambodia's Ministry of Commerce.

"This MoU will significantly contribute to the elevation of the two countries' relations, particularly on trade and economic cooperation," Nimul said at the event.

"The joint trade committee established

under this memorandum will serve as a mechanism that allows both sides to explore ways to create favourable conditions for businesses and investors and to diversify economies, expand production bases, and foster bilateral trade," she added.

Under the MoU, both countries will work together and actively engage the private sectors, including chambers of commerce and business associations, to promote trade and economic activities, the news release said. The two sides will exchange information on trade, promote small and medium enterprises, and boost mutual exports, it added.

Secretary Agriculture for achieving cotton cultivation target on 4 mln acres

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Agriculture Punjab, Ifikhar Ali Sahoo, directed all divisional directors to ensure the achievement of the cotton cultivation target on 4 million acres by May 31.

As many as 6.5 million cotton bales were expected which will be helpful to run wheel of the national economy.

He directed the relevant officers to provide technical guidance to cotton farmers, considering the current weather conditions. Separate technical advisories should be issued for early and seasonal cotton cultivation.

Clear instructions have been given to field formations in cotton areas to stand by the farmers from sowing to harvesting. Accurate statistics regarding cotton cultivation should be prepared.



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, presiding over the 9th National e-Commerce Council (NeCC) meeting, underscoring the importance digital trade and eCommerce for Pakistan's economic future.

PBF says UAE \$10 bln pledge an irrefutable proof of foreign investors confidence

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman lauded the announcement from United Arab Emirates (UAE) of a \$10 billion investment for Pakistan in the promising economic sectors.

PBF President while talking to APP on Tuesday said that he commended the UAE's development journey and emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its friendship with the UAE and expanding cooperation, especially in the economic, commercial, and investment sectors.

"He said this huge investment is an irrefutable proof of foreign investors' confidence in government's efforts to revamp the economy."

UAE is home to 1.8 million Pakistanis who are contributing towards development, prosperity and economic growth of the two brotherly countries.

In this regard PBF President suggested that there is a further need to increase cooperation between the two countries

in the fields of aviation and tourism to increase people to people contact.

The PBF also stated that in 2022, the UAE exported \$5.8 billion worth of goods to Pakistan. The main products exported from the UAE to Pakistan were Crude Petroleum (\$2.29 billion), Refined Petroleum (\$1.3 billion), and Propylene Polymers (\$212 million).

Similarly Pakistan exported in 2022 \$2.58 billion worth of goods to the UAE. The top Pakistani exports were Refined Petroleum (\$1.07 billion), Rice (\$235 million), and Bovine Meat (\$165 million). Pakistan's exports to the UAE have grown at an annualized rate of 4.5 percent over the last 19 years, increasing from \$1.12 billion in 2003 to \$2.58 billion in 2022.

President, Pakistan Business Forum also invited Chairman of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, Adullah Mohammed Almazrui and CEO Ahmed Khalifa Al Qubaisi to visit Pakistan soon along with their delegation to explore more bilateral trade avenues.

Pakistan and Ethiopia President SCCI emphasizing the potential for enhanced trade and investment

SIALKOT (APP): President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Abdul Ghafoor Malik addressed the Ethiopia-Pakistan Business Forum, emphasizing the potential for enhanced trade and investment between Pakistan and Ethiopia.

According to SCCI, the event was held in Addis Ababa attended by prominent figures including Minister for Trade and Regional Integration Gebremeskel Chala, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Birtukan Amano, Ethiopian

Investment Commissioner H a n n a Arayaselassie, President ECCSA Eng. Melaku Ezezew, Chairman Trade Development Authority of Pakistan Zubair Motivala, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jamal Beker and Ambassador of Pakistan to Ethiopia Atif Sharif.

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik highlighted Ethiopia's attractiveness as an investment destination due to its robust economic growth, strategic location and favorable investment climate. President SCCI

noted, "Ethiopia, with its rich history and large population, offers vast opportunities for Pakistani businesses seeking to explore new markets. Boasting one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, Ethiopia has sustained an impressive average GDP growth rate of around 10% over the past decade."

Malik also stressed the importance of addressing trade barriers and building closer business-to-business linkages to capitalize on the untapped potential.

Food minister announces price reduction of bakery items

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said the government is on a mission of providing quality and affordable food items to the people of Punjab.

After the clear reduction in the prices of flour, roti and naan, on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister, the minister on Tuesday announced a significant reduction in bakery products. According to the details, after meetings and negotiations with the representatives of the bakery association and various brands, a reduction of Rs. 30 has been made on the large bread, while the large bread available at less than Rs. 200 is being reduced by Rs. 20.

The Food minister said that a discount of Rs. 10 has been given on small bread and Rs. 5 on all kinds of buns. Bilal Yasin said that a decrease of Rs 10 for 200 grams of rusk is announced while the prices of all types of bakery products were reduced significantly. He said that the price reduction of bakery products will be implemented immediately and the price reduction will be applied to all brands and local bakery products across the province.



SUKKUR: Vendor runs his juice business as people quench their thirst as demand of juices increased in city during scorching hot weather of summer season, in Sukkur.

President FCCA nominated Honorary Coordinator Federal Tax Ombudsman

PESHAWAR (APP): A prominent businessman from Peshawar and President of Frontier Custom Agents Association (FCCA), Zia ul Haq Sarhadi has been nominated as Honorary Coordinator of Custom Matters to the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO).

The nomination of Zia Sarhadi was announced by Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah (recipient of Hilal-e-Imtiaz and Sitara-e-Imtiaz) during his visit to Peshawar. Speaking to the business community of Peshawar at the Sarhadi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), FTO Dr.

Asif Mehmood said the honorary designation has been awarded to Zia Sarhadi in recognition of his services for the promotion of commerce and trade in the region through the resolution of problems faced by the business community.

According to a notification issued by the FTO Secretariat, Zia Sarhadi will liaise with local chambers of commerce and industry, trade associations, market associations, and general trade bodies about issues with customs clearance.

He will also present custom clearing agents' problems, issues, conflicts.

'Creative Economy' Chairman ICE promotes concept to connect Pak with Indonesia's economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman International Creative Exchange (ICE) Atta-ul-Karim on Tuesday said that tourism and education are important sectors to promote 'Creative Economy in Pakistan' and to connect Pakistan with trillion dollar Indonesia economy.

International Creative Exchange (ICE) as his vision includes promoting the concept of 'Creative Economy, connecting Pakistan with modern and innovative economies including Indonesia, bringing investment in the tourism sector in Pakistan and developing it along modern lines, Chairman ICE, Atta-ul-Karim said.

He said this while addressing a press conference along with Charge d'Affairs Indonesia in Islamabad, Rahmat

Hindiarta to announce the business and investment promotion in Pakistan and shared his vision with media in National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad.

Chairman ICE said that the only solution to the severe economic challenges that Pakistan is currently facing is the 'Creative Economy' and Indonesia has become the world's largest economy with this concept.

He said that Indonesia is currently the first trillion economy of the Islamic world, which is moving step by step with the rest of the world. This country has major tourist destinations including Bali.

He said that there is a lot of tourism potential in the northern regions of Pakistan. And international investment is very important for its promotion.

SNGPL disconnects six more connections

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) disconnected six more connections of consumers on various charges here on Tuesday.

The departmental task force was raiding on a daily basis and disconnected two metres over defects in gas metres.

Likewise, metres of three consumers were also removed and seized over using compressors for taking gas. The metre of a consumer was disconnected over non billing and Task Force has recommended further departmental action.

Additionally, five consumers were found illegally supplying gas.

Public outrage against IPPs looting them for decades growing: Hanif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal said on Tuesday that public anger against independent power producers (IPPs) is growing due to frequent tariff hikes.

He said that the IPPs have been looting the masses in the name of business for decades and now they have earned trillion of rupees. They should reduce their charges; otherwise, they and their political facilitators may soon face the wrath of the public, he added.

Dr. Hanif Mughal told party workers that we cannot allow IPPs to make extraordinary returns, which have depleted the nation and the masses.

They must provide some relief to the people, or else they may face severe consequences in the event of public backlash, he warned.

The chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad said that it was surprising that many people still consider the facilitators of private power plants and those who extend their disastrous contracts to be leaders instead of enemies of the country.

According to official data, the IPP bill is the third largest debt owed to the government after defence expenditures and foreign debt repayments. However, despite paying this amount and continuously increasing the cost of electricity, the circular debt is increasing to become a heavy burden on the national treasury.

According to Dr. Hanif Mughal, due to their aligned interests and lack of concern for the plight of the masses.

Public outrage against IPPs looting them for decades growing: Hanif



HUB: Members of All Balochistan Transporters Association blocked the Quetta-Karachi National Highway against the border trade of Iranian diesel in Balochistan and the extortion of Pakistan Coast Guard Customs, at Bhawani in Hub on Tuesday.

Gold rates dip by Rs.500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs. 240,300 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs. 240,800 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.429 to Rs.206,018 from Rs.206,447 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.188,850 from Rs.189,243, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,800 and Rs.2,400.54 respectively.

PDMA issues advisory for farmers, herders

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Tuesday issued a comprehensive advisory urging farmers, herders, tourists, and the general public to take essential precautionary measures in light of the anticipated dust storms and severe weather conditions.

According to the details, the Meteorological Department has issued a weather alert indicating that weak westerly winds are expected to impact the upper regions of the country starting May 28. This weather system is anticipated to bring intermittent rain,

thunderstorms, and strong winds from the evening of May 28 to June 1.

The regions likely to be affected include Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Manshehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Malakand, Waziristan, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Karak, Khyber, Peshawar, Mardan, and Kurram.

Heavy rainfall during this period may trigger landslides in the upper regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, specifically in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Manshehra, and Abbottabad. Strong winds and thunderstorms could damage structures.



HYDERABAD: Workers making different parts from iron die at his work place at goods Naka area.

Spain, Ireland and Norway recognise Palestinian state

Monitoring Desk
MADRID: Spain, Ireland and Norway formally recognised the Palestinian state on Tuesday in a coordinated decision slammed by Israel as a "reward" for Hamas, more than seven months into the devastating Gaza bombardment. The three European countries believe their initiative has a strong symbolic impact that is likely to encourage others to follow suit, defying Israel which had condemned the plan. After Ireland's government formally approved the measure, Prime Minister Simon Harris said the aim was to keep Middle East peace hopes alive. "We had wanted to recognise Palestine at the end of a peace process. However, we have made this move alongside Spain and Norway to keep the miracle of peace alive," he said in a statement, urging

Israel to "stop the humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza. As Oslo's recognition went into effect, Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide hailed the move as "a special day for Norway-Palestine relations". After Spain's cabinet backed the move, Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said it was a day that would be "etched in Spain's history". Earlier, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the recognition was "essential" for peace, insisting the move was "not against anyone, least of all Israel" and the only way to secure a future of two states living side-by-side "in peace and security". The decision also reflected Spain's "outright rejection of Hamas, which is against the two-state solution" and whose October 7 attacks led to the Gaza conflict, he added.

Tuesday's move will mean 145 of the United Nations' 193 member states now recognise Palestinian statehood. On October 7, Hamas fighters stormed into southern Israel in an assault that killed more than 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. The Palestinian fighters also took 252 hostages, 121 of whom remain in Gaza. The Israeli army says 37 of them are dead. Israel's relentless retaliatory offensive, which has been globally and widely condemned, has killed more than 36,000 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the territory's health ministry. Spain, Ireland and Norway will also jointly issue a "firm" response to Israel's angry reaction to their decision to recognise a Palestinian state, Spain's top diplomat said.



Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide and Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheal Martin gesture after a press conference in Brussels, Belgium.

Security Council set to meet over deadly Rafah strike

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: The UN Security Council was set to convene an emergency meeting Tuesday over an Israeli strike that killed dozens in a displaced persons camp in Rafah, as three European countries were slated to formally recognise a Palestinian state. AFP journalists on the ground early Tuesday reported fresh Israeli strikes overnight in the southern Gaza border city, where an Israeli attack targeting two senior Hamas members on Sunday night sparked a fire that ripped through a displacement centre, killing 45, according to Gaza health officials. The attack prompted a wave of international condemnation, with Palestin-

ians and many Arab countries calling it a "massacre". Israel said it was looking into the "tragic accident". "There is no safe place in Gaza. This horror must stop," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres posted on social media. UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths pointed to the widespread warnings of civilian deaths that circulated ahead of Israel's incursion into Rafah, saying in a statement: "We've seen the consequences in last night's utterly unacceptable attack." "To call it 'a mistake' is a message that means nothing for those killed, those grieving, and those trying to save lives," he added.

As Israel attacks Rafah, Palestinians are living in tents and searching for food

Monitoring Desk
DEIR AL-BALAH: The tent camps stretch for more than 16 kilometers (10 miles) along Gaza's coast, filling the beach and sprawling into empty lots, fields and town streets. Families dig trenches to use as toilets. Fathers search for food and water, while children look through garbage and wrecked buildings for scraps of wood or cardboard for their mothers to burn for cooking. Over the past three weeks, Israel's offensive in Rafah has sent nearly a million Palestinians fleeing the southern Gaza city and scattering across a wide area. Most have already been displaced multiple times during Israel's nearly 8-month-old war in Gaza, which is aimed at destroying Hamas but has devastated the territory and caused what the

United Nations says is a near-famine. FILE - Palestinians displaced by the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip set up a tent camp in Rafah on Dec. 6, 2023. The tent camps stretch for more than 16 kilometers (10 miles) along Gaza's coast, filling the beach and sprawling into empty lots, fields and town streets. (AP Photo/Hatem Ali, file) Palestinians displaced by the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip set up a tent camp in Rafah on Dec. 6, 2023. (AP Photo/Hatem Ali, file) The situation has been worsened by a dramatic plunge in the amount of food, fuel and other supplies reaching the U.N. and other aid groups to distribute to the population. Palestinians have largely been on their own to resettle their families and find the basics for survival.



Palestinians travel in vehicles and on foot along with their belongings as they flee Rafah due to an Israeli military operation, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Doctor says Gaza hospitals operating in 'mediaeval' conditions

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Gaza hospitals are reduced to practising "mediaeval medicine", a British surgeon recently returned from the bombed Palestinian territory said on Monday. "It's absolutely true to describe it as mediaeval medicine. It is what you would hear about or read about what would be happening in Europe maybe 300, 400 years ago," Dr Khaled Dawas, head of gastrointestinal surgery at University College London Hospitals, said in an interview. Dawas described dire conditions in Gaza, with medical staff operating virtually without supplies, power supplies intermittent and patients lying on the floor. He returned at the end of April from his two-week stint to help overstretched

Palestinian hospital surgeons — his second wartime stay there, following one in January. Dawas was in Brussels to describe his experience to European Union officials. "By April they were seeing this constant, constant volume of dying and dead bodies coming into the hospitals and any human wouldn't be able to tolerate it," he said. "They carry on working, but you can see the effect of that. They're all extremely burdened by what they're doing." The 54-year-old surgeon, an Arabic-speaker who has Palestinian parents, said many people in Gaza wounded or needing other medical attention tried to avoid going to the hospitals because it "means pretty much a death sentence".

12 Indians killed in quarry collapse after cyclone rains

Monitoring Desk
SATHKHIRA: Torrential rains in the wake of a powerful cyclone caused the collapse of a quarry in India's Mizoram state killing 12 people, government officials said on Tuesday. "So far 12 bodies have been found, we are looking for more," deputy commissioner of Aizawl district Nazuk Kumar told AFP. Rescue efforts in the quarry were being hampered by "heavy rains", police director general Anil Shukla said, NDTV news network reported. Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma offered compensation to families of the victims of the "landslide due to Cyclone Remal". "I pray for the success of rescue and relief operations and wish a speedy recovery of the injured," India's President Droupadi Murmu said on social media.

Russia not planning to restart Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia is not currently planning to restart the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, the head of Russia's state-owned nuclear power company Rosatom was quoted as saying on Tuesday. Russian forces have occupied the Zaporizhzhia plant since early in what Russia calls its special military operation in Ukraine, and its six reactors are not in operation. Russian state-run news agency TASS said Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had held talks with a Rosatom delegation in the western Russian city of Kaliningrad at which he said an understanding was reached on the safety of the plant.

Iran talks suspended after Raisi's death, says IAEA

Monitoring Desk
VIENNA: Planned talks between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog aimed at breaking the impasse over Tehran's nuclear programme have been put on hold after the death of President Ebrahim Raisi, an agency report said on Monday. The temporary suspension of talks between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comes as its chief Rafael Grossi reiterated his concern over public statements made in Iran regarding its nuclear

weapons capability. In the report, Grossi said that "further public statements made in Iran... regarding its technical capabilities to produce nuclear weapons and possible changes to Iran's nuclear doctrine only increase... concerns about the correctness and completeness of Iran's safeguards declarations." Iran has always denied any ambition to develop nuclear weapon capability, insisting its activities are entirely for peaceful purposes.

Storms kill 21 across four states in US

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Tornado-spawning thunderstorms that swept the US southern plains and Ozarks have killed at least 21 people as of Monday morning across four states and wrecked hundreds of buildings, with forecasters warning of more severe weather. The death toll over the Memorial Day weekend includes at least eight fatalities in Arkansas, seven in Texas, four in Kentucky and two in Oklahoma, according to tallies by state emergency authorities. Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency early on Monday while the National Weather Service said a severe thunderstorm watch was issued for parts of

Georgia and South Carolina until at least Monday afternoon. "It was a tough night for our people," the Kentucky governor said on social media platform X on Monday. He later said in a press briefing that "devastating storms" had hit almost the entire state. Officials said 100 state highways and roads were damaged by the storms. At least seven people perished — including two children aged two and five from a single family and nearly 100 were injured on Saturday night when a powerful tornado struck communities in north Texas near the Oklahoma border, Governor Greg Abbott said at a Sunday news conference.



People clear an area at the site of a landslide in Yambali village, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea.

North Korea's suspected spy satellite launch ends in 'fragments'

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea's latest satellite launch ended in a mid-air explosion on Monday night, Pyongyang said, hours after its announcement of the planned launch. The launch of the Mallyong-1 reconnaissance satellite "exploded in the air during the first flight and failed to launch", the country's National Aerospace Technology Administration said in a statement carried by state media, adding the "cause of the accident was the reliability of the newly developed liquid oxygen and oil engine". Japanese broadcaster NHK ran footage of what

appeared to be a flaming projectile in the night sky, which then burst into a ball of flame, saying it had filmed it from northeast China at the same time as the attempted launch. Pyongyang had notified Japan earlier on Monday that it was planning to put another satellite into orbit, after a successful attempt in November, plus two failed efforts earlier last year. Nuclear-armed North Korea is barred by multiple UN resolutions from tests using ballistic technology, and analysts say there is significant technological overlap between space launch capabilities and the development of ballistic missiles.

Russia invites Afghan Taliban to key economic forum

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Moscow has invited the Taliban to its biggest annual economic forum and is considering a proposal to remove the group from its terror list, a Russian diplomat was quoted as saying on Monday. Since the Taliban seized power in Aug 2021 as US-led forces withdrew after 20 years, Moscow has been slowly building ties with the Taliban, though the movement is still officially outlawed in Russia. The foreign and justice ministries have reported to President Vladimir Putin on the issue of removing the ban, Zamir Kabulov, an official at the Russian foreign ministry, told state news agency TASS.

China calls for Red Sea attacks on civilian ships to end

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China called for attacks on civilian ships in the Red Sea to end and safe navigation there when China Foreign Minister Wang Yi met his Yemen counterpart in Beijing on Tuesday. Wang said China is ready to continue to play a constructive role in the matter, according to a foreign ministry statement.

Ukraine to receive F-16s soon but aid arriving late, defence minister

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine will receive its first supplies of F-16 fighter jets "very soon", but around half of its desperately needed foreign military aid is arriving late, Kyiv's defence minister has said. Rustem Umerov, 42, told Reuters in an interview in Kyiv late on Monday that Russia was deploying more manpower and equipment to the front, more than 27 months after its full-scale invasion. Kyiv's forces have managed to stabilise the new front in the northeastern Kharkiv region where Russia attacked earlier this month. But Umerov said Moscow was preparing for a new push. "Their objective is to open a new front in the north to start using all their manpower, firing power, against us, they are continuing with their objective to destroy the nation," he said. "We are withstanding, but of course we need more weapons, we need more fir-

ing power, we need long-range missiles, not to allow them to enter our state." He said Ukraine was grateful for the military aid and weapons supplied by its partners, but that only half of the promised deliveries arrived on time. Evry delay benefited Ukraine's much larger and better-equipped foe, with a front line stretching 1,200 km (750 miles). Even before Russian forces crossed this month into the northern part of the Kharkiv region, capturing border villages and forcing thousands of civilians to flee, it had been slowly advancing for months in the eastern Donetsk region. "Time is super-crucial and, to repel the attacks, we need to have [the deliveries] on time in place," Umerov said. Ukraine has also struggled to recruit the number of troops it requires to replenish and rotate tired and exhausted soldiers, some of whom have been fighting since February 2022.

Baby found dead in stricken migrant boat heading for Italy

Monitoring Desk
LAMPEDUSA: The body of a five-month-old baby was found on Tuesday when some 85 migrants heading for Italy from Tunisia were rescued from distress at sea, according to a Reuters witness. The infant girl, her mother and 4-year-old sister were in an unseaworthy boat laden with migrants that had set off from Sfax in Tunisia two days earlier bound for Italy, according to charity group SOS Humanity. SOS Humanity workers aboard its "Humanity 1" vessel found many of the migrants exhausted and suffering from seasickness and fuel burns.

Two KFC outlets attacked in Baghdad

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq's interior ministry and police on Monday stated that two Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants had been attacked in Baghdad, over the last 48 hours. The attacks damaged the restaurants; however, no injuries were reported. Since the attacks, Iraqi security forces have arrested "some" suspects. Initial investigations depict that the restaurants were targeted over the perceived support of "US-based" brands for Israel (amidst the war in the Gaza Strip), according to police sources.

Tantawi instead asked his supporters to fill out unofficial "popular endorsement" forms—a tactic the authorities labelled as tantamount to election fraud. He ultimately collected only 14,000 endorsements—well short of the 25,000 needed from at least 15 of Egypt's 27 governorates to enable him to run. Alternatively, he would have had to garner nominations from at least 20 parliamentary deputies. The former member of parliament withdrew his candidacy before the December vote, citing harassment and obstruction.

Macron calls rise of far-right an 'ill wind' for Europe

Monitoring Desk
DRESDEN: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday raised concerns over "ill wind", around the rise of the "far-right" in European politics. Macron voiced his concerns during a state visit to Germany, ahead of the EU elections. Macron noted a "fascination with authoritarian regimes" in Europe, whilst singling out the "Viktor Orban" government in Hungary for criticism. "Everywhere in our democracies these ideas thrive, pushed by the extremes and in particular the far-right" Macron said. Macron was delivering a speech in the eastern city of Dresden, which has been a 'bastion of support', for Germany's 'far-right'. "This ill wind is blowing in Europe, so let us wake up" he stated, in front of the city's famous

'Frauenkirche church'. Macron's trip comes just two weeks ahead of the European Union elections. Polls currently indicate that his 'centrist' coalition is trailing the 'far-right' and may even struggle to reach a 'third-place finish'. Macron, who is undertaking the first state visit by a French president to Germany in a quarter of a century, made a plea to 'defend democracy against nationalist forces'. In Germany, the three parties in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition are polling behind the 'far-right' AfD, in surveys. This is despite 'a series of scandals' embroiling the anti-immigration party. "Europe is not just a place where we give ourselves common rules, it is a set of values" Macron said. "We must find the strength and commitment to defend it everywhere" he added.

Meet Jacob Zuma, former president shaking up South African election

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: Six years after South Africa's scandal-plagued former president Jacob Zuma was pushed out of office, he is backing a new party against his longtime political home the African National Congress (ANC) in Wednesday's national election. Zuma's political return as the leader of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a party named after the ANC's former armed wing, is significant since the ANC is fighting to retain its majority amid declining

popularity. Support for MK is around 8%-14% nationally, according to opinion polls. Although 82-year-old Zuma is legally barred from standing for parliament due to a jail sentence, MK's emergence has disrupted the political landscape, testifying to his enduring influence particularly in his home province KwaZulu-Natal. An anti-apartheid veteran and Zulu traditionalist, Zuma has a strong following especially in rural areas due to his populist style and modest upbringing.



People take part in a protest against a draft bill on "foreign agents" in Tbilisi, Georgia.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on Pakistan-China cooperation.

Pakistan reviving Belt and Road Initiative projects: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal said here on Tuesday that the incumbent government was hopeful to inject some fresh momentum into projects that fall under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it tries to boost the country's troubled economy.

The government is looking forward to joint ventures for renewable energy projects, agriculture collaboration and possibly enticing some Chinese companies to relocate to Pakistan, Ahsan Iqbal, who also co-heads the committee responsible for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor said in an interview with Bloomberg.

"Yeah, I'm very hopeful because I was there in China recently and I had meetings with their senior leadership... So I see great interest on the Chinese side

China an important partner in economic development of Pakistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said China is an important partner in the economic development of Pakistan, and we desire increase of Pakistani exports to China.

"Chinese nationals will be provided fool proof security in Pakistan. All the facilities will be extended to Chinese investors and industrialists, he said this while presiding over a meeting in Islamabad Tuesday regarding enhancing cooperation with China in various fields.

Different ministries presented important proposals with reference to bilateral economic relations between Pakistan and China. Addressing the meeting PM Shehbaz Sharif said we invite Chinese businessmen especially the Chinese textile industry to set up industries in Pakistan.

He held out an assurance that the Chinese nationals will be provided with foolproof security in Pakistan. A comprehensive plan has been evolved with reference to security of Chinese nationals.

Shehbaz Sharif said preparations are being made for the next phase of CPEC. He said Gwadar port will be made a logistics hub with Chinese cooperation.

He said establishment of Agriculture Demonstration Zones will be an im-

Aleem hold meeting with Tajikistan's ministers to discuss various matters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Investment Board, Privatization and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan, during his visit to Tajikistan held detail meetings with Transport Minister Azim Ibrahim and Minister for Economic Development and Trade Zavgizoda Zavqi Amin to increase bilateral trade between the two countries.

Aleem Khan agreed to the proposals for starting a pilot project at the ports of Gwadar and Karachi and increasing the "Organic Export", said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The federal minister while expressing the determination to expand existing relation between two coun-



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in Islamabad.

BTTN organizes webinar on Pak Nuclear Journey, deterrence to sustainable dev.

QUETTA (APP): To commemorate 26th Anniversary of Pakistan's successful Nuclear Tests, Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) organized a webinar on "Pakistan's Nuclear Journey: Deterrence to Sustainable Development" on Tuesday. The webinar was moderated by Research Officer Ms Summra Hamid.

While discussing the Emerging Challenges to Strategic Stability in South Asia, Dr Atia Ali Kazmi, Director Research CISS Islamabad, explained that the shifting regional circumstances have necessitated a robust deterrence capability for Pakistan's national security, emphasizing peaceful development and self-defense.

Emerging challenges to strategic stability in South Asia are exacerbated by India's rapid development of first strike capability and its role in Asia Pacific strategy which destabilizes the region. This arms race and India's strategic partnerships heighten instability and pose significant threats to regional equilibrium.

She pressed upon the fact that India's growing sense of invulnerability could cause undesirable consequences to regional stability. She concluded by saying that all nine nuclear armed states must know the fact there is no victory in fighting a nuclear war thereby one must not fight one. Head of BTTN, Brig Agha Ahmad Gul @ paid rich tribute to all who contributed in Pakistan's going nuclear and politico-military leadership.



KARACHI: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Chief, Pir Sibghatullah Shah Rashidi exchanging views with Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) during meeting held in Karachi.

Wheat smuggling scam: 108 govt employees including two ACs found involved

ISLAMABAD (Online): As many as 108 government officers and subordinate staff have been found involved in smuggling of wheat from Punjab to KP and Afghanistan.

The officials have been identified by the secret agencies. These officers were deployed on the duty of preventing wheat smuggling. They inflicted heavy financial loss on national kitty through massive smuggling.

The secret agencies identified 108 officers and subordinate staff of Punjab police, CTD and revenue department after completing the investigation.

According to sources these officials were appointed in Lodhran, Okara,

Pak ambassador presents Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam medal to ISDB Chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq on Tuesday presented 'Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam' medal to Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB) Group Dr. Muhammad Al-Jasser, at ISDB headquarters in Jeddah.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from Pakistan's missions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a press release said.

'Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam' medal is one of Pakistan's highest civil awards awarded to foreign nationals for special merit or their eminent services to Pakistan.

The President of Pakistan had conferred this medal on Dr. Al-Jasser for his instrumental role and for ISDB Group's leadership in supporting Pakistan's economic and development agenda and support at important world forums.

Pakistan gives counselor access to 2 Indian spies

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan while taking a major step on humanitarian basis has given Indian high commissioner counselor access to 2 Indian spies.

The counselor access was given on the request of Indian government.

The officers of interior ministry were also present during the meeting.

According to diplomatic sources counselor access was provided to Indian high commission authorities to two youths of Occupied Kashmir who were arrested on the charges of espionage.

These two spies including Feroze Ahmad Lon and Noor Muhammad Dani were arrested from Gilgit-Baltistan under spying charges. Feroze Ahmad Lon is 29 while Noor Muhammad Wani is 26.

Diplomatic sources said both the spies belong to Goretz area of Bandi Hora of Occupied Kashmir. Both the youths are missing from Occupied Kashmir since 2018. Both were arrested for crossing the border illegally and spying.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti distributing certificate among participants at concluding ceremony of National Workshop Balochistan.

No negligence to be tolerated in ongoing development projects in Kalat: Lango

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has warned that any negligence would not be tolerated in the ongoing development projects in Kalat.

He said that he would not hurt the trust of people, which has been demonstrated by them.

He said that steps are being taken for resolving the issues including law and order in the area.

The Provincial Minister

was addressing the meeting held to review progress of the ongoing development projects, law and order situation and other issues in Kalat on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner Kalat, Bilal Shabbir and other concerned officials were also present in the meeting. Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister visited Kalat city, Khaliqabad and other areas and gave patient hearing to the problems of people.

PM welcomes Spain's announcement to recognise Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday welcomed the announcement by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez to formally recognise Palestine as a state. The prime minister, in a statement, said that the recognition of Palestine as a state by Spain was a positive development in the international scenario which also manifested the rejection of Israeli barbarism against the unarmed Palestinians by the Spanish people and their Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. He strongly condemned the recent unprovoked Israeli bombing of Rafah which martyred another 45 Palestinian people, and reiterated his call for an immediate end to the genocide of Palestinian population being carried out by Israel.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain alongwith Srilankan Minister for Religious and Cultural Affairs and Buddhassana, Vidura Wickremanayake inaugurating the Gandhara Symposium and exhibition.

Federal Govt. taking steps for reduction of poverty in Balochistan: Chairperson BISP

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Ms. Rubina Khalid has stated that the federal government is taking steps to alleviate poverty in Balochistan.

For the purpose, the BISP provides necessary economic support to the women of province.

These views were expressed by the Chairperson BISP while presiding over the meeting of stakeholders for cooperation and implementation of the BISP initiatives in the province on Tuesday.

The meeting was participated by the Secretary Information Technology, Ayaz Khan Mandokhail, Secretary Industries, Noor Ahmed Pirani, Secretary

Colleges, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir, Director General BISP, Abdul Jabbar and other concerned high ups.

The Chairperson BISP said that she is visiting Balochistan on directives of the President Asif Ali Zardari, who has directed to pay special attention on the province.

This speaks high about the interest of President of Pakistan in the province, she added.

Mrs. Rubina Khalid said that the professional training programme would be started by imparting training to the men and women of the province.

She announced that implementation of the programme would be started very soon.

She on the occasion underlined the need to improve the skills programme for reducing poverty.

She said that steps would have to be taken for bringing improvement livestock and healthcare sectors besides the handicrafts and packing of different goods.

Besides, we also have to go to quality training just because the world is in need of the skilled persons, he added.

Earlier the meeting was informed about implementation on the programme regarding health and education sectors.

It was also mentioned that social protection is also being provided to all the deserving persons of province under the BISP.

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Gandhara Symposium: Salik for promotion of tolerance, unity to fight extremism, injustice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Tuesday emphasized the concerted efforts to promote tolerance and understanding as well as unity to fight the menace of extremism posing threats to the world's peace and security.

"In today's world, extremism poses one of the most potent threats to peace and security... Let us promote tolerance and understanding recognizing that our diversity is our strength. We must stand united against extremism and injustice," the minister said addressing a symposium titled "From Gandhara to the World: The Legacy of Gandharan Buddhism" held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in connection with Vesakh Day.

The two-day event brought together religious leaders and experts from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, besides scholars, diplomats, historians, and art enthusiasts to provide them a platform to exchange ideas and foster connections.



KALAT: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango alongwith Deputy Commissioner and other officers visiting different police stations

Government officials' meeting held in Nushki

NUSHKI (APP): A meeting of all government departments of the district was held at the DC Office under the chairmanship of MPA Haji Mir Ghulam Dastgir Badini.

According to details, the meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Amjad Hussain Soomro, Assistant Commissioner, DSP Sharif Bareach, and heads of the health department; B&R, Principal Degree College, and PPHI district leaders.

Heads of the sports, finance, local government, PHE, irrigation, and education departments also participated in the meeting.

Department heads provided MPA Badini with detailed briefings on their respective departments' funds, schemes, and issues.

MPA Haji Mir Ghulam Dastgir Badini instructed all departments to resolve public issues and provide the best services.

He emphasized that addressing issues in education, health, and drinking water are top priorities.

He stressed that it is the responsibility of all departments to provide better services to the public.

He declared that absentee doctors and those attached to other places would not be tolerated in the district, and their salaries would be withheld.

Badini highlighted the significant issues within the PHE department and instructed that all complaints should be addressed and drinking water tube wells should be made fully functional.

He expressed displeasure over the absence of the Deputy Director of Livestock at the meeting and stated that officers who fail to serve the public efficiently will not be tolerated.