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President, PM express grief

Captain among seven soldiers martyred in Lakki Marwat IED blast: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): A Captain along with six soldiers of Pakistan Army on Sunday embraced martyrdom after an improvised explosive device exploded on vehicle of Security Forces in Lakki Marwat district.



According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the martyred soldiers were identified as Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas (age: 26 years, resident of Kasur District) along with six other brave sons of the soil; Subedar Major Muhammad Nazir (age: 50 years, resident of; Skardu district), Lance Naik Muhammad Anwar (age: 34 years, resident of; Ghanchi district), Lance Naik Hussain Ali (age: 36 years, resident of; Ghizer district), Sepoy Asad Ullah (age: 33 years, resident of; Multan district), Sepoy Manzoor Hussain (age: 27 years, resident of; Gilgit district), Sepoy Rashid Mehmood (age: 31 years, resident of Rawalpindi district); who made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced martyrdom.

act would be brought to justice.

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

Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas Shaheed belongs to Kasur district of Punjab. He got commission in Northern Light Infantry of Pakistan Army in 2020. He was going to get married on June 19, 2024. Faraz Ilyas Shaheed is survived by his parents and siblings.

Subedar Major

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QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti issuing orders after listening the problems of the masses

Our brave jawans rendering great sacrifices of lives for protection of motherland: CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has strongly condemned the assault of terrorists on the security forces in Laki Marwat.

In an official condemnation statement issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister expressed grief over the martyrdom of Captain Faraz, Sobaidar Major Nazir, Sepoy Manzoor, Asadullah and Lance Nike, Hussain Ali and Muhammad Anwar in the

terrorists' attack.

He said that our brave jawans have been rendering great services of their lives for protection of their motherland.

The Chief Minister said that we equally share grief with the bereaved families of the martyrs in the hour of grief.

He said that our martyrs are our pride and the nation can't forget their sacrifices. Mir Sarfaraz Bugti said that the whole nation is standing with it's brave armed forces.

Pakistan, IMF disagree on key loan program points

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are still grappling with several key issues as they negotiate the terms of a new loan program. According to sources within the Finance Ministry, disagreements persist on tax exemptions for former FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) regions and the tax treatment of various income groups.

A major sticking point appears to be the continuation of tax breaks for Pakistan's former FATA territories. While the IMF pushes for their immediate removal, the Finance Ministry argues that a one-year extension is crucial to support development efforts in the region. This includes tax breaks on imported machinery and income tax relief.

One area where progress has been made is income tax on exporters. Both sides have reportedly agreed to a revised system that calculates taxes based on exporters' income and expenses, replacing the current flat rate of 1%.

However, negotiations remain deadlocked regarding income tax rates for salaried and non-salaried individuals. Additionally, the IMF's proposal to impose an 18% sales tax on the agriculture and health sectors faces resistance from Pakistan.

The Finance Ministry has signaled its openness to taxing pensions exceeding one lakh rupees per month. Meanwhile, discussions are ongoing regarding the creation of a national tax authority or council to streamline federal and provincial tax collection.

The IMF has reportedly linked the loan program's terms to Pakistan's new budget and is unwilling to budge on Parliamentary approval of these conditions. This signifies a potentially difficult road ahead for the government, as implementing these measures could face public backlash.

The ongoing negotiations highlight the challenges Pakistan faces in securing vital IMF funds. Finding a middle ground between the IMF's demands for fiscal consolidation and the government's desire to minimize the impact on citizens will be crucial for reaching a successful agreement.

Govt. of Balochistan decides to introduce new pension scheme

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to introduce a new pension scheme for the provincial government pensioners.

According to the sources of Provincial Finance Department, the new pension scheme would be applied on the provincial government employees to be freshly recruited.

The sources said that the new pension scheme for the government employees would be announced in the next financial year budget for the year 2024-2025.

The sources said that

the amount of pension would be deducted from the salaries of government employees every month. The similar amount would be added in the pension of the employees by the provincial government, the sources informed.

The sources said that the monthly accumulated amount would be paid to the employees on their retirement. The new pension scheme would not be applicable to the provincial government employees already recruited, the sources of Finance department confided.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting through video link regarding preparation for upcoming meeting of National Economic Council

"District administration taking measures to open road": Zayreen coming from Iran stranded at Pak-Iran border in Gwadar area due to road block by local dwellers: Rind

Spokesman of provincial government urges zayreen to avoid using unapproved & undeclared route for movement

Independent Report

QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has stated that zayreen and some other passengers have been stranded at the Pak-Afghan border in Gwadar area due to the road blockade by the local dwellers, who are otherwise protesting against action taken for prevention of smuggling of the border.

In an official statement issued here on Sunday, the spokesman of provincial government mentioned that strict measures have been taken for prevention of smuggling at the Pak-Iran border, Gwadar.

He said that the pre-

vention of smuggling is being made as per the decision made in the Apex committee.

He said that the people involved in smuggling have blocked the road since Saturday evening on action against the smugglers.

Due to closure of the road, zayreen coming from Iran to Pakistan have also been stranded in the border area, the spokesman further mentioned.

However, the negotiations have been held with the protestors for opening the road and restoring traffic on it, he added.

Shahid Rind said that the route being used by the zayreen for across the bor-

der movement is not declared route by the government. So, they (zayreen) use that route against the standard operating procedures (SOPs), he made it clear.

He said that zayreen move on the route at their own risk, so they should avoid using this otherwise unapproved route in future.

Still, the district administration is engaged in opening of the road and for the purpose, it is taking steps in peaceful manner, the spokesman maintained.

He recalled that around 300 zayreen had also been rescued from the area and brought them to Karachi last month.



MURREE: Deputy Chairman Senate Saydal Khan meeting with PML (N) Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

Governor Kundi challenges CM Gandapur for a debate

PESHAWAR (INP): Tug of war between Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur continues and former challenges latter for debate.

Talking to media persons in Peshawar on Sunday, the Governor KP said that Gandapur could debate with him on any channel of his choice.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that the chief minister was talking like this to secure a job. The CM must engage in reasoned discourse, he added.

He said, "I will like to tell the KP chief minister that dancing horses don't win races."

Why Gandapur's father was forcibly retired from the army, the governor questioned.

Nevertheless, Kundi once again invited the chief minister to sit together for the progress of the province.

Nawaz Sharif advocates strengthening parliament over street protests

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Sunday said that talking to the streets is a futile exercise, as the real forum for strengthening, protecting, and ensuring supremacy of the Constitution is the Parliament.

These views were expressed by the president of Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (N) and three-time former premier during a conversation with the Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Senator Syedal Khan, who called on him in Murree today.

Syedul Khan congratulated him on being elected as the President of PML-N. On this occasion, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, the leader of the PML-N parliamentary party in the Senate, was also present.

Nawaz Sharif also congratulated the Deputy Chairman of the Senate on assuming his position and expressed the hope that he would play an effective role in the Senate for the strengthening of the federation, national unity, and the promotion of democracy.

Pak urges US to forge balanced ties with S. Asian nations, not overly align with India

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States' policy to over-align itself with India negates the country's traditional policy of maintaining strategic balance in the relationship with South Asian countries, Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, has said, while underscoring that restoration of equilibrium would contribute to peace and security in the region.

At the same time, he said in a pod-cast with Tim Horgan of World Affairs Council of New Hampshire — a think-tank — that Pakistan and the US have now re-calibrated their relationship around two clusters — security and economic partnership.

"When we talk about Pak-US economic partnership, which is all encompassing, we also include climate change and issues like healthcare, education,

people-to-people contacts, so that we could give strong sinews to this relationship," the ambassador said.

On US-China relations, the Ambassador said that the United States leadership has been managing the relationship with "great care and wisdom." He also noted that the recent visits have set the ground for a collaborative model, not a confrontational one.

The ambassador expressed the view that rapprochement between United States and China would be in the interest of the two countries and the world. In this regard, he said that Pakistan could act as an economic bridge between China and the United States.

While the US was decoupling or de-risking, Masood Khan said it could relocate some of its industries to Pakistan.

ANP Balochistan forms six-parties alliance for supremacy of law & constitution: Aimal

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central President of Awami National Party (ANP), Senator Aimal Wali Khan has stated that the ANP Balochistan has formed six parties alliance for supremacy of law and constitution in the country.

He said that the six-parties alliance is not aimed at dismantling or making the government, rather is purely meant for waging struggle for supremacy of law and constitution in the country. He said that all the parties have decided not to withdraw their demands until and unless these are met.

Khan was addressing press conference here at the Arbab House on Sunday.

The central President of National Party and Member Provincial Assembly, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, Provincial Ameer of JUI and Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey, Chairman Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Abdul Khaliq Hazara, and other leaders of the ally parties were also present on the occasion.

The ANP's central President said that our forefathers had taken the right of vote from the British rulers. However, the power of vote was taken back from the masses this time, Senator Aimal Wali Khan main-

tained. He alleged that whoever did bargaining with the institution is in the assembly. He also alleged that the security issues were created in the areas rich with the natural resources.

Referring the issues being faced in the province, the ANP's quaid said that the issue of missing persons is a basic one. He said that the people of Balochistan are confronting the issues of target killing and extremism.

Meanwhile, grand reception was hosted by ANP Balochistan in honour of the central president of party at the baldia lawn the same evening.

Imran wants supremacy of Constitution: Barrister Gohar

SWAT (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has said party founder Imran Khan wants the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law in the country.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder has earnest desire that the Constitution and law should be "restored" in the country, the PTI chairman said while addressing a rally in Swat

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar said, "I thank the people for coming to the rally. We want rule of law in the country. Founder PTI is fighting for the country. With the support of the people PTI founder will come out of jail soon."

He said the PTI founder said he forgives those who did wrong with him, but he will not forgive those who damaged the interests of the country.



SAUDI ARABIA: Workers busy in packing zamzam water in Zamzama Factory for distributing among the hajjaj at Zaidiah.

Govt decides to continue PTI's ten billion tree initiative

ISLAMABAD (INP): The PML-N-led federal government has decided to continue Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project, initiated by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, a private news channel citing sources said on Sunday.

The government has decided to increase the budget for the Ministry of Climate Change by Rs11.82 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25, with aiming at mitigating the effects of global warming and promoting sustainable development.

The budget includes a significant allocation of Rs15.62 billion for the Green Pakistan initiative, previously known as the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami —

a project initially launched in 2018 by PTI. The project aims to plant trees across the nation and combat the adverse effects of climate change.

The government has also proposed a new project to combat climate change, details of which are yet to be disclosed. It has also been proposed to provide Rs1.019 billion to the Ministry of Climate Change to enhance its technical capacity and effectively implement climate change projects.

The budget also allocates Rs15.775 billion for four ongoing schemes, aimed at promoting sustainable development and environmental conservation.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting through video link regarding preparation for upcoming meeting of National Economic Council

Kashmiris highlight Kashmir issue during EU Parliament election drive

MIRPUR (APP): The European-based Kashmiri Diaspora community will continue to highlight the significance of the early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue at each relevant forum with full vigour to invite the due role of peace and freedom loving nations across the globe towards the urgency of an early peaceful solution of the much delayed issue, said Ali Raza Syed, Brussels-based Chairman of the Kashmir Council (European Union).

In a statement reaching here on Sunday, Ali Raza Syed said, "We have tried to highlight the issue of Kashmir, especially the human rights violations against the oppressed Kashmiris by Indian occupying forces in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir state, during the recent election campaign of the European Parliament."

The voting process for the election of new members of the parliament of the countries associated with the European Union began on June 6 and will end on June 9.

Ali Raza Syed said that during the election campaign of the European Parliament, we had meetings

with the leaders of various political parties, important European personalities and especially the candidates actively participating in the elections and informed them about the background of the Kashmir issue and the current situation in occupied Kashmir.

Chairman Kashmir Council EU said that we have told various European circles, especially the expected members of the European Parliament, that the Kashmir problem is a globally recognized issue that has been pending for the last seven and a half decades on the United Nations agenda. Also, the current situation in Occupied Kashmir is very dire, as India has deployed 800,000 troops there, who are oppressing the people by using black laws.

The Chairman of the Kashmir Council EU said that we have told several European personalities and European Parliament candidates that India is claiming democracy on the one hand but, on the other hand, oppressing Kashmiris and suppressing their democratic rights for more than seven decades. Since August 2019, since India abolished the special

status of Kashmir and divided Occupied Kashmir by changing the domicile laws, New Delhi is trying to eliminate the identity of Kashmiris and change the proportion of the population of Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed expressed hope that the new European Parliament, especially the new parliamentarians who have love and compassion for humanity, will understand the rights of Kashmiris and play their role to stop the violation of Kashmiris' rights.

Ali Raza Syed said that humanitarian circles in Europe do not ignore human rights issues, and we will highlight the rights of the oppressed people of Occupied Kashmir to the newly elected European parliamentarians who have humanitarian sympathy. Human rights violations are continuing on a large scale in Occupied Kashmir, and it is the responsibility of the international community to stop these violations. European institutions, including the European Parliament, will play an important role in this regard.



KARACHI: Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad addressing students during his visit to IT Marquee at Governor House. Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori is also present



Muqam asks CM KP to focus on resolution of people's problems rather point scoring

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions and Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam has asked the Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to focus on the resolution of people's problems rather than point scoring.

He said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) did want tall hallow claims and wanted development and prosperity.

In response to the address of chief minister in Swat, Engr Amir Muqam said in a statement that tall hallow slogans are very easy to chant but PTI Government did not make anything for the province during its 11 years of rule. He said that these elements

wanted to repeat the May 9 gory incidents.

The government would not allow attacks on the official installations, he said and added that these elements were wasting time and insulting people's mandate.

The minister said that during his party, political leaders were targeted and fake cases against them were registered. He said that these elements were claiming themselves innocent after facing corruption cases and were making hue and cry when investment started coming again to the country. Engr Amir Muqam said that these negative elements can not tolerate the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

PML-N solo flight in federal budget preparations irking PPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the lead-up to the PML-N's federal budget announcement, serious reservations have emerged from the coalition partner PPP, highlighting a lack of consultation and inclusion.

According to sources, senior PPP leader Khurshid Shah expressed complete ignorance of the proposed federal budget. In response to questions about the upcoming budget, Shah revealed significant communication gaps between the PML-N and its coalition partners.

"What suggestions have been given to the government regarding the upcoming budget? Are you satisfied?" Shah was asked. He replied, "What kind of proposals, what kind of

budget? The government has not informed us of anything, nor have we been taken into confidence."

Shah criticized the lack of transparency, stating, "We have no knowledge of PML-N's plans regarding privatization policy, taxes, or the development program. We are unaware of how provincial shares are allocated in measures aimed at providing relief to the people, or what is new in the federal ministries' plans."

He further questioned the budget's origin, asking, "We haven't even been informed if this budget is being drafted by the government itself or if it is an IMF-imposed budget. The PPP has supported the government extensively, so what

exactly has been done? Should we tell the public that we do not know?"

Shah emphasized that the PPP would have to carefully consider its political stance on the budget. "We cannot silently support the government while witnessing the people being burdened by the budget. We have a manifesto, and our proposals should have been included in the federal budget. It is unfortunate that this was not done without the need for our input," he lamented.

The PPP's dissatisfaction highlights a growing rift within the coalition, raising questions about the PML-N's approach to budget formulation and its impact on coalition dynamics.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with the Prince Rahim Aga Khan.

Govt Hajj Scheme: Pre-Hajj flight operation to end today

MAKKAH (APP): A month-long pre-Hajj flight operation, which began on May 9 to transport around 70,105 from major cities of Pakistan to holy cities of Madinah and Makkah under the government scheme, would complete with the arrival of the last flight at the King Abdulaziz International Airport Jeddah on Monday morning.

As per the schedule, a copy of which is available with APP, a Saudi Airlines SV-3727 would leave Islamabad International Airport for Jeddah at 3 a.m. (PST) carrying 380 passengers - the last batch of Pakistani intending pilgrims under the government scheme.

This year, 160,000 Pakistani pilgrims will perform the religious obligation of Hajj, with 70,000 arriving under the government scheme and around 90,000 through private Hajj Groups Organizers (HGOs).

Official statistics indicate that around 63,321 pilgrims have already reached Saudi Arabia under the private scheme, with the remaining individuals expected to arrive before the start of Hajj on June 14, the 8th of Zilhaji.

Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, requires every financially and physically able adult Muslim to undertake the pilgrimage to Makkah's holy Islamic sites at least once in their lifetime.

As the Saudi government finalizes preparations for Hajj 2024, over 1.9 million pilgrims worldwide, including 160,000 from Pakistan, are expected to perform the pilgrimage this year.

With the Saudi government's elaborate preparations in place, the stage is set for a spiritual journey of a lifetime for the pilgrims, during which they would be communing with Allah Almighty seeking forgiveness for their sins and invoking His blessings.

World Cup 2024: Akeal Hosein takes five as West Indies decimate Uganda

GUYANA (INP): Akeal Hosein claimed his maiden five-wicket haul in T20Is to steer West Indies to a crushing 134-run victory over Uganda in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 here at Providence Stadium.

Set to chase 174, Uganda, who are participating in the T20 World Cup for the first time, posed no threat to West Indies and bowled out for a meagre 39 in 12 overs. Roger Mukasa bagged his third consecutive

duck after Hosein got him out on the second ball of the innings.

Hosein dismissed Alpeh Ramjani and Riazat Ali Shah in consecutive overs to claim three wickets in his three overs. He castled Dinesh Nakrani, followed by the wicket of Kenneth Waiswa in his last over to get his T20I career's first five-wicket haul.

Uganda's Juma Miyagi was the only batter to reach the double figures as he scored an unbeaten 13 off 20. Alzarri Joseph bowled

Frank Nsubuga to finish the match on the last ball of the 12th over.

Earlier, West Indies opted to bat and got off to a flying start courtesy of a 41-run opening stand between Brandon King (13) and Johnson Charles. Alpeh Ramjani broke the partnership by dismissing King, however, Charles kept the scoreboard moving. Meanwhile, Nicholas Pooran smashed three sixes during his 17-ball 22 before Uganda skipper Brian Masaba sent him back.



RAWALPINDI: A large number of spectators watching T-20 cricket match between Pakistan and India during ICC Men's T20 World Cup on big screens installed by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Nilofar hails UNFPA & CEJ-IBA's support for launching NMF on WRs

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Nilofar Bakhtiar has highly appreciated the partners UNFPA and CEJ-IBA for their unwavering support in launching the National Media Fellowship on Women's Rights.

Lauding the partners, she stated, "I am immensely proud of you all fellows who have produced 165 impactful stories and two documentaries, shedding light on crucial issues of gender-based violence and child marriage."

Her diverse backgrounds, representing all regions of Pakistan, have enriched our initiative. Looking ahead, I encourage all journalists to continue championing women's rights and addressing gender-based violence and child marriage in their reporting."

Nilofar Bakhtiar said

that NCSW was committed to supporting your efforts and will soon be holding national conferences on health, climate change, law reforms, and education.

She said, "Together, we can drive social change and ensure a better future for all women in Pakistan."

Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasar, commended the efforts of NCSW in advancing women's rights.

"All of these media fellows have done an outstanding job," said Syedaal Nasar.

"The National Media Fellowship has been crucial in training journalists to report on sensitive issues with professionalism and ethics. As Deputy Chairman Senate, I pledge my support to strengthen laws and mechanisms that protect women's rights and ensure the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act Bill in the National Assembly and Senate."

Asrar Kakar elected President of Oxford Union

QUETTA (INP): Asrar Kakar, hailing from a small village in Qila Abdullah district of Balochistan, has been elected as the President of the prestigious Oxford Union. This achievement marks a significant milestone as he becomes the first Baloch and the third Pakistani to hold this esteemed position.

On his election, Kakar expressed immense pride in his journey from a remote village to leading the world-renowned debating society. "It is an honor for me to reach here from a very backward village," he said, highlighting the challenges and triumphs of his path.

Kakar follows in the footsteps of notable Pakistani figures, including former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Ahmad Nawaz, a survivor of the APS tragedy, both of whom previously held the position of Oxford Union President.

Sindh, Balochistan win on third day of PBCC T20 blind cricket super league

ABBOTTABAD (APP): On the third day of the 7th Pakistan Blind Cricket Councils (PBCC) T20 Blind Cricket Super League, Sindh and Balochistan on Sunday secured victories in their respective matches, continuing their strong performances in the tournament.

In the first match, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faced Sindh. KP, batting first, posted a competitive total of 249 runs for the loss of 9 wickets in their allotted 20 overs. However, Sindh, led by Ayub Khan's third century, chased down the target, scoring 251 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in 19.2 overs. Ayub Khan's outstanding innings of 102 runs earned him the player of the match award.

Despite KP's strong batting performance, they were unable to defend their large score. In the second match of the day Balochistan overpowered Punjab in a dominant display. Punjab batted first, setting a target of 212 runs for the loss of 8 wickets in 20 overs. Balochistan, with Kamran Akhtar's exceptional century, chased the target with ease, scoring 213 runs for the loss of 3 wickets in just 16.2 overs.

Kamran Akhtar was nominated the player of the match for his brilliant 100-run innings. Balochistan's comprehensive performance outclassed Punjab in all aspects of the game. The league will continue with two more matches scheduled for the fourth day.

South Africa hold Nigeria for draw in FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier

UYO (INP): South Africa held Nigeria for a 1-1 draw at Godswill Akpabio International Stadium to keep the Super Eagles without a victory in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier.

The stalemate saw Nigeria drop to fourth in Group C with three points from as many matches with South Africa third on four points. Minnows Lesotho ranked 149th in the world, are top of the Group C standings with five points on the back of a 2-0 win over Zimbabwe earlier on Friday.

Rwanda are second with four points and a better goal difference than both Benin and South Africa. Friday's match in the southern Nigerian town of Uyo was a repeat of the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations semi-final in the Ivory Coast, which also ended 1-1 before Nigeria won on penalties.

The hosts started brightly with Paul Onuachu, Ademola Lookman and Benjamin Tanimu having shots at goal in the first half. South Africa gradually settled into the game. A Teboho Mokoena free kick brushed off the crossbar with Nigeria goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali beaten.

The visitors were rewarded in the 29th minute when Themba Zwane took on the Nigerian defence on his own before he fired home the opening goal.

Captain among seven soldiers...

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Muhammad Nazir Shaheed belongs to Skardu district of Gilgit Baltistan. He performed the duties of defending the homeland for 31 years. Subedar Major Muhammad Nazir Shaheed has left his wife, two sons and five daughters among the mourners.

Lance Naik Hussain Ali Khan Shaheed belongs to Ghizer district. He served in Pakistan Army for 14 years. Lance Naik Hussain Ali Khan Shaheed is survived by his parents and siblings.

Lance Naik Muhammad Anwar Shaheed belongs to Ganche district of Gilgit Baltistan. He served in the Pakistan Army for 13 years to defend the homeland. Lance Naik Muhammad Anwar Shaheed has left his wife, two daughters and two sons among the bereaved.

Sepoy Manzoor Shaheed belongs to Gilgit district. He served in Pakistan Army for 6 years for homeland defense. Sepoy Manzoor Shaheed has left behind his wife and three daughters.

Sepoy Asadullah Shaheed belongs to Multan. He performed national defense duties in Pakistan Army for 14 years. Sepoy Asadullah Shaheed has left his wife and one son among the bereaved.

Sepoy Rashid Mehmood Shaheed belongs to Rawalpindi. He served in the Pakistan Army for 13 years in defense of the homeland. Sepoy Rashid Mehmood is survived by his parents and siblings.

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday expressed grief over shahadat of personnel of security forces who lost their lives after their vehicle reportedly hit an improvised explosive device (IED) in District Lakki Marwat.

The president paid tribute to the martyred Jawans of Pakistan Army and prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

He also condemned the IED attack by the terrorists and reiterated the resolve of the entire nation to root out the cancer of terrorism.

Paying tribute to the sacrifices and valour of shaheed Jawans, the president said the nation would never forget the sacrifices of its sons and Shuhada and expressed condolences with the bereaved families and prayed for them to bear the losses with fortitude.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday while reiterating the resolve to continue fighting against terrorism till its complete elimination, expressed his deep grief over shahadat of seven security personnel, including Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas shaheed, in a terrorist attack in District Lakki Marwat. The prime minister prayed for the bereaved families to bear the losses with equanimity, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He said that the entire nation saluted the law enforcement agencies for their services and unprecedented sacrifices and stood with the brave Jawans.

Pakistan Pavilion Shines at International Festival Organized by ISB

ISLAMABAD (PR): The Embassy of Pakistan, Brussels participated in International School of Brussels (ISB) International Festival with a uniquely designed Pakistani pavilion on 9th July, 2024.

The ISB International Festival is an annual celebration showcasing diverse cultures and traditions from around the world. The diverse student community of the school actively participated with 100 countries represented in the event with their distinctive displays.

The event provided an opportunity to present rich heritage, cultural diversity, tourism, and export potential of the country. These displays included artefacts, handicrafts, traditional costumes, and photographs. A selection of books and documentaries on tourism and culture in Pakistan provided visitors with a unique insight into the country's rich history, traditions, and tourism potential.

Traditional Pakistani street food was a major attraction, drawing a large number of visitors, who enjoyed delicacies such as Biryani, Samosas, Gulab Jamun, and the special Pakistani chai. The pavilion also featured a Henna (Mehndi) corner, offering intricate and beautiful designs for those seeking a more immersive cultural experience.

Particular interest was taken in Made in Pakistan Sports items i.e. football and cricket kits. Children and parents took special pictures with the World Cup Football on the Pakistan stall.

On the directives of Executive Engineer Drainage Naserabad Zone Mudassar Zafar Khosa crack of temple drainage being filled



On the directives of Executive Engineer Drainage Naserabad Zone Mudassar Zafar Khosa crack of temple drainage being filled

Sino-Pak relations boosted by PM's China visit, say top Chinese firms

BEIJING (INP): Chinese companies operating in Pakistan expect better opportunities for the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) following Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's visit to China.

World's leading Chinese engineering and power companies such as CMEC and POWERCHINA Pakistan aim to enhance investment and undertake new projects across various sectors.

In a media's interaction, Dai Bao, Vice General Manager of China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) Pakistan expressed strong interest in collaborating with the Pakistani government during the second phase of the

CPEC.

He acknowledged the recent high-level meeting between President Xi and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The initial phase of the CPEC laid a robust foundation for Pakistan's national destiny and established a pivotal framework for further bilateral cooperation.

This progress paves the way for the next steps, and both sides eagerly anticipate the new phase of CPEC. The Prime Minister's visit to China signaled the beginning of this transformative stage.

The company's senior representative highlighted that both nations aspire to witness fresh achievements and embrace a renewed outlook of the joint corridor.

Work on Lifestyle residency to be completed with availability of funds

ISLAMABAD (APP): The work on Lifestyle Residency G-13/1 and G-13/4, Islamabad will be completed with the availability of required funds.

According to a senior official of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), the Grey structure of apartments in seven Towers on a 10-acre plot had been completed; however, the Grey Structure of one Tower (B-1) and construction work of apartments had stalled on a five-acre plot due to financial problems.

He said that efforts were being made to complete the project's two phases at the earliest possible.

IGP Islamabad chaired vital meetings at CPO

ISLAMABAD: According to details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired important meetings with senior police officers at the Central Police Office (CPO) Islamabad, as reported by a public relations officer.



He said that, during the meetings, DIG Headquarters Syed Mustafa Tanveer, SSP CTD Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, SSP Investigation Hasan Jahangir Watto, SP CIA Rukhsar Mehdi, and Zonal SPs were

of police officers and improve resources.

He also issued orders to improve the investigation wing, consolidate all under-investigation cases as soon as possible, submit their complete challans to the relevant courts, and intensify crime prevention measures.

MoHR enhances regional directorates' capacity for labour, HRs initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Human Rights is working to develop and strengthen the institutional capacities of Regional Directorates to enhance their performance in core functions, including labour rights and integrating a human rights-based approach to development, said an official here on Thursday.

Dr Saleh bin Saad says: Directorate of passport continues to provide services to pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Commander of Passports Forces for Umrah, Major General Dr. Saleh bin Saad Al-Murabba has stated that the General Directorate of Passports continues to provide services to pilgrims through air, land, and sea ports using mobile devices, security documentation cameras, document verification devices, and si-



ISLAMABAD: A woman along with her children crossing the road.

Country's first female attendant of filling station sets example of women empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rukusna Manzoor, the first female attendant at the PSO filling station near the Foreign Office in the federal capital, has set an example of women's empowerment and called upon them to come forward and participate in all walks of life with courage and bravery to realize their empowerment.

Talking to APP, she said, "Women have bright prospects in the male-dominated petroleum sector, particularly as attendants at their local filling stations."

She said that as the sole breadwinner of her

family, she was facing numerous challenges, and choosing such a unique type of profession was the result of her aptitude, which was not an easy task to do. She asked the women to make their own destinies.

Rukusna said that if I had sat at home, I would have had no future, and she added that she worked hard and successfully made a career in a challenging field.

"If I have to change my life, I must begin with myself. I'm not going to accept defeat; I will fight, and there is no looking back now," she added.

She said that it was very difficult for her to meet



ISLAMABAD: People standing in queue to fill their pots as they are facing water shortage in the area of Bhata Mandi.

Maulana Tahir Ashrafi urges Pilgrims to avoid political, sectarian activities, backs Saudia's Fatwa on Hajj

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Sunday underscored the importance of maintaining the sanctity of Hajj as a purely religious duty and urged pilgrims to refrain from engaging in political and sectarian activities during their pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

In a media talk, he specifically advised pilgrims to avoid carrying political flags, banners, or pictures, and to steer clear of political gatherings or communal debates.

Ashrafi emphasized that adherence to Saudi laws and regulations was crucial

for a successful and respectful pilgrimage.

Highlighting the scale of this year's pilgrimage, he mentioned that between 68,000 government-sponsored pilgrims and an additional 90,000 private pilgrims were expected to perform Hajj. He noted that all operations related to Hajj would be completed by June 12.

He also reminded prospective pilgrims that performing Hajj required official permission and those intending to perform Umrah or holding an Iqama must secure the necessary approvals to participate in Hajj.

Ashrafi announced his full support for the recent

Fatwa issued by the Supreme Council of Ulema of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, "which mandates that performing Hajj without official permission is impermissible."

He appealed to all Muslims to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations set by Saudi Arabia regarding Hajj. "The Fatwa of the Council of prominent Ulema of Saudi Arabia is clear: Performing Hajj without the required permissions is a sin. We urge all intending pilgrims to respect this ruling to avoid legal complications," Ashrafi stated.

He said the leadership of Saudi Arabia had previously warned that all Hajj arrangements must be made through approved companies, and they had announced heavy fines and legal consequences for those attempting to perform Hajj without proper authorization. He reiterated this warning and encourages all pilgrims to comply with these regulations to ensure a peaceful and lawful pilgrimage.

Ashrafi also emphasized the importance of booking Hajj only through companies authorized by the Saudi government. Unauthorized bookings and travel arrangements would be considered illegal, and violators would face severe penalties, he added.

Shahera Shahid concedes over the demise of Taskeen Zafar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Radio Pakistan's senior newscaster Taskeen Zafar.

Termining Taskeen Zafar an asset of Radio Pakistan, Shahera Shahid said the vacuum created by her death could never be filled and her services for Radio Pakistan would always be remembered.

In her condolence message, Secretary Information prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

Humid weather expected in Karachi during Eid days

ISLAMABAD (APP): Meteorological analyst Owais Haider on Sunday forecasted that the weather in Karachi will likely remain humid during the days of Eid.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that during the daytime, the weather will be partly cloudy. Winds from the south-west will continue to blow at a good speed, and sea clouds will be present in the morning and night hours, he added.

He said that the maximum temperature is expected to be between 33 and 35 degrees Celsius. Currently, he said that there is no chance of rain in Karachi, but the monsoon season is anticipated to start at the end of June or the beginning of July, continuing intermittently until the end of August.

He also noted that after June 13, there is a possibility of drizzle in the morning and night. There is no current forecast for a heat wave in the city, he said.

MATARAT Holding prepares for peak arrival of Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): MATARAT Holding successfully prepared the Kingdom's airports for the influx of pilgrims arriving by air for the 1445 AH Hajj season. According to the company, more than 1.1 million pilgrims have already arrived at designated airports to perform Hajj rituals.

To ensure a smooth travel experience for pilgrims, MATARAT Holding implemented a comprehensive operational plan in collaboration with 27 government, security, and operational agencies, SPA reported. A dedicated workforce of over 21,000 employees, spread across major airports, is committed to providing excep-

tional service. Thirteen travel lounges were established in six key airports: King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Prince Muhammad bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah, Prince Abdul Moez bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Yambu, Taif International Airport, King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, and King Fahd International Airport in Dammam.

An integrated plan is in place to accommodate over 1.4 million pilgrims arriving by air from outside the Kingdom via 106 air carriers. The total Hajj season air traffic for international passengers—arriving and departing—at these six

airports is expected to exceed 15 million.

Building on the success of the 1444 AH Hajj season, MATARAT Holding expanded the "Traveler Without Bag" service, which allows pilgrims to complete travel procedures and check luggage from their home country 24 hours before their flight.

This service is available at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah and Prince Mohammed bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah. During the peak period of Umrah in the holy month of Ramadan 1445 AH, Saudi airports witnessed a record number of passengers—over 12.5 million across various airports.



ISLAMABAD: A group of young labourers sitting in handcart waiting for customers to shift luggage in weekly Sunday Bazaar, H-9 Sector.

Margalla Girls College transformed into up-to-date institute

ISLAMABAD (APP): Margalla College for Girls Islamabad, one of the oldest girls' colleges in the region, has received a significant boost with a comprehensive renovation and upgrade, revitalizing its facilities after two decades of dilapidation.

The extensive refurbishment project has transformed the institution, enhancing the educational environment and resources available to its students, official sources from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training said.

"One of the most notable additions is a new state-of-the-art computer lab, providing students with access to the latest technology and software, ensuring they are well-equipped for the digital age. This facility is designed to foster technical proficiency and digital literacy, preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce" they said.

Furthermore, the college library has also been overhauled, now featuring additional resources, modern furnishings and digital access to a vast array of academic materials. The updated library not only provides traditional books and journals but also offers e-books and online databases, making research more accessible and convenient for students.

The ministry informed that the college dispensary has been upgraded, offering improved medical facilities and services to cater for the health and well-being of the students. Equipped with the latest medical equipment and staffed by qualified healthcare professionals, the dispensary ensures that students have access to prompt and effective medical care. In a bid to promote creativity, a new art gallery has been established, giving students a dedicated space to display and appreciate their artwork.



ISLAMABAD: Aman writing Eid Mubarak on camels as reach at Sector I-14 Maweshi Mandi a head of Eid-ul-Adha.

Pakistan's first Shariah, Compliant human milk bank launched at SICHN

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director of the Sindh Institute of Child Health and Neonatology (SICHN), Prof. Jamal Raza on Sunday said that they were proud to have launched Pakistan's first and only Shariah-compliant Human Milk Bank at SICHN. Speaking to a private news channel, he explained that this initiative aims to provide pasteurized donor milk to infants who cannot receive sufficient breast milk from their mothers. He said that they have established a specialized facility to collect, process, store, and distribute human breast milk donated by lactating mothers.

This facility was established in collaboration with UNICEF which will be proved to be a significant milestone in maternal health. Prof. Raza stated that the project will provide essential nourishment to newborns in need, further enhancing comprehensive neonatal care.

"Once collected, the

milk undergoes pasteurization to eliminate any potential pathogens while preserving its nutritional content. After pasteurization, the milk will be stored frozen until needed," he added.

He highlighted that human milk banks primarily serve premature or sick infants in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) who may not be able to breastfeed directly from their mothers. Donor milk can provide these vulnerable infants with essential nutrients, antibodies, and protective factors that support their growth and development. In addition to providing donor milk to hospitalized infants, human milk banks will also offer support and education to breastfeeding mothers, he added.

Prof. Raza said that complete records of the donors and children would be kept at the institute and provided to the parents to ensure the facility is Shariah-compliant.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted look Express Highway as no much traffic seen on the road.

DC reviews weekly efforts on dengue control, market management

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a weekly performance meeting of Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates and reviewed various actions taken over the past week. According to the Spokesman of ICT administration, the meeting was focused on the efforts to combat dengue, manage cattle markets, and control prices. During the meeting, officials reported that dengue larvae were found in 250 locations last week, though no new dengue cases have been recorded in the city. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for a

joint campaign with citizens to control dengue.

The meeting also covered the setup of cattle markets at five locations across Islamabad. These markets are equipped with essential facilities such as clean water and shaded areas, with teams from relevant institutions, including security and livestock services, stationed on-site to ensure smooth operations. Another topic of discussion was the reduction in transport fares following the recent decrease in petroleum product prices. The Deputy Commissioner issued show-cause notices to two Price Control Magistrates for failing to comply with directives.

DIG Islamabad chaired meeting about crime

ISLAMABAD (APP): According to details, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Islamabad, Syed Ali Raza, presided over a crime meeting in which SSP In-

teams and collaborate closely with them to combat crime effectively. He emphasized the importance of officers being vigilant against criminal activities.

DIG Islamabad di-



vestigation, Hasan Jahangir Vito, Zonal SPs, SDPOs, and SHOs participated, as stated by a public relations officer.

He mentioned that DIG Islamabad congratulated the newly appointed SHOs, emphasizing that they had all been appointed on merit. He instructed them to work solely on merit and refrain from engaging in any illegal activities.

Furthermore, he urged all SHOs to form their own

rected all officers to increase patrolling in their respective areas to control crime and ensure their visible presence.

He also instructed them to compile a list of absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in serious crimes and to locate and apprehend them.

He added that police stations would commence operations tomorrow under a special initiative, with each station operating 24 hours a day.

Around 537 train accidents reported during last five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 537 train accidents of different classifications have been reported during the last five years including 313 leading to loss of life or serious injury. "A decline has been witnessed in train accidents during the past four years and all railway accidents were probed to avoid recurrence at various competent tiers of management including the highest level of Federal Government Inspector of Railways," an official told APP.

He said that Pakistan Railways during the past five years has operated approximately 2,03,717 trains with average of about 40,750 trains/year and with an average of 107 accidents/year. The official said that Pakistan Railways has an elaborate system of accident mitigation, relief mechanisms, and inquiries.

He said that a total of 159 accidents occurred in 2019 followed by 145 in 2020, 87 in 2021, and 62 in 2022 while a surge was witnessed in 2023 and 84 accidents were reported. The official said the factorial analysis suggests that 32 percent of accidents are at the unmanned level crossing for which the road users are mainly responsible. During the five years of reporting, a total number of 259 employees were held responsible in various degrees and were taken up and punished under the Efficiency.

He said that following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Shalimar police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of the snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities. The accused were identified as Muhammad Awas and Ehsan Khan.

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Enduring friendship

The optics from Shehbaz Sharif's China trip appear to be positive. The highlight of the visit came on Friday, when the prime minister met China's top brass, including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

In other engagements, Mr Sharif and his delegation, including top ministers, networked with Chinese investors and officials. The meeting with Mr Xi was warm, as China's leader extolled the virtues of the bilateral relationship, and promised to "build a closer China-Pakistan community".

As for concrete takeaways, there were pledges to revive CPEC, with Xi Jinping saying Beijing was willing to create an "upgraded version" of the corridor, while at least 32 MoUs were signed, covering various sectors such as transport, infrastructure, agriculture, etc.

While both the Pakistani and Chinese sides were effusive in their praise for the bilateral relationship, concerns regarding security were communicated by the highest echelons of the state. President Xi hoped that Pakistan would "effectively guarantee the safety of Chinese personnel", while Premier Li echoed similar concerns.

Such messaging was expected from Beijing, especially after five Chinese workers were killed in the Dasu terrorist attack earlier this year. For his part, Mr Sharif extended his condolences over the loss of life, and promised that Pakistan would do all it could to protect Chinese personnel and interests. Mr Sharif also promised Chinese investors in Shenzhen that the state had zero tolerance for corruption.

From the PM's interactions, it is clear that China will stand by Pakistan and is committed to deepening ties, but that Pakistan will have to deliver on promises of fool-proof security, and crack down on corruption. China is perhaps Pakistan's closest bilateral partner, along with Saudi Arabia, and maintaining this relationship is essential to the country's economic and geopolitical interests. Attracting new Chinese investment, and launching the 'second phase' of CPEC, can play a key role in getting Pakistan out of the dire financial straits it finds itself in currently.

But it is clear that the state will have to work overtime to ensure that the new CPEC projects, as well as the multiple MoUs signed in Beijing, are translated into reality. It should be remembered that following his recent trips to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the PM returned with pledges of billions of dollars in investments. Most of those pledges — if not all — have yet to materialise.

Perhaps the issue is that whether it is our friends in the Gulf or our partners in China, Pakistan's foreign allies want to see internal political stability, a commitment to financial transparency and fiscal responsibility, as well as a secure environment free of terrorism before they commit their funds. This is perhaps the biggest obstacle that confronts the state in attracting foreign investment.

Muhammad Amir Rana

Pakistan is not alone in confronting armed opposition. Many nations grapple with persistent violence, often resorting to force over peace negotiations. This hesitation stems from the fear of concessions, neglecting the heavy price paid for prolonged conflict.

Colombia offers a compelling example. In 2016, it opted for peace, establishing a ceasefire with major rebel groups — primarily factions of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has been active since 1964. Despite initial setbacks, Colombia recently enacted a Total Peace Bill to forge agreements with remaining armed groups.

Colombia's peace process has been arduous, with the government determined to achieve an end to the conflict, even if it necessitates meeting some of the armed groups' demands. This dilemma resonates with states facing insurgencies, who fear internationalising their conflicts. While Colombia's UN involvement, prompted by resis-

tance demands, ultimately aided negotiations, core issues like land reform, victim justice, and political participation remain unresolved.

The success stories of other peace processes offer valuable lessons. Notably, many successful agreements involved compromises across the table. In some cases, these have caused major amendments in social contracts of the states, the autonomy of a region, the separation of a territory, or agreement on resource distribution. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 in Northern Ireland helped end the violent conflict known as 'The Troubles', leading to power-sharing in the North-ern Ireland Assembly and disarmament of paramilitary groups.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 ended the Second Sudanese Civil War, granted southern Sudan autonomy, and led to a referendum in 2011, after which South Sudan gained independence.

The Peace Accords (1996) in Guatemala ended 36 years of civil war, leading to the demobilisation and integration of guerrilla

Price of peace

fighters into society, and significant political reforms. The Mindanao Peace Process (2014) in the Philippines and the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro established the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, granting greater autonomy and addressing the grievances of the Moro people.

Finally, the Final Agreement (2016) between the Colombian government and the FARC was signed. The agreement ended over 50 years of armed conflict. These peace processes typically involved lengthy negotiations, international mediation, and the establishment of frameworks for disarmament, political integration, and socioeconomic development to address the root causes of the conflicts.

A multifaceted armed resistance stretched out for 50 years in Colombia because it had roots in socioeconomic factors, took time to pick momentum, and once it picked momentum, it became more lethal compared with movements triggered by religion and ideologies. A mix of socioeconomic, political, and ideological factors can nurture a separatist solid

resistance against the states. The FARC emerged as a response to deep-rooted social and economic inequalities in rural Colombia. Vast land ownership disparities and peasant communities' marginalisation provided fertile ground for the group's initial support and recruitment.

Colombians took 50 years just to assess the strength of the resistance movement, which resulted in thousands of deaths, political instability, a poor economy, and a constant state of fear. Un-governed and poorly governed spaces have always provided fertile ground for resistance movements, and Colombia was no different in this respect.

A similar situation was witnessed in the Fed-erally Administrative Tribal Areas — now the New-ly Merged Tribal Districts — where the state is still facing armed and un-armed resistance against its approach to governing these areas. The banned TTP wants to revoke the status of these areas to regain the strength it enjoyed before the military operations and under tribal arrangements.

Balochistan is facing the worst governance crisis; a hybrid governance system has failed to stop the power elites' misuse of the province's resources. It cannot deliver services to the people and needs help to conceive a development plan. The securitisation of the province fuels anger among the people, including those who have experienced urban life in other parts of the country.

A comparison between the Baloch and FARC armed resistance can be drawn as both movements are deeply rooted in socioeconomic disparities. Another common feature that creates a conducive environment for the armed resistance movement lies in the structure of the parallel economies in the areas, which include illicit trade, smuggling, drug trafficking, etc. Both state and non-state actors become the beneficiaries of this parallel economy. The resolution of the problem can hurt their economic benefits, and they resist any attempt at this.

In Colombia, the FARC survived so long because of parallel economic structures, which significantly funded its operations through the cultivation, production, and trafficking of cocaine. Kidnapping for ransom and extortion of local businesses and individuals were also significant sources of income for the FARC, further sustaining the resistance.

Two factors that the state emphasises are regional dynamics and external support for the armed resistance. These are essential factors, but to deal with armed resistance, it must concentrate on other aspects too. For instance, the state underestimates the armed group's ability to adapt its tactics and strategy to changing circumstances, as well as the local support network it has built up over time.

While a good take-away from the Colombian peace process is that it has not caused the country's disintegration, it is also true that had the peace process been started 40 years ago, the results would not have been very different. The state took 50 years just to prove it is strong, but real strength comes through dialogue. -- Courtesy Dawn

Can the Great Wall stop PTI?**Abbas Nasir**

With the budget round the corner and the IMF-enforced hardship it will inevitably bring for the urban poor and the middle class in particular, the question is whether the jailed PTI leader Imran Khan can channel the resultant public anger into public protests and imperil the hybrid system.

I agree that what I've just said deals with hypothetical situations. But you will also agree that while hypothetical, these are also very realistic, plausible scenarios, and therefore, it won't be out of place to discuss them and try and assess the state of play over the next few weeks.

PTI has had phenomenal success in the use of social media, not just for reaching out to, and messaging, its supporters but also for organising its rank and file. As two recent posts on X on Imran Khan's handle demonstrated, despite being imprisoned, he retains the ability to communicate with his support base.

Ergo, it is safe to assume that if the budget triggers any popular backlash, the use of social media can potentially play a vital role in galvanising and channelling that public anger into an anti-government movement. Any such exercise will have to overcome many challenges.

First and foremost are the repercussions from last year's May 9 protests that drove a wedge between the PTI and the establishment and opened up a seemingly unbridgeable gulf between the two. In its aftermath, the crackdown that ensued tested the will of the PTI support base in the face of state oppression.

While many party loyalists, including a number of women, from Yasmeen Rashid and Aliya Hamza to Sanam Javed, have remained incarcerated for over a year now, there has been little public pressure that the party has been able to muster for their release.

Even then, the leader himself has been getting relief in one case after an-

other from the judiciary, a section of which, it seems, would be on a collision course with the establishment because of such decisions. This alienation between the two can lead to untold consequences that the country and its shirtless multitudes can least afford.

For its part, the establishment feels that the legal cases against the former prime minister are ironclad. The establishment appears to believe that some in the superior courts are not deciding the cases on merit but on the basis of a soft corner for the PTI leader. Some of the judges have said that immense pressure is being brought to bear on them from the security services because their judgements are based on the evidence before them and decided strictly in line with the law and the Constitution, and not what the establishment wants.

As we speak, there seems to be no sign of anyone moving away from confrontation. If anything, there is daily evidence of positions being further cemented, with Mr

Khan and his immense support base on one side, and the establishment and its civilian political allies on the other.

Let's take up another vital factor that would play a role over the coming weeks. Yes, the reference here is to social media. The PTI had a head-start in the social media game, and its complete and total domination in that area was demonstrated in February's election.

After the ECP decision to deny PTI its 'bat' symbol was endorsed by the Supreme Court, party candidates stood in that election as 'independents'. Ahead of polling day, many observers expressed the fear that, having been deprived of its symbol, its candidates would be at a gross disadvantage as voters (some illiterate) would struggle to find and stamp their desired person on the ballot paper.

But lo and behold! those fears proved ill-founded. The PTI social media teams sprang into action and developed an app which facilitated the

workers/ voters at the grassroots level in identifying party-backed candidates.

I can't say to what extent the denial of the symbol impacted the party vote eventually, but it would be safe to say it didn't turn out to be the decisive handicap as some had hoped. This is how vital the social media is to PTI's success. Right or wrong, its narrative has been seen as a winner, and any counter-narrative has failed to gain any traction.

If what sources are saying is correct, Pakistan may be just a few days away from deploying and extensively using a Chinese system, similar to the one called the 'Great Wall of China' or GWC (which Beijing uses to great success), to monitor and block social media content, and even police VPNs which many Pakistanis have used since X was blocked. Not sure if this is part of CPEC!

This software will be used, we are told, in a manner that does not place any obstacles in

the path of dozens of software companies and call centres that are currently earning the country some foreign exchange. A multibillion-dollar market still remains untapped.

That is the plan at least. Our competence to deliver such fine-tuned systems is another matter. Who knows if the draconian legislation that the Punjab Assembly has passed to muzzle social media, and similar proposed legislation that is currently before parliament in Islamabad, is a back-up in case our version of the GWC fails?

It is remarkable that any discussion of the media these days almost always excludes traditional media, such as the dozens of 24x7 TV channels and newspapers, apart from online news sites. There could only be one reason for this: the traditional media is now so much under the thumb of the authorities that it is largely seen as their mouthpiece. Notwithstanding the very, very few honourable exceptions. Tragic, if you ask me.

Modi's 'guarantee'**Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

That Modi would win his third term was never in doubt. However, contrary to expectations, he did not achieve the landslide he was hoping for. Why has 'Modi ki guarantee' (a boastful commitment to people's welfare) not delivered the two-thirds majority to which he aspired? Several reasons are being cited: high unemployment rates, rising inflation, and the incumbency factor. The opposition projected Modi as a fascist in the making. His intense anti-Muslim rhetoric scared away not only Muslim voters, whom he called 'ghusbathiyar' or infiltrators, but also liberal Indians attached to India's secular and pluralistic ethos. Losing the seat housing the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is a case in point.

Yet, with 240 seats, the BJP is the largest party in Lok Sabha, way ahead of the Indian National Congress, which secured 99 seats. With its coalition partners, the BJP is assured of a third consecutive term led by Modi. This has become possible because of several notable achievements, mostly in the economic field. Under his watch, India became the fifth largest economy, compared to the 10th when he took over the reins of power 10 years ago. GDP has grown by 162 per cent, average income by 135pc, and foreign exchange reserves by 113pc to \$620 billion. There has been a surge in internet usage, while digital transactions have grown by 358pc to \$95bn. A series of initiatives were launched to make India a manufacturing hub. Modi's government added 50,000 kilometres of national highways (a 60pc increase since 2014) and

31,000 km of rail networks, with plans to start bullet trains. Thirty million houses have been built for the poor.

With the economy doing well, India was able to spend more for its defence needs. According to the Stockholm-based organisation SIPRI, India spent \$83.6bn on its military in 2023, the steepest annual rise since 2009, and a 44pc increase since Modi took over in 2014. It is now the fourth largest military spender in the world. Notably, the bulk of the funds for military procurement (75pc) were allocated to domestically produced equipment, which has boosted local manufacturing, including that of homebuilt aircraft carrier, Vikrant. He also fast-tracked India's space programme, achieving the landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the moon in August 2023.

What does Modi's third term look like? Ostensibly, his top priority is to place India on course to become a developed country by 2047. He is also likely to continue his efforts to consolidate India's status as a 'Hindu first' nation, but it appears that this may not dilute his focus on the economy. He envisions that by 2030, India should be a \$6.7 trillion economy, surpassing Japan and Germany to become the third-largest global economy. Even though India is the third-largest climate polluter, Modi wishes to make India climate-friendly by 2070. He also plans to move the country towards digital governance.

India's foreign policy under Modi's third term is likely to continue in the same mode: navigating a tough balance in its relations with mutually antagonistic major powers: the US (strategic partner), Russia (enduring friend), and China (competitor); while enhancing special

affinities with the Gulf sheikhdoms. He is likely to continue projecting his country's image as a leader of the Global South.

Modi has disconnected his country from Pakistan in every domain. During the election campaign, he was utterly hostile to Pakistan. The jingoistic rhetoric of Modi's companions was centred around the mindset of 'ghus ke mareng' (infiltrate and kill), which is dangerous for regional peace. Its talk of targeting Azad Kash-mir and Gilgit-Balt-istan is also empty rhetoric, as any misadventure is likely to receive a befitting response, as in Feb-ruary 2019. India's accusation of Pakistan committing cross-border terrorism is also not borne out by the facts. It is not India that is suffering from terrorism, but Pakistan, where Indian operations have managed to kill 20 Pakistanis during 2023, similar to what they did in Canada and the US.

It appears that in his third term, Modi might not take any positive initiative towards Pakistan, even though he wants a stable western border to continue his focus on his economic vision and goals. Pakistan's government would be well advised to wait until a positive initiative is taken by the Modi government.

Should he change his mind and approach Pakistan for limited cooperation, Pakistan should respond positively. Meanwhile, it should focus all its energies inwards to achieve a degree of political stability, continuity of economic policies, and human development in pursuit of a clear vision and positive strategy for the country. That is the only way Pakistan can regain its relevance in the eyes of friends and foes alike. -- Courtesy Dawn

Policing one's own**Muna Khan**

What did you have for lunch last Sunday? What about 10 Sundays ago? Or 10 years ago? What thoughts run through your mind as you try to answer these questions? Memory is the ongoing process of information retention over time, according to Harvard, and a lot of research continues to go into understanding how memory works. Fear not, my piece isn't about cognitive science, but how our past actions, seemingly innocuous, can impact our present.

The British politician and academic Faiza Shaheen knows this well now. The former Labour candidate, who narrowly lost her constituency in 2019, learned last week that she'd been blocked by her party from contesting the election next month, reportedly over her tweets relating to Israel.

Earlier, she was asked by the party's national executive committee to explain her tweet history from as far as back as 2014, when she was not a member of the Labour party. She was asked why she liked a tweet featuring a video skit by US talk show host Jon Stewart about not being able to freely talk about Israel and Palestine. As he begins to talk about the war on Gaza in that sketch, Stewart's colleagues on the show jump up and rebuke him for daring to question Israel's actions. It is a comedic but essentially accurate representation of how difficult it is to talk about Israel in the West without being shut down for being anti-Semitic — a trend that continues. "Just merely mentioning Israel or questioning in any way the effectiveness of her policy is not the same thing as being pro-Hamas," Stewart says in the skit before he is shut down by

the same colleagues. (You'd be forgiven for thinking this commentary is from today.)

Fast forward to 2024, and Stewart is back hosting the comedy show once a week and being critical of the Zionist state. However, liking his politics on social media has pretty damning consequences. Shaheen doesn't even remember liking that tweet 10 years ago, but her detractors remember. She acknowledged that the tweet she liked references antisemitic tropes and apologised for it, but as we've seen well before the Oct 7 attacks, you can be forgiven everything but a hint of criticism of Israel.

Shaheen has since resigned from the Labour party and plans to run as an independent. She has been replaced by a pro-Israeli candidate who is not from the area. Shaheen's supporters are angry at the Labour party, which, in its defence, says they want the most suitable candidates. To be clear, Shaheen went through all the processes required and was cleared to run for the seat.

"They would rather lose than have a left pro-Palestine candidate. This is offensive to my community," she tweeted.

Shaheen's politics reflect issues Labour once stood for: wealth inequality, public ownership, environmental issues, and Palestine. But under Keir Starmer's leadership, the party stands for something else. In fact, Starmer is accused of purging the party of left-wing candidates; coincidentally, all of them have one thing in common — they spoke in favour of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Labour is widely expected to win next month's election, and is already behaving like Israel's newest best friend; a trusted one that can be counted on to do

its bidding. I see its deselection of Shaheen as one example of wanting to make its rich donors with ties to Israel happy. The manner in which political parties and other organisations like the media aid Israel in shutting down conversations by slapping the "antisemitic" label is horrifying. This is how meaningful conversations on Israel's treatment of Palestinians — grounded in truth — are blocked. All critics are silenced and vanished from screens.

Two examples this year include female journalists Sanita Myska of LBC radio and Belle Donati of Sky News, who were reportedly let go of shortly after difficult interviews with Isra-eli officials. Both women are respected journalists who were merely doing their jobs when they asked tough questions. Apparently you can't ask these sorts of questions of Israeli officials. How can voters and audiences be OK knowing foreign powers have that kind of hold on their media? This is deeply worrying for a free press.

The double standards are all too clear to see. Shaheen's social media activity is open to scrutiny, but Labour candidate Luke Akehurst's is not. He's a staunch supporter of Israel, has called the UN antisemitic, and said Palestinians actors "staged atrocities in Gaza" in his tweets. He isn't policed for his views.

I'm hopeful that Shaheen stands a chance next month, because she has a strong supporter base which, I believe, has grown in the last week out of anger at Labour's policies rooted in racism and Islamophobia. Shaheen's courage should inspire young women here, too. -- Courtesy Dawn

KP Govt lawyer's statement in SC on appointment of VCs incorrect, misleading: Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday termed the statement of lawyer of KP government in Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding selection of vice chancellors and sending its summary to the Governor KP was totally incorrect and misleading and urged the Chief Justice to take notice of it.

The Governor made it clear that neither the said summary has been received by the governor house nor he stopped it.

The Governor has requested Chief Justice of Pakistan to take notice of this serious matter, stating that if such erroneous statements are made at the official level in front of the esteemed apex judiciary of

the country, then it would be extremely unfortunate for the country, said a statement issued by Governor House here.

Addressing as the special guest at the Annual Convocation 2024 of Allama Iqbal Open University in Peshawar, the Governor said that erroneous statement was made by KP government lawyer in the Supreme Court regarding the appointment of vice chancellors claiming that the selection had been finalized and summary was sent to the Governor House for approval. However, the Governor clarified that no such summary had been received, and no approval was granted.

Expressing his deep concerns, the Governor

stated that first orders for acting vice chancellors in seven top universities were issued against legal norms and later its summary was sent to the Governor House for approval that was returned back with an objection of being unlawful.

The Governor said that seeing this kind of education system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a matter of great concern.

Despite completion of selection of vice chancellors by academic search committee for 24 universities, he said that the appointments have not been made and a letter was written to CM KP to complete the appointment process quickly to take these universities out of administrative and educational crisis.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing the Annual Convocation of the Allama Iqbal Open University.

Sindh Governor, Minister visit stall of SSUET Education Expo

KARACHI (APP): Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology (SSUET) took part in The News Education Expo 2024 held at the Karachi Expo Centre and the stall of the university was centre of attraction.

Governor Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and Provincial Minister for Education, Syed Sardar Ali Shah visited the SSUET stall and appreciated the knowledge-based skills of SSUET students reflected on their projects.

According to University spokesperson the Governor was impressed by the demonstration of the project Reverse Vending Machine, designed and

prepared by SSUET students and hinted for the inclusion of this project into his technological initiatives.

He took Hashir's number to invite him to the Governor House, while Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah enjoyed the ride of a simulator bike that was prepared by the students of Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology.

Talking to the media, Syed Sardar Ali Shah said "This event is an example of the media's social responsibility and commitment to future generations to providing access to quality education. This is a commendable initiative."

Governor, PML-N delegation agree to work for development of Sindh

KARACHI (APP): A five-member delegation of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led by PML-N Central Senior Vice President Shah Mohammed Shah called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori. According to a Governor House communique on Sunday, the delegation included PML-N President of Business Forum Ishtiaq Baig, Jam Karam Ali, Jam Qaim Ali and Khalid Sheikh.

The governor and PML-N delegation agreed to work together for the development of the Sindh province. Governor Tessori said that all the stakeholders had to work for the development of the province beyond politics.

The PML-N Central Senior Vice President Shah Muhammad Shah said that Kamran Khan Tessori is the Governor from Karachi to Kashmir. He said that the initiatives of the governor for the development of the province are commendable.

CM orders restructuring of government depts to improve governance

Congratulates PM on successful China visit

LAHORE (APP): A revolutionary decision has been made by the government to bring an overwhelming change in the government and governance system in Punjab.

For the first time in the history of Punjab, a decision has been made to undertake massive reshuffling of ministries and departments in Punjab under which downsizing of surplus, inept and deficit-prone institutions will be carried out. Additional institutions working for similar assignments will be abolished.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved the restructuring project. The performance of official affairs will be eased by

reducing the number of ministries and those institutions which work for similar assignments will be merged.

By undertaking the restructuring and downsizing process, the performance of institutions and public service mechanisms will be made simple, easy and swift.

Restructuring and downsizing will accrue savings worth billions of rupees. A fiscal space will also be created by carrying out massive reduction in the annual expenditures of the government.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

on undertaking a successful visit to China.

In her message on Sunday, the CM paid tributes to Shehbaz Sharif for his endeavours undertaken for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. "Under the guidance of PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the national economy is treading on the road to progress and prosperity and the completion of CPEC projects will be expedited," she said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after undertaking a successful visit to the UAE, paved the way for the country's progress and prosperity by virtue of excellent diplomacy in China as well, she expressed.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhary Shafay Hussain being welcomed during his visit to Women Resource Centre.

Senior minister exemplifies Punjab govt's first 100 days' performance

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Sunday the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) governments in Centre and Punjab has reignited hope among the populace and steered the country back on the path of prosperity in its first 100 days.

In a statement issued here, she said every sector was witnessing growth, and inflation was on a downward trajectory. "Prudent decisions have led to a historic alleviation of the people's burdens. In this short span, the price of bread has dropped from 14 to 12 rupees, exemplifying tangible relief for masses. Instead of fueling violence, the youth are being empowered with laptops. Pakistan stands as a beacon in Asia, with inflation rapidly decreasing," she added.

The minister asserted, "The 100-day milestone once again highlights the stark contrast between the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and the conspiracies orchestrated by Imran Khan. "The resounding praise for the performance of PM Shehbaz Sharif and CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif resonates loudly, while Imran Khan's falsehoods and plots only intensify. It begs the question: why does Imran Khan become agitated whenever the country's progress surges and inflation recedes," she asked.

Marriyum continued, "The public must reflect on why Imran Khan consistently seeks to sow instability whenever the economy stabilises. The nefarious elements behind inflation, economic downturns, youth unemployment, and anti-national conspiracies have reared their heads once more." She highlighted, "Inflation has plummeted by 17 per cent in 100 days, with significant reductions in the prices of essential commodities like flour, bread, and ghee.

12 dead, 1291 injured in 1219 road accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least twelve persons were killed and 1291 injured in 1219 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 583 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 708 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 718 drivers, 49 underage drivers, 143 pedestrians, and 442 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 277 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 298 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 80 in with 83 victims and at third Multan with 68 RTCs and 68 victims.

According to the data 1108 motorbikes, 56 autorickshaws, 148 motorcars, 24 vans, 08 passenger buses, 35 truck and 88 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in these road traffic accidents.

Mastermind of bank robbery gang arrested in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Intelligence Wing of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Karachi on Sunday apprehended the mastermind behind a gang involved in robbing citizens as they left banks with money.

According to a private news channel, the CTD spokesperson said that the mastermind was recently released from jail on bail. After his release, he formed a new gang and resumed his criminal activities across the city.

The gang was known for targeting people outside various banks in Karachi.

During a recent attempted robbery,



LAHORE: Members of Punjabi National Alliance are holding protest demonstration against killing of Punjabis in Balochistan, outside US Consulate Office in Lahore.

Police directed to ensure Eidul-Azha security plan

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Home Minister Zia-Ul-Hassan Lanjar has issued directives to the Sindh Police to ensure the implementation of the Eidul-Azha security plan, here on Sunday.

He directed to monitor and respond to potential security threats through the central command and control centre at the Central Police Office, deploy surveillance teams in plan clothes in shopping centres, public places, cattle markets and prayer venues, identify and categorising all

mosques, imambargahs, eidgahs and open places for Eid prayers.

He said that the police should ensure the deployment of police commandos and personnel at these locations.

Lanjar directed to establishment of wireless control rooms at zonal, district, and police station levels to coordinate security efforts. He said that a comprehensive security plan to prevent potential security threats and ensure peace and order during Eidul-Azha be implemented.

ANF recovers over 391 kg drugs; arrests 18 accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover over 391 kg drugs and arrested 18 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that 195.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of four suspects rounded up in two operations near Lakpas Toll Plaza.



LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Opposition Leader, Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Lahore press club.

Maryam focusing on resolving public problems: MPA

SIALKOT (APP): Senior leader Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Member Punjab Assembly (MPA) Muhammad Manshaullah Butt has said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is focusing on resolving public problems.

He expressed these views while addressing a joint meeting of labor union and trade union representatives at the Surgical Instruments Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SIMAP).

He said the Chief Minister had fulfilled the promise of providing quality and low-cost bread (roti) to the people. This is a historic relief to 130 million people in the first 100 days of any government.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz, Punjab has made a significant reduction in the prices of food items. Prices of flour, bread, roti and naan decreased by 48% in the first 100 days, he added.

Members Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) Muhammad Faisal Ikram and Chaudhry Tariq Subhani were also present on this occasion.

Manshaullah said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is determined to deliver the right of the people to their doorsteps by putting the self-respect of the people first and her Dream App launch is a link in this chain.

He said that on the instructions of Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Department of Labour and Manpower Punjab has accelerated the process of death.



LAHORE: Youth taking a dip in the swimming pool to reduce the heat intensity in the provincial capital.

PPP embraces youths with open arms: Murtaza

LAHORE (APP): Syed Hassan Murtaza, General Secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Punjab, emphasized his party's dedication to youth representation, declaring it the true party for young Pakistanis.

Speaking at a ceremony at the People's Secretariat on Sunday, Murtaza underlined that the PPP, led by its young chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, continues to champion the voices of the youth at every level. The event celebrated the induction of prominent young leaders Husnain Anwar Rajput, Muhammad Adeel Khan Kamoka, and Rana Waqas Tanveer, along with their colleagues, into the PPP.

These figures, previously associated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) Youth Wing, announced their switch to the PPP Youth Wing.

"We welcome these dynamic young leaders who have chosen to join our ranks. The PPP, with its commitment to youth empowerment under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is dedicated to enabling the youth to take the reins of the nation," said Murtaza. Key party figures including Secretary Records and Events Ahsan Rizvi, PPP Youth Vice Presidents Zeeshan Shami, and Hasan Ashraf Bhatti were also in attendance, demonstrating a united front in welcoming the new members. In a related development, PPP USA Vice President Safdar Qureshi met with Syed Hassan Murtaza to discuss the current political and economic landscape of Pakistan.



LAHORE: Activists of Peoples Party (PPP) Minority Wing Central Punjab are holding protest demonstration against Sargodha incident, at Lahore press club.

PESHAWAR (APP): Defeating unemployment and poverty, Ehtisham Khan (28) a "gur" juice seller was all smiles after receiving a substantial profit from the sugarcane stored by him for the ongoing summer season in Peshawar, attracting people in droves.

A resident of Wapda Town Nowshera, the motivated youth had purchased 1,000-kilogram sugarcane from the Charsadda district last winter which enabled him to earn maximum capital in the lucrative market of Peshawar where the commodity was being sold like a hot cake.

"After my 4 years BS in Urdu Literature from Govt Postgraduate College

Peshawar, I started the business of 'gur' juice in 2000 to support my six family members after the rejection of my applications due to lack of experience by public and private sector organisations," he said while presenting cold juices to the customers at Wapda Town.

Assisted by the brother, he said that a small glass of juice was being sold at Rs 50 and the large glass at Rs 100 in the local market, adding he had purchased 500 kilograms more sugarcane from Charsadda and Mardan due to its superior quality and high demands.

"To beat the scorching heat and keep one hydrated for a longer

time, gur juices being organic in nature are the best during sizzling heat" said Zeeshan Khan, a customer and an employee of Forest Department while during the mouthwatering drink mostly popular in KP.

Besides high energy and cool feelings, he said that gur juice was also more economical than other juices and beverages in the local market. Keeping in view of the increased productivity of sugarcane, the demands of its juices were also enhanced in Mardan, Peshawar and other cities and towns of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sugarcane is an important cash crop in Pakistan. It is grown in a large area of the country

and provides raw material to the large number of sugar mills that have been established in the country over the years. Some portion of the sugarcane crop is used for the production of gur (jaggery), especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The sugar industry in the country is the second largest agriculture-based industry after textile. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Agriculture Department data has revealed that the sugarcane crop has a longer duration than the other cash crops in the country where farmers require great skill and huge investment to cultivate the crop and face a host of problems, including the increasing cost of inputs and labour

as well as a scarcity of water. The sugar industry comprises six per cent of the manufacturing sector and 13pc of the crop economy. The sugar sector provides direct employment to over one million people and has a market size of Rs501 billion as of 2021.

The government has continuously increased the support price on sugarcane from Rs126 per 40kg in 2011 to Rs300 per 40kg in 2022 to incentivise the farmers to increase sugarcane production. Since 2011, the sugarcane production in the country has shown a cumulative growth of 36pc compared to a 42pc growth in the demand for the commodity while its cultivation.

Australian High Commissioner highlights education and trade cooperation with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins on Sunday emphasized Australia's commitment to investing in Pakistan's future through education and trade.

In an exclusive interview with the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), he said, "By investing in the people of Pakistan, particularly the young people who study in Australia, we hope they will return with valuable skills to contribute to Pakistan's future."

Hawkins stated, "I highlighted the sustained efforts to offer scholarships, focusing on women in executive leadership, climate change and agriculture. 'Gender equality and climate change are major focuses for us," he said, underscoring the shared climate challenges between the two nations and the potential for cooperative efforts.

The environmental focus, particularly on water and agriculture, remains a critical aspect of their support, with Hawkins noting his recent visit to northern Pakistan to witness climate change impacts firsthand.

Regarding trade, Hawkins noted a significant increase from the 2.5 billion dollars trade volume in 2022, with a 30 percent rise this year. Key exports include agricultural products like cattle, wheat, and canola, with nearly 90 percent of Pakistan's canola sourced from Australia. "If you're enjoying chana or chickpeas for breakfast, they're likely from Australia as well," he added.

This dialogue was part of an event celebrating the achievements of 60 Pakistani scholars who completed their studies in Australia through the prestigious Australia Awards scholarship program. These scholars, including 21 men and 39 women, were recognized for their academic excellence and dedication.

"I am proud to join the celebrations with these Pakistani scholars who have completed their studies funded by Australia," Hawkins said. "I congratulate them on their hard work and dedication. I am confident their newly acquired knowledge and skills.



BEIJING: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Investment Board, Abdul Aleem Khan presiding a high level meeting with the officials of Chinese Business group.

Top Chinese firms say: PM Shehbaz visit boosts Pak-China relations

BEIJING (APP): Chinese companies operating in Pakistan expect better opportunities for the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China.

World leading Chinese engineering and power companies such as CMEC and POWERCHINA Pakistan aimed to enhance investment and undertake new projects across various sectors.

Talking to the Chinese media, Dai Bao, Vice General Manager of China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) Pakistan expressed strong interest in collaborating with the Pakistani government during the second phase of the CPEC.

He acknowledged the recent high-level meeting between President Xi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The initial phase of the CPEC laid a robust foundation for Pakistan national destiny and established a pivotal framework for further bilateral cooperation. This progress paves the way for the next steps, and both sides eagerly anticipate the new phase of CPEC.

The Prime Minister visit to China signaled the beginning of this transformative stage.

The company senior representative highlighted that both nations aspire to witness fresh achievements and embrace a renewed outlook of the joint corridor.

China, drawing from its experience with reform and openness, extends a friendly hand of support to Pakistan. Notably,

SPARC hails SIFC for boosting Pak economy through tobacco tax hike

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) hailed the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and previous work on investing in better economic decisions, and tobacco topped the list when it came to increasing taxes on non-essential items for boosting the economy.

Health activists are hopeful that SIFC will advocate for an increase in cigarettes taxes by 26% in upcoming budget of year 2024-25.

This will be a Win - Win situation for both the economy and public health as it will generate PKR 17 Billion in revenue and after this tax increase, there is huge potential for long-term savings in health cost recovery by 19.8 percent.

Malik Imran Ahmad country head Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) said, "Higher taxes on tobacco products can lead to increased revenue for the government. Pakistan currently holds the highest proportion of young people, as 64% of the total population of Pakistan is below the age of 30. While 29% is between the ages of 15-29 years.

Approximately, 1200 children initiate smoking every day in Pakistan. This number is growing rapidly every year and as responsible citizens and stakeholders we must all take action to protect our future generations from addiction and death."

"Revenue from this proposed tax increase will generate billions of rupees for the national exchequer and can then be allocated to various sectors.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor busy in extracting mustard oil at his stall in weekly Sunday Bazaar, H-9 Sector.

LCCI holds consultative session on national industrial policy

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) hosted a pivotal consultative session on the formulation of the National Industrial Policy (NIP) here on Sunday.

Chairing the session, LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that the current policies are designed for those who are in the tax net and for documented industries. He emphasized that policies should be made to expand the tax base and support the industrial sector. He mentioned that SRO 1842, SRO 350 and the Income Tax Amendment Act 2024 are making the business environment more difficult.

He elaborated on the process of petitioner assessment that if assessment by assessing officer exceeds Rs 20 million, the petitioner has to go to the tribunal for remedy. If the tribunal also decides against the petitioner, the next forum is the high court, and for the assessment below Rs 20 million, the next forum for remedy is commissioner appeal and then high court. In High Court, for attaining stay, the petitioner has to deposit 30 percent value of the assessed amount for seeking stay which will create cash flow problems and other difficulties for the tax payers.

He mentioned that according to SRO 350 if the previous supplier will not submit his sales tax return the subsequent sales tax return to claim input tax will not be submitted. He noted that importing machinery at 25 to 26 percent raises costs, and other obligations like EOBI, LDA, and payment for industries to use highways adds to the burden.

Training workshop on quality assurance held

PESHAWAR (APP): The workshop on Effective Quality Assurance and Accreditation Bodies was held at Agriculture University Peshawar under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Emeritus Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht.

The workshop, organized by Director of Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA), Associate Prof. Dr. Khuram Nawaz Saduzai, aimed to guide university departments on assessing quality assurance and accreditation in educational programs as per HEC recommendations.

On the invitation of Director QAC, former Dean of Agriculture University Peshawar and Swat Professor (Rtd) Dr. Farmanullah was the resource person of the workshop.



SARGODHA: Labourers are busy in collecting watermelons from their field at Shekan Road to transport to the fruit market.

Int'l carpet exhibition will now start from Oct 3: PCMEA

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has changed the date of the 40th International Carpet Exhibition to be held in Pakistan in October this year on the request of buyers from European countries. According to the new decision, the exhibition of handmade carpets will be held from October 3 to 5 instead of October 12 to 14 at a local hotel.

Usman Ashraf, Senior Vice Chairman of the Association, told media here Sunday that after the announcement of the exhibition, they are constantly in touch with the foreign buyers. "Meanwhile, the majority of buyers from European countries requested a change in the dates of the global exhibition and now the new dates have been announced by consensus, according to which the 40th exhibition of handmade carpets will be held from October 3 to 5 in Lahore," he said, asserting that foreign buyers and other departments including Trade Development Authority of Pakistan.



MULTAN: Traders of Multan are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding in city during hot weather of summer season, in Multan.

ACT Alliance holds dialogue to combat illicit trade

MARDAN (APP): The ACT Alliance Pakistan convened a significant civil society and media dialogue in Mardan on Sunday to address the critical issue of illicit trade and its detrimental impact on the local, provincial, and national economies.

The event brought together representatives from various sectors, including business leaders, media professionals and civil society organizations, to discuss the pressing economic challenges of illicit trade, tax evasion, smuggling and counterfeiting.

The illicit trade in Pakistan has reached alarming levels, with an estimated \$68 billion in illicit activities occurring annually. Tax evasion accounts for over \$21 billion, while smuggling exceeds \$3 billion.

Additionally, nearly 80 percent of products, particularly in town centers and rural areas, are counterfeited.

These figures underscore the urgent need for collective action to address these pervasive issues.

This emphasis on the urgency of the issue should make the audience feel concerned and aware of the immediate need for action.

Speaking at the event, Ihsan Bacha, President of the Traders Association, Mardan, lauded the ACT Alliance's efforts in raising awareness and fostering collaboration to combat illicit trade.

"The ACT Alliance's initiative to reach out to local communities and raise awareness about illicit trade is commendable. The traders' community in Mardan recognizes the challenges posed by illicit trade and is committed to cooperating to eradicate this menace," said Bacha.

SNGPL punishes 17 consumers for illegal use of meters

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished 17 citizens during a crackdown for last two days.

According to officials of Task Force, the consumers were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and had also shifted meters at different sites by themselves. The gas metres of all 17 consumers were disconnected for violation of the laws. Similarly, another 17 consumers have been warned to shift their meters near service points in interior city as these had been installed outside the service points. The department urged citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number 0619220085 as secrecy would be maintained. According to Regional Manager Hussain Zafar, a special cell has been introduced to respond to complaints. Some officers have also been deputed in the cell to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

Train passengers demand cut in fares

SARGODHA (APP): Passengers on Sunday demanded that authorities take action against overcharging in the Mianwali Express train.

They staged a demonstration near the Sargodha Railway Station here on Sunday. A passenger, Azhar Hussain, who travels from Sargodha to Lahore twice a month, stated that despite a reduction in the prices of petroleum products several times, the management of Mianwali Express had not reduced the fares.

Malik for resolving Pak, India conflicts to spur regional economic growth

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday pointed out that long pending unresolved conflicts between Pakistan and India hinder economic growth and overall prosperity in the region.

In a media statement here Sunday, he noted that increased trade and economic collaboration between India and Pakistan could lead to significant advancements in technology, infrastructure, and overall economic development. He called on both the governments to prioritize peace and stability, suggesting that joint efforts in trade and commerce could pave the way for a more prosperous and harmonious South Asia. Iftikhar Malik urged the governments to hold constructive dialogue with Pakistan, emphasizing that diplomatic efforts are essential to overcoming historical grievances and building a future based on mutual respect and cooperation. He hoped that India's new government will address the Kashmir dispute and also reflect a broader vision for regional.

Waves of inflation continue in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The wave of inflation continues in Peshawar, increasing the price of vegetables, fruits and live chicken per kg while most of the vendors could not follow the official rates issued by the district administration.

The price of the vegetables increased with every passing day and the price of Onion jumped from Rs. 120 to Rs 180 while tomato 110, lemon 350, garlic 540 and ginger 700 rupees were being sold. The ginger was 650 and it increased by Rs. 50 to reach Rs. 700 per kg well before the forthcoming Eid-ul-Adha.



HUB: Sacrificial animals wait for their buyers at a makeshift sacrificial animals market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, in Hub

PHHSA for timely steps to cope with decreasing area of arable land

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan needs to take timely measures to offset emerging challenges of fast decreasing area of arable land and looming water scarcity, which poses a serious threat to food security especially rice cultivation in the country.

Talking to the media here Sunday, Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said that rice is a staple food crop and a critical component of Pakistan's agriculture sector, contributing substantially to the national economy and food security. However, increasing urbanization, industrial expansion, and climate change are progressively reducing the area of arable land and water available for agriculture/farming.

The PHHSA chief suggested that in order to mitigate these issues, it is imperative to adopt advanced agricultural technologies and sustainable practices that can enhance productivity while conserving resources. He mentioned, development and adoption of drought-resistant and high-yielding Guard hybrid rice seed varieties through genetic modification and traditional breeding techniques play a crucial role.

NUML-ICCI to improve industry academia linkages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rector National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (ret'd) visited Islamabad Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and met President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Baktawari.

Senior vice president, vice president and former presidents of ICCI also attended the meeting, said a press release issued here.

Rector NUML, while talking with ICCI leadership highlighted the importance of strong industry-academia linkages to improve the industrial development and economic growth of the country.

Fine of more than Rs 1.3mln collected for overpricing

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa has instructed active action in the field to eliminate profiteering and hoarding.

These directives were given in a meeting to review the performance of Price Control Magistrates in the committee room of the office.

The Price Control Magistrates were informed that a crackdown is underway in Bahawalpur district to eliminate profiteering and hoarding.

From June 3 to June 8, the Price Control Magistrates conducted 10,392 inspections at shops and business centers.

For violations, the Price Control Magistrates imposed a total fine of Rs 1.373 million on the spot.

One FIR was registered, 5 shops were sealed, and 86 profiteers were arrested. Assistant Commissioners of the district, System Network Administrator Muhammad Azeem Zeeshan, and Price Control Magistrates were present at the meeting.

Sale of sacrificial animals begins

RAWALPINDI (APP): The sacrificial animals have started arriving in Rawalpindi division from far-flung areas of the country for sale ahead of Eidul Azha. The animals can be seen in Raja Bazaar, Bara Market, Fowara Chowk, Dengi Khoi, Waris Khan, Naz Cinema, College Road, Benazir Bhutto road, Bakra Mandi, Lal Kurti, Dheri Hassanabad, Saddar Bazaar and other areas. At the moment, animal prices are quite high and beyond the reach of the common man, though, these prices are expected to fall closer to the annual religious.



SARGODHA: A farmer busy in planting saplings of rice in his field along Shekan Road.

Gaza's Health Ministry says 274 Palestinians were killed in Israeli raid that rescued 4 hostages

Monitoring Desk
DEIR AL-BALAH: At least 274 Palestinians including dozens of children were killed, and hundreds more were wounded, in the Israeli raid that rescued four hostages held by Hamas, Gaza's Health Ministry said Sunday. The military said its forces came under heavy fire during the complex daytime operation deep inside the territory.

The killing of so many Palestinians, in a raid that Israelis celebrated as a stunning success because all four hostages were rescued alive, showed the heavy cost of such operations on top of the already soaring toll of the 8-month-long war ignited by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack.

The operation deep into Nuseirat, a built-up refugee camp in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, was the largest rescue since Oct. 7, when Hamas and other militants stormed across the border, killing some 1,200

people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages. Scores of hostages are believed to be held in densely populated areas or inside Hamas' labyrinth of tunnels, making rescue attempts extremely complex and risky. A raid in February rescued two hostages while leaving 74 Palestinians dead.

Israel's massive offensive has killed over 36,700 Palestinians, according to the health ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its counts. It said 64 children and 57 women were killed in the latest raid, and 153 children and 161 women were among the nearly 700 wounded.

In Gaza, medics described scenes of chaos after the raid. Overwhelmed hospitals were already struggling to treat the wounded from days of heavy Israeli strikes in the area.

"We had the gamut of

war wounds, trauma wounds, from amputations to eviscerations to trauma, to TBIs (traumatic brain injuries), fractures and, obviously, big burns," said Karin Huster of Doctors Without Borders, an international charity working in Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

"Kids completely grey or white from the shock, burnt, screaming for their parents. Many of them are not screaming because they are in shock."

The Israeli military said it had attacked "threats to our forces in the area," and that a special forces officer was killed in the rescue operation.

Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, told reporters Saturday that the hostages were held in two apartments about 200 meters (219 yards) apart. He said the forces moved in simultaneously on both.



Palestinians inspect a house hit in an Israeli strike in Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza Strip.

Rights groups hail Israel's addition to UN list of shame

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Human rights groups have welcomed the United Nations decision to place Israel on a 'List of Shame' of countries that fail to protect children in war. The UN informed Israel about the move on Friday. Israel has killed tens of thousands of Palestinian children and maimed many more in its brutal bombing on Gaza, sparking global outrage against its military offensive.

The UN decision was

welcomed by the world's two major rights groups, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Amnesty Secretary General, Agnes Callamard, stated that the decision was long overdue. "It should not have taken 15,000 children killed in Gaza for Israel to be on this shameful list," she tweeted.

"It's a thoroughly justified, albeit long overdue, move by the Secretary-General," said HRW's Louis Charbonneau.

Israel extends Al Jazeera ban by 45 days, citing security threat

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: A ban on Al Jazeera's operations in Israel was extended for another 45 days by Israel's telecoms regulator on Sunday after the cabinet agreed its broadcasts posed a threat to security. A Tel Aviv court last week upheld an initial 35-day ban on Al Jazeera operations in Israel, imposed by the government on national security grounds, which ended on Saturday. In a separate ruling on a petition by Al Jazeera against the closure, Israel's Supreme Court described the measure against the Qatari-backed.

Migrant arrests drop at US-Mexico border as Biden asylum ban rolls out

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The number of migrants caught illegally crossing the US-Mexico border dropped, a senior US border official told Reuters, saying it signaled a restrictive new Biden administration policy was deterring some illegal immigration. US Border Patrol arrested around 3,100 people crossing illegally, down roughly 20% from the days before, the official said, requesting anonymity to discuss preliminary figures.

China says US provoking arms race in moves into South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: The US poses the largest security challenge in the South China Sea as its military deployment there is turning it into "the whirlpool of an arms race", Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong said in remarks published on Sunday.

Recent maritime run-ins between China and the Philippines, a US treaty ally, have made the highly strategic South China Sea a potential flashpoint between Washington and Beijing.

"At present, the biggest security challenge in the South China Sea comes from outside the region," Sun said in comments published by his ministry, after attending a high-level meeting on East

Asian cooperation in Laos. Sun said US-led forces were "promoting military deployment and actions in the South China Sea, inciting and intensifying maritime disputes and contradictions, and damaging the legitimate rights and interests of coastal countries".

A move by the United States to deploy medium-range missile systems in the area "is dragging the region into the whirlpool of an arms race, placing the entire Asia Pacific region under the shadow of geopolitical conflicts", Sun said.

China is committed to properly managing disputes with the parties in the South China Sea through dialogue, he added.

Developing countries call on US to lift Palestinian UN veto

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: The D-8 group of developing nations called on Saturday for the US to lift its veto on the full membership of Palestine as an independent and sovereign state in the United Nations. The Palestinians are currently a non-member observer state, a de facto recognition of statehood that was granted by the UN General Assembly in 2012. In a declaration after a meeting in Istanbul of its council of ministers, G-8 members Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey also demanded all countries stop supplying weapons and ammunition to Israel.

The UN General Assembly last month backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognising it as qualified to join and recommending the

UN Security Council "reconsider the matter favorably". The Palestinian push for full UN membership comes several months into a war between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and as Israel is expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank, which the UN considers to be illegal.

As the Palestinian death toll in Gaza has exceeded 36,000 and a humanitarian crisis has engulfed the enclave, human rights groups and other critics have faulted the US for providing weapons to Israel and largely defending Israel's conduct.

On Saturday, Israeli military said they rescued alive four hostages who were seized by Hamas during the Oct 7 attack in which Israeli said 1,200 people were killed and 250 abducted.

South Korea to blast loudspeaker broadcasts after North's trash balloons

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea will begin loudspeaker broadcasts directed at North Korea on Sunday that will be "unbearable" for the Kim Jong Un regime, its National Security Council said, after Pyongyang resumed sending balloons carrying trash across the border.

The Council met on Sunday morning, after dozens of balloons with trash attached were found in Seoul and in areas near the border earlier in the day and overnight.

"The measures we will take may be unbearable for the North Korean regime but they will send a message of hope and light to the North's troops and its people," the Council said.

South Korea has warned it would take "unendurable" measures against the North for sending the trash balloons, which could include blaring propaganda broadcasts from huge loudspeakers set up at the border directed at the North. Pyongyang started

sending balloons carrying trash and manure across the border in May and has said the move was in retaliation to anti-North leaflets flown by South Korean activists as part of a propaganda campaign.

On June 2, it said it would temporarily halt sending the balloons because 15 tons of trash it sent was probably enough to get the message across on how "unpleasant" it was. However, it vowed to resume if leaflets are again flown from the South by sending hundreds times the amount. A group of South Korean activists defied the warning and have since flown more balloons to the North with leaflets criticising its leader Kim Jong Un together with USB sticks containing K-pop videos and dramas, and US dollar notes. North Korea has shown some of the angry reactions towards the leaflet campaign and the loudspeaker broadcasts, in some cases firing weapons at the balloons and speakers in the past.

Two vessels catch fire after missile strikes off Yemen's Aden

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Two ships caught on fire after being hit by projectiles off Yemen's Aden, two UK maritime agencies reported on Sunday.

The British security firm Ambrey said on Sunday an Antigua- and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship was struck by a missile 83 nautical miles southeast of Aden and caught fire. The fire was later contained.

Earlier, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said it had received a report from a captain of a vessel of an incident 80 nautical miles southeast of Aden.

"The ship was heading southwest along the Gulf of Aden at a speed of 8.2 knots when the forward station was struck by a missile. A fire started but was neutralised," Ambrey said in an advisory note.

"A second missile was sighted but did not hit the ship. Persons on board small boats in the vicinity opened fire on the ship during the incident," Ambrey said the ship

changed course to port and increased speed, adding that "no injuries were reported".

Separately, Ambrey and UKMTO said they had received a report about another incident 70 nautical miles southwest of Aden.

"The master reports that the vessel was hit by an unknown projectile on the aft section, which resulted in a fire. Damage control is underway," UKMTO said in advisory note.

They added that no casualties were reported and the vessel was proceeding to its next port of call.

The Houthi militia, which controls the most populous parts of Yemen and is aligned with Iran, has attacked ships off its coast for months, saying it is acting in solidarity with Palestinians fighting Israel in Gaza. Houthi fighters have launched drone and missile attacks in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and Gulf of Aden, forcing shippers since November to take longer and more costly journeys around southern Africa.

Iran OKs 6 candidates for presidential race, but again blocks Ahmadinejad

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran's Guardian Council on Sunday approved the country's hard-line parliament speaker and five others to run in the country's June 28 presidential election following a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others.

The council again barred former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a firebrand populist known for the crackdown that followed his disputed 2009 re-election, from running.

The council's decision represents the starting gun for a shortened, two-week campaign to replace Raisi, a hard-line protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei once floated as a possible successor for the 85-year-old cleric.

The selection of candidates approved by the

Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei, suggests Iran's Shiite theocracy hopes to ease the election through after recent votes saw record-low turnout and as tensions remain high over the country's rapidly advancing nuclear program, as well as the Israel-Hamas war.

The Guardian Council also continued its streak of not accepting a woman or anyone calling for radical change to the country's governance.

So far, none of them has offered any specifics, though all have promised a better economic situation for the country as it suffers from sanctions by the U.S. and other Western nations over its nuclear program, which now enriches uranium closer than ever to

2 killed, fires rage in Lebanon after Israeli strikes

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: Israeli strikes on Saturday killed two people and sparked wildfires in southern Lebanon, state media said, with Hezbollah announcing the death of one fighter.

Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, has traded near-daily fire with Israeli forces in the eight months since the Gaza conflict began, triggered by Hamas' October 7 raid.

The deadly clashes have intensified in recent weeks, causing multiple brush fires on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border.

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said on Saturday that "an Israeli drone carried out an air attack with two guided missiles, targeting a cafe in Aitarun and killing the cafe's owner, Ali Khalil Hamad, 37, and a young man named Mustafa A. Issa."

Voting in 20 EU countries underway as election for the European Parliament enters its final day

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Tens of millions across the European Union voted Sunday in EU parliamentary elections in a massive exercise of democracy that is expected to shift the bloc to the right and redirect its future.

The war in Ukraine, migration, and the impact of climate policy on farmers are some of the issues weighing on voters' minds as they cast ballots to elect 720 members of the European Parliament.

Surveys suggest that mainstream and pro-European parties will retain their majority in parliament, but they will lose seats to hard right parties like those led by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, Hungarian leader Viktor Orban, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands

and Marine Le Pen in France.

That would make it harder for Europe to pass legislation and could at times paralyze decision-making in the world's biggest trading bloc. "I do hope that we will manage to avoid a shift to the right and that Europe will somehow remain united," voter Laura Simon said in Berlin.

EU lawmakers have a say in issues from financial rules to climate and agriculture policy. They approve the EU budget, which bankrolls priorities including infrastructure projects, farm subsidies and aid delivered to Ukraine. And they hold a veto over the appointment of the powerful EU commission.

US, British citizens among suspects on trial in Congo after thwarted coup

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: More than 50 defendants, including six with US, British, Canadian or Belgian citizenship, appeared in court in the Democratic Republic of Congo charged with taking part in a failed coup and other offences that carry the death penalty. Armed men briefly occupied an office of the presidency in the capital Kinshasa on May 19 before their leader, US-based Congolese politician Christian Malanga, was killed by security forces. The defendants include Malanga's 22-year-old son Marcel Malanga, two other US citizens and the three other holders of foreign passports.

Protesters slam Biden in Gaza rally near White House

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON/LONDON: Thousands of protesters held a "red line" rally near the White House on Saturday, voicing anger at US President Joe Biden's tolerance of Israel's brutal military campaign against Hamas.

Chanting "From DC to Palestine, we are the red line", the demonstrators held a long banner scribbled with the names of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces.

In London thousands of people marched through the city centre to parliament calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The demonstration was organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Marchers waved Palestinian flags and chanted: "Free the genocide" and "Free, free Palestine".

While Biden has faced criticism for playing a balancing act on key ally Israel's actions in the conflict, the White House said last month that a deadly Israeli strike on Rafah did not cross a "red line" that Biden had seemingly set two months earlier when asked about a potential invasion of the southern Gaza city.



LONDON: Protesters hold placards and wave Palestinian flags as they gather in Parliament Square at the end of 'National March for Gaza', calling to end the genocide and stop arming Israel.

US resumes aid deliveries to Gaza from temporary pier: CENTCOM

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States has resumed aid deliveries to Gaza from a temporary pier, the country's military said on Saturday, after the structure suffered storm damage and underwent repairs in a nearby port.

"Today at approximately 10:30 am (Gaza time) US Central Command (USCENTCOM) began delivery of humanitarian assistance ashore in Gaza. Today, a total of approximately 492 metric tons (~1.1 million pounds) of much needed humanitarian assistance was delivered to the people of Gaza," CENTCOM said on social media platform X.

"No US military personnel went ashore in Gaza," the military command responsible for the Middle East added.

Gaza has been devastated by Israeli operations against Palestinian militant group Hamas now entering their ninth month, uprooting the coastal territory's population and leaving them in dire need of humanitarian assistance. More than two million pounds of humanitarian aid were delivered via the pier last month, but it was damaged by high seas around a week after deliveries began. The pier was repaired in the Israeli port of Ashdod before being brought back to the Gaza coast and reestablished on Friday.

Makkah cleared of unregistered pilgrims

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said on Saturday that security forces had cleared hundreds of thousands of unregistered pilgrims from Makkah ahead of Haj which begins next week.

Crowd management is a major concern during the annual pilgrimage, which drew over 1.8m people last year, according to official figures.

Those turned away in recent days from the holy city, include 153,998 foreigners who travelled from abroad on tourist visas rather than the required Haj visas, the official Saudi Press Agency said.

Astronaut who took 'Earthrise' photo dies in plane crash

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: William Anders, the former US astronaut who took the historic "Earthrise" photo from space over 55 years ago, died in a plane crash on Friday at the age of 90, his family said.

Anders had been piloting a small plane which crashed off the coast of Washington state on Friday morning, his son told US media.

Anders was alone in the plane. His body was later recovered by a dive team. The Seattle Times reported, quoting a Coast Guard spokesperson.



Alternative for Germany (AfD) party co-leaders Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla react to results after the polls closed in the European Parliament elections, in Berlin, Germany.



Additional Foreign Secretary Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui at the Senior Officials Meeting preparatory to the Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum held in Laos.

Pak commitment to regional peace, security, prosperity highlighted at ASEAN forum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia & Pacific), Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, represented Pakistan at the Senior Officials Meeting preparatory to the Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Ambassador Siddiqui appreciated ARF's pivotal role in multilateral efforts for regional peace and prosperity, according to a statement issued on Sunday.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the ASEAN Regional Forum's mandate, he emphasised the importance of international collaboration for shared objectives of stability and sustainable prosperity.

Stressing the need for an equitable and inclusive security framework, the Additional Foreign Secretary underscored the importance of resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people for lasting peace and security in South Asia.

Ambassador Siddiqui condemned the rising tide of Islamophobia and the pursuit of Islamophobic political agenda as strategies in election campaigns. He emphasised the importance of comprehensive approaches to address the root causes of terrorism.

He also called for international scrutiny and accountability for extrajudicial killings by foreign agents inside Pakistan.



QUETTA: Sacrificial animals wait for their buyers at a makeshift sacrificial animals market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha.

Pakistan to boost 26% BISP funding for poorest amidst IMF demands

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), a social safety net for the poorest families, is set for a significant funding boost in the upcoming budget. The government is proposing a record allocation of Rs 593 billion, a 26% increase from the current year, in response to demands from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF has called for expanding BISP coverage and increasing cash transfers to counter rising inflation. The proposed budget reflects these demands, with plans to add more families to the program and raise the quarterly stipend from Rs 10,500 to Rs 13,000.

Sources say the additional funding aims to increase BISP beneficiaries from 9.6 million to 9.7 million families. The goal is to eventually reach 20 million households, potentially requiring further financial support.



QUETTA: Secretary Communication and Works Lal Jan Jaffar presiding over Departmental Sub Committee

Balochistan students dream big to study in Oxford

QUETTA (APP): Seeing the pictures of world famous personalities on a wall of Lady Margaret Hall, the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Sadullah Akhtar, a Quetta-born Pakistani journalist was swayed by excitement as it felt to him like day dreaming.

Hailing from a low-income family, the Chevening Scholarship winner had never imagined to travel to such an honored institution in the London city - an ambition frequently voiced by Pakistan's middle class citizens.

"I am very excited to be here in London and more importantly, visiting Oxford University as a journalist was my dream that came true," Sadullah told APP. "What inspired me the most, were the pictures of Oxford University alumni that were hanging on the wall of LMH."

Starting from low level in journalism, Sadullah is now a journalist turned student at University of Westminster - a reward for his hard work to earn name in journalism to a level where he was offered this scholarship. "I am overwhelmed with excitement to be studying for one year at Westminster and visiting Oxford. My hard work finally paid me back."

Earlier, the ordinary students from Balochistan could have rarely thought of joining such world known institutions but things are now changing and a leap forward fulfilling this dream is inking an agreement with Oxford University by Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

Giving a new hope to many aspiring students of Balochistan, this Memorandum of Understanding would provide opportunities to Balochistan students to receive scholarships from Oxford University through the Benazir Scholarship Program being executed in collaboration with Oxford Pakistan Program (OPP).

Foreign investment coming back to Pakistan under PM's leadership: Engr Amir Muqam

SWAT (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Engr Amir Muqam here on Sunday said that huge foreign investment had again started coming to Pakistan due to successful policies of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Government that had restored confidence of the international investors.

Addressing party workers here at Malam Jabba, the federal minister said that important MoUs and agreements were signed during the successful visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the brotherly country of China that would largely benefit the people of Pakistan.

Engr Amir Muqam said that investments were also coming from brotherly Islamic countries including Saudi Arabia and UAE which strongly reflected investors confidence in the economic and foreign policies of Shehbaz Sharif Govt. He said that vast opportunities for investment were existed in agriculture, mines and mineral, tourism and Information Technology in Pakistan especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Owing to the prudent economic, fiscal and trade policies of PML-N Govt, he said that prices of daily use commodities were significantly decreased and the value of rupee against dollar stabilized. He said that Opposition leaders were victimised during PTI Government and fake cases were registered against PML-N leadership. He said that PML-N leadership had faced all the cases with steadfastness and were acquitted by the courts of law.

On the other hands, he said that PTI leadership was making tall hollow slogans in a bid to instigate people and putting pressure on institutions to release PTI founder arrested in corruption cases. He said that these negative elements were provoking people to repeat the May 9 gory incidents.

CM visits Sanjavi; condoles death of cousin of Minister Food Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti visited Sanjavi area on Sunday. During the visit, the Chief Minister condoled death of cousin of Provincial Minister for Food, Noor Muhammad Dummer and offered fatha for the departed soul.

He prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss of his death. Also accompanied with the Chief Minister were Provincial Ministers Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Noor Muhammad Dummer, Member National Assembly, Adil Khan Bazai, Director Political and Public Relations, Faisal Tariq Khan and other high ups.

Radio Pak legendary Urdu newscaster Taskeen Zafar passes away

ISLAMABAD (INP): Legendary voice of Radio Pakistan, Urdu newscaster Taskeen Zafar passed away in Rawalpindi after brief illness. She was 67.

Her Namaz-e-Janaza will be offered at 4:30 pm at Eidgah, Lalkurti in Rawalpindi this afternoon. Born in Rawalpindi in 1957.

13 policemen martyred in attacks on polio teams in current year

PESHAWAR (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has disclosed the harrowing toll exacted by attacks on anti-polio teams this year. According to an exclusive report, a staggering 13 officers have been martyred, with 36 others sustaining injuries in these cowardly assaults.

The report unveils a chilling pattern of violence, highlighting 15 attacks targeting polio teams across various regions. Bannu bore the brunt with 4 attacks, while Bajaur and Tank each witnessed 3 assaults. Additionally, incidents were reported in Khyber, Lakki Marwat, Mardan, North, and South Waziristan.

Tragically, the sacrifice of 9 valiant policemen in Bajaur and the injury of 30 others underscore the gravity of the situation. Bannu, too, mourns the loss of 2 officers with 3 more wounded in line of duty.

Financial aid but a fundamental commitment to educational transformation and empowerment of Balochistan youth.

Benazir Scholarship Program and OPP is an initiative of its kind to help increase Pakistani students representation at a leading university and its credit goes to all contributors who struggled for better opportunities to Balochistan students.

Since its establishment three years ago, OPP has become the single largest Pakistan-focused academic platform outside Pakistan. To address the under-representation of Pakistani and British Pakistani students at Oxford; and to raise the academic profile of Pakistan and Pakistan-related areas of interest amongst Oxford's faculty are the two major objective of OPP.

PM's China visit to upgrade CPEC, further bilateral ties

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China will prove to be a catalyst for the next phase of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and also further strengthen investors relations, flourish businesses, and enhance people-to-people contact between China and Pakistan, ushering in a new era of economic prosperity in Pakistan.

This was the upshot of a panel discussion on "PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China and its impact on Pakistan", organised by Press Information Department (PID) here at its regional office on Sunday.

The panelists included renowned journalists Salman Ghani, Saleem Bukhari, Ayesha Ashfaq, Mohammad Mehdi, and Najam Wali. Director General Bushra Bashir and other officers of the PID. The discussion delved into the political and economic significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its revival for Pakistan's progress.

Ms. Ayesha Ashfaq, Head of Department of Development Communications at Punjab University, commenced the dialogue by underscoring the positive outcomes expected from the PM's visit, particularly highlighting the signing of 32 new agreements and MoUs. She emphasized the crucial role of effective communication, both through mainstream and social media, to elucidate the importance of CPEC to the common populace to ensure effective implementation of CPEC projects in future.

Saleem Bukhari, a senior journalist and analyst, underscored the criticality of the IT sector within the signed MoUs, foreseeing its pivotal role in Pakistan's future progress. Moving on, Najam Wali

Khan, a senior broadcast journalist, stressed the correlation between economic stability and political stability, advocating for robust measures to counter misinformation and build public trust that must go along to ensure effectiveness of CPEC projects.

Mohammad Mehdi, a foreign affairs expert and senior columnist, emphasized the imperative of capacity building for the effective implementation of CPEC projects. Lastly, Salman Ghani, a senior journalist, lauded PID Lahore's initiative in facilitating such discussions.

KARACHI: A 5-member delegation of PML(N) led by central senior Vice President Shah Muhammad Shah meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

China distributes meat to needy people in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (INP): In connection with the celebrations of the upcoming Eid ul-Adh, the meat of sacrificial animals has been distributed among local people of Gwadar by the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad and the China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC). More than 20 goats have been sacrificially slaughtered, and their meat has been doled out to needy communities, offering a profound gesture of brotherhood and philanthropy.

Around 393 less fortunate families received the meat in 2 kg packets. Zahid Baloch, a destitute member of a fisher family, told Gwadar Pro. "Skyrocketing inflation has wreaked havoc on people's already ramshackle financial condition.

Monitoring Desk

KARACHI: Known for his bold predictions about the country's politics, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Manzoor Wassan on Sunday made a bold statement anticipating the incumbent government's dissolution in the next three months.

The politician said that the next "trimester is extremely crucial" regarding the political landscape. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif may dissolve the National Assembly within the next three months."

Wassan also ruled out the possibility of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif becoming the next premier in the current political scenario.

He said that it would be seen what kind of setup emerges afterwards, but the provincial assemblies will remain intact.

The politician further stated that he doesn't see any favourable circumstances for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan or other politicians. "Reliefs are given and taken back, so Imran Khan shouldn't be living in his own imaginary world."

Zubair announces to quit PML-N

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Sindh governor Muhammad Zubair on Sunday announced to part ways with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Talking to a private Tv news channel, Muhammad Zubair announced his decision to quit Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. In support of his decision, Muhammad Zubair said he had differences with the party leadership on the no-confidence move against the former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan, the 16-month performance of the Pakistan Democratic Movement's government and other issues.

"I conveyed my differences to the party leadership long ago," he added. The former Sindh governor said currently he has not decided to join any political party and will make a decision regarding this in the near future.

Muhammad Zubair said PML-N deviated from its "Vote Ko Izzat Do" slogan. Earlier, Mohammad Zubair said that PML-N had abandoned the "vote ko izzat do" (respect the vote) party narrative days before the PDM government.

The former governor said that PML-N started with a confrontational narrative, then turned to reconciliation and now they are running the campaign on the economic narrative.

IMF demands imposing tax on farm sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has demanded more tax collection from provinces and imposition of the agriculture tax, official source said on Sunday.

The IMF has urged for imposition of tax on the agriculture income adding that the farm sector paying low tax in Pakistan over its share of income.

The monetary fund has also advised the government to use the national tax council for enhancing provincial taxation. "The province's tax share in national revenues has been at the minimal level of one percent," IMF has pointed out.

The IMF has also demanded full tax collection on properties in as well as sales tax on services in provinces.

The International Monetary Fund earlier demanded Pakistan to public assets of office holders, government officials, ministers, and parliamentarians. According to sources, the IMF has suggested strict anti-corruption measures in the upcoming budget 2024.

The monetary fund directed the government to establish a portal to declare assets of public officials, but the government has failed to do so, sources said.

Pakistan's authorities are bound to create a portal and disclose asset details under the agreement with the IMF, sources added.



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The former governor said that PML-N started with a confrontational narrative, then turned to reconciliation and now they are running the campaign on the economic narrative.

IMF demands imposing tax on farm sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has demanded more tax collection from provinces and imposition of the agriculture tax, official source said on Sunday.

The IMF has urged for imposition of tax on the agriculture income adding that the farm sector paying low tax in Pakistan over its share of income.

The monetary fund has also advised the government to use the national tax council for enhancing provincial taxation. "The province's tax share in national revenues has been at the minimal level of one percent," IMF has pointed out.

The IMF has also demanded full tax collection on properties in as well as sales tax on services in provinces.

The International Monetary Fund earlier demanded Pakistan to public assets of office holders, government officials, ministers, and parliamentarians. According to sources, the IMF has suggested strict anti-corruption measures in the upcoming budget 2024.

The monetary fund directed the government to establish a portal to declare assets of public officials, but the government has failed to do so, sources said.