

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

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Single-digit taxation not sustainable: Aiming to take tax-to-GDP ratio to 13pc in next 3 years: FM Aurangzeb

Govt negotiating with 'Banking Sector' to resolve liquidity issue of top export sectors; Govt protects low income groups in Budget 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): Reiterating the pressing need for digitization and broadening of tax base, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb asserted here on Thursday that below 10 percent tax to GDP ratio was not sustainable for managing country's economy.

"We have to take it up to 13 percent in next three years gradually," the minister said while addressing the post-budget press conference, adding as per the



international benchmark, no country could sustain at 9.5 tax to GDP ratio base without external assistance. Hence, there is a dire need to enhance tax to GDP ratio, the minister said.

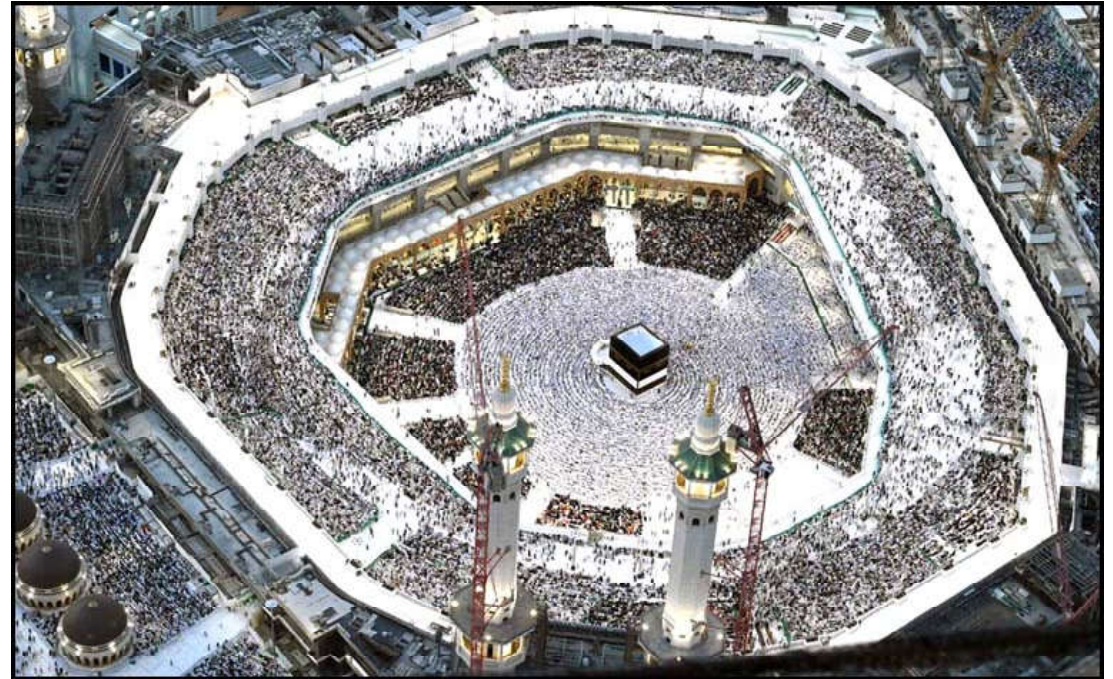
The minister was flanked by State Minister for Finance, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Secretary Finance, Imdad Ullah Bosal and Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Amjad

Zubair Tiwana.

Aurangzeb underscored the importance of doing away with undocumented economy with end-to-end digitization to reduce human intervention as much as possible and make the tax mechanism transparent and mitigate chances of corruption.

The minister admitted that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) could not do compliance and enforcement to the extent it should have done.

Continued on page 2



MAKKAHAL MUKARRAMAH: A beautiful view of the Khana Kaaba through rooftop of Clock Tower as a large number of pilgrims performing circumambulation (Tawaaf).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

PM to pay special visit to Balochistan in couple of days to resolve issue of solarization of agri. tube wells

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Prime Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has announced to pay special visit to Balochistan in next couple of days in order to resolve the issue of solarization of agricultural tube wells in the province seriously.

The Prime Minister was presiding over the meeting about solarization of the agricultural tube wells in Balochistan, in Islamabad on Thursday.

The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti participated in the meeting through video link.

The meeting reviewed in detail about converting the agricultural tube wells of the province on solar energy.

The Chief Minister on the occasion welcomed the visit of Prime Minister to the province and said that conversion of agricultural tube wells on solar energy is unavailable for ensuring uninterrupted supply of electricity to the zamindars of province z.

He said that it is our endeavour that federal government may release Rs. 40 billion to resolve the issue at the earliest.

It would also enable us to resolve the issues being faced by the zamindars of province.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the long term solution to the issue. However the funds which are required by the provincial government for resolving the issue should also be released duly.

He said that the dependency on QESCO would also be decreased for electricity supply with completion of the project, reducing the circular debt, adding he believed.

Meets Maulana Fazlur Rehman PM Shehbaz proposes committee to resolve political issues

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has proposed to JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to constitute committee to address political issues with mutual cooperation.

PM Shehbaz Sharif reached residence of Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday to appease him.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman welcomed PM. PM lauded the religious services of Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

PM said Maulana always promoted peaceful struggle for safeguarding democratic norms. We hold

it in high esteem.

Sources said PM sought support from Maulana Fazlur Rehman with reference to budget-2024 in the meeting.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman once again informed PM about his reservations regarding results of February election saying we are struggling for democracy, transparent election and supremacy of constitution. We wanted all democratic forces should play their role together for strengthening democracy.

PM said we are convinced of your services for democracy

President directs FIO to ensure prompt relief to aggrieved policyholders

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday directed the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) to provide speedy and free of charge justice to the aggrieved insurance policyholders against the maladministration of insurance companies.

He said that FIO needed to enhance its outreach and ensure quick disposal of complaints so that a maximum number of citizens could be provided

monetary relief.

The president expressed these views while talking to the newly-appointed Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) Mumtaz Ali Shah, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During the meeting, President Zardari highlighted the need to create awareness about the role of FIO in providing justice to aggrieved policyholders in the settlement of insurance

Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 reviewed: Distances created between youth & State thru negative propaganda: CM

Chief Minister emphasizes youngsters can be kept away from anti-state activities by introducing health activities

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 would be compatible with the needs of youth of province.

He said that it is very necessary to provide opportunities of education, livelihood and development to the youth.

He said that it is a matter of great concern that distances were created between the youth and State through negative propaganda. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the youngsters away from anti-state

activities by introducing healthy activities.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Chief Minister while chairing a review meeting on formulation of Balochistan Youth Policy 2024 here on Thursday.

The Member National Assembly, Nawabzada Jamal Raisani, concerned high ups, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Imran Zarkoon and spokesman of provincial government, Shahid Rind were in attendance at the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the salient features of the Balochistan Youth Policy with the aim to formulate it according to the needs of youth.

The Secretary Youth Affairs, Tariq Qamar Baloch briefed the meeting about the salient features of Youth Policy.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister stressed the need to make the Youth Policy compatible with requirements of the modern day as well as needs of the youth, transgenders and jawans of all oppressed segments of the society.

He directed to prepare calendar of events for engaging youth in healthy activities.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting regarding formation of Youth Police 2024

PML-N has proven track record of pulling economy out of crisis: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif had a proven track record of pulling the country's economy out of crisis. Keeping in view the past performance, the deputy PM hoped to replicate the previous successes in the current tenure as well.

Addressing an event organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ishaq Dar said when the PML-N government was formed in 2013, all the in-



ternational rating agencies and financial institutions were indicating that Pakistan's economy was on the brink of default and that it would take 10 to 12 years to stabilize.

However, he said that the PML-N government managed to stabilize the economy within three years due to its prudent policies.

He regretted that whenever the country's economy started taking off, some hidden hands created hurdles and made the economy unstable again.

Congo virus controlled in Balochistan; emergency enforced in Livestock Dept

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Livestock, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has stated that an emergency has been enforced in Livestock department owing to the threat of Congo virus for last three weeks.

He said that there was threat of Congo virus in the province, however, we have controlled it to great extent.

The Provincial Minister was speaking to the media persons after inaugu-

ration of the official cattle market in the Government Poultry Farm here on Thursday.

Bakht Muhammad Kakar on the occasion formally inaugurated the official cattle market. The Secretary Livestock, Muhammad Tayyab Lehri and other senior officials of Livestock department were also present.

The Minister Livestock said that the Livestock department is fully functional at all districts of the province.

LEAs' IBO in Balochistan, terrorists arrested

QUETTA (INP): The law enforcement agencies in Balochistan province have arrested several dangerous terrorists by conducting a successful Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO).

According to the details, the intelligence agency and law enforcement agencies foiled the attempt to establish centers of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Balochistan.

Among those arrested is the most dangerous and wanted commander of the outlawed TTP.

According to the initial investigation, the fabric of the network meets internal and external terrorists. The arrested commander was involved in terrorist activities in different areas. Further investigation is going on, and important secrets are also expected to be revealed about the nexus of various terrorists present in the country.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering the oath of office to Mumtaz Ali Shah as the Federal Insurance Ombudsman during an oath-taking ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Imran, Sheikh, Qureshi acquitted in Azadi March case

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions court Islamabad has acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and others in Azadi March case.

Judicial magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran announced reserved judgment.

Case was registered against PTI founder, Sheikh

Rashid and others in 2022 on violation of section 144 and rioting clauses in police station 1-9.

The court also acquitted Sadaqat Abbasi and Ali Nawaz Awan.

It is pertinent to mention here that Anti Terrorism Court Lahore had extended bail of PTI founder in 3 cases related to Jinnah House attack case a day before.

Punjab govt presents Rs5.4 trillion 'tax-free' budget



LAHORE (INP): Punjab Finance Minister Shujaur Rehman presented the provincial 'tax-free' budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total outlay of 5.44 trillion amid protest by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

The finance minister laid before the House Rs 5446 billion budget with a surplus Rs 630 billion. He said that 77 new mega projects will be launched under the annual development plan.

Just like the centre, the Punjab government also

In his budget speech, Shujaur Rehman claimed that no new taxes are imposed while existing taxes are not increased in the budget.

According to the budget documents, Rs 6 billion is earmarked for laptop scheme, Rs 5 billion endowment fund, Rs 268 billion for supplementary grants, Rs 26 billion for the supplementary budget statement of the financial year 2023-24, Rs 26 billion rupees for agricultural equipment, and Rs 10 billion Kisan card.

Time has come to hold Israel accountable for its grave crimes: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan says time has come to hold Israel accountable for its grave crimes, urging the global conscience to force Israel towards immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza.

At her weekly media briefing in Islamabad Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said it is also critical to bring an end to the war on people of Palestine.

She said Pakistan also welcomes the report of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on Occupied Palestinian territory including East Jerusalem and Israel.

Naqvi attends funeral prayer of ANF martyrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday attended the funeral prayer of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) personnel, Muhammad Gulzar, Mazhar Iqbal and Zeeshan, who were martyred in a firing incident by drug traffickers at Tarkai Toll Plaza Jhelum.

The Interior Minister met with the families of the martyrs and offered heartfelt condolences. He prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and for the patience of their loved ones.

Afghan Consul General meets Mandokhail: Peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan in interest of whole region, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has categorically stated that peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of the whole region. He said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are two brotherly neighbouring countries and sustainable peace with the neighbouring countries is an important part of international relations.

During the course of meeting, matters of mutual interests including issues faced by the students of Afghanistan in the country were discussed. The Governor assured his best cooperation for resolving the issues of students studying in different universities and their welfare.

Attaullah Tarar says

Empowerment of youth through skill based education key to country's progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that education was backbone of the society and economy and empowerment of youth

through skill based education was vital for the progress of the country.

Talking to the media persons at an education exposition organised by a leading media group here, he

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JHELUM: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi paying homage to ANF martyrs.

Hajj arrangements review: Pakistani Hajj pilgrims cheer to see minister Salik among them

MAKKAH (APP) - The minister also took round of the pilgrims' dining halls and kitchens, sat with them on their dining tables and tasted the food being served to guests of Allah Almighty.

Overall the pilgrims expressed their gratitude and praised the government's arrangements, highlighting that this year's Hajj organization and the performance of the staff have been exemplary compared to previous years.

Minister Salik informed the pilgrims that they would be transported to Mina during the night between Thursday and Friday, marking the beginning of their pilgrimage rites.

He assured the pilgrims that the Pakistan Hajj Mission was diligently working to provide continuous support and necessary facilities in Mina and Arafat.

Furthermore, the minister emphasized the presence of Pakistani Hajj assistants and paramedical staff, who will accompany the pilgrims at the holy sites to offer assistance and ensure their needs are met.

He also mentioned that information regarding their animals' sacrifice would be communicated to them through the Pak Hajj App, a digital platform designed to facilitate the pilgrims.

Chaudhry Salik also highlighted the arrangement for the sacrificial rites, stating that the sacrifices for those pilgrims who have deposited money with the ministry would be completed between Zohar-Asr time of the 10th of Zilhajj.

Weather may ruin Pakistan's chances of qualification to Super Eight

LAHORE (APP) - Pakistan cricket team's fate hangs in balance after persistent inclement weather in Lauderdale, Florida is likely to wash away the USA versus Ireland fixture of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup to be played in Lauderdale, Florida on Friday.

A no result between USA and Ireland will earn both the teams one point and it will be enough to take USA team to the Super Eight stage in its maiden appearance at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Even a no result match will propel USA to the next stage by virtue of its narrow win against Pakistan. USA also beat Canada in a spectacular run-chase in the opening match of the World Cup.

According to the weather pundits Accuweather, the maximum temperature forecast is 29 degree Celsius with couple of showers and a heavy thunderstorm; cloudy and humid while additional rain can lead to flooding problems. A 12.1 mm of rain is the forecast in the morning and all the

matches at the venues in the USA are being played in the day. Heavier rain is expected in the afternoon on Friday while the chances of rain and thunderstorm are minimum.

Pakistan cricket team's practice session scheduled for Thursday in Lauderdale, Florida was also cancelled due to a wet outfield, according to the team's Media Manager Raza Kitchlew. The team members attended light physical training session.

Senior sports journalist Muhammad Yousaf Anjum told APP from Lauderdale Florida that the field is soggy at the ground due to persistent rain for 10 hours the other day, adding that a match between USA and Ireland is only possible if the rain relents tonight.

Senate continues discussion on finance bill 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate has commenced discussion on the finance bill 2024-25.

Opening the debate, Leader of the Opposition Shibli Faraz said the budget for next fiscal year carries no economic vision to steer the country out of debt trap. He welcomed the enhancement in minimum wage but regretted the increase in the taxes on salaried class.

Participating in the debate, Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui said there is no crisis in the country as all the institutions are working and the parliament is functional.



QUETTA: President Pakistan Peoples Party Balochistan Mir Changez Khan Jamali and General Secretary Rozi Khan Kakar meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

Pakistan Football League to commence on Oct 15: Chairman PFL

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Pakistan Football League (PFL) Farhan Junejo on Thursday said that ten teams from various cities, including Karachi, will participate in the PFL scheduled to commence on October 15 and will continue for 65 days.

He expressed these views while talking to the Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab at the mayor's office here.

The Chairman PFL informed the mayor that the teams participating in the league, each team featuring four international players. The matches will be played in Karachi and Lahore, and preparations and upgradation of the grounds are underway.

Farhan Junejo also mentioned efforts to build a world-class football stadium in Karachi to host various football competitions.

He said that the team that wins the PFL final will have the opportunity to

play against international teams and will be included in clubs from different countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that we will provide full cooperation to the administration in organizing of the PFL.

He mentioned that sports activities enhance the atmosphere of the city, and all international football players coming to Karachi will be provided with facilities. He said that KMC will provide land for the construction of a world-class football stadium in Karachi.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab, said that Karachi has produced international football players, and Lyari is especially known as a hub for football players.

He said that a large number of Karachi residents are expected to attend the Pakistan Football League matches in Karachi.

Price of petrol likely to be reduced for 15 days

ISLAMABAD (Online): The price of petroleum products are likely to be reduced from June 16 by Rs 9.30 per liter for 15 days.

The price of petrol is expected to be slashed by Rs 9.28 per liter, diesel by Rs 4.02 per liter and kerosene oil by Rs 2 per liter for 15 days.

Fall in the prices of petroleum products was witnessed in international market during last week.

Government is determined to pass on benefit of reduction in price of petrol to the people.

Final approval in reduction of price of petroleum products will be accorded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Finance ministry will issue notification on reduction in price on June 15.

Iranian Ambassador, Islamia College VC discuss strengthening academic

By M.Ilyas

PESHAWAR - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Raza Amiri, and the Vice Chancellor of Islamia College Peshawar, Professor Dr. Ali Muhammad Yousafzai, met to explore avenues for enhancing literary and academic cooperation between Iran and Pakistan.

During the meeting, interests, such as teacher and student exchange programs, joint cultural and sports initiatives, and the establishment of an "Iranian Corner" at Islamia College to promote the Persian language.

In a gesture symbolizing the growing friendship, Ambassador Amiri planted a sapling on the college grounds, expressing his de-

light at the lush greenery of the campus. The meeting was also attended by several notable figures, including Ali Banafsha Khaw, Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Dr. Hussain Chakami, Director General of Khana Farhang, Islamic Republic of Iran; Arab Zaid Dawood, Registrar of Islamia College; Dr. Shabir Ahmed Kakakhel, Admin Officer; and Shabir Ahmed, Deputy Registrar.

This meeting marks a significant step towards strengthening academic and cultural ties between Iran and Pakistan, with both nations committed to future collaboration and mutual development in the education sector.

Abdullah Khan chairs meeting on preparations for World Population Day

QUETTA: Secretary Population Welfare Department, Abdullah Khan chaired meeting on preparations for the World Population Day. The Chairperson Commission for Status of Women Balochistan Ms. Fozia, UNFPA Provincial Lead Dr. Samad Saeed, Director PMCT Malik Naeem Kasi, Pathfinder team lead Abdul Wali, Dr. Ambreen, and other partners attended.

In the meeting, it was deliberated upon that for healthy Balochistan, in the month of July, awareness sessions throughout Balochistan will be conducted. In Quetta on July 11, 2024, a seminar will be conducted to create awareness about reproductive health and family planning. The World Population Day is celebrated on July 11 through out the world.

CANCELLATION OF BIDDING PROCESS

The tender for the work "CONSTRUCTION OF ZANDARA KAREEZ DISTRICT ZIARAT (PSDP 4710, 2023-24), which was published in the daily newspaper Quetta on 28.05.2024 vide PRQ No.2607/27-05-24 and uploaded on the BPPRA website vide TSE-232405435373 are hereby cancelled due to Un-Avoidable Circumstances

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, IRRIGATION DIVISION, ZIARAT.

PRQ No.2986/13-6-2024

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232406461743 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BELA IRRIGATION DIV: invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates.

S.No	Name of Work	E/Cost
1	Flood Protection Bund Retaining Wall For Goth Mir Muhammad Jamot Banbhari Uthal District Lasbela.	45,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 31,500,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years, showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-5 and above (Upto 65 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems), CE04(v) (Irrigation Only). Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 4% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 3,500 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 28 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 28 June, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: RCD Highway Uthal. Phone no: 0853920272 Fax no: 0853920272 Email: gmbadini@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION BELA AT UTHAL

PRQ No.2998/13-06-2024

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Aiming to take tax-to-GDP ratio to.....

Continued from page 1

He said, the government had introduced progressive taxes in the federal budget for upcoming fiscal year 2024-25 to impose more tax on high income earners.

He said, the country needed to move on the direction of broadening tax base to make economy sustainable. Therefore, it was imperative to bring into tax net the retailers and wholesalers to share the burden.

He said, the government had launched tax scheme for retailers and wholesalers and they were offered to registration on volunteer basis, however it was termed unsuccessful. Later, in May 2024, the minister added, FBR workforce mobilized itself, which resulted in registration of around 31,000 retailers with the scheme till date.

He said, the registration for the scheme would continue while tax would also be imposed from July 2024.

"We have no other option but to get this sector into tax net," he remarked. The minister said that Point of Sale (PoS) prize scheme would be re-launched to do away with cash transactions.

To a question about Petroleum Development Levy (PDL), the minister said it would be increased gradually and in accordance

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer Building CW, PP&H Department District Kech (Turbat) invites sealed percentage tender based on Composite schedule of rates 2023. Government of Baluchistan (G.O.B) amended upto-date from interested Government Contractors/Firm who renewal for the year 2019, for the work listed below: -

Tender Fee Rs: 1000/- 3000/- Deposited in shape of Green Challan In Head of account Earnest Money 2% and Time limit 24 Months

S.No	Name of Work	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF BASKETBALL COURT AT UNIVERSITY OF KECH FOR GIRLS TURBAT DISTRICT KECH TSE 232406460643	2,426,600

The Procurement shall be carried in accordance with Baluchistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules 2014. ELIGIBILITY: - a. Relevant Experience three years b. Turn-over of at Least last three years. c. The Contractor must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant category (C-6) and discipline and registration with tax authorities i.e (NTN and Sales tax Department) where applicable. METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: - Single stage one envelope procedure BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS: - Issuance: - Documents will be issued from the date of publication till submission date and time on production of green challan form amounting to (Rs: 1000/-) (as bidding documents charges) deposited in the head of account (C-02716) through Government Treasury District (Name of Treasury Office) in National Bank Pakistan. Submission: - Last Date of submission will be 26-06-2024 at (12.00 PM). Opening: - The Tender will be opened on 26-06-2024 at (1.0 P.M) (bids shall be opened within hour of the deadline for submission of bids) before procurement committee in the presence of contractors or their authorized representative/ agents. Place: - of issuance submission inquires and opening will be - Validity: - Validity of tender will be (60) days Address: - Executive Engineer Building CW, PP&H Department District Kech (Turbat) Phone No. 0852-413280 E-Mail address: - executiveengineer2kech@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDING CW, PP&H DEPARTMENT DISTRICT, KECH

PRQ No.2992/13-06-2024

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232406461663 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BELA IRRIGATION DIV: invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates

S.No	Name of Work	E/Cost
1	Pacca Mori for the Farmers of Kenhawari Pawan Ahora Sukkan Wayaro Uthal Tehsil Utha District Lasbela.	20,500,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 14,350,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years, showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(i) (Dams/Water Retaining Structures) . CE04(v) (Irrigation Only). Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 4% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 3,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 28 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 28 June, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: RCD Highway Uthal. Phone no: 0853920272 Fax no: 0853920272 Email: gmbadini@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION BELA AT UTHAL

PRQ No.2992/13-06-2024

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CORRIGENDUM

The Notice Inviting Tenders published in daily newspaper on 30th May, 2024 vide PRQ No. 2669 and 2681/30-05-2024 as well as uploaded on BPPRA website under TSE-232405438003, TSE-232405437953, TSE-232405438303, TSE-232405438343, TSE-232405438083, TSE-232405438283, TSE-232405438333, TSE-232405438123 and TSE-232405438363. The necessary corrections and amendments have been made in bidding documents. Furthermore, the BOQ of scheme "BT Road from Loiband to Nahara, Killa Saifullah" (TSE-232405438303) has been rectified. The interested bidders are requested to download the updated bidding documents available on BPPRA website. The timing of bids submission/Opening are hereby extended till 24th June, 2024. The other terms and conditions will remain the same.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (ROADS), CW, PP&H DEPARTMENT, DISTRICT KILLA SAIFULLAH

PRQ No.2984/13-6-2024

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TENDER NOTICE

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S.No	Name of Work	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF PACCAMORI FOR LAKHRA, HARMOOSANI, SHEH, DANG SABRA TEHSIL LAKHRA, DISTRICT LASBELA NAKAKHARRARI, CHOOR, SONMINI DAMB WINDER.	20,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 1 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 14,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years, showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Upto 25 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(i) (Dams/Water Retaining Structures), CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems), CE04(iii) (dams only), CE04(v) (Irrigation Only). Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 4% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 3,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 27 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 27 June, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: RCD Highway Uthal. Phone no: 0853920272 Fax no: 0853920272 Email: gmbadini@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION BELA AT UTHAL

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Legislators urge govt to provide maximum relief to masses

ISLAMABAD (APP): The lawmakers in the Senate Thursday urged the government to provide maximum relief to the downtrodden segments of society in the federal budget 2024-25 and called for reducing taxes and increasing allocations for the education and health sectors.

Senator Saifullah Abro while participating in the budget debate said that all issues should be resolved in Parliament, the representative and proper forum for the masses.

He held the caretaker government responsible for halting development projects in Sindh, Punjab, and other provinces.

Saifullah also stressed the need for basic health facilities in Sindh. He criticized the policy that prevents non-filers from traveling abroad.

Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Bushra Anjum Butt praised the government for presenting a balanced and comprehensive budget addressing various issues.

She called for expanding the tax net for the welfare of the masses and appreciated the significant allocations for health and education.

Bushra Butt accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of politically victimizing educational and other projects in Punjab during its tenure, harming the future of school-going children.

She supported public-private partnerships to enhance the capacity of state-owned entities and reduce the government's burden.

President of the Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali Khan, criticized the numerous taxes imposed on the masses and called for their

review to provide relief in the federal budget.

He noted that previous budgets, including this one, failed to offer any relief to the downtrodden.

He urged the government to enhance allocation for education and health sector.

Senior PPP leader Senator Taj Haider claimed that the government did not consult party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the federal budget.

He opposed the privatization of government entities, which he argued creates unemployment.

Taj Haider advocated for running inefficient institutions and promoting policies to reduce dependence on foreign loans.

He also suggested the government for providing cheap fertilizer to the farmers.



ISLAMABAD: NDMA held a seminar on 'Disaster Resilient Pakistan' at NUTECH. Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Ms. Romina Khurshid attended the opening session.

PM's aide Romina Khurshid urges collective action for climate-resilient Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, MNA Romina Khurshid Alam, on Thursday said that while Pakistan is struggling to cope with exacerbating impacts of climate change particularly heatwaves and floods, the present government is taking all-out policy measures to overcome the impacts, which have already caused irrecoverable economic losses worth billions of rupees.

While addressing a national seminar 'Disaster Resilient Pakistan' held here at the National University of Technology and organised by the National Disaster Management Authority, PM's aide noted that frequent disruptions in normal weather patterns overall last one decade has severely impacted the country's agricultural productivity, posing risk to national food water, energy securities, livelihoods of

millions, deepening hunger and malnutrition woes.

The country's geographical location, coupled with its heightened socio-economic vulnerabilities, intensifies the risks posed by the climate crisis, she highlighted.

Evidence from the various reports international financial institutions including World Bank and Asian Development Bank suggest the country would continue to experience more adverse effects of climate change in future, including more erratic weather patterns, heightened glacial melting, paced sea-level rise and unleashing of more intense weather events such as floods and droughts. These impacts not only threaten human lives and infrastructure but also exacerbate existing socio-economic disparities, the reports highlight.

Quoting from a World Bank study 'Pakistan: Country Climate and De-

velopment Report', the PPPM's aide Romina Khurshid said that between 1992 and 2021 climate- and weather-related disasters in Pakistan causes economic losses to the tune of US \$29.3 billion from damage to property, crops, and livestock, equivalent to 11.1% of the 2020 GDP.

The devastating riverine floods in 2022 alone resulted in more than \$30 billion in economic losses and damages, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive action, she added.

Apprising the event participants of the present PM Shehbaz Sharif-led government's climate risk mitigation measures, Romina Khurshid Alam said, "The present PM Shehbaz Sharif-led government is taking all-out policy initiatives and implementing various adaptations and mitigation coping measures to address the country's worsening climate-vulnerability."

Speakers discuss Gender-based violence, legislation in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers on Thursday said that the level of discrimination and marginalisation prevalent in the society was more owing to the adverse impact of culture, and the medieval mores of patriarchy that spike up gender-based violence in the contexts of sexual, psychological and physical realms with no legislation and good governance that can control it.

A Roundtable Conference on "Gender-Based Violence and it Legislation in Pakistan," was conducted by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in Collaboration with Chief Commissioner Office Islamabad, on Wednesday, and was participated by Additional Commissioner and Director Women Development Islamabad Administration, Nishaa Ishtiaq; Valeria Khan of ASF; DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Mustafa Tanveer; Nabeela Malick, chairperson INGAD; and Hafiz Ahsan

Khokhar, lawyer, a news release said.

President IPRI Dr Ambassador Raza Muhammad opened the debate by highlighting the importance that Islam has laid on gender equality, and the values that Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) preached in terms of women empowerment.

It was underscored that there are a plethora of laws to deal with any of the eventualities in terms of violence in the gender proximity, but either they lack implementation mechanisms or the will of the concerned administrations. It was pointed out that laws are free from gender contextualisation, and anyone either it is a woman or a man can be a victim of abuse and violence, and the law is equally applicable.

The roundtable delegates agreed that violence exists in our society, and cannot be denied under any assumptions. The scale of domestic violence, it was noted, is mostly under reported, and women at times shy away from standing out to be recognised.



ISLAMABAD: Zamurad Khan (Hila-i-imitaiz) addressing the audience on the occasion of Blood Donor Day at PIMS Hospital.

Secretary praises Saudia tireless efforts in serving Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs Zulfiqar Haider on Thursday praised Saudi Arabia's continuous role in serving Hajj pilgrims and urged all the Hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia to seek the mercy of Almighty Allah while offering their prayers for peaceful nation's progress.

Talking to PTV news channel, he mentioned that in light of the soaring temperatures, Saudi authorities were taking proactive measures to ensure the well-being and safety of all pilgrims, adding that by adhering to these guidelines, pilgrims can undertake the Hajj pilgrimage with confidence, devotion and comfort.

He also acknowledged the Hajj mission Pakistan's efforts to provide exceptional services to pilgrims, adding, Pakistan Hajj Mission is extending the best accommodation, transport, and medical facilities, along with three-time meals of Pakistani taste, to the intending pilgrims.

The Pakistan Hajj Mission has also arranged ambulance services to fetch and drop ailing pilgrims from their buildings to the hospital and vice versa. Additionally, elaborate arrangements have been made to shift serious patients to Saudi hospitals, he mentioned. All prospective pilgrims also reminded to remain patient under all circumstances especially when in Arafah, Muzdalifah and Mina, he stressed.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Eunji Tei Programme officer at United Nations Tourism.

Irfan urges opposition to give constructive suggestions for federal budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Parliamentary Leader Senator Irfan Siddiqui on Thursday urged opposition parties to refrain from criticism and instead suggests constructive recommendations for the federal budget 2024-25.

Participating in the budget debate in the Senate, Siddiqui said, "The opposition should give positive suggestions and recommendations for the budget 2024-25, as political statements will not benefit the people of the country." He recalled that when PML-N left the government in 2018, inflation was at 3 percent and GDP growth exceeded 6 percent. In contrast, he said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government left the country with 39 percent inflation.

He highlighted that overseas Pakistanis have sent \$34 billion in remittances, reflecting confidence in the current government.

He accused the PTI government of accumulating loans in four years equal to the amount borrowed over the previous 75 years.

He also defended PML-N's economic policies, stating that the party, led by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, had said goodbye to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said that the PTI leadership, during their tenure, approached the IMF again and signed a tough agreement with it.

Egyptian Ambassador, China Energy International Group officials meets IG Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: IG Islamabad discussed security matters with the Ambassador of Egypt and officials from China Energy International Group to ensure the protection of ambassadors and their properties. Islamabad Police will utilize all resources to guarantee their safety.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi met with the appointed Ambassador of Egypt and senior officials from China Energy International Group at the Central Police Office Islamabad.

IG Islamabad exchanged views on security matters with the Egyptian Ambassador and expressed mutual interest in enhancing both countries' police forces through collaborative training. IG Islamabad presented a memento to the

Egyptian Ambassador. Moreover, he also met with the senior official from China Energy International Group Company Limited. During the meeting, the delegation thanked the Islamabad Police for ensuring security to the Chinese company.

IG Islamabad said that



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi met with the appointed Ambassador of Egypt and senior officials from China Energy International Group at the Central Police Office Islamabad.

Meeting held to abolish Corporal Punishment in educational institutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): To abolish and completely eradicate Corporal Punishment in educational institutions, a meeting was convened on Thursday by inviting relevant stakeholders at the Pakistan Manpower Institute Building.

Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training chaired the meeting.

According to the Education Ministry, the chair explained that it was our prime responsibility to ensure protection of children rights in educational settings and that included absolute ending of Corporal punishment.

The deliberations of meeting included strategizing effective execution of corporal punishment Act and ensuring that every child was being protected and heard, it added.

The actions in this regard will include immediate awareness raising campaigns, a baseline survey for auditing the extant and frequency of corporal punishment, workshops for students, teachers, parents and community, display of a sealed compliant box in all educational institutions.

Mashhood says: Govt succeeds in bringing down inflation rate to 11pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday said that the Pakistan Muslim League (N) led coalition government had presented a balanced budget for 2024-25.

Talking to the media, Mashhood said that the completion of the stand-by agreement with the IMF was the achievement of the government and we have reduced the inflation rate from 38 to 11 percent.

He added that the country was on the verge of default when Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif came into power.

The reduction in the interest rate of State Bank of Pakistan, increase in exports and shrinkage in imports reflected the best economic policies of the government.

He added that the country's economy was moving towards right direction under the dynamic leadership of PM Shehbaz Sharif and he would succeed in overcoming the financial problems.

UNDP aims to overcome climate vulnerabilities in GB & KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented project "The Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)", in partnership with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and supported by the Green Climate Fund aims to overcome the climate vulnerabilities of the valleys of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Pakistan is home to over 13,032 glaciers spanning the Karakoram, the Hindu Kush and the Himalayan Mountain ranges, making its northern region the largest reservoir of glaciers outside of the polar regions. However, with striking changes in the climate, these glaciers and the habitats surrounding them are deeply troubled, with 10,000 glaciers reported to be receding. The project aims to protect communities from the impacts of GLOFs resulting from significant glacial melts.

In collaboration with Cirrus Pakistan, the project is rolling out awareness sessions at various universities and colleges in GB and KP, leading up to a climate-centric hackathon to incubate ideas and solutions based on local knowledge to propel climate adaptation mechanisms and programming. Applicants were asked to submit their concepts for advancing climate-conscious solutions through livelihood interventions and innovative disaster risk reduction practices, among other focus areas.

Dr. Allah Ditta, Associate Professor/Chairman, Department of Environmental Sciences of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Sheringal, Dir said, "Collective efforts in engaging our youth through such initiatives will pave the way for innovative solutions to combat the severe impacts of climate change in our region." Sumaira Gul, a student of Karakoram International University, (Chilas) Diamer Campus, discussed the need to invest in climate-centric solutions to overcome the impacts of global warming during the awareness session.

AIOU ranked 1st in quality education among Pak universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has been ranked first among 89 Pakistani universities and 7th among 2175 international universities in the recent Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 for quality education (SDG-4).

Additionally, AIOU has secured the first position among Pakistani universities for SDG 8 (Decent Employment and Economic Growth) and ranked third for SDG 10 (Reduction of Inequality) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mahmood congratulated the entire faculty and staff on this proud moment and stated that Allama Iqbal Open University is in no way inferior to the best universities in the world. "Our curriculum, laboratories, and teachers adhere to international standards, and we make every effort to achieve the benchmarks of quality education."

Digital advertising prioritizes preservation of Islamabad's natural beauty: Randhawa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday said that special attention would be given on preserving the Islamabad's natural beauty during the digital advertising in the capital.

While chairing a meeting on digital advertising project in the federal capital, he said the implementation of various tools for digital advertising is planned, including digital screens, signage, billboards and LED screens.

The meeting was attended by Administrator of the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and other senior officials, said a press release.

CDA chief said a groundbreaking step is being taken in Islamabad with the introduction of 3-D advertising, heralding a new era in the city's development and advertising strategies.

To ensure the project's success, Muhammad Ali said a technical committee has been established, and consultations with experts are ongoing.

Additionally, he said a comparative analysis of the project costs and revenues will be conducted.

Pakistan Army, Rescue 1122 extinguish forest fires in Murree

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a concerted effort to combat the raging infernos engulfing the lush forests of Murree, Pakistan Army and Rescue 1122 joint forces, deploying over ten teams to extinguish the blaze at various locations.

"We are pleased to announce that the combined efforts of armed forces and emergency responders have brought the fire under control in eighty percent of the affected area, "a rescue spokesperson told PTV.

With the remaining twenty percent of the area still under scrutiny, the firefighting teams remain vigilant, ensuring that every ember is extinguished and every corner of the forest is secured, he maintained.

He said the relentless efforts not only subdued the flames but also shielded the neighboring communities from the encroaching threat.



ISLAMABAD: Two elderly persons busy in reading newspaper about Federal Budget 2024-25.

Islamabad Police effective strategies keep crime at bay; says IGP Nasir Rizvi

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi issued a video message about the performance of the Islamabad Police over the last 50 days. In his video message, he mentioned that the Islamabad Police have reorganized many systems through hard work around the clock over the past 50 days.

With the help of Islamabad citizens, crimes have been controlled. Utilizing the information and calls from Pucar-15, crimes were significantly controlled, and criminal elements were arrested and detained.

This effort and courage are due to the public's trust, and we will show you the eradication of crime.

He further mentioned that motorcycle and vehicle patrolling by the police has been greatly enhanced. The Dolphin Force was reorganized, crime hotspots were identified, new crime prediction software was introduced, the scope and utility of Safe City Islamabad were enhanced, and a new innovation named "Cyber Security Digital Sophistication" was initiated.

This involved the vertical and horizontal sophistication of Safe City Islamabad, with the arrest of criminal elements using cameras, digital surveillance, and AI features.

IG Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi stated that a system for registering FIRs based on Pucar-15 calls was introduced. The registration of FIRs was boosted, and FIRs were also registered based on previous applications.

With the registration of FIRs, criminals will be apprehended, a criminal record will be available, and they will be duly punished.

Court extends interim bail of PTI lawyers in Manika attack case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has extended till June 15, interim bail of PTI lawyers in the case of attack on Khawar Manika. The bail before arrest pleas came up for hearing before judge Tahir Abbas Sipra of ATC Thursday. Those nominated in the case including Usman Riaz Gul advocate and other lawyers of PTI appeared in the court. The representatives of Islamabad High Court and district Bar associations remained in court to express solidarity. Adil Aziz Qazi while opening arguments said the role of man who was in court room was separate and whosoever was outside his role was separate.



Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House Islamabad.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday June 14, 2024

Budget for stabilisation

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's new budget for the next fiscal year has laid out some ambitious targets — in line with the demands of the IMF to help Pakistan strengthen its case for a larger and longer bailout so that it can anchor its newfound economic stability of the last one year. Overall, the budget seeks to boost the government's tax revenues by over 40pc to Rs12.97tr during a projected collection of Rs9.25tr during the outgoing year through significant tax measures. The average annual increase in tax collection during the last five years has averaged around 20pc and is estimated to be 30pc this year. The additional tax measures of Rs2.2tr, equal to 1.8pc of GDP, seek to broaden the scope of consumption tax, significantly increase the existing personal tax burden on salaried and non-salaried individuals, do away with tax exemptions for various sectors of the economy, bring some untaxed incomes into the net, tighten the noose around non-filers, and boost the petroleum levy by Rs20 per litre to Rs80. The remaining increase of Rs1.5tr in tax revenues is expected to come from a nominal expansion in the economy due to a targeted inflation rate of 12pc and 3.6pc GDP growth.

The additional tax measures and the proposed increase in the petroleum levy will help raise the tax-to-GDP ratio for next year to an estimated 11.5pc of the size of the economy from this year's estimated 9.6pc. Another major goal of the budget is to produce a primary surplus of 1pc of the size of the economy to hold down its fiscal deficit to 6.8pc for debt sustainability. The deficit would be further slashed to 5.9pc provided the provinces also throw up a surplus of Rs1.2tr as envisaged in the budget. While the measures announced by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb are a step in the right direction, and seek to tax 'sacred cows' such as real estate investors, stock investors, exporters, the retail supply chain, and the like, these lack any "disruptive policy changes", and represent incremental measures towards documentation of the economy. Perhaps, political conditions in the country are not conducive for the government to implement the radical measures needed for taking a major leap towards boosting the economy. However, while the tax and deficit targets are ambitious, it is not impossible to pull those off. Yet doubts remain about the authorities' ability to enforce the new measures fully and ensure greater compliance. While the government has raised the tax collection target to narrow the fiscal gap, the budget makes little effort to cut expenditure. Though, in his budget speech, the finance minister talked about 'right-sizing' the government, he did not announce any tangible policy measure in this direction. Rather the total current expenditure is estimated to surge by 21pc to Rs17.2tr, with power and other subsidies jumping to Rs1.4tr and defence expenditure by 14pc to Rs2.1tr. Likewise, the consolidated development expenditure of the centre and provinces has been spiked by over 58pc to nearly Rs3.8tr as the government hopes to kick-start moderate economic growth through its spending on large infrastructure projects, in the absence of any appetite for new investment in the private sector.

Apart from accessing the IMF funds, the other major objective of the new budget is to shore up the stability it managed in the last one year. While fiscal consolidation aimed for in the budget will likely deepen stability, sustainable economic recovery remains dependent upon foreign flows from multilateral and bilateral partners. These are needed to bolster international reserves so that they cover three months of imports. Although the authorities are hopeful that the new IMF deal will help them unlock these flows and improve the nation's credit ratings, enabling them to access commercial loans, there is little indication of any substantial boost in foreign flows from these sources in the near term. The IMF deal would be helpful in unlocking multilateral funds, but that is not enough to reassure bilateral or commercial creditors or foreign investors. Sadly, the new budget does not do much in this respect.

Shahid Kardar

A widely held perception, if not an unshakeable belief, is that the energy sector presents an existential threat to Pakistan's economy, with no likely respite if it remains fixated on its poor policies and a mode of governance managed by over 20 organisations.

A key area of concern is the high 17 per cent transmission and distribution losses of the system — with a 50pc share of the latter — compared to 3.6pc of South Korea, 5pc of the US and 8pc of China.

The key issue afflicting the distribution sector is governance in the form of collusion between Discos personnel and consumers through theft of electricity — via illegal connections, underreporting of consumption or its parking under some other head — followed by a high level of technical losses, owing to inadequate investment in the transmission and distribution networks and grid infrastructure.

Resultantly, the majority of Discos, established with literally no equity base, are not finan-

cially solvent and are unable to upgrade their infrastructure, expand capacity and manage the distribution systems to ensure reliable electricity supply. The extent of their insolvency has been adding to the debt profile of the government, which is reflected as 'circular debt'.

To address the issues of the Discos, the news making the rounds is that the government is considering, yet again, privatising them as a way of improving service delivery and operational efficiencies and checking their financial haemorrhaging. This article argues that there are enough reasons to be less sanguine about the ability of the private sector and competition to provide affordable electricity to all.

To begin with, clarity is required on what is being privatised. For instance, will the wire and pole infrastructure, a monopoly, be transferred? If not, then how is competition to be induced? Only increased competition can have a beneficial impact through better customer services and lower prices, say, by commissioning a system of several small

entities operating in the same area sharing this network of infrastructure.

Furthermore, will we continue to maintain a policy of uniform tariffs for all areas of the country? How will the element of cross-subsidies to some categories of consumers be handled, because the private operator is more than likely to target profitable, higher-paying consumers? Will tariff revisions be allowed in a timely manner — a politically sensitive issue? Will the private operator be empowered to a) decide who to retain on the payroll; and b) penalise or eventually disconnect government agencies for not paying their bills by the due date? Will continued active support be available from law-enforcement agencies to prevent illegal connections, ie, the use of kundas?

More importantly, how can competition be introduced at the retail end with performance base contracts without competition anywhere in the rest of the supply chain, if only government agencies run primary fuel markets and publicly owned transmission and distribution com-

panies are free to determine wheeling charges as carriage for the wire and pole infrastructure that they'll be mandated to manage?

Absolute freedom to the latter to fix prices to fully cover all inefficiencies of the public sector will end up making the privatisation of services, metering (say, through prepaid smart meters) and billing a non-starter. And with more than 70pc of the electricity paid by consumers at the stage of generation, this governance structure is more likely to result in sub-optimal outcomes in technical and economic efficiencies. It may even render the operations of private distribution financially unviable.

Global experience suggests that the most successful privatisation of distribution in developing countries was in middle-income countries with stable governments, policy predictability, skilled personnel managing the system independently and political commitment to tackle the complications posed by the regime of subsidised tariffs. The latter is important because the global experience of in-

ducing competition at the retail level is that it results in greater convergence in the cost of supply and tariffs of different consumer categories, which in turn implies an increase in tariffs of domestic and agricultural consumers and reduction in the element of cross-subsidies, with political implications. Moreover, privatisation was successful only in selected areas and not the entire distribution network.

For us, a major challenge will be the quality of regulatory oversight and inter-agency coordination — because of multiple agencies operating in the sector and the arbitrary division of powers — for safeguarding public interest and smooth service delivery and economic and social regulation.

Our regulatory regime is highly politicised. There are governmental interventions, with opportunities for employment provided to retiring well-connected/ 'loyal' bureaucrats — most of whom have limited technical and market expertise — playing to the gallery. It is not managed by proficient professionals fo-

cusing on service standards, efficiency and economic considerations. And when even an agency like Nepra has supposedly been made autonomous, the powers granted to it by legislation have been taken away by the executive, making it ineffectual and functioning purely as a subordinate agency, if not a rubber-stamping entity, to the Ministry of Water and Power. This shows the distaste of our political leadership for any kind of institutional autonomy.

Finally, since electricity is a concurrent subject under the Constitution, we need to ensure that there is a consensus over the institutional arrangements, especially to avoid regulatory overlapping, confusion and a conflict-ridden environment for settling disputes. To conclude, one is left wondering if these aspects are getting adequate attention in the plans to privatise Discos. It will be a massive challenge to achieve the lofty objectives being associated with privatisation without clarity on how these critical issues will be attended to. -- Courtesy Dawn

People vs the system

Khurram Husain

Much will be written about the budget's specifics, but there is something else on my mind this year. This budget marks nearly a quarter century of back-to-back, virtually nonstop IMF programmes that Pakistan has been on. This means for 25, or a quarter of a century now, we have had a near continuous run of austerity as national economic policy, with the exception of three brief spurts of short-lived growth in between. And even those were fuelled by external, debt-creating inflows.

We could take this story further back perhaps. But the year 2000 forms a good cut-off point because it also saw the implementation of a tough IMF Stand-by Arrangement, the same as the one today, following months of a troubled programme. The outlines of that programme, as well as each one that followed, were the same. So the wheel has turned full circle from that point — a short and tough stand-by, followed by a longer and

more sustained Extended Fund Facility, and today, we stand in the same moment we were in the summer of 2001.

A quarter of a century of back-to-back IMF programmes and their attendant austerity measures have left the country deeply scarred. Twenty-five budgets have come and gone between then and now. Yet like then, the weight of our external debt, the narrowness and rigidity of the state's revenue base, its ailing and dilapidated power system, burgeoning population of barely literate and poorly nourished youth, and deteriorating social indicators have all taken a toll.

Today, economic policy in Pakistan consists of scrambling to meet IMF targets to pass the next review. All else is fluff.

The only thing that matters in the budget is things like the targets on the primary deficit, revenues, size of the PSDP, the external financing assumption in the resource envelope and perhaps a glance through the various items from where the expendi-

ture restraint will be obtained. There is not now, nor has there been in the past 25 years, any budget that sought to radically change anything.

The results are there to see in the Economic Survey released earlier this week. Take a quick glance at the social indicators. Here is what you will find.

In the 1980s, there were 1,084 people per primary school in Pakistan. Today, that figure has risen to 1,500. Likewise for secondary schools. There were 14,161 people per middle school in the 1980s, but by now, that figure has crossed 50,000. And the picture is even more dismal for high schools. In the 1980s, there were 17,833 people per high school in the 1980s, but this figure has risen to 68,413.

This is one example, and a crude measure because it is looking at just the number of schools per population. For a fuller picture, one would obviously have to look at the number of primary schools available for the number of primary school-

going age children, and then look at how these are distributed across the country to measure access, and then assess quality of education being imparted. None of those figures are available in the Economic Survey sadly.

But for now, a crude picture will do because the larger point remains the same. The number of children that need to be served with a primary and secondary education has risen, but the ability of the country's educational system to serve this need has fallen. Half a century later, the country is not only struggling to carry its debt burden and raise the resources required to pay for its government, it is also struggling to educate its next generation and equip them with the most basic skills required to be productive citizens of a modernising country.

The situation is no different in the health sector. In the 1980s, for example, there were 147,926 people per hospital in the country. By 2023, that figure had risen to 188,000.

Now consider this. These figures should be

moving in the opposite direction. We should be talking about the rate of improvement not being good enough in the social indicators. Instead, we are seeing them deteriorate, year after year, decade after decade.

This endless cycle of austerity followed by credit-induced boom followed by austerity has left a terrible legacy. The worst thing it has done is to pit the people against the system. Every time the system booms, the rich reap the benefits. Every time it busts, and austerity sets in, the people are made to bear the costs. This budget is no different. Neither is the track record of stabilisation that the government is busy congratulating itself over. It is just one more repetition of this cycle.

The system consists of the alliance of state and capital upon which our larger social order rests. It underpins stability and provides the livelihoods that sustain everyone here. But it is predatory in nature, curbs opportunities outside of a small elite group, and survives by

appropriating the incomes that ought to have flowed to the poor.

The whole system is animated by a massive funneling of wealth from the poor to the rich. This flow continues during periods of boom as well as austerity. And the taxation system is designed to facilitate this flow, while much of the property rights regime in the country is designed to facilitate the appropriation of wealth from the poor and funnel it to the rich.

We are now in the third or fourth such cycle since the year 2000. It is hard to be precise because the period is punctuated by three episodes of artificial, credit-induced growth spurts, whose end resulted in a sudden shock to the system, the costs of which fell almost entirely on the poor. The finance minister spoke of difficult decisions that need to be made to rectify the deficits plaguing the system. For the real difficult decisions, talk to the poor and the lower middle classes and find out how they have coped with the record-high inflation of the past three years.

Lionised in London

F.S. Aijazuddin

Whoever designed Istanbul airport must have been inspired by the phrase: 'Walk that extra mile'. Passengers have to walk over endless travelers until they reach the immigration counters. Turkey admits only the fittest.

The extra exercise would have been less exacting, had one not spent 10 days treading the unyielding pavements of London. Fortunately, like the food there, the weather has changed. Gone the sooty smog of childhood, the Spartan meals, the lockdown on Sundays, the after-effects even into the mid-1950s of wartime rationing.

Today's London is a vast epicurean table, with cuisine from every kitchen: Greek, Ethiopian, Indonesian, even Mexican chipotles. Reverse colonialism has conquered Britain. The Vikings brought power; the Romans civics and law; the colonies brought curries.

Khushwant Singh would have been delighted to learn that the final day of his KSLF 2024 ended in Cambridge. He loved Britain as only a foreigner can — with a recurring, unrequited, one-sided passion.

A speaker in Cambridge (a Brit-Pak professor of English at Bristol University) introduced her unforgiving diatribe against her father. It was patrician in print. Her father had been a professor of medicine at Lahore's premier medical college. He was insensitive to a fault.

Candid in another way was Lord Simon of Salford, Master of Christ's College. He had retired after over 40 years of distinguished service in the Foreign & Commonwealth Relations Office. He spoke openly about Brexit and sub-continental politics.

One of the oldest attendees at KSLF Cambridge was the indefatigable

nonagenarian Sir Nicholas Barrington, the former ambassador to Pakistan (1987-1994). Still active, he distributed freely his latest analysis on Afghanistan.

Cambridge University, like almost all British educational institutions now, is an academic campus of Chinatown. Once, seeing a foreign face in the UK was a rarity. Now, a British profile is hard to come by.

Interestingly, the Chinese tourists in Cambridge and in London were not geographics fulfilling the dream of a lifetime but young Sino-yuppies, tramping confidently over their British domain like the Roman legions did after their conquest of Britain in 55 BCE. Chinese restaurants in London are cheap, cheerful, and a chopstick's length away from every home.

Ethnicity is no longer a novelty, as the In-dian craft shops reeking of incense once were. It is part of British multicultural identity.

Certainly the most startling evidence of this fusion could be seen in the currently popular musical *The Book of Mormon*. However much one had heard of its shocking profanity, nothing prepared one for the actual performance. The theme seemed innocuous enough — the plight of white Mormon missionaries sent to convert black natives in Uganda.

The loud lyrics and the uninhibited choreography though oscillated between heresy (for Mormons), blasphemy (for monotheists), and racial racism (for those of any colour). Judging from the cheers that greeted every solo, some in the audience had seen the show before. Obviously they craved more profanity.

The antidote to this unvarnished cultural onslaught lay in the calming exhibition on Ranjit Singh:

Sikh, Warrior, King, on display until October at the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square. The Wallace collection is a private benefaction by the Hertford family, comprising "fine and decorative arts from the 15th to the 19th centuries with important holdings of French 18th-century paintings, furniture, arms and armour, and Old Master paintings".

Appropriately, the Sikh exhibition is derived from the private collection of a modern Sikh benefactor Davinder Toor. He has applied his wealth to amassing an enviable tosha-khana of rare relics and precious objects associated with the Sikh Raj during 19th-century Punjab. The exhibition is a tour de force of scholarship, design and imaginative display. For those who yearned for choices, there was an offer of English tea and sandwiches on one floor and lassi and nimbupani a floor below.

Many of the exhibits on display had been filched by the East India Company following the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. These include Ranjit Singh's golden throne. In a moment of imperial hubris, Lord Dalhousie commissioned a copy in wood for himself to sit in, enthroned in solitary splendour in his English manor. Also on show are a rarely seen ornate belt studded with large emeralds from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's fabled treasury. The East India Company surrendered them to Queen Victoria after she remarked how much better they would look in her collection. An associated lecture on 19th-century paintings by the Hungarian artist August Schoeffel in the Princess Bamba collection in Lahore Fort brought Lahore and London together. The Lion of the Punjab is at last being lionised in London. -- Courtesy Dawn

Shahzad Sharjeel

As was expected, the BJP, or should one say, Narendra Modi, has won the general election in India. What has proven wrong are assertions like 'abki baar, char sau paar', which alluded to the BJP's aspiration to win more than 400 seats in the 543-strong Lok Sabha. Even another interpretation that it meant the BJP would cross that mark with the respective victories of its allied parties proved incorrect. Shashi Tharoor's response to the BJP slogan, 'abki bar Tihar', an allusion to the infamously tough prison in India, an equivalent of Mach jail on this side of the border, was more a case of wishful thinking than a rallying call and would remain so.

The BJP's opponents in south India criticise it for being a Hindi-belt party only. The election results have defied this label somewhat, as the BJP has expanded the spread of its constituencies in the south, if not the total number of seats, from 2019. However, Indian national politics is generally conducted in Hindi/Sanskrit idiom, ie, 'Bharat jodo' and 'Nyay yatra' of Rahul Gandhi and 'Hindu rashtra' to 'Ram raj' of the Sangh Parivar.

That our politics is stagnant is axiomatic, but the staleness of political slogans, particularly during the rough and tumble of electioneering, points to a lack of creativity and acumen. Mainstream political parties in Pakistan are not the only culprits; pressure groups and non-electoral entities are equally unimaginative when it comes to capturing and galvanising public aspirations.

Slogans that gained currency across the political divide soon became jaded with overuse and

Slog sloganeers

failure to build upon the narrative. These include a not-so-veiled reference to the military's influence in every sphere of life, in which the uniform is cited to explain away every conceivable situation, except perhaps for 'andey mein jo zardi hai...' 'Zardi' means yolk. Thank goodness for this, as the proverbial egg is on all our faces.

Slurs like 'chor', 'ghadar', 'Dirty Harry', 'diesel', 'youthey', insinuating corruption, treason, conspiracy, smuggling, and affiliation with the youth-driven PTI, respectively, vitiate the atmosphere aplenty but do not reflect any aspiration or even a call to action by their proponents. 'Software update' and 'half-fry', 'full-fry' euphemisms for security agencies' extrajudicial measures can only be shredded at.

Unlike the Shuhb Laxmi and Ladi Behna welfare schemes across the border, the title of our safety net flagship, Benazir Income Support Programme, does little more than commemorate her services to the country. Branding of similar social safety net schemes introduced subsequently also fails to inspire a sense of inclusion.

Like the 1990s, which saw a rise in party songs as an important part of branding, the building up of the PTI and dharna culture, especially from 2013 onwards, saw the rise of DJs, drone coverage, and all-night jamming sessions at political rallies. Shipping containers' reputation as roadblocks was salvaged as they began to be used as a home away from home for the dharna leadership, vanity vans of sorts for the vain. Meanwhile, the multitudes had to face the elements under the sky, albeit accompanied by the carefully

curated beats and songs of Esakhelvi who lent his creative genius to PTI campaigns but eventually got as disillusioned as the DJ who reportedly got short changed over the 'concert fees'.

Sindh continues to live under the Elvis fan club delusion. The only innovation since 'zinda hai Bhutto' has been a proclivity to add 'shabeeh' as a prefix or suffix to every party leader's name. Such is the fervour in this regard that leaders with healthy vital signs are sometimes called martyrs.

Balochistan continues to aspire to 'sahil, wasail par haq' (right over land and maritime resources), KP yearns for 'akhpal khauri, akhpal ikhtiar' (our soil, our choice). Punjab has the dubious honour of inventing damp squibs like 'vote ko izzat do' and parochial wake-up calls like 'jaag Punjab jaag.' While our countrymen in Gilgit-Baltistan struggle for constitutional rights, their current rallying call, 'wheat subsidy,' is uninspiring and lacking in ambition. The Serai ki belt is the most focused, and spot-on, with its singular cry for 'waseeb' (sociopolitical living space). The slogan comprehensively relays the region's aspirations.

Now that the electoral frenzy in India has peaked, does one expect the political and communal temperature to go down? Will the strain in the BJP-RSS marriage result in less froth and fire aimed both at home and abroad, or should one brace for double trouble? It remains to be seen what becomes of the 'lath lahrao Modi' (wave the staff, Modi) brigade now that the spouses are considering a separation, if not an outright divorce. -- Courtesy Dawn

Kundi offers minorities to hold festivals in Governor House

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said the minorities have played a pivotal role in enhancing the country's prestige and image at national and international level and the nation is proud of the role of those deployed at higher posts from this segment.

Talking to minority groups of different religions including Christians, Hindus, Parsi, Sikh and others here, the Governor said the religious festivals of the minorities will be held at Governor's House.

On the occasion, Secretary Finance and Coordination PPP, Farzand Ali Wazir, heads of the delegations including Bishop Humphry Sarfaraz Peter, Church of Pakistan Pushup Ernest Jacob, Haunch Hashmat, Chairman Assembly of God Church Masih Pastor,

PPP president Naseeb Chan, Dr Sawera Parkash, General Secretary Yaisr Bahatti and others were present.

The Governor said that Pakistan Peoples Party accorded prime priority to the welfare of the minorities whether it was the increase in Senate seats or protection of rights of the minorities at assembly floor.

He said that he was thankful to his party for imposing confidence in his services adding that he would try his best to come up to the expectations of his party leadership. "I am not the Governor from PPP but from all the parties of the province", he said.

"I am well aware of the problems faced by the minority segments of the society in the past but will try my best to compensate for those shortcomings".

The Governor further said that he was thankful



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in a group photo with representative delegation of minorities who called on him at Governor House.

HITEC University showcases innovative student projects

WAH CANTT (APP): HITEC (Heavy Industries Taxila Education City) University held its 10th Open House on Thursday, showcasing the impressive final-year projects of students from various engineering disciplines.

The event was graced by the presence of the Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, the Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission.

The Open House and Job Fair featured a total of 150 Final Year Design Projects (FYDPs) across different engineering fields.

This included 44 projects from the Mechanical Engineering department, covering areas such as robotics, defense systems, human aid systems and solar technology.

The Electrical Engineering department presented 18 projects focused on the efficient integration of renewable energy into power systems.

The Software Engineering and Computer Science departments exhibited 64 projects emphasizing robotics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, surveillance systems and human aid systems.

The Civil Engineering department showcased 14 projects related to construction technologies and the Computer Engineering department presented 10 projects centered on artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Mayor Karachi visits different areas of Manghopir Town

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab visited different areas of Manghopir Town here on Thursday.

Municipal Corporation Chairman Haji Nawab Ali Brohi, local leaders and concerned officers were also present on this occasion.

The Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab went to the shrine of Haji Sakhi Sultan and laid a chادر on his shrine and recited Fateha.

Speaking about the arrangements regarding the Urs of Haji Sakhi Sultan, the Mayor Karachi said that all local government facilities will be provided on the occasion of Urs.

The people have special devotion to the dargah of Haji Sakhi Sultan and we are serving the saints, elders and Sufiyas whose blessings are for the people and thousands of devotees visit Haji Sakhi Sultan's shrine on the occasion of Urs, he said.

He also discussed with the administration regarding alligators pond and their feed.

He also visited different areas of Manghopir and said that the local government problems of the area will be solved on priority basis. Manghopir is the hub of PPP Jiyalas and government of Pakistan People's Party.



RAWALPINDI: A large number of people purchasing tickets at Faizabad Bus Stand to travel to their hometowns to celebrate Eid ul Azha with their loved ones.

to the Party for honoring him with governorship of the province and headship of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Today, he said the minority delegations which came to the Governor House consisted of all the political parties and not only from PPP.

The Governor maintained that half of the national cricket team comprised of players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but sadly our historical cricket ground, Arbab Niaz Stadium was yet to be completed despite passage of 10 years. There is no First-Class Cricket in the province for a long time, he added.

Kundi further assured the delegations that he would not let down the minorities and a special quota for them would be created in educational institutions adding that all other missing privileges would be provided to them.

Talking to a group of journalists, Sargala said that billion tree projects were successfully implemented in the region planting millions of tree at different forest enclosures throughout the three division of the region and the results will be witnessed within few years with the growth of

4 MC employees die of electric shock at Dijkot disposal station

FAISALABAD (APP): Four officials of Municipal Committee Dijkot were killed and two others including a rescue official sustained injuries when they suffered fatal electric shock while repairing a water pump in a well of disposal station on Thursday. According to Rescue-1122, five officials of the Municipal Committee Dijkot were repairing an electric water pump at a disposal station near the graveyard of Chak No 263-RB when they received an electric shock.

As a result, four officials were killed on-the-spot. They included Shafique (35), Asgar (40), an electrician; Haji Burhan (40) and Arsalan (36). Another official Hamid and a rescue official Nasir also suffered electric shock and they were shifted to rural health centre and civil hospital, respectively in a critical condition.

DC visits Nullah Lai to inspect dredging work

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, Hassan Waqar Cheema here on Thursday visited Nullah Lai and inspected the ongoing dredging and desilting work. The DC also visited other city areas and reviewed the cleanliness work of different major nullahs of the city. The ongoing dredging and desilting work of Nullah Lai should be completed before the start of monsoon rains, the DC said adding that special attention should be given to cleaning all main nullahs particularly vulnerable points near low-lying areas.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif signing the Budget 2024-25 documents.

AJK govt committed to take climate change mitigation measures: Forest minister

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Minister for Forest Muhammad Akmal Sargala on Thursday said Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government intends to initiate number of reforestation measures including green Pakistan program (GPP) and protection of forests to mitigate climate change effects.

Talking to a group of journalists, Sargala said that billion tree projects were successfully implemented in the region planting millions of tree at different forest enclosures throughout the three division of the region and the results will be witnessed within few years with the growth of newly planted trees.

"GPP will be 100 percent funded by the federal government while in other provinces, 50 percent funds would be provided by the provincial governments," he disclosed adding that the initiative would be started during the new fiscal year.

He said the government was taking strict measures for the protection and conservation of forests besides growing new forests including enforcement of ban on cutting of trees in letter and spirit while measures have been taken to overcome the damages being caused by wild fire and other activities.

"The forest lands illegally occupied by groups and people in different areas had been cleared by the department and wood smuggling had been curtailed on a reasonable scale," he claimed.

He said rising heat was one of the causes of wild fire however, in some areas, miscreants were involved in fire incidents and a number of criminal cases had been registered against them.

He disclosed that 875 acre forests had been affected by the wild fire in the Mirpur division however, he informed that fire was successfully controlled by the help of local people.

Minister says: Malakand people to soon have modern healthcare facilities

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Works and Communication (C&W), Shakil Ahmad and Health Minister, Sayyed Qasim Ali Shah have said that steps on urgent basis were needed to provide modern healthcare facilities to the people of Malakand.

The prime focus of the incumbent KP government was to ensure provision of best possible medical cover to the people at their doorstep.

The ministers said this during a meeting held to review health facilities in Malakand district on Thursday. The meeting was also attended by the MPA Gul Ibrahim, Secretary Health Department Mehmood Aslam, DG Health, DHO Malakand, MS Hospital and relevant officials.

Minister C&W said there was a need to upgrade rural health centers (RHCs), basic health units (BHUs) and address the issue of staff shortage at hospitals besides equipping the health facilities with modern medical machinery to ensure proper medical facilities to the people of Malakand.



KARACHI: Sindh Police Inspector General (IG), Ghulam Nabi Memon presides over a high-level meeting, at CPO Headquarters in Karachi.

Maryam Aurangzeb greets PM for presenting balanced federal budget

LAHORE (APP): Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb on Thursday congratulated Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif for presenting a balanced federal budget 2024-25.

She praised PM Shahbaz Sharif for saving Pakistan from default through continuous hard work and now stabilising the economy for the welfare of common man.

In a statement, senior minister Maryam Aurangzeb said that for the betterment of economy, the entire nation, every sector of life, as well as the media fraternity, would have to come together. She said that tough decisions had brought economic stability to the country and the budget would give a new direction to the economy.

She praised that a significant relief in salaries and pensions would help to counter inflation.

Maryam Aurangzeb emphasised that those who led the country to the brink of default and drowned the people in inflation should be ashamed of criticising the federal budget.

195 cops injured in encounters with criminals this year

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said on Thursday that 195 police personnel were injured in encounters with robbers, drug-dealers and criminals this year until now, and the department is providing all possible assistance for their treatment and speedy recovery.

He said that the scope of the Safe Cities Projects is being extended to all districts of Punjab. So far, more than 20,000 promotions have been given across various police cadres, and the process continues.

He added that this year, Rs. 3.5 billion will be spent for welfare of the force, and a huge amount will be spent on development projects and safe cities. According to details, a ceremony was held at the Central Police Office to encourage the police teams who worked outstandingly in suppressing criminals involved in kidnapping for ransom, blind murder, and other serious crimes.

Punjab govt presents public friendly budget: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) and Law Sohaib Ahmed Bharth has said that the Punjab government has given public friendly budget with an inimitable relief to low-income citizens of the province in all sectors.

In a statement, he termed this budget as people centric which is the aim of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The minimum wage of the worker has been increased from thirty-two thousand to thirty-seven thousand which will give a relief to workers. He added the government has taken decisions only to uplift the economy of the country.

Sohaib Ahmad Bharth further said that it has been the top priority of the Chief Minister Punjab to provide maximum relief to the citizens and it is reflected in the provincial budget. The Punjab province is now on the track of unshakable progress and there will be less inflation in days to come, he remarked. The country is coming out of economic crisis which is a good omen, he added. He disclosed that a sufficient budget has been earmarked for road sectors and for the upgradation of existing infrastructure of the province.

Five expressways, enhancing connectivity between many districts of the Punjab, would be constructed for which budget has been allocated.

The minister added that as many as 842 billion has been allocated for development sector which is marvelous in the history of Punjab as in previous year it was 655 billion. Around 77 initiatives of the CM Punjab were also included in the budget, and these would be implemented and would be completed within one year. He added that 296 billion has been allocated for repair and rehabilitation of roads, covering an area of 2,380 Kilometers. Moreover, 135 billion has also been kept for 482 road sector schemes. He said that 528 schemes, dumped in Planning & Development, would be started again with an amount of 58 billion. He further said that 31 billion has been allocated for Muzaffargarh Alipur.



FAISALABAD: Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli, Vice Chancellor (VC) Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) viewing displayed paintings and art work displayed during the Art and Design exhibition (Degree Show 2024) at Government College Women University Faisalabad.

Efforts to deal with adverse effects of climate change: CM's aide

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Advisor to KP CM on Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan has said that the adverse effects of climate change are a big threat to the society and the provincial government is making all possible effort to deal with these challenges.

He expressed these views while addressing a climate change related seminar titled 'Faith Communities Together for Climate Justice' here at the University of Peshawar on Thursday.

The seminar was organized under the auspices of the Department of Criminology in collaboration with Outreach Assistance to Humanity wherein the Advisor to KP CM on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif was chief guest.

The advisor to KP CM said that the previous PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had initiated Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation Project while its central government had launched 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation project which were globally recognized due to their effectiveness.

He said that for water conservation several small dams are being constructed in the province, while steps are also being taken to protect forests. He said that students can play an active role in the achievement of this national goal and they will actively participate in plantation campaigns.

The Advisor to Chief Minister said that 64 percent of the country's population consists of youth and the provincial government is beginning the Ehsaas Rozgar scheme.



LAHORE: Citizens donate blood at Ganga Ram Hospital on the occasion of World Blood Donation Day in the provincial capital.

Rs 9.5b for CM Roshan Gharana, Rs 80b for CM District SDGs allocated

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has allocated Rs 9.5 billion for Chief Minister Roshan Gharana Programme and Rs 80 billion for Chief Minister District SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) during financial year 2024-24.

Provincial Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman disclosed this in his budget speech in the Punjab Assembly session here on Thursday. He explained that under the CM Roshan Gharana Programme, relief would be provided to the people in the electricity bills and in the first phase, complete solar system would be provided to domestic consumers using up to 100 units of electricity per month. He said the government was also providing houses to the poor under 'Apna Ghar, Apni Chhat'. Mian Mujtaba added that development programmes at district level would be completed under the Chief Minister District SDGs Programme worth Rs 80 billion during the next FY.

In his budget speech, he said that Rs 296 billion would be spent on the construction and rehabilitation of 2,380 kilometers roads across the province, while old and dilapidated roads would be rehabilitated through 483 schemes with a total cost of Rs 135 billion; Undergraduate Scholarship Programme and Chief Minister's Skilled.

World's largest solar power project to be launched in Sindh: Energy Minister

KARACHI (APP): The provincial Energy department and Go Energy Pvt Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for laying off 500 Megawatts floating solar energy project on Keenjhar Lake in Thatta district.

The MoU signing ceremony was held here at a local hotel on Thursday, which was attended by Sindh Minister for Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah. Secretary Energy Mossadiq Ahmed Khan, CEO-STDC Salim Shaikh, CEO-Go Green Amar Ali Talat and Director K-Electric Haris Siddiqui were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the energy minister said that the Go

Energy Pvt Limited was working on the project with the cooperation of Sindh Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) and Irrigation Department Sindh. This project is Pakistan's first and World's largest solar power project, Shah added.

He said the K-Electric will lay 60 kilometer long 220 KV transmission line from STDC Keenjhar Lake Power Project to K-Electric Grid Station Dhabeji, Karachi.

Shah said that K-Electric was the off-taker of the 500 MW floating power project for which K-Electric had provided Letter of Intent (LOI) and Energy Department also provided a Letter of Intent (LOI).



RAWALPINDI: A worker busy in preparing new grills to be used for Barbecue ahead of Eid ul Ahza at his workplace, Pirwadhai.

FBR to relaunch POS scheme soon: Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana informed on Thursday that the board would soon relaunch the Point of Sale (POS) prize scheme.

Speaking at the post-budget press conference, he said that the scheme was previously closed due to some deceiving activities. The chairman added that currently, over Rs. 1 billion is available in the POS account.

It is worth mentioning that, the first computerized draw of the POS Prize Scheme was held on Saturday, 15th January 2022 at FBR Head Quarters (HQs), Islamabad.

Governor directs SNGPL authorities to resolve issue of gas shortage

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi has directed the authorities of the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) to address problems of people relating to gas shortage and supply.

The Governor was talking to General Manager SNGPL, Waqas Ullah Shinwari who called on him

at Governor House here Thursday. He expressed concern over the non-availability of gas to the consumers in summer and directed the authorities to address the issue.

He also discussed establishment of SNGPL Regional Office in D I Khan and extension of gas provision network and gas supply to consumers in D I Khan.

Govt allocates Rs 104m for development schemes of HR Division under PSDP 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has allocated a sum of Rs. 104 million for eight ongoing development schemes of Human Rights (HR) Division under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2024-25.

According to budgetary documents, an amount of Rs. 20 million has been allocated for the ongoing project, "Establishment of Project Planning and Monitoring Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR). Around Rs 14 million

have been earmarked for the "Establishment of Sub-Office of Human Rights in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa".

For "Institutional Strengthening of MoHR (Revised)", an amount of Rs 14,324 million has been allocated. Similarly, an amount of Rs 13,581 million has been set aside for the ongoing project of "Human Rights Coordination and Monitoring Unit for National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF)".



HYDERABAD: Vendors displaying the sacrificial animals to attract the customers at Cattle Market in connection with upcoming Eidul Ahza.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on digitisation of the Federal Board of Revenue.

PM vows to launch crackdown against tax evaders, facilitators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday vowed to launch a crackdown against the tax evaders and their facilitators saying that he would leave no stone unturned to eliminate them.

He was chairing a high level meeting at the PM House to discuss tax reforms, digitization of the economy and measures to boost revenues.

Emphasizing the importance of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the prime minister said the Board played an important role in running the economic wheel and pledged to provide all necessary resources for its human resource development and

digitization. He said during the budget preparations, he had issued clear directives to bring more people in the tax net and that the elites should be made to pay their due taxes.

He said minimum taxes were imposed on the middle and lower classes in the recent budget.

He said decreasing the tax rate and expanding the tax net was the government's top priority, which was already working to ensure complete digitization of the tax system and enhance the capacity building of the workforce.

The prime minister also stressed the need of documenting the economy

and increasing the tax collection through digital means. He directed the authorities to take a swift action to bring more people in the tax net.

The representatives of international firm McKinsey and Karandaaz briefed the prime minister about the past four weeks' progress with respect to increasing the revenues and digitization of the FBR.

Besides, short and medium term plans were also presented in the meeting regarding increasing the tax revenues.

The meeting was further informed that increasing the country's income by billions of rupees in terms of taxes was possible only after the

full implementation of the current policies in the country.

It was told that the digitization and automation of the value chain of economy would help increase the revenues, besides its documentation.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema and Muhammad Aurangzeb, ministers of state Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Ali Pervaiz Malik, Coordinator to the PM Rana Ehsaan Afzal, former finance minister Dr Shamsad Akhtar, Dr Ikrum ul Haq, Salman Ahmed, FBR chairman, representatives of McKinsey and Karandaaz, and relevant high officials attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation from US Treasury Department meets Minister for Power Awaits Leghari in the leadership of Assistant Secretary of Treasury Brent Neiman.

Pak total liquid foreign reserves recorded as \$14.38 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 14,383.8 million as of June 07, 2024 while the reserves held by the central bank recorded as \$ 9,103.3 million. The foreign reserves held by the central bank decreased by \$ 6 million to \$ 9,103.3 million during the week ended on June 07, 2024, a statement issued here on Thursday by SBP informed adding that net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded as \$ 5,280.5 million. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on May 31, 2024, were \$ 14,215.6 million. Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 9,109.5 million while \$ 5,106.1 million were held by commercial banks.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.240,700 on Thursday against its sale at Rs. 241,900 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 1,029 to Rs.206,361 from Rs.207,390 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.189,165 from Rs. 190,108, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

MNA hails budget as comprehensive, public friendly

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly (MNA) Dr Shaista Khan Thursday termed the budget 2024-25 a balanced budget which reflects Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's concern for downtrodden people of the country where salaried class' rights were being protected.

Talking to a PTV news channel, she said the working class as well as pensioners had been given a reasonable raise in their wages, which was an appreciable measure.

Unlike the previous budgets this government's budget will reduce the gap between the rich and the poor segments of society,

Business community assured resolution of problems, creating favourable environment

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary (CS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary here on Thursday assured that problems faced by business community would be resolved and a business friendly environment would be created. He was talking to a delegation of industrialists and businessmen from the Mohmand Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The delegation informed CS about their issues Mohmand Economic Zone. He listened to the concerns of businessmen

and assured the delegation that government would resolve the challenges faced by business community. Recognizing their vital contribution to economy, he emphasized government's dedication to create a favorable business environment particularly for the merged districts.

PHA to provide landscaping service to citizens in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): The Parks & Horticulture Authority (PHA) has decided to provide landscaping and lawn designing services to citizens in Faisalabad.

Giving some details here on Thursday, Director General (DG) PHA Abdul Qadir Shah said that special teams were constituted at town level which would provide complete guidance to people for tree plantation and development of the green areas. He said that the PHA officials would also

PEC advisor visits SU to discuss development initiatives

HYDERABAD (APP): Advisor to the chairman Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and convener of the Pakistan Development Committee (PDC) Engr. Mir Masood Rashid visited the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Sindh Jamshoro to discuss initiatives related to the development framework, policies and solutions aimed at advancing the country's status by achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs).

According to the details provided by the Dean faculty of Engineering & Technology (FET), University of Sindh Professor Dr Lachman Das Dhameja, the efforts will align with the regulatory guidelines of Pakistan Engineering Council and the government policies approved by the cabinet. During his visit, he also presented a cheque of Rs 122,000 to support Final Year Projects funded by PEC.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi talks to representative delegation Peoples Traders Association, who called on him at Governor House.

Murtaza bids farewell to PAAPAM, joins ICCI as SG

LAHORE (APP): Ghulam Murtaza, a distinguished veteran in trade organizations transitioned from his role at PAAPAM to become the Secretary-General of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). GM's significant and far-reaching contributions to Pakistan's engineering manufacturing and auto parts industry were celebrated during a grand dinner in Lahore, where PAAPAM recognized its exceptional service to the engineering community.

PAAPAM's seasoned leader and Acting Chairman, Mumshad Ali, Acting Senior Vice Chairman, Tufique Sherwani, and Former Chairmen, Usman Aslam Malik and Rehman Riaz commended GM's tenure, appreciated his services and extended their best wishes for his continued success in his new position. A large assembly of PAAPAM's senior and executive members, conveners of the standing committees, and general body members gathered in Lahore to participate in the dinner.

Reform plan chalked out to remove the deficiencies in the power sector: Awaits

US Treasury Dept delegation meets Minister for Power

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the US Department of Treasury led by Assistant Secretary Brent Neiman met Federal Minister for Power Division Sardar Awaits Leghari here Thursday.

The meeting aimed at exploring potential collaborations in the energy sector, said a press release.

Sardar Awaits Leghari said that the reform plan has been chalked out to remove the deficiencies in the power sector. The purpose of these reforms is to improve the energy mix of Pakistan and eliminate other deficiencies of the power sector, it further said.

The minister informed the Secretary that reforms are being implemented to increase private sector participation in the distribution and transmission of electricity in Pakistan. These reforms

aim to improve the quality of service being delivered to the people of Pakistan, he said.

Regarding debt management, the minister said that Pakistan has started a programme to replace conventional fan with energy saving one that will save energy and improve the seasonal variation in energy demand. Sardar Awaits Leghari stressed the need for U.S. technical support to address the seasonal generation and demand gap. He also highlighted the importance of American assistance in securing international financing for Pakistan's power sector at more favorable rates.

The US Assistant Secretary of Treasury appreciated Pakistan's power sector reform initiatives and assured all possible cooperation to resolve Pakistan's power sector problems.



QUETTA: Member Board of Investment Muhammad Asif Bazai meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

Huawei Tech Connect 2024, a commercial market event to target SMEs for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Huawei Technologies Pakistan has successfully executed Huawei Tech connect 2024, on Thursday. This event was focused on bringing Digital Transformation to the SME sector of Pakistan, revolutionizing the way organizations operate with a steadfast approach towards improving the ICT landscape of Pakistan, said a press release.

The cross-Industry event focused on tackling IT infrastructure challenges of various sectors including Education, Pharma, Energy, Banks, Real Estate, HealthCare and Retail.

The event has given industry related experts to share their insights, interact and network with one another to discuss modern world technology challenges and how

Huawei's cutting edge solutions can make organizations stay one step ahead of them.

Over 100+ customers participated, representing a broad spectrum of industries. Also High-profile attendees, including C-level customers from key organizations were present. Huawei Pakistan Showcased Huawei's latest solutions, attracting and retaining the interest of attendees. The successful event facilitated meaningful connections between participants, leading to potential collaborations and business growth.

While talking at the Event Shahzad Ahmed, Director IT – UIT stated on the occasion that "It was a good event in a way that we got to know about Huawei's offerings in the field of Storage.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi talks to representative delegation Peoples Traders Association, who called on him at Governor House.

Stocks diverge after US Fed rate cut plans

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets diverged on Thursday as traders reacted to the US Federal Reserve's plan to only cut interest rates once this year.

Europe was trading firmly in the red, with Paris and Frankfurt shedding more than one percent each as investors continued to track fallout from far-right gains in last weekend's EU elections.

Wall Street had a mixed opening as the tech-heavy Nasdaq and the S&P 500 climbed while the Dow slipped back.

The euro recovered from sharp losses against the dollar in recent sessions, after French President Emmanuel Macron said he would not resign should his party lose snap elections he called after its drubbing by the far right in EU-wide polls.

In the United States, the Federal Reserve left its key lending rate unchanged on Wednesday and pencilled in just one rate cut this year, down from the three expected in March.

was below expectations, while the consumer price index remains comfortably above the Fed's two-percent target.

"Fed chair Jerome Powell didn't give a huge amount away, although it felt telling that he was fairly cautious about the cooler-than-expected inflation figures from earlier in the day," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. The Fed "wants further signs inflation is on the path to the magic two-percent level before it is prepared to start cutting rates. One major sticking point being the continued tight labour market conditions".

Fresh US government data released on Thursday showed that wholesale prices unexpectedly declined last month by 0.2 percent, providing further indications inflation is cooling in the world's top economy. The improved producer price figures come on the heels of Wednesday's better consumer price data, which together are "net bullish" for stocks, said Adam Sarhan, chief executive of 50 Park Investments.

US, Europe clear way to \$50B Ukraine loan in deal to tie up Russian assets until Moscow pays for war

Monitoring Desk
BORGIO EGNAZIA: The United States and European countries have agreed to lock up sanctioned Russian assets until Moscow pays reparations for its invasion of Ukraine, a senior U.S. official said Thursday. The move clears the way for leaders to announce a \$50 billion loan package for Kyiv at the Group of Seven summit, where President Joe Biden is set to sign a security agreement with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The highly anticipated agreement will leverage interest and income from the more than \$260 billion in frozen Russian assets, largely held in Europe, to secure a \$50 billion loan from the U.S. and additional loans from other partners. The first disbursements will be made this year, but it will take time for Ukraine to use all the money, the official said. The official spoke

on the condition of anonymity to preview the agreement, which will be included in the G7 leaders' communique on Friday. Ukraine will be able to spend the money in several areas, including for military, economic and humanitarian needs and reconstruction, the official said. The leaders' statement will also leave the door open to confiscating the Russian assets entirely, for which the allies have yet to secure the political will, largely citing legal and financial stability concerns. Biden will meet on Thursday with Zelenskyy to discuss a bilateral security agreement between the U.S. and Ukraine, as the international group of wealthy democracies has been looking for new ways to bolster Ukraine's defenses against Russia. They planned a joint news conference afterward. The agreement on how

to use the frozen Russian assets to benefit Ukraine comes several months after the White House broke through a logjam in Congress that stalled approval of some \$60 billion in U.S. aid for Ukraine. The delay gave Russia time to make up ground on the battlefield. Earlier Thursday, Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, described the security pact as a "real marker" of the U.S. commitment to Ukraine, "not just for this month and this year, but for the many years ahead." Zelenskyy, on social media, said the document is "unprecedented, as it should be for leaders who support Ukraine." Sullivan said the agreement would not commit U.S. troops directly to Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion. That is a red line drawn by Biden, who does not want to have the U.S. pulled into a direct conflict with nuclear-armed Moscow.



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, U.S. President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida attend a session on Africa, climate change and development on the first day of the G7 summit at the Borgo Egnazia resort, in Savelletri, Italy

Gaza war rages as US wants to 'close' truce deal

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: Top US diplomat Antony Blinken said Wednesday (Jun 12) that an elusive truce and hostage release deal to end the Gaza war was still possible, wrapping up a Middle East tour as deadly fighting rocked the Palestinian territory.

Lebanon's Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, rained rockets on northern Israel, a day after an Israeli strike killed one of its senior commanders. Secretary of State Blinken, in Doha for the last stop of a tour to promote President Joe Biden's Gaza ceasefire roadmap, said the United States would work

with regional partners to "close the deal." Hamas late Tuesday submitted its response to mediators Qatar and Egypt, and Blinken said some of the proposed amendments "are workable and some are not." A senior Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, said it sought "a permanent ceasefire and complete withdrawal" of Israeli troops from Gaza, demands rejected by Israel. The three-stage plan endorsed by the UN Security Council and Arab powers - includes a six-week ceasefire, a hostage-prisoner exchange and Gaza's internationally-backed reconstruction.

Zelensky lands in Saudi Arabia on unannounced visit

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, Saudi state media reported, his latest visit to the Gulf kingdom which has sought to stay neutral in Ukraine's war with Russia.

Zelensky landed in the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah for the unannounced trip and was greeted by Saudi officials including the national security adviser and ambassador to Kyiv, the official Saudi Press Agency said. No details on his itinerary were immediately available.

Heavy rocket fire from Lebanon at northern Israel

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Air raid sirens sounded across cities in northern Israel on Thursday and about 40 rockets had been fired from Lebanon in the afternoon, Israel's military said.

State broadcaster Kan aired footage of numerous mid-air interceptions of rockets above Israeli towns, including in Safed, some 12 km (7.5 miles) from the border. Two people were wounded by shrapnel, Israel's national ambulance service said, and several wildfires were set off by rockets that landed in open areas.

Fistfight erupts in Italian Parliament as tensions rise over expanding regional autonomy

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Tensions in Italy's lower house erupted into a fistfight, sending an opposition lawmaker to hospital, over a controversial government proposal that opponents say will further impoverish the poor south. Video of the fight Wednesday shows lawmakers converging on 5-Star Movement lawmaker Leonardo Donno, who opposes the changes, after he tried to hand an Italian flag to regional affairs minister Roberto Calderoli. Calderoli, a firebrand lawmaker from the Lega party with northern roots, drafted

the contested expansion of regional autonomy that would mostly benefit regions like Lega strongholds of Veneto and Lombardy. Italian media reported that Donno was taken to the hospital for evaluation after being hit in the head and the chest. Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, interviewed on Sky TG24, expressed disappointment at the scene. "I have no words," Tajani said. "We need to set another example, not punches to resolve political problems. It's not braggadocio, it's not shouting, it's ideas that need to be explained well to persuade voters."

WHO says many people in Gaza facing 'famine-like conditions'

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday (Jun 12) that many people in Gaza were facing "catastrophic hunger and famine-like conditions". "A significant proportion of Gaza's population is now facing catastrophic hunger and famine-like conditions," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Despite reports of increased delivery of food, there is currently no evidence that those who need it most are receiving sufficient quantity and quality of food."

Tedros said there were more than 8,000 children under five years old who had been diagnosed and treated for acute malnutrition, including 1,600 children with severe acute malnutrition. "However, due to insecurity and lack of access, only two stabilisation centres for severely malnourished patients can operate," he added. "Our inability to provide health services safely, combined with the lack of clean water and sanitation, significantly increases the risk of malnourished children." The war in Gaza began on Oct 7 when militants led by Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis and took more than 250 hostage, according to Israeli officials. Israel's response has caused the deaths of more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Blinken says US will try to bridge Israel-Hamas gaps on deal

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken vowed Wednesday to work to seal a Gaza ceasefire agreement, saying not all Hamas demands were acceptable but voicing hope gaps could be closed. Consulting with key mediator Qatar on the Hamas response to the plan outlined by US President Joe Biden, Blinken said the Palestinian group could have given a "clear and simple yes" but voiced guarded hope for moving forward. "We believe that some of the requested changes are workable and some are not," Blinken told reporters in Doha. "And so we have to see on an urgent basis over the course of the coming days whether those gaps are bridgeable."

But he said the onus was on Hamas, describing the rest of the world as united in seeking an end to the eight-month war. "We're determined to try to bridge the gaps. And I believe those gaps are bridgeable," Blinken said. "That doesn't mean they will be bridged because, ultimately, Hamas has to decide," he said. "The longer this goes on, the more people will suffer, and it's time for the haggling to stop." He added: "I believe it's absolutely necessary to try our hardest to do it. But there's no guarantee." Hamas proposed amendments late Tuesday including a ceasefire timeline and the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, according to a source familiar with the talks.

Nigeria's president says economic reforms will continue despite hardships

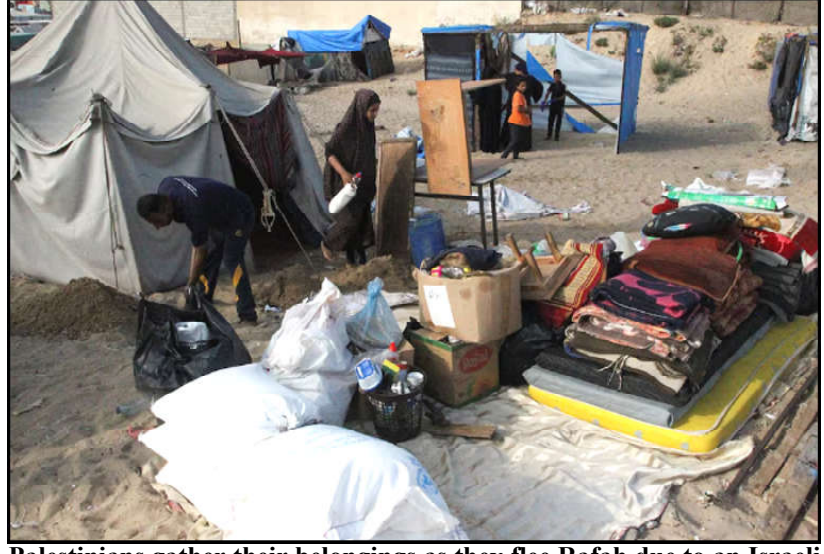
Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu said on Wednesday economic reforms would continue despite increasing hardships that have fuelled public anger, and promised to send an executive bill to parliament soon to set a new minimum wage. Tinubu, who came to power a year ago, removed a decades-old petrol subsidy that kept prices artificially low and devalued the currency, sending inflation soaring to 33.69% in April, its highest level in nearly three decades and eroding incomes. In a television broadcast to mark Democracy Day, Tinubu acknowledged hardships caused by the reforms, which also include higher interest rates and the partial removal of electricity subsidies, but he said this would create a stronger foundation for future growth. "Our economy has been in desperate need of reform for decades. It has been unbalanced because it was built on the flawed

foundation of over-reliance on revenues from the exploitation of oil," Tinubu said. "As we continue to reform the economy, I shall always listen to the people and will never turn my back on you." Nigeria is grappling with the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades and labour unions last week suspended a strike called to pressure the government to agree a new monthly minimum wage. The government has offered to double the minimum wage to 62,000 naira (\$41.89) a month against labour demands of 250,000 naira, and Tinubu said his government had negotiated in good faith. The last minimum wage was set in 2019. "We shall soon send an executive bill to the National Assembly to enshrine what has been agreed upon as part of our law for the next five years or less," Tinubu said. He did not say whether the bill would contain the government minimum wage proposal or a new figure.

Philippines cracks down on offshore gambling firms working illegally

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: Philippine authorities have launched a crackdown on illegal offshore gambling operators, several run by Chinese firms, as calls to ban these activities mounted due to their alleged links to criminal syndicates. Around 250 to 300 offshore gambling firms are operating in the Philippines without a licence, the chief of the country's gaming regulator said on Thursday, around six times more than the 46 legitimate gaming operators in the country. "Together with the police, we search for these illegal operators, conduct raids, and shut them down," Alejandro Tengco, chairman of state regulator Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp (PAGCOR), told Reuters in a phone interview. The online gaming industry emerged in the Philippines in 2016 and grew exponentially as operators capitalised on the country's liberal gaming laws to target customers in China, where gambling is banned. At their peak, Philippine offshore gambling op-

erators, or POGOs, totalled 300 and employed more than 300,000 Chinese workers. But the pandemic and tighter tax rules have forced many to relocate or go underground, Tengco said. The crackdown was triggered by reports of POGO-related crimes such as human trafficking, torture, kidnapping, and fraudulent activities like credit cards, crypto investment, and "love scams" - when criminals adopt fake online identities to persuade victims to give them money. If we have any hope of reducing the damages from climate change over the next couple of decades, methane is key. In March, law enforcers raided a POGO facility in Pampanga province which led to the rescue of more than 800 workers, including Filipino and Chinese nationals, local media reported. Security officials have also expressed concern over illegal POGOs, with the defence minister saying criminal syndicates posing as POGOs were a national security concern.



Palestinians gather their belongings as they flee Rafah due to an Israeli military operation, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Russian nuclear submarine, frigate arrive in Cuba

Monitoring Desk
HAVANA: A Russian navy frigate and a nuclear-powered submarine chummed into Havana harbour on Wednesday, a stopover the US and Cuba said posed no threat, but which was widely seen as a Russian show of force as tensions rise over the Ukraine war. Curious onlookers, fishermen and police lined the Malecon waterfront boulevard under grey skies to welcome the ships as they passed the 400-year-old Morro castle at the harbour's entrance. Cuba - a long-time ally of Russia - saluted the ships' arrival with cannon fire from the harbour, while Russian diplomats waved small Russian flags and took selfies as the vessels passed the harbour's historic fortresses. The Admiral Gorshkov frigate, and later the nuclear-powered

submarine Kazan, half submerged with its crew on deck, were accompanied by a tugboat and fuel ship that had arrived earlier in the morning. The four Russian vessels sailed to Cuba on Wednesday after conducting "high-precision missile weapons" training in the Atlantic Ocean, Russia's defence ministry said on Wednesday. The submarine and frigate carry Zircon hypersonic missiles, Kalibr cruise missiles and Onyx anti-ship missiles, the ministry said. Cuba said last week that the visit was standard practice by naval vessels from countries friendly to Havana. The communist-run government's foreign ministry said the fleet carried no nuclear weapons, something echoed by US officials.

UN expert voices for American held in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The Taliban must provide Ryan Corbett, an American held in Afghanistan for nearly two years, with immediate medical care to prevent irreparable harm to his health or even his death, a United Nations expert said on Thursday. "The Taliban must provide Ryan Corbett with medical treatment in a civilian hospital without delay," said Alice Jill Edwards, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Corbett, an aid worker, has been held without charge in conditions "utterly inadequate and substantially below international standards," she said. "This is having a significant impact on his physical and mental health, which is declining rapidly," added Edwards.



A Russian nuclear-powered submarine, part of a naval detachment visiting Cuba, docks at Havana harbour.

US sanctions pro-Russia governor of Moldova's Gagauzia region

Monitoring Desk
CHISINAU: The United States imposed sanctions on the pro-Russia governor of Moldova's Gagauzia region on Wednesday, a move supported by the pro-Western government in Chisinau. Evgenia Gutul is a Kremlin ally who was elected last year to head the autonomous southern Moldovan region and has been at odds with the country's government, which seeks to take the small ex-Soviet state into the European Union. Gutul faces criminal allegations at home of channeling funds from Russia to finance the now-banned Shor Party set up by Ilan Shor, an exiled pro-Russia businessman convicted of fraud in Moldova. She has denied those allegations as

fabricated. The sanctions announced on the website of the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control freeze any assets held by Gutul in the United States and generally prohibit Americans from doing business with her. "The United States announced sanctions against (Gutul) as an active facilitator of fugitive convicted oligarch Ilan Shor and his Shor Party, and their Kremlin-backed illegal political interference efforts," the US embassy in Chisinau said in a statement. Moldovan Prime Minister Dorin Recean said the sanctions had been imposed after "effective cooperation" with partners and that "we will continue to take decisive action to counter corruption."

Insider trading case brought against Elon Musk

Monitoring Desk
WILMINGTON: Elon Musk made billions of dollars by selling Tesla stock using insider information, an institutional shareholder accused in a lawsuit filed on Tuesday, asking the court to direct the Tesla CEO to return "unlawful profits." The lawsuit comes two days before a critical vote by Tesla shareholders on whether to reinstate Musk's \$56 billion pay package after a Delaware judge voided it in January because she found that Musk had improperly controlled the process. Musk and his brother Kimbal Musk, a Tesla director, sold a combined \$30bn in the electric vehicle maker's stock between late 2021.

China Premier Li starts New Zealand, Australia visits

Monitoring Desk
WELLINGTON: Chinese Premier Li Qiang landed in Wellington on Thursday (Jun 13) to launch a tour of New Zealand and Australia, a trip focused on trade against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions. Second only to President Xi Jinping in China's political hierarchy, Li is the most senior figure to arrive on official business in either nation since 2017. A small crowd of supporters greeted Li's motorcade as it pulled out of Wellington Airport in New Zealand's capital, banging drums, cheering and waving red-and-gold banners. The visit starts with a

ceremonial welcome at state Government House, before a formal dinner in the residence's ballroom in the evening. Over six days Li will set foot in five different cities, meet two prime ministers, hold talks with a string of business leaders, and embark on China's trademark "Panda diplomacy". China's relationship with both hosts has shifted drastically in the seven years since Li's predecessor toured Down Under. New Zealand, long seen as one of China's closest partners in the region, has become increasingly bold in its criticism of Beijing's role in the South Pacific.

4 industries accused of causing 2.7m deaths a year in Europe

Monitoring Desk
COPENHAGEN: The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday blamed four major industries - tobacco, ultra-processed foods (UPFs), fossil fuel and alcohol - for 2.7 million deaths a year in Europe, accusing them of obstructing public policies that could hurt their profits. "[These] four industries kill at least 7,000 people in our region every day," Hans Kluge, the director of the WHO Europe region which counts 53 countries including Central Asia, said in a statement.

Rural India runs dry as thirsty megacity Mumbai sucks water

Monitoring Desk
SHAHAPUR: Far from the gleaming high-rises of India's financial capital Mumbai, impoverished villages in areas supplying the megacity's water are running dry - a crisis repeated across the country that experts say fore-shadows terrifying problems. "The people in Mumbai drink our water but no one there, including the government, pays attention to us or our demands," said Sunita Pandurang Satgir.

Underwater gardeners in Denmark plant eelgrass to save 'dead' fjord

Monitoring Desk
VEJLE: Under a white tent on the shores of a polluted Danish fjord, volunteers and researchers prepare slender green shoots of eelgrass to be planted on the seabed to help restore the site's damaged ecosystem. Denmark generally has a strong track record on environmental issues, but only five of its 109 coastal zones are considered healthy, according to the Danish Environmental Agency.

Like other coastal areas in Denmark, the Vejle fjord is suffering from eutrophication - a process in which nutrients, often from land run-off, accumulate in a body of water and lead to increased growth of microorganisms and algae. The algae cover water surfaces, blocking light and cutting off oxygen, killing plants and wildlife. An underwater surveillance camera installed in the Vejle fjord by the municipality last year detected just one fish in 70 hours.



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.

PM gives green light for Asaan Karobar Act enactment

Directs federal ministries, deptt heads to utilize Task Management System

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the initiation of legislation for Asaan Karobar Act saying that promotion of the business and investment friendly environment was the government's top priority.

Chairing a meeting on ease of doing business, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to establish a one-window operation to simplify documentary procedures for the businesses and traders.

He also directed to seek assistance from the Chinese experts to establish an experimental facility service center modeled after the Shenzhen One-Stop Shop.

As regards ease of doing business and other various initiatives, it was informed that an electronic registry would be established for business registration, licenses, certificates and other documents.

It was further told that an online one-window Pakistan Business Portal system would be introduced

through which services of all the relevant departments could be accessed.

It was apprised that a strategy was being evolved for the establishment of Islamabad Business Facilitation Center.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Industry and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Petroleum Minister Musaddik Malik, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaz Malik, Coordinator to the PM Rana Ehsaan Afzal, chief secretaries of all the four provinces and other relevant high officials.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday instructed federal secretaries and heads of departments to personally utilize the Task Management System.

He issued these instructions while chairing a meeting to assess the implementation progress of directives requiring federal

ministries and departments to use the Task Management System.

The Task Management System is a modern software of international standards used to monitor instructions issued by the prime minister to federal ministries, and progress in this regard.

The prime minister also decided to conduct daily review for implementing the task management system.

He said that continuous monitoring of progress in all projects was the initial step towards their timely completion.

During the briefing, it was told that a mobile application for the task management system had already been developed.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musaddik Masood Malik, Minister of State for IT, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, and senior officials from relevant institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on ease of doing business.

EU's Team Technical & Vocational Education & Training Support Prog. to bear best results: CM

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the Team Europe's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Support Programme has immense importance for youth of the province and it would bear best results in collaboration with the provincial government.

The Chief Minister was addressing the launch ceremony of TVET Support Programme here at a local hotel on Thursday.

The Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka, Consul General of Germany to Karachi, Dr. Rudiger Lotz, provincial government functionaries, experts and other concerned high ups were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister on the occasion appreciated the launching of Team Europe's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Support Programme and said that we are indebted to the EU in this regard.

He said that such programmes are contributing a lot in imparting modern training to the young-

sters.

He also referred to the plan of provincial government regarding sending some 30,000 youngsters for training abroad during couple of years.

He believed that we would achieve the goal with devotion.

The EU's ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka, German Consul General Dr. Rudiger and others also addressed the ceremony.

Later, Chief Minister formally launched the Team Europe's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Support Programme.

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UN Resident Coordinator calls on Planning Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Newly designated United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Mohamed Yahya on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal and discussed matters relating to mutual interest. Emphasizing the strong and enduring relationship between Pakistan and the United Nations, the minister said Pakistan has a robust bond with UN agencies and the United Nations has always stood by us during challenging times, such as climate disasters.

He also appreciated the UN's significant efforts in assisting Pakistan during the 2022 floods and highlighted that, in response, the Ministry of Planning, in collaboration with

policymakers, developed the 4RF framework to enhance the country's resilience against any catastrophic situations.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the significance of the newly established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Secretariat, which will become operational from 1st of July 2024. "Our focus now needs to be on engaging policymakers to achieve our SDG targets and involving media professionals to spotlight critical issues related to the SDGs," he stated.

Reflecting on Pakistan's commitment to the SDGs, he maintained that Pakistan was among the first few countries to have adopted SDGs agenda in National Assembly in 2016 as our national agenda.



ISLAMABAD: Mohamed Yahya the United Nations Resident newly designated Coordinator in Pakistan paid a courtesy call on Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal in his office.

Pakistan urges UN to address specific cases of missing persons in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has urged the United Nations to address specific cases of missing persons in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Speaking at an Arrria Formula meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, Ambassador Usman Jadoon said the cases of missing persons in IIOJK

have led to the tragic phenomenon of half widows, referring to Kashmiri women who live in uncertainty about the fate of their husbands, sons, and brothers.

He said Pakistan believes that the most effective response to the issue of missing persons in armed conflict is the strict application of international law and a process of accountability.

Governor says Elected representatives ought to come up to expectations of respective constituencies

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that it is responsibility of the elected representatives to come up to the expectations of people of their respective election constituencies.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation comprising the representatives of Quetta city Halqa PB-42, who called on him under the leadership of MPA Zarak Khan Mandokhail here at the

Governor House on Thursday.

The Governor said that the manner people elected them as their representatives in elections reposing confidence on them, similarly, they should serve them and meet their expectations.

He said that the dignity of leadership is based on the public service.

He stressed that it is responsibility of the elected public representatives to perform their duties honestly.



QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development, Bakht Muhammad Kakar cuts ribbon during inauguration ceremony make-shift sacrificial animals market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, in Quetta.

Tahir lauds role of EU for providing IT equipment to Balochistan Assembly

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Balochistan Assembly Mr. Tahir Shah Kakar on Thursday said that the European Union (EU) was providing Information Technology (IT) equipment under considering the needs of the Balochistan Assembly was commendable.

He expressed these views while addressing at ceremony held in the Balochistan Assembly regarding the supply of IT equipment and computers etc to the Balochistan Assembly by the European Union. Addressing the ceremony, Secretary Balochistan Assembly Tahir Shah Kakar thanked the European Union for providing IT equipment and this initiative would prove a milestone in the partnership between Pakistan and the European Union. "Apart from this, the provision of the equipment will speed up the legislative process in the Balochistan Assembly and

the performance of parliamentary duties will also be effective," he said.

He said the initiative would be a first step towards fulfilling the EU's broad commitment and building the foundation for better digital information and better democratic traditions in Pakistan.

"In particular, the European Union will be effective in improving parliamentary performance in Pakistan, we are proud of the European Union that Balochistan is playing an important role and key role in the functioning and duties of the Provincial Assembly and in guiding us," he said. He said that he hoped that the EU would take all possible steps to improve the Balochistan Provincial Assembly. Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation of the European Union, while expressing his views at the event, said that through the four-year program.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti addressing launching ceremony of 'Team European Technical and Vocational Education Training Support Program. Ambassador European Union Dr. Riina Kionka, Consul General of Germany Dr. Rudiger Lotz, Chairperson NAVTTC Gulmina Bilal and other sitting on stage

GoB signs MoU with Roche Pakistan for provision of free of cost medicines

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for provision of free medicines to the patients suffering from fatal diseases in the province.

The MoU was signed in presence of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and high ups of the Roche Pakistan at the Chief Minister secretariat on Thursday.

The Secretary Health, Mujeeb Rehman Qambrani and Managing Director of Roche Pakistan, Hafsa Shamsie signed the MoU.

Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director Roche Pakistan said that

the vision of provincial government regarding healthcare is appreciable. She termed the MoU for provision of medicines to the poor people as historic.

The poor people would directly benefit from the initiative, she added.

The Secretary Health said that the costly medicines would be purchased under cost sharing as per the agreement.

The Roche Pakistan would pay the 56 percent cost while the provincial government would pay the remaining 44 percent.

However, the medicines would be provided to the patients suffering from cancer and other fatal diseases free of cost, he added.

10 injured as speedy car overturns

Independent Report
QUETTA: A devastating incident occurred on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway when a speeding pick-up van, traveling from Karachi to Quetta, lost control and overturned while climbing the Wadh Pass.

The accident left 10 individuals severely injured, with 4 reported to be in critical condition. The victims, all residents of Quetta, were promptly attended to by the timely arrival of the 1122 emergency team, who swiftly transported them to trauma centers for urgent medical care.

Inactive PCC raises concerns

Independent Report
NAAL- The Price Control Committee in Naal has come under scrutiny for its complete inactivity, allowing bakery, tandoor, and butcher shops as well as vegetable vendors to exploit consumers by not issuing a government price list. Despite noticeable reductions in food prices nationwide, local traders continue to manipulate prices, profiting unjustly. The committee urgently needs to release price lists for bakeries, naan bakers, butchers, and vegetable sellers, enforcing strict compliance among all traders to display these lists prominently in their shops.

Shibli welcomes increase in minimum wage in budget

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Public Health Engineer (PHE) Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran on Thursday said that the federal government has presented the budget of 24-25 as people-friendly and the fruits would be available to the public very soon. He said that the Balochistan government also presented a people-friendly budget under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. In his statement, the provincial minister has paid tribute to Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and his team

WAPDA awards Rs. 10.6b contract for Dargai Rehabilitation Project

LAHORE (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has awarded the contract for civil and electro-mechanical works for rehabilitation of Dargai Hydel Power Station worth Rs. 10.6 billion to a Joint Venture (JV), comprising two Chinese and a Pakistani firm.

General Manager (Hydel Development) WAPDA Ihsan Ullah and authorized representative of the JV Nabeel Tahir signed the contract on behalf of their organizations. Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt. Gen. (Retd) Sajjad Ghani, Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar, WAPDA officers, representatives of AFD, the consultants and the contractors were also present in the contract signing ceremony,

according to WAPDA spokesman here Thursday.

WAPDA is carrying out rehabilitation and capacity enhancement of Dargai Hydel Power Station with Financial Support of AFD, France.

According to the contract, Dargai Hydel Power Station will be rehabilitated in 3 years. On completion of the rehabilitation project, Dargai Hydel Power Station will generate 22 MW of green and clean hydel electricity. It will provide 130 million units of low cost hydel electricity to the National Grid annually.

Dargai Hydel Power Station, located in Malakand, was constructed in 1952. After serving 72 years, it requires rehabilitation to continue its operation.

PTI, Dar meeting on standing bodies ends without a resolution

ISLAMABAD (INP): A crucial meeting between PTI and Leader of the House Ishaq Dar regarding the division of standing committees concluded without a resolution. The PTI delegation, including Shibli Faraz and parliamentary leader Barrister Ali Zafar, convened with Dar in the Senate, aiming to finalize committee assignments.

Despite discussions, both parties failed to reach an agreement on committee distribution. However, they have scheduled another meeting for today to continue negotiations. Senator Ali Zafar expressed optimism, stating, "Standing committees should adhere to procedural rules, and we anticipate our proposals will be considered."



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani in a group photo with participants who completed training under BACT

ECP challenges LHC decision about constitution of election tribunals

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has challenged in Supreme Court (SC) decision of Lahore High Court (LHC) about constitution of election tribunals.

The ECP has requested the apex court to suspend LHC decision forthwith.

ECP filed appeal in SC against the decision of Justice Shahid Karim of LHC on Thursday besides requesting the SC to suspend the LHC decision.

ECP has taken plea in the petition that LHC decision is against the law. It is the power of ECP to constitute election tribunals.

High court cannot exercise powers of ECP. The appeal be fixed for hearing today (Friday).

LHC had ordered to constitute 8 election tribunals.

In the light of LHC decision chief justice Shahzad Malik had issued orders for constitution 8 election tribunals.

Khetran terms federal budget people friendly

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Public Health Engineer (PHE) Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran on Thursday said that the federal government has presented the budget of 24-25 as people-friendly and the fruits would be available to the public very soon. He said that the Balochistan government also presented a people-friendly budget under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. In his statement, the provincial minister has paid tribute to Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif and his team

in difficult financial situations. He said that the journey of sustainable development was beginning and the country was coming out of the state of economic crisis day by day. He said that the budget was exactly in line with the aspirations of the people saying that in the federal budget, efforts have been made to provide maximum relief to the people.

The country's conditions will improve further by the grace of Allah, inflation is being decreased and a people-friendly budget will also be presented in Balochistan, he stated.

APNEC lauds restoration of health insurance scheme for journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): All Pakistan Newspapers and Electronic Media Employees Confederation (APNEC) has welcomed the restoration of health insurance scheme for journalists, as announced by the government in the budget year 2024-25.

APNEC Chairman Muhammad Siddique Anzar in a statement expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, saying the step would benefit thousands of journalists and media workers.

Anzar said the decision would establish a cordial relationship between journalists and the government and would help discourage the perpetrators of carrying out malicious propaganda against the country and the nation.

He stressed the need for allocating more funds for journalists and media workers in order to support them in fulfillment of their professional duties.



QUETTA: Country Head of UNFPA in Pakistan Dr. Luay Shabaneh meeting with Provincial Advisor for Women Development Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi

Bakht Kakar terms central budget as people-friendly

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Livestock and Dairy Farms Bakht Kakar on Thursday termed the federal government's budget as people-friendly and balanced.

Talking to APP, he said that government employees lauded the federal budget announcement of 25 percent increase in salaries, despite the difficult economic conditions.

The federal government has tried to provide

relief to every class, he added.

The provincial minister said that despite the IMF's direction, the federal government presented a balanced budget, which is a good practice, adding that a huge amount was being spent on pension support. The government would bring reforms in this regard, he said.

The government is privatizing the sectors that was not producing results and generating income.

WDDD to extend full coop. to achieve SDGs of UNFPA in various sectors: Rubaba

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi has made complete assurance to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in achieving its sustainable development goals (SDGs) in different sectors including women health and balance in population and resources in the province.

The Advisor for

Women Development was speaking to the Head of UNFPA, Dr. Luay Shabaneh who called on him here on Thursday. The UNFPA Head briefed the Advisor about overall functioning and projects being executed by the Fund in different sectors in Balochistan. Also present in the meeting were Provincial Head of UNFPA Balochistan, Dr. Sarmad Saad and Provincial Coordinator of MNCH Programme, Dr. Gul Sabin Ghauzeai. During the course of meeting, there was discussion on different matters of mutual interest including healthcare of women and their participation in decision making.

Dr. Rubaba Buledi on the occasion assured full cooperation on behalf of her department for implementation of the programmes of UNFPA.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Balochistan and President National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engr. Shafiq Ali