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Can't allow to kill tourists, barbers and security personnels at all:

No one would set right Balochistan coming from outside, rather MPAs sitting in House have to correct, asserts CM

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti winds up debate on budget in Provincial Assembly; asserts we are ready to hold talks with everyone, but can't support those imposing their ideology through weapons; warns to sternly tackle those taking law in hands; release of funds to be started for development schemes from July 1, 2024

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has emphasized that no would set right the province coming from outside, rather the members of provincial assembly have to correct it. He said that although he is ready to hold talks with every one, but can't allow

to kill the tourists, barbers and security forces personnel at all. He also can't support those who impose their ideology carrying weapons, and as such would deal those who are taking law in their hands.

He categorically stated that law and order is the biggest problem for us in the province. He stressed that we have to separate our

personal interest for the interest of province.

These views were expressed by the Chief Minister Balochistan while winding up debate on the next financial year's budget here in the budget session of assembly on Friday evening.

The Speaker Abdul

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacts with Chairman PPP, MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in the National Assembly.

Mohsin Naqvi says Pakistan committed to peacekeeping partnership

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan will work with the United Nations and all interested states to further develop the concept of peace enforcement.

This was stated by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, while addressing the UNCOPs Summit 2024 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Interior Minister said Pakistan is proud of longstanding contributions to the UN peacekeeping. He said Pakistan is committed to peacekeeping partnership especially with the African Union and the OIC.

He said in today's dangerous time, the world faced threats of forced foreign interventions, suppression of freedom struggles, poverty, inequality, global tensions, military tensions and nuclear arms race.

Mohsin Naqvi said preventive diplomacy should



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focus on addressing the root cause of conflicts. He said the UN peacekeeping missions face increasing challenges from terrorist groups, tribal rivalries and threats to safety.

He said Pakistan agrees with the cause of series and broad-based future reflection of the UN peacekeeping. The Minister suggested that peacekeeping missions must be part of an overall political strategy, which seeks to address and resolve the cause of conflict and violence.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Muhammad Khan Lehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Special anti-polio campaign to be launched from July 1: CS calls for taking joint measures for eradication of polio; terms campaign challenge for all

Shakeel Qadir Khan terms anti-polio campaign very important for stopping spread of polio virus; warns action to be taken against those stopping anti-polio teams from vaccination

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has categorically stated that polio is a national issue, and all of us have to play our effective role for eradication of the virus from the province.

He also termed the upcoming anti-polio campaign as a challenge for the district administration and health department emphasizing upon reaching out to each and every child for immunization during the campaign.

He warned that stern

action would be taken against those who made an attempt to stop the anti-polio teams in any area.

The Chief Secretary was presiding over meeting about the forthcoming anti-polio campaign starting

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QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Sadiq Umrani, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Ziaullah Langoo, Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Raheela Hameed Durrani and MPAs Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail, Mir Ghulam Dastagir Badini and Fazal Qadir talking with each other during Balochistan Assembly session



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing Balochistan Assembly after approval of budget

NA passes Finance Bill-2024 with majority vote

FM Aurangzeb says economy has achieved stability; Announces tax exemption for health, education sectors inputs; PPP supports govt in passing budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Friday passed the Finance Bill 2024 after a clause-by-clause consideration, incorporating specific amendments.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb moved the motion for consideration of the Finance Bill, 2024 to give effect to the financial proposals of the federal government for the year, commencing on July 1, 2024.

The motion was passed with majority vote which led to the passage of Finance Bill-2024 after clause-by-clause reading and adopting amendments after due process of voting.

All the amendments, presented by the opposition members, were rejected.

The total outlay of the federal budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 is Rs. 18.877

trillion. This budget outlines the government's fiscal policies and budgetary allocations for the upcoming financial year, reflecting a comprehensive plan to address various economic and social challenges.

The government has allocated Rs. 1,400 billion for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) in its current budget, and an additional amount of Rs100 billion would be allocated under Public-Private Partnership, bringing the total to Rs1,500, the highest in the country's history.

In the budget grants amounting to Rs1,777 billion for the promotion of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit-Baltistan, merged districts of KP, Higher Education Commission, Railways, and IT sectors have been allocated.

To ensure equitable development in AJK, GB, and merged districts of the KP, the government has allocated at 10 percent and around 11 percent for other sectors development including IT, telecom, science and technology, governance, and production sector.

The House also held discussion on the Charged Expenditure that included Demands for Grants and Appropriations for the financial year ending on June 30, 2025.

The House approved 133 demands for grants related to various departments and ministries.

According to the Rule 187 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in National Assembly 2007, not less than four days shall be allotted for the

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QUETTA: Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar enquiring about health of school teacher Aamir Ghori who was injured while saving life of a child from passenger train

CJ BHC directs to take steps for provision of best medical treatment to Aamir Ghouri

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Justice, Balochistan High Court (BHC), Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar visited the Trauma Center Quetta on Friday.

During the visit, he went to see the injured teacher, Aamir Ghouri, being treated at the Trauma Center.

The Chief Justice summoned the high officials of Health Department includ-

ing Special Secretary Health, Commissioner Quetta, Medical Superintendent of Sandeman Hospital and Managing Director of Trauma Center.

He directed them to take every possible steps for ensuring the medical treatment and all other necessary facilities to the injured Aamir Ghouri.

He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured teacher.

Alarming situation of crippling disease: Polio cases continue to rise in Balochistan as another reported from K. Abdullah

Independent Report

QUETTA: The polio cases continued to rise in Balochistan province where another case of the crippling disease has been reported on Friday.

The Health Department sources confirmed that the polio virus has been diagnosed in around two years child belonging to Killa Abdullah district.

It may be mentioned here that it is the third case reported from Killa Abdullah and sixth from Balochistan during the current year. A polio case was reported a couple of days back from Killa Abdullah district. Besides, three polio cases (one each) had been reported from Quetta, Chaman and Dera Bugti earlier this year.

It may also be mentioned here that Balochistan remained polio free province in 2022 and 2023. Earlier, one polio case was reported in 2021 while record 26 cases had been reported in 2020. Aggregately, a total of 59 cases of polio have been reported in Balochistan since 2015.

Deputy PM Dar meets Saudi Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy and discussed bilateral cooperation and key areas of mutual interest.

In the meeting, the two sides also reaffirmed commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership between the two brotherly nations, a Foreign Office press release said.

The Deputy PM also appreciated the facilities extended to the pilgrims during the Hajj.

CJP calls JCP meeting to appoint CJs of LHC and SHC

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa has called a meeting of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on July 2 to discuss the appointment of the chief justices (CJs) of the Lahore High Court (LHC) and Sindh High Court (SHC).

The agenda of the JCP meeting on July 2 includes the consideration of a permanent Chief Justice for the Lahore High Court. Sources indicate that Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Justice Ali Baqer Najafi, and Justice Alia Neelum are being considered for the position of Lahore High Court's Chief Justice.

Additionally, the meeting will also consider the appointment of a permanent Chief Justice for the Sindh High Court.

Elite class to be brought to tax net, vows PM

Questions KP govt's failure to establish CTD despite receiving Rs590 b funds

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hailed the approval of the budget 2024-25 in the National Assembly (NA), vowing to bring elite class and tax defaulters to tax net.

The remarks came during the prime minister's meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb as he lauded the latter and his team preparing a "pro-people budget" that prioritises welfare of common man and promises to steer the country towards economic prosperity.

Talking to the finance minister, PM Shehbaz expressed his satisfaction over the active participation of all the treasury and opposition members in the budget session.

He also appreciated the efforts of the officers from

ministries of finance, planning, other relevant ministries and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in preparation of the budget.

The government, he said tried its best to utilize all possible resources to provide maximum relief to the common man. He said the government provided relief to the salaried class, pensioners and workers.

The prime minister highlighted that a special attention was given in the budget to various important sectors such as health, education, agriculture and information technology.

He said the elite class and the tax defaulters would be brought to the tax net. It is not possible for the poor pay the taxes and the elites enjoy tax exemptions, he added.

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, in the Federal Capital.

In a tit-for-tat move NA passes counter-resolution, criticizes US understanding of Pakistan's democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly (NA) on Friday adopted a counter-resolution criticizing the United States' understanding of Pakistan's democratic system.

The United States (US) House of Representatives, in a resolution passed on June 25, expressed support for democracy in Pakistan, prompting the NA to pass a counter-resolution with a majority vote.

While acknowledging the US as an important and valued partner, the NA em-

phasized the principles of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan and reaffirmed its commitment to upholding democracy and fundamental human rights.

It reiterated Pakistan's ongoing efforts to safeguard those principles, reflecting the aspirations of its people and the vision of its founding fathers.

The NA expressed deep regret that the US resolution demonstrated an incomplete and incorrect

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QUETTA: View of traffic jam due to protest demonstration of Zamindar Action Committee for acceptance of their demands, at Kan Mehtarzai.

Tarar assures to form committee on journalists protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday assured the protesting reporters covering parliamentary proceedings of forming a committee on the protection of journalists and develop a mechanism in that regard in consultation with the provinces.

The reporters staged a walk-out from the National Assembly's Press Gallery to raise their concerns about the security of journalists facing violence across the country and reservations on working environment in the Parliament House.

The minister flanked by Press Information Officer Mubashir Hassan came to the Press Gallery to hold negotiations with the protesting journalists.

Speaking on the occasion, Tarar said, "We have a very strong relationship with journalists. When the gates of Parliament House were closed for us, we used to sit with you and convey our voice to the people."

He said efforts were being made to solve the problems of journalists on priority. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was working to address the issues of journalist community.

The minister paid tribute to the Parliamentary Reporters' Association (PRA) for upholding freedom of press.

"I have taken strict notice of the coordination problems arising in relation to the budget books, which will be solved immediately," Tarar confirmed that the matter would be resolved immediately by contacting the National Assembly Secretariat.

Foreign Office spokesperson US Congress resolution unsolicited interference; neither welcome nor acceptable: FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Friday said that Resolution 901 adopted by the US House of Representatives was an "unsolicited interference" in Pakistan's domestic affairs which was "neither welcome nor acceptable."

The Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, told the media that the resolution clearly stemmed from an inadequate and erroneous understanding of political and electoral process of Pakistan. "It is also an unsolicited interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs. We believe that bilateral relations between countries should be based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. The unsolicited interference from the US Congress is therefore neither welcome nor acceptable," she remarked.

Besides, the spokesperson said the timing and context of the said resolution were also not conducive to the current positive trajectory of bilateral ties between

Pakistan and the United States.

She said Pakistan would like to develop its relations with the US on the basis of mutual trust and confidence and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. Expressing concerns about the continued suppression of the democratic rights of the Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), she said that a few days ago, the Indian authorities banned the elections of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association and arrested former Bar President Mian Qayoom.

The Indian authorities also disallowed Eid congregation at Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid and house arrested prayer leader and prominent Kashmir leader Mirwaiz. These oppressive measures are yet another example of the autocratic approach of the Indian authorities and a violation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights, especially

of the rights of association and peaceful assembly," she said and reiterated Pakistan's stance for continued political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiri people for just and peaceful settlement of the dispute as per the UN Security Council resolutions. The spokesperson strongly condemned the indiscriminate bombing of Beit Lahia city in Northern Gaza by the Israeli forces, killing women and children.

"Pakistan deplores Israel's actions as war crimes against the people of Gaza and emphasizes the urgent need for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to prevent further civilian casualties," she stressed. Spokesperson Baloch informed the media that the government had appointed Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East and SIFC) Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh as Pakistan's Ambassador to Washington and Asim Iftikhar, currently serving as Pakistan's envoy in France,

as Pakistan's Additional Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. She apprised the media of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar's address at the Institute of Strategic Studies here wherein he called for leveraging Pakistan's strategic location and advocating for international cooperation over confrontation, with firm support for multilateralism, promoting peaceful relations and regional stability to foster sustainable economic development.



QUETTA: A delegation of Zamindar Action Committee led by Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti

Khurshheed Shah floats proposal of 4-year govt constitutional term

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) senior leader Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah on Friday reiterated his proposal of a four-year constitutional term for a government.

"If we want the system to function properly, the term of the government and assemblies should be four years," Khurshheed Shah said in statement.

"Although the term is said to be five years, in reality, the government has never lasted more than three and a half to four years," he added.

Khurshheed Shah recalled that about a decade ago, the then Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had also suggested that the four-year term should apply from the next government, and "I had proposed that we should make the constitutional amendment for the purpose now."

He said the government's four-year term would bring stability in the system and institutions. "The first three years will pass peacefully, and in the fourth year, everyone will start preparing for elections anyway," he maintained. Khurshheed Shah urged both the government and opposition benches to sit together and take a consensus decision regarding the government's four-year term.

Balochistan CM assures ZAC's delegation to solve issues of farmers

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Friday assured the representatives of Zamindar Action Committee (ZAC) that provincial government was taking serious steps to address issues of farmers which being faced by them in the areas.

He shared these views on Friday while talking to a delegation of ZAC led by its Chairman Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani called on him here.

The Delegation apprised the Chief Minister about the problems of farmers saying that farmers were facing difficulties due to massive power load shedding in the province.

Speaking to the members of the delegation, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the case of the landlords effectively rose before the federation, despite the progress made to a large extent, the call for a strike was regrettable.

He said that the case of the landlords of Balochistan was taken up in the Federation as the lawyer of the landlords.

The Zamindar Action Committee announced to end the ongoing strike across the province after assuring the CM in the meeting. Chairman Zamindar Action Committee (ZAC) Malik Naseer Ahmed Shahwani assured

that the strike would end after Friday prayers.

Earlier, on the appeal of the Zamindar Action Committee, farmers across Balochistan blocked the National Highway including Karachi-Quetta, Kharan, Kolpur, and Nushki others Highway against 21 hours power load shedding at agricultural feeders.

Passengers were being faced difficulties due to the closure of national highways and several vehicles were stuck on the highways.

The protester farmers demanded that the government should provide at least 6 hours of electricity to the landlords as promised load shedding.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Elite class to be brought to tax....

Continued from page 1

Expressing satisfaction over the economic situation, the prime minister said the country's economy had now been put on the right path and that Pakistan's journey of prosperity had begun.

PM Shehbaz Sharif further said due to the business friendly policies of the government, the trust of the investors had been restored on the government.

He said the government was taking steps to bring reforms in the government departments and privatize the loss making State Owned Entities on priority.

APP adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday questioned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its failure to establish the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) despite receiving Rs590 billion during the last 14 years.

The prime minister, responding to a point of order raised by Sunni Ittehad Council member and former NA Speaker Asad Qaiser, highlighted that under the NFC, an additional one percent share was allocated for the KP province just to augment its efforts against terrorism. He said the last NFC Award was agreed upon in 2010 by the government of Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani when terrorism was at its peak and the KP province suffered the most, followed

by Balochistan and other provinces.

The prime minister said that KP people had been the frontline soldiers against terrorism which would always be remembered.

He said the additional one percent share for KP in NFC was still intact and no other province including Balochistan got such funds nor objected to it despite immense sacrifices by their law enforcement agencies and people against terrorism.

He told the House that from 2010 till now, the KP province had received Rs590 billion but could not yet establish the CTD for which the funds were mainly allocated.

This also needs to be looked into as why the CTD is still incomplete there despite getting such huge funds, he remarked.

Coming to another objection by the opposition member, the prime minister told the House that the federal government had forwarded a panel of three persons, as per tradition, asking the KP government to choose one officer for appointment as Chief Secretary which they have not decided so far.

He also offered to revise the panel if the provincial government desired so but rubbished the allegation of any discrimination against the province.

NA passes....

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understanding of Pakistan's political and electoral processes. It highlighted the enthusiastic participation of millions of Pakistanis in the general elections held on February 8, 2024, as evidence of the country's vibrant democracy.

The NA also asserted Pakistan's status as an independent and sovereign nation, rejecting any external interference in its internal affairs. It viewed the US House's action as an attempt to undermine the state's autonomy. In a call for a broader perspective, the NA urged the US Congress to focus on more pressing global issues, such as the ongoing acts of genocide in Gaza, human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), and state-sanctioned atrocities against minorities, particularly Muslims, in India.

It called on the international community to take immediate steps to alleviate the suffering of people in Gaza and IIOJK.

The NA reaffirmed its commitment to strong, cooperative bilateral relations with the US, grounded in mutual respect and sovereign equality. It expressed hope that future actions by the US Congress would focus on constructive collaboration for the mutual benefit of both nations.

SC withdraws show-case notices of Vawda, Mustafa Kamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Friday accepted the unconditional apology of Senator Faisal Vawda and Mustafa Kamal of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, and withdrew its show-cause notice in the contempt case.

A three-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the case.

Mustafa Kamal's lawyer Barrister Farogh Naseem adopted the stance that his client had tendered an unconditional apology and also expressed his regret in a press conference.

The chief justice asked Faisal Vawda whether his lawyer had not come and whether he had also sought an apology. Vawda answered in the affirmative.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani unveiling the plaque during the launch of Annual Sustainability Report 2023, jointly organized by the SDPI and CCCPK held at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS), in Islamabad.

NA passes Finance Bill-2024....

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general discussion on the budget.

However, the National Assembly smoothly continued debate on the Finance Bill, 2024 for eight days.

The formal debate started on June 20, 2024 that continued till June 27, 2024. The House also discussed recommendations of the Senate.

Minister of Finance Muhammad Aurangzaib termed the budget 2024-25 as growth budget and said it was based on a well-thought-out strategy to boost the economic growth.

He said that the budget for the next fiscal year was aimed at narrowing the fiscal deficit by expanding the government's revenues and cutting unnecessary expenditures. Muhammad Aurangzaib reiterated the government's commitment to increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio to 13 percent, which currently stands at a low 9.5 percent.

He said that the country had achieved macroeconomic stability. He highlighted that the economic indicators, including the current account, fiscal deficit, inflation, and foreign exchange reserves, were stable and under control.

He outlined the government's plan to continue this economic stability into the next fiscal year, aiming to lead the country towards sustainable economic growth.

He also called for reconstructing and digitizing the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to ensure high GDP target. He said that the concept of non-filers would be eliminated from the tax system, making it mandatory

for everyone to pay taxes. The minister expressed the government's resolve to curb tax evasion and expand the tax net, particularly targeting retailers and the real estate sector.

He said that the current account deficit had decreased, the fiscal deficit was under control, and the country had foreign reserves of \$9 billion, providing an import cover for two months.

He highlighted a significant reduction in inflation, from 38 percent to 11 percent, and sustained food inflation at two percent. He said that no tax had been imposed on the solar.

The Finance Minister said that cardiology stents, surgical items, books, printing, and items and in FATA and PATA region had been granted tax exemptions.

He said that tax exemptions could not be granted for packaged milk that did not meet quality standards. He said that these tax exemptions for education and health sectors were provided despite the challenging economic conditions.

Opposition leader in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub, along with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Gohar Ali Khan and Sunni Ittehad Council leader Ali Muhammad said relevant stakeholders were not taken on board during the formulation of the bill.

Omar Ayub said: "The finance bill fails to address the critical economic challenges faced by the country and has been drafted without adequate consultation with the key stakeholders."

Gohar Ali Khan said: "This bill is not reflective of the people's aspirations or the country's economic realities."

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzaib on Friday said that tax exemption has been retained on medical surgery equipment including other health and education inputs.

The finance minister said cardiology stents, school books and printing stuff, cardiology surgery and Ex. Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATAs) tax exemptions were retained.

Meanwhile, participating in the discussion on the budget 2024-25, in the National Assembly, he said "We all need pure milk for the good health of the people, but tax exemption cannot be given on packed milk which is not according to the health standard."

Aurangzeb said that the tax exemption for education and health was given in very difficult economic conditions.

The minister said that teacher research has also been given tax exemption which has also been given in the finance bill 2024-25.

He said that tax exemption has also been made in the agriculture and fertilizer Sector for providing relief. He said that there were high taxes on the salary class which have been normalized now.

The minister said "we need to increase tax to Gross Domestic Production (GDP) to 13%, which currently stood at 9.5%. He said that if the country wants to move towards Self-Reliance and go to the last program of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) then revenue collection need to be enhanced.



QUETTA: Senior Journalist Shahzada Zulfiqar meeting with Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

CS calls for taking joint measures for....

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from July 1 in different districts of the province, here on Friday.

The Secretary Health, Provincial Coordinator of the Emergency Operation Center for Polio Eradication, Syed Zahid Shah as well as other concerned high ups and representatives of the WHO, UNICEF and other organizations were in attendance.

During the briefing, it was informed that the special anti-polio campaign is due to start from July 1 in 16 districts of the province. The seven-day campaign is being started after presence of the polio virus in the province.

It has been targeted to

vaccinate 0.95148 million children below five years of age in the targeted districts.

More than 3,000 teams would take part in the polio immunization campaign. In addition to them, there would also be 326 fix sites and 222 transit site teams.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary said that all resources are being mobilized to ensure eradication of the polio virus completely.

He said that the anti-polio campaign is very important for stopping spread of the polio virus.

He assured that the foolproof security would be provided to the teams taking part in the campaign.

He made pledge to make the anti-polio campaign successful this time by any means.

He stressed that we have to make access to each and every child in the campaign to vaccinate against polio virus.

He particularly directed to pay attention on the children at the transit points besides those left from being vaccinated during the campaign.

He also urged to convince the parents refusing the anti-polio vaccine to their children. He also sought the role of religious leaders, tribal elders and elites for making the anti-polio campaign successful.

prospects of foreign investment in this sector are also bright, especially the car manufacturing companies around the world are already interested in investing in the car sector here, he said.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of showroom owners led by Haji Muhammad Umar Khilji at Governor House Quetta.

On this occasion, Governor Balochistan expressed his belief that if the government provides necessary opportunities and facilities to local investors and businessmen and industrialists of Balochistan with inter-

national reputation, that day was not far away.

When Balochistan's own investors and showroom owners will set up car manufacturing plants on their own or in partnership, apart from economic development, new employment opportunities will also be created, he added.

The delegation of showroom owners presented their demands to Governor Balochistan and requested him to restore their revoked trade licenses and sealed showrooms would be opened, unnecessary restrictions on business should be removed and free business should be allowed,

No one would set right...

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Khaliq Achakzai was in the chair.

The Chief Minister maintained that the release of funds would be started for development schemes from July 1, 2024.

He said that we would spend Rs. 229 billion on development in next financial year.

He mentioned that 79 schemes of the province had been sent to the federal government for inclusion in the federal PSDP, however, our two schemes were approved.

He announced that several federal schemes would be seen while completing in the next financial year. He said that our accountability would be started from July 1.

He said that we would hold special sessions on education, health and law and order in the province. He said that the members of assembly have to suggest improvement in the concerned departments.

He said that we have allocated Rs. 130 billion for education sector, however, we have to look the benefit of these funds.

He said that he bring every matter in the assembly so that the House take lead on it.

He said that there game of ping pong is going on between ours and the Higher Education Commission. He said that we don't have enough money for the salaries of employees of universities, but new departments are being opened there. However, we are bringing scholarship programme in the educa-

tion sector, he added. The scholarships would also be offered to the transgender community and minorities, he informed.

He on an occasion said that the law and order is the biggest issue for us.

The Chief Minister also said that we are providing Rs. 100 billion for treatment of the people of province. And if we provide the same Rs. 100 billion to Agha Khan Hospital, the treatment of people of the whole province can be done there (in Agha Khan Hospital), he added.

He said that we are going to give many hospitals under the Public-Private Partnership in the province.

He said that we have to strengthen the local government system for resolving issues of the province. This is why, 100 percent raise has been made in budget of the local government in next financial year.

He also announced that the Green bus service is being expanded.

The Chief Minister said that the corruption is the biggest issue of Pakistan and Balochistan as such he has plan to strengthen the anti-corruption establishment.

Referring Quetta, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that Quetta is just our face, we all live here, so cleanliness is necessary in the city.

He said that we have collected and dumped the garbage heaps of last 10/15 years from the city.

He also announced to visit remote areas of the province.

Later, the session was adjourned till 11:00 AM today (Saturday).



ANKARA: Ambassador H.E Dr Yousaf Junaidd receiving Mayor of Ankara H.E Mansur Yavas at Pakistan Rice Festival.

Upcoming monsoon rains to cause devastating floods: Romina Alam

Relief camps established in vulnerable areas should be widely advert

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday stressed that the upcoming monsoon rains could lead to devastating floods, whereas relief camps established in vulnerable areas should be widely advertised to ensure access for potential victims.

The Coordinator to PM on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination made these remarks while chairing the meeting

of task force on global warming and heat waves here.

Romina emphasized the importance of utilizing all available media platforms, including digital, electronic, radio, and mosque loudspeakers to effectively communicate information about the relief camps. She highlighted the urgent need for protective measures against the severe threats of heat waves and floods to food, health, and the economy along with the need for collaborative ef-

orts to face these calamities, stating that "hazards cannot be stopped but can be handled".

Furthermore, she urged the authorities to address the pressing issue of tree cutting and the dumping of trees in nullahs, as these actions can lead to damage to bridges during floods in KPK and Kashmir. The decisions made in the earlier two meetings of the task force held on 7th and 14 June were reviewed in detail. She said, "The departments contributing in my efforts to overcome socio-economic impacts are my team and assured of Ministry's all possible support at all levels so as the country's disaster vulnerability is lessened through coordinated efforts among the federal and provincial departments including national and provincial disaster management authorities, health, education, agriculture, water and energy departments." She said well-coordinated disaster risk mitigation or prevention measures are required.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Senate Standing Committee for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman posing for a group photograph along with participants during the seminar titled "Building Resilience by Strengthening the Community (BRSC) - II Project".



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid, meets KfW Development Bank mission, headed by Dr. Patrick Rudolf, at BISP Headquarters Islamabad.

AOA gathers in Istanbul to promote human rights, good governance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi said that Ombudsman Institutions constitute a global fraternity which can play an effective role in improving the quality of life for the common man through better governance.

Ombudsman Institution has a direct bearing on the realization of the overall goals, principally the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and good governance in all spheres of life.

Qureshi emphasized the need for greater sharing of experiences and best practices to the mutual advantage of all stakeholders. "The commonly shared objectives are worth striving for and we should make a conscious effort for their realization", he observed.

He expressed the con-

fidence that such exchanges amongst the Ombudsman Institutions would lead to further refining and streamlining the systems and procedures for addressing maladministration, bureaucratic bottlenecks and systemic issues.

He thanked the Board of Directors (BoD) for expressing confidence and trust in Pakistan's contribution in promoting the cause of Ombudsmanhood to realize the ultimate objectives of good governance and the rule of law besides the invariability of human rights.

BISP, KfW join hands to educate masses on mother, child health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and KfW Development Bank will join hands to disseminate awareness about mother and child health in line with Benazir Nashonuma initiative.

This was discussed during a meeting of Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid with the KfW Development Bank mission at BISP headquarters on Friday.

stunting among women beneficiaries and their children under Benazir Nashonuma.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Patrick Rudolf, Head of Division in Health, KfW Frankfurt, Anna Berzovskaja, Portfolio Manager in Health and Social Protection, Dr. Matthias Nachtnebel, Technical Advisor, Dr. Masuma Zaidi, Senior Sector Specialist, KfW Pakistan, Additional Secretary Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor, and DG NSER/CCT Naveed Akbar.

Chairperson Rubina Khalid proposed collaborative initiatives with KfW to raise awareness about nutritious food and the benefits of breastfeeding for newborns.

Modi govt deploys more troops in IIOJK in name of Amarnath security

ISLAMABAD (APP): BJP-led Indian government has deployed more troops in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IIOJK) under the guise of providing security for Hindu pilgrims attending the Amarnath Yatra with the actual aim of instilling fear among the local population.

According to Kashmir Media Service, more than 100 companies of Indian forces' personnel have been deployed along the Pahalgam route, and another 90 companies along the Baltal route in the Kashmir Valley. The 52-day Hindu pilgrimage is commencing from the twin tracks on June 29 (Saturday) and ending on August 19.

Humid weather to continue; rain likely at isolated places: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Friday forecast mainly hot and humid weather in most parts of the country during the next 24 hours.

However, rain-wind-storm/thundershower was expected at isolated places in Kashmir, northeast Punjab, Pothohar region, Islamabad, upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, southeast Sindh, northeast/south Balochistan, the PMD added.

Light rain/drizzle was also likely at isolated places in coastal areas of Sindh.

According to the synoptic situation, "a low lies over the north Arabian Sea and adjoining areas of southeast Sindh and is likely to persist during next 24-30 hours". Weak monsoon currents were penetrating in upper/central parts of the country.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami hold a protest against the highly inflated electricity bills, at sector I-9 in the Federal Capital.

Preparations underway for pilgrimage to holy shrines in Iran, Iraq

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the mourning days of Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S) approach, preparations are in full swing for the visits to the holy shrines in Iran and Iraq.

"The Iranian Headquarters of Arbaeen has taken various measures to welcome visitors from other countries, with a special focus on the friendly and brotherly nation of Pakistan," the Iranian Embassy said in a statement on Friday.

pilgrimage during the holy month of Muharram.

The embassy said, "Those interested in visiting the holy shrines from June 27 to July 8, can travel to Iraq via Iran with a valid double-entry visa."

"Additionally, those planning to participate in the Arbaeen Procession from July 9 to August 22, can travel to Iraq through Iran with an Iranian double-entry visa, provided they possess a valid Iraqi visa," it added.

To accommodate the high number of pilgrims at the common borders, the Iranian Arbaeen Headquarters advised the Pakistani pilgrims to first obtain an Iraqi visa before applying for an Iranian visa.

"This can be done at any of the five Iranian missions located in Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, and Quetta," the embassy said.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam chairing a meeting of task force on global warming and heat waves.

PML-N leader terms political stability vital for achieving economic strength

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Leader, Syeda Nosheen Iftikha Friday stressed the need of political stability to achieve economic strength and urged the opposition to work collectively with the government for strengthening the country by setting aside personal agendas.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that political stability and social harmony were two essential elements which would only ensure progress of the country, adding, if there

was a conflict in society then no policy could yield positive results.

The PML-N leader said the credit of bringing the economy of the country on the right track went to PML-N leadership, adding, It was hoped that situation would further improve in the coming months and inflation would be reduced. She also lauded that the government had presented a highly balanced budget with its limited resources to strengthen economy and open new doors of development.

PBM launches first-ever Business Facilitation Centre under WISE project

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a historic move, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), in collaboration with Islamic Relief (IR) has introduced its first-ever Business Facilitation Centre under Women Initiative for Skill Enhancement (WISE) project, in a ceremony held here on Friday.

Regional Program Coordinator-Asia from Islamic Relief Worldwide, Haney Masood inaugurated Business Facilitation Centre in the presence of PBM Directors Muhammad Hussain and Saima Wadood along with the trainers and trainees of the Women Empowerment Centre.

The initiative has sketched the outline of three months training to at least 120 poor and deserv-

ing girls in various trades including digital marketing, art and craft, stitching and beautician at Women Empowerment Centre of PBM.

Speaking on the occasion, Regional Program Coordinator, Islamic Relief Haney Masood appreciated the PBM's efforts to support the deprived populace of the country.

He said the WISE project focused on uplifting marginalized women by equipping them with marketable skills that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

On the occasion, PBM's Director Administration, Muhammad Hussain expressed his gratitude to Islamic Relief for extending their generous support and cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan addresses to the Concluding Ceremony of International Conference on Uplifting Mental Health of Vulnerable Segments of Population.

Edu ministry partners with CERP to enhance teaching quality

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has collaborated with CERP to fulfil the goals of the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE) program and to address the urgent need for high-quality teachers' training and development in Pakistan.

The signing ceremony in that regard was attended by the Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Federal Secretary Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, held here Friday.

As per the collaboration, NIETE aims to uplift teaching standards through rigorous training programs that utilize technology and modern pedagogical methods. This partnership will also help mitigate educational disparities and resource constraints, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

The program focuses on integrating digital literacy, retraining teachers, and improving the quality of learning through digital infrastructure and innovative technologies.

CERP, with its distinguished expertise in conducting impartial evaluations, will measure and validate the benefits of the project to both teachers and students.

Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool said, "Education plays a formative role in adding value to Pakistan's human capital development. It starts with not only bringing more children into the classroom but ensuring that once they get there, the quality of education is of a high standard".

Govt taking revolutionary initiatives to empower youth; Chairman PMYP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan has said that the government was committed to empowering youth through several revolutionary initiatives and was taking crucial steps for the betterment of the youth.

Addressing the 16th National Youth Forum organized by the Pakistan Girls Guide Association here Friday, he said that a National Youth Council was being formed to include the youth in the policy-making, development and governance engagements.

He said Pakistan has a talented youth and has a pivotal role in advancing the country towards fast-paced development.

"We are dedicated to preparing our youth to excel in diverse fields, from technology-driven industries to traditional crafts. This holistic approach will enable them to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's socio-economic development," he added.

The Chairman PMYP further elaborated that the PML-N Punjab government had devised a policy to provide 5,000 E-bikes to females while the government was making efforts to provide free-of-interest

laptops to students from banks on soft instalments.

Rana Mashood said that a comprehensive approach such as skills development, education, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability was being formulated for the empowerment of youth.

He said that today's youth are the leaders of tomorrow and the government was making all-out efforts to make them skilled in every sphere of life.

He urged the youth to actively participate in constructive activities to contribute to the creation of a peaceful and healthy society.

NA passes amendment to Elections Bill-2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Friday passed an amendment to the Elections Act, 2017 (The Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024).

The bill was moved by Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Briefing the lawmakers, he said the amendment was aimed at expediting the settlement of petitions pertaining to elections of the National Assembly, the Senate, provincial assemblies, and local governments.

He explained that due to the workload on serving judges, the proposed amendment seeks to restore the original provision of Section 140, making retired high court judges eligible for appointment as members of election tribunals.

24th Arab radio, TV festival begins in Tunis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 24th Arab Radio and Television Festival commenced last Wednesday in the Tunisian capital of Tunis.

According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA) organized by the Arab States Broadcasting Union in collaboration with Tunisian radio and television institutions and the Arabsat Foundation, the event saw participation from representatives of the union's member bodies, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as representatives from Arab production companies, private news agencies, foreign Arabic-speaking radio and television stations, and private radio and television networks, along with international radio and television unions. During the initiation ceremony, the president of the Arab Radio and Television Union and CEO of the Radio and Television Authority, Mohammed bin Fahd Al-Harithi, honored several distinguished guests, including former advisor to the Radio and Television Authority Saad Al-Jaris, as well as several media figures and academics in the field of Arab radio and television.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar exchanging views with Donald Blome, Ambassador of United States to Pakistan during meeting held at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

BEOE advises emigrants to reach out only valid OEPs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The officials of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) have advised the foreign job-seekers to only reach out the valid Overseas Employment Promoters to avert any loss of time, money and their energies.

An official source told APP here on Friday, there were only 2,577 Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) licenses were valid as more than 5048 licenses had been pronounced invalid.

Out of the invalid OEPs, licenses of some 670 were cancelled on various grounds while 805 were expired and rest of them had surrendered.

They said all the foreign job-seekers must visit to the official web-page of

the bureau regularly to get fresh and valid information and protect themselves from unauthorised OEPs.

The officials said that the BEOE was mandated to regulate emigration under the Emigration Ordinance, 1979, promote Emigration of Pakistani citizens and look after the interest and welfare of the emigrants.

Among other functions, the BEOE had been advising the federal government on migration policies and procedures, monitoring and supervision of Overseas Employment Promoters through 7 Protectorates of Emigrants Offices, processing of Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) licences and giving pre-departure briefing to emigrants.



ISLAMABAD: Traffic wardens issue fine tickets to the motorcyclists without helmet in middle of a road at Blue area, in the Federal Capital.

Ministry of Hajj, Umrah holds first meeting for Umrah Season 1446 AH

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has recently held a meeting with Umrah companies and institutions to prepare for the upcoming Umrah season 1446H.

According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA) Vice Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Abdullah bin Sulaiman Mushaat emphasized the ministry's commitment to achieving excellence through collaboration with all partners and sectors.

The focus is on enhancing the private sector's services and prioritizing visitors' and pilgrims' comfort and safety to the Two Holy Mosques.

Cooperation between the ministry and Umrah

companies and institutions is vital to ensure high-quality services for pilgrims worldwide he added.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the partnership with the private sector and align with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals. Participants discussed empowering more pilgrims, improving their experience through innovative services, developing electronic platforms, and facilitating the licensing process for Umrah services throughout the year.

The meeting addressed initiatives to enhance service quality and the digital experience and ensure compliance with standards through digital monitoring and tracking of pilgrims.

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PM spurned

An attempt by the prime minister, perhaps a tad belated, to mend fences with the PTI has been shot down before it could take flight. The PTI seems to be in no mood for any talks with the government until its incarcerated workers and leaders, including former PM Imran Khan, have been released by the state. In answer to PM Shehbaz Sharif's surprise offer for dialogue, made during the Wednesday session in the National Assembly, PTI lawmakers, one after the other, recounted the indignities they had been made to suffer by the state.

Their anger was justified; still, it was an unfortunate response to an otherwise positive development. It now seems the door has closed on the possibility of a quick political breakthrough. The acrid hostility between the government and opposition has festered for too long, and unless one side softens its position, a messy show-down seems inevitable.

In retrospect, the government's biggest folly was believing that the PTI would eventually break under the same repressive tactics used against its own leaders in the past. However, while these tactics were initially able to cut the PTI to size, the party endured.

Further, the Feb 8 election made clear that the Pakistani citizenry was rallying against the tactics employed by the state. This should have been signal enough for a new government battling for legitimacy to immediately launch the reconciliation process and prevent further victimisation of its political opponents. It chose not to.

To make matters worse, over the past few weeks, at least two different PML-N lawmakers signalled that the government was now considering 'extending' Mr Khan's detention, presumably through freshly fabricated cases. This seemed like a deliberately provocative act by a party that still does not realise it is on very thin ice.

The government should realise that intimidation, coercion and fear tactics have only worsened the political disequilibrium and precipitated even stronger feelings of social unrest. They have also weakened its moral position and emboldened the PTI to dictate terms.

If the prime minister is serious about turning a new page, he must ensure the release of all political prisoners forthwith and make sure the PTI is allowed to function just like any other political party. This simple gesture alone will earn him much-needed goodwill and help create an environment more conducive to talks.

On the other hand, the PTI must not set rigid conditions that may preclude a meaningful dialogue. This country does not 'belong' to any particular political entity or political leader: people ascribing to all hues of political opinion should be given equal respect.

Talks must be welcomed and given a fair chance simply because no government can endure in Pakistan without first securing some guarantee from its opponents on political stability.

Zafar Mirza

Since the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978, there has been much rhetoric from the World Health Organisation (WHO) about primary healthcare, but little organised and specific guidance from it on how to practically implement PHC in the context of different countries.

However, it appears that the WHO PHC Special Programme, based at the organisation's headquarters, has done a good job by finally producing the first volume of the PHC global report titled Implementing the Primary Health Care Approach: a Primer.

It goes without saying that no country can improve its vital health indicators, prevent diseases and address the determinants of health without PHC. It is the foundation of universal health coverage, and yet we spend around 70 per cent of our health budget on tertiary-level healthcare, which is primarily curative.

Basically, we continue to treat in big hospitals at a very high cost what could be prevented at the PHC level at a very low cost. We treat the failure of PHC in

big hospitals with the help of specialists. One doesn't need to be Aristotle to understand this simple fact; yet nothing changes. There are many reasons for this tragedy, ranging from the political economy to education, the training of health professionals, and many others. But the fact remains that, in our minds, we equate PHC with poor healthcare for poor people. PHC is less sexy, less remunerative, and away from the power centres of healthcare.

In 1978, the WHO and Unicef joined hands to convene an international conference on PHC in Kazakhstan, which was then a part of the communist Soviet Union. The same conference was reorganised in 2018 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Alma-Ata Declaration. In the intervening four decades, Alma-Ata had become Almaty, and the Soviet republic the independent republic of Kazakhstan, driven by a market economy. In these 40 years, a selective PHC approach based on vertical and unsustainable health programmes had pushed aside the holistic

PHC approach, which had active community engagement.

In recent years, however, under the leadership of Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the dynamic WHO director general, a resurgence of PHC has been witnessed in the organisation. Dr Tedros set up a special programme on PHC, which started drilling deeper into the theory and practice of PHC around the world. A series of documents was produced at the time of the Almaty conference, and now this wonderful work has been produced.

It is co-produced by the WHO and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. It is a work of significance and edited by six editors, including a dear former WHO colleague from Pakistan, Dr Khalid Faraz, with 69 authors from all continents. This almost 500-page, comprehensive work is divided into three parts and 17 chapters. Part one is about the PHC approach — its foundations, history and concepts; part two is about implementation; and

part three deals with the impact on performance. Each chapter, under the same template, which consists of five sections — key messages, introduction, evidence review, country illustrations and conclusion.

As an example, the chapter on health financing under part two (implementation), begins by providing a list of 12 key messages, which in a way summarises the chapter. One of the key messages, for example, is that using pooled funds to pay for PHC (and avoiding out-of-pocket payments) is more equitable.

The introduction explains the key health financing functions: revenue collection; pooling; allocation; purchasing; coverage policies from financing perspective; and purchasing arrangements.

The section on evidence first explains PHC expenditures and how they are measured, and provides there is a list of around 80 references which cover more or less all the impor-

tant sources of evidence on health financing for PHC from across the world.

All 17 chapters are produced in the same pattern, covering almost all major topics in PHC. These include: 'the PHC approach: an introduction'; 'historical overview and unrealised potential of PHC'; 'PHC: definitions, terminology and frameworks'; 'the PHC approach: rationale for orienting health systems'; 'integrating public health and primary care at the core of the PHC approach'; 'PHC-oriented models of care'; 'health governance'; 'health and care workforce'; 'health financing'; 'medicines and pharmaceutical services'; 'health technologies'; 'health infrastructure'; 'information systems and digital solutions'; 'the impact of PHC on efficiency and quality of care'; 'the impact of PHC on equity, access and financial protection'; 'the impact of PHC on resilience and environmental sustainability'; and 'implementing the PHC approach: summary and conclusions'. -- Courtesy Dawn

Until now too long

Educating the privileged

Farid Panjwani

The state of education in Pakistan is nothing short of a crisis. Arguably, 95 per cent of school-age children are either not in schools or receiving sub-standard education.

Most conversations and reforms, consequently, focus on the circumstances of the majority, and particularly out-of-school children. But, what also matters is the education of the remaining 5pc, approximately three million children, studying in institutions capable of giving excellent education. A nation's fate hinges on the character and capacity of what Martin Luther King Jr calls a "creative dedicated minority".

Today, 95pc of kids are not getting a good education partly because of the decisions of a privileged minority of yesterday. The fate of the country over the coming decades will depend significantly on the choices of those who will become the elite in the coming years.

Privileged here refers not only to those who are directly in power but also

to the intellectual, civil and economic notables who influence public and private decision-making. Societies are almost always under elite capture, with a small group wielding disproportionate power to decide or influence policy and resource distribution.

The real question, then, is about the nature of these elites. Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan philosopher, bifurcates them: the elite of leisure and the elite of labour.

The elite of leisure "minimises social commitment and exertion and is placed in a situation in which it can pursue a life of comfort without worrying about social disapproval. Elite of labour, on the other hand, is one which finds it necessary to justify its elite status by providing effective leadership and by setting an example of hard work through its own behaviour and performance".

For now, it seems the education of the privileged in Pakistan is driven by economic goals of lucrative jobs inside or outside the country. The entire system works under

the shadow of economics, which transforms education primarily into an investment that needs to be recouped in due course. This is a recipe for creating the elites of leisure, in Mazrui's terms.

What kind of education is likely to turn this privileged group of 3m children into an elite of labour?

As a conversation starter, I propose the following: To begin with, there should be no compromise on the quality of scientific, mathematical, artistic and literary education. However, this academically rigorous education should happen in the crucible of equity and emancipation.

For example, economics education should question the highly skewed distribution of wealth and control over resources, the causes of poverty, and the link between wealth and politics. Integrated in the teaching of technology must be the moral questions it raises, its social consequences, and its link with economics. Literature should go beyond canon and include writers who bring to the fore-

front the lives of the dispossessed and exploited. All this and more to help the young grasp the historical and contemporary structures and power relations shaping the visible state of the world.

This segues into nurturing empathy, which is the seam stitching academic tools with the realities of the downtrodden. Beyond books, this can be done through projects and research, which can help get in the shoes of those whose lives need to be touched with a spark of hope. It will show that material success and failures are almost never individualistic. Social structures and moral luck play a key role in what one achieves. For Aristotle, educating the mind without educating the heart was no education. For us, it is a recipe for producing clever monsters.

There is much stress on the ideal of critical thinking. Arguably, the best roads to critical thinking are philosophy and history. The former helps raise first-order questions and scrutinise the premise of knowledge claims, while the latter

helps create a cognitive distance from the present, the here and now, allowing for its critical interrogation. These should be a significant part of education.

Excellent communication skills with a desire to speak honestly and courageously is yet another ability that the privileged should have. Exposure to those who spoke truth to power, from biblical prophets to modern-day whistleblowers, can be very inspiring for young idealistic minds. An equally important area is physical health and fitness. A life of social responsibility is often born of physical hard work.

A major educational concern these days is the dwindling attention span and decreasing capacity to memorise. Without the ability to pay attention, no great achievement is possible in any field. Halting the weakening of these capacities should also be an aim of education. Here, meditative habits and the prudent use of screen time, particularly in early education, is of immense value.

Until now too long

Defying nature

Zubeida Mustafa

It seems that the guardians of our morality believe a major threat to Pakistan's existence comes from its transgender citizens. A considerable section of religious scholars is unable to explain how a small community of 10,478 (census 2023) vulnerable souls can pose a danger to some 240 million who constitute the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

With their lively imagination, they conjure up all sorts of hypothetical situations that they believe will destroy the moral fibre of the nation. It is strange that those who actually resort to both illegal and immoral actions escape the wrath of our religious scholars. When have they called a conference or uttered a word of condemnation when women are gang-raped, little girls sexually abused and murdered, and thousands of young women trafficked in an illegal multimillion-dollar trade with the connivance of the police? Does their silence on such matters indicate a tacit acceptance of these horrific crimes? But when there is talk of the constitutional rights of the transgender community, it throws them into a state of moral panic. Is this not bizarre?

In a convention held recently in Kara-chi, a section of the clergy lost no time in denouncing some provisions of the Trans-gender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018, that has been in force for the last six years. To put the record straight, it must be mentioned that this Act has been approved by the Council of Islamic Ideology, while the Supreme Court accepted the principle of self-determination in matters of gender identity/expression in 2012 and Nadra has been issuing CNICs in accordance with

the court's ruling.

The aim, it seems, is to reverse the few gains the transgender persons had managed to win after a hard struggle. We saw some fundamentalist elements belatedly file a petition in the Federal Shariat Court challenging the 2018 Act and labelling it un-Islamic. In 2023, the court gave a verdict turning down the self-determination clause and requiring a transgender person's gender to be identified by a medical board. Transgender persons understandably consider this violative of their dignity.

Now, these elements are claiming that they had been 'deceived' and that the 'nation is a victim of a big "fitna"'. These are serious charges against the Supreme Court that had set the ball rolling for the transgender community at a time when internationally the trend had been to reform gender recognition laws. According to TGEU (Transgender Europe), "Self-determination is growing in popularity as a model. Gender self-determination means that a person can change gender marker and name on official documents through an easy administrative process. The change is based on the person's self-determined gender identity. No third party is required."

Since the government has mercifully appealed against the FSC verdict, these conservative elements are in a fix. They now want the government to withdraw its appeal. They even speak of launching a movement against the law protecting the rights of the transgender community. According to the participants of the convention, the Act is a guise to encourage homosexuality and obscenity.

These are trying times for the transgender community. A large number of them have been

single out and killed since 2021, when the hate campaign against them reached fever pitch. They feel insecure, and this has hampered their progress. After the passage of the 2018 Act, the rights activists failed to sustain their campaign to create awareness about the transgender community. Social prejudice against them has still to be rooted out. Many religious parties have taken advantage of this situation and are whipping up hatred against non-binary people.

I feel sad and call up Bindiya Rana, the pioneer of the transgender movement in Pak-istan. She is depressed. "Three transgender persons have been murdered recently," she tells me. "And do you know who their killers were? They were her own siblings, who have no love for their sister." Bindiya feels that the Transgender Persons Act needs to be strengthened and not undermined. It should have a provision for punishing parents who abandon a transgender child before s/he reaches adulthood. But here are some conservative elements trying to make life more difficult for them.

I agree and point out that the real danger comes from bigotry and obscurantism. Those born with birth defects cannot hurt this country. Bindiya remains calm and has no harsh words for her tormentors, who reject her humanity. After all, she is God's creation, and what she has been denied is compensated by her generosity of spirit and sagacity. Bindiya reminds me of the words of the transgender protagonist of Arundhati Roy's book, Ministry of Utmost Happiness: "The word Hijra... meant a Body in which a Holy Soul lives." -- Courtesy Dawn

Death-worth rule

Shahzad Sharjeel

Ask anyone what a human life is worth, and answers would range between 'priceless', 'incalculable', and 'more than all the gold in the world'. Incalculable nihilists would say 'worthless', and the philosophical-minded would lead you astray with gems like 'every breath is a transaction, decide the price and pay the cost'.

Philosophy and romanticism aside, this is a practical question that governments and organisations grapple with daily.

That one's life is not considered equal in worth to someone else's is an unsettling realisation and sounds unfair. But then, such is the nature of our existence. It was reported in the media recently that families of five foreign workers killed in a terrorist attack in Kohistan some months back would each receive a little more than half a million US dollars in compensation from the government. Going by the exchange rate, this would roughly equal a little less than Rs14 crore per family. Meanwhile, the family of the Pakistani driver who was also killed in the attack would get Rs2.5 m. The huge gap between the two amounts notwithstanding, both are insufficient because the victims and relations and emotions associated with them are irreplaceable. However, from another perspective, the driver and his family were shortchanged. Unfortunately, life is more complex than emotions; all else being 'unequal' applies more to it than the ceteris paribus so often referred to by economists.

It can take the authorities several years to process claims and determine compensation. Why? Because the con-

cerned bodies have the unenviable task of determining the 'worth' of each life lost. Economic and non-economic losses are considered. The former consists of losses in expected income in case of death or decreases resulting from disability. The non-economic losses include pain, trauma, and short- to long-term psychological impacts. To assess economic losses, factors like the victim's age, academic qualification, means of livelihood, income at the time of death/disability, health condition, and life expectancy are all factored in to extrapolate their earnings from what is determined to be their expected working life.

Depending upon local laws and other factors, more or different factors may be thrown in or removed from the equation. Back to the incident in Kohistan, a 30-year-old driver earning, let us assume, Rs35,000 a month will not earn more than a 50-year-old engineer earning Rs5m a month possibly for the next 10 years, assuming 60 to be the age of superannuation for both. Of course, these formulae assume that the driver would remain that and will not branch out into entrepreneurship and that the engineer would retain his ability to construct hydropower projects for another 10 years. Hopefully, a clearer picture is beginning to emerge by now as to how your life may be worth more than mine when it comes down to hard-core, economic number crunching.

Before condemning this or that socioeconomic framework, let us bear in mind that even in the old tribal codes, still practised today, a chief's blood money is many times higher than that of his family members, whose lives are considered far dearer than those of a tribe member.

Victim compensation is a specialised field; in developed economies, its calculation is entrusted to VC attorneys, and individual determinations are made by courts or boards of funds set up by governments in the aftermath of losses from calamities, disasters, wars, or acts of terrorism. One such VC fund was formed

in 2001 in the aftermath of the twin-tower attack in New York. Its initial ambit lasted till 2004. As more types of dama-ges, losses, and trauma that could be covered under the fund came to the fore with time, new pieces of legislation were enacted to provide legal cover for the ongoing nature of claim filing and settlements. Currently, the fund's tenure extends to 2090.

In our local context, while laws, procedures, and protocols to deal with almost any eventuality exist, implementation depends on officialdom's whims and political expedience. Every fire or rain deluge results in business and trade bodies exhorting the government to compensate for their losses. Why, one must ask, should the government pick up the tab for their decision to forego insurance? When moveable assets like vehicles are lost or damaged, do we ask the government to compensate for them? Either they are insured or they are not. Why should it be any different for other types of assets? Governments should incentivise the insurance sector and encourage employers to enlist their workforce. Faiz Ahmad Faiz ruled the voiceless multitudes: "No plaintiff, no witnesses; the blood of the down-to-earth, sustains it." -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab CM pledges intensive efforts for systemic reforms

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif made a commitment to the people of Punjab, assuring them that she will not let them down. Addressing the concluding budget session of the Punjab Assembly, she pledged to tirelessly work every day, hour, and minute to improve the lives of the citizens and bring about positive changes in the system. She emphasized that no appointments in Punjab have been made against merit, asserting that no other chief minister can make such a claim. Maryam Nawaz Sharif appealed to the opposition, stating, "Let Pakistan progress, opposition members are also my brothers and sisters. I know many of them are patriotic Pakistanis." She expressed hope that the opposition would appreciate the budget as it did not impose any new taxes on the people of Punjab for the first time. "The opposition creates noise because they have nothing substantial to say," she remarked, adding that anyone can make noise, but true service is a privilege granted to a few. She affirmed that the opposition

would be defeated by the government's performance. Criticizing the previous PTI government, she mentioned that after three months of their performance, they claimed, "We were busy," but they were actually busy with vengeance and setting new records of incompetence. She mentioned that Nawaz Sharif has no objections to installing air conditioners for Imran Khan in jail, highlighting the previous government's focus on retribution rather than service. "I swear that the Punjab government and Nawaz Sharif never ordered the cessation of any facilities for the opposition," she declared, adding that Imran Khan has privileges not afforded to other thieves. Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed pride in the accomplishments of her government in the past 100 days. She noted that unlike previous administrations, she won't complain about the past's corruption and inefficiency. She announced significant measures including the launch of a laptop scheme worth 10 billion rupees, in collaboration with Google International, which will provide digital

skills training to over 300,000 children annually. Additionally, new tech education programs, such as Middle Tech, Matric Tech, and Inter Tech, are being introduced for the first time, she added. The CM also unveiled initiatives in machine learning, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and startups skill development programs, aiming to educate 4,000 children in IT across every district of Punjab. Sports competitions will be held in every district, with school sports grounds being converted into community sports grounds. She assured that students excelling academically would have their university fees paid by her. The minimum wage has been increased to Rs. 37,000 and systems are being implemented to ensure workers receive their full wages, she added. Skill development programs for the children of laborers, including courses in plumbing, nursing, electrician work, and hotel industry skills, will be launched, and the "Maryam Ki Dastak" project will include 65 more services within three months across all districts.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in a group photo with delegation of MPAs, headed by the Parliamentary Leader of the PPP, Syed Ali Haider Gillani at the Governor's House.

Punjab Governor says: Political parties should play positive role for development and prosperity of the country

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation of members of the Punjab Assembly, headed by the Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Punjab Assembly, Syed Ali Haider Gillani, met Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House, Lahore. During the meeting, the members of the delegation congratulated Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider on assuming the office of Governor.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that all political parties including the opposition should play a positive role for the development and prosperity of the country. Governor Punjab further said that good governance and improving the quality of education in universities is a priority. He said that all resources would be utilized for the welfare of the people. He further said that he was committed to provide the facilities of higher education to the backward tehsils of

far flung districts of Punjab. Punjab Governor said that the sub-campuses of major universities in the backward tehsils of Attock District would be established in the shortest possible time. Parliamentary Leader of Pakistan People's Party in Punjab Assembly, Syed Ali Haider Gillani said that People's Party has always believed in the politics of reconciliation for stability in the country. The delegation comprised Sardar Raees Nabeel, Malik Wasif Mazhar Ran, Mian Kamran Abdullah Mudal, Qazi Ahmed Saeed, Aamir Ali Shah, Inam Bari, Sardar Habibur Rehman Gopang, Shazia Abid, Neelam Jabbar and Nargis Faiz Malik. Earlier, Secretary Home Punjab, Noor Ul Amin Mengal called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, Secretary Home Punjab briefed the Governor Punjab regarding the peace and order plan during Muharram in Rawalpindi Division, especially in Attock district.

KP to start Water Resource Accountability for Pak Prog.

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur presided over the meeting with officials of the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Drainage, International Water Management Institute.

(WRP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the support of the British Government. This program will provide technical support to the provincial government for the conservation of water resources, their better management and wise use. By implementing the program, reliable data related to underground, surface and rain water will be collected in the province. As a result of this support, the implementation of the Provincial Government's Water Act and Water and Agricultural Sector Reforms Agenda will be ensured. Under the program, the International Water

Management Institute will provide technical assistance to the provincial government in six different sectors in Pakhtunkhwa. These areas include water accounting and productivity assessment, early draft warning system, water resource management information system, irrigation demand management, water allocation system and capacity building. This program will be initially started in Charsadda and Mansehra district which will later be extended to other districts of the province. For this purpose, MoUs will be signed between the relevant provincial departments.



KARACHI: Opposition members in Sindh Assembly are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding, Sui Gas load shedding and shortage of drinking water in Karachi, at Sindh Assembly.

Minister for minority affairs meets journalists, Sikh pilgrims

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora visited the Lahore Press Club.

A large number of Sikh pilgrims from India were present on the occasion while former President of Chandigarh Press Club Punjab, India, and Secretary General of Indian Journalists Union, Balender Singh Jammu, and various Indian journalists were also present. President of Lahore Press Club Arshad Ansari, Member Governing Body Imran Sheikh, Rana Shahzad and Syed Badr Saeed etc. welcomed the distinguished guests. Ramesh Singh Arora said that he was very happy to come to Lahore Press Club while religious minorities in Pakistan, especially the Sikh community, have complete religious freedom and protection. Sikh pilgrims from India are provided with best facilities and perform their religious rituals without any hindrance. He further said that the facilities that the minorities get in Pakistan are not available to any minority including Muslims in India. "We are living a prosperous and peaceful life in Pakistan."

Health Dept. KP lifts ban on MTI

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department has decided to lift the ban on the decisions of the Board of Governors of the Medical Teaching Institution.

A formal letter has been issued by the Health Department to the chairmen of the Board of Governors of all MTIs. On March 8, the Chief Minister had banned the Board of Governors of Medical Teaching Institutions from taking important decisions. As a result of the formation of new boards, the ban on taking important decisions has been removed.



KARACHI: Mr. Riaz Ahmed Memon (Advisor) Federal Ombudsman and Navid Ahmed Shaikh, Member (Incharge) Secretariat talking to media persons during a visit and inspecting facilities of the Protectorate of Emigrants Office.

NADRA Chairman visits Central Police Office

LAHORE (APP): National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) Chairman Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar visited the Central Police Office here on Friday.

Punjab said that NADRA's data sharing in identification of criminals and terrorist elements, verification of citizens, policing issues is highly commendable. Chairman NADRA, Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar indicated to further expand cooperation with Punjab Police in the process of eradication of crimes and identification of miscreants and criminals. He said that Punjab Police is a modern force equipped with advanced infrastructure and technology, providing excellent services for maintaining law & order and peace.

The IG Punjab briefed the NADRA Chairman about police working and public service initiatives through the Central Police Office dashboard. He said that Smart Safe Cities and Police Stations projects are moving towards completion. The entire province is being converted into safe city. Additional IG Punjab, MD Safe City Authority, CTO Lahore, and AIG Admin were present at the meeting.

Director General NADRA Lahore Sohail Jahangir, AD Rizwan Ali, and Major Nadeem Gondal accompanied him. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and senior police officers welcomed the NADRA Chairman. A smart police contingent presented a salute to the NADRA Chairman on arrival. The NADRA Chairman visited the Police Martyrs' Memorial and offered prayers for the souls of the martyrs. Chairman NADRA, Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of the Punjab Police martyrs. During a meeting with IG Punjab, discussions were held to further enhance strategic partnership, data information sharing and mutual cooperation in cyber security and other professional affairs. The IG

Obtaining information from govt departments right of citizens, Shoib Siddiqui

KARACHI (APP): Federal Chief Information Commissioner Shoib Ahmed Siddiqui has said that obtaining information from government departments is the right of every citizen, as granted by Article 19-A of the Constitution of Pakistan.

He emphasized that citizen and journalists should exercise this right to promote good governance and transparency in government institutions. He explained that the process of obtaining information is simple and can be done through written or verbal requests and that the commission is bound to take action on such requests. He also mentioned that the commission will decide on appeals within 60 days and that the Sindh Information Commission will decide on appeals within 45 days.

Uzma warns anti-state elements for creating chaos in name of religion, politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Information Minister Uzma Bukhari Friday warned the anti-state elements who were involved in lawlessness to destabilize the country and said that government would adopt zero-tolerance policy in that regard.

Talking to a private news channel, she clarified the issue of restoring a hundred-year-old Gurdwara, adding no discussion was held so far in that regard but some anti-state groups were misleading the people. The minister said law would come into action if there was a threat of damaging public property or harming the people, adding, anti-state elements were playing every tactic to tarnish the image of the country but would not succeed. The provincial government would not allow anyone to spread violence and fan anarchy, she added.

President of Lahore Press Club Arshad Ansari, Member Governing Body Imran Sheikh, Rana Shahzad and Syed Badr Saeed etc. welcomed the distinguished guests. Ramesh Singh Arora said that he was very happy to come to Lahore Press Club while religious minorities in Pakistan, especially the Sikh community, have complete religious freedom and protection. Sikh pilgrims from India are provided with best facilities and perform their religious rituals without any hindrance. He further said that the facilities that the minorities get in Pakistan are not available to any minority including Muslims in India. "We are living a prosperous and peaceful life in Pakistan."



GILGIT: Fateh Ullah, Chairman Board of Investment Gilgit-Baltistan addressing a post budget press conference along with Finance Minister Engr. Muhammad Ismail.

PPAF signs Rs183m agreement to enhance education in Sindh, GB

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has signed grant agreements amounting to PKR 183 million with three key organizations in Sindh and one in Gilgit-Baltistan under its Continued School Support Project (CSSP).

Under CSSP, PPAF's support includes the provision of teaching and non-teaching staff, capacity building for teachers and school management committees, classroom renovation and repairs, and the supply of furniture and teaching aids.

Furthermore, the project encompasses initiatives such as transportation for teachers and girl students, health and hygiene awareness sessions, sports activities, tree plantation drives, and educational visits. Nadir Gul Barech, CEO, PPAF, emphasised the organisation's commitment to education, he said.

Anti-polio campaign officially launched in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here on Friday officially launched the campaign by administering polio drops to children to be started from July 1, 2024.

The five-day anti-polio campaign will continue from July 1 to July 5 with the Anti-polio campaign in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa being launched in July 2024.

PA Speaker suspends membership of 11 opposition MPAs

LAHORE (APP): Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Friday suspended the membership of 11 opposition members for causing disruption and chaos during Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's speech.

According to the Punjab Assembly spokesperson, during the session of the Punjab Assembly on Friday, opposition members violated rules, tore up copies of the agenda, used unparliamentary language, targeted the Leader of the House, and dishonored the sanctity of the House during Maryam Nawaz's speech. Consequently, the Speaker suspended the membership of the following opposition members: Zulfikar Ali (PP-76), Rana Shahbaz Ahmad (PP-130), Muhammad Arif (PP-133), Muhammad Tayyab Rashid (PP-141), Muhammad Imtiaz Mahmood (PP-155).

Parents are requested to give their children anti-polio shots and protect them from life-long disability. Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said. All sections of the society will have to play their individual and collective role to rid the province of polio virus, the Chief Minister added.



LAHORE: Sikh pilgrims and from India Journalists meeting with Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora and President Lahore Press Club.



GILGIT: Rescue 1122 staffer busy in lifting car from the ditch after road accident at Nalter Express way.

IGP orders committee to implement Habitual Offenders Monitoring Act

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon, on Friday ordered the formation of a committee consisting of Deputy IGPs from Telecommunication and Transport (T&T), CIA, Investigation, and others to advance the implementation of the Sindh Habitual Offenders Monitoring Act, 2022.

He highlighted the importance of implementing the Sindh Habitual Offenders Monitoring Act, 2022, to curb crime and ensure justice, noting its significance for maintaining peace and benefiting society.

Speaking at a meeting at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi to review the progress on e-tagging of habitual offenders, IGP Memon emphasized that the committee should perform its duties efficiently and complete the assigned tasks. IGP Sindh stressed the need to eliminate any loopholes or errors by refining the rules and regula-

tions for the technical support and procurement of equipment related to e-tagging. The meeting was attended by DIGPs of Investigation and Crime, T&T, Headquarters.

Economy poised for growth in FY2024-25: Finance Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The growth prospects for Pakistan are expected to remain encouraging during the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25 as the government's focus on key sectors is expected to propel the country onto a trajectory of sustained growth, according to a recent report released by the Finance Ministry on here Friday.

"Pakistan's growth prospects are expected to remain encouraging. Budget FY2025 is gearing towards a shift to an era of sustainable and inclusive growth," said the Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for June released by the ministry. Aiming to this, the government is focusing on high-potential sectors like Information Technology (IT), Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs), mines and minerals, tourism, exports and agriculture, it said.

"These sectors can pay rich dividends and lend support to the country's balance of payments position. Complementing this, fiscal discipline, effective implementation of home-

grown growth program along with bilateral and multilateral cooperation will necessitate the sustainable potential growth path in coming years," the report maintained.

The monthly update says that fiscal year 2023-24 was going to end with an economic stabilisation path accompanied by improved macroeconomic indicators.

"The subsiding inflationary pressures, stability in external accounts and exchange rate, fiscal consolidation and gradual recovery in industrial activities are restoring the confidence of economic agents thus facilitating economic growth," it said. Highlighting the performance of various economic indicators, the report said, the inflation outlook for June 2024 has slightly increased compared to the previous month but remains well below the levels of the same month last year. This rise is primarily due to higher prices of perishable items driven by Eid ul Azha.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation

recorded at 11.8 per cent on a year-on-year (YoY) basis in May 2024 as compared to 17.3 per cent in the previous month and 38.0 per cent in May 2023. During July-May FY 2024, CPI stood at 24.5 per cent against 29.2 per cent last year.

On the revenue side, the reports said, during July-April FY2024, net federal revenues grew by 51 per cent to reach Rs.5627.5 billion against Rs.3715.3 billion last year.

During 2023-24, the agriculture sector has shown promising performance as it grew by 6.3 per cent driven by favourable weather conditions, increased crop yields, and government initiatives aimed at boosting agricultural productivity.

As anticipated, LSM witnessed a moderate growth of 0.45 per cent during Jul-Apr FY2024. This turnaround is likely to continue in upcoming months on the back of stimulated external demand, improved business confidence, and removal of import restrictions.



ISLAMABAD: The Second meeting of the Committee to assess and facilitate the reconstitution of Board of Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KoFHA) was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh. Federal Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain was also present as members of the committee.

Minister chairs meeting to reconstitute BoD for KoFHA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second meeting of the committee tasked with assessing and facilitating the reconstitution of the Board of Directors (BoD) for the Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KoFHA) was held here Friday.

The meeting was chaired by the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, while Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Secretary Maritime Affairs Syed Zafar Ali Shah and other senior officers of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs were in attendance as committee members, said a

press release.

The committee was formed to ensure that the reconstitution of KoFHA's Board of Directors complies with applicable laws; as the core focus of the committee lies in meticulously scrutinizing the Federal Government's selection of five Board members.

During the first meeting, held on June 11, the committee meticulously reviewed the criteria and guidelines for the selection process. The discussions focused on ensuring that the nominated members would bring a diverse range of skills, experience, and expertise to the board, align-

ing with the objectives outlined in the KoFHA Ordinance and the SOE Act, 2023. In its second meeting today, the list was reviewed followed by threadbare discussion and would finalize the names after necessary consultation with stakeholders. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh emphasized the importance of transparency and meritocracy in the nomination process. He added that we focus to reconstitute a Board of Directors that upholds the highest standards of governance and is equipped to drive KoFHA towards greater efficiency and success.

Weekly inflation falls by 0.73 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.73 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 27, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 314.57 points as compared to 316.88 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 22.88 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16=100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.80 per cent and went down to 306.62 points from last week's 309.10 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, decreased by 0.85 percent, 0.77 percent, 0.79 and 0.67 percent

respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 8 (15.69%) items decreased and 25 (49.02%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (25.25%), chicken (14.20%), onions (3.90%), garlic (2.80%), bread (0.81%), rice basmati broken (0.15%), eggs (0.09%) and rice Irri (0.04%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included f LPG (5.38%), pulse gram (4.72%), pulse moong (3.20%), cooked daal (1.87%), pulse masoor (1.79%), potatoes (0.99%), gur (0.87%), bananas and wheat flour (0.61%) each, pulse mash (0.32%) and firewood (0.20%).

On-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included wheat flour (32.49%), chicken (31.87%), cooking oil 5 litre (15.98%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (13.29%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (12.31%), bananas (11.15%), mustard oil (8.07%), tea packet (2.52%) and petrol (1.38%).



QUETTA: A delegation of All Balochistan Car Showroom Association meeting with Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

4 Central Asian countries' ambassadors meet business community at LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Ambassadors of four Central Asian countries - Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan - have a detailed meeting with business community to discuss ways and means to further improve the mutual trade relations during their visit to Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), here on Friday.

"It is a historic moment when Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Totuinaev, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin have visited Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry together," said LCCI President Kashif Anwar who warmly welcomed the envoys and presented the address of welcome.

The Ambassadors and LCCI President Kashif Anwar also inaugurated

Business Kiosk established by four countries at LCCI which will give a new boost to trade.

LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan Rao Khalid M. Khan and Rizwan Fareed also spoke on the occasion while Executive Committee Members were also present.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar emphasized to explore trade potential between Pakistan and Central Asian Countries and also addressing the bottlenecks which are causing constraints to trade promotion.

Ambassador of Turkmenistan Mr. Atadjan Movlamov said that Pakistan and Central Asian Republics need to know each other more because "we have huge potential". He said that Turkmenistan is the richest country in the world in term of natural resources with seven million people.

He said, "Our foreign

policy is natural and we believe in promoting peace. With Pakistan, the trade can be done in various areas like Pakistan export rice, sugar, vehicles, motorbikes, auto parts which have a huge demand in Turkmenistan and can import LPG petroleum products and it can be done both government level and private sector. With this kind of approach, we can find solution of challenges and for economic development."

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is emphasizing on exploiting the tremendous potential of trade in ASEAN, Africa Continent and especially in Central Asian Countries.

"We believe that Pakistan and Central Asian Countries have significant potential for trade and economic cooperation, driven by their strategic geographical positions and complementary economic strengths."

FCCI to sign MoUs to facilitate its members

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) will sign a series of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with different organizations to project this august trade body in addition to ensuring maximum concessions and facilitation for its ten thousand members.

Senior Vice President FCCI Dr Sajjad Arshad along with Vice President Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli inked two separate MOUs with Sahil Hospital and Pure Gold Jewellers respectively.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sajjad Arshad said

that Sahil Hospital would provide 15-20% discount to FCCI members on laboratory tests, X-rays, ultrasound and other services. "However, FCCI employees would be entitled for a discount of 20-35% on these tests and services", he added.

He also signed an MOU with Pure Gold Jewellers and said that this organization would offer 100% discount in labor charges on making of gold ornaments.

It would also cooperate with FCCI in arranging recreational facilities for FCCI members, he added.

Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Friday gained 03 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.34 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.37.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.7 and Rs 280.6 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 13 paise to close at Rs 297.68 against the last day's closing of Rs 297.55, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen lost 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.72.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PTCL Group integrates advanced AI to achieve customer service excellence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's largest telecommunication and ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has collaborated with STech.ai to integrate an innovative AI-based platform that leverages advanced technologies, including Urdu-based Large Language Models (LLMs), Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Machine Learning (ML) to enhance its customer services system. The platform aims to enhance quality management systems by providing enriched customer sentiment analysis and valuable insights, driving PTCL's overall customer experience strategy, said a news release.

The strategic initiative underscores PTCL Group's commitment to excellence in customer experience.

Customer centricity is paramount at PTCL Group, which inspires the Group's commitment to

excellence in both customer experience and services delivery. The company continuously invests, innovates, and refines its business processes. It leverages innovative technologies and customer feedback to enhance every interaction and ensures that each service touchpoint is seamless, responsive, and efficient to foster a reliable and enriching experience for its valued customers. Looking ahead, the integration of innovative AI will elevate customer experiences to unprecedented heights, setting a new benchmark for the entire industry.

Hatem Bamatraf, President & Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, saying, "Leveraging contemporary technologies like AI shall be the enabler to improve our customer experience significantly. AI is set to revolutionize the industry, and it is a proud moment for PTCL Group to be at the forefront of this journey."

At MWC 2024 Huawei redefines connectivity with 5.5G advancements

SHANGHAI (China) (APP): Li Peng, Huawei's Corporate Senior Vice President and President of ICT Sales & Service, delivered a keynote focusing on maximizing the value of 5.5G for carriers. He highlighted the industry's readiness for large-scale commercial use of 5.5G through years of concerted effort in network, service, and business ecosystem preparation. According to Li, business model innovation and capability integration are critical for carriers to achieve optimal return on investment in 5.5G. He emphasized the arrival of the mobile AI era, urging carriers to integrate network, cloud, and AI capabilities to offer differentiated connected experiences. This shift, Li argued, moves beyond traditional traffic monetization to monetizing the user experience itself, thereby driv-

ing industry development. Drawing a parallel with the aviation industry's evolution, Li underscored the importance of high-quality supply in stimulating new demand. He highlighted the need for the mobile communications industry to integrate advanced technologies as it transitions to 5.5G, aiming to meet new and latent user demands and accelerate industry growth.

Regarding network capabilities, Li pointed out that 5.5G enhances bandwidth by a factor of 10, enabling carriers to guarantee a reliable connected experience with features like wireless QCI-based scheduling and guaranteed bit rate (GBR). This allows for tailored packages and personalized services that cater to diverse user needs, boosting revenue and loyalty among high-end customers.

PSX loses 83 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday shed 83.29 points, a slight negative change of 0.11 percent, closing at 78,444.96 points against 78,528.25 points on the last working day.

A total of 347,671,672 shares were traded during the day as compared to 283,542,503 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11,899 billion against Rs 11,067 billion on the last trading day. Around 435 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 189 of them recorded gains and 170 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 76 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were PTCL with 70,992,434 shares at Rs 12.01 per share, K-Electric Limited with 18,700,951 shares at Rs 4.63 per share WorldCall Telecom with 13,191,366 shares at Rs 1.26 per share.

SMEDA launches 10 years cluster based development plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) on Friday launched a Ten-Years Cluster-Based Development Plan for tapping the potentials of SMEs by facilitating them to achieve sustainable economic growth and industrial development in the country.

The plan was launched in a ceremony held here for celebrating the international Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) day, which was organized by the SMEDA in collaboration with other national and international

institutions. Dr Fakhar e Alam Irfan Federal Secretary Industries and Production, Socrat Aman Rana, Chief Executive Officer of SMEDA also addressed the ceremony that was widely attended by a large number of SMEs, leaders of the business community and senior government officers.

Addressing the ceremony, Federal Secretary Industries and Production Dr Fakhar e Alam Irfan said that the national economic landscape thrives on the dynamism of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which play a pivotal role in driving growth,

innovation and job creation, making them the cornerstone of our economy.

He told that the ten-year Cluster Based Plan for SMEs, include five sectors including fruits, vegetable processing, E-bike, pharmaceutical, sea foods, and marble & granite.

These studies, on these sectors, are a result of the collaboration between the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, guided by the consultation with private sector, he added.

Tokyo stocks close higher on weaker yen

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks closed higher on Friday after the yen slid to its weakest value against the dollar since 1986.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.61 percent, or 241.54 points, to 39,583.08, while the broader Topix index rose 0.57 percent, or 15.93 points, to 2,809.63.

"As the yen weakened further against the dollar, Japanese equities extended their gains," Iwai Cosmo Securities said.

A weaker Japanese currency helps exporters as it inflates their repatriated profits. One dollar bought 161.12 yen at around 0100 GMT, before it was down to 160.93 yen in the afternoon in Tokyo. The greenback traded at 160.79 yen in New York on Thursday.

Japan's finance ministry spent 9.79 trillion yen (\$61 billion) to prop up the yen between April 26 and May 29. But analysts now say it is possible traders will keep pushing the envelope to see at what point the government will act, with some saying the currency could hit 170. The Japanese currency has cratered from around 115 per dollar before Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. This plunge is due in part to the Bank of Japan's policy of maintaining ultra-low interest rates to support the economy, while other central banks have hiked theirs. In Tokyo trading, SoftBank Group jumped 2.51 percent to 10,390 yen while Toyota climbed 0.83 percent 3,290 yen.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, Wan Hai-316, Maersk Cairo, Express Athens, Alora, Southern Anoa, Gaschem Fuji and Clipper Barolo scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Chemicals and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminals and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Afra Rossie and Samsima scheduled to load/offload Furnace oil and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours. Ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two container ships, Maersk Cairo and Express Athens left the port on today morning while five more ships, Wan Hai-316,



FAISALABAD: Farmers using modern agriculture machine for seeding of rice crop in their field.

Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan calls on SACM

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher, chaired a meeting regarding Chinese Investments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the construction materials, mining, herbs and light engineering sectors at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) here Friday.

The Chinese delegation was headed by Mr. Chen, Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan, which is located 120 kilometers over the Khunjarab Pass from Sust. Officials of the Board were also present on this occasion.

The Chinese delegation informed that after detailed study of this region, they chose Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as having one of the best investment opportunities in

this region due to its connectivity with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) along with being rich in hydel power and clean energy and boasting on its natural endowments, making it ideal destination for investments in Economic Zones, Tourism, and mining. It was also highlighted that the herbs present in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are really liked and favored in the Peoples Republic of China. It was also decided that new ventures of collaboration may be sought and there should be more business to business and people to people connections. Chairman Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan invited the SACM and other government officials from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade, KPZDMC, SIDB to showcase KP products at the exhibition centre of either Sust or at the Border Trade Zone Tashkurgan.



FAISALABAD: A farmer spreading corn cobs for drying purpose.

Russia warns it can take unspecified measures in response to US drone flights over Black Sea

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia's Defense Minister ordered officials to prepare a "response" to U.S. drone flights over the Black Sea, the ministry said Friday, in an apparent warning that Moscow may take forceful action to ward off the American reconnaissance aircraft. The Russian Defense Ministry noted a recent "increased intensity" of U.S. drones over the Black Sea, saying they "conduct intelligence and targeting for precision weapons supplied to the Ukrainian military by Western countries for strikes on Russian facilities."

"It shows an increased involvement of the U.S. and other NATO countries in the conflict in Ukraine on the side of the Kyiv regime," the ministry said in a statement.

It noted that "such flights significantly increase the probability of incidents involving Russian military

aircraft, which increases the risk of direct confrontation between the alliance and the Russian Federation." "NATO members will bear responsibility for that," it added. The ministry said that Defense Minister Andrei Belousov has directed the General Staff to "make proposals on measures of operative response to provocations."

On March 14, 2023, a Su-27 fighter jet of the Russian air force intercepted and damaged a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone, causing it to crash into the Black Sea. The incident marked the first direct clash between the Russian and U.S. forces since the Cold War.

The Pentagon and U.S. European Command said after the incident that two Russian Su-27 aircraft dumped fuel on the MQ-9, which was conducting a routine surveillance mission over the Black Sea in international airspace.

The Russian Defense

Ministry said then that the U.S. drone was flying near the Russian border and intruded into an area that was declared off-limits by Russian authorities.

Russia has declared broad areas near Crimea off-limits to flights. Ever since Russia's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea and long before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow has accused U.S. surveillance planes of flying too close to its borders while ignoring the notices issued by Russia.

Friday's Russian statement follows a Ukrainian attack on Sevastopol over the weekend with U.S.-made ATACMS missiles, which killed four and injured about 150, according to Russian officials.

Russian officials have claimed that the U.S. was directly involved in the attack by providing intelligence and targeting and warned to take retaliatory measures.



A woman carries a child as she evacuates with others from the Tuffah neighbourhood, in the east of Gaza City.

Democrats scramble to limit damage after Biden's wobbly debate showing against Trump

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's allies scrambled to contain the fallout on Friday from his faltering performance at the first 2024 US presidential debate after he struggled to stem a barrage of attacks and false claims from his Republican rival Donald Trump.

The Biden campaign had hoped that a strong debate would quell concerns among voters that the 81-year-old Democratic incumbent is too old to serve a second four-year term.

Instead, a hoarse Biden stumbled over his words

and lost his train of thought at times, especially early in the debate.

One Biden donor, who asked for anonymity, called his performance "disqualifying" and predicted that some Democrats would revisit calls for Biden to step aside in favour of another candidate before the party's national convention in August.

Panicking Democrats exchanged messages wondering whether Biden would consider stepping down. One senior Democratic strategist said there would be calls for Biden to step down.

Russian satellite breaks up in space, forces ISS astronauts to shelter

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: A defunct Russian satellite has broken up into more than 100 pieces of debris in orbit, forcing astronauts on the International Space Station to take shelter for about an hour and adding to the mass of space junk already in orbit, US space agencies said. There were no immediate details on what caused the break-up of the RESURS-P1 Russian Earth observation satellite, which was declared dead in 2022. US Space Command, tracking the debris swarm, said there was no immediate threat to other satellites.

US soldier charged in Japan over minor's rape

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japan's government is calling for stricter oversight of US troops stationed in the country after a soldier was charged with the alleged sexual assault of a Japanese teenager in Okinawa. Prosecutors in the southern island region charged the US soldier in March, top government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters on Tuesday. Local media said the 25-year-old man had been accused of assault.

Bolivian President Luis Arce denies conspiracy after failed coup

Monitoring Desk

LA PAZ: Bolivian President Luis Arce on Thursday denied conspiring with his former army chief, who was arrested after deploying troops and tanks to the heart of the capital La Paz, where they tried to break down a door of the presidential palace.

Fourteen civilians who opposed the coup were wounded by gunfire, according to the authorities. Some had to be hospitalized and operated on, Luis Arce told the press.

Authorities paraded

handcuffed detainees in front of the media on Thursday, announcing 17 arrests including ex-army chief Juan Jose Zuniga, and riot police kept close watch over government buildings a day after the botched coup.

Tensions in the Andean nation have been rising in recent weeks over surging prices, shortages of dollars and fuel, and a feud between President Luis Arce and the powerful former president Evo Morales ahead of the 2025 election.



Bolivian President Luis Arce talks to the media during a press conference in La Paz.

Kenyan police fire on protesters after fresh clashes

Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI: A climbdown by Kenya's president over plans to raise taxes brought no end to nationwide protests on Thursday, with at least two people reported killed in clashes near the capital Nairobi and others shot by police elsewhere.

A day after President William Ruto abandoned a tax hike bill, demonstrators in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and other cities called for him to step down, although crowds were smaller than earlier in the week. Police fired teargas at dozens of protesters in Nairobi and blocked off roads to the presidential palace. In the town of Homa Bay in western

Kenya, police said officers had shot at protesters when they tried to torch police vehicles. "I can confirm seven people have been admitted in hospital with gunshot wounds. Police opened fire when protesters attempted to burn police vehicles," said Hassan Barua, Migori police commander.

The Standard newspaper said two people had been killed as police clashed with anti-tax protesters looting two supermarkets in Ongata Rongai, a town on the outskirts of Nairobi.

Ruto withdrew the legislation including new taxes and hikes on Wednesday, a day after parliament was briefly stormed.

South Korea releases video showing North Korean missile exploding in flight

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: South Korea's military on Friday released a video that it said showed a North Korean missile abnormally spiralling early in flight and exploding, a rare publicising of surveillance footage to dismiss the North's claim of a successful test. Footage filmed by a thermal observation device with South Korean frontline units showed a projectile spiralling out of control on an irregular flight path, then disintegrating.

The South Korean military assessed that "instability during flight" led to the missile's explosion, it said in a statement on Friday, calling North Korea's claims of success as "deception and exaggeration to cover up the failure".

North Korean state media had said that Pyongyang successfully conducted an important test on Wednesday aimed at developing missiles able to deploy multiple warheads.

Palestinians flee as Israeli forces return to Gaza's north

Monitoring Desk

GAZA STRIP: Palestinians fled eastern Gaza City on Thursday under heavy bombardment as the Israeli military issued an evacuation order for the area it had previously declared clear of Hamas fighters.

The flare-up in the northern Gaza Strip's Shujaiya district, which witnesses and medics said caused numerous casualties, comes as fears grow of a wider regional conflagration involving Israel and Hezbollah, a Hamas ally.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, on a visit to Washington to discuss the Gaza conflict and ways to avoid broader conflict in the Middle East, warned Hezbollah that fighting on a massive scale would send Lebanon

"back to the stone age".

With cross-border tensions between Israel and Hezbollah rising, Gallant said, "We do not want war, but we are preparing for every scenario." In Gaza, fighting has ground on despite comments by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the "intense phase" of the war — now nearing its 10th month — was winding down.

The civil defence agency in the Hamas-run territory and medics said Israeli strikes overnight and early on Thursday killed at least five people in Gaza City and another in Beit Lahia, also in the north.

The Israeli military said it had "attacked terrorists who were in a school complex in Khan Yunis" in the south.

Turkey welcomes removal from a key money-laundering watchlist, hoping to boost foreign investment

Monitoring Desk

ANKARA: Turkey on Friday welcomed a decision by an international watchdog to remove it from a so-called "gray list" of countries that have not fully implemented measures to fight money laundering and terrorism financing.

The announcement by the Financial Action Task Force in Singapore could bolster foreign investments in Turkey, which is trying to rebound from a deep economic downturn.

"We succeeded," Turkish Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek wrote on the social media platform X, as the decision was being announced.

Vice-President Cevdet Yilmaz said: "With this development, international investors' confidence in our country's financial system has become even stronger. The decision will have ex-

tremely positive consequences for the financial sector and the economy."

Being on the watchdog's gray list can scare away investors and creditors, hurting exports, output and consumption. It also can make global banks wary of doing business with a country.

FATF President T. Raja Kumar, who is finishing his two-year term, said Turkey was taken off the gray list because of the "substantial progress" that it has made. Christophe Deloire, the head of media freedom group Reporters Without Borders, has died. He was 53. Kumar said a FATF team visited Turkey in May and confirmed that the country had taken "substantive steps" to improve its anti-money laundering regime, addressing all the items in its action plan.

Kenya's young protesters plot next moves after dramatic tax win

Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI: After their stunning success in forcing the government to shelve \$2.7 billion in tax hikes, young Kenyan activists are setting their sights higher, taking aim at ingrained corruption and misgovernance.

Protesters say the finance bill that President William Ruto abandoned on Wednesday was only a symptom of the problems plaguing a country where many young people have few job prospects despite strong economic growth.

The movement has little precedent in its mass mobilisation of Kenyans across ethnic and regional divisions while rejecting any kind of political leadership.

Protests in Kenya have historically been led by elites, often ending in power-sharing deals that yielded few tangible benefits for demonstrators.

Protesters now face the challenge of maintaining unity and momentum while pursuing broader, less immediate goals.

They will also have to

decide how to respond to Ruto's offer of dialogue, made on Wednesday but without specifics.

Writer and activist Nanjala Nyabola said most of those involved in the recent protests were motivated by legitimate, strong grievances against the government.

"Until those grievances are addressed, it's unlikely that they're going to be willing to make concessions."

How the diffuse and leaderless movement, which largely organised via social media, pursues its objectives remains an open question — and a source of internal debate.

Christine Odera, co-chair of the Kenya Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, a civil society organisation, said it needed to formalise its structures to advance young people's interests and speak to the government.

"If we go organically, then we might lose the whole conversation," said Odera, who participated in the protests.

Nigeria's northeast risks mass hunger as UN funding dwindles

Monitoring Desk

ABUJA: The United Nations humanitarian agency is struggling to secure funding to combat severe food insecurity in Nigeria's insurgency-hit northeast, raising fears of mass hunger and deaths, its resident coordinator warned.

In April, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched a \$306 million appeal alongside Nigeria on behalf of 2.8 million people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, regions ravaged by a 15-year Islamist insurgency, during the lean season, a period of peak food scarcity.

OCHA chief Mohamed Malick Fall told Reuters that, despite an initial \$11 million commitment from Nigeria and another \$11 million from the UN's central pool, the target remained far off due to reluctance among international donors.

"We are far from where we want to be. That is something we are confronted by even beyond the lean season which is that we have noticed that humanitarian assistance to Nigeria is shrinking," Fall said in an interview on Thursday.

is shrinking," Fall said in an interview on Thursday.

Fall anticipates receiving only \$300 million in the best-case scenario, a significant drop from the \$500 million secured last year. He attributed the decline to the economic impact of COVID-19 on major donors. Competition from new global crises has also diverted attention and resources. "Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan have all emerged in the past two years which makes it difficult to maintain the same pace of funding," Fall said.

The situation is further exacerbated by Nigeria's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation, with inflation exceeding 33% and food prices soaring above 40%. OCHA warns of "catastrophic" consequences of food insecurity in Nigeria's northeast without immediate intervention. UNICEF data from April already shows more than 120,000 children admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition in the region, exceeding the entire year's target of around 90,000.



An Iranian man votes at a polling station in a snap presidential election to choose a successor to Ebrahim Raisi following his death in a helicopter crash, in Tehran, Iran.

Reformist hopes for breakthrough as Iran votes in presidential election

Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Iranians voted on Friday in a presidential election where a lone reformist aimed for a breakthrough against a divided conservative camp.

Around 61 million Iranians were eligible to vote in the election called after the death of ultraconservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash last month.

The Guardian Council, which vets candidates, allowed the reformist Masoud Pezeshkian, 69, to run against a conservative field dominated by parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

No major reformist or moderate candidates were approved for Iran's last presidential election three

years ago.

Also left in contention is cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi after two ultraconservatives, Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani and Raisi's former vice president Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, dropped out.

The ballot in sanctions-hit Iran comes at a time of high tensions between the republic and its arch-foes Israel and the United States, as the Gaza conflict rages on.

"We start the elections" for the country's 14th presidential ballot, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said in a televised address.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who holds ultimate political power in Iran, cast his ballot shortly after the polls opened.

Oil edges higher amid crisis in Middle East

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Oil prices rose about one per cent on Wednesday despite a surprise jump in US gasoline supplies, as investors worried that a potential expansion of the fighting in Gaza could disrupt crude supplies from the Middle East.

Brent crude futures rose 22 cents, or 0.3pc, to \$85.23 per barrel by 1835 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures settled 7 cents higher at \$80.90 a barrel. Cross-border strains between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah have been escalating in recent weeks, stoking fears of an all-out Israel-Hezbollah war that could draw in other regional powers, including major oil producer Iran.

"The geopolitical risk premium has been coming back to the market as a war between Israel and Lebanon is likely to see [the] direct involvement of Iran, that would be a concern," Andrew Lipow of Houston-based Lipow Oil Associates said.

Japanese scientists make smiling robot with 'living' skin

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japanese scientists have used human cells to develop an equivalent to living skin that can be attached to robotic surfaces to flash a realistic — if creepy — smile.

The University of Tokyo researchers published their findings this week along with a video of the gooey-looking pink material being stretched into an unsettling grin. They used a "skin-forming cell-laden gel" to create a "robot covered with living skin", their study in the journal Cell Reports Physical Science said. The biohybrid robot specialists hope the technology will one day play a role in the invention of androids with human-like appearances and abilities.



NAIROBI: People run for cover as police use teargas, during a demonstration against the killings of those who took part in protests against Kenya's proposed finance bill.

CPEC success story of resolve for continued Pak-China collaboration in diverse sectors, says Gillani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday termed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a success story and said that the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Pakistan and China for 2nd phase underscored the will for continued collaboration in diverse sectors. He expressed these views while addressing the launch of the Annual Sustainability Report 2023 in Islamabad. The event was jointly organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and China Chamber of Commerce Pakistan at Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), a news release said.

"CPEC is a non-partisan agenda in Pakistan as all political parties stood with the government while having a detailed session with Liu Jian Chao, Minister of Central Committee of the International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC)" Chairman Senate remarked.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani also observed that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the first which under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari paved the way for the initiation of CPEC and economic cooperation between Pakistan and China and successive governments continued their resolve to have CPEC completed. "We are now entering the 2nd phase of CPEC with consistency in our relations and commitments by all political forces in Pakistan" Chairman Senate said.

The PPP's founder Chairman Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Chinese leader Chairman Mao were the architects of strong brotherly relations between the two peoples. Shaheem

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and President Zardari, continued following the footsteps of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Chairman Senate observed that Pakistan faced a multitude of challenges on economic, political and socio-economic fronts last year. However, amidst trials and tribulations, there emerged a story of resilience. He observed that Pakistan is fully committed to ensuring foolproof security for Chinese citizens and workers undertaking tasks on CPEC projects.

He highlighted that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is working to address these challenges and bottlenecks. He that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor since its inception, has unfolded at an accelerated pace and extended its roots to various sectors.



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

Effective measures be taken to make Chaman Industrial Zone & Complex Functional, directs Chief Minister

Bugti directs to ensure provision of basic facilities in Industrial area; take steps for making SEZ functional in Balochistan; announces to make necessary amendments in laws about operationalization of projects under PPP mode

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to take effective steps for making the Industrial Zone and Multipurpose Commercial Complex functional in the border town, Chaman.

The Chief Minister also directed to ensure provision of all basic facilities including electricity in the Industrial area Chaman. In addition to this, he directed to call Expression of Interest for allotment of the plots available in the Industrial area.

The Chief Minister was chairing an important meeting about the operationalization of Industrial Zone and Multipurpose Commercial Complex under the Chaman Master Plan here on Friday.

The Provincial Minister for Planning and Development, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Provincial Minister Agriculture, Ali Madad Jatak and Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Communication and Works, Secretary, Industries, Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shaifqat and other high ups participated in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister believed that the investors and industrialists can be attracted to make investment in the area by providing necessary facilities to them. He said that the necessary amendments would be made in the existing laws for operationalization of the projects under the Public-Private Partnership.

He on the occasion also directed to take steps for making the Special Economic Zone functional in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister remarked that there is a need to establish new cities equipped with modern facilities in view of the increasing population.

PM stresses collective efforts for national prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) played a vital role in country's economy and stressed the importance of collective efforts for the national development and prosperity. Chairing a meeting on the matters related to the FBR, he instructed the hiring of top lawyers to pursue various pending cases of the board in courts and tribunals.

The prime minister instructed that Customs Appellate Tribunals, along with Inland Revenue Appellate Tribunals, be established to expedite the resolution of tax-related cases.

He vowed presiding over the weekly review meetings on FBR's ongoing reforms and revenue.

The prime minister also directed to formulate a

strategy for giving awards to meritorious officers of the FBR.

During the briefing, it was mentioned that the process of establishing Appellate Tribunals in Inland Revenue had begun.

A transparent written examination will be conducted for appointing judges to these tribunals.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani, Spokesperson of the Federal Government on the Legal Affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ishaan Afzal Khan, Chairman FBR, and other senior government officials.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal attending launching ceremony of Annual Sustainability Report 2023, jointly organized by the SDPI and CCCPK held at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Assures treatment in Agha Khan Hospital: Bugti visits Trauma Center; meets injured "hero" teacher Ghouri, family

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti visited the Trauma Center, Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital here on Friday morning.

During the visit, Chief Minister inquired about health of the teacher, Aamir Ghouri, injured while saving a child from the Chaman Passenger train earlier this week.

It may be mentioned here that the teacher Aamir Ghouri had lost one leg and an arm during the course of saving the child from the hit

of train.

The Chief Minister highly appreciated the bravery and human friendliness of the teacher and said that he (Aamir Ghouri). Has raised the head of Balochistan with pride. He announced that the treatment of brave son of the province would be done from the Agha Khan Hospital.

Besides, he also announced that the expenditures of education of children of Aamir Ghouri would also be borne by the provincial government.

NA approves pay hike for members amid opposition protest

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly has approved an amendment proposed by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) regarding the salaries and benefits of its members, passing it by a majority vote.

PPP's Abdul Qadir Patel introduced the amendment in the House, aiming to increase the privileges of Members of Parliament. This amendment to the Salaries and Allowances Act was incorporated into the Finance Bill.

NAB challenges PTI founder's bail in 190m pounds scam case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday challenged the post-arrest bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder before the Supreme Court in 190 million pounds scam case.

NAB, in its plea, prayed the top court to set aside the verdict of Islamabad High Court of May 14, granting bail to the PTI founder. It also requested the court to suspend the IHC's judgment till the final decision into the appeal.

NAB took the plea that the IHC had used the powers of the trial court and did not view the facts completely.

China, US ambassadors meet DPM Dar; review bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of China Jiang Zaidong on Friday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Reaffirming Pakistan-China All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the two sides expressed the resolve to implement the bilateral consensus reached during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China, a Foreign Office press release said.

Both sides also resolved to further strengthening of Pakistan-China friendship and up-gradation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Meanwhile, Ambassador of the United States in Islamabad Donald Blome separately met Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar.

The two sides reviewed the latest developments in bilateral relations and discussed ways to move the relationship forward.

FIA arrests man employed with fake degree for 17 years in PIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested a man allegedly used a counterfeit degree for 17 years while employed at Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). According to the FIA spokesperson, the man identified as Rauf Sohail allegedly used a counterfeit degree for 17 years while employed at PIA. Initially recruited as a cargo assistant, Rauf Sohail's employment at PIA came to an end.

Ist-phase of CPEC added 8,000MW electricity in national grid: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal said on Friday that mega infrastructure development projects were completed in the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and added 8,000 MW of electricity to the national grid.

Middle East, suggesting Pakistan could create North, South, and East connectivity corridors to explore regional trade and investment opportunities.

Speaking at the event, Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb described the first phase of CPEC as focused on infrastructure development such as roads, electricity, and ports. He noted that the second phase aims to attract investment built upon this foundational infrastructure.

The high-level policy dialogue of the Belt and Road Investment Forum was attended by diplomats from neighbouring countries, government officials, experts, and private sector leaders. Among others, ambassadors from China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in Pakistan were present.

The Belt and Road Investment Forum, the first regional economic forum led by the private sector, was jointly hosted by the Embassy of China in Pakistan in consultation with the Ministry of Planning.

All Pak Chambers Conference in Islamabad: Ulas Yar Khan highlights importance of trade with neighboring countries

Independent Report
CHAMAN / ISLAMABAD: The prominent trader and Senior Vice President of Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ulas Yar Khan has underlined the need to promote mutual trade and business activities with the neighboring countries including Afghanistan, Iran, India, China and the Central Asian States.

While speaking on occasion of the Presidents of All Pakistan Chambers Conference in Islamabad the other day, Ulas Yar Khan highlighted the importance of mutual trade

with the neighboring and other Asian countries and stressed that there is a need to promote mutual trade with all the countries.

On the occasion, he also highlighted the hardships being faced by the traders of Chaman and diverted the attention of the concerned authorities towards the protest camp continued in the border town for last nine months.

During the conference, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani presented commemorative shield to the senior Vice President of Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Maulana Azad Jameel meeting with Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

To provide easiness to traders Governor stresses need to protect local trade & business activities

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stressed the need to protect the local trade and business activities and provide easiness to the traders community especially keeping the lack of industrial activities and foreign investment in the province.

speaking to a delegation of showroom owners who called on him under leadership of Muhammad Umar Khilji here on Friday.

The Governor expressed the belief that if the local investors and internationally reputed traders of the province were provided necessary opportunities by the government, then they would establish vehicle manufacturing factories in the province. By doing so, new opportunities of livelihood would be created besides the economic development, he added.

PM condoles death of Saudi Prince Mansour bin Saud's mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed deep sorrow over death of mother of Prince Mansour bin Saud bin Abdulaziz.

"My heartfelt condolences are with His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, HRH Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Prince Mansour bin Saud bin Abdulaziz and the Royal Family," he wrote in his official 'X' account.

Masood for stronger US-Pakistan security, economic partnerships

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan need sophisticated small arms and communication equipment to combat the growing terrorism, Ambassador Masood Khan has said, while calling for stronger US-Pakistan security and economic partnerships.

"This is crucial for regional security and opposing the rising tide of terrorism that also threatens the interests of the US and its allies," Khan, the Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., told the Annual Pakistan conference titled, 'Looking Back, Looking Forward: Assessing the US-Pakistan Relationship' on Thursday.

The well-attended conference was organized by the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute in partnership with the International Academy of Letters USA. Among those present were policy makers, scholars, intelligentsia, corporate leaders, members of think-tank community and Pak-American community leaders.



Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan addressing at the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute in Washington.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding of meeting of Provincial Project Steering Committee (PPSC) of IFRAP

Asadullah Baloch stresses equal allocation for all districts

QUETTA (APP): Leader of Balochistan National Party-Awami and Member Balochistan Assembly Mir Asadullah Baloch has emphasized the need for allocating sizeable funds for initiating flagship projects in less developed areas to accommodate all sectors and ensuring equal distribution of development budget for all districts of the province. "Equality in the distribution of funds in the Public Sector Development Funds (PSDF) to all constituencies of the province would help remove the sense of deprivation prevails among people living in remote areas of the province," he said while talking to media persons here Friday.

Asadullah Baloch said to bring the disgruntled people in mainstream, there

is a dire need to initiate flagship projects in Balochistan and boost economic activities in the region and ensure employment opportunities to the local people.

He asked the provincial government to give priorities to less developed areas in the public sector development program as they would help in bringing prosperity to local areas. He also urged the federal government to ensure maximum employment opportunities to the youth of Balochistan in the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Reko Diq.

He said that the Balochistan government remained elusive to provide employment and over 25,000 graduates were being added to unemployed individuals every year.

Asad Baloch said that around 7,000 engineers and over 3,000 doctors were waiting for a decent job and source of income which would continue to increase anxiety among the youth with each passing day.

He suggested that the provincial government should announce employment allowance of Rs 50,000 for engineers and up to Rs 100,000 for doctors.

Baloch stressed that the government should initiate projects for the welfare of farmers and provide subsidy on seeds, electricity, agriculture equipments and fertilizers. He also emphasized that the government should provide scholarships to 10,000 youth of the province and sends them abroad for getting higher education in the world top veracities.



HUB: View of site after traffic accident due to over speeding and break failed, at Hub River Road.