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Bugti emphasises crucial role of education in democracy and societal advancement

CM announced the inauguration of a new graduate scholarship aimed at empowering a deserving Balochistan student to pursue STEM subjects at Oxford

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oxford Pakistan Programme ("OPP") hosted its annual may dinner & fundraiser at the University of Oxford.

The dinner was attended by around 150 distinguished guests, including Malala Yousafzai, Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti, Aamir Ibrahim, Mohammed Khaishgi, Farouq Sheikh OBE, Professor Kamal Munir (Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cambridge), Farmida Bi CBE, Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar, and Sarwar Khan.

Senior academics and administrators from within the University of Oxford were also in attendance, including Professor Stephen Blyth (Principal of LMH), Helen Mountfield KC (Principal of Mansfield College), Professor Jonathan Michie (Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford), Professor Petra Schleiter (Joint Head of the Politics Department), Professor Paul Chastity (Head of the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies), and Dr Samina Khan (Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Outreach), said a press release.

On this occasion, Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, commemorated the profound legacy of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, whose tenure at this historical college

symbolises a bridge between past leadership and future aspirations.

Speaking to a distinguished audience, he emphasised the crucial role of education in democracy and societal advancement.

He stated that this dinner marks a significant milestone in our commitment to nurturing future leaders from Balochistan and in his address. On this note, the CM announced the inauguration of a new graduate scholarship aimed at empowering a deserving Balochistan student to pursue STEM subjects at Oxford. He articulated how this initiative not only addresses educational disparities

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Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti witnessing signing of scholarships agreement between Oxford Pakistan program and University of Oxford for the students from Balochistan



QUETTA: Different delegations meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhai

Federal minister calls for minority judges in higher judiciary

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazir Tarar has expressed his aspiration for judges from minority communities to join Pakistan's higher judiciary.

Speaking at the Justice A.R. Cornelius Conference held at a local hotel on Saturday, he emphasized the importance of religious freedom and minority rights in Pakistan. The event was organized by the Bright Future Society and Implementation Minority Rights Forum Pakistan.

He highlighted that Pakistan's Constitution guarantees complete religious freedom, aligning with Islamic teachings on the rights of minorities.

He lamented the decline

in religious tolerance post-Afghan war but reiterated Quda-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of a united, tolerant society. He mentioned ongoing efforts to establish a Minority Rights Commission and proposed reserving quotas for minority law officers and legal advisors.

He praised retired Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani for his landmark decisions benefiting minorities, and lauded Justice Cornelius for his legacy of equal justice. Supreme Court Justice Mansoor Ali Shah echoed Tarar's sentiments, noting the Constitution's protection of minority rights and advocating for the appointment of minority judges to the higher judiciary.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, addressing the Justice AR Cornelius Conference 2024.

Vietnamese envoy's wife found hours after going missing in Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The wife of Vietnam's ambassador was found by federal police within an hour of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's notice. She had gone missing after leaving home in a distressed state. According to police sources, the ambassador reported to the Margalla police station and the police helpline on Sunday afternoon that his wife had left their residence at 11 am for a beauty parlour but had not returned after several hours.

In response, a police team was formed under the supervision of SP City. Interior Minister Naqvi, currently on a visit to the UK, took notice of the situation and instructed IGP Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi to expedite

Pakistan reports fourth polio case of 2024

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Saturday reported the fourth poliovirus case of the current year, sources within the Ministry of National Health said.

A 2-year-old boy from Bharkan union council in Sindh's Shikarpur district became the latest victim.

The health department official said the virus was detected in stool samples collected from a child, adding that he had developed symptoms of paralysis on May 21.

This is the fourth polio case in 2024 as Pakistan had earlier reported three cases. All of the previous three cases reported this year were from Balochistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world where the poliovirus, which causes paralysis and can be a life-threatening disease, is endemic.

Last year, six polio cases were reported in the country which included four from the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and two from the southern port city of Karachi.

FIA issues notices to PTI bigwigs over uploading of controversial video

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) issued notices to senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Barrister Gohar, Omar Ayub and Raof Hasan over the issue of uploading controversial video by the official account of PTI founder Imran Khan.

All three bigwigs of PTI have been summoned to appear before FIA on Tuesday at 11 am.

"An attempt was made to incite the people against the state and its institutions by uploading the video through official account of PTI founder," said the notice issued by the FIA.

According to FIA sources, on May 26, a propaganda video was tweeted with reference to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the official X handle of PTI's founder. A tweet from his account surfaced in which he urged people to read the Hamoodur Rehman Commission report on the 1971 debacle.

The police located her using a combination of surveillance footage and cellular technology. The entire search operation took four hours, with the final hour being the most crucial following the minister's notice. She was subsequently

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Those talking of isolation of Pakistan living in fool's paradise: Ishaq Dar

Deputy PM urges healthcare professionals to serve needy, deserving with compassion, empathy

ISLAMABAD (Online): Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and foreign minister Ishaq Dar has said those talking of isolation of Pakistan at international level are living in fool's paradise.

"Young doctors have pivotal role in the society. Saving life of one man is tantamount to save the whole humanity. Doctors should work in professional manner, he said this while addressing convocation of HBS Dental and Medical college here Saturday.

He held the services of

Government is continuing work on fast paced basis for betterment in all sectors.

We will soon succeed in restoring our lost prestige, he added.

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Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal in a group with Chinese businessmen during a visit to Chengdu city in Sichuan, China

Planning Minister urges Chinese entrepreneurs to participate in CPEC Phase II

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal visited Chengdu city in Sichuan, China and had a comprehensive tour of the Chengdu High Tech Development Zone (CDHT).

According to press release issued by Planning Commission here Saturday, the minister also met with Chengdu based entrepreneurs, and businessmen, interested in becoming part of Phase-II of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and members of the Pakistani diaspora.

During Minister's tour of CDHT, he was briefed by Chengdu Municipal leaders, and zonal officials, on the High Tech Development Zone's history, development profile, special policies to attract both domestic and foreign investors, and pillar industries.

The CDHT, established in 1988, is one of the first national high-tech zones in China. In 2023, the CDHT realized a zonal GDP of over US\$ 43 billion. Covering an area of 237 sqkm, the zone includes a financial district, biotechnology city, and a science and technology park, employing more than 750,000 people, and registering over 4300 enterprises and expertise.

The minister thanked the local officials for their briefing and invited them to participate in Pakistan's development, especially vis-a-vis CPEC Phase-II, and to develop technology parks in Pakistan, sharing their valuable experiences and expertise.

The minister also invited relevant experts to visit Pakistan, and engage with authorities and businesses, so that meaningful cooperation could take place. This was greeted positively by both the Municipal leaders and zonal officials.

NEPRA issues decision to enhance electricity tariff by Rs 3.28 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): NEPRA has issued the decision to enhance the electricity tariff by Rs 3.28 per unit.

According to decision of NEPRA, hike of Rs 3.28 per unit in electricity tariff has been approved.

The increase in electricity tariff has been made under the head of quarterly adjustment.

The increase in power tariff will be applicable for the month of June, July and August.

NEPRA has sent the decision on enhancement in power tariff to federal government.

The increased power tariff will be applicable after approval from federal government.

ECP rejects single panel by LHC for election tribunals

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rejected single panel name by Lahore High Court (LHC) in connection with election tribunals and decided to resort to Supreme Court (SC).

The meeting of ECP was held under Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Saturday.

The legal team briefed the meeting on decision of LHC and ECP powers in connection with election tribunals.

The legal team told the meeting ECP is of opinion that Chief Justice (CJ) LHC can not decide on his own about name of one judge for tribunals under election act.

Live-streaming of NAB amendments case can be misused politically: SC

Says apprehensions about hearings being used for "political purposes and point scoring" proved correct when Imran Khan detoured in speech

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Supreme Court on Saturday issued detailed verdict while justifying its earlier rejection of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's plea for live-streaming the NAB amendments case hearing.

In the detailed order issued on Saturday, the apex court said that the plea of KP government was rejected as it wasn't a case of public interest.

"The broadcasting of the court proceedings of cases involving politicians can be used for political point-scoring," the SC stated in its detailed order.

The case was heard by a five-member SC larger bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and composed of

Continued on page 2



KHALIQABAD: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango listening problems of people at Kot Lango

Finance Ministry defies PM directives to cut petrol price

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Finance Ministry has defied the directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehzad Sharif to slash the prices of petroleum products.

The premier directed the finance ministry to cut petrol price by Rs 15.4 per litre and diesel price by Rs 7.9 per litre for the next fortnight to bring relief to the public grappling with inflation.

However, the finance ministry brought the price of petrol by Rs 4.74 per litre and the price of diesel by Rs 3.86 per litre.

The press release issued by the finance division states: "The prices of petroleum products have seen a decreasing trend in the international market during the last fortnight."

"The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has worked out the con-



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan inspecting development projects at Hanna Lake

Federal govt likely to slash funds for discretionary development schemes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government is set to slash funds for discretionary development schemes of members of parliament, citing recommendations from both the IMF and World Bank funding for provincial projects is also slated to be halted. Notably, there are proposals to reduce the health development budget from 26 billion rupees to 17 billion rupees and allocate 32 billion rupees less for the education sector, compared to the previous year's budget of 83 billion rupees.

The inner sources revealed that due to the impending election year, approximately 61 billion rupees were allocated for parliamentarians' schemes in the current financial year.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Minority Affairs Sanjay Kumar and Spokesman of Government of Balochistan Shahid Rind giving away amount of Rs. 01 million to widow of Rashid Masih



ISLAMABAD: Cyclists take part in cycling on celebration of World Bicycle Day organized by Turkmenistan Embassy & Serena Hotels

Pakistan aims for T20 glory in historic US World Cup

Exciting tournament kicks off today with USA, Canada opening match

NEW YORK (INP): As Pakistan marks 15 years since their triumph in the 2009 T20 World Cup, hopes are high for a repeat victory under the leadership of Babar Azam.

The historic tournament was going to be held in the United States for the first time, has fans eagerly anticipating another potential win.

In 2009, Pakistan, captained by Misbah-ul-Haq, clinched the T20 World Cup title. Since then, the team has faced challenges in reclaiming the top spot. This year, however, supporters are optimistic that Babar Azam and his squad will bring the trophy home. Babar has assured fans of his commitment to achieving victory in America.

Notably, the West Indies and England are the only nations to have won the T20 World Cup twice. India, Sri Lanka, and Australia have each secured the title

once. Although Pakistan is not among the top favorites this year, they are widely expected to reach the semi-finals.

The T20 Cricket World Cup, which began in 2007, saw India win the inaugural tournament.

As the competition unfolds in the US, cricket enthusiasts around the world will be watching closely, hoping for a stellar performance from Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the much-anticipated ICC Twenty20 World Cricket Cup will kick off today with the inaugural match set to begin at 5:30 am Pakistan Standard Time.

Cricket enthusiasts are eagerly awaiting the clash between the host nation, USA, and their northern neighbors, Canada. This opening game will take place at the Grand Prairie Stadium in

Texas, marking the beginning of an exciting tournament.

The World Cup promises a thrilling series of matches, with a total of 55 games scheduled, bringing together some of the best cricketing talent from around the globe.

Following the opening match, the second encounter of the tournament will see the West Indies facing Papua New Guinea. This game will commence at 7:30 pm Pakistan Standard Time in the city of Providence, West Indies.

As the teams gear up for an intense competition, fans worldwide are set to witness a festival of cricket, filled with skill, strategy, and sportsmanship.

The ICC Twenty20 World Cricket Cup is sure to captivate audiences, making it a must-watch event for cricket aficionados everywhere.



QUETTA : Pakistan Chest Society leader, Dr. Shereen Khan along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club

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Bugti emphasises crucial role....

turely home-grown initiative that is going from strength to strength.

The OPP represents a pioneering effort to catalyse a range of Pakistan-focused initiatives at the University of Oxford. Spearheaded by Professor Adeel Malik (Associate Professor of Development Economics at Oxford), Dr Talha J. Pirzada (Lecturer in Material Science & Junior Research Fellow at Oxford), Haroon Zaman (Associate at Travers Smith LLP), and Minahil Saqib (Associate Director at Barclays), the OPP has two core objectives: i) to address the underrepresentation of Pakistani and British Pakistani students at Oxford; and ii)

to raise the academic profile of Pakistan and Pakistan-related areas of interest amongst Oxford's faculty. Just before the dinner commenced, a significant annual strategic advisory board meeting took place at the Lady Margaret Hall. The meeting included a productive discussion on the future directions of the OPP, covering scholarship availability, accessibility measures and post-study employment opportunities for scholars.

The session was attended by prominent figures from the Pakistani and British Pakistani academic and business communities, in addition to the core OPP and LMH development teams. Discussions at the meeting focused on strategies for the OPP and explored potential collaborations amongst the attendees. Notably, on the announcement of the launch of an endowment model for OPP, Sarwar Khawaja announced his generous donation of £100,000 to initiate this endowment fund, which was met with enthusiastic approval.

The core team of the OPP initiated this year's dinner by outlining the expansive vision and recent achievements of the OPP, emphasising the necessity to expand academic discussions about Pakistan beyond conventional narratives. Dr Talha J. Pirzada, Professor Adeel Malik and Haroon Zaman each highlighted the crucial role of education and the significant impact of such financial support, discussing how the OPP serves as a link between educational ambitions, inspirations and actual outcomes.

They also highlighted how the OPP, now in its second year of granting scholarships, continues to support an impressive array of scholars. This year, 11 outstanding scholars spanning a wide range of disciplines have been beneficiaries of the OPP. Their fields of study include Education, Development Studies, Climate Change, Law, Music, Chemical Biology, Clinical Epidemiology, Medical Statistics and Computer Science.

The OPP has provided numerous scholarships to financially assist on-course Pakistani students at Oxford in need throughout the year. Together with its partners, the OPP's scholars have received in excess of £460,000 in funding.

The OPP team also discussed its outreach efforts, the Allama Iqbal Lecture Series and the notable progress made by the OPP.

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Kyrgyzstan still ideal country for medical education of foreign students: Kyrgyz Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Ulanbek Totuaev on Sunday said that Kyrgyzstan is still an ideal country for medical education of foreign students and their government has always provided a good educational environment to foreign students.

Talking to APP, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Ulanbek Totuaev said that recently, some local criminal elements attempted to disrupt the situation in Kyrgyzstan but their government handled the situation according to the constitution. Pakistani students are now safe in Kyrgyzstan and can continue their education, he added. The ambassador said that Kyrgyzstan has always been an ideal country for Pakistan's students in medical education and students from Pakistan are coming from different provinces to get quality educational environment there. He said that the relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are ideal and the history of mutual diplomatic and economic rela-

tions between the two Islamic brother countries is rooted in the ancient 'Silk Route.'

He said that recently some elements want to spoil the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, which both countries are aware of and the people of both countries should also be aware of it.

From the moment information about the incident was received, law enforcement agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic took prompt measures to detain persons involved in the event, both foreign citizens (four Egyptian citizens) and around 10 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The chief and nine officers of the Internal Affairs Directorate of the Sverdlovsk region were removed from their positions after riots on the night of May 18.

He said that on May 20, 2024, in Astana, on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Zheenbek Kulubayev had a bilateral meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

He said that a video of the fight and injured Kyrgyz citizens was re-



Hussain Muhammad, Consul General of Pakistan Consulate Dubai honored Khalid Hussain Chaudry, President Pakistan Social Centre Sharjah (PSCS) along with his team members with appreciation certificates for serving Paki-

Citizens applaud China's role in Pakistan's satellite missions

ISLAMABAD (INP): The people from nationwide have expressed their gratitude for China's support in launching Pakistani satellites into space.

According to Gwadar Pro, after the successful deployment of back-to-back two space satellites ICUBE-Q and PAKSAT MM-1, they expressed their appreciation for China's role in Pakistan's space missions.

Expressing their thoughts on social media, a number of Pakistanis view China's support in their space missions as a significant collaboration that enhances their capabilities and strengthens bilateral ties.

They regarded China's assistance as crucial in initiating and advancing Pakistan's satellite capabilities, fostering a robust partnership in space exploration.

On X (formerly Twitter), a user expressed gratitude and credited the Chinese side. The user quoted

a saying from late Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping.

Another user posted on social media that launching of this satellite would address several issues we currently face in Pakistan, particularly internet outages.

The successful satellite launch received applause not only from overseas Pakistanis but also from those residing in China.

The internet was flooded with congratulatory messages celebrating Pakistan's flourishing space missions.

The report says, the launch of PAKSAT MM-1, Pakistan's second communication satellite will bring a multitude of benefits to the country. It will significantly improve internet connectivity across Pakistan, especially in remote areas.

The satellite will support tele-education and telemedicine services, allowing people in remote

Ramesh hints Govt change, worsening political situation after budget

ISLAMABAD (INP): People's Party leader Dr Ramesh Kumar has hinted at change in government and worsening political conditions in an interview with a private TV channel.

Dr Ramesh Kumar said, he was seeing worsening situation and change of the government this year.

"The situation will further worsen after a difficult budget."

"I am knowing things not seeing the PMI-N government to remain in power," he said. "After difficult conditions where the game will head will clear in September and October," he said. He said, "It is going to be seen, the conditions will improve with re-election or any other setup emerges".

"I am also seeing Nawaz Sharif's U-turn to the anti-establishment stance," he said. "If the political situation turns toward the PTI's founder, it will bring more destruction for the country", he said.

Ramesh Kumar said, "I have remained associated with the PTI's founder and running a government is not possible for him," he added.

"His stars are good but running a country is difficult for him," he said.

have registration from the Nursing Council and a minimum of three years of related working experience in the hospital setting.

He said that specialized post-basic training in Operation Theatre (OT)/ICU and paediatrics would be preferred, and he/she should not be older than 45 years. The basic monthly salary would be 3,000 to 4,500 RM. The health firm would provide an allowance per month, including a general nursing allowance for pediatric nurses. Specialized Allowance for ICU and OT. Allowances include a Specialized Allowance of 1100 RM, a General Nursing Allowance of 700 RM, and a Degree Allowance of 400 RM and Post Basic Allowance, 800 RM.

"The source also shared the terms and conditions of the employment contract, as the salary of the confirmed employee will be reviewed in March each year based on the individual employees."

The candidate should

Demand for female nursing staff in Malaysia increasing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistani and Human Resource Development, would export around 100 female nursing staff to a health firm in Malaysia.

An official told APP that the demand for female nursing staff in Malaysia was increasing with the passage of time due to the highly qualified and expert staff of health already working in the different hospitals in Malaysia.

He said that OEC had already announced the application from job seekers to apply for Malaysia and prescribed qualifications and experience.

He informed that 100 nurses were required for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) with a diploma in nursing, a bachelor of science in nursing, or a post-RN from a recognized institution.

The candidate should

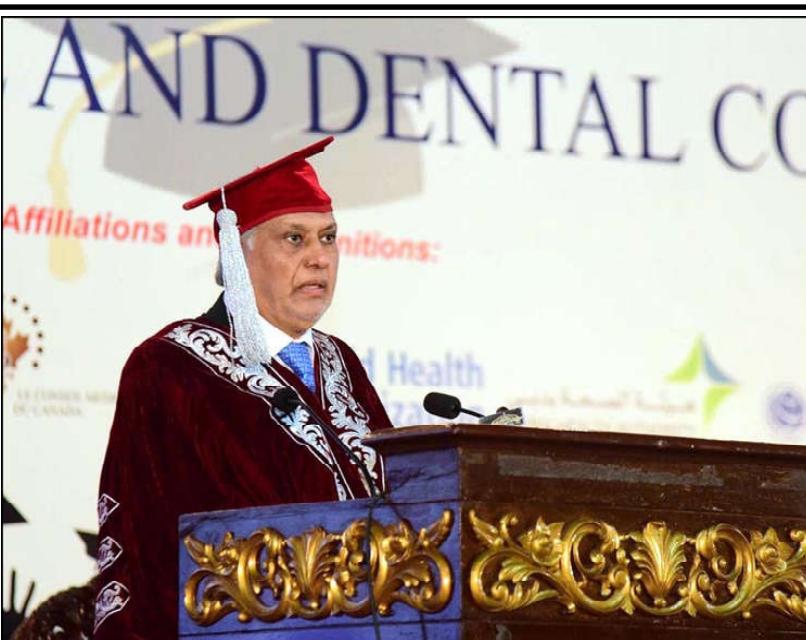
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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, delivering remarks as Chief Guest at the 1st Convocation Ceremony of THBS Medical and Dental College.

Govt to set up ECE centers in existing primary school

100 classrooms to enhance childhood education facilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Pakistan is establishing Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres in existing primary school 100 classrooms in Islamabad to enhance early childhood education facilities and ensure quality education for young children.

This project aims to provide a foundation for lifelong learning by focusing on the critical early years, facilitating foundational learning and skills, said a press release here on Saturday.

It aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-4 and SDG-5), ensuring children are well-prepared for formal schooling. Initially, fifty urban and fifty rural areas are selected for the construction and renovation of 100 classrooms into ECE centres with appropriate furniture and materials and providing trained Montessori teachers and support staff.

As a result, the project significantly improves educational infrastructure.

The initiative promotes holistic development, including physical,

intellectual, emotional, social, and moral growth, which helps reduce dropout rates, improve attendance, and enhance retention. The project targets enrolling 6,000 students annually, thereby improving the early childhood education enrollment ratio and ensuring gender equality by providing equal educational opportunities for boys and girls.

Economically, the project creates 300 jobs, including teaching and non-teaching positions and contributes to developing a skilled and educated workforce.

To address ECE needs, the project will establish a total of 100 ECE classrooms with the structure of kindergartens with five ECE rooms, one activity room, and a play area in 10 urban centres, and convert 50 existing classrooms into ECE centres in rural schools.

The provision includes specialised Montessori teachers (PPS-05), Montessori Teacher/Aide (PPS-04), and support staff (Ayas, PPS-01), hired through Education Service teachers and support staff.

As a result, the project significantly improves educational infrastructure.

The initiative promotes holistic development, including physical,

providers (ESP) or FDE. Learning during the early years plays a critical and formative role in acquiring concepts, developing skills and attitudes, and nurturing hidden potential, laying the foundations for lifelong learning. This period is marked by rapid physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and moral development.

Quality early childhood care and education significantly positively impact children's future learning, careers, and adult lives as responsible citizens. Investment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) benefits individuals, the education system, and society as a whole.

ECE is crucial for developing cognitive abilities, communication skills, creativity, problem-solving, and social skills, setting the stage for enhanced learning outcomes in subsequent grades. Children who receive ECE before enrolling in primary school exhibit lower dropout rates, improved attendance, better retention, and completion, and smoother transitions to higher educational levels.

Hajj Pilgrims laud Saudi authorities for exemplary services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hajj pilgrims from around the world have expressed heartfelt gratitude to Saudi authorities for their exceptional services, which have transformed their sacred journey into a profoundly comfortable and spiritually enriching experience.

From advanced cooling systems to carefully sourced materials, every detail has been tailored to enhance the pilgrimage journey. "The advanced cooling systems have been an absolute lifesaver, especially during the peak hours of the pilgrimage. They've made the entire experience so much more comfortable and enjoyable for me," - A grateful pilgrim Abdul Rehman from Bangladesh expressed with a smile, feeling a deep sense of peace.

Similarly, Arief, another pilgrim from Indonesia, shared his sentiments, saying, "The care and attention to detail put into every aspect of our journey have truly made me feel at home here. I am grateful for the exemplary services provided, which have made this sacred pilgrimage a truly unforgettable experience."

Managed by the Zamzam Water Department, the provision of cold Zamzam water around the clock at Masjid e Nabvi stands as a testament to the meticulous care provided by the Saudi authorities. An astounding 300 tons of Zamzam water are transported daily from its source in Makkah to the Prophet's Mosque, according to reports from the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). Rigorous testing ensures the water's purity before it is distributed to thousands of coolers strategically placed throughout the mosque.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam meeting with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi.

APHC condemns deteriorating HRs situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): 24,015 since August 5, 2019. In the just concluding month of May, eight Kashmiris, including three in fake encounters or custody, were martyred, 703 youth were arrested, and four were injured, he added.

He criticized the Indian government's actions aimed at suppressing the freedom of expression and perpetuating a culture of fear through draconian measures in the occupied territory. With nearly one million troops deployed, IIOJK has become one of the most militarized zones globally, the spokesman said.

The APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement in Srinagar said that the occupation troops have martyred 875 Kashmiris, injured over 2,400, and arrested approximately 24,015 since August 5, 2019. In the just concluding month of May, eight Kashmiris, including three in fake encounters or custody, were martyred, 703 youth were arrested, and four were injured, he added.

He criticized the Indian government's actions aimed at suppressing the freedom of expression and perpetuating a culture of fear through draconian measures in the occupied territory. With nearly one million troops deployed, IIOJK has become one of the most militarized zones globally, the spokesman said.

Hot weather to prevail in most areas with chances of isolated rain: PMD

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot weather for most areas of the country during the next 24 hours. While very hot weather with dust raising winds are likely in southern parts.

However, windstorms with isolated rain-thunderstorms are expected in Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northeast Punjab, Potohar region and Islamabad.

According to the synoptic situation, continental



ISLAMAAD: Participants of World Bicycle Day Race passing through Constitution Avenue in the Federal Capital.

Death anniversary of poet Riaz-Ur-Rehman Sagar observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 11th death anniversary of veteran lyricist and poet Riaz-Ur-Rehman Sagar was observed on Sunday and rich tributes were paid to him for his lifetime services to the Pakistani film industry.

Riaz-Ur-Rehman Sagar was born on December 1, 1941, in Bathinda, Punjab, his family emigrated to Pakistan as refugees following the independence of India.

Sagar enrolled in Millat High school where he discovered his love of poetry. He later joined Emerson College Multan for Intermediate Studies, where his poetry readings attracted large crowds.

Riaz-Ur-Rehman's published works include 'Aangan Aangan Taaray', 'Arz Kiya Hai', 'Wo Bh Kya Din Thay' and 'Chand Jharokay Mai'.

Fire on Margalla hills partially controlled

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has stated that significant progress in containing the fire that erupted on the Margalla Hills.

Memon stated that the fire near Gandian village, behind Faisal Masjid, has been brought under control, while efforts are underway to extinguish the blaze near Kamial village, close to Naval Headquarters.

Despite challenges, including the spread of fire in Kinsala village, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Islamabad administration remains vigilant in its firefighting efforts. Rescue

teams are actively combating flames, even at the location of the stupa, where a fire has ignited.

Attributing the fire's spread to high temperatures and strong winds, Memon assured that precautionary measures have been implemented to contain further escalation. Notably, three individuals have been apprehended on suspicion of starting the fires, with ongoing interrogations underway.

Firefighters and helicopters have been deployed to aid in extinguishing the blaze, underscoring the multi-pronged approach to tackle the situation.

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Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reviewed the special exercises, with DIG Law and Order and other senior police officers also present on the occasion.

The Anti-Riot Unit, Counter-Terrorism Department, and Red Zone com-

mandos participated in the training courses. During these exercises, police personnel demonstrated their skills in maintaining peace, safeguarding public and private properties, confronting criminal elements, and effecting arrests, while also showcasing the use of water cannons, tower rappelling, and other advanced techniques.

The police officials successfully demonstrated their ability to disperse any unlawful protests using six different formations, encompassing various tactics and techniques to manage and control such situations effectively.

Moreover, the CTD and Red Zone commands also presented a practical demonstration for dealing with and countering terrorist elements.

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Another approach

In recent times, there has been growing concern over the misuse of social media for orchestrating defamatory campaigns against the government, judiciary, military, and even journalists and private individuals. The state has responded with various legislative measures, such as the broadening of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act and, more recently, the defamation law passed by the Punjab Assembly.

There has been heated debate on the appropriateness and effectiveness of these actions, and even as they agree that something must be done to check the abuse of social media platforms, rights activists and journalists have correctly warned that any measures to check unlawful and destructive activity must be calibrated so that they are not used to restrict constitutional freedoms of speech and expression. No one denies the problem; the difference is in the approach proposed to be taken to address it.

One of the country's most powerful forums recently issued a strongly worded statement on 'digital terrorism', highlighting the gravity with which it views deviant activities online. The forum's concern over the abuse of social media is shared by all, including the media, but equating social media dissent with acts of terrorism seems to be problematic.

Pakistan has endured a long and painful struggle against militancy and terrorism, marked by the loss of thousands of lives. Conflating the genuine threat it poses — and which the nation continues to face — with the online actions of a few misguided individuals or miscreants seems to be taking the matter too far. Instead, the authorities would see better results in taking a more reflective approach. It seems crucial in this respect to acknowledge that the polarisation in our society is not solely a result of what is being said on social media. Neither can members of the ruling class, be they civilians or military officers, distance themselves from what is happening — they are a part of the same society as their critics.

The extreme emotions currently being expressed online seem to be a reflection of the deep social and political angst that has engulfed the country. Unless the root causes of this instability are addressed, ordinary people can be expected to continue to act in ways that are detrimental to both the state and society. That is why merely labelling critics as 'digital terrorists' and initiating a new crackdown seems unlikely to bear results; instead, it could even exacerbate the discontent. What is needed, instead, is a broader, inclusive debate on how we as a nation can manage and mitigate the challenges posed by social media while respecting freedom of expression. Side by side, a softer, more empathetic approach is required to mend the rifts within society. It is only with patience and fortitude that this issue may be resolved.

Aqdas Afzal

If there were a central bankers' roll of honour, it would prominently feature Paul Volcker's name, perhaps even at the very top. Volcker, who died in 2019 at the age of 92, single-handedly tamed inflation in the US, which had touched 15 per cent in 1980, by rising above political affiliations to do the right thing.

Resisting tremendous political pressure, Volcker raised interest rates, taking them as high as 21.5pc in 1981, killing inflation, but also bringing about the electoral defeat of his benefactor, president Jimmy Carter.

Despite Volcker's epic battle against inflation, his legacy remains somewhat mixed, mainly because of the steep economic costs attached to the 'Volcker shock' that came in the shape of the 1981-82 recession, unsustainable fiscal deficits and rampant unemployment above 10pc.

Over the last two years, just like the US in 1980, Pakistan, too, has suffered from skyrocketing inflation, though of even larger magnitude. It started with the Russia-Ukraine conflict that raised interna-

tional oil prices, taking inflation to 38pc in May 2023 before coming down to 17.3pc in April.

Where inflation created challenges for everyone, it impacted the most vulnerable or poor segments of society the most, given they spend a disproportionately large fraction of their incomes on food — last year, food inflation had reached an unbelievable 48pc.

No one has specifically connected the present political instability with this inflation, as the recent political upheaval is seemingly driven by structural factors of the political system itself.

Still, the political crisis' persistence and unending social unrest make a convincing case for attributing some causal power to two-plus years of very high inflation.

In a sense, this back-breaking inflation is reminiscent of Weimar Germany of the 1920s, when facing the mother of all inflations, Germany veered to the extreme right, opening up space for Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, enabling them to seize power democratically, but then turning Germany into a fascist-totalitarian state.

There is no ambiguity

about whether very high inflation devastates society. But economists are not entirely sure how much influence high interest rates hold in controlling inflation.

Whereas some economists argue that, instead of raising interest rates, central bankers should target money supply, others say that inflation is also a supply-side phenomenon, meaning that supply shortages feed into price spikes, leaving inflation somewhat immune to interest rates.

Not only do these perspectives raise questions about the impact of monetary policy, they also highlight concerns about the huge economic cost that comes from very high interest rates in the shape of anaemic economic growth and almost no job creation.

This was one reason why the recent State Bank decision to keep the interest rate unchanged at 22pc was scrutinised, with some analysts clamouring for a decision review. These analysts argue that since inflation has now come down significantly, Pakistan's central bankers should have lowered interest rates by at least 100-200 basis points to spur economic growth

that has all but stopped, given the high cost of borrowing.

However, these analysts may have missed out on some very important developments that, when taken into context, demonstrate that the decision to keep rates unchanged is without merit.

First, data reveals that inflation has not really come down as expected in big advanced economies such as the US and UK. Higher-than-anticipated inflation numbers have stopped American and British central bankers from slashing interest rates. Though the impact is not significant, inflation in advanced economies does push inflation higher in emerging economies by raising international commodity prices, in particular.

Second, the world is probably witnessing the possibly end of globalisation and free trade. In this new era of geo-economic fragmentation and

'slowbalisation', nations like the US that previously championed free trade, are increasingly becoming inward-looking and protectionist as demonstrated by the US slapping a 100pc tariff on Chinese electric vehicles. The IMF calculated the long-term impact of these trends to cost 7pc of global GDP or \$7.4 trillion.

For this reason, analysts believe that these structural transformations, whereby nations are busy rewiring their supply chains, are going to be inherently inflationary for a few years.

Third, lower interest rates could bring about a sharp depreciation in the exchange rate as capital will head to destinations where it can obtain a higher return.

This is sometimes referred to as the 'carry trade'. Recently, the Japanese yen fell to a 34-year low against the US dollar primarily because of the interest rate differential between Japan and the US. Sitting atop more than \$1tr of forex reserves, Japan made quick interventions to the tune of \$60 billion to prop up its currency. Needless to say, Pakistan does not have the forex reserves to play this game.

Last, despite what ever has been said about inflation coming down, it still clocked in at 17.3pc compared to 12 months ago — not a small number. But, this purported 'drop' in inflation is driven, in large part, by what is called the 'base effect', meaning that prices were towering so high a year ago that even a significant absolute increase would look like a modest percentage change. Falling inflation does not mean falling prices; they are still increasing, but at a slower rate. It should then not come as a surprise that people are up in arms against rising prices in various parts of the country.

What this analysis points out is that despite intense scrutiny, Pakistan's central bankers had good reason to keep interest rates unchanged. If tailwinds and trends continue, there would be a strong case for lowering interest rates next month. But, perhaps the most important message of this analysis is that central bankers must never give in to political — or social — pressure to always do the right thing, just like Paul Volcker. -- Courtesy Dawn

Money and man

Tahir Mehdi

There is an unusual stakeholder in the ongoing Indian elections — the electronic voting machine. The last batch of Indian voters will press buttons of their choice on this machine this evening, concluding the seventh and last phase of voting. This will be the fifth general election in India held solely through EVMs. But never before has the potential for its manipulation been so vehemently debated and feared. It can be partly attributed to the Modi government's ruthless use of state institutions to further its political games. The Election Commission of India (ECI), which otherwise has an enviable reputation, was no exception this time.

Controversies regarding ECI appointments began a year before the elections. The Indian constitution empowers the government to appoint a chief and many election commissioners as it wants. A law later fixed the number of commissioners at two and the practice continued for decades without being challenged. But in recent times, parties have found it risky to trust Modi for the job

and approached India's supreme court. The court decided in March 2023 that until parliament enacted a specific law, three-member committee comprising the prime minister, leader of the opposition and the chief justice would select the commission members.

The Modi government, however, enacted a law in December 2023 replacing the chief justice with a union minister chosen by the prime minister. This effectively meant that power remained with the sitting government. Incidentally, one commissioner retired in February 2024 and the other in March under dubious circumstances. The government quickly exercised its new powers and filled the two vacancies a month before the elections. The chief election commissioner has already been facing criticism on various matters, especially his defence of the right to privacy of donors of political parties under the controversial electoral bonds scheme introduced by the Modi government but quashed by the supreme court.

It is, however, not just the lack of trust in the commission that is making parties nervous about EVMs. The machine itself raises hard questions. The ECI took around 25 years to 'perfect' the machine before abandoning the paper ballot in 2004. Around the same time, a number of other countries were attracted by these machines and tried them. Germany's highest court threw a spanner in the works in 2009 by ruling in favour of a complaint, which had pointed out that EVMs require voters to have blind faith in technology as by pushing a button in the machine, they could not be sure if their vote had gone to the intended candidate, in contrast to marking/stamping the paper ballot. Germany abandoned the machine and stuck to the paper ballot.

Indian machine enthusiasts, however, worked out a way to get around this weakness, introducing the 'Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail'. This required the insertion of a third machine, the VVPAT unit, between the earlier two, namely the ballot unit on which voters push the button of their choice and the control unit in which the votes are recorded. When a voter pushes a button, the VVPAT is instructed to print a chit with the name

and symbol of his/her chosen candidate. The chit remains visible to the voter for seven seconds through a glass window after which it drops into a concealed compartment. India used this three-unit machine on a trial basis in 2014 and adopted it for the entire general election in 2019.

The VVPAT, however, has thrown up more questions than it has answered. Yes, the voter can now see which candidate he/she has voted for, but no one can be sure if the VVPAT unit has correctly conveyed the same to the control/storage unit. The names and symbols of candidates are uploaded to VVPAT units, after nominations and allotment of symbols have been finalised, by attaching an external device, mostly a laptop, to the unit. This increases the chances of EVMs' exposure to malwares, besides making them vulnerable to manipulation by hackers, national or foreign. The earlier two-unit machine had no port for external devices. More importantly, it was candidate-agnostic as it recognised and recorded candidates only as a number. But after the VVPAT's

addition, EVMs know which number stands for which candidate, making potential manipulation more targeted.

On counting day, paper chits stored in five VVPAT machines randomly selected from amongst all used in a constituency segment are manually counted too, but the rules provide no satisfactory solution in case such counts do not tally with machine counts. Parties and experts have been demanding the hand counting of chits from all VVPATs but the ECI has refused to oblige, probably because higher incidences of mismatches between hand and machine counting will make the whole system more controversial.

After voting ends, the machines are stored in strong rooms until counting day, which may be weeks away. Parties have been apprehensive about EVMs' security during the storage period. If, however, the ECI publishes the turnout details at the end of each voting phase, parties can tally it with the total votes polled by all candidates as revealed on counting day. This can ensure, to a large extent, that

the machines have not been tampered with during the storage period.

The ECI launched an app in 2019, which provided two-hourly updates on the turnout in real numbers, but during the current elections, it issued the turnout only in percentage terms, until a party knocked on the supreme court's door. Though the court refrained from issuing directives, the ECI decided to publish the turnout details in real numbers. The details of the first five phases have thus been published 36 days after the start of polling. However, this belated action may not be sufficient to counter all conspiracy theories regarding EVM manipulation during the storage period.

On June 4, all EVMs will be brought from the strong rooms to counting centres, and their seals will be broken to push the result buttons. Besides the next government, these results will decide if the EVMs have survived the hardest endurance test of their lives. It will influence the raging international debate on replacing the paper ballot with machines. -- Courtesy Dawn

Jinnah's children

Bina Shah

We still haven't figured out exactly who Mohammad Ali Jinnah — Quaid-i-Azam — is or was, even in 2024. Westernised liberal secular, or champion of religious freedom for Muslims? Brilliant statesman or failed politician who played the religion card? This national confusion swirls as we consider whether Jinnah's personal life really was a reflection of what he intended Pakistan to become.

In Jinnah's Constituent Assembly speech of Aug 11, 1947, he declared his support for peace, harmony, and pluralism. He envisioned Pakistan and India living as tranquil neighbours. Eminent Pakistani scholar Prof Akbar S. Ahmed supports this interpretation of Jinnah's intentions in his play Gandhi and Jinnah that was presented at this year's KLF.

Lawyer Yasser Latif Hamdani, author of the biography Jinnah: A Life, posited that Jinnah's personal beliefs in secularism matched his political ones — that he was opposed to bringing religion into politics. Islamic fundamentalists are the ones who turned Pakistan into a fundamentalist state completely the opposite of what Jinnah wanted.

Renowned publisher Ameena Saiyid, who has overseen the publication of scores of books about Jinnah, agrees that Jinnah envisioned a secular, egalitarian country with Muslims living in peace with Hindus, Christians, Parsis, and open borders with India. She recalls multiple tense conversations she held with her daughter Dina, on the phone and in person. "It was as if she needed to unburden herself and talk about her great disappointment with what her father wanted and what

the country had become." But others say that Jinnah never intended for Pakistan to be divided from India in this manner. Historian Ayesha Jalal states in her 1985 seminal work, *The Sole Spokesman*, that Jinnah banished the possibility of a partition on a religious basis only to secure more protections for the Muslims in a united India. Congress rejected this idea and actually made Partition a reality, one that Jinnah did not really believe in.

Anatol Lieven writes in Pakistan: A Hard Country that the 'slogan of Pakistan' was used by Jinnah to win control over the Muslim League, and to force Congress to agree to a United India where Muslims shared power with Hindus. His vision of a secular Pakistan where Muslims would be 'people of state' was one idea; another, that Pakistan could exist as an autonomous entity in a wider, united South Asia. But a lack of numbers in Congress meant that Jinnah had to rely on 'Muslim street power' to persuade others of his political strength.

This introduction of religion into politics gave rise to the obscurantist Pakistan we live in today. Ameena Saiyid believes Jinnah is held hostage to people who want his endorsement of their ideas and opinions.

"His name, imagined life, and politics are being used to influence others in the narrative ... In the process, the real Jinnah has become blurred, even disappeared."

In literary critic Roland Barthes's groundbreaking 1967 essay 'The Death of the Author', it is argued that once a text is published, it loses its connection with the author's intentions and becomes subject to reader interpretations. In fact, it

COP28 to SB60

Aisha Khan

The 60th session of the Subsidiary Bodies will take place from June 3-13, 2024, at the World Conference Centre Bonn. As the overall political progress on the road to COP28 remains slow, SB will be key for negotiators to recalibrate their positions and identify areas of compromise, with a view to laying the groundwork for an outcome at COP29.

The upcoming climate conference will be judged on how it delivers on three core tasks: 1) agreement on a new post-2025 climate finance goal that lays the groundwork for the free flow of finance to developing countries to meet their Nationally Determined Contributions commitments; 2) build momentum for the next generation of national climate transition and resilience plans; 3) guide countries on how to follow up and deliver on the outcome of the first Global Stock Take (GST).

The extent to which Bonn can narrow down differences will determine the COP29 outcome. The most important task for negotiators will be to push beyond fixed positions on the new collective quantified goals (NCQG) that can unlock progress in negotiations and pave the pathway for a final solution. To this end, the talks must use UNFCCC processes to continue the implementation of outcomes from COP28 and the GST. This is the time to build pressure on the COP29 presidency and the COP troika of the UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil to take ownership of the UNFCCC process from Bonn to Baku and steer parties towards convergence across topics under the roadmap of keeping 1.5 alive.

At COP28, the overall strategy for advancing the GGA identified dimensional and sectoral targets but weak financial provision remains a stumbling block. SB60 needs to emphasise the need for prioritising public finance that is grant-based and

concessional to push the agenda forward.

It is important to use UAE-FGCR and the NCQG on climate finance to create synergies for catalysing adaptation action. The oft-resisted inclusion of Means of Implementation as an integral part of finance will once again come in the way of closing the financial gap for adaptation. This year the issues under discussion must build momentum on decisions taken at Dubai with an eye on giving the agenda forward.

To restore confidence in the multilateral system, negotiators in Bonn must make cross-cutting conversations an integral part of the UAE-FGCR and make efforts towards operationalisation during the work programme to ensure comprehensive and effective implementation.

The SB60 should avoid losing time on fighting agenda battles, and focus on matters relating to resilience and adaptation. The foremost consideration should be narrowing the submission scope guided by experts' outputs to help receive targeted inputs and generating discussion to capture additional views from parties and stakeholders.

As the planet inches closer to crashing the 1.5 guard rail, the mood in the Global South is souring and platitudes are no longer acceptable to the people. With patience running out for promises without a plan, SB has its work cut out for escalating COP28 priorities into leader-level engagement.

Bonn offers an opportunity for building bridges between developed and developing countries around a shared vision and driving political agendas towards landing zones. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM Maryam says Police must control crime as she accountable to 1.3 billion people

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over a special meeting to review the overall law & order in the province here on Saturday.

The IG Police gave a briefing about the overall law and order and police performance.

The CM said, "I am accountable to 13 crore people; the police should control crime and one cannot turn a blind eye to reality. I will not tolerate any no-go area in Punjab. The crime rate will have to be brought down across the province under any circumstance. If the crime rate is on the rise then the people overlook reforms and development projects of the government."

She maintained, "The police are making sacrifices

but black sheep persist as well. I side with the police and stand behind the force. I expressed solidarity with the police force by donning a uniform. We are providing complete resources to the police so that their performance is not affected. We are introducing an analysis and inspection system in order to evaluate police performance and eliminate corruption."

The CM said that 14 special check-posts were being established to stop inter-provincial smuggling. "We are meeting every demand of the police force in the shape of the provision of vehicles, gadgets, ammunition and training. It is our foremost responsibility to ensure protection of every police personnel standing on a

check-post. I laud the performance of the IG Police, RPO Sargodha and DPO for protecting and safely evacuating 10 persons from a mob. More than 50 percent decrease in dacoity incidents in Lahore is welcome," she commented.

The CM said labourers being looted after taking their salaries was not only sorrowful but also shameful. "I have given a deadline to the RPO Sheikhupura to overcome dacoity incidents. Snatching and theft incidents of sacrificial animals should be eradicated. A crackdown should continue on a permanent basis for the elimination of drugs. The police should make effective measures to stop firing incidents.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz presides over the meeting to review law and order situation in province.

Minister inspects repair work on Kohat Grid Station

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance and Law Afzal Alam Afridi Advocate on Saturday visited fire-affected Kohat Grid Station and inspected ongoing maintenance work.

He was accompanied by Members Provincial Assembly Daud Shah Afridi Advocate and Shafiq Jan and Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal.

The minister was informed that electricity has been restored to most parts of the city and the remaining areas would be provided electricity within the next five days. He was told that workers are busy round the clock to repair the damaged grid station.

The law minister directed the authorities concerned to immediately restore the electricity and accelerate the repair work.

CM Sindh reviews resource mobilisation, directs revenue generating depts to achieve targets

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the revenue collecting department to achieve their targets so that the scope of development works and poverty alleviation can be ensured.

This he said while presiding over a meeting regarding resource mobilisation here at CM House.

The meeting was attended by Senior Minister ET&NC Sharjeel Memon, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, SMBR Baqailah Unar, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary Excise Saleem Rajput, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Chairman SRB Wasif Memon, and other concerned officers.

The chief minister

emphasised that the government's priority for the next financial year is to implement policies and initiatives to stimulate economic growth and raise all citizens' living standards. "Our focus will be on investing in key sectors such as education, healthcare, provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, infrastructure, and agriculture", he added.

Murad Shah directed the SRB to suggest relief for the taxpayers and proposals for enhancing the SST net for the next financial year. The SRB chairman assured the chief minister that his organisation would reach the target and he would submit his proposals.

The CM said that the E&T dept has a target of Rs143 billion and it has to achieve it. Minister E&T Sharjeel Memon said that he had taken strict measures to achieve the tax collection target and would hopefully, give him good news at the end of June 2024.

LGH gynecologists achieve major success in life-saving operation

Independent Report

LAHORE: A team of gynecologists at Lahore General Hospital (LGH) has successfully saved the life of Sumera Amjad, a 48-year-old mother of two, by performing a highly complex operation to remove a 25 kg tumor from her fibroid uterus.

The operation, which lasted five hours, was carried out by the skilled team of the Gynaecology Department Unit 3, including Dr. Shabnam Muhammad Ali, Dr. Maryam Zulfiqar, Dr. Nadia Sabeeb, Dr. Aroosa Dr. Sajida, and Dr. Usman.

According to LGH sources on Saturday, the patient had been suffering from severe abdominal pain and various gynecological issues for an extended period. Despite visiting hospitals, her condition continued to deteriorate.

Both the governors exchanged pleasantries and congratulated each other on assuming new responsibilities.

They both reiterated to further improve relations between two provinces and play role for country's development and progress, said press release issued here.

Various matters including promotion of higher education, enhancing of trade and business activities were also discussed in the meeting.

Sardar Salim Haider and Faisal Karim also agreed to take steps for creating platform for people of both provinces to take benefits of mutual experience.

Eventually, she sought treatment at the Gynecology OPD of LGH, where Dr. Laila Shafiq and her expert team conducted comprehensive examinations and discovered the massive tumor in her uterus.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the medical team decided to proceed with the operation at LGH. The successful removal of the tumor not only saved Sumera Amjad's life but also alleviated the agony she had endured for so long. Principal of Post Graduate Medical Institute & Lahore General Hospital, Professor Dr. Al-Fareed Zafar, praised the gynecology team for their outstanding performance. "I am pleased that the team of LGH gynecologists was able to relieve the patient from her prolonged suffering.

The chief minister

Two die in road accidents

SARGODHA (APP): Two people were killed in road accidents on Saturday.

According to

Rescue 1122 sources, a speeding truck hit a motorcycle near the wood market in Darya Khan. Consequently, the motorcycle rider, Muhammad Haniza (20), died on the spot due to multiple injuries. In another incident, Muhammad Ibrar, a resident of Sahiwal, along with his mother, was traveling on a motorcycle on the Sahiwal-Farooka road when a rashly driven car coming from the opposite direction.

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Pakistan, China sign MoU to help invest in key projects for promotion of industrial coop.

BEIJING (APP): The National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) has agreed to partner with China-Pakistan International Silk Road Industry Investment Management Company Limited by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate investment in key projects for promotion of industrial cooperation between China and Pakistan and supporting the establishment of special economic zones and other sectors of economy and bilateral trade.

Economic Minister, Aslam Chaudhary, Liu Jiang Hua from China-Pakistan International Silk Road Industry Investment Management Company Limited, Representatives from Dan Zhou Government, Hai Nan Province, Zhang Yu Bo, MCC & Bank of Tianjin witnessed the signing ceremony held at Pakistan Embassy here on Saturday. The event was also

joined virtually by Riaz Hussain, SEVP and Group Chief, International Financial Institutions and Remittances Group and Hasan Jamal, SVP, Investment Banking Group National Bank of Pakistan, Head Office, Karachi.

Addressing the participants on occasion, Aslam Chaudhary briefed them about the incentives offered by the present government to attract the foreign investment especially from China.

He informed that special economic zones are being established across Pakistan where the Chinese enterprises could relocate their industry and export products to different countries taking advantage of preferential agreements signed by Pakistan with various countries.

The Economic Minister said that Pakistan having a population of over 225 million is itself a big market and the Chinese companies could benefit from it.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Representative of NBP, Sheikh Muhammad Sharqi told the audience that the National Bank of Pakistan is the largest and state-owned bank and amongst the Domestic Systematic Important Bank from Pakistan, operating with 18 overseas branches located in South Asia, Central Asia,

ISLAMABAD (INP): A new report by UNICEF finds that ensuring a consistent energy supply for health facilities in Pakistan could save over 175,000 lives by 2030 and contribute US\$296 million to the economy by 2044.

The report, titled "Reliable energy to save 175,000 lives, boost Pakistan's economy," emphasizes the importance of "resilient energy" - reliable, flexible, and accessible power that can withstand disruptions like power outages and floods.

This type of energy supply is crucial for improving health,



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhai in a group photo with President Anjuman-e-Tajiran Double Road Malik Nadir Khan Achakzai and other traders.

Resilient energy can save 175,000 lives, contribute \$296m to Pakistan's economy: UNICEF

education, and water services across Pakistan. The study, conducted by the Economist Impact Unit, estimates that investing in resilient energy could yield returns up to three times the initial investment.

The report highlights benefits beyond just healthcare. Providing stable electricity to schools could reduce dropout rates and improve learning outcomes, potentially adding US\$2.3 billion to the economy by 2040.

This is particularly relevant considering Pakistan's recent declaration of an education

emergency, where millions of children are out of school. Resilient energy could also power nearly 20% of off-grid schools in two provinces.

Pakistan has faced extreme heatwaves recently, with temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius. This strains the power grid and makes it difficult to maintain cooling systems in hospitals and schools, endangering children's health.

Children rely on schools, health centers, and safe drinking water, but these facilities often lack a stable electricity supply."



PESHAWAR: CM KPK Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur chairing a meeting of Mineral Investment Facilitation Authority.

Power generation from Thar coal reaches 2,640mw, Poised to hit 3,280mw by year's end: Malik

HYDERABAD (APP): Thar coal is currently contributing approximately 2,640 MW of electricity to the national grid from its two blocks, with power generation expected to reach about 3,280 MW by the end of this year. Azhar Malik, Vice President of Site Operations at Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) for Thar Coal Block II, disclosed this while speaking to the media in Islamabad, Tharparkar.

Malik mentioned that each block produces 1,320 MW of electricity.

He highlighted that Thar coal could save Pakistan \$8 billion annually by generating cheaper electricity and suggested shifting cement and urea fertilizer plants to

PESCO provides electricity to 4.3m consumers through 1,315 feeders

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) is providing electricity to its 4.3 million consumers through 1,315 feeders in the province.

During the last 12 hours, the power has been fully restored to 548 feeders of category 1 and 2, said press release issued here on Saturday. Proper load management has been done on remaining feeders due to ratio of losses and system overloading.

During the last 12 hours, 64 Pesco feeders have been affected by fault at different times. Pesco operation teams have restored power to 28 feeders by repairing the fault immediately.

Gold rates dip by Rs.1,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,400 and was sold at Rs.240,300 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.241,700 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,200 to Rs.206,019 from Rs.207,219 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.188,850 from Rs189,950, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.80 to 2,820 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs.68.58 to Rs.2,417.70.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$16 to \$2,326 from \$2,342.

FAISALABAD: Owners proudly display their pets during the competition 26th International camel and Goat contests of beautification, weigh and milk, contest is jointly arranged by the Faculty of Animal Husbandry (FAH), UAF and International Goat and Bull Association at UAF Stadium.

FBR faces Rs33bn tax revenue shortfall, needs Rs1,289bn in June

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is grappling with a tax revenue shortfall of Rs33 billion for the current financial year.

From July 2023 to May 2024, the FBR collected Rs8,126 billion, slightly below the target of Rs8.159 billion intended to be collected for the 11 months of this financial year, according to informed sources. To achieve the overall tax revenue target of Rs9,415 billion for the

fiscal year, the FBR must now collect an additional Rs1,289 billion in June.

Despite this daunting task, there are positive indicators in the revenue collection trends. Compared to the first 11 months of the previous fiscal year, there has been a remarkable 31% increase in tax revenue.

Moreover, the FBR exceeded its revenue target for May 2024 by Rs15 billion, collecting Rs760 billion against a target of Rs745 billion.

Atif urged govt to announce a new industrial zone in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Capital Area of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Atif Ikram Sheikh has urged the federal government to officially announce a new industrial zone in Islamabad to promote industrial sector and attract investment. Addressing the members of Islamabad Industrial Association on Saturday, Atif Ikram who is also President FPCCI, said Islamabad has seen fast expansion during the last 15 years, and the existing industrial area has no more space to set up

new industrial units. As per Master Plan of Islamabad, the industrial area of sectors I-9 and I-10 have come almost in the middle of the city with no adequate space available for establishment of additional industrial units," he pointed out. Ikram said that industrial estate played a pivotal role in bringing prosperity to a larger extent with poverty reduction through creating plenty of job opportunities. Urging the government to give due consideration to this important issue.

Tanveer stresses for agricultural reforms to develop economy

LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Industries, Production and Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain has stressed for agricultural reforms to develop economy.

Addressing a ceremony in Lahore, he said prosperous farmers can ensure a prosperous Pakistan. The Minister said provision of relief to farmer community is the government's top priority.

He said multiple measures are being taken in the domain of food security as it is a great challenge across the world.

Business and trade delegation from Pakistan ends its visit to Ethiopia

SIALKOT (APP): As a business and trade delegation from Pakistan concluded its visit to Ethiopia.

President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik expressed heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the delegation.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik highlighted the delightful experience of staying in Addis Ababa, noting the city's beauty, cultural heritage, the resilience and warmth of its people.

On the occasion, Abdul Ghafoor Malik presented souvenirs to Jemal Beker Abdula in honor of his contributions to promoting bilateral trade and managing the delegation with perfection.

Earlier, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ethiopian Investment Commission to facilitate consortium-based investments in sectors such as sports goods, sports wear, leather products, surgical instruments, gloves, and workwear.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Local Government Zeehan Rafiq inspecting the stall at Property exhibition at Expo Centre.

Shah lays foundation stone of Sukkur Industrial Enclave

SUKKUR (APP): The pace of industrialisation in the country and enhancing the volume of exports by creating an enabling environment for investors to initiate ambitious export-oriented projects in the Zones which would, as a corollary, create job opportunities, bring in new technology and attract foreign investment, he added.

General Secretary Supreme Council Stone Crusher Market, Rana Muhammad Irshad Khan, requested the Chief Commissioner to give time till 3 June for a detailed reply with reference to the statistics and suggested that notices related to the figures be postponed for one week according to the actual data.

It was decided in the meeting after consultation that a detailed meeting should be held with all stakeholders on June 3.



HUB: Residents of Asad Chowk block road as they are holding protest demonstration against the prolonged electricity load shedding during hot weather of summer season, at RCD Highway road in Hub.

Traders demand pragmatic steps for maintenance of law and order situation

PESHAWAR (APP): Traders on Saturday demanded of the government to take pragmatic steps for improving law and order situation. They urged provincial and federal tax departments and authorities to respect dignity during actions and enforcement of rules and regulations and orders.

During a joint meeting of various trade bodies and associations of Peshawar held under chairmanship of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Faiz Ishaq at the Chamber House here Saturday, the business

Biden presents Israel's new Gaza ceasefire plan

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden called on Hamas to agree to a new offer from Israel on releasing prisoners in exchange for a Gaza ceasefire, saying this is the best way to begin winding down the deadly conflict.

In his first major address outlining a solution to the eight-month conflict, Biden said the proposal started with a six-week phase that would see Israeli forces withdraw from all populated areas of Gaza.

"It's time for this war to end, for the day after to begin," Biden said in a televised address from the White House, adding that "we can't lose this moment" to seize the chance for peace.

Israel has offered a comprehensive new proposal. It's a roadmap to an enduring ceasefire and the release of all hos-

tages," he said.

The 81-year-old Democrat put particular pressure on the Palestinian group, "Hamas needs to take the deal," said Biden, who has supported Israel with military aid since the conflict began.

Biden said the first six-week phase would include a "full and complete ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli forces from all populated areas of Gaza, release of a number of prisoners, including women, the elderly, the wounded, in exchange for release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners."

Israel and the Palestinians would then negotiate during those six weeks for a lasting ceasefire — but the truce would continue if the talks remained underway, Biden said.

"As long as Hamas lives up to its commitments, a temporary

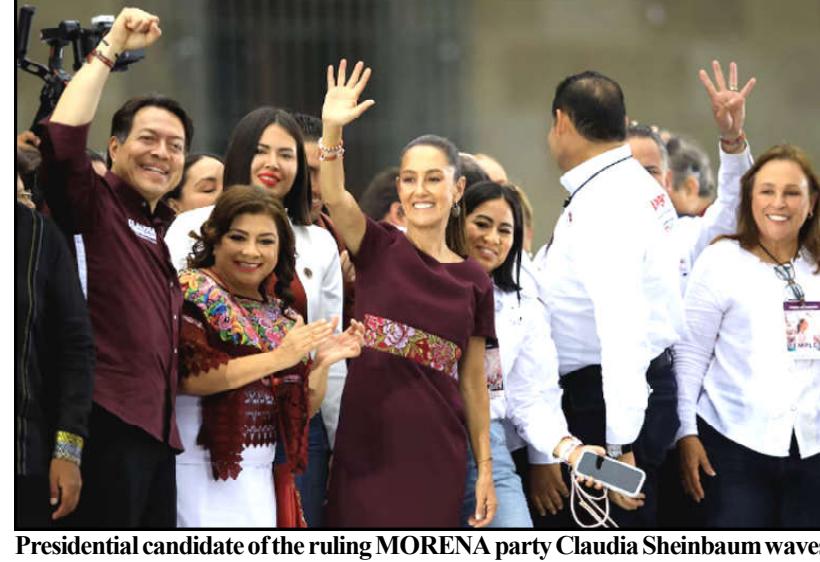
ceasefire would become, in the words of the Israeli proposal, the cessation of hostilities permanently," added Biden.

Biden's announcement of the proposal comes after repeated attempts to end the war have stalled. Hamas insists that any ceasefire should be permanent.

The group said earlier on Friday it had informed mediators it would only agree to a "comprehensive" truce agreement including a prisoner swap if Israel halts its "aggression".

Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's Qatar-based political office, reiterated that the group's core demands — including a permanent ceasefire and full Israeli withdrawal — "are non-negotiable".

Biden did not significantly address Israel's assault on the southern city of Rafah.



Presidential candidate of the ruling MORENA party Claudia Sheinbaum waves during her closing campaign rally at Zocalo Square, in Mexico City, Mexico.

Trump will appeal historic conviction

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Donald Trump said on Friday he would appeal the guilty verdict that made him the first US president convicted of a crime, though he will have to wait until after his sentencing on July 11 before taking that step.

In rambling remarks at the Trump Tower lobby in Manhattan, he repeated complaints that the trial was a "rigged" attempt to hobble his comeback White House bid.

"If they can do this to me, they can do this to anyone," Trump, 77, said in an unscripted 33-minute speech. Applauded by supporters, he took no questions from reporters.

"We're going to be appealing this scam," he said.

Trump will have 30 days from the date of his July 11 sentencing to file a notice of appeal.

President Joe Biden, who will face Trump in the Nov. 5 election, said Trump had been given an opportunity to "defend himself in the same justice system that applies to all Americans."

"It's reckless, it's dangerous, it's irresponsible for anyone to say this was rigged just because they don't like the verdict," Biden, 81, said at the White House.

The New York hush money case against Trump was considered the weakest by many legal experts, but it resulted in a stunning conviction and is likely to be the only one of the four facing the ex-president to be tried before the November election.

He has been indicted in Washington and Georgia on far more serious charges — seeking to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

South Africa election ends 3 decades of ANC dominance

Monitoring Desk

MIDRAND: South Africans angry at joblessness, inequality and power shortages have slashed support for the African National Congress (ANC) to 40 per cent in this week's election, ending three decades of dominance by the party that freed the country from apartheid.

A dramatically weakened mandate for the legacy party of Nelson Mandela, down from the 57.5pc it got in the previous 2019 parliamentary election, means the ANC must share power with a rival in order to keep it — an unprecedented prospect.

"We can talk to everybody and anybody," Gwede Mantashe, the ANC chair and current mines and energy minister, told reporters in comments carried by the South Afri-

cans Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), dodging a question about who the party was discussing a possible coalition deal with. Vote tallying from Wednesday's poll was entering its final stages on Saturday, with results from 99.53pc of polling stations giving the ANC 40.21pc.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), had 21.80pc, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a new party led by former president Jacob Zuma, managed to grab 14.60pc, while the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by former ANC youth leader Julius Malema, got 9.48pc.

"We have achieved our mission: [...] to bring the ANC below 50pc. We want to humble the ANC," Malema told journalists at the results centre.



Voters queue up to cast their ballots at a polling station during the seventh and final phase of voting in India's general election in Chandigarh.



New Zealand's Defence Minister Judith Collins, Malaysia's Defence Minister Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Singapore's Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen, Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles, and Britain's Director General (Security Policy) Paul Wyatt meet on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue for the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) Defence Ministers' Meeting.

US, allies 'gravely concerned' by North Korea-Russia cooperation

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States and its main allies said on Friday they are "gravely concerned" by deepening cooperation between North Korea and Russia and called for an end to North Korean arms transfers for use against Ukraine.

The US secretary of state and foreign ministers from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, South

Korea and Britain, as well as the EU High Representative, issued a joint statement highlighting their recent coordination of sanctions measures in response to such activity.

"Our governments stand in resolute opposition to these continued arms transfers, which Russia has used to strike Ukraine's critical infrastructure, prolonging the suffering of the Ukrainian people," they said.

Twenty drown in boat accident in eastern Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk

KABUL: Twenty people, including children, drowned when a boat sank during a river crossing in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province on Saturday, a provincial official said.

"A boat with women and children on board sank on Saturday morning at 7am in the river in the Basawul area of Momand Dara district" of eastern Nangarhar, said Quraishi Badloon, the head of the province's information department, in a post on social media platform X.

Residents in the area regularly cross the river using boats often in poor condition, as there is no nearby bridge, local media reported.

He said five people

survived the accident, the cause of which was being investigated.

The Nangarhar Information and Culture Department said the authorities had sent a medical team and ambulances to the area, in a message shared with the media.

At least five bodies had been recovered and efforts were underway to find the others, provincial government officials said.

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A protester holds a banner reading 'France is complicit in genocide' during a demonstration in Paris on Friday to show support to Palestinians.

TV exit poll summary projects victory for Indian PM Modi in general election

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party-led alliance is projected to win a majority in the general election that concluded on Saturday, becoming India's next president following the death in a helicopter crash of Ebrahim Raisi, state media reported.

Haghani, a close aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told reporters after registering that his qualifications were based on experience from serving 45 years in the presidency and the leader's office. The US Treasury designated Haghani, a close aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told reporters after registering that his qualifications were based on experience from serving 45 years in the presidency and the leader's office. The US Treasury designated

Modi's Revolutionary Guards commander Vahid Modarresi as a possible coalition deal with. Vote tallying from Wednesday's poll was entering its final stages on Saturday, with results from 99.53pc of polling stations giving the ANC 40.21pc.

The NDA won 353 in the 2019 election. The opposition "India" alliance led by the Con-

gress party was projected to win more than 120 seats.

Exit polls have a patchy record in India as they have often got election outcomes wrong, with analysts saying it is a challenge to get them right in the large and diverse country.

Nearly one billion people were eligible to vote in the seven-phase election that began on April 19 and was held in scorching summer heat in many parts of the country.

The summary of two exit polls projected the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could win more than 350 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament, where 272 is needed for a simple majority.

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Faisal Kundi says: May 9 mastermind should be punished

LAHORE (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said the May 9 mastermind should be the first to be punished, as he called for holding those accountable for the violence perpetrated on that day.

Talking to media persons at the mausoleum of Allama Iqbal, he said the PTI were not taking responsibility for the post shared on X and, at the same time, avoided deleting the same.

He was referring to the post shared on the official account of PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, in which he has been equated with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The latest remarks come after the military on Thursday again called for holding the planners, facilitators and executioners of May 9 violence accountable and warned that the country would remain hostage to the elements hatching conspiracies in case of a failure. Kundi said the PTI

was even distancing themselves from the person operating the X account, adding that they were in habit of committing the crime and resorting to wailing simultaneously.

They want to come into power yet again just like they had in the past, he remarked. Kundi said they were ready if the PTI wanted to hold talks with the democratic forces, but he wasn't in a position to say anything if the aim was to use the establishment's shoulders to grab power again.

At the same time, he said that the Governor's House won't become part of any conspiracy and noted that the PTI was a political party. Criticising the language used by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Kundi said no one could stop anyone from moving freely, but praised him for arguing his case with arguments at the Special Investment Facilitation Council meeting held earlier in the week.



LAHORE: Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi talking to the media after his visit to Mazar-e-Iqbal.

Pakistan to welcome UK's support to tackle cybercrimes' challenge

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Saturday said Pakistan will welcome UK's support to tackle the challenge of cybercrimes.

He made the remarks during his meetings with Director General of the National Crime Agency James Babbage and Director General National Security of Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Jonathan Allen in London.

On the occasion, the Interior Minister was briefed about the functioning of British institutions and close cooperation was agreed upon. It was decided that Pakistani officers will be trained by the National Crime Agency regarding cybercrimes and counter-narcotics.



QUETTA: Delegation led by President Balochistan Forum Environmental Journalists Zahir Khan Nassar meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhai

Controlling inflation, provision of employment opportunities govt's top priorities: Masadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Division Dr Masadik Masood Malik on Saturday said that controlling inflation and providing employment opportunities to the people were the government's top priorities.

Addressing a press conference here, he said on the directives of the prime minister, maximum relief was being ensured to the masses and inflation witnessed a gradually decrease in the country.

The premier has given targets to all the ministers to serve the people and reduce their burden by controlling inflation and creating job opportunities for

them, he said.

He said factors like floods and natural calamities besides Russian-Ukrainian and Middle East conflicts caused an increase commodity cycle.

However, owing to the efforts of the incumbent government and targets given by the Prime Minister, the ratio of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has decreased from 37 per cent to 17 per cent, he added.

Similarly, the food inflation has also reduced from 40 per cent to 11.5 per cent adding that we are going towards stability. Prices of petroleum products have also been slashed

and around Rs 25-26 per litre relief on petrol was given to the people in one month, he added.

He expressed the hope that inflation would further witness a down trend in the days ahead. Tractors' purchases have also registered a 50 per cent increase while urea production recorded a 17 per cent jump in the last one year, he added.

To a question, he said the PM-LN government set up power plants to generate electricity at affordable rates. They always gave preference to the State rather than their personal politics, he said.

To another question, he said there were always doors open in politics and his party leadership always called for reconciliation and dialogue. PML-N leadership always stressed the need for a charter of economy and democracy, he said.

Unannounced loadshedding in country challenged in LHC

LAHORE (Online): June 01 (Online): Unannounced load shedding continuing in the country has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

The miscellaneous petition in this regard has been filed by Judicial Activism panel in LHC.

The petition said unannounced load shedding is continuing in the country without any reason.

Load shedding is being observed from 6 to 8 hours in the cities and 10 to 12 hours in the villages.

The petitioner requested the court to order for ending unannounced load shedding in the country.

Pakistan CG meets President PSC Sharjah

DUBAI (APP): Counsel General of Pakistan Consulate Dubai, Hussain Muhammad on Saturday met President Pakistan Social Centre Sharjah (PSCS) Khalid Hussain Chaudry and his team members to acknowledge the organization's outstanding efforts in providing aid to Pakistani families affected by recent floods.

The Consul General paid tributes to the President of Sharjah Social Center for the tireless efforts during the floods in provision of food and water to the stranded Pakistani families.

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam has reiterated that Pakistan was committed to the cause of the Kashmiri people till they get the right to self-determination in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

Addressing a press conference here at a local hotel after a briefing by AJK top government officials about progress on federal Public Sector Development Programmes (PSDP)

projects and AJK's Annual development program (ADP) besides meeting delegations, the minister said that the issue of Kashmir and its people was of prime importance to Pakistan which was consistently advocated at international level in the United Nations and different other international forums.

Engr Amir Muqam said that his support to the Kashmir cause is because Pakistan considers Kashmir its jugular vein and will continuously strive to provide support for the freedom of the Kashmiri people

in all forms at all costs. The minister said that the present regime has taken various measures to support the smooth functioning of the government in AJK.

He said the federal government has transferred the funds, staff and assets relating to the Kashmir Council in Islamabad to AJK Government. He said that funds amounting to approximately Rs. 7.5 billion have been transferred from Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to the Government of AJK.

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