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QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti addressing Pakistan Peoples Party's Provincial, Divisional, District Presidents and General Secretaries

CM vows to put Balochistan on path of development as per vision of President Zardari & mission of Chairman PPP

Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti pledges steps for reorganization of PPP and hold party's elections by promoting democratic process

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has reiterated his government's resolve to put the province on path of development as per the vision of President Asif Ali Zardari and the mission of Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

He announced that the Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would visit the province soon and would take steps for reorganization of the party with his consultation and hold

party's elections by promoting the democratic process.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the provincial, divisional and district presidents and general secretaries of the PPP here on Saturday.

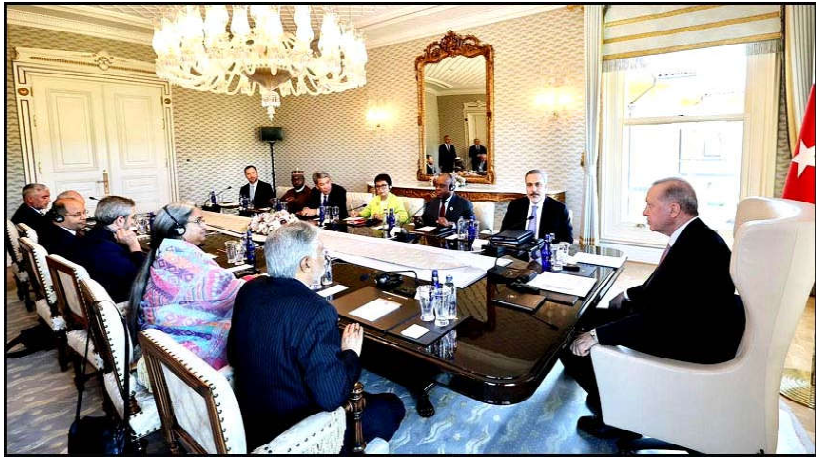
The Chief Minister also listened their issues and highlighted the steps taken so far by the provincial government for public welfare in the province.

Also present on the occasion were the provincial general secretary of PPP

Rozi Khan Kakar, secretary Information, Sardar Sarbuland Jogejai besides others.

Expressing views during course of meeting, the Chief Minister said that PPP is the party of martyrs, which always defended the rights of people against the cruelty and force. In this struggle, the leaders and workers of the party rendered sacrifices. Only from Dera Bugti, we lost 370 people.

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ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar joined a collective call of D-8 Foreign Ministers on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after the conclusion of the Extraordinary meeting of D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers on the Situation in Gaza.

Deputy PM Dar meets President Erdogan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday joined a collective call of D-8 Foreign Ministers on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after the conclusion of the Extraordinary meeting of D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers on the Situation in Gaza.

President Erdogan was briefed on the proceedings of the Ministerial meeting.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister applauded Turkey's initiative of hosting D-8 Ministerial meeting on Gaza, Foreign Office Spokesperson

said in a press release.

He conveyed to President Erdogan the greetings of President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He thanked President Erdogan for his personal interest and leadership towards enhancing Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister reiterated invitation to President Erdogan for visiting Pakistan at the earliest convenience for the 7th High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC).

Gwadar port reflects BRI's commitment to local socio economic dev.: Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal said the high-quality development of Pakistan's Gwadar port under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a testimony that the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is helping Gwadar evolve into a world-class port city brimming with opportunities.

Located in the southwestern Balochistan province, the port presents significant opportunities for maritime trade in the region, including giving access to landlocked Central Asian country of Afghanistan, he told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"The current development of Gwadar is just the first step and the port has a long way to go... In partnership with China, we hope that Gwadar will become an internationally acclaimed world-class port city, which will have tremendous opportunities for the people of Pakistan," Iqbal added.

Launched in 2013, CPEC, a flagship project under the BRI, is a corridor linking Pakistan's Gwadar port with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, highlighting energy, transport, and industrial cooperation in the first phase, while the new phase expands to the areas of agriculture and improving livelihoods, among others.

Never considered revenge against Imran, says Nawaz Sharif

Ex-PM says he doesn't even think about removing Khan's AC; PML-N president appreciates efforts of PM Shehbaz, Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz in bringing inflation down



MURREE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Saturday said he was the kind of person who did not harbour malice, enmity or revenge against others.

Without taking Pakistani Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's name, Nawaz said he always behaved like an angry man.

"He once said in a public rally 'Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif I will drag you here'," he said lambasting the PTI founder over his disrespectful remarks against the then-serving PM.

The former prime minister said this while addressing a meeting of the PML-N parliamentary members in Murree today.

PML-N president appreciated efforts of PM Shehbaz, Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz in bringing inflation down

On the contrary, he said he had working relationship with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and his party signed the Charter of Democracy.

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Zia urges people of Chaman resolve issues politically; keep them away from conspirators

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has stated that some elements want to create chaos and provocation, as such the people of Chaman should keep them away from the conspirators and resolve their issues through political means.

The Provincial Minister was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here on Saturday. Mir Ziaullah Langove said that the caretaker government had decided to enforce one document regime and make passports conditional for across the border movement.

He said that the people of Chaman are loving. He said that the evidences of movement of terrorists from Chaman border have been produced.

The Minister Home said that there are issues of country's stability regarding Chaman border, so it is very necessary to remain vigilant and take measures to maintain law and order.

He said that the people of Chaman are our own people, and as such we have

Pak, China reaffirm to strengthen strategic relationship, safeguard common interests, promote socio-economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and China on Saturday reiterated that they would continue to view the relationship between the two countries from a strategic height and a long-term perspective, take effective measures to safeguard the common interests of Pakistan and China and promote socio-economic development and well-being of the two peoples.

The two sides agreed to work together to jointly uphold regional peace, stability, development and prosperity, and accelerate the building of an even closer 'Pakistan-China Community with a Shared Future in the New Era', said a joint statement issued between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People's Republic of China at the conclusion of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's five-day visit to China.

The two sides had candid and in-depth exchanges of views on the entire spectrum of bilateral relations as well

as regional situation and international landscape and reached extensive consensus on further strengthening the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and promoting practical cooperation in various areas, and on international and regional issues of mutual interest, a press statement of the Foreign Office said.

The two sides agreed that Pakistan and China are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and ironclad friends, and the two countries have always understood, trusted and supported each other.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 73 years ago, Pakistan-China relations have stood the test of changing international environment and have been as solid as a rock, and as unshakable as a mountain.

The Chinese side reiterated that the Pakistan-China relationship is a priority in its foreign relations. The Pa

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XI'AN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits different sections of Terracotta Warriors Museum.

PM arrives in Pakistan after wrapping up his visit to China

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday arrived in Pakistan after concluding his five-day official visit to People's Republic of China.

The prime minister had undertaken the visit at the invitation of Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, said in a press release.

During his visit, the prime minister accompanied by his high-level delegation, held meetings with the Chinese leadership, authorities; and business and investor companies.

PM visits historical Chinese Terracotta Warriors Museum in Xi'an

XI'AN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by the Pakistani delegation visited the historical site of China, Terracotta Warriors Museum on Saturday.

The visit was part of an invitation extended by the Chinese President Xi Jinping to the prime minister to visit the museum in his hometown, Xi'an.

During the visit the prime minister and the delegation were briefed on the preservation and restoration of historical heritage and the promotion of tourism. PM Shehbaz visited various sections of the museum and commended the beauty of ancient Chinese heritage and the skill of Chinese artisans.

"Great nations protect and take care of their historical assets like the Chinese do", he said adding that the skill of the Chinese craftsmen of 200 BC was admirable.

5th polio case reported from Quetta

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fifth polio case of the year has been reported from Quetta on Saturday from Balochistan. The affected two-year-old child developed onset of paralysis on April 29 in his legs. He became progressively ill with weakness spreading to his arms, and unfortunately passed away in a hospital in Karachi a few weeks later, according to the Regional Reference Laboratory at the National Institute of Health, samples taken from him, his brother and cousin who live in the same house confirmed the presence of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1).

Pakistan has played pivotal role in war on terror: Interior minister

NEW YORK (Online): Interior minister Mohsin Naqvi has said Pakistan has played pivotal role in war on terror.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called on United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the UN headquarters in New York and discussed matters related to the engagement of Pakistan police personnel with the UN peacekeeping operations.

Interior minister said number of women officers has increased in Pakistan police.

The UN Secretary General expressed his best wishes to the people and the government of Pakistan on the occasion.

It was agreed to increase the number of Pakistani personnel in the UN peacekeeping missions.

Due to the personal efforts of the interior minister, the stalled process of

deployment of Pakistani police officers in UN peace missions will be revived after many years. 128 Pakistani police officers will soon be able to go to the UN and get deployment.

The UN Secretary General and the Interior Minister also discussed the establishment of a unit of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Force. Referring to the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan in the war on terrorism, Mohsin Naqvi offered Pakistan's support for the unit.

The UN Secretary General while evincing keen interest in establishment of Tahhafaz centre and other reforms said induction of women officers in police is good omen. Women officers do good policing. Women police officers will be given priority certainly.



NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi shaking hands with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

CJP Isa calls for taking steps to ensure environment protection

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa said that we all should take steps to ensure the environment protection. "We get ill when the temperature of human body rises. Our earth is also ill and it is suffering from fever but we are not putting efforts to save it," chief justice said while addressing a seminar titled 'Effects of Climate Change'.

Addressing the seminar, he said that the doctors advise us to walk in

order to live a healthy life. "Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has talked about the hybrid cars but I think we all should prefer to walk and we can also arrange bicycles for our judges," chief justice said. He added that we are responsible for destroying our natural resources.

"We miserably failed to understand the nature. The birds and animals want to live in their natural habitats but we have destroyed them," the chief justice concluded.

Two policemen injured in DIKhan attack

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least two policemen were injured in a blast targeting a police vehicle in Dera Ismail Khan on Saturday.

According to reports, an improvised explosive device (IED) rocked the police vehicle near a house at Hathala, on Tank road. The blast took place near the vehicle of DSP Inamullah Gandapur when he, along with his team, was heading for a search operation.

New York prepares for 'high-voltage' Pakistan-India cricket match

Sports Desk

NEW YORK: At the cultural crossroads of the world, New Yorkers will experience a thrilling first on Sunday, a World Cup cricket match hosted in a US city between Asian powerhouses: rivals India and Pakistan.

"India-Pakistan is the game everyone would like to watch, and... it's happening in our backyard," said Ajith Shetty, president of two local cricket leagues.

"I'm very, very thrilled," the Indian native told AFP on Friday.

However, roughly 10 miles (16 kilometres) from the pop-up stadium at Eisenhower Park on Long Island, fans interviewed in

the bustling Little India neighbourhood of Queens said they won't be able to attend the game in person.

"I asked about it, but it's so expensive. I'll watch it on my mobile," 31-year-old Rajeeet Krishna said.

"Pakistan against India is special... there's a long history there," he said, with the 34,000 seats in the stadium sold out for months.

"Lion and tiger" This first Cricket World Cup hosted in the United States is in the T20 format, with games that last around three hours, as opposed to the five-day contests in the traditional test match format.

Tickets on the resale market are going for at least

\$800, with Indian Premier League (IPL) founder and former president Lalit Modi slamming the inflated prices.

The tournament "in the US is for game expansion & fan engagement, not a means to make profits on gate collections," he said on X.

Beyond the Indian and Pakistani communities, the face-off is eagerly anticipated by immigrants from other South Asian countries where cricket is popular.

"Like lion and tiger" is how Faros Ahmed, a 58-year-old of Bangladeshi origin, described the rivalry.

"Even if I am not Indian, not Pakistani, I am

going to watch it because this is a high-voltage match," said the restaurant manager, who supports Pakistan and will broadcast the game for his customers.

"Like to see India lose" Although both countries are cricket powerhouses, head-to-head matches are rare between the nations.

The two sides do not meet outside of official competitions of the ICC, the international cricket federation, and the last test match between them was in 2007.

"We are going to take revenge, we are going to beat them," said Roop Sajani, an Indian native who manages a sari store.



XIAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif recording his remarks in the visitors' book at Terracotta Warriors Museum.

T20 World Cup: Imad Wasim may be sent back after Pakistan-India clash

NEW YORK (INP): As cricket fans eagerly await the highly anticipated clash between Pakistan and India, concerns have emerged within the Pakistani camp regarding the fitness of all-rounder Imad Wasim.

Sources close to the team have revealed that Imad Wasim has not fully recovered from his health issues, prompting the team management to consider sending him back after the match against India on Sunday.

The sources say that the team management is keen on adding Imad to the match against India.

In light of Imad Wasim's uncertain fitness status, discussions have begun regarding potential replacements. One name that has surfaced is that of spinner Mehran Mumtaz. Sources suggest that the team management is seriously considering adding Mehran Mumtaz to the squad in place of Imad Wasim for the upcoming matches.



QUETTA: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Leader, Shehryar Khan Afridi addresses during seminar on Rule of Law organized by Insaaf Lawyers Forum, held at Quetta press club.

Govt. to send 1,000 students to Yangling Base for latest agri-training: PM

XI'AN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that the government would send a batch of 1,000 students to Yangling Agricultural Demonstration Base, China for seeking the latest training in agriculture field.

The prime minister decided that the government would bear their expenses and directed the Ambassador of Pakistan in China and other relevant officials to give a final shape to this decision in consultation with the Chinese authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister also invited the North West Agriculture and Forestry University to open its campus in Pakistan and in this regard, assured it of all possible support from the government.

The prime minister also issued directive to the ambassador of Pakistan and other relevant officials to finalize the mechanism.

The prime minister visited the Yangling Agricultural Demonstration Base and took round of its different sections and the Pakistani Pavilion, showcasing Pakistani products.

The prime minister was accompanied by Federal Ministers Khawaja

Muhammad Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Musadik Malik and Rana Tanveer Hussain.

During a briefing, he was apprised of that a total of 26 countries were cooperating over agricultural research being carried out in the base.

Pakistan was the pioneer country that cooperated in the base, it was further told. The prime minister was also apprised of the Pakistani scientists and the Pakistani universities participating in the research work.



FAISALABAD: Baloch students protesting in favor of their demands under the auspices of Punjab Student Council in Zilla Council Chowk in the City.

Babar Azam not improved as captain in four years: Shoab Malik

LAHORE (INP): Former Pakistan captain Shoab Malik has criticized the national team's white-ball captain Babar Azam for his performance as captain after a shocking loss against the United States (USA) in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

According to media reports, Pakistan endured a five-run defeat against the co-hosts in the Super Over as they failed to chase down the 19-run target.

Senior pacer Mohammad Amir bowled the Super Over for Pakistan and conceded 18 runs. In response, the Green Shirts only managed 13/1.

After the match, Malik, who also played under Azam, stated that the right-handed batter has not evolved as a captain and makes predecided decisions on the field rather than improvising according to the situation.

"This captaincy talk, I

would like to go into its depth. You [Babar Azam] have set a blockage in your mind, that is the problem. If you have decided that

Shadab [Khan] has to bat at a certain number, and Azam [Khan] and Iftikhar [Ahmed] have to bat in the last overs, and you do that exactly, these are the blockages," said Malik while talking on a local channel. "The most important thing which needs to be fixed is Babar's captaincy from four years ago and now, I cannot see any difference.

"If someone is improving then you give them time because the results will be seen in the long run but in Babar's case, as a leader, he is still where he was four years ago." The Green Shirts will face arch-rivals India in the most anticipated match of the T20 World Cup 2024 on 9 June in New York.

Maulana Fazal reservations conveyed to Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Snow has started melting between the two rival parties of the past PTI and JUI-F and the reservations of Maulana Fazlur Rehman have been conveyed to Imran Khan.

Imran Khan has issued directives to party central leadership to allay these concerns.

According to sources the former political rivals are close to unite against the federal allied government.

The message of Maulana Fazlur Rehman has been conveyed to Imran Khan.

PTI founder along with Maulana Fazlur Rehman will constitute three committees to settle the matters.

The negotiating committee will evolve joint strategy. Consensus will be evolved first in regard to protest movement and other points.

Pak, China reaffirm to strengthen strategic relationship, safeguard common...

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kistani side underscored that the Pakistan-China relationship is the cornerstone of its foreign policy. The two sides enjoy unbreakable strategic mutual trust, fruitful practical cooperation in various fields, and maintain close coordination on international and regional affairs.

The Chinese side congratulated Pakistan on holding successful general elections, and expressed best wishes for the new Pakistani government in leading the Pakistani people in their endeavors to achieve socio-economic development, prosperity, unity, stability and security.

The two sides will explore avenues to deepen experience-sharing in state governance and synergize their development strategies.

The Pakistani side spoke highly of China's major development achievements in the New Era, and expressed good wishes to the Chinese people that under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China, China will realize the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in every dimension.

The Pakistani side spoke highly of and supports China's all-round efforts to advance the building of a strong country and achieve national rejuvenation through a Chinese path to modernization, believes that the Chinese path to modernization provides a new option and practical solution for developing countries to achieve independent development.

The two sides reaffirmed their unyielding support for each other on issues concerning their respective core interests. Both sides stressed that the authority of the UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 brooks no dispute or

challenge. Pakistan reaffirmed its firm commitment to the one-China principle, and reiterated that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China's territory, and that Pakistan firmly supports the Chinese government's every effort to achieve national reunification and opposes any form of "Taiwan independence." Pakistan firmly supports China on issues concerning Xinjiang, Zixiang, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

The Chinese side reiterated its steadfast support for Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, national independence and territorial integrity, in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions and in its efforts to safeguard national security, stability, development and prosperity, in firmly combating terrorism, and in playing a bigger role in regional and international affairs.

The two sides strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Chinese convoy of the Dasu Hydropower Project in Pakistan on March 26, 2024, and emphasized that no attempt to undermine Pakistan-China friendship and cooperation will ever succeed. The Chinese side appreciated the Pakistani side's active pursuit and conduct of the investigation and its findings, and hoped that the Pakistani side would continue to make every effort to hunt down any perpetrators and make sure they receive deserved severe punishment.

The Pakistani side was committed to enhancing security forces deployment and taking more effective security measures, and making all-out efforts to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan.

The two sides reiterated their commitment to com-

bating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with a "zero tolerance" attitude, and agreed to further strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism and security through a comprehensive approach.

Calling on the international community to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation, the two sides expressed their firm opposition to double standards on counter-terrorism, and opposed the politicization and instrumentalization of counter-terrorism.

The two sides stood ready to work with the international community to strengthen multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations. The two sides recognized that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been a pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Since the launch of CPEC, the two sides have adhered to the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefiting together," and promoted the construction of CPEC to achieve fruitful results, which has changed the development landscape of Pakistan, benefited its people's well-being, and promoted the integrated development of Pakistan and China.

After the successful first decade of CPEC, the two sides are committed to carrying out the eight major steps for supporting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, forging an "upgraded version" of CPEC by jointly building a growth corridor, a livelihood-enhancing corridor, an innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor, aligning with Pakistan's 5Es Framework based on Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy, and Equity & Empowerment to better benefit the two coun-

tries and their peoples, working together to build CPEC into an exemplary project of high-quality building of Belt and Road cooperation.

The two sides reaffirmed that upgradation of ML-1 is an important project under the CPEC framework and is of strategic significance to Pakistan's socio-economic development.

The two sides agreed to implement the common understanding of the leaders of the two countries, actively explore advancing the project in a "phased manner" and start working on financing modalities.

They recognized that the Karakoram Highway (Raikot-Thakot) realignment project is of great significance for the smooth operation of the only land-based channel between Pakistan and China.

The two sides reviewed with satisfaction the important progress made in the preliminary work of the project, and signed the framework agreement of the project during this visit.

They believed that the Khunjerab-Sost pass plays an important role in promoting trade and people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and China. The two sides agreed to advance upgradation of the inspection infrastructure of the Khunjerab-Sost pass so as to realize the all-year-round function of the Khunjerab-Sost pass at an early date.

Recognizing the significance of Gwadar Port as an important node in cross-regional connectivity, the two sides were satisfied that the New Gwadar International Airport will soon be finished, and reiterated the need to speed up the development of the auxiliary infrastructure of the Gwadar Port in order to fully realize the potential of the coastal city, especially as a

Zartaj Gul nominated as SIC parliamentary party leader in NA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Member of National Assembly (NA) Zartaj Gul from Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has been appointed parliamentary party leader in National Assembly (NA).

PTI founder Imran Khan has accorded approval to the appointment of Zartaj Gul as parliamentary leader. PTI has proposed four names for the position of parliamentary leader in NA.. They included Zartaj Gul, Sahibzada Mehboob Sultan, Zain Qureshi and Ahmad Chatha.

Head of SIC will inform NA speaker Sardar Ayyaz Sadiq on Monday about nomination of Zartaj Gul.

Never considered....
Continued from page 1
mocracy with former prime minister Benazir Bhutto as well.

The PML-N president said that during Khan's tenure, he was threatened to get his prison cell's AC removed. However, he said he did not believe in political vengeance.

In fact, the three-time prime minister said that he did not even think about it as Khan is serving his jail sentence now.

It should be noted that the government has time and again extended Khan an olive branch but the offer was disdained from the other side that wished to hold talks with the "real stakeholders" only.

However, sources recently told Geo News that Khan has decided to "step back" from his rigid stance, ordering his party leaders to establish contacts both inside and outside the Parliament to ease the ongoing political

CM vows to put Balochistan on...
Continued from page 1
He asserted that the labourers, farmers and general workers are the party's asset.

He said that the government of PPP was formed in Balochistan after a long time, and adding he attributes the honour to the party's workers. The Chief Minister announced to visit all districts of the province to get himself acquainted about the issues of workers personally. He urged the party workers to earn good name for the party and its government by serving the masses dedicatedly. He said that injustice would not be tolerated with any party worker. He said that we would not do unfair with anyone but would also not leave our right.

The Chief Minister on the occasion also mentioned that the elected provincial government has prepared clear roadmap of development and prosperity of the province and it's people according to the vision of President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman of PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He said that the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme was started for promotion of education in the history of Balochistan. He also noted that the doors of 200 universities including Oxford have been opened for the students of province. Similarly, educational scholarship programme was also started for the Children of civilian martyrs, minorities and transgenders. Besides, we also have the credit of launching first air ambulance service in Balochistan. The Peoples' air ambulance service would be free for the people. The serious pa-

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He also mentioned that some 30,000 youth of the province would be imparted different skills in next couple of years from Balochistan. They would be sent abroad after learning their skills, he added. Referring the meeting with party's office bearers, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said that the process of consultation meetings would remain continued in future as well.

He said that the people have lot of expectations with the party as such all office bearers should remain in forefront for the public service. He assured to the party's office bearers that all possible steps would be taken to resolve the issues being faced by the people and party's workers.

The provincial leaders of PPP on the occasion expressed pleasure over the steps taken for improvement in the province and party besides for public welfare. They also expressed wholehearted confidence on the Chief Minister and vowed to play their role in development of the province.

Romina calls for global action to fight ocean pollution, address climate change impacts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, MNA Romina Khurshid Alam said that as the world celebrates World Ocean Day, the present government has firmly reaffirmed its commitment to the global efforts for preserving and protecting marine ecosystems in the country and anywhere in the world. In a press statement issued here on Saturday, MNA Romina Khurshid Alam said that this year's theme, "Catalyzing Action for Our Ocean & Climate," very much resonates deeply with Pakistan's

coastal communities, whose lives and livelihoods are intricately connected with the health and sustainability of the oceans. She said that as a coastal nation, Pakistan is committed to its part in advancing marine conservation efforts. "As a nation with a rich maritime heritage, we recognise the vital role that oceans play in supporting life on Earth, regulating our climate, and providing resources that sustain livelihoods," Romina Khurshid Alam said. The initiatives of Mangroves restoration in Pakistan has resulted in

300% increase of mangroves since 1992, which drew global appreciation for the government's conservation efforts, the PM's coordinator highlighted. Through initiatives such as marine protected areas, community-based conservation projects such as national mangroves restoration initiative, and public awareness campaigns, the present government was striving to safeguard our oceans and promote their sustainable use, she highlighted. She also said that the present government was very much aware of the na-

tional and global environmental and climate change-related challenges facing the oceans and efforts are being made to address marine pollution, promote sustainable fisheries management, and conserve marine biodiversity. Pakistan is blessed with a resource-rich coastline of about 1,046 kilometers along the Arabia sea, which harbours a diverse array of marine life and ecosystems. From the bustling ports of Karachi to the tranquil shores of Gwadar, Pakistan's coastal areas are not only vital hubs of economic activity.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Nilofar Bakhtiar presenting the shield to Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasar on the occasion of National Media Fellowship under NCSW at Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Central Spokesperson Pakistan Peoples Party, Shazia Marri addressing a press conference in Federal Capital.

Shazia urges govt to convene NEC meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Information for Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Shazia Marri on Saturday urged the government to convene a meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) to formulate a comprehensive economic plan. Addressing a press conference, she highlighted the importance of forming the NEC to ensure equal development across the country.

Rs. 22 billion for universities last year and is planning to increase this allocation to Rs. 30 billion this year. Expressing concerns about widespread load shedding, particularly in Sindh where it can last up to 20 hours, she urged the government to take immediate action. She also highlighted the compounded problems of water shortages due to the inability to run electric motors during load shedding.

She praised the significant contributions of President Asif Ali Zardari in empowering the provinces and suggested that the current government could benefit from his experience. Shazia Marri called on the government to provide maximum relief to the public in the upcoming federal budget and advocated for subsidies to support the oppressed class. She said that the Sindh government had allocated

Responding to a question, she reaffirmed the PPP's historical support for journalists, mentioning that the party did not support the defamation law and that its leadership had previously participated in protest camps with journalists. Shazia Marri reiterated the PPP's ongoing commitment to addressing key national issues and advocating for the rights and welfare of the public.

PTDC 2-day int'l symposium to explore economic prospects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in partnership with the World Bank Group will organise a two-day Pakistan Travel and Tourism Symposium scheduled to be held at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) here from June 10 to 11.

Talking to APP, the PTDC official said that the Tourism Symposium would be a two-day event focused on the theme of Building a National Economy through tourism. He further said that the symposium would be organised to showcase Pakistan's rich tourism potential to create government-to-government (G2G), business-to-business (B2B) and G2B linkages among the industry stakeholders. He said that PTDC intended to bring together more than 400 national and international tourism professionals, industry experts, and decision-makers to share their ideas for the development of a future road map for the sustainable growth of the tourism industry of the country.

Ministry plans outdoor gyms in capitals' model schools, colleges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Education and Professional Training has developed a plan to introduce outdoor gyms in its model schools and colleges to promote the physical fitness and well-being of students. According to an official of the ministry, this initial phase marks the beginning of a broader initiative, to foster physical fitness and well-being among students. It acknowledges the inherent link between a healthy body and a sound mind. The ministry plans to expand the network to even more schools and colleges, providing students with accessible and engaging opportunities to stay active and healthy.

"The summer vacation will commence from June 10 and end on July 31, the ministry notification said. The school and colleges working under the FDE will reopen on August 01, the ministry added. Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) has also announced summer vacations in all the private institutions from June 10.

PUC backs Saudi Arabia's Fatwa on Hajj regulations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Saturday announced its full support for the recent Fatwa issued by the Supreme Council of Ulema of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which mandates that performing Hajj without official permission is impermissible.

The PUC appeals to all Muslims to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations set by Saudi Arabia regarding Hajj. The PUC emphasized the importance of booking Hajj only through companies authorized by the Saudi government. Unauthorized bookings and travel arrangements will be considered illegal, and violators will face severe penalties, it added. In a statement, the PUC leadership, including Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pittafi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Obaidullah Gorman, Allama Tahir-ul-Hasan, Maulana Hanif Osmani, Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa, Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahid,

and Maulana Saadullah Ludhianwi, stressed that Hajj was a time for worship and not for political or sectarian activities. "The Fatwa of the Council of prominent Ulemas of Saudi Arabia is clear: performing Hajj without the required permissions is a sin. We urge all intending pilgrims to respect this ruling to avoid legal complications," the PUC leaders stated. They said the leadership of Saudi Arabia has previously warned that all Hajj arrangements must be made through approved companies and they have announced heavy fines and legal consequences for those attempting to perform Hajj without proper authorization.

Nikah during iddat case: Bushra files petition in IHC seeking suspension of her conviction

ISLAMABAD (Online): Bushra Bibi wife of PTI founder has filed petition in Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking suspension of her sentence in Nikah during iddat case. The petition has been filed through barrister Suleman Saifdar. The petition said the conviction be suspended and Bushra Bibi released on bail. The prosecution presented weak evidence full of contradictions. The punishment cannot be awarded on the basis of this evidence. The punishment awarded by trial court cannot stay. It was further said in the petition Bushra Bibi has been kept in jail in worst environment for the sake of political victimization. In order to meet the norms of justice it is essential that the petition seeking suspension of conviction and issue orders for releasing Bushra Bibi on bail.

Crackdown against wrong parking violators in full swing

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Police has launched a campaign against those involved in parking their vehicles wrongly and creating problems in smooth flow of traffic by occupying footpaths. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police have launched a campaign against wrong parking violators. The SSP Traffic Islamabad directed all Zonal DSPs to ensure implementation of traffic laws and take action against those involved in creating problems for traffic discipline in the city. The SSP Traffic said that it is the right of pedestrians to use footpaths and no parking would be allowed there. He said that vehicles should be parked at lots specified at shopping centers while awareness campaigns should be launched to educate citizens. During the first phase of the campaign, action was taken against showroom and shopping malls' administrators in various areas of the city.

IG Islamabad visits CTD Complex and Security Division

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited the CTD Complex and Security Division. During the visit, he inspected various offices and branches of the CTD Complex and Security Division. He issued orders to the officers to ensure timely attendance in the offices. He further directed the officers to personally check all duties and ensure the best performance of their official responsibilities. Officers should be fully briefed and equipped

the ongoing construction works at the CTD Complex. Additionally, he issued orders to the Security Division officers to enhance the security of embassies. He emphasized ensuring an effective search process at the entry and exit points of the Diplomatic Enclave and effective monitoring of these routes with Safe City cameras. He further said that, Islamabad Police is actively engaged in maintaining peace and order in the federal capital and ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and property. Citizens are urged to



with all necessary gadgets before being sent on duty. Negligence and carelessness in duties will not be tolerated. During the visit, IGP Islamabad also reviewed

cooperate with the police and immediately report any suspicious items or activities to the emergency helpline "Pukar 15" or ICT - "15" app.

Randhawa directs to complete repair work of Faisal Mosque shortly

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday directed that all repair and maintenance work on Faisal Mosque should be completed shortly. During his visit to Faisal Mosque with other CDA officials, Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed that all repair and maintenance work on Faisal Mosque should be completed shortly. He stressed the importance of expediting the decoration and renovation works to ensure all possible facilities for worshippers visiting the mosque. "Faisal Mosque holds national significance, not just for Islamabad, so its renovation should be a priority," he stated. Following the chairman's directives, the mosque's non-operational fountains have been repaired and made functional.

area of the mosque be improved immediately. He stressed the importance of expediting the decoration and renovation works to ensure all possible facilities for worshippers visiting the mosque. "Faisal Mosque holds national significance, not just for Islamabad, so its renovation should be a priority," he stated. Following the chairman's directives, the mosque's non-operational fountains have been repaired and made functional.

Psychological test of Islamabad Police officers conducted

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Following

and mental capability. This initiative seeks to



the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police conducted a psychological test of police officers performing their duties with foreign ambassadors to improve the performance

enhance the aptitude of officials within the Islamabad Police. The test included a special psychological examination committee, chaired by SSP Headquarters, and psychological experts were the members of the committee.

PM visit to China to help in CPEC upgradation: Zafaruddin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China will help upgrade China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) flagship project, Zafaruddin Mehmood, head of think tank Understanding China and former CPEC Envoy said. While talking about the visit, he said that the recent visit of the Prime Minister Shehbaz to China is a detailed visit wherein he also met with businessmen in Shenzhen in Guangdong Province of China. This is Shehbaz Sharif's first visit to China after being elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan. He chose Shenzhen, the most developed city in China, for his visit, which shows his desire to promote cooperation in new technology from China, he CMEG. He said, the political significance of this visit is that he had meetings with the leadership of China, which will strengthen the position of both countries on global and regional issues. He said Pakistan fully supports the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Urbanization Initiative presented by President Xi Jinping. On the last day of his visit, the Prime Minister visited Xi'an, which is also the twin city of Lahore. This visit will add a golden chapter in the historical relations between the two countries, he added.

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Fellowship showcases significant contributions to responsible reporting on gender-based violence, Child marriage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Nilofar Bakhtiar, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to partners UNFPA and CEJ-IBA for their unwavering support in launching the National Media Fellowship on Women's Rights. She praised the fellows, stating, "I am immensely proud of you all fellows who have produced 165 impactful stories and two documentaries, shedding light on crucial issues of gender-based violence and child marriage. Their diverse backgrounds, representing all regions of Pakistan, have enriched our initiative. Looking ahead, I encourage

all journalists to continue championing women's rights and addressing gender-based violence and child marriage in their reporting. NCSW is committed to supporting your efforts and will soon be holding national conferences on health, climate change, law reforms, and education. "Together, we can drive social change and ensure a better future for all women in Pakistan," she said. Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasar, commended the efforts of NCSW in advancing women's rights. "All of these media fellows have done an outstanding job," said Syedaal

Nasar. "The National Media Fellowship has been crucial in training journalists to report on sensitive issues with professionalism and ethics. As Deputy Chairman Senate, I pledge my support to strengthen laws and mechanisms that protect women's rights and ensure the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act Bill in the National Assembly and Senate." The National Media Fellowship's second cohort (2023-24) has concluded successfully, with 39 fellows producing a total of 165 print, digital, television, and radio stories, along with two standalone documentaries. The Cohort comprises of one year

empowered journalists to play a vital role in advocating for women's rights through their reporting." The stories produced by the fellows covered a range of critical topics, including: Women's inheritance rights and their deprivation; The practice of "Ghugh" in KP, where random men can claim a woman without her consent; Challenges faced by transgender individuals when a community member dies without anyone to conduct the funeral prayer. A key focus of this fellowship has been the gender-based violence (GBV) faced by the transgender community in Pakistan. "This fellowship has



ISLAMABAD: Electric buses parked at a charging point established at Jinnah Convention Center in the Federal Capital.

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Small victories

In the midst of unspeakable tragedy, hope remains for a better tomorrow for the Palestinian people. As Israel continues its genocidal campaign in Gaza, unfazed by global censure and warnings from international courts to stop its monstrous campaign, there is growing consensus within the comity of nations that legal recognition must be extended to Palestine as a sovereign state.

After Ireland, Spain and Norway recognised Palestine last month, the central European state of Slovenia earlier this week did the same. This brings to 147 the number of countries that recognise Palestine as a state, confirming the fact that the global majority is in favour of granting the Arab nation its legitimate, and long-denied, rights.

But while such international solidarity must bring some solace to the people of Palestine, the troubling question of stopping Israel's campaign of extermination remains. The fact is that the international community's solidarity must result in a long-term ceasefire so that Tel Aviv's eight-month-old pogrom in Gaza is brought to a halt.

This can only happen when those states that recognise Palestine put pressure on Israel's powerful benefactors — primarily the US — not to sabotage ceasefire efforts, especially within the UN Security Council. When Israel's warmongers know that America will defend them at every international forum that counts, why will they stop? Moreover, Palestine's allies must translate their gestures of support into concrete actions, for example enforcing a trade and arms embargo against Israel until it stops the bloodbath. Words enough will not be enough to bring Tel Aviv to its senses.

All states that value human life, and hundreds of thousands of ordinary people marching against genocide in cities across the world, have called for an end to the butchery in Gaza. But Israel remains unrepentant. The latest atrocity came in the shape of the Israeli attack on a UN school in which nearly 40 people were killed. Many of the victims were children.

Unfortunately, the list of atrocities Israel has committed in Gaza since Oct 7 is a long one, and each fresh act of barbarism eclipses the previous action. Yet, despite the global outcry, Tel Aviv insists on 'finishing' the job in Gaza, which presumably means eradicating all signs of life in this forsaken territory. Moreover, Tel Aviv's warmongers are now eyeing Lebanon, with the possibility of their exchanges with Hezbollah mutating into a full-blown war.

Therefore, recognition of Palestine is only the first step. The need is for the international community to endorse an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. Unhindered humanitarian aid must simultaneously be made available to the occupied territory's traumatised population. At a later date, the comity of nations must hold Israel and its backers to account for the murderous rampage Gaza has been subjected to.

Ishrat Husain

The government recently formed a committee of eminent international and Pakistani economists to draft a home-grown economic programme. This article shows that there is little need for such a committee. There is no dearth of reports, recommendations, cabinet decisions and plans prepared by the government itself as well as international development partners, private sector organisations, academic institutions, think tanks and professional bodies which cover all aspects of a home-grown programme.

Numerous books, articles, op-ed pieces, webinars, seminars and conferences have also provided many proposals. This piece confines itself to the last six years. During this period, the management of the economy was in the hands of the PML-N, PTI, PDM, the caretaker set-up, and again PML-N.

The Nawaz Sharif government published Vision 2025, which was updated to Vision 2030, with five Es — eradicating extreme poverty, education, energy, environment and

exports. The Planning Commission under the PTI produced its own development strategy. Five-year plans and annual plans were prepared regularly. None of these vision statements or strategy papers received enthusiastic support from either the finance ministry or sectoral ministries or the provincial governments.

The finance ministry presented the medium-term budget strategy papers to parliament. The State Bank came up with the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, a digitalisation strategy, and financial sector strategic plans. The SECP revised the Companies Act and introduced the Code of Corporate Governance. Despite political differences, all these documents correctly identified the problems, outlined the priorities and proposed actions. Ministries have produced policies on strategic trade, logistics, aviation, digitisation, electricity, etc. Have the outcomes of these policies been evaluated?

Economic advisory councils, task forces, working groups, government committees, the private sector, leading economists

and other experts have generated over 50 detailed analyses and proposed short-, medium-, and long-term actions on governance, fiscal, taxation, trade, the financial sector, energy, CPEC, agriculture, etc. The SOE triage report resulted in the SOE policy and Act but the government is still struggling to categorise SOEs for privatisation, retention or restructuring. There have been very few transactions for privatising loss-making SOEs. Had the government implemented the PIA restructuring report submitted to the cabinet in 2021, additional liabilities of Rs300 billion could have been avoided.

On the subject of governance, the civil service, the restructuring of federal ministries, autonomous bodies and attached departments, the induction of technical expertise, pensions, and austerity, task forces and cabinet sub-committees have, after stakeholder consultation, submitted comprehensive reports that received cabinet approval but have yet to see the light of day. Subsequently, a committee under Nasir Khosa and a recent one under Jehanzeb Khan

(both ex-bureaucrats) also made similar suggestions. It's a pity their reports were referred to other ministerial committees.

Performance agreements between the PM and each minister, with key indicators on priority action, were signed in 2022 after intensive dialogue, specifying cross-ministerial co-responsibilities. Promotions were to be made on performance rather than seniority; annual increments were linked to key performance indicators. Technical experts were to be inducted into several ministries. Proper implementation of these measures would have led to clear accountability. Attempts to enact laws empowering local governments (LG) to deliver public services and transferring resources and taxation powers have met with little success. A merit-based, open competitive policy to recruit MDs/CEOs of public sector entities was successfully practised for three years and several Pakistani expats showed interest. It is not clear if this policy was followed by successive governments.

It is my guess that the IMF, World Bank, ADB,

DFID (now FCDO), USAID, EU, UNDP, etc. must have collectively invested hundreds of millions of dollars in preparing excellent reports on macro, meso and micro issues, and providing consultancy services to ministries and foreign training to government officials. The World Bank's policy papers were discussed at conferences on human capital, fiscal policy and public expenditure. Issues such as child stunting, illiteracy and poverty have found resonance in public debates. Yet, action is pending. Foreign trainings and visits have not proved useful as, once back, the officials are not posted in the ministries/agencies for which they were trained.

Among the think tanks, the noteworthy contribution is that of the PIDE, which has come up with an Islah package. One may disagree with some of their findings but their reports are a rich repository of alternative and divergent views on economic transformation, and should be utilised for policy formulation and discussion. Other local organisations which have done serious research and analyses are the

CDPR, CREB, IDEAS, SDPI, Lums, BNU, Nust, LSE, BIPP, SDPC, IBA and AERC.

In the private sector, the Pakistan Business Council has produced a series of relevant reports on trade, taxation, tariffs, and the ease of doing business. The OICCI has developed a confidence index based on the survey of foreign companies, the FPCCI has formed a think tank, and APTMA regularly articulates its problems and proposals. The KCCI, ICCT, LCCI are also active in pointing out the constraints of private business. Professional bodies such as ICAP, ICMA, ACCA, and many others are in regular dialogue on topics of national interest.

The purpose of this analysis is to back the assertion of the finance minister that 'we know our problems, we know what we need to do. The key is implementation'.

I have argued elsewhere that implementing these reforms would be painful the first three years but by year five, the government can show stabilisation and growth revival. -- Courtesy Dawn

Budgets to empower women

Rashida Dohad

How much do governments in Pakistan spend to empower women? What are the trends in allocating and expanding budgets for facilities and institutions that help women and girls get equal opportunities and live in dignity? Are there gaps in essential and strategic investments that can be plugged to help reduce gender parity?

A gender budget tagging methodology developed for the governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in 2023 helps answer these questions. It maps budgets to assess the quantum and nature of approved allocations and actual public spending likely to help women and girls access services like education, healthcare, training, credit, justice, security, disaster response and social protection. Public funds are also ranked on the basis of their relevance to empowering women.

Gender-tagging of the provincial budgets of Punjab and KP over the past three fiscal years, FY2020-21, FY2021-22 and FY2022-23, shows approved allocations with a high gender-relevance

ranged from 4.8 per cent to 6.73pc of the total budget, and spending was between 5.8pc to 7.53pc of the total expenditures. Budgets marked as high relevance have a principal purpose of supporting gender equality. These typically include funds for schools, hospitals, start-ups and other financing mechanisms designed to benefit women and girls. They also include public resources for creating and running shelters and providing other facilities that help respond to violence against women.

High relevance allocations were not the only gender-responsive investments made by the provincial governments. Rs1,315,409 million, or 36pc of total allocations over three years in KP, and Rs4,113,273m, or 44.43pc of the total in Punjab, were allocated for public services like universities, tertiary care hospitals, irrigation, and transport. These amounts are of medium relevance, as they likely benefited women and girls even though gender equality was not the deliberate purpose of these budgets.

An additional Rs554,999m, or 15pc of the cumulative total three-year

budgets in KP, and Rs1,265,760m, or 13.67pc of the total in Punjab, represent low relevance funds; ie, amounts that may create an enabling environment for gender equality by supporting, for example, agricultural research that will assist women who depend on farming for food and livelihood. Going forward, more granular information, including sex-disaggregated data, will help governments show whether such public spending gives women and girls access to equal opportunities and rights, demonstrating government compliance with domestic policies like the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Empowerment Policy, 2017, and the Punjab Women Development Policy, 2018, as well as international obligations such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Categorising gender-responsive budgets shows that the largest share in fiscal years 2020-23 was provided for social services in Punjab and KP. This included funds for education, healthcare, and basic services like drinking water.

This was followed by budgets for women's economic empowerment, which support the access of girls and women to income opportunities and contribute to economic activity. This included funds for vocational training, credit, mobility, and facilities like working women's hostels that make it possible for women to take jobs away from their families and hometowns.

An analysis of Pakistan's federal budget for FY2023-24 shows that the largest share of gender-responsive budgets, Rs499,940m, was allocated for social protection, which includes support for social safety nets like the Benazir Income Support Programme. Ninety-four per cent of the amount categorised under social protection is highly relevant; ie, designed for gender equality. Rs139,720m expended for climate change supports adaptive and mitigation measures such as afforestation, solarisation and research on climate trends. However, in this category, dedicated funds are needed to develop the resilience of women, poor and others that are most vulnerable to climate shocks. The information gen-

erated by gender tagging of federal and provincial budgets helps understand what is funded, how much is funded, where the funding gaps are, and how to better allocate resources. Using such information and analysis for sustained and more impactful outcomes requires three priority actions.

First, integrate methodologies like gender budget tagging in the financial data management systems of the federal and provincial governments, so that robust data and analysis, including trends over time, are regularly made available to assist legislators, policymakers and government officials in making gender-responsive budget choices. Second, provide more detailed information on current and development budgets to help more accurate gender tagging. Descriptions of budgets often do not provide enough information to judge their gender relevance. Some headway has been made to improve data contained in project planning documents, like the PC-Is. These efforts should be further expedited and skills of government officials upgraded so that they are able to produce more detailed PC-Is.

Third, use the information generated by gender tagging of budgets for in-depth assessments to help more impactful use of public resources to empower women and increase their agency. For example, providing schools and colleges for girls is important to reduce gender parity. But equally important is an assessment of how budgets can overcome challenges like high dropout rates of girls after primary school, estimated at 32pc. Also required are strategic investments, like including content in education curriculum that helps reverse pervasive social discrimination against women and girls. Ranked 142 out of 146 countries, Pakistan is nearly at the bottom of the Global Gender Gap Index 2023, reflecting the grim realities of women, who make up 49pc of the country's population of 241.5m. Gender-responsive budgets will help reduce gender disparities and provide more equal opportunities, which can provide a strong engine for macroeconomic stability, stimulate economic growth, reduce income inequality, and make better development outcomes possible.

Children in prisons

Rida Tahir

On a cold morning in 1937, a remand home was inaugurated in Karachi under the Bombay Children Act, 1924. This remand home was later shifted to near Central Jail in Karachi, and is now functioning in accordance with the Sindh Children Act, 1955, and the Sindh Remand Homes Rules, 2011. Another remand home has been sanctioned in Nawabshah/Shaheed Benazirabad, but it is non-functional.

Despite the passage of nearly 90 years, there is only one functional remand home in Sindh, highlighting the failure of the state in protecting children. There are 385 juvenile offenders (of these, 106 are under the age of 16, whereas 100 are under the age of 18) languishing in the province's prisons, as per the latest data released by the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service in 2023.

A remand home is a shift towards reformative and rehabilitative justice for children. In contrast to the harsh bars of prisons, a remand home provides a child with an environment of care, protection, observation and treatment. The purpose of remand homes is not to reprimand the child, but to reform their behaviour and reintegrate them into society. Remand homes are mandated to "provide proper accommodation to the inmates, including separate bed, sanitary, toilets and bathrooms", as per Rule 7 of the Sindh Remand Homes Rules. Further, Rule 16 mandates the provision of recreational facilities such as indoor and outdoor games during the child's stay at a remand home.

In 2018, the Juvenile Justice System Act was passed by parliament to protect the rights of children in conflict with the law. JJS, 2018, defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of 18 years. It did not repeal the Sindh Children Act, 1955, but it has an overriding effect as per Section 24 of JJS, 2018.

JJS, 2018 introduced the 'juvenile rehabilitation centre', which has been defined as "a place where a juvenile may be kept and given education, vocational or technical training for his mental, moral and psychological development". It is important to outline that the functions outlined for JRCs under Section 2 (k) of JJS, 2018, are analogous to the functions of the institution of remand homes as per Section 26 of the Sindh Children Act, 1955, and Rule 2 (f) of the Remand Home Rules, 2011. Therefore, both federal and provincial obligations for the protection of juvenile offenders will be fulfilled if remand homes are established in each district of Sindh.

Children do not belong in prisons. The age of criminal responsibility in Pakistan has been capped at 10 years, as per Section 82 of the Pakistan Penal Code (amended in 2016). Further, Section 83 extends this protection to children of ages above 10 and under 14 years, who have not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of their conduct. Unfortunately, only 34 per cent of children under five are registered at birth nationally. This means that many children in the 10-14 age group are unable to escape the confinement bars even though the law protects them.

The absence of remand homes/JRCs translates to children being put behind bars even where bail is the right of the child. Over 26 million children are out of school in Pakistan. Alarming, even among those attending school, 77pc are unable to read or comprehend simple text by the age of 10, according to data released by Unicef. Moreover, millions are trapped in child labour in the country.

Research has suggested that childhood experiences such as poverty, maltreatment, and school exclusion are associated with serious offences and frequent criminal convictions. Despite a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of children in conflict with the law, it is unfortunate that children trapped in the vicious cycle of conflict with the criminal justice system are not a priority of the state.

The Sindh Human Rights Commission has been actively advocating for the establishment of remand homes in each district of the province and the formulation of provincial rules under JJS, 2018, which have not been notified in the province as yet. To protect children, it is suggested that the rules under JJS, 2018, when notified, are aligned and harmonised with the Sindh Remand Home Rules, 2011. Additionally, the SHRC is also advocating for establishing free legal assistance for juveniles and children under Section 3 of JJS, 2018.

Children are not only the future but also the present of our society. It is imperative that the state safeguard and rehabilitate juvenile offenders to build a more equitable society. -- Courtesy Dawn

Reshaping knowledge

Aisha Khan

Geopolitics and geo-economics are seen as parallel pathways to progress. When there is harmonisation between the two, the outcome is good; when political differences come in the way of economic cooperation, the result is increased political tension and under-optimisation of economic activity.

In developing countries, this negative feedback loop is to the detriment of the people, where poor social and economic indicators, worsened by escalating debt burdens due to climate change, are increasing hardships for people.

Politics drive all agendas, but political activity does not take place in a vacuum, nor does it operate in isolation. The changing alignments in the geopolitical landscape at the global level also affect politics in South Asia.

Right now, that world is divided in two camps. The bipolar world, which became a unipolar world, is headed towards a second Cold War theatre. The competing ideologies of free market and state capitalism are at the heart of the divide. This battle of political entrenchment is embroiled in a desire to create a world order based on the dominance of one system over the other.

This stand-off is not likely to change in the foreseeable future and will continue to shape global politics. South Asia will have to navigate its way deftly in this tug of war between the competing blocks.

As it is, South Asia has a conflicted history with countries born out of divisions. The partition of Pakistan from India, and Bangladesh from Pakistan, has left scars that haunt relationships. This

wounded sentiment is exploited by political actors and is responsible for holding progress hostage to a history of hostility.

The inability to sidestep differences has come at the cost of undermining regional potential for growth and development.

Meanwhile, climate change is pushing the region towards the limits of its coping capacity.

Reshaping knowledge amidst turmoil and using this ecosystem can help convert outdated strategies into fit-for-purpose actions that can change the regional dynamics for engagement.

The last six months have seen elections in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. No mention or even an aspirational desire was expressed during the campaign for strengthening regional cooperation. This is largely because political ideology is deeply entrenched in emotions, and passions drive the agendas to the extent of making countries prefer remaining locked in perpetual acrimony over beneficial economic cooperation.

In this gloomy scenario, prospects may look dim, yet there is a glimmer of hope that comes from the large youth cohort, which may want to craft a future that does not carry the weight of history. As the quantum of challenges increase, there will be a corresponding need for elevating response to avoid a humanitarian crisis. The region desperately needs intellectual space for an alternative trajectory that allows for free flow of ideas and interactions.

Under the normative framework, the logical ask would be for revival of Saarc, activation of Safta, and making travel easier to facilitate cross-border communication. But none of this can happen despite the obvious advantages,

because feelings of negativity come in the way of cooperation. The sad reality is that the region is trapped in the past and tied in a Gordian knot.

Moving beyond the status quo will require investing in the political economy of know-wledge to promote innovative thinking, develop a new roadmap for engagement, and invest in regional integration. The youth and climate action offer the best chance for change. The young in South Asia outnumber the old, and climate is a common threat that respects no borders. Business as usual is no longer a workable plan.

Reshaping the know-wledge landscape and empowering the youth with decision-making hold the key to unlocking rusty doors, using the gateway to build bridges of hope. The scope for expanding regional knowledge networks is immense.

Politics is about power, and market forces drive the economy. As the global resource base shrinks, political alignments will converge more with economic interests, pitting vested interest groups against each other for grabbing critical resources. The ensuing demographic shifts will add to societal tensions and provide a hunting ground for populist leaders to exploit fear and scarcity for short-term political gain.

History tells us that science without humanity and politics without principles serve a limited purpose. Similarly, populism and the politics of hate also have a short shelf life, but like black carbon, can do great damage in a short time. This is a time for the youth to use knowledge platforms to change jaded narratives into hubs of hope and seize the opportunity for investing in a better future. -- Courtesy Dawn

8th meeting of KP cabinet held, discusses key initiatives to strengthen KP Police

PESHAWAR (APP): The 8th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial cabinet, held at the Chief Minister House which was presided over by Chief Minister (CM) Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur here on Saturday.

The meeting underscored key initiatives to strengthen the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police, enhance revenue from the mineral sector, and improve the execution of developmental schemes.

CM Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur emphasised the allocation of additional resources to the KP Police to bolster law and order in the province. He also highlighted the need for improved revenue generation from the mineral sector through better structures and processes.

The establishment of the KP Minerals Development and Management Company (KPMDC) was lauded as a positive step towards responsible mining and international marketing of minerals.

The meeting of the provincial cabinet was attended by Ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretaries and relevant administrative secretaries.

The cabinet approved the proposal for the establishment and incorporation of KPMDC, which will focus on exploring, developing, excavating, processing and marketing minerals with an emphasis on mechanized economic excavation.

The Draft bill for amendment in section 116-A of the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1965 duly endorsed by the Law and Finance Departments was placed before the provincial cabinet to reallocate the 25% quota/share of traffic fines from traffic education, awareness, purchase of machinery & equipment to 15% and the remaining



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad inaugurates Youth Program and upgrade of PM Youth Development center at Lahore College for Women University.

Handing over arms to new guards CM Sindh orders action against private security companies

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while taking notice of a scavenger boy's death by a security guard of a private security company has ordered to arrest the culprit immediately and submit a report to him in this regard.

According to a CM's Spokesman, the Chief Minister had ordered to take action against private security companies that hand over arms to under-training or recruited new guards.

The Sindh Chief Minister directed the Home Department to inspect private security companies.

Murad said that the companies should also work on mental health and development of security guards during and after recruiting process.

He said that arms should not be given to a person, who was recruited as a new security guard.

He said that the criminal record of the guard should also be checked during the recruitment and his deployment.

The CM said that such incidents were painful and unbearable. He had also expressed his sorrow and showed sympathy to the family members over the death of the boy.



KARACHI: A view of the site after an explosion in Karachi. At least one killed and eight others injured in an explosion in a chemical tanker in Shireen Jinnah Colony Area.

QWP supports 18th Amendment, against conspiracy: Sikandar

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Chairman of Quami Watan Party (QWP) Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao on Saturday said that 18th Amendment was constitutional right of the provinces and will foil the conspiracy.

He was speaking at the condolence reference for Party leader Asad Afridi Advocate. Paying tributes to the late party leader, Sikandar Sherpao said the deceased rendered services for the cause of Pakhtuns.

He said the QWP lost a committed leader, who had deep understanding of the geopolitical situation of the region and worked for the welfare of the poor.

Commenting on the challenges facing the province, Sikandar Sherpao said that a conspiracy was being hatched against provincial autonomy. "We will foil the conspiracy against the 18th Amendment," he said.

Sikandar Sherpao said the 1973 Constitution guaranteed provincial autonomy.

He said that a conspiracy was also being hatched against the National Finance Commission Award, which was against the spirit of the Constitution.

He said that a hybrid regime was imposed on the country after the 2018 general election, adding that now a hybrid plus government was brought in as a result of the 2024 polls.

He said that experiments with the political system should be stopped so that democracy could thrive in the country.

He said all state institutions must function within their constitutional ambit.

Criticizing the provincial government, he said that irregularities were committed in the wheat procurement process.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and President PPP Women Wing Faryal Talpur in a group photo with Italian Consul General on the eve of the Italy National Day.

Empowering youths essential to develop country: Mashhood

LAHORE (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has stressed empowering the country's youth, declaring the strategy as essential for driving development.

Addressing a ceremony after the inauguration of the Prime Minister Youth Development Centre at Lahore College Women University (LCWU) here on Saturday, he emphasised the importance of utilising the potential of youth for national progress, stating that without utilizing the abilities of youth, national development is not possible.

Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is committed to empowering the youth alongside economic revitalization, adding that the Prime Minister's Youth Program is working to equip young people with skills to face future challenges, targeting to provide skill training to one million boys and girls this year, creating job opportunities in Pakistan and abroad.

The chairman expressed his vision to propel Pakistan's IT industry to a \$25 billion market. Rana Mashhood highlighted the current IT industry's value at \$2.5 billion and, following Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision, aims to increase it tenfold. The inclusion of female students in the Youth Loan Program has been increased from 11 per cent to 30 per cent, he announced.

Highlighted the need to provide educational and healthy recreational opportunities for the youth, he emphasized that youth are the future of Pakistan.

Despite economic challenges and stringent IMF conditions, the government remains committed to providing a better future for the youth, he added.

US consul general, Punjab minister discuss interfaith harmony

LAHORE (APP): Consul General of USA Kristen Hawkins called on Provincial Minister of Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora in his camp office.

Political/Economic Chief Douglas Johnston, Political Specialist M Daim Fazil, Secretary HR Ali Bahadur Qazi and other persons were also present in the meeting. There was a detailed discussion on promoting interfaith harmony with the cooperation of both countries. The provincial minister told the consul general that as soon as the government was established in Punjab, the protection of the rights of religious minorities was being ensured. "Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif went to Kartarpur and opened the Baisakhi festival. She also reached Maryamabad and distributed 10,000 Easter grants. Besides, on the instructions of the Chief Minister, cheques of educational scholarships have been distributed among minority students," he added. He said that by increasing the minority development fund in the budget, religious tourism would be promoted and religious places of worship.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services addressing first International Gynecological Conference at King Edward Medical University.

Health minister announces Rs 12bln medicine stock for district hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir has announced that the district health authorities had secured a medicine stock worth Rs. 12 billion.

Addressing the CEOs Health/MS Conference on Saturday, he revealed that hospitals under the Punjab Health Facilities Management Company in 14 districts had received medicines valued at Rs. 7 billion. During the conference, Secretary Health Ali Jan Khan briefed the minister on the facilities available in District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospitals, Rural Health Centers (RHCs), and Basic Health Units (BHUs). The minister stated that out of 2,500 BHUs, 500 lacked doctors as of March, but all 2,500 BHUs and 200 RHCs will have doctors by the end of June.

The minister emphasised that 90 per cent of the medicine supply to district and tehsil hospitals is complete. Over 100,000 people have benefited from 32 field hospitals across Punjab, with more than 200 Clinics on Wheels providing medical care in underserved areas.



LAHORE: Guru Arjan Dev Jealous Sikhs arrives in Pakistan across the Wagah border from India under the leadership of Sardar Gurbachan Singh to participate in the Yatri celebrations.

CM approves Punjab's first-ever livestock card & farmers' guidance App

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the Punjab Livestock Card project which will grant Rs250,000 interest-free loans for animal feed.

The CM presided over a meeting here on Saturday relating to livestock in which important projects were granted approval. The chief minister directed to simplify the stages to acquire loans for the livestock farmers along with formulating a scheme for dairy farming in South Punjab. The CM said, "We want to put livestock farmers of Punjab on the path to economic independence."

The participants were apprised during the meeting that prospects to provide loans on soft instalments to males and females for dairy farming in the rural areas of South Punjab will be reviewed. Over 40,000 farmers will be granted loans through the Punjab Livestock Card.

Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain, Special Assistant Rashid Nasrullah, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Secretary Livestock and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

Over 400,000 animals will be available for meat export through the Punjab Livestock Card scheme. The farmers will be provided with facilities to undertake free tagging of animals, free insemination services along with wanda (feed) and silage quality testing facilities.

The farmers will be provided with a soft loan worth rupees 270,000 through the Livestock Card for wanda, silage and mineral mixture facilities in Punjab. The farmers can pay their loan in 90 days through the Punjab Livestock Card. The livestock care will be facilitated through 'Animal Identity Traceability System' in Punjab.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan giving away memento to the Country Head UN Women, Lansana Woneeh at CM Secretariat.

Coordinated strategy will be adopted to eliminate encroachments: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that a strong and coordinated strategy should be adopted to eliminate encroachments from the city.

He expressed these views on Saturday while presiding over separate meetings of the Estate Department, Land Department, Anti-Encroachments Department and Council Department.

The meeting noted that buildings that started construction within the boundaries of KMC should be monitored, if they are built illegally, immediate legal action should be taken against it. Encroachment creates deterioration in the city, especially traffic accidents increase, if encroachments are established on footpaths.

Municipal Commissioner KMC S. M. Afzal Zaidi, Deputy Commissioner South Captain Retired Altaf Sario, Additional SSP South, SSP East and, the concerned departmental heads participated in the meeting.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that encroachments should be cleared from the footpaths located in different areas of the city, especially in the South and East District. If there are encroachments on footpaths, people walk on the streets causing traffic accidents, he added.

The mayor directed the Senior Director of Land Sabah ul Islam and Senior Director of Anti-Encroachment Imran Rajput to work together with the district administration to carry out operations against encroachments.

He said that encroachments should never be established especially in front or around the Parks, playgrounds and places of worship, he said that the land mafia has built shops by placing containers on footpaths so these should be removed immediately.



KARACHI: View of huge heap of garbage creating problems for commuter, causing unhygienic atmosphere showing the negligence of concerned authorities, located on Korangi Chakra Goth area.

Governor, CM KP condemned attack on Police mobile

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Saturday condemned attack on Police mobile in Dera Ismail Khan wherein two policemen were injured.

In his message Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi condemned the incident and expressed his best wishes for the recovery of the injured policemen.

The Governor expressed concern and regret over the successive attacks on police personnel in Dera Ismail Khan and other districts.

It is worth mentioning here that some unknown terrorists attacked the police in Dera Ismail Khan. Meanwhile, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur also condemned the attack on Police mobile, injuring two policemen.

The Chief Minister expressed his best wishes for the recovery of the two policemen injured in the firing.

The CM Directed the district administration to ensure timely provision of medical aid to the injured officials.

Police have made eternal sacrifices for the protection of people's life and property, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said in his separate message.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has fought terrorism with great courage and bravery, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said.

DPO inquires after health of injured Policemen

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): District police officer Dera Nasir Mehmood visited the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Dera and inquired after the health of injured police constables.

Two policemen were injured in the blast near the patrolling van.

PM lauds POWERCHINA contributions in energy sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of POWERCHINA, Ding Yanzhang, has called on Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his state visit to Beijing, China. According to a POWERCHINA press release received here on Saturday, both sides held in-depth discussions on promoting cooperation in areas such as energy and power planning, clean energy development, and major projects under construction in Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed gratitude to POWERCHINA for its long-standing contributions to Pakistan's energy and power infrastructure development. POWERCHINA has actively participated in the construction of the CPEC by leveraging its own resource advantages,

investing in and constructing a series of landmark and influential projects, which have played a positive role in improving Pakistan's energy structure and enhancing energy security. Currently, the Pakistani government is committed to green energy transition and industrial cooperation development, hoping that POWERCHINA will continue to leverage its professional advantages, deepen cooperation, and actively participate in the planning and construction of relevant major projects to make new contributions to further deepening cooperation between the two countries in the energy and economic fields. Chairman Ding Yanzhang congratulated PM Shehbaz on his reappointment as Prime Minister and thanked the Pakistani government for its long-term support and

assistance to POWERCHINA. He stated that as a global leader in clean, low-carbon energy, water resources, and environmental construction, POWERCHINA actively practices the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and has been involved in the early stages of the CPEC construction, effectively driving local employment and promoting Pakistan's economic and social development. POWERCHINA will fully leverage its integrated advantages across the entire industry chain, actively participate in hydropower, new energy, and other fields in Pakistan, promote the optimization of local energy structure and green development, and contribute to the optimization of local energy structure and green development, and contribute to the optimization of local energy structure and green development, and contribute to the optimization of local energy structure and green development.



XI'AN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visiting Pakistan Pavilion at the display center in Yangling Agricultural Demonstration Base.

CCP signs first international MoU with Chinese market regulator

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China's State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) during the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China. The MoU aims to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of competition law and policy, marking a significant milestone in Sino-Pakistani relations, said a press release issued here on Saturday. The SAMR, a ministerial-level agency under China's State Council, is responsible for enforcing anti-monopoly laws and regulating markets. The MoU signifies a new era of collaboration in anti-trust

activities between the two nations. On October 19, 2023, a high-profile Chinese delegation led by Dr. Gan Lin, Vice Minister of SAMR visited the CCP. Discussions between CCP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu and Vice Minister Gan Lin highlighted the strategic importance of a partnership focusing on enhancing market regulations, providing training and capacity building, sharing expertise in cartel detection, and collaborating on research projects to improve regulatory efficiency. The China's substantial investments in Pakistan, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), are expected to increase significantly with the second phase of CPEC. To accommodate this growth, the CCP is

developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework. The MoU outlines a framework for cooperation through bilateral meetings, training programs, workshops, research collaborations, and information exchange. The MoU aims to ensure sound and effective enforcement of competition law, which is crucial for market efficiency and consumer welfare. By fostering technical collaboration and information sharing, this partnership will strengthen bilateral ties and create favourable conditions for economic development. This is the first international MoU in the Commission's 16-years history. Moreover, the CCP will soon be signing MoUs with competition agencies of Russia, Turkey, and Egypt.

Leghari invites Chinese company to setup solar manufacturing plant in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Power Division Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari on Saturday invited the Chinese company LONGI Green Energy Technology Co. Ltd. to set up solar PV manufacturing plant in Pakistan. In a meeting with President of LONGI Green Energy Company, Zhenguo Li, the minister invited him to set up the solar

manufacturing plant in Pakistan, said a statement issued by the Power Division here. The minister briefed the Company's President about the solar potential in Pakistan adding that the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix was rapidly being increased. Mr. Zhenguo Li assured his full support to promote solar energy in Pakistan.



MULTAN: Daily wage workers carrying seasonal fruit baskets on their heads to earn for livelihood.

AJK minister for small industries visits LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Minister for Small Industries Dr. Kausar Taqees Gilani visited the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday and held a meeting with LCCI President Kashif Anwar. Executive Committee Member Raja Hassan Akhtar and other members were also present. During his address, Kashif Anwar emphasised the importance of strengthening the relationship between the Lahore Chamber and the Azad Kashmir Chamber to promote business activities in the country. He highlighted that all banks in Azad Kashmir are providing interest-free loans to small industries, which is a positive initiative where the Ministry of Small Industries plays a crucial role. Additionally,

industrial areas are being established in Azad Kashmir through the efforts of this ministry. Moreover, a five-year tax holiday is being provided in Azad Kashmir, which will undoubtedly be a significant relief for existing and new industries. Kashif Anwar mentioned that these efforts will greatly facilitate small and medium sized industrialists. Speaking about the LCCI's extensive work for women's empowerment including the establishment of the Women Empowerment Lounge and the Women Entrepreneur Center, he mentioned that for the first time, the Lahore Chamber organized the Women's Recognition Ceremony. He emphasized that the chamber has worked for industry, economy, and tax compliance.



XI'AN: Federal Minister for Power Awaiz Leghari meets President Zhenguo Lee of Longi Green Energy Technology Company Limited.

FPCCI stresses investment friendly policies to protect country's economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh on Saturday said that investment friendly policies should be introduced to protect the economy. President FPCCI has said that electricity and interest rates should be reduced, said a press release issued here. Atif said that inflation has reduced to 11.8% and the 22% interest rate also needs to be reduced for smooth business in the country. He said that by reducing the interest rate, the government can save 3 trillion rupees in interest payments. Talking about the textile sector, Atif Ikram

said that for the last four months, cotton imports from the US and Brazil have been blocked at the port, which has led to a significant financial burden due to the increase in demurrage charges, which are now Rs 50 million. He said that these charges are being paid to foreign companies in dollars, which is increasing the economic pressure on the country. The government should take notice of this issue and resolve it immediately. Atif Ikram said "We believe in the determination of the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to promote a favourable environment for business and trade in Pakistan."

Gold rates dip by Rs.3,600 per tola to Rs.239,400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3,600 and was sold at Rs.239,400 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.243,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.3,086 to Rs.205,247 from Rs.208,333 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.188,143 from Rs.190,972, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to 2,750 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs.42.86 to Rs.2,357.68. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$70 to \$2,292 from \$ 2,362, the Association.

Turkish envoy calls for increasing bilateral trade to \$5 billion

FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkiye must adopt a focused approach to enhance cooperation particularly in the field of IT, AI, education, health and tourism to increase bilateral trade from \$1 billion to \$5 billion, said Turkish Ambassador in Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci. Addressing the business community in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) here on Saturday, he said that both countries enjoy exceptional cordial relations at government to government, people to people and business to business level but despite all these plus points, the volume of the bilateral trade is dwindling at only 1 billion dollar. "We must collaborate with each other

to utilize the untapped potential", he asserted. He also mentioned the humanitarian aid extended by Pakistan during the earthquake in Turkiye and said that both countries are supporting each other particularly on Kashmir and Cyprus issues. He said that Turkiye was also doling out liberal educational scholarships to Pakistani students while steps are also being taken for the exchange of faculty members. Earlier, Dr Khurram Tariq, President FCCI, welcomed the Turkish Ambassador and his team. He briefly introduced Faisalabad and said that FCCI was playing its role in resolving issues being faced by its members in addition to striving hard for the socio-economic

Citrus centre to be set up in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): The federal government will set up a citrus centre at a cost of Rs200 million to increase the quality and production of citrus fruits whereas tenders for laboratory machinery would be floated on June 11.

This was disclosed by Federal Executive Director Export Development Funds, Syed Abbas Naqvi, during a ceremony regarding citrus production here at the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He said that the government has a great wish to expedite the production of citrus as the state was getting ample revenue through it. Vice Chancellor, University of Sargodha, Prof. Dr. Qaiser Abbas, Vice Chancellor, Baba Guru Nanak University, Dr. Muhammad Afzal, former State Minister.

TDAP organizes handicrafts, bangles expo in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The 'Handicrafts and Bangles Expo 2024', organized by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), was inaugurated here on Saturday at Dolmen Banquet Hall in Latifabad. Addressing the inaugural ceremony Brig Noman Arif, Station Commander Hyderabad, observed that the colours of culture had been put to display in an awesome way at the expo. He said he visited all the stalls and found the handicrafts and other beautiful productions reflecting admirable artisanship. He said it was a small initiative of TDAP to provide a platform to the artisans from different

parts of Sindh to display their handicrafts and bangles. Brig Arif noted that the platform which had been provided by the TDAP was a big opportunity for the artisans as they were not only showcasing their creations but they were also learning things from each other. He said the cultural handicrafts also reconnected the people with their culture. "Our culture is very rich which needs to be given a touch of innovation keeping in view the modern requirements," he added. Director General TDAP Abdul Kareem Baloch informed that the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and Pakistan government.

DC chairs meeting regarding electricity bills recovery

ASTORE (APP): A meeting was held on Saturday regarding the recovery of electricity bills under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Astore Muhammad Tariq. The Executive Engineer of the Electronics Department, Zahidullah, and other high officials also participated in the meeting. Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner said that the process of recovering electricity bill balances should be expedited and there should be no lapses in it. If there is any obstacle in the collection of balances, the district administration will fully cooperate with the electronics department.



HYDERABAD: Station Commander Numan Arif, Commissioner Hyderabad Ahsan Qureshi, DG TDAP Karim Memon, vice chancellor SABS University Dr Arabella Bhutto and Salahuddin Abbasi visiting the stalls during 2nd edition Exhibition of Handicrafts and Bangles, organized by Trade Development Authority Pakistan, at local hall.

Rs.897.5 million fine imposed on 8,791 power pilferers

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) caught 8791 power pilferers during last 273 days and imposed a fine of over Rs.897.5 million for stealing electricity in six circles of the company during the ongoing special anti-power theft drive. Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Saturday that over 24.7 million detection units were charged and 8675 cases were registered against power theft in various police stations. The police arrested 6755 pilferers so far including 39 accused during past 24 hours in addition to recovery of Rs.645.6 million from the power

pilferers. Giving further details, he said that the FESCO teams detected electricity theft at 2081 points in Faisalabad First Circle and imposed a fine of Rs.206.3 million on them under the head of 4789,000 detection units. In Faisalabad Second Circle, the FESCO teams caught 1602 electricity thieves and imposed a fine of Rs.165.1 million under 3956,000 detection units. Similarly, 1001 cases of electricity theft were detected in Jhang circle and the company fined them Rs.103.2 million under 2910,000 detection units. He further said that 1277 electricity thieves were caught from Sargodha.

Six sale points set up for sacrificial animals in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Capt. Aurangzeb Hayder Khan on Saturday has said that the district administration has set up six temporary sale point for sacrificial animals. Talking to media, he said that the sale points have been set up at Mela Mandi Ground in Sargodha, Burana bypass Sillanwali, Muazamabad bypass, Kotmomin, Water supply, Farooqa road in Sahwal, New Sabzi Mandi in Bhera and Chugi Morr in Bhulwal whereas there will be no fee or charges on the sale and purchase of animals. Aurangzeb Hayder said warned that action would be taken on violation.

Minister visits cattle market, reviews arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Zeeshan Rafique inspected a sacrificial animal sale point established by the district administration in the Sagayan cattle market here on Saturday. Accompanied by Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) and Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider, MCL Chief Officer Ali Abbas Bukhari, and Assistant Commissioner City Rai Babar, the minister reviewed the ongoing arrangements and facilities provided at the market. During the visit, the DC briefed the minister on the arrangements made at the sale point. Expressing

satisfaction with the efforts of the MCL, the minister directed the deputy commissioner to take action against illegal markets reportedly operating in certain locations. He emphasized the need to enforce the Punjab government's ban on the sale of animals on roads and streets diligently. Addressing citizen and trader concerns at the sacrificial animal sale point, the minister issued on-the-spot instructions to officials concerned for prompt resolution. He reaffirmed his commitment to providing all necessary facilities to animal traders and citizens at official sale points, including proper lighting at night and effective security arrangements.

PPP Swabi rejects imposition of excise tax on tobacco

SWABI (APP): Pakistan People Party, Swabi District through a resolution rejected the decision of PTT provincial government to impose excise tax on tobacco and decided to strongly oppose this illegal tax. The emergency meeting of PPP district Swabi was held under the Chairmanship of Ali Khan, PPP District Swabi President. President of Tehsil Swabi Jhangir Afsar, General Secretary of Tehsil Swabi Rahim Taz Khan, President Tehsil Chotta

Lahore Sikandar Khan, General Secretary Tehsil Lahore, Malik Nawaz Khan President Tehsil Topi Zarin Gul Haji, General Secretary Tehsil Topi and office-bearers participated. On this occasion, it was unanimously decided to oppose this tax at all levels by rejecting the cruel decision of the provincial government to impose excise tax on tobacco cess through a resolution. The resolution was also passed that the tobacco cess funds should be allocated for the people of Swabi.



QUETTA: Sacrificial animals wait for their buyers at a make-shift sacrificial animals cattle market established for the upcoming festival Eid-ul-Azha, in Quetta

UN to call out Tel Aviv for ‘violations’ against children

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has added Israel's military to a global list of offenders who have committed violations against children, Israel's UN envoy Gilad Erdan said, describing the decision as "shameful."

Erdan said he was officially notified of the decision on Friday.

The global list is included in a report on children and armed conflict due to be submitted to the UN Security Council on June 14.

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the decision would impact the country's relations with the United Nations.

Erdan said he was notified by Guterres'

chief of staff and posted a video on social media of him responding to their phone call. "I am utterly shocked and disgusted by this shameful decision of the Secretary-General," said Erdan.

Guterres' spokesperson, Stephanie Dujarric, declined to comment.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that the UN had "added itself to the black list of history when it joined those who support Hamas".

Guterres' annual report to the 15-member Security Council on children and armed conflict covers the killing, maiming, sexual abuse, abduction or recruitment of children, denial of aid ac-

cess and targeting of schools and hospitals. It was not immediately clear what violations Israel's military had been accused of committing.

The list is split into two: parties that have put measures in place to protect children and parties that have not. Erdan said he was told Israel had been included on the list of parties that had not put in place adequate measures to protect children.

The report has been compiled by Virginia Gamba, Guterres' special representative for children and armed conflict. The list attached to the report aims to shame parties to conflicts in the hope of pushing them to implement measures to protect children.



A man carries a casualty in the aftermath of an Israeli strike, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip.

Biden's aide says US may deploy nuclear weapons to 'deter China, Russia'

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States may have to deploy more strategic nuclear weapons in coming years to "deter growing threats" from Russia, China and "other adversaries", a White House aide said on Friday.

Pranay Vaddi, the top National Security Council arms control official, made his comments in a speech on "a more competitive approach" to arms control that outlined

a policy shift aimed at pressing Moscow and Beijing to reverse rejections of US calls for arsenal limitation talks.

"Absent a change in adversary arsenals, we may reach a point in the coming years where an increase from current deployed numbers is required. We need to be fully prepared to execute if the president makes that decision," he told the Arms Control Association.

UN staff, other aid workers kidnapped in Yemen

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels have detained an unspecified number of aid workers, including United Nations staff, in an apparently coordinated sweep, a diplomatic source said on Friday.

Eighteen aid workers were kidnapped in four Houthi-held parts of the country, the Yemeni Mayyun Organisation for Human Rights said, listing 10 workers from UN agencies. A diplomatic source said "more than a dozen" aid workers.

UN demands release of 11 personnel detained in Yemen

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS (INP): The United Nations on Friday called for the immediate release of 11 of its personnel detained by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in different parts of war-torn Yemen in an apparently coordinated sweep.

"Houthi de facto authorities have detained 11 United Nations national personnel working in Yemen," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

Moscow says US to blame for civilian deaths in Russia from rockets it supplied to Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia alleged on Friday that Ukraine had used US-supplied rockets to kill women and children in a region of southern Russia, and said that Washington was to blame.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the deaths had occurred last week in the Belgorod region after the United States agreed to let Ukraine fire US-supplied weapons into Russian territory for the Kharkiv region.

She said statements by Washington giving the

green light for such attacks amounted to "a confession... for the murder of children and women in the Belgorod region".

"Fragments of Himars [rockets] will serve as direct proof," she told reporters.

Reuters could not independently verify the assertion and there was no immediate comment from Ukraine or the United States.

Zakharova did not present images of any rocket fragments. She did not say how many people had been killed in the alleged incident.



Supporters of Peter Magyar, former government insider and leader of the Respect and Freedom (TISZA) Party take part in a rally ahead of the European Parliament elections, in Budapest, Hungary.

Sudan could soon have 10m internally displaced people: UN

Monitoring Desk
ETHIOPIA: The number of people internally displaced in Sudan due to conflict could soon exceed 10 million, the United Nations migration agency said on Friday, in the world's largest displacement crisis.

Fighting broke out in the capital Khartoum in April 2023 and quickly spread across the country, reigniting ethnic bloodshed in the western Darfur region and forcing millions to flee.

"How much suffering and loss of life must the people of Sudan endure before the world takes notice? Isn't 10m internally displaced enough to compel urgent global action?" said Mohamed Refaat, Sudan Chief of Mission for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

"Every one of those 10m displaced life repre-

sents a profound human tragedy that demands urgent attention."

The IOM recorded 9.9m people internally displaced across Sudan this week. Prior to the war, there were already 2.8m internally displaced people, according to the IOM.

In total, about 12m people have been forced to flee their homes, with more than 2m crossing into neighbouring countries, including Egypt and Chad.

Refaat said that more than half of the internally displaced people in Sudan were women and a quarter of them were children under-five. He said aid agencies were struggling to keep up with the rising needs. "Funding shortfalls are impeding efforts to provide adequate shelter, food and medical assistance," Refaat said.

Danish PM 'attacked' by man in Copenhagen

Monitoring Desk
COPENHAGEN (INP): Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was "hit" on Friday by a man in a Copenhagen square, her office said, with EU chiefs quickly condemning the attack.

The Danish prime minister's office said in a statement that Frederiksen was "shocked by the incident", but did not provide further details.

"Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was hit by a man Friday evening on Kultortet in Copenhagen. The man was subsequently arrested," the statement said.

The incident comes on the heels of a spate of attacks on politicians from across the political spectrum at work or on the campaign trail in Germany ahead of this week's EU elections.

Combative Modi invited for oath tomorrow

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Indian President Draupadi Murmu invited Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi for the swearing in of the government on Sunday, after his election as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), this time including his own BJP lawmakers, on Friday.

Addressing the NDA in his acceptance speech, Modi displayed all the bitterness he showed towards the opposition during his furious electioneering, particularly targeting the Congress party by name. The speech exuded a distinct sense that Modi had not abandoned the combative mode, ignoring the convention that such occasions are used to highlight the achievements of democracy. This could be because

he would remain insecure until winning the mandatory trust vote in the new Lok Sabha.

In a TV discussion with political analyst Parakala Prabhakar, the anchor noted that the name of Modi's BJP rival and cabinet colleague Nitin Gadkari was being mentioned among a section of BJP MPs as a better alternative to him. Gadkari was seen not rising from his seat when others stood up to greet Modi in the central hall of the parliament. It is possible that a section of the opposition parties would also agree to back him should Gadkari throw his hat in the ring.

The BJP has fallen short of a majority in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, winning 240 seats, and having to rely on its allies to form the government.

Malaysia defends eviction of sea nomads, citing security concerns

Monitoring Desk
KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian authorities defended their decision to evict hundreds of sea nomads from their homes off the coast of Sabah state this week, saying it was aimed at boosting security and combating cross-border crime. More than 500 people from the Bajau Laut, a mostly stateless sea-faring community who live on rickety houseboats or coastal huts built on stilts, saw their homes demolished or burned by enforcement officials this week, local activists have said.

The operation in Sabah's Semporna district was criticised by rights groups, which called on the government to halt the evictions and ensure the safety.

India court bails Rahul Gandhi in latest defamation case

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: An Indian court on Friday granted bail to opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in the latest of several defamation cases brought against him for accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi or his party of corruption.

Gandhi, 53, has faced numerous legal cases brought by members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was last year briefly disqualified from parliament after a criminal libel conviction.

He is one of several top opposition leaders to face criminal proceedings in cases they claim are politically driven by Modi's government.

Denmark urged to prioritize Kashmir dispute in UN Security Council

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK (INP): Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, a prominent Kashmiri scholar and Chairman of the World Forum for Peace & Justice, has congratulated Denmark on its election to the United Nations Security Council and urged the country to prioritize the long-pending Kashmir dispute as per UN resolutions during its tenure. Dr. Fai's appeal comes as Denmark, along with Greece, Panama, Somalia, and Pakistan, was elected to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council for 2025-2026.

Emergency authorities said they carried out 13 rescues and received 297 calls for assistance from residents in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales state, in the 24 hours to 5 am local time, because of floods sparked by the heavy rain.

Two Muslim men beaten to death, another injured by Hindutva goons in Chhattisgarh

Monitoring Desk
RAIPUR (INP): In a shocking incident, two Muslim men were brutally beaten to death, while another was severely injured, by a group of Hindutva activists in Raipur, the capital city of India's Chhattisgarh state.

The victims, identified as Chand Mian, Guddu Khan and Saddam Khan, were transporting buffaloes, which is legally permissible, in a truck when they were intercepted and attacked by the Hindutva goons.

According to reports, the three men in the truck were pursued and attacked by a group of 10-12 Hindutva extremists. The attackers intercepted the truck on the Mahanadi Bridge near Arang, dragging out and brutally beating the occupants.

Reportedly, Chand Mian and Guddu Khan, two of the victims, were thrown off the bridge, while Saddam Khan, the third victim, sustained severe injuries and is currently undergoing treatment at a pri-

Putin says Russia's economy is growing despite heavy international sanctions as he courts investors

Monitoring Desk
ST. PETERSBURG: President Vladimir Putin said Friday that the Russian economy is growing despite heavy international sanctions and the country has expanded economic ties with countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, as he sought to court investors.

Addressing the leaders of Bolivia and Zimbabwe and business leaders at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin said Russia "remains one of the key participants in world trade," despite the fact that the country is under sweeping sanctions for sending troops in Ukraine.

The forum has been used by Russia for decades as a showcase for touting the country's development,

though Western officials and investors have steered clear of the session since sanctions cut off much of Russia's trade with Western Europe, the U.S. and their allies.

The main driver of Russia's economic growth is the fighting in Ukraine — now as important to the Kremlin economically as it is politically.

Russians are finding a few imported staples, and most global brands have disappeared — or been reincarnated as Russian equivalents. But not much else has changed economically for most Russians, with massive state spending for military equipment and hefty payments to volunteer soldiers giving a strong boost to the economy.

Biden asks Americans to recommit to democracy in Normandy cliff speech

Monitoring Desk
FRANCE: Atop the cliff that US Army Rangers scaled 80 years ago on D-Day, President Joe Biden on Friday compared the threats posed by Nazi Germany to those facing the world today by dictators and authoritarianism, and urged Americans to resist isolationism.

Biden's speech in Normandy, his second in as many days, aimed at strengthening support for Ukraine, which is locked in a war with Russia and its President Vladimir Putin. Biden said the Army Rangers who fought that day would want Americans to defend freedom.

"Does anyone doubt that they would America to stand up against Putin's aggression here in Europe today?" he asked.

Biden never mentioned his Republican rival

in the Nov. 5 presidential election, Donald Trump, but his speech criticized the former president's isolationist inclinations.

"The most natural instinct is to walk away to be selfish, to force our will upon others. To seize power, to never give up," Biden said, in an apparent dig at Trump.

Biden urged Americans to remember the Rangers whose dramatic heroism on D-Day helped make the invasion a success.

"As we gather here today, it's not just to honor those who showed such remarkable bravery that day, June 6, 1944," Biden said. "It's to listen to the echo of their voices. To hear them. ... They're not asking us to scale these cliffs. They're asking us to stay true to what America stands for."

South African parties await details of ANC unity government proposal

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: South African opposition parties said on Friday they were waiting for more details on a proposal by the African National Congress to form a government of national unity after it lost its majority for the first time in the democratic era.

The former anti-apartheid liberation movement once led by Nelson Mandela has run South Africa since 1994. But voters, angered by years of economic stagnation, high unemployment and corruption, punished it at the ballot box on May 29.

It remains the biggest party. But the lack of an outright majority means it must now share power — and President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday the ANC leadership had decided that a broad collaboration was the best way forward for South Africa.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), the largest opposition party, said it was open to talks and was "committed to the process".

"But the broad invitation to all parties ... rather than limiting it to parties committed to our current constitutional dispensation, the rule of law and a social-market economy, has undoubtedly complicated matters," spokesperson Werner Horn said.

"Our negotiation team will ... have further meetings with other parties to listen to their views and reaction," Horn added.

The ANC will have 159 of the 400 seats in the new National Assembly. Its nearest rivals are the pro-business, white-led DA, with 87 seats; the populist uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) led by former President Jacob Zuma, with 58; and the hard-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) with 39.

A South African appeals court on Monday (June 3) suspended a previous ruling that had halted offshore exploration by Shell along the unspoiled Wild Coast and allowed oil companies another chance at public consultation.

In poll campaign blow, Sunak apologises for leaving D-Day events early

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, in a new setback to his election campaign, apologised on Friday for leaving D-Day commemorations early. He said he left early to give an interview in which he attacked the main opposition party. Sunak's decision not to stay at the event in northern France alongside other world leaders was met with dismay in the Conservative Party. Opinion polls suggest he faces the prospect of a heavy defeat in the national election on July 4.

The leader of the opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, remained in Normandy for the duration of events marking the 80th anniversary of the 'D-Day' landings. Starmer was seen talking to leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"On reflection, it was a mistake not to stay longer, and I've apologised for that, but I also don't think it's right to be political in the midst of D-Day commemorations," Sunak told reporters. "The focus should rightly be on the

veterans." Sunak says his plans had been set, long before the start of the election campaign.

US President Joe Biden, Britain's King Charles and other leaders gathered at the events in Normandy. Sunak spoke at a British-led event but delegated other duties to ministers, which included Foreign Secretary David Cameron. Cameron was pictured with Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. An anonymous Conservative politician said, "I can't explain it and I won't." The lawmaker said it could be because the "Gillian Duffy moment", in a reference to 2010 when then-prime minister Gordon Brown had apologised for being caught on tape calling a voter "a bigoted woman". This moment was seen as a turning point in a campaign which he eventually lost.

Sunak's Conservatives lag about 20 points behind Labour in opinion polls. Sunak's campaign had an inauspicious start last month, when he announced the election date under a downpour of rain.



A woman walks past tents at the Gymnasium Vincent which was turned into a shelter for people who had to flee their homes due to gang violence, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Deputy PM calls for immediate ceasefire, unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Strongly condemning the use of hunger and starvation as a weapon of war by the Israeli forces, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday urged the international community to take action to stop this collective punishment unleashed on the Palestinians and help ensuring immediate ceasefire and unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

“Recent attacks by Israeli settlers on aid convoys as well as seizure of Rafah border crossing with Egypt amounts to deliberate blocking of humanitarian supplies with a clear intent to starve the civilian population,” the deputy prime minister said while addressing the Extraordinary Meeting of the D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers in Istanbul.

He said the world was witnessing indiscriminate killings of civilians with a disproportionately large

number of women and children. “Israeli forces are systematically bombing hospitals and vital infrastructure to target the very existence of Palestinians.”

According to the World Health Organization, he said only 12 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals were functional, that too barley. More strikingly, 84% of all health facilities are either destroyed or damaged, all most all certainly by design.

Israel’s incessant and brutal aggression is a blatant attempt to wipe out the Palestinian population, Ishaq Dar said adding that the world was witnessing one of the worst massacres of our time being perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces, in total disregard of the international law world opinion and ICJ orders.

The Deputy PM demanded that the order of the International Court of Justice directing Israel to immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah must be



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani inspecting a class room during her visit of Govt. Railway Girls Higher Secondary School

PM stresses need to leverage sister-city relationships of Xi’an with Lahore, Multan

XI’AN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday outlined the need to leverage sister-city relationships of Xi’an with Lahore and Multan through practical cooperation at city-to-city level to promote bilateral cooperation in trade, technology, agriculture, and tourism. The prime minister, along with his delegation met Party Secretary of Shaanxi province in Xi’an, China Zhao Yide.

In the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz and Party Secretary Zhao discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in various sectors, including trade, technology, agricultural and cultural exchanges.

The reaffirmed commitment to further deepen Pakistan-China strategic cooperation, including

Muqam urges lawyers to support constitution, democracy

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for SAFRON, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam on Saturday urged lawyers to support movements aimed at upholding the constitution and democracy. Addressing Mardan Bar Council at Alhama Hall, Engineer Amir Muqam emphasised the pivotal role of the nation’s founding fathers, particularly acknowledging the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his legal acumen. Expressing concern, the minister highlighted how some individuals are exploiting the nation’s resources for personal gains, urging for a collective effort to thwart such endeavours.

Amir Muqam while stressing the importance of upholding the sanctity of institutions, called upon lawyers to support movements aimed at upholding the constitution and democracy and prosperity of people. He reiterated the



XI’AN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Party Secretary of Shaanxi Province Zhao Yide.

Deputy PM Dar, Bagheri discuss Gaza, Rafah situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Acting Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Bagheri on Saturday discussed the situation arising out of ongoing Israeli bombardment and targeting of refugee camps in Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

They called for urgent measures to bring an immediate end to Israeli aggression, its incessant crimes against humanity and violation of international humanitarian law.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister met Iranian acting foreign minister on the margins of the Extraordinary Meeting of the D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers held in Istanbul, Türkiye, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister reaffirmed Pakistan’s strong commitment to the people of Palestine and their right to self-determination. The two ministers expressed satisfaction over the trajectory of bilateral relations marked by increased high-level exchanges in political, economic, defence and security and intelligence spheres.

They reaffirmed commitment and resolve to continue strengthening of mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation and dialogue between the Pakistan and Iran. The acting foreign minister of Iran congratulated Deputy Prime Minister Dar on Pakistan’s election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.



ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with Acting Foreign Minister of Iran, Ali Bagheri on the margins of the Extraordinary Meeting of the D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers.

Seamless Hajj operation enables Pakistani pilgrims to focus on spiritual journey

MAKKAH AL MUKARRAMAH (APP): A month-long pre-Hajj flight operation, which began on May 9, is proceeding smoothly, providing Pakistani pilgrims with comprehensive facilities to concentrate on their spiritual journey and prayers in the holy cities of Saudi Arabia. “So far, 65,000 pilgrims have arrived via 243 flights under the government scheme, while more than 36,402 have arrived under the private scheme.” Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony spokesman Muhammad Umar Butt said on Saturday.

He said the overall Hajj operation was continuing as per schedule and all Pakistani pilgrims who arrived in the holy land were performing their routine prayers in complete peace and discipline under the vibrant facilitation of the Pakistan Hajj Mission and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. He advised the public to avoid rumours creating confusion regarding any discomfort to guests of Allah Almighty.

Meanwhile, Joint Secretary (Hajj) Sajjad Haider Yaldrum, in a video message, requested Pakistani pilgrims to use the ministry’s online mobile service, ‘Pak Hajj App,’ to lodge their complaints or suggestions, instead of manual ones.

“All the online complaints and suggestions are directly monitored by the Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and all senior officers to ensure their prompt resolution,” he said.

The joint secretary noted that if any pilgrim found themselves unable to lodge online complaints they should approach the PHM Moavins deployed at each residential building for facilitation. He added that the back of the pilgrims’ lockets also contained the numbers of the complaint cell.

He explained that complaints could be lodged through the Pak Hajj App, WhatsApp, or by calling the Pakistan Hajj Mission’s helpline toll-free numbers: 00923376510003, 00923376510004, 00923376510005, and 0092306332555.

Under the Complaint Management and Monitoring System, he noted, all pilgrims are just a click away from registering any kind of complaint.



KILLASAI FULLAH: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Speaker Balochistan Assembly Abdul Khaliq Achakzai offering Fataha on sad demise of Maulana Asmatullah

To achieve lasting peace in Balochistan Dr Rubaba, others underscore need of collaboration among govt., edu. institutions & tribal authorities

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Advisor to Chief Minister, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi participated in a dynamic panel discussion titled “The Role of Tribal Structures - Leveraging Traditional Institutions for Peace Building.”

The panel brought together government school teachers and lecturers to explore the potential of traditional tribal structures in fostering peace and harmony in Balochistan.

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi emphasized the critical role of tribal institutions in Balochistan’s socio-political landscape.

She highlighted how these structures, deeply rooted in the province’s cultural heritage, can be pivotal in resolving conflicts,

promoting education, and enhancing community cohesion.

“Tribal structures have long been the cornerstone of Balochistan’s social fabric,” Dr. Buledi stated. “By leveraging these traditional institutions, we can create sustainable peace-building mechanisms that resonate with the local populace.”

The panel discussion covered a wide range of topics, including the integration of modern education with traditional values, the role of teachers in mediating community disputes, and the importance of empowering local leaders to address contemporary challenges. The educators shared their experiences and insights, offering valuable perspectives on how to effectively engage with tribal leaders and communities.

The event underscored the necessity of collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and tribal authorities to achieve lasting peace and development in Balochistan.

Dr. Buledi reaffirmed the government’s commitment to supporting initiatives that harness the strengths of traditional systems while promoting progressive educational and social policies.

The event concluded with a consensus on the need for continuous dialogue and partnership to foster a peaceful and prosperous Balochistan.



LAHORE: Sardar Ramesh talking to media personnel regarding the arrangements done by Matrook Waqf Amlak for pilgrims visiting Pakistan.

Shehbaz’s visit gets extensive coverage in Chinese media

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s five-day visit of China and his meetings with top Chinese leadership and Chinese government officials have received extensive coverage in electronic and print media.

The prime minister has been in headlines of Global Television Network (CGTN) and CCTV, China’s prominent English and Chinese language news channels; and newspapers such as Global Times, China Daily, People’s Daily, China Economic Net and a large number of other Chinese newspapers and news websites.

China state-run Xinhua News Agency interviewed the prime minister ahead of his visit while the Global Times published the prime minister’s op-ed.

The international media based in Beijing also followed engagements of the prime minister in the Chinese capital.

PM Shehbaz held meetings with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, Chairman Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, Zhao Leji, Heads of key government departments and addressed Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs at Pakistan China Business Forum held in Shenzhen.

A number of Chinese scholars commented on various aspects of the prime minister’s visit on television and contributed news articles in the newspapers.

At the invitation of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, PM Shehbaz undertook an official visit to China from June 4-8. Besides Beijing, he visited cities of Shenzhen and Xian.

Governor, CM & Speaker BA condole death of Maulana Asmatullah

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor, Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti and Speaker Provincial Assembly, Captain Abdul Khaliq Achakzai visited Killa Saifullah on Saturday.

During the visit, they condoled death of former Member National Assembly and former Provincial Minister, Maulana Asmatullah with his children. They also offered fataha for the departed soul of Maulana Asmatullah. They prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the late parliamentarian was very kind and sociable person who always preferred to serve the people. Also accompanied with them were the provincial minister, Bakht Muhammad Kakar and member Provincial Assembly, Zarak Khan Mandokhail.



QUETTA: Leaders of PkMAP Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal, Ghulam Nabi Marri, Yar Muhammad Baryal, Changez Hayee Baloch Advocate, Hazrat Umar Achakzai and other attending condolence reference on eve of death anniversary of Shaheed Barrister Amanullah Khan Achakzai



QUETTA: Advisor of Chief Minister for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi addressing her views during panel discussion of Voice of Balochistan. MPA Agha Umar Khan Ahmedzai is also present

Speaker NA issues show cause notice to 68 ghost employees

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly (NA) Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has issued show cause notice to 68 ghost employees in assembly secretariat. These employees are not marking biometric attendance.

He has suspended additional secretary Yasin Salimi who was promoted against rules and regulations. Investigation has been launched against him.

According to NA secretariat biometric attendance has been made incumbent on all employees of secretariat.

Special secretary Admn Mubarak has already

846 Sikh pilgrims from India arrive for Jor Mela celebrations

LAHORE (APP): About 846 Sikh pilgrims from India, led by Sardar Gurubachan Singh, crossed into Pakistan on Saturday via the Wagah Border to participate in Jor Mela commemorations of Guru Arjan Dev Ji’s death anniversary.

The group received a warm welcome with bouquets from Punjab Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Additional Secretary Shriens Saifullah Khokhar, and members of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC).

Additional Commissioner Sibi launches polio drive

SIBI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Ali Asghar Magsi, formally launched the anti-polio campaign in the district on Saturday by administering polio drops to children at District Headquarters Hospital Sibi. On this occasion, District Health Officer Dr Akbar Solangi, Dr Rafiq Chhalgari and other officers of the health department were present.

On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ali Asghar Magsi said that all UCMOs

Earthquake shakes Swat, surrounding areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Earthquake tremors have been felt on Saturday in Swat and its surrounding areas. According to a private news channel, an earthquake with a magnitude of 4.5 was recorded in Swat and the surrounding regions.

According to the Seismological Center the earthquake’s depth was measured at 95 km, with its epicenter located in the border area of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan.