

# Independent

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## Total expenditures estimated in budget are Rs. 930.206 billion: Balochistan's surplus budget for fiscal year 2024-25 presented with total outlay of over Rs. 955.602 billion

Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani presents annual budget in Assembly's session; Over Rs. 321 billion allocated for development in budget; salaries and pensions of government employees and pensioners increased on pattern of federal govt.; 3,000 vacancies proposed in budget; Rs. 5.5 billion allocated for health card programme; grant of public sector universities increased to Rs. 5 billion; development expenditures proposed as Rs. 321 billion; 2704 new development schemes have been proposed

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan's annual surplus budget having total volume of Rs. 955.602 billion for the next financial year 2024-25 was presented in the provincial assembly here on Friday.

The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani unveiled the maiden budget of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti-led coalition government while the Speaker, Captain (Retd)

Abdul Khaliq Achakzai was in chair and the Chief Minister in attendance.

Unveiling the provincial budget, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani said that while the total volume of provincial budget for the next financial year is over Rs. 955 billion, the total expenditures are estimated as over Rs. 930.206 billion in the budget showing surplus Rs. 25.395 billion.

The Minister Finance mentioned that the budget allocated over Rs. 321 bil-

lion for development expenditures.

As per the budget documents and mentioned by the Finance Minister in his budget speech, Balochistan is set to receive Rs. 862 billion from transfers and the divisible pool.

The budget has allocated over Rs. 93 billion for law and order, over Rs. 146 billion for education, and over Rs. 67 billion for health sectors.

As per the budget at a glance, over Rs. 138 billion

have been allocated for the general public service, over Rs. 93 billion for the public order and safety affairs, over Rs. 79 billion for economic affairs, over Rs. 909 million for the environment protection, over Rs. 49 billion for the housing and community amenities, over Rs. 67 billion for health sector; over Rs. 146 billion for the education affairs and services, over Rs. 13 billion for the social protection and over Rs. 6 billion for recreational, culture and religion sectors.

According to the budget document, Balochistan would get over Rs. 862 billion from the revenue receipts including Rs. 726 billion from the federal government receipts. These are included over Rs. 647 billion from the divisible pool, over Rs. 20 billion from the straight transfers, over Rs. 20 million from the non-development grants and over Rs. 59 billion from the development grants.

The total provincial own receipts are estimated in the budget as over Rs. 124 billion. These are included: over Rs. 47 billion from the provincial tax re-

ceipts, over Rs. 18 billion from the provincial non-tax receipts and over Rs. 58 billion from the provincial non-tax receipts (including the lease extension bonus).

Similarly, the capital receipts in the budget are estimated as over Rs. 69 billion. These are included over Rs. 21 billion (recoveries of loans, advances and investments), over Rs. 17 billion (foreign project assistance - loan) and over Rs. 30 billion (projects financing).

The Minister Finance announced that the salaries and pensions of the government employees and pensioners have been increased on the pattern of federal government.

He mentioned that 25 percent increase has been proposed in the salaries of government employees of Grade-1 to 16 while 22 percent increase has been proposed in the salaries of government employees serving in Grade-17 to 22. Besides, 15 percent increase has been proposed in the pensions of retired provincial government employees in the next financial year's budget, he added.



QUETTA: Balochistan Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Noshewani presenting the Budget 2024-25 during Balochistan Assembly session.

## Not possible to satisfy all and give progress to Balochistan in dev. budget of Rs. 230b: CM

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that we are aware of the challenges being faced by the province, however, it is not possible to satisfy all and give development to the province in the development budget of Rs. 230 billion.

The Chief Minister mentioned that the provincial budget for next financial year has been presented in the assembly and maintained that it is the first budget of Balochistan which is presented in the surplus.

He said that he is thankful to all the allies on cooperation on the budget preparation.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the media persons after the budget session of the provincial assembly on Friday.

He said that education has been given top priority in the next financial year budget of the province with second to health and then law and order sectors.

He said that the test of our good governance would start from July, 2024.

He said that it has been targeted to spend 70 percent of the funds

of development projects.

Referring police and Levies, the Chief Minister said that these are our forces and as such we are taking steps to bring salaries of both forces at par of other provinces.

He said that we have not withdrawn from the Sui gas surcharge, and adding he mentioned that there are Rs. 50 billion are outstanding.

He hoped that we would get the arrears of gas surcharge after lease review.

He announced that we would not leave even a single penny on the federation.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over budget meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

## Cross-party consensus backs CPEC, stronger China ties as Pakistan hosts first JCM

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the mainstream political parties of Pakistan on Friday displayed exemplary consensus to back the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the leaders reiterating their unwavering commitment to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China by thwarting all nefarious designs.

The political consensus was shown at the CPEC Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and 3rd Meeting of CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and member of the Communist Party's Central Committee Liu

Jianchao who is on a three-day visit here.

Besides Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the senior leadership of all major political parties attended the event including Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, MQM's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Maulana Fazlur Rahman of JUI-F, Hina Rabbani Khar of PPP, Senator Syed Ali Zafar of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Munazza Hassan of Istehkam Pakistan Party, National Party's Senator Jan Muhammad, senior politicians Afrasiab Khattak and others.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said the CPEC played a catalytic role in Pakistan's socioeconomic development.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a group photo with participants of 3rd Pakistan-China joint consultative meeting of political parties on CPEC, in the Federal Capital.

## NEPRA proposes fixed charges up to Rs 1,000 for domestic electricity users

ISLAMABAD (INP): NEPRA has proposed introducing fixed charges for domestic electricity consumers, starting from July 1, potentially impacting millions of households nationwide.

According to sources, the proposal has been submitted to the federal government for final approval. The proposed fixed charges are integrated into the average basic electricity tariff.

The charges are tiered based on monthly consumption: Rs 200 for 301-400 units, Rs 400 for 401-500 units, Rs 600 for 501-600 units, Rs 800 for 601-700 units, and Rs 1,000 for usage above 700 units. Previously, fixed charges were not included in the tariff for domestic customers. The final decision on the new tariff structure will be made following the federal government's review.

## New political party AP launched

LAHORE (Online): Former leaders of PML-N Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail have launched new political party in the name of Awam Pakistan (AP). A video has been shared on X account of APP with the tag line of "Awam Pakistan badlain ganizam" which has been reposted by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail.

The frustrated people were seen questioning in the video about inflation, shortage of gas and electricity, corruption, unemployment and shortage of girls schools.

## COAS Asim Munir pledges full support for CPEC

Liu Jianchao lauds Pakistan Army's role in providing security to Chinese nationals

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao on Friday met Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here at General Headquarters.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest, including regional peace and stability, and reviewed progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering

## Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Hashim Kakar inaugurate research center in BHC

QUETTA: The judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar inaugurated the newly established Research Center in the premises of High Court here on Friday.



Muhammad Ejaz Swati and other judges of the High Court and judicial staff were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice Jamal Mandokhail hailed the establishment of new research center in High Court saying that it is a welcoming initiative.

## Pak-China friendship vital for peace, development of both countries & region: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the Pakistan-China friendship was indispensable for peace and development of both the countries as well as the region and beyond.

Emphasizing on historic and unique significance of bilateral relations between the two countries, the prime minister reaffirmed that the Pakistan-China friendship was time-tested and enduring.

He was talking to Minister of International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao who along with a delegation called on him at the PM House.

## Budget 2024-25: PPP excuses unconditional support to PML-N

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has excused unconditional support to Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government on Budget 2024-25.

According to media reports, the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), did not yield any positive results as PPP did not assure the Prime Minister of their cooperation on the budget. Sources said that the party has stuck to its previous stance on its demands. The government had requested PPP's support in passing the budget 2024-25, but PPP has demanded implementation of the written agreement on their demands before offering any support. Sources said that the government has not provided a deadline on accepting PPP's demands.

Yesterday, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the former's reservations over the budget 2024-25. The prime minister urged all political parties to work together for the development and prosperity of the country and public welfare.

While welcoming the Chinese dignitary and members of his delegation to Pakistan, the prime minister congratulated him as well as political leaders of Pakistan on the successful organization of Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and the 3rd round of Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) of Political Parties on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said it was a matter of great satisfaction that there was complete political consensus in both countries on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Reflecting on his recent visit to China where he



RAWALPINDI: Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao, met with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, at General Headquarters.

## BHC terms decision of cabinet regarding wheat procurement at subsidized rates as illegal

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has termed the decision of provincial cabinet to procure wheat at subsidized rates after allocating Rs. 500 million as illegal and directed to the Chief Secretary to divert the said amount towards payment of loan and establishment of technical center, town planning and supply of drinking water, etc. as suggested by the Chief Minister. The BHC announced the judgement on a petition in which the validity of decision taken by the provincial cabinet regarding procurement of wheat from Naseerabad division after allocation of Rs. 500 million at subsidized rates despite bumper wheat crops in the country. The division bench headed by the Chief Justice,

Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar had heard the constitutional petition. In its judgment, the High Court observed that we find that the decision of the provincial cabinet does not meet the standards of reasonableness, non-discrimination and prudent financial management. For the aforesaid reasons, the petitions are allowed and the decision of the provincial cabinet to procure wheat at subsidized rates after allocating 500 million rupees stands illegal.

The court further observed "before parting with the judgement in hand, we are of the opinion that keeping in view the weak financial conditions of the province, the government is required to cut expenditures while shutting down loss-making departments.



LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari showering petals over the grave of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 71st birth anniversary, in Garhi Khuda Baksh Bhutto.

## Five soldiers martyred in Kurram district landmine blast

RAWALPINDI (APP): Five soldiers of Pakistan Army on Friday embraced martyrdom after an improvised explosive device exploded on a vehicle of the Security Forces in general area Sadda, Kurram District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, five brave sons of soil identified as Havildar Aqeel Ahmed (age: 33 years, resident of District Okara), Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer (age: 30 years, resident of District Poonch),

Sepoy Anosh Rufun (age: 24 years, resident of District Attock), Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan (age: 26 years, resident of District Haripur) and Sepoy Haroon William (age: 29 years, resident of Islamabad Capital Territory), made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

"Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists present in the area and perpetrators of this heinous act will be brought to justice.



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## KP's 'power struggle'

An ongoing dispute between Peshawar and Islamabad over loadshedding in KP has flared up once again, with the provincial government now demanding that power cuts not exceed 12 hours in any area.

However, though the PTI's stance appears to be 'pro-people', it also risks creating impediments in the fight against electricity theft, and the party will soon realise it should reconsider its policy on the matter.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pesco, which powers most parts of KP, is among those distribution companies that regularly report high theft and loss of electricity, with 'line losses' climbing to as high as 60pc on average on its network. This means that Pesco customers, on average, pay only Rs4 for every Rs10 of electricity they consume. The rest is picked up by other bill-paying customers across the country, as it is factored into the uniform national tariff.

To penalise delinquency in the payment of bills, many electricity distribution companies have been imposing loadshedding in low-recovery areas, due to which even bill-paying customers may suffer hours of no electricity for no fault of their own. The same is true for those in KP who are dutifully paying their bills but still suffering because Pesco is unable to recover the money others owe.

However, while Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's gung-ho response to his province's electricity crisis may endear him to his party's supporters, he seems to be taking a counterproductive approach to an issue that needs to be resolved responsibly.

Instead of emboldening protesters who keep breaking into electricity grid stations, Mr Gandapur should encourage his provincial subjects to clear their due bills and use his authority to ensure that theft is minimised. This seems to be the surest way of ensuring that honest citizens do not continue to suffer.

To be fair, the KP government does seem to realise where the problem lies: just last month, it amicably concluded discussions with the federal government on the same matter. However, the onset of summer has brought with it immense public pressure for a quick resolution to the loadshedding issue, which is a tall order given the complexities of the economics of electricity supply.

Mr Gandapur has suggested on multiple occasions that the dues owed to KP by the centre should be used to offset the province's electricity liabilities, but while he is justified in seeking his province's fair share, it appears unlikely that it will materialise given the centre's severe resource constraints.

Both Peshawar and Islamabad must, therefore, find a way out of the mess. Till then, however, protesters must not be allowed to interfere with the electricity grid. It seems dangerous and irresponsible and should not be condoned by the KP government.

### Faisal Bari

If memory serves me right, the following is from one of Mushtaq Yousufi's books, possibly Zargazish. He says that every time he went to his boss, who was a Scotsman, to ask for a raise, his boss would say, as soon as Yousufi entered the room, "Yousufi, it is good you are here, we have to fire some people". Ten minutes later, Yousufi would leave the office very grateful that he was not one of those who was fired.

When the government first announced that it was cutting the budget for higher education, and later, with great magnanimity, announced it would restore it to last year's level, it reminded me of this story. And the government also expects us to be thankful.

The number of universities keeps going up as provincial and federal governments bestow new charters and upgrade colleges. But the Higher Education

Commission's funds have not been increased for several years. This despite the inflation. It is not surprising that many universities, even the more established, older ones, are under grave financial stress.

This year, too, while the HEC budget did not go up, salaries went up by 20 per cent and inflation has been around 15pc. Public-sector universities, which the agency funds, will continue to hurt and the hurt will keep getting deeper. Some might face default on salary or pension payments as well.

But this year's budget has more bad news for the higher education sector. Teachers and researchers had a 25pc income tax rebate (it was 50pc for the first few years) that had been given a couple of decades back. This has been taken away in this budget. This implies even if universities give a 15pc raise this year, with the removal of the rebate and with the income tax slab adjustments that have been imposed on salaried

teachers/researchers, the latter will have less take-home than they did last year. And these are times of high inflation!

We have a shortage of teachers in Pakistan. At the higher education level, it has been hard to find or hold on to faculty. Our application pools have dwindled. Those with PhD degrees do not want to come back to Pakistan, and many of those who are here want to leave. Many have left, and many others continue to look for opportunities abroad.

Hitting the salaries of teachers and researchers in this manner and in these times clearly shows that the government does not attach much priority to education despite all the rhetoric about an education emergency. It is not as if this measure is going to give the government any sizeable amount of revenue. But it will have a big impact on individuals who have been hit and on universities and their budgets.

Another taxation proposal is also set to

strike not-for-profit universities. Currently, the tax commissioner is empowered to issue exemption certificates in cases where a person's income is exempt from tax as is the case with not-for-profit universities. These universities rely on this certificate to ensure that no tax is withheld on their behalf by withholding agents.

The Finance Bill 2024 proposes to withdraw the commissioner's power to issue exemption at 100pc and allows him/her to only issue exemptions at a lower rate. This will hurt in two ways. For not-for-profit universities this means that tax will be held in their name but they will not be able to adjust this tax as they will not have any tax liability to offset against at the end of the year. And getting refunds from the FBR is not easy and everyone knows that it will not happen. So, the working capital needs of universities will be hurt and a liability will be created against the FBR for no reason. This change will

also create opportunities for nepotism, favouritism and rishwat where commissioners will be lobbied to issue exemption certificates at a higher percentage rate. It is a harsh proposal that will not give the government any revenue and will not raise tax income but will open the door for lobbying for refunds as well — again, leading to more graft and nepotism.

If all of this were not enough, the government, in its belief that the Pakistani people read too much and should be doing other things, has raised the general sales tax on books. Books have become a lot more expensive over the last two to three years due to a) an increase in the price of paper and b) devaluation. As it is, the local book business is not a huge one and the recent price hikes have hit it badly.

The rise in GST will hurt even more. Imported books have become expensive and retailers have been seeing the impact. Raising GST on books will make it even more difficult to sell books. Educationists

were already very concerned about the lack of a reading culture vis-à-vis our youth. On the one hand and as part of the education emergency, the government has been introducing 'reading' hours in schools to improve foundational learning, and on the other, GST on books has been raised.

More taxes are needed. But it cannot be a policy that we just impose taxes blindly wherever we see an opportunity to be able to extract or extort taxes. We have to realise that taxes have consequences. We are doing poorly in education already. We have become cutting funding for higher education and funding for school education is barely keeping up with inflation. Parents are hurting due to rising tuition fee and other costs.

To hit the education sector through the various tax measures mentioned seems very unfair. One hopes that the Senate and House debate on the budget will take these issues into consideration. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Higher education up the creek

## Pakistan's Hobbesian nightmare

### Shahid Mehmood

Human history is replete with governance innovations. Some of these have changed the course of history. But perhaps none was as cataclysmic and transformational as the founding of the 'nation state'. There were two primary sources of the rise of the nation state: power struggle between the Italian city states and the Church, and the intellectual contribution of the 'scholastic' school of thought, both aimed at freeing the affairs of men from the centuries-old ecclesiastical moorings regarding thought and life.

But if the affairs of men were to be governed by practical considerations, what ought to be the justification of having a set-up (government) that is a substitute for one based on divine law? Scholars and philosophers of the later mediaeval period remained seized with this question for some time. Of the earliest attempts to furnish an answer, two came from Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679).

The Florentine diplomat and political adviser, Machiavelli, was crystal clear on the raison d'être of the existence of a government (or sovereign). In his celebrated book, *The Prince*, he stated: "He ought accordingly to encourage his subjects by enabling them to pursue their callings, whether mercantile, agricultural, or any other, in security so that this man shall not be deterred from beautifying his possessions from the apprehension that they may be taken from him, or that other refrain from opening a trade through fear of taxes; and he should provide rewards for those who desire so to employ themselves, and for all who are disposed in any way to add to the greatness of his City or State."

(Three centuries later, the same was to be restated by the celebrated Adam Smith, albeit in slightly different words). Hobbes' advocacy of a state was born more out of his fears. Like Machiavelli, he acknowledged that people have an innate desire to better their lot through the acquisition of riches. Various groups of people have a

tendency to establish a social equilibrium among themselves, which keeps the wheels of development and commerce well-oiled. Hobbes, though, foresaw that a particular group may have an incentive to break that equilibrium in order to establish its hegemony or to impose its will. To keep that fine balance between different groups intact, he advocated giving the state the monopoly on violence.

Otherwise, as he wrote, life would be "nasty, brutish and short". You do not need to be an Einstein to grasp the role of the state in light of what Machiavelli and Hobbes eschewed. Let us then start with the most fundamental aspect: how safe are we as citizens?

Just before Eidul Fitr and recently, Islamabad, the federal capital, witnessed record crime, which is but a small reflection of what is happening around the country. Its entire police force and more than 2,000 'safe city' cameras could do nothing to stop it.

The plight of Pakistan's main commercial hub, Karachi, is well-known: killings occur

daily during muggings and petty theft has been the norm for decades. The same is the case for all other urban centres.

What of "the apprehension that they may be taken from him"? There is little or no enforcement of property or intellectual rights in Pakistan. Properties are forcefully occupied or taken, and people are picked up by the 'deep state' at will.

What of the "refrain from opening a trade through fear of taxes"? The state's oppressive, extractive taxation system ensures that a huge informal economy prevails and citizens are put under an increasing burden of taxes to finance an unproductive leviathan that guzzles money to preserve its colonial ways (read PIDE-PRIME Tax Reform Commission report).

Lastly, what of the "rewards for those who desire so to employ themselves, and for all who are disposed in any way to add to the greatness of his City or State"? How about Dr Abdus Salam, who put Pakistan on the map of Nobel Prize winners? How did the Pakistani state and its people re-

ward him? Short of hanging him in public, we did (and still are) doing everything to tarnish his legacy and achievements!

This may sound trite, but the profound repercussions of an unsafe, risky Pakistan are hardly understood. Theft, robberies and pilferage, be it by governments or individuals, constitute a transfer of hard-earned wealth. If it is easy to whisk away years of hard-earned wealth (vehicles, smartphones, etc) in a day from its rightful owners, what is the incentive to work hard?

Given such an environment, why do we bemoan 'Dubai Leaks'? Would you like to keep your wealth here? Sure, those who earn wealth in a dubious manner do send it to safer havens, but crying hoarse over corruption cannot take away from the fact that citizens have little to no confidence in a state's ability to safeguard their legitimately earned wealth, which results in its flow to other places.

Even better, ask yourself why Pakistan's best brains have been fleeing the country for de-

acades now. Gloating needlessly about \$30 billion-plus in 'remittances' does not account for the aggregate loss to our economy due to our diaspora's contributions elsewhere.

Pakistan is a Hobbesian nightmare since what Hobbes feared the most (life being "nasty, brutish and short") is at play in Pakistan. And the government that he envisioned, which was supposed to act as a bulwark against this possibility, is nowhere to be found.

Let everyone be very clear: Pakistan's state has a legitimacy problem. Its citizens have lost trust in the ability of the state to provide them with an environment where they can pursue their well-being without any fear. No amount of foreign tours for begging dollars, SIFCs, outlandish financial returns, etc, can convince foreigners when a state's own citizens are so disenchanted and disillusioned. And neither can gimmicks such as sasti roti, public sector freebies, SNC, mega infrastructure projects or government-sponsored cash handouts bring back that confidence.

## Unity in diversity

### Amin Valliani

Collectively, we are all humans, yet we are divided in various segments. We are created by Almighty Allah from a single soul (4:1) but mutually we are different in many ways and can be identified according to many criteria.

In a family, siblings from the same parents have various physical traits distinguishing them, such as a different height, eye colour, facial structure, blood group, etc. There are also differences in their personalities, hobbies, habits and beliefs.

People have sought answers to the enigma of what makes one person open and honest, and another closed-minded. Science explains that every person has unique genetics; these together with their environment, upbringing, education and other factors impact a person's personality. The Holy Quran says about diversity: "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colours."

Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge" (30:22). Upon reflection, we find that the world is a wonderful blend of unity and diversity. Natural bodies like the earth, plants, insects and animals, etc are unique in creation, serving their own purpose; they are a part of diversity and yet don't lose their unique identity. This is the beauty of the world that things are unique and different in their shapes and texture.

Unity in diversity makes our world and relations more meaningful. Understanding helps achieve harmony among dissimilar individuals or groups. However, the lack of understanding always leads to conflict, disharmony, intolerance and dis-

unity. We are facing challenges in understanding diversity, especially at the national level. During the last few decades, it has been observed that the worship places of minority groups have been disrespected, they have faced violence, and overall harmony is on the decline with the rise of intolerance. There are some areas where mediaeval mindsets prevail, and human life and dignity are worth little.

In order to counter these challenges, understanding about diversity needs to be cultivated in these areas. We learn about many societies where people belonging to different faiths once lived together peacefully, yet these societies have become victims of extremism and intolerance. This has driven a wedge between various segments of society.

In order to make this world livable and peaceful, it is necessary to understand the reality that no two persons are identical, no two persons have the same level of understanding. Everybody needs to show tolerance while maintaining differences so that our society becomes more peaceful.

Similarly, at the mental level each one of us has different ways of thinking and we have a right to form opinions while others should respect them. This is essential for smooth working in society. No society can achieve peace unless it accepts and embraces the diversity of views and opinions and welcomes differences of opinion. However, no one should be allowed to force his views on others.

The Holy Quran says that all humans are one community. Thus, Islam accepts unity along with the concept of diversity. Humanity is like a tree with innumerable leaves, all different in shape, but raised from one base. Similarly, the Muslim world consists of people with vast differences in culture, language and other demographic characteristics, but we have one base.

In Islamic history, we have the excellent example of the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) who always welcomed his companions' views about different matters. He used to consult his companions before going to war and respected their fi-ghting skills. We are part of Divine creation; a multitude of colours—rs, languages and cultures, yet bound together by our hu—m—nity. We are gifted with Divine attributes; in other words, there is a Divine thread running across humanity, connecting each individual with the Creator. Every-one born in this world is human first, then takes on his family's identity as a Muslim, Christian or a believer of any other faith. In some cases, the family's faith takes precedence in a way that renders the person oblivious to his/her prime responsibilities as a human towards fellow beings.

The Holy Quran says: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (49:13). It implies that every individual is born from a single soul. He is different from others though part of the whole, carrying a lot of potential. Every individual must make an effort to become a good human being and realise what nature has hidden in his or her personality. After all, humans have the potential to become the 'crown of creation'. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Almost five months since one of the most manipulated general elections in our checkered history, there is an ominous quiet before yet another impending storm. What form it takes is unknown, but it is clear that the current hybrid regime is devoid of legitimacy and has neither the will nor the capacity to resolve Pakistan's many structural crises.

The PTI is convinced that it is the answer to Pakistan's problems, and can viably claim to being the party with the most popular support across what is an extremely divided polity. But for all of the repression that the PTI has experienced over the past two years, there is little evidence that it would be able to lead a process of structural change to overhaul Pakistan's militarised political economy and state ideology and resolve deeply rooted class, gender and ethnic-national contradictions.

Those political forces that I believe do offer at least the ideological depth and political commitment to challenge the establishment-centric order are not sufficiently strong to do so. In this category are some ethnic-nationalist forces — particularly youth-led movements — as well as the political left.

So we are faced with a medium-term prognosis of deepening structural crises while mainstream parties slug it out in a zero-sum game for governmental power. There is also the resurgence of religious militancy of varying kinds across different geographies of the country.

In significant swathes of the Pak-Afghan borderlands, the re-

## Tick tock

ligious right has re-established what is virtually a parallel governing system while the state abdicates its writ. We have been here before and the story does not end well. The so-called Pakistani Taliban and other more mainstreamed Deobandi organisations have deep wells of support in the highest echelons of power and this is reflected as much in the resurgence of militancy as the regular bouts of state repression visited upon peaceful movements like the PTM and the Baloch long march.

In the core areas of the country, relatively newer and distinct religious-political organisations are also gaining steady ground. The TLP stands out amongst all of them, and has recently been at the forefront of organised lynching campaigns against Punjabi Christians as well as Ahmadis. Such groups not only do the politics of hate, they also undertake welfare and other societal activities that deepens their social base in the absence of state-led welfare and recreational schemes.

It is worth bearing in mind that most of these organisations boast an extremely youthful rank and file, and they will continue to grow so long as the underlying socio-economic decay is not arrested. The way in which the current regime treated farmers amidst the wheat import scandal, unrelenting inflation and unemployment, as well as the disdain for workers' rights and unionisation tell us that the potential pool of support for militant organisations will only grow.

Meanwhile, even higher up the class ladder, relatively educated segments continue to be fed a stylised set of facts in the name of the 'two-nation theory' that inhibit

critical thinking and innovation, while rewarding those who want to become cogs in the state's bureaucratic machine.

It is also well-documented that a huge number of young people are trying to get out of the country by hook or by crook, and this is not limited to those who are dirt poor. In other words, the classic brain drain is also continuing to play out, with no sign of reversal.

All told, the situation is dire, and likely to get worse. I do not mean to spread doom and gloom but it is essential that existing realities are acknowledged so that we stop going around in circles. Interrupting the worsening cycle requires those who have recently experienced repression — here I am referring particularly to the PTI — to look beyond messiahs.

For ethnic-nationalists and the left, who are the only forces immediately committed to taking on the challenge of building a popular politics for social transformation, there must be a willingness to find allies within the mainstream that can be coaxed into deepening their political positions.

None of this will happen through wishful thinking. It requires conscious recognition of the situation we face and viable strategies to redress it. The clock is ticking and the urgency of our myriad predicaments is increasing, and here I have not even considered the growing likelihood of climate breakdown events. It is under this backdrop that hateful ideologies and molecular violence are deepening across the social formation.

Appealing to the good sense of the powerful does us no good. The oppressed must come together to take things into their own hands. -- Courtesy Dawn





ISLAMABAD: A delegation of leading exporters of Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Lawmakers urge govt to provide more relief to agriculture, IT sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Friday urged the government to focus on people-oriented policies and provide more relief to the agriculture and Information Technology sectors.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) leader Muhammad Farooq Sattar, while participating in the budget debate, termed the budget for 2024-25 as traditional, reflecting a continuity of policies from the past 77 years.

"The country's current debt servicing issues, noting that most budget allocations are used for this purpose," he highlighted.

He said, "It is the government's responsibility to prepare the budget with the public's issues in

mind." He said, "Unfortunately, every budget seems to favor the wealthy." Sattar urged the government to focus on the agriculture sector and criticized the imposition of more taxes on salaried individuals.

He called for relief measures for the poor in the budget and asked the government to revise the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award.

He stressed the need to resolve Karachi's water issues and to allocate more funds to improve the city's drain system.

He also advocated for more incentives to attract Foreign Direct Investment and for policies that encourage a growth-oriented economy.

Sunni Ittehad Council's Rana Atif thanked his party for giving him the opportunity to contest the elections and promote the party's vision.

He highlighted the issues of his constituency and asked the government to solve these issues of every district without discrimination.

He called for the government to address the issue of IPP capacity payments and to take steps to further enhance the country's import.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Asia Naz Tanoli said that in 2018, the government solved the issue of load-shedding and that during the PML-N tenure, more funds were allocated for development projects.

## Weekly inflation up by 0.94 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.94 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 20, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 316.88 points as compared to 313.93 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review

witnessed an increase of 23.78 per cent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, increased by 1.58 per cent and went up to 309.10 points from the last week's 304.28 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 1.44 percent, 1.20 percent, 1.11 and 0.69 percent respectively.

## PSX gains 8.96 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday gained 8.96 points, a positive change of 0.01 percent, closing at 78,810.49 points against 78,801.53 points the previous trading day.

A total of 471,344,897 shares valuing Rs.20.475 billion were traded during the day as compared to 452,637,253 shares valuing Rs. 20.675 billion the last day.

Some 436 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 137 of them recorded gains and 237 sustained losses,

whereas the share prices of 62 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 43,051,185 shares at Rs.1.27 per share, Hum Network with 41,927,277 shares with 11.13 per share and Pervez Ahmed Co with 37,352,634 shares at Rs.1.84 per share.

Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.75.60 per share price, closing at Rs.1,026.91, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile Mills Limited with a Rs.40.83 rise in its per share price to Rs.582.49.

## Economic growth directly linked with fast sustainable upsurge in exports: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said the country's economic growth was directly linked with the fast sustainable growth of exports. He was talking to a delegation of exporters, which called on him here at the PM House.

The prime minister said the exporters being the back bone of national economy, were extremely important for the government as they were playing a key role in the country's development. The country's economy would

attain sustainable growth when the export sector showed fast growth, he added. PM Shehbaz said the government was providing all possible facilities to promote the non-traditional exports. He expressed the government's resolve to take all the decisions in the larger interest of the people and the country. The government, he said, was taking measures to boost the export to GDP ratio. The payment of sales tax refund to the traders and industrialists was also being ensured timely, he added. The prime minister

warned the relevant authorities that no laxity would be tolerated in that regard.

He directed the federal ministers to make consultation with the delegation to ensure resolution of all their issues.

The exporters expressed gratitude to the prime minister and the government for announcing a historic cut in the electricity prices for the industrial sector, terming it a breath of fresh air.

They also expressed their full confidence in the government's economic policies and assured their

all-out cooperation. They said they would fully support the government in taking action against tax evaders and those adversely affecting the revenue for national exchequer.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Power Minister Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Salman Ahmed and relevant high officials attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: The delegation of All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealers Association (APFDA) calls on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain

## Shaza appreciates Google for creating local assembly of Chromebooks in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday appreciated Google for Education for creating local assembly of Chromebooks in Pakistan, saying that provision of digital tools to both teachers and students will help in reducing education divide in the country.

During a meeting with high-level delegation of Google matters related to effective use of technology in the field of education, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital economy were discussed, said a news re-

lease. The Google delegation comprised Andrew Ure, Head of Trade and Economic Affairs, Asia-Pacific for Google.

Kyle Gardener, Government Affairs and Public Policy Lead, South Asia, and Farhan Qureshi, Google's Country Head for Pakistan.

The delegation briefed the Minister of State for IT about Google literacy programs.

Shaza Fatima said that equipping the youth with digital skills for their capacity building is the need of the hour. Both teachers and

students must be trained in using digital tools, she said, adding that better employment opportunities can be acquired through digital literacy.

She said smart schools are vital for remote learning. Ministry of IT and Telecommunication will fully cooperate and support Google in the implementation of its initiatives, she added.

Additional Secretary, MOITT Aisha Humera Moriani, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam and Member Telecom Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim were also present in the meeting.

## Investment of approx. \$50m Engro fertilizers completes largest-ever En Ven plant turnaround

ISLAMABAD (APP): Engro Fertilizers has invested approximately USD 50 million in a plant turnaround to enhance its reliability and operational efficiency and the company successfully completed the largest-ever scheduled maintenance activity for the EnVen Plant, spanning 55 days, as planned on June 18, 2024. Established in 2011 with an investment of USD 1.1 billion, the EnVen Plant has an annual production capacity of 1.3 million tons and is the most energy efficient fertilizer plant in Pakistan, with the lowest consumption of gas per ton of urea, said a news release.

The project scope of the turnaround included over 5,000 technical activities, including the first-ever replacement of the waste heat boiler, overhaul of the furnace convection section, ammonia storage tank inspection and a comprehensive overhaul of six major turbo trains and gas turbines.

At peak, more than 6,000 people were engaged round-the-clock at the Plant site for these turnaround activities.



KARACHI: A vendor is preparing Falsa juice for customers at his roadside setup, in the Provincial Capital.

## CCP approves acquisition of Luxembourg firm with presence in Pak solar market

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the 100% acquisition of M/s. Actis Holdings S.a.r.l (Actis Holdings), a Luxembourg-based company having a presence in Pakistan's solar power market, by M/s. General Atlantic Partners, L.P. (GA), a US-based firm.

Actis Holdings is a sustainable infrastructure investor with a diverse portfolio in energy infrastructure, long-life infrastructure, digital infrastructure, real estate, and private equity sectors. Funds managed by Actis hold a majority interest in Solis, which is a majority shareholder in Yellow Door. Yellow Door is actively engaged in the solar electricity business in

According to Ali Rathore - CEO of Engro Fertilizers, "The safe and successful completion of this major turnaround, despite extreme weather conditions, showcases the engineering excellence of the Engro Fertilizers team in executing large-scale projects within planned schedules and budgets, while prioritizing the safety of everyone involved in the activity. These critical projects were executed in-house by our talented engineers using innovative techniques and global best practices of safety and quality."

He added that, "The meticulous planning and execution ensured that the availability of urea to our hardworking farmers was not impacted, demonstrating the entire Engro Fertilizers team's firm commitment to our purpose of enabling the food security of Pakistan. We would like to thank our employees, contractors, global technical partners, local administration, and all other key stakeholders for their seamless support and guidance that contributed to the success of this major turnaround."

## Gold rates up by Rs.1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was sold at Rs.242,900 on Friday against its sale at Rs. 241,300 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,372 to Rs.208,248 from Rs. 206,876 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.190,894 from Rs. 189,636.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with Google delegation.

## SNGPL disconnects four more connections

MULTAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) disconnected four more connections over different charges here on Friday.

The Sui Gas Task Force continued its daily operations, disconnecting four more meters and removing five extensions.

Four consumers had illegally transferred their meters from the service to their homes, causing leakage losses to the department. After thorough inspection, the task force disconnected all four connections. Additionally, a meter of a non-billing consumer was also disconnected and sent to the laboratory for further departmental action. Five consumers who were illegally supplying gas to more than one house had their extensions removed.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Maersk Chicago, Navios Constellation, OM Shanghai and Khaipur carrying Container, Chemicals and Gasoline, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, High Loyalty and Canopus with Edible oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. Seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Simaisma and Navios Constellation left the port on today morning while four more ships.

## FPCCI holds FBR's top anomalies committee meeting: Atif Ikram

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI and Dr. Gohar Ejaz, former federal commerce minister - who are jointly chairing FBR's Anomaly Committee 2024 from the business side - called a high-profile meeting of all chambers, trade bodies and associations at FPCCI; and, discussed the glaring anomalies in the Finance Bill and federal budget 2024 - 25 in detail on a sector-to-sector basis.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, will be presenting the dossier of anomalies from the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan to the federal minister for finance and revenue to be reviewed by federal government's economic team and the prime minister to remove or resolve anomalies from the federal budget 2024 - 25.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh explained that, being the apex body, FPCCI will provide the government with the collective, aggregated, comprehensive and descriptive list of anomalies that are creating confusion, discontent and apprehensions. We deserve a friendly budget for the businesses, industry, exporters and the economy as a whole, he added. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh maintained that one of the primary measures in the budget that need to be reviewed immediately.

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## IESCO examines 1,310,874 meters across all six operational circles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) in the light of government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division directives has checked 1,310,874 meters since September 7, 2023 during anti-power theft campaign in all its six operational circles.

Sharing details, Chief Executive Officer of IESCO, Dr Muhammad Amjad said that fines amounting to Rs 627.75 million have also been imposed on the power pilferers. Some 1,872 FIRs have also been registered against

the electricity thieves while 1450 individuals have been arrested so far.

Dr Amjad said that a sum of Rs 3,338.66 billion has also been recovered from 130,019 running and dead defaulters during the campaign.

He said crackdown against electricity theft and the recovery of dues would continue across all operational circles, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantonment, Attock, Chakwal, and Jhelum, with the cooperation of the FIA, police, and other law enforcement agencies.

## Fertilizer dealers meet with Minister for Industries

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealers Association (APFDA) delegation, led by Chairman Ghulam Ahmed on Friday met with Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain to discuss specific issues of the fertilizer industry.

The minister said that government was committed to support the fertilizer industry for the betterment of farmers.

He pointed out that expanding the tax base to generate revenue was also a priority of the government.

## Rupee gains 09 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Friday gained 09 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.51 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.60.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.8 and Rs 280.7 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.21 to close at Rs 297.56 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.77, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

## SBP injects over Rs2.6trln into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Friday, injected Rs2,601.55 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on June 21, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted all the 31 received bids amounting to Rs2,471,550 million.

The central bank received 20 quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs1,984.7 billion offered at the rate of return ranging between 20.56 to 20.63

percent. For the 28-day tenor an amount of Rs486.85 billion was offered through 11 quotes at the rate of return ranging between 20.55% to 20.59%.

The SBP accepted all the 20 bids for 7-day tenor at 20.56% and 11 bids for 28-tenor at 20.55% annual rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also injected Rs130 billion in the market through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors.

The SBP received one quote amounting to Rs130 billion (face value of collateral) at 20.58% rate of return while no bid was received for 28-day tenor.

## Minister for providing egg-laying hens to farmers at subsidised rates

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Dairy Development Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Friday directed the Rawalpindi Poultry Research Institute (RPRI) to resume its programme of providing egg-laying hens to farmers at subsidised rates.

During his visit to the institute, the minister said, "We are committed to supporting our farmers and promoting the poultry industry in the province. Resuming this programme will help reduce the cost of production for farmers and increase egg production, making eggs more affordable for

consumers."

The minister emphasised the need to increase the growth of egg-laying hens to meet the demand of eggs in the province.

He directed the RPRI to take steps to increase the growth of egg-laying hens, including improving breeding and nutrition programmes.

Agriculture and Livestock Minister Ashiq Hussain Karmani said that last year 91 thousand sets of chickens were distributed among the farmers by the institute and the number should be increased this year.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in packing mangoes in wooden boxes at fruits market.





ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends a session of National Assembly.

## Common Balochistan should benefit from CPEC projects: Federation has assured to remove apprehensions of Balochistan regarding federal PSDP

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the province's apprehensions regarding federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) have been taken up with the concerned forum through Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. On this, the federation has assured to remove the apprehensions regarding federal PSDP.

He said that the important projects of Balochistan have been included in the federal PSDP

due to the attention of Chairman PPP.

The Chief Minister was speaking on occasion of the luncheon he hosted in honour of the members of provincial assembly belonging to the coalition government and ally parties here ahead of the budget session on Friday.

The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail also participated in the luncheon.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that the next provincial budget would be compatible with the public requirements.

He said that the education and health are priorities in the budget. He said that the public resources would be spent on their welfare. He also said that we are determined to put the province on path of development and raise living standard of the people.

Referring the Gwadar port, the Chief Minister said that he has requested to the President Asif Ali Zardari for functionality of the Gwadar port.

He said that the people of province should get benefit of the projects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

## Ahsan Iqbal highlights Pak-China partnership as beacon of stability amidst global uncertainties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Friday highlighted the importance of Pakistan-China cooperation under CPEC amidst global uncertainties.

Addressing the China-Pakistan Political Parties Forum and the Third Meeting of CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism, the minister, "China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) serves as a beacon of stability, regional integration, and economic interdependence."

The event, attended by high-ranking officials and dignitaries, including Minister for International Department Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Liu Jianchao and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Honorable Mohammad Ishaq Dar, underscored the enduring strength of the Pakistan-China relationship and the pivotal role of CPEC.

Ahsan Iqbal said, the

development of Gwadar Port, a crucial component of CPEC, was noted for its strategic significance, providing China direct access to the Arabian Sea and promising economic revitalization for Pakistan, the minister added.

He said, CPEC was envisioned as part of a broader vision for regional prosperity, fostering economic cooperation with neighboring countries. Phase-II of CPEC aims to enhance Pakistan's manufacturing capacity through industrial cooperation, attracting Chinese investment, and relocating industrial units to Special Economic Zones.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed profound gratitude to the Chinese leadership for their steadfast support in fostering bilateral cooperation and advancing the CPEC initiative and emphasized the unique nature of the meeting, which demonstrated national consensus on Pakistan-China relations and CPEC, transcending domestic political divisions.

He appreciated the

Chinese leadership for hosting the Prime Minister of Pakistan during his recent visit, resulting in a strong consensus on bilateral matters, with both sides agreeing to enhance the strategic partnership and economic cooperation.

The 13th session of CPEC's Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) was successfully held on May 24 wherein Pakistan and China agreed to upgrade CPEC by introducing five new corridors: Growth Corridor, Livelihood Enhancing Corridor, Innovation Corridor, Green Corridor, and Opening Up/Regional Connectivity Corridor.

These new corridors align with Pakistan's 5E framework, prioritizing export-led growth, digital development (e-Pakistan), environmental sustainability, energy and infrastructure development, and equity and empowerment.

Both sides agreed to expedite initiatives for modernizing Pakistan's agricultural sector with advanced technologies.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon.

## Ambassador Munir exposes anti-Pakistan propaganda at UN

NEW YORK (INP): Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram highlighted that several countries including Pakistan have been a victim of disinformation and cyber warfare.

Akram made these comments while speaking to the Security Council's High-Level Open Debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing Evolving Threats in Cyberspace".

The ambassador reiterated Pakistan's stance, emphasizing on the necessity of a legally binding global document formed on the guidelines provided by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

While explaining, Akram referred to the 2019 and 2020 reports by EU DisinfoLab, which exposed

anti-Pakistan propaganda including disinformation activities, and cyber warfare. He said: "The 2019 report provided proof of 15 years of massive disinformation operations against Pakistan, involving more than 10 so-called NGOs fraudulently accredited to the UN Human Rights Council, over 750 fake media outlets, and 550 fake websites, even resurrecting dead people."

The Pakistan envoy stressed that the EU DisinfoLab's exposé on disinformation campaigns requires global attention.

Furthermore, Ambassador Akram discussed the Pakistan sponsored UN General Assembly resolution, titled "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."

## Pakistan has special place in China's foreign policy, says senior Chinese minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): China's Minister of Central Committee of the International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao on Friday said as its "iron brother and time-tested friend", China accorded a special place to Pakistan in its foreign policy and desired to strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

The senior Chinese leader expressed these views in a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, held here in Islamabad.

Liu expressed satisfaction at the steady pace of China Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC) and said China would extend full cooperation to Pakistan for the timely implementation of all ongoing and new CPEC projects.

He also lauded the political parties of Pakistan for their steadfast support to CPEC and China-Pakistan friendship.

He reiterated China's keen desire to further enhance linkages between the Communist Party of China and the political parties of Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar appreciated the positive contribution of CPEC to Pakistan's socio-economic development, and progress and prosperity.

## Women participation in trade, commerce activities must for sustainable national development, says Governor

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that we can freshen the memory of Hazrat Khadijatul Kubra (RA) by ensuring participation and involvement of women in the commerce and trade activities for the sustainable national development and prosperity.

He said that there's no dearth of talent and capabilities in women of the province. But the poverty and lack of opportunities are causing hurdles in their way.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation

who called on him under leadership of the president of a welfare organization, Zainul Abidin here on Friday.

The head of women chamber of commerce, Ms Mehwish Janjua and CEO of Angan, Ms. Nazia were also present on the occasion.

The Governor maintained that the women and men have equal opportunities in the socio-economic development according to the conscious of modern era in the ever changing world.

They are also equal partners in all affairs of the life, Governor added.

## Canadian HC meets Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon met Interior Minister and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi on Friday.

On her arrival at the Ministry of Interior, Mohsin Naqvi warmly welcomed the Canadian High Commissioner.

During the meeting, they discussed issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations of two countries while both sides also discussed issues of border security, immigration, illegal human trafficking and drug trafficking.

Mohsin Naqvi said Pakistan is making every possible effort to secure its border and making all out efforts to stop illegal movement and human trafficking.



QUETTA: A delegation of a welfare organization Balochistan led by its President Zainul Abidin Khan Khilji meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

## Senators demand broader economic dialogue, people's centric approach in Finance Bill, 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senators on Friday demanded the government and the opposition to initiate broader economic dialogue and embrace people's centric approach to provide relief to the masses battered by economic crunch and inflation in the Budget 2024-25.

The members of the Upper House of the Parliament were presenting recommendations to the National Assembly on the Finance Bill, 2024.

The session commenced 22 minutes late from the scheduled time with the verses of the Holy Quran's Surah Al-Furqan that detailed the characteristics of the virtuous and the followers of Rehman (The Almighty Allah) who walk politely on the earth and bear the best virtues of starting conversation with Salam (Salutation), seekers of the Almighty's forgiveness from the Hell and are not extravagant nor thrifty

but maintain balance in their spending.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar while initiating the House business allowed Senator Poonjo Bheel to raise a matter of importance.

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Senator Poonjo Bheel urged the House to allocate some time to pay tribute to former prime minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her birthday.

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QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti and Provincial Ministers cutting cake on eve of birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

## Shaheed BB always played important role for promotion of democratic values: Bugti

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti on Friday said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto always played an important role in the promotion of democratic values in the country.

Addressing at cake cutting ceremony at Chief Minister Secretariat on the birth anniversary of Martyr of Democracy Benazir Bhutto, he said that Shaheed BB always kept the public service as the aim of her politics.

She was the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan who strengthened the public service mission of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto with her role, he said. He said that Shaheed BB's role was a beacon for all politicians and women adding that we would keep her mission as our motto of democracy and public service. Provincial Ministers including Sardar Sarfraz Domki, Mir Ali Madad Jatak, Mir Sadiq Umrani and Asfandyar Kakar, General Secretary Party Rozi Khan and leaders were also present on the occasion.

On the occasion CM Sarfraz Bugti and Provincial Ministers paid rich tribute to the Martyr of Democracy Benazir Bhutto, and also prayed for her elevation of rank in Jannah.

## PM vows all-out support for KP's development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said the federal government would provide utmost assistance and resources for the welfare of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## SC issues roster of 13 members full court to hear matter of reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has issued roster of 13-member full court to hear the matter of reserved seats of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

The full court presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case on June 24 and 25.

## Amna meets Deputy CEO Luxembourg Space Agency

BRUSSELS (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union Amna Baloch on Friday met with Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Luxembourg Space Agency Dr. Mathias Link and discussed potential collaborations in space related matters.

## Imran moves SC for early hearing of constitutional petition related to polls rigging

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has requested Supreme Court (SC) to hear constitutional petition related to election rigging early.

Hamid Khan counsel for PTI founder filed the miscellaneous petition in SC Friday.

The petitioner has taken plea that the petition

seeking inquiry into polls rigging on February 8 is pending hearing. The question of public interest and basic rights has been raised in petition against polls rigging.

The petition further said PTI founder had requested to hear the petition against rigging in NAB case.

## Pakistan's Envoy presents credentials to Mexican President

ISLAMABAD (Online): Ambassador of Pakistan to Mexico, Shozab Abbas has presented his credentials to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) at ceremony held in the presidential palace in Mexico City.

During his meeting with President López Obrador, the Ambassador emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral diplomatic, political, economic, and scientific relations between Pakistan and Mexico. He highlighted the potential for enhanced cooperation in various sectors, reaffirming the commitment of both nations to deepen their ties.

He recalled historic cooperation between Mexico and Pakistan during the 1960s Green Revolution, initiated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This period witnessed collaborative efforts between agro-scientists from both countries, leading to the development of the high-yield wheat variety known as Mexi-pak.

## ADB, EAD sign agreement worth \$250m policy-based loan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Economic Affairs Division (EAD) on Friday signed an agreement worth \$250 million policy based loan. According to the ADB official 'X' handle, the agreement aimed at assisting Pakistan drive sustainable investment in infrastructure and services through Public Private Partnership (PPP). ADB Country Director for Pakistan Yong Ye and Secretary EAD Dr Kazim Niaz signed the agreement.

## PPP chairman addressed a crowd in Lyari during a birthday celebration for late Benazir Bhutto

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari announced plans to provide free solar energy to Karachi residents to alleviate load-shedding.

He also expressed hope that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would fulfill promises made to the PPP as budget discussions with the government continue.

highlighting their efforts against two military dictators and their continuous support for the city's residents.

Bilawal reiterated his personal commitment to the city's development, noting his own political journey with the people of Karachi, the city where both he and Benazir Bhutto were born.

He expressed gratitude to the people for electing the PPP to form the Sindh government again and urged Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to focus on addressing Karachi's issues.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti recording his expression for late Nawab Abdul Zahir Kasi on his services.

## Minister Salik visits MCO Madinah, gets briefing on post-Hajj operations

MADINAH AL-MUNAWARAH (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Friday visited the Main Control Office (MCO) of the Pakistan Hajj Mission in Madinah and got briefing on arrangements for the post-Hajj operation.

During the month-long post-Hajj flight operation, approximately 160,000 Pakistani pilgrims will be transported from King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah and Prince Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah to major cities in Pakistan.

Director Zia-ur-Rehman of Madinah MCO briefed the minister on the arrangements made to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims visiting the Prophet's city after performing Hajj at holy sites in Makkah, including Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalifa.

## ANP lauds representation of political parties in CPEC consultative meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): Central President Awami National Party, Aimal Wali Khan here Friday welcomed the participation of political parties in CPEC Consultative meeting and said that political ownership of this mega project would pave a way to resolve exiting crises.

In a message issued from Bacha Khan Markaz here, ANP President termed the representation of political parties in consultative meeting a good omen and welcomed Minister of International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and member of the Communist Party's Central Committee Liu Jianchao in Pa-

kistan. ANP President said we support the five apprehensions of Chinese minister adding that steps should be taken to counter propaganda and foil conspiracies against CPEC and to protect Chinese nationals working on the project. He highlighted the significance of CPEC for country especially for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan and said that the project would further strengthen relations between China and Pakistan.

He also suggested complete implementation of National Action plan to ensure completion of the project and stressed steps to control law and order situation in KP and Baluchistan.