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Chinese Minister arrives Islamabad on three-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao arrived here Thursday on a three-day visit.

He was received at the Islamabad International Airport by Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia & Pacific) Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, a Foreign Office press release said.

Minister Liu Jianchao will call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and hold extensive bilateral talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar.

PM urges political parties to work together for development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged all the political parties to work together for the development and prosperity of the country and public welfare.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan People's Party headed by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari that called on him in Islamabad today. The delegation included Chairman Senate Yusuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Syed Khurshid Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman. Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held discussions national political issues.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said further consultation was held with Pakistan Peoples Party regarding the budget 2024-2025. He said economy is showing positive indicators while stock market has witnessed historic boom.

The Prime Minister said steps have been taken to provide relief to the common man in the budget of the new financial year. He said more consul-

tation will continue through committees.

A dinner was given by the Prime Minister in honour of the Pakistan Peoples Party delegation.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan People's Party headed by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif



GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a meeting on the security and law and order situation of Balochistan.

President for enhanced capacity of LEAs to counter terror in Balochistan

Says prosecution system needed to be improved so that the terrorist elements could not escape justice

Independent Report

GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for enhancing the capacity of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), posting competent officers in Balochistan, and improving the prosecution mechanism to effectively counter terrorist elements in Balochistan.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting on the security/law and order situation in Balochistan, in Gwadar, on Thursday.

Minister for Interior, Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MNA Malik Shah Gorgaji,

Home Minister, Mir Ziaullah Lagov, MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, senior civil and military officials attended the meeting.

The President was briefed about the overall security situation of the province as well as the role of LEAs in successfully countering terrorist attacks in various districts of Balochistan.

It was informed that the provincial government had adopted a targeted approach to improve the security and law-and-order situation in Balochistan. It was further appraised that the initiatives taken by the LEAs had resulted in improving the security situa-

tion in the province. The President was informed that the provincial government was taking steps to provide fool-proof security to Chinese and foreign nationals.

The President appreciated the efforts of the provincial government as well as the sacrifices of the LEAs in combatting terrorism.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the prosecution system needed to be improved so that the terrorist elements could not escape justice. He said that compensation for the families of martyrs of LEAs in Balochistan should be enhanced bringing it at par with the rest of the provinces.



ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation led by Kevin Kells, Managing Director, Google for Education, call upon the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui says Govt aims to transform entire education system of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Thursday said we aim to transform the entire education system of Pakistan. He pointed out the high number of out of school children and the adverse impact it is having on the society. He was talking to a high level delegation led by Kevin Kells, Managing Director, Google for Education, which called on him. The delegation included Farhan Qureshi, Country Director Pakistan Google, Aron Saether Jackson, CEO Allied, Umar Farooq, CEO Tech Valley amongst other senior officials of Google. The meeting was also attended by senior officials of the education ministry led by Secretary Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani.

Dr. Khalid welcomed the diverse Google delegation that comprised of officials from seven different countries including USA,

UK, Australia etc. He said under his leadership, the ministry was working tirelessly to bring this number down. He said that this crisis has been given the highest priority.

He said the delegation can provide expertise and knowledge that can help us chart future plans that can enable us to resolve this issue.

Dr. Khalid urged the delegation to expand their scope of work with special regard to education in Pakistan. He assured the delegation of full support of the Ministry of Education.

The optimum use of technology is the only way to bridge the enormous gap of resources needed. Pakistan is at a critical juncture where every effort needs to be in the right direction, he said.

Dr. Khalid said as all of the tech companies would expand their presence in Pakistan, it will lead to more development, growth and investment which is the need of the hour.

Pakistan, Türkiye agree to further deepen bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephone conversation on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha to exchange Eid greetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye Hakan Fidan.

The two ministers reviewed the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, a Foreign Office press release said.

During the conversation, they expressed satisfaction on the robust strategic partnership between the two countries and agreed to further deepen bilateral cooperation and engagement across multiple domains.

35 Pakistani pilgrims fall a victim to scorching heat during Hajj, say authorities

RIYADH (INP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs has confirmed deaths of 35 Pakistani pilgrims.

According to Hajj Mission DG Abdul Wahab Soomro, nine Pakistanis died in Mashair, four in Mina, three in Arafat and two in Muzdalifah.

The Hajj DG says 20 Pakistani pilgrims lost their lives in Makkah and six in Medina.

The DG said the deaths were caused by intense temperature of 50 degrees Celsius. He said the allega-

tion that the pilgrims were not taken care of was unfounded.

He said the dead bodies were notified by the Saudi government and arrangements of burials were made in accordance with wishes of the families of the deceased. Arrangements of bringing the bodies to Pakistan had also been made, Soomro said.

The Saudi government, he said, had always cooperated with the Pakistan government in such matters.

Benazir Bhutto 71st birth anniversary to be celebrated today



KARACHI (APP): The 71st birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Shaheed will be celebrated on Friday, June 21, 2024.

Pakistan Peoples Party Karachi Division will organize the main ceremony at Chakiwara area of Lyari Town, Sindh Local Government Minister and Divisional President

PPP Karachi Saeed Ghani said while presiding over a meeting held here on Thursday to review the arrangements of the ceremony.

The meeting was attended by Provincial General Secretary PPP Sindh Waqar Mehdi, GS Karachi Division Javed Nagori, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Murad, Presidents and General Secretaries of all districts of Karachi division. Saeed Ghani, speaking at the occasion said that the main ceremony to celebrate 71st birth anniversary of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed was being organized in Lyari on the instructions of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who will deliver speech at the ceremony.

Election tribunals case:

Promulgating presidential ordinance is insult of parliament: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has sent appeals from Election Commission (EC) against Lahore High Court (LHC) decision regarding constitution of election tribunals to judges committee.

Committee will constitute larger bench next week in respect of these appeals.

SC has issued notice to Attorney General (AG) besides seeking details about constitution of tribunals in other provinces from EC.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked the matter be placed before the committee as soon as possible. Promulgating presidential ordinance is insult of the parliament. If ordinance has to be brought then shut the parliament. How can the change be made through presidential ordinance. On one side parlia-

ment has enacted law. How can the ordinance be brought after enactment of law by parliament.

What was reason for bringing ordinance? Was there any emergency. The ordinance came from where after the enactment of law by parliament. This is too interference in election. Election act was desire of parliament.

This ordinance was of whose desire. Either value of parliament is more or value of cabinet. The decision of high court was negated through this ordinance. The constitution is very clear. The powers of constitution of election tribunals rest with EC. Section C of article 219 has made it amply clear. We have taken oath under law and constitution and not on

courts decisions. Whenever SC made constitutional interpretations, complications came into being, the CJP gave these remarks on Thursday.

The CJP directed Suleman Akram Raja not to come in uniform being respondent in the case.

Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan remarked we want to see as to why the problem of constitution of tribunals was not created in other provinces. The proceedings of tribunals is near to completion in Balochistan. When I was chief justice of Balochistan high court I had said in clear terms the powers to constitute tribunals rest with EC.

A two members bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up for hearing appeal plea filed by

EC against constitution of election tribunals.

Sikandar Bashir counsel for EC and Suleman Akram Raja counsel for PTI appeared in the court.

Sikandar Bashir counsel for EC opened the arguments.

He told the court there is matter of interpretation of article 219 © in the case.

The CJP inquired tell us some facts of the case.

The counsel for EC said EC wrote letters to all high courts for constitution of tribunals on February 14.

The constitution of tribunals is mandate of EC. Through the letters the lists of name of judges were sought from all high courts. The panels of judges name were sought from high courts. Lahore High Court gave name of two judges on February 20 Both the

judges were notified for election tribunals. More two judges were notified as election tribunals on April 26.

CJP stopped the counsel for saying the word respectable for high court.

The CJP Qazi Faez Isa remarked you are saying respectable to high courts. This is said for judges.

He inquired English language is of England. Is the word respectable used for parliament there.

He remarked here the parliamentarians don't give respect to each other. They exchange abuses with each other. We want there should be respect. Why EC is not called respectable. Is EC not respectable.

Counsel for EC said no dispute arose to the extent of establishment of 4 election tribunals.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah unveils the plaque to inaugurate the Sindh Smart Surveillance System (S-4) during inauguration ceremony held at Chief Police Office (CPO) in Karachi.

Murad inaugurates S-4 of Karachi Safe City project

KARACHI (INP): Asserting that ensuring peace in Karachi and elsewhere in Sindh was a priority for the provincial government, Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said that 400 latest cameras had been installed at different spots in the province to monitor the security situation on roads.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of S-4 project of Karachi Safe City and Sindh Surveillance System in Karachi, the chief minister said that the latest system had also been installed at 40 toll plazas of the province for security purposes. "The cameras installed at these plazas are also equipped with the facility

of night vision," he informed.

He said that the installation of cameras would help the Sindh government control the activities of outlaws in the province by ensuring monitoring of the entry and exit points. Murad said with the installation of the system two programmes of automatic number-plate recognition and face identification programme will work together to control crime and criminal activities. He said that a smart surveillance system could be helpful in arresting over 80,000 absconding criminals in the province.

Earlier, Sindh home minister and the provincial inspector general of police (IGP) Ghulam Nabi Memon

welcomed Murad on arrival at the IGP office.

He was also given a briefing at the CPO's Command and Control Room.

As many as 1,044 new surveillance cameras have been installed while 256 old ones have been upgraded under the Karachi Safe City Project, which has been finally launched after a delay of eight years. In the first phase, the Red Zone [a term used for mostly south district areas where key government buildings, foreign consulates, Sindh Assembly, CM House, Governor House and other important structures are situated, would be covered. A total 1,300 cameras would be installed in the first phase.

146,584 tons of offal, garbage collected on Eidul Azha: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that during the Eid days, 146,584 tons of offal and garbage were collected through 99 collection points and this operation successfully concluded over five days.

He expressed these views on Thursday while addressing a press conference at the KMC head office. He said that following the budget meeting, municipal staff and sanitary workers will be invited to the City Council, where he and the elected representatives will honor them. He said that despite the extreme heat, sanitary workers performed excellently, cleaning the city of remains of sacrificial animals and garbage. After the cleanup, the next major challenge is the rains, for which all preparations have been completed. Post-rain, focus will shift to development work and completing ongoing projects, he said.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Deputy Parliamentary Leader in the city council Dil Muhammad, Jumman Darwan, Mayor Karachi's Political Affairs Spokesman Karamullah Waqasi, Managing Director Sindh Solid Waste Management Board Syed Imtiaz Shah, various UC chairmen and local leaders, were also present on this occasion.



KARACHI: A view of Full Court Reference on the eve of elevation of Hon'ble Chief Justice Sindh High Court Mr. Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi to the Supreme Court of Pakistan at the Committee Court room No. 1 High Court.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Friday June 21, 2024

Killing of terrorist commander in Afghanistan

Certainly, the killing of a high value target terrorist commander Abdul Manan alias Hakimullah in Afghanistan is a serious blow to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a designated global terrorist group, involved in multiple acts of terrorism including target killings, IED blasts against security forces and other heinous crimes like extortion.

According to the reports, the terrorist Commander Abdul Manan alias Hakimullah was neutralized by unknown men in Chagasarai, District Asadabad, Kunar province of Afghanistan the other day.

Needless to mention is that Abdul Manan also remained involved in facilitating terrorist activities in different areas of the country including Bajaur.

He was an important figure of TTP and member of TTP Shura Malakand, who is reported to be a close associate of TTP's Malakand Chapter Commander Azmat Ullah Mehsood (Azmat Lala).

As per the reports, Abdul Manan remained involved in multiple acts of terror including target killings, IED blasts against Security Forces, extortion and played a key role in facilitating terrorist activities in Bajaur.

The reports coming from across the border suggest that Abdul Manan's killing is result of internal conflicts within different groups operating inside Afghanistan. His presence in Afghanistan further reinforced TTP's use of Afghan soil to perpetrate terrorism in Pakistan.

Pakistan has mentioned time and again that the fugitive commanders and combatants of the TTP are using havens in Afghanistan to launch deadly cross-border attacks against Pakistanis, including security forces.

As a matter of fact, a report released by The Washington-based Center for a New American Security last month had mentioned that the TTP and other regional militant groups "are active and face few constraints on their activities from the Taliban—with whom they share core ideological beliefs."

The study warned that terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan "are intensifying and an Afghan-based Islamic State affiliate, the Islamic State-Khorasan, or IS-K, "constitutes the main international concern."

The given situation although manifests bad governance by the so-called government in Afghanistan but still needs prompt action against the terrorist groups operating inside country and using the soil for the cross-border attacks against Pakistan.

Undoubtedly, it would be a test case for the Taliban regime to take result-oriented action against the terrorists' groups and prove their ability to improve governance in the country.

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

The finance bill or proposed budget for the next fiscal year has refused to commit any resources or even set the national direction for climate resilience.

It has failed to acknowledge that Pakistan is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, and perhaps the least prepared. It has missed, once again, the opportunity to determine the course of action for Pakistan's sustainable economic development. Worse, the proposed budget has not outlined a vision for climate-resilient investments.

The finance bill has not shown any particular appetite for institutional or policy reforms that could help stop the economic bleeding caused by repeated climate-induced disasters or the slow onset that is threatening GDP growth rate and per capita incomes. Ironically, despite heavy losses, Pakistan has not explicitly adopted climate considerations into the budgetary process.

The government has, instead, opted for a simplistic formula for generating

tax and non-tax revenues, particularly by cutting subsidies. Economic development is a secondary target, and climate-resilient development is not even on the horizon. As seen in several other countries, the government can ensure that public finance is aligned with climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

The Planning Commission has still not embedded adaptation and mitigation in PC-1s that are the backbone of annual public sector investments. The finance ministry has not initiated the tracking of climate expenditures, despite attempts over the years by several development partners. The office of the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues has not climate-proofed reporting of federal transactions, nor has the Auditor General upgraded its auditing standards and disclosure rules.

The FBR is not tracking and reporting climate-related tax expenditures, nor has it supported the development of climate-resilient infrastructure by ensuring that tax policies and regulations promote investments in climate-resilient projects and infrastructure. In fact, none of the major govern-

ment players have strengthened climate-smart budgeting by embedding climate considerations into their processes. These lacunae are mirrored in the provincial budgets.

Some of Pakistan's neighbours have begun to climate-proof their annual budgets. Bangladesh is now graduating from least developed country status to become, like Pakistan, a low-middle income country. It stands out for its long journey towards human development and climate resilience. As part of broader efforts to mainstream climate finance across its public financial management systems, Bangladesh set up the Climate Change Trust Fund in 2010 with a governmental equity of \$350 million. Designed to help communities recover from climate disasters by supporting the construction of houses in cyclone-affected areas, the CCTF has supported the construction of embankments and provision of solar home systems.

While our finance bill has announced the government's intent to set up a similar fund, following the Climate Change Act of 2017, the finance minister

has clouded its future by not committing any equity from the government, without which it will remain a fictional fund.

Another example is the Climate Fiscal Framework that Bangladesh has implemented since 2014. Revised in 2022, the CFF emphasises institutional co-ordination between the planning, finance and other divisions to ensure effective implementation of climate fiscal policies and programmes. The CFF is designed to ensure that their vulnerabilities are integrated into national development and resource mobilisation strategies. It made way in 2018 for a budget-tagging system that tracks and reports on all climate-related expenditures, enabling them to identify, classify, and mark climate-relevant allocations in the budget system. There is a lesson for Pakistan: such tracking systems not only help improve policymaking to address climate vulnerabilities, but also add to transparency and accountability in its budgeting.

A climate-smart budget would typically rest on five anchors: i) an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change on different sec-

tors and regions, ii) a mechanism to track and report on related expenditures, iii) an alignment with national policies and targets, such as the Nationally Determined Contributions, iv) prioritising resource allocation for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building, and v) accessing domestic and international climate finance to fill the resource gaps.

In other words, rather than treating it as a stand-alone issue, Pakistan needs to integrate its climate considerations into the overall budget-planning processes. Governments across the world are routinely focusing on domestic financing through national budget reallocations, the establishment of national/subnational climate funds, and partnerships with the local private sector, civil society, and local authorities. No such intent is outlined in the proposed budget. Likewise, the budget bill has not committed to systematically pursuing innovative green finance mechanisms, such as green bonds, green loans, and green guarantees to mobilise climate finances.

True, Pakistan's fiscal space is narrow, yet we still

follow traditional debt relief involving rescheduling, forgiving, or reducing a portion of a country's debt, often through bilateral or multilateral agreements. This approach focuses on reducing debt burdens without necessarily addressing environmental and climate concerns. Debt-for-climate swaps, on the other hand, involve converting debt into funds dedicated to environmental conservation and climate mitigation. This approach addresses both debt distress and climate change by redirecting debt payments towards climate-smart projects.

Several developing countries have used debt-for-climate swaps to finance climate projects. This approach focuses on reducing debt burdens without necessarily compromising environmental or climate concerns. Debt-for-climate swaps, on the other hand, involve converting debt into funds dedicated to environmental conservation and climate change mitigation. This can help address both debt distress and climate change by redirecting debt payments towards climate projects. -- Courtesy Dawn

Accounting for change

Khurram Husain

The resistance to change in Pakistan is an old problem but it wears a new face every few years. These days the resistance to change is wearing the face of an accounting problem. In other words, everything from our debt management to reforms in the power sector and tax machinery appears to us as little more than an accounting problem.

This resistance to change has been the country's key defining theme for decades now. It was laid down by Ghulam Ishaq Khan as the principal strategy with which the country would deal with the massive changes sweeping the world, starting in the 1980s and accelerating through the 1990s. GIK and a small coterie of bureaucrats around him, including but not limited to people like A.G.N. Kazi, H.U. Beg, V.A. Jafarey, Saeed Qureshi, I.A. Hanfi among others, practically ran Pakistan's economic management in those years.

They were serious men, rightly famous for

their professionalism and intellect, and they operated like an exclusive club of power-wielding civil servants where admission was by invitation only. Mahbub ul Haq hovered on the outer edges of this group, a one-man army, trying to champion change at a time when this coterie manned the ramparts to keep all change at bay and protect the status quo.

What was the change they were trying to keep at arm's length? In a nutshell, it was the declining ability of the state to shoulder all the responsibilities it had picked up, first during the heady growth years of the 1960s, and then again following the disastrous nationalisations of the 1970s.

From financing the development of the country's infrastructure to maintaining a pricing regime for agriculture and energy, to deciding who gets how much credit and on what terms, and who gets to invest how much and where, and fetch what returns on that investment, the state played an overriding role in the country's economy in

those days. And this coterie of bureaucrats selected all winners and losers in the economy.

Pakistan was not alone in facing this pressure for change in those days. It was near universal. Around the world, governments were finding their power to hold a pre-eminent position in all national economic decision-making challenged. Some responded by digging in, others by searching for a way out, and yet others by trying to externalise the costs of staying the course. It was not until the late 1980s and the early 1990s that proper reform strategies began to appear in the global conversation about breaking out of this confinement and finding new ways for economic growth to continue.

Crucially, those strategies included a template for tax and power sector reforms. But they also included a more general withdrawal of the state from areas administering pricing, credit allocations, ownership of commercial enterprises and more. Taken together, these strategies came to be called 'the

Washington Consensus'.

In those days, GIK laid the foundations of how Pakistan would tackle the growing crisis of state and economy. It was his approach to first agree to wide-ranging reforms, then find ways to blunt their impact, stymie their implementation and where necessary, simply renege on commitments once the funds promised under the agreements had been released.

The first Benazir Bhutto government was overwhelmed by the scale of the challenges it had to face — the aftermath of the Afghan jihad was smouldering to the west, while to the east, an Indian arms build-up had drained Pakistan's coffers. A bankrupt economy at home and a strident IMF programme signed by the interim government prior to her taking power necessitated structural reforms so deep that governments since her time have struggled to implement them.

The first Nawaz Sharif government brought in some of the changes envisaged. They changed the debt management strategy, brought in

the first non-DMG State Bank governor in the person of Muhammad Yaqub, undertook the first privatisation, liberalised trade, passed the Sales Tax Act (by a sleight of hand where they disguised it under a money bill), and opened up the capital account to free up the flow of capital into and out of the country. They also successfully wrested control of economic policy from GIK and his coterie and brought their own people into key positions, such as Sartaj Aziz and Ishaq Dar.

This is what lay at the heart of the big fight between president Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif, ending eventually with both being brought down. But what started as a fight over changing the direction of the economy, eventually became little more than a changing of the guard. The reforms of the first Nawaz Sharif government were not built to do much, other than spur short-term growth, and encourage an inflow of dollars through the foreign currency deposit scheme that became an albatross around the

government's neck by the end of the decade.

What emerged from all this is a type of economic management that today goes under the name of 'Daronomics', and whose principal aim is not that different from that of GIK. Daronomics aims to find ways to retain the state's pre-eminent role in the economy, while allowing enough space to private sector energies to continue the process of investment and growth. This strategy rarely works, and when it does, it racks up a tremendous bill that eventually lands up in the fiscal and public debt part of national accounts. The challenge of our times has been to find a way to pull the state out of this role and, instead, have empowered regulators to safeguard the public interest. But the nature of the political power struggle in our country is such that all power has to flow upwards and be subservient to the requirements of this struggle. The non-stop struggle for power has paralysed the state at the top, and stymied its attempt to develop a sound reform strategy.

Food, with thought

F.S. Aijazuddin

It is not a novel idea: which interesting personality would you want to share a meal with? From 2012, The New York Times has run a weekly column 'By the Book', in which famous authors are asked to identify three writers (dead or alive) they would like to invite for a literary dinner. Predictably, most choose William Shakespeare — provided he spoke modern English.

Even earlier, since 1994, the UK's Financial Times ran its series 'Lunch with the FT', in which a singularly important living personality was invited for an interview over lunch at a location of their choice, at FT's expense. Out of 1,000 or so lunches, the FT selected 50 interviews, publishing them as Lunch with the FT — A Second Helping (2019).

Intended to be a one-to-one, the FT occasionally had to pay also for accompanying security details. One brought five guards. Modest by Pakistani standards, where no leaders worth their salt travel without a 50-strong police escort, not counting the ambulance team.

Not every interviewee honoured FT's open-palmed largesse. The newspaper tycoon Richard Desmond, for example, ordered a bottle of wine before the FT host could open the menu. It cost £580.

The Brexit spoiler Nigel Farage (who now threatens to disrupt the forthcoming UK general elections) preferred to drink before, during and after his meal, and then between meals.

Donald Trump for his interview in 2013 chose his own Trump Grill, in the basement of his own Trump Towers on Fifth Avenue, New

York. The bill for two came to a modest \$74.

His fellow American Edward Snowden released CIA's and NSA's classified documents to The Guardian and to The Washington Post and then had to seek asylum in Russia. (Putin has since granted him Russian nationality.) Snowden asked his interviewer Alan Rusbridger (formerly editor-in-chief of The Guardian) to meet him in the latter's room in the secluded Golden Apple Hotel in Moscow.

Snowden's choice of food was unexpected: spicy chicken curry, followed by ice cream. His trenchant remarks about the limited choices before the US voter in 2016 — Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton — will resonate among voters of recent elections across the world. He complained: "We're a country of 330 million people and we seem to be asked to make a choice between individuals whose lives are defined by scandal."

Particularly moving is the interview with the juvenile Bana al-Abed, trapped at Aleppo in the war between the Syrian regime and opposition militias. In the absence of coverage by journalists, she became the voice from the carnage through her Twitter feeds, managed by her mother.

Especially poignant were her tweets in December 2016: "My name is Bana. I am seven years old. This is my last moment to live or die." Earlier she had posted: "I am sick now, I have no medicine, no home, no clean water. This will make me die before a bomb kills me." She spoke for every child in Gaza.

Readers of the FT book who savour the pickle of corruption should read the interview with Sepp Blatter, the controversial head of FIFA

1998-2016. He admits being startled at the 14-8 decision in December 2010 to award the Soccer World Cup 2022 to Qatar. He had tried to rig the vote 'behind the scenes' to ensure that the 2018 and 2022 competitions would go to the 'two superpowers' Russia and the US.

Blatter griped that French president Sarkozy had let him down. After an indecent interval, in April 2015, Qatar bought 24 French Dassault Rafale jets for \$7 billion. (Pakistanis will recognise overtones in the infamous French Agosta 90B submarine deal in 1994. Sarkozy was then budget minister.)

Many of the FT interviews themselves border on literature. The novelist Hilary Mantel who has written best-sellers on the Tudors and Thomas Cromwell was asked whether she was the greatest English prose writer. Her reply was artfully simple: "You're only as good as your next sentence."

The best interview — it is a personal view — is the one of Roger Federer by Simon Kuper, conducted on board a private jet flying from Zurich to Madrid. Federer talks movingly about balancing the demands of world-class tennis with the imperative of playing Lego with his young son.

Kuper concludes with this paragraph that is an ace in itself: "Federer throws an arm around me, and I put my hand on his back. Every other back I've touched felt like a single undefined mass. On Federer's back you feel every bone and muscle. It's like reading an anatomy textbook in Braille."

It is sentences like these which subordinate the locale, the food consumed, and the price of the meal. Such interviews elevate reportage into an art form. -- Courtesy Dawn

Rule of violence

Khadim Hussain

With 245 terror attacks on security forces, police check-posts and public places — mostly in KP and Balochistan — in the first quarter of 2024 alone, it is obvious that terrorism is once again eating into the vitals of Pakistani state and society. However, what is more horrendous is the repetition of the pattern of violence that Pakistan, especially KP, witnessed a few decades ago; terror is once again stalking various parts of the country, especially Malakand Division and the former Fata region.

On May 9, a girls' school was set ablaze in the scenic Shawa valley of South Waziristan. On May 17, the people of lower South Waziristan awoke to the terror of a bomb attack on another girls' school. On May 29, a girls' school was torched in Shakhmir village in Razmak, North Waziristan. Thirty-four schools, mostly girls' schools, are on the verge of closure in central Kurram district due to lack of funds. All this has happened a year or so after Afghanistan banned secondary and higher education for girls there — as happened under the first Afghan Taliban regime. In the latter case, some two decades ago, the terror syndicate in KP followed suit.

The terror syndicate and violent extremists see gender diversity as a threat to their discourse of homogenisation. They are scared of gender diversity as much as they are of aesthetics and cultural diversity. The religious militant discourse constructs women as objects devoid of any human agency. Women must have no public role in the worldview of the proponents of this discourse, who wish to de-

stroy every space that women can use for a public role. Their destructive tendencies start with torching and bombing girls' schools. Destroying girls' schools with impunity at this time marks the beginning of another phase of the rule of violence.

On May 30, a student of Malakand University, Musa Khan, died in a heart-wrenching motorbike accident. It was later revealed that the circumstances that led to the accident may have been created inside the university. Musa Khan had been issued a show-cause notice and then an expulsion letter by the university, because he had allegedly brought a rubab to a university event. This had put the young student under severe mental pressure, which might have resulted in his accident. On May 31, renowned folk artist Said Wali Wazir of Janikhel, Bannu was manhandled and his musical instruments broken by the local police. This seems to have been on account of the dread spread by the terror syndicate that is opposed to music. Said Wali Wazir's music concerts are already banned in his area.

Like women, primary victims of the empire of violence include music, art and poetry. The terror syndicate demonstrated its abhorrence for music, art and poetry two decades ago; the pattern is now being repeated: as they are an expression of aesthetics and the beauty of life, music, art and poetry must be banished from the social structure and cultural norms. Instead, the narrative of ugliness must be injected into life. This entire discourse hinges on erasing our natural feelings for beauty and artistic expression. Music, art and

poetry are powerful tools to encourage socio-cultural gatherings; the terror syndicate wishes to keep the people isolated. Music, art and poetry keep the people rooted in their home soil, while the terror syndicate wants them to be uprooted.

When one looks at this saga, along with the attacks by violent mob r a n s a c k i n g several churches in Jaranwala town, Faisalabad, in August 2023, and an attack on a Christian home and factory in Sardogha on May 26, 2024, one reaches the conclusion that religious diversity is also under severe threat in Pakistan. The torching of girls' schools and targeting music, art and poetry by the terror syndicate in KP and attacks on religious minorities by extremists in Punjab clearly indicate a pattern of the rule of violence in the country.

Political parties, civil society organisations, the intelligentsia, media persons, women associations and youth groups need to wake up to the danger zone ahead. Folk music concerts, poetry recital sessions, cultural fairs, arts exhibitions, study circles and other cultural activities need to be regularly organised in educational institutions and public places, especially in KP. Policies that facilitate violent extremist private militias and the use of religion for political interests need to be challenged. A paradigm shift in foreign policy formulation needs to be advocated at all forums. Genuine federalism and a constitutional dispensation need to be underscored. Lastly, sociopolitical and socio-cultural activism must be facilitated in educational institutions and the larger society. -- Courtesy Dawn

PM Shehbaz says: Govt bringing reforms in energy sector to reduce electricity tariff

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the government was bringing reforms in the energy sector to reduce electricity tariff.

He was talking to a delegation of foreign experts in the energy sector, led by former Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri which called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister said that circular debt, line losses and electricity theft were the major challenges in Pakistan's energy sector.

Emphasizing the importance of energy sector for the country's economic growth and development, he expressed his government's commitment to implement policies for reducing circular debt and improving the efficiency of electricity bill collection personnel.

He said privatization and outsourcing of the power distribution companies was the top priority of the government. "In this regard the government desires to take benefit from the Georgian experience."

The prime minister expressed his government's desire to promote alternative energy sources, particularly solar energy, and reduce reliance on expensive energy sources. He said the government would also promote public private partnership in the energy sector. The prime minister directed the federal ministers to consult with the delegation regarding the basic reforms of the country's energy sector and to evolve a comprehensive strategy regarding the reforms immediately. Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik, Power Minister Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, and relevant high officials attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with a delegation of experts of Power Sector led by Nika Gilauri Former Georgian Prime Minister, in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain presides over a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee.

Multiple agri projects underway to unleash green revolution: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that multiple agriculture development projects were underway in the province which on completion would brought a green revolution in the region.

The Chashma Lift Canal project, once completed, would help irrigate over 250,000 acres of land, and its irrigation area would be increased to 600,000 acres if its height were raised to 90 feet, he added.

The governor was addressing a ceremony held at the District Bar Dera Ismail Khan to distribute grant cheques of Rs 7.8 million among bar councils of the district.

He said the Federal Government was also working on the proposals of Tank Zam and Daraban

Zam projects, which would bring a green revolution and help meet the food requirement not only of the region but also of the neighbouring countries.

The governor said the role of bar councils was very important in resolving the social issues of the people and providing leadership to the nation. The bars also helped maintain the supremacy of law.

The lawyers' movement had proved that they were united to achieve their goals, he added.

Kundi said that there was a shortage of 10 judges in the merged tribal districts and he had taken up the matter with the Federal Government in order to ensure speedy justice for the local people.

The governor said the development of Dera Ismail Khan was his mission. They people here were fac-

ing numerous problems, including in education and health sectors.

"I have always highlighted the issues of my area with the Federation. Before the federal budget, I personally talked to the prime minister about the long-standing demand of the Chashma Lift Canal project, besides other issues, and I am thankful to the Federal Government for allocating Rs 19 billion for the canal, whose foundation stone will be laid down by the end of 2024."

The canal on completion would irrigate around 600,000 acres of land, he added.

He again expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Water Resources Musadik Masood Malik for allocating funds for the Lift Canal project.

Minister directs for audit of fertilizer companies to determine production costs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industry and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday directed that a third-party audit be conducted to determine the cost of production of fertilizer companies, in order to ensure transparency and fair pricing in the industry.

He issued the directive while chairing a Fertilizer Review Committee meeting which was attended by Federal Secretary Industries and Production, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan, said a news release.

The meeting reviewed the stock availability, demand, and prices of urea in the country.

Rana Tanveer said that there was no shortage of urea fertilizer in the country and added steps were taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to fertilizer companies for smooth production of urea.

He also directed fertilizer companies to review the performance of dealers and agencies, and instructed provinces to verify fertilizer dealers and agencies, with any ghost dealers and agencies to be blacklisted.

The minister emphasized that fertilizer companies must ensure the supply of fertilizer to the provinces

SIFC provides enabling environment for investment

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has provided an enabling environment for investment and business development in the country by working with utmost diligence and dedication over the last one year. The most important of the measures is the provision of facility for investors in the IT sector to repatriate up to fifty percent of their profits. According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, IT exports have grown by sixty two percent.

Similarly, the establishment of the Office of the Investment Ombudsman has provided a platform to investors to resolve their issues efficiently and invest

China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan to construct new railway to enhance trade, economic cooperation

BEIJING (APP): China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan will construct a new railway starting in China Kashgar and traversing Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan, to enhance trade and economic cooperation.

A trilateral intergovernmental agreement on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project was signed at a ceremony in Beijing last week.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev hailed the event as a sign of unity and shared progress.

The governments of

China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan agreed to embark on constructing the new railway at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in the Uzbek city of Samarkand in September 2022. The project feasibility study was updated following the completion of field surveys by Chinese engineers in December last year.

"All three countries have diligently prepared for the construction, which is expected to commence later this year," China Daily reported.

The new railway, a beacon of hope and optimism, will start in China's Kashgar and traverse Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan.

It is estimated that the railway will shorten the route between China and Europe by about 900 kilometers and reduce freight transit time by eight days.

This transformative railway, with its potential to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the countries along its path, holds the promise of a brighter future and instills optimism due to the potential economic benefits it will bring.

According to an earlier announcement, the planned 523-km railway will be constructed through a joint venture involving three countries. The estimated total cost of the project is \$8 billion, with \$4.7 billion allocated for the Kyrgyz part.

Rupee sheds 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday witnessed a devaluation of 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.60 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.50. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.7 and Rs 280.6 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 55 paise to close at Rs 298.77 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.22.



Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with CEO Huawei Pakistan Mr. Ethan Sun in Islamabad.

Exports increase by 28.75% to Rs 7.9trln in 11 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 28.75 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Exports during July-May (2023-2024) totaled Rs. 7,962,082 million against Rs. 6,183,949 million during the corresponding period of last year, according to PBS provisional figures.

Exports from Pakistan during May, 2024 increased by 25.99 percent to Rs. 790,199 million compared to exports of Rs. 627,199 million in May 2023.

On month-on-month basis, the exports from the country increased by 20.83 percent in May 2024 when compare to exports of

Rs. 653,957 million in April 2024.

The main commodities of exports during May 2024 included knitwear (Rs. 115,022 million), readymade garments (Rs. 97,564 million), bed wear (Rs. 77,184 million), rice others (Rs. 75,311 million), cotton Cloth (Rs. 48,117 million), towels (Rs. 28,768 million), petroleum products, excluding top Naphta (Rs. 25,393 million), rice Basmati (Rs. 20,807 million), makeup articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs. 18,558 million) and cotton yarn (Rs. 17,883 million).

On the other hand, imports during July-May (FY2023-24) totaled Rs. 14,109,047 million as against Rs. 12,272,596 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 14.96%

PSX closes at historic high level of 78,801 points

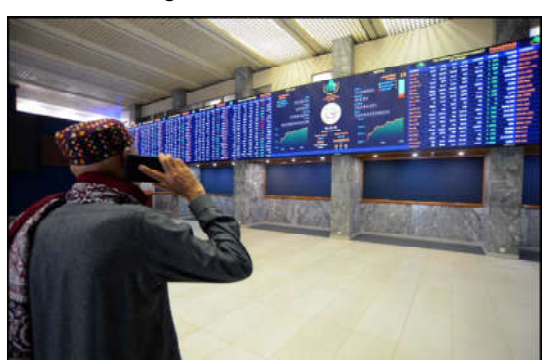
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 2,094.76 points, a positive change of 2.73 percent, closing at historic level of 78,801.53 points against 76,706.77 points the previous trading day.

A total of 452,637,253 shares valuing Rs. 20,675 billion were traded during the day as compared to 395,897,996 shares valuing Rs. 21,366 billion the last day.

Some 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 256 of them recorded gains and

133 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 58 remained unchanged.

In PSX, the three top trading companies were Silk Bank Ltd with 53,586,473 shares at Rs. 1.09 per share, the K-Electric Ltd with 23,109,865 shares with Rs. 4.72 per share and Habib Bank with 20,943,162 shares at Rs. 121.92 per share. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs. 86.62 per share price, closing at Rs. 7,706.92, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs. 63.93 rise in its per share price to Rs. 1,443.93.



KARACHI: Brokers are busy in trading at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi.

New UAF sugarcane varieties suitable for cultivation during April, May: Dr Sarwar

FAISALABAD (APP): Two GM sugarcane varieties developed by University of Agriculture Fairlead (UAF), in addition to engineered traits of top-borer resistance and herbicide (glufosinate)-tolerance, are carrying numerous superior traits like input-responsiveness, high-number of millable canes, high sugar recovery and early maturing making it suitable for plantation in the months of April and May after harvesting wheat, said Pro-Vice Chancellor UAF and developer of GM sugarcane varieties Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan.

In the last week, The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of Pakistan under the Environment

Protection Agency (EPA), in its 34th meeting chaired by the Director General of the EPA, Farzana Altaf Shah, approved two GM sugarcane varieties; herbicide (glufosinate)-tolerant (CABB-HTS) and insect (top borer)-resistant (CABB-IRS) developed by UAF.

Vice Chancellor UAF Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Director General EPA Farzana Altaf Shah, and many other scientists at the meeting congratulated Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan (Pro-Vice Chancellor/Dean Agriculture, UAF) and his team for developing these varieties and considered it a landmark achievement in GM sector world-

High-level delegation led by Industries Minister to visit Turkmenistan from June 24

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation led by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain will visit Turkmenistan from June 24 to 26 to explore new opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

The minister on Thursday held a meeting with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov to discuss matters relating to the visit.

During the meeting, the minister said that strengthening trade and economic relations with Turkmenistan was the government's top priority and the delegation's visit would play an important role in that regard. Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov proposed that both countries should organize a joint trade exhibition to promote trade and investment.

Asian markets swing as traders assess rates outlook

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets were mixed Thursday as investors tried to gauge the outlook for US interest rates, while also keeping tabs on developments in France as it heads for crucial elections.

With Wall Street closed, there were few catalysts to drive buying, though sentiment has been buoyed this week by recent data indicating the world's top economy is slowing gradually, giving the Federal Reserve some freedom to ease monetary policy.

Traders are closely following the utterances of US central bank officials on their outlook for rates, with most warning that while inflation was on a downward trajectory, they wanted to see more evidence before committing to a cut.



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari presiding over a meeting in connection with the preparation of forthcoming All Pakistan Chamber President Conference.

ICCI all set to host APCPC on June 25-26

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) will organize "All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conclave" (APCPC) on June 25-26, 2024.

The APCPC will hopefully be attended by Presidents of over 70 Chambers of Commerce & Industry and federal ministers of government's economic team, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that it is at the credit of the ICCI that it took the initiative to organize first APCPC in 2020 to bring Presidents of all Chambers of Commerce and Industry at one platform to discuss the key issues of business community and put forward proposals to the government for resolving them and now it is once again all set to convene the second

APCPC.

He said the event aims to discuss important issues, share ideas and collaborate on initiatives that promote economic growth and development.

The Conclave will feature keynote speeches, panel discussions, and networking opportunities, providing a platform for business leaders to engage with each other and with policymakers.

He said that at the moment, the economy of the country is facing multiple challenges, which have slowed down the business activities, therefore, the ICCI felt the need to bring the leadership of the entire business community at one place and give comprehensive as well as workable proposals to the government for the revival of business and economic activities.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Marathopolis, MSC Positano, Atlantic Crown and Simaisma carrying container, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Maersk Chicago, Khairpur and Chemtrans Ionian with Containers, Gasoline and Mogas also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

Seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Nordic Copenhagen and IMO left the port on today morning while two more container ships, Marathopolis and MSC Positano are expected to sail on same day.

Cargo volume of 188,296 tonnes, comprising 140,778 tonnes imports cargo and 47,518 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,276 Containers (2,566 TEUs Imports and 2,710 TEUs exports) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Khairpur, OM Shanghai and Maersk Chicago & another ship 'Navios Constellation' carrying Gasoline, Chemicals and Container are expected to take berths at respectively FOICO, EVTL and QICT on Thursday.



PESHAWAR: Workers preserving the hides of sacrificial animals at their warehouse at Ring road.

Sri Lankan FM reaffirms unwavering commitment to SAARC

COLOMBO (PR): His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC Ambassador Golam Sarwar, visited Sri Lanka from 10-14 June

recognizing his esteemed position as a member of the SAARC Council of Ministers, in propelling the SAARC process forward.



2024. During the visit, Secretary General Sarwar paid courtesy call on Minister of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Ali Sabry on 14 June 2024 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo. Discussions focused on ways to further enhance the SAARC process.

The Secretary General provided an update on ongoing initiatives and the challenges of SAARC, seeking Sri Lanka's support for advancing and further energising the process. Moreover, he sought the guidance of the Minister,

Foreign Minister Sabry, acknowledging the progress achieved and appreciating the Secretary General for his efforts, underscored the need for the Association to take further strides in strengthening regional cooperation. Recognizing the significant potential of SAARC as a regional forum, Minister Sabry emphasized its capacity to facilitate extensive regional cooperation in mutually agreed-upon domains and assured Sri Lanka's unflinching commitment for the SAARC process.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah along with Home Minister Sindh, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar and IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon and others witnessing the signing of the MoU between Sindh Police and the State Life Insurance Corp. to insure the Policemen, in Karachi

NDMA to become a safety wall for Pakistan: PM

Visits revamped NEOC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, lauding the revamped National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) equipped with multiple satellite feeds and artificial intelligence tools, expressed the hope that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would prove to be a safety wall for Pakistan against the impacts of the climate change.

“Due to climate change, Pakistan is in the red zone and among the top ten vulnerable countries. We should not lose our morale rather work hard. After this achievement, I have no doubt that the NDMA, in coordina-

tion with provincial PDMA, will become a safety wall for Pakistan,” the prime minister said during his visit to the NEOC here along with the federal ministers and secretaries.

This was the maiden visit of the prime minister since the revamped NEOC was inaugurated in October last year.

He highly appreciated NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik for realising his dream of focusing on the capacity building and human resource development of the Authority instead of an earlier planned project of building an office tower.

Referring to his previous meetings following the floods of 2022, the prime minister said he had suggested the NDMA chief to prioritise the capacity building of the organisation by equipping it with the latest technology, input from the provinces and recruitment of permanent human resources, besides establishing a digital hub.

“Today, the way that dream has been realised deserves applause. I don’t think any province has achieved such capacity with the world-class systems. I am happy that instead of a highrise building, you invested in this digital hub,” the prime minister remarked.

He said the 2022 floods had inflicted a \$30 billion loss to the country which would take years to overcome as the Federal Government alone had spent Rs 100 billion for the rehabilitation of affected population, besides the funding from provinces as well as aid from the friendly countries.

He said consequent to the efforts by that time Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other federal and provincial organisations, the country was able to rehabilitate millions of people.

Tarar regrets ‘smear campaign’ against Pak-China friendship by a political party on Eid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday took exception to a “smear campaign” launched by a specific political party against the Pakistan-China friendship on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Addressing a news conference, the minister brushed aside the propaganda against Pakistan-China friendship particularly surrounding the upgradation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“Undoubtedly, the lobbies against the Pakistan-China Dosti are active, and

are completely perturbed by the CPEC’s upgradation, but such botch attempts are destined to fail,” he added.

The minister said the government fully understood that some powers which were stung by the Pakistan-China friendship, were resorting to undue and unfounded criticism towards the CPEC, but nothing could harm the enduring bond between the two nations. “The people normally celebrate Eid-ul-Azha by slaughtering sacrificial animals and sharing sweets with their loved ones but there was one political party that exerted all its energies for conspiring against

Benazir Bhutto’s visionary leadership still inspires young generation: Raisani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Raisani on Thursday said that the vision and the dynamic leadership of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto still inspired the young generation of the country.

The young PPP Member of the National Assembly, in a statement on the 70th birth anniversary of former party chairperson, said her struggle and sacrifices for democracy was a golden chapter in the country’s history.

Due to the party leaders like Benazir Bhutto, the PPP always remained steadfast against the anti-democracy elements, he

added.

Raisani said it was Benazir Bhutto Shaheed who had become a symbol of Pakistan’s identity internationally because of her prolonged fight against the dictators.

She set a precedent by working for the country’s solidarity, integrity and stability, he added.

Raisani said that she was the first woman prime minister of an Islamic country and was revered as the “Daughter of Islam”.

He said she was a beacon of hope for the party leaders and workers as she had the only dream of how to elevate the sufferings of the marginalized segments of the society.

PIA’s first post-Hajj flight with 150 pilgrims on board arrives in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The first post-Hajj flight PK 860 of Pakistan International Airlines carrying 160 pilgrims from Jeddah arrived at the Karachi Airport on Thursday afternoon.

The pilgrims were received by PIA District Manager Umar Khan, Airport Manager Javed Pechuho and other PIA officers, a PIA spokesperson said.

The PIA would bring back more than 35,000 pilgrims, including 19,500 under the Government Hajj Scheme, 14,900 under the Private Hajj Scheme and about 630 Khudam from Saudi Arabia through 171 flights, he added. The national airlines would operate post-Hajj flights to Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Sialkot and Peshawar, while pilgrims from Sukkur and Quetta would travel via Karachi.

The post-Hajj operation would end on July 21, the spokesperson said.



LAHORE: Director Hajj Punjab Muhammad Rizwan Sharif, Deputy Director Hajj Lahore Mujeeb Shah and others welcoming Hajj Ikrum and garlanding them with flowers.

Heavy monsoon rains expected across country

LAHORE (INP): The Chief meteorologist has forecasted the onset of the monsoon season in Pakistan between June and July, predicting an above-normal rainfall in southern Sindh, including Karachi. However, this long-term forecast remains subject to change.

Chief Meteorologist Lahore, Shahid Abbas, speaking to a local TV channel, stated that monsoon rains are expected to start by the end of June.

Man killed in front of his son for resisting robbery in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): In a distressing incident, robbers shot dead a man and injured his son for resisting robbery in Karachi’s Korangi Coast Guard Chowrangi area.

As per details, robbers entered a gas filling shop at Korangi Coast Guard Chowrangi and opened fire during resistance, killing Zafar and injuring his son Wahab.

Police reported that the

injured Wahab managed to seize the pistol from the robbers and fired at them, causing both robbers to flee the crime scene.

The injured robbers went to Jinnah Hospital for treatment, where the injured Wahab identified them, leading to their arrest by the police.

The robbers were identified as Qadir and Ehtisham.

Amid intense heat Salik hails Saudi Govt for exemplary Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain has applauded the Saudi Government for its exemplary arrangements for pilgrims even amidst intense heat.

During a consultation meeting at the Pakistan Hajj Mission in Makkah,

Chaudhry Salik hails Saudi Govt for exemplary Hajj arrangements

Chaudhry Salik Hussain highlighted that the Saudi authorities had implemented various measures to alleviate the adverse impact of heat, including installing water sprinklers and organizing a system to distribute cold water and beverages.

Armed men kidnap 10 Punjab residents from Quetta

QUETTA (INP): Unidentified armed men kidnaped 10 people hailing from Punjab from Shuban picnic point in Zarghon Ghar, Quetta.

According to details, armed men took 16 people hostage who were enjoying at Shuban picnic point in Zarghon Ghar. The DG Levies said the armed men released six hostages after checking their Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs).

The ten people who have been abducted include a Customs Officer and others, who are residents of Punjab province.

Veteran labour unionist Karamat Ali passes away in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Veteran labour unionist Karamat Ali on Thursday morning died in Karachi after prolonged illness, his nephew Abbas Haider confirmed.

According to Haider, the joint director of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Ali was under treatment at a private hospital in Karachi.

His funeral prayers will be held at 7pm today at the Shuhada-i-Karbala Imambargah in Karachi’s Ancholi area, after which he will be laid to rest in the Wadi-i-Hussain Graveyard, Haider added.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao received at the Islamabad International Airport by Additional Foreign Secretary.

SAU announces to establish new campus in Malir and seed farm in Setharja

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam has announced the launch of two major projects, the establishment of a new campus in Malir, Karachi, to produce graduates aligned with industry needs, and the development of an experimental farm for pure seeds in Setharja, district Khairpur.

These announcements were made by the Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Mari during an Eid-Milan meeting with the university’s academic and administrative heads.

Dr. Mari highlighted that over the past three and a half years, the budget allocation from the Sindh government has increased tenfold, allowing the university to overcome its financial crisis

gradually. Significant improvements have been made to the university’s infrastructure, classrooms and laboratories, and several projects have been launched in collaboration with international and national institutions, he added.

Dr. Mari emphasized that this year, a new campus will be established in Malir, Karachi, to introduce degree programs that meet industry requirements. Additionally, an experimental field will be developed in Setharja, Khairpur, to focus on the production of pure seeds.

He also mentioned that the accreditation of degree programs at the Khairpur College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology was in its final stages.

Karachi Police Chief honors gold medalist constable

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police Imran Yaqoob Minhas on Thursday honored Police Constable Shah Nawaz Khan for his outstanding achievement in bodybuilding. Shah Nawaz Khan recently won the gold medal in the South Asian Bodybuilding Championship and earned the title of South Asia. In recognition of his accomplishment, Constable Shah Nawaz Khan was presented with a CC-1 certificate and a cash reward by the Additional IGP at the Karachi Police Office, according to a spokesperson for the Karachi Police.

Imran Yaqoob Minhas felicitated Constable Shah Nawaz Khan for his remarkable success, noting that his victory has brought significant pride to the country. He commended Shah Nawaz Khan’s dedication and effort and extended his best wishes for Khan’s future endeavors.

Karachi admin arrests 173 for spreading offal waste

KARACHI (APP): Karachi administration arrested 173 individuals during three days of Eid-ul-Azha on violation of ban imposed to prevent spreading offal and garbage on roads and streets.

The Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi, while enforcing Section 144 Cr.P.C in the city prior the Eid imposed ban on tearing off offal for tripe and spreading the waste on roads, streets and public places.

The commissioner also directed deputy commissioners to take effective action against scavengers who are responsible for tearing offal and littering and spreading garbage while violating the ban.

According to the reports submitted by the deputy commissioners to the Commissioner Karachi 26 individuals were arrested in District South, 44 in District East, 7 in District West, 14 in District Malir, 57 in District Korangi, 40 in District Central and 5 were nabbed in district Keamari.



KARACHI: Police staffs patrolling on horses and disperse the people visit Sea View Beach as ban has been imposed on bath into sea due to rough condition of sea, at Clifton area



PRINT OR PERISH

The 10% GST Threatens Free Press

1. The newspaper industry is facing an existential crisis due to the 10% GST proposed on newsprint in the recent budget.
2. In an environment full of fake news and disinformation, newspapers are a vital source for credible and authentic news. They play an important role in promoting democratic values and shaping informed public opinions. The imposition of this GST will push many newspapers, particularly small and regional newspapers, towards closure.
3. Newspapers organisations are already subsidising the cost of their publications for their readers as they are not passing on the cost burden to the readers. Taxing the newspapers will further weaken the economies of the print media and impact the citizens’ right to know.
4. This tax threatens the survival of an already struggling newspaper industry. While reducing the quality and quantity of news coverage, the tax will increase production costs, endanger jobs, restrict the ability for the industry to pay competitive and timely salaries and will make it impossible for print media organisations to implement the government mandated Wage Board for newspaper employees.

We urge the government to reconsider and withdraw this tax to ensure the survival and continued contribution of newspapers to an enlightened society.