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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairs high-level meeting to review the security arrangements in the province during Muharram ul Haram.

Chairs high level meeting on security arrangements for Muharram: Chief Minister directs to ensure complete implementation on SOPs for security of Muharram processions & gatherings

Bugti directs all divisional commissioners to prepare coordinated strategy regarding security arrangements in respective divisions together with law enforcement agencies

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to ensure complete implementation on the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for security of the processions and gatherings to be held during the month of Muharramul Haram.

Muharramul Haram in the province, here at the CM's secretariat on Wednesday. The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Deputy Inspector General of Police Quetta, Aitezaz Goraya, Director General Levies force, and other concerned high ups participated in the meeting.

The Commissioner Quetta and commissioners of other divisions participated in the meeting through video link. The concerned high ups briefed the meeting about the security arrangements made in the province.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to all the divisional commissioners to prepare coordinated strategy regarding security arrangements in their respective divisions together with the law enforcement agencies. He also directed to them to submit report of the security measures for Muharram taken in the divisions in the Chief Minister's secretariat. In addition to this, the security of sensitive districts should also be beefed up, adding he directed further.

Establishment 'must step back' to ensure transparent elections: Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) incarcerated and beleaguered founding chairperson Imran Khan emphasised the urgent need for the establishment to step back to ensure transparent elections in the country. "If we want to save the country, the establishment must step back to move towards transparent elections," the former premier asserted during an informal talk with media in the Rawalpindi's Adiala jail today.

The PTI supreme highlighted the drastic increase in national debt, stating that in 2021, it was Rs2.8 trillion, but within four years, it had surged to Rs8 to Rs9 trillion. He criticised the current government for failing the nation, saying, "The current government has destroyed Pakistan's hope; no one trusts this government anymore." Imran pointed out the severe economic burdens on the common people, noting, "The poor who used to have a 2,000 rupees bill now face a 10,000 rupees bill."



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in a meeting with JUI Secretary General Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri.

Ahsan, Chinese Envoy discuss CPEC-2 progress, future initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to discuss the ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase 2. During the meeting, he underscored the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring the timely implementation of CPEC projects, said a news release. The minister emphasized Pakistan's eagerness to advance to the next phase of CPEC, which includes the operationalization of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) aimed at facilitating Chinese investment in Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal is scheduled to visit China to attend the high-level forum

on the Action Plan for Global Development and a Shared Future, organized by the China International Development Cooperation Agency.

This visit follows up on the agreements reached during the recent visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to China. The follow-up meeting will focus on mutually agreed projects, with special attention to agriculture scholarships, IT training programs, the ML-1 railway project, and the Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase 2 (Thakot-Raikot Section).

Ambassador Jiang Zaidong extended a warm welcome to Minister Iqbal, noting that this marks the fourth visit to China by the Planning Minister since the new government assumed office.



QUETTA: A delegation of Al-Hamd Islamic University led by its President Dr. Shakeel Roshan meeting Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Justice Tariq received 'suspicious calls and messages'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The office of Islamabad High Court judge Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri received "suspicious calls and messages", days after IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq had declared that the court cannot tolerate any malicious campaign against any judge any longer.

The person behind the suspicious calls introduced himself as director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the sources said and added, the caller wanted to talk directly to Justice Tariq Jahangiri. The sources said after an investigation it was learnt that FIA DG did not make any call to the IHC judge.

Security forces stops major smuggling operation

QUETTA (INP): Security forces in Balochistan have successfully intercepted a significant smuggling operation, seizing a variety of contraband items. At a checkpoint in Kalat-Quetta, forces stopped and searched a container, discovering smuggled goods including 400 tyres, 250 cloth sacks, 500 blankets, as well as weapons and ammunition. In a separate operation conducted between June 9 and July 6 in the Gwadar-Turbat region, authorities confiscated 42 kg of ice meth and other narcotics. Additional seized items included gutka, cigarettes, betel nut, and nine goats. The anti-smuggling operations also resulted in the confiscation of smuggled clothing, utensils,

Terrorist Commander among three killed, four soldiers martyred in Peshawar IBO

RAWALPINDI (APP): A terrorist commander among three were killed in a joint intelligence-based operation conducted by the Security Forces and Police in Hassan Khel area of Peshawar District while four brave sons of the soil embraced martyrdom amid gallantly fighting against the terrorists. During conduct of the operation, after intense exchange of fire, three terrorists including high value target, Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem were killed whereas weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies and the government had fixed head

money of Rs 6 million on him, as he remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, and was also responsible for Shahadat of Captain Hussain Jehangir Shaheed and Havildar Shafiq Ullah Shaheed on 26 May 2024.

"Today's operation has avenged the heinous act and has brought the main perpetrator to justice," the ISPR said. The martyred soldiers were identified as Sepoy Muhammad Idrees (age: 34 years, resident of Swabi District), Sepoy Badam Gul (age: 34 years, resident of Kohat District) of Pakistan Army and Sub Inspector Tajmir Shah, (age: 38 years, resident of Peshawar District) and Assistant Sub Inspector Muhammad Akram (age: 34 years, resident of Mansehra District) of CTD KPK.

Maulana Fazal says We are waiting for court's decision on reserved seats case

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Online): JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said we are waiting for court's decision on the matter of reserved seats case.

Approval of resolution in US Congress has no importance but it is weakness of our diplomatic mission. Instead of operation Azme Istehkam we should sit together to ascertain basic reasons to the problems related to terrorism and move towards its solution,

he said this while talking to media men here Wednesday. He went on to say Supreme Court has now to give decision on the matter of reserved seats. It is hoped the court will give the best decision.

To a question he said the approval of resolution in US Congress does not hold importance because resolutions continue to be passed about other countries in the world parliaments.

13 die, Jeep plunges into river Neelum

MUZAFFARABAD (Online): As many as 13 people were killed and several injured after a jeep plunged into river Neelum in AJK capital Muzaffarabad.

The passenger jeep was on its way from Lawat Bala to Muzaffarabad when it fell into River Neelum on Neelum highway.

The rescue teams are

facing difficulties in rescue work due to rain. The victims include men, women and children. The bodies of 13 persons have been pulled out and rescue process is underway. People were travelling in the jeep beyond its capacity, therefore, more casualties are expected. 3 persons have been injured who have been shifted to hospital.



Planning Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal meets with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Jiang Zaidong, to discuss ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Islamabad

PM Shehbaz tells ministries Roll up your sleeves as nation wants results; won't tolerate laxity in downsizing plan

Calls for coordination b/w federal, provincial Govts to ensure peace during Muharram; Federal cabinet approves action plan for Pak PWD abolition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, warning against any laxity in the implementation of the government's downsizing agenda, asked the ministries to work hard for making a difference and meeting the nation's expectations.

"I will not allow my time to waste and I am sure you will not allow your time to be wasted. The only thing that will make the difference is action and imple-

mentation. Roll up your sleeves as this is a matter of country, its resources and resolution of its issues," the prime minister said in his remarks while chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet.

Apprising the members of his visits to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, he referred to his interactions with world leaders particularly Russian President Vladimir Putin, and said he had formed a committee under

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal for follow-ups. Similarly, he said he had chaired a meeting a couple of days ago to review the progress on the follow-up of "very productive" discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang during his China visit and would hold another meeting on July 20.

The prime minister said the government had launched solarisation of 28,000 tube-wells in

Balochistan to save bleeding of annual Rs 80 billion. He also appreciated the Balochistan chief minister and other relevant ministries and departments for taking the project to the implementation stage.

He told the meeting that the finance ministry had been tasked to work out a business plan for solarisation of a million tube-wells in the country which were currently running on imported fuel.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the federal cabinet.

Governor maintains Concept of power changing at fast pace in ever changing world and so requirements of modern era

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the concept of power is changing at fast pace in the ever changing world and so the requirements of modern era.

The Governor said that the mental power has gained preference over the physical power in view of the artificial intelligence and robotic technology.

He said that we left behind because of lack of the research centers and absence of comprehensive planning. We could also not

produce quantity human resource and thus we as a nation remain behind in the race of development.

The Governor was speaking to the core committee of National Security Workshop who called on him under leadership of Sardar Qurban Jogezi here at the Governor's House on Wednesday.

The Governor observed that there is no dearth of visionary and intelligent people in our society, what's needed is to provide all necessary facilities and opportunities to them so that they may play their

role for guiding the new generation and putting them on path of development.

He regretfully pointed out that we couldn't benefit from the services of our thinkers, scientists, experts and researchers in the best interest of country and nation. The Governor stressed the need to benefit from the knowledge and experience of all concerned in all sectors of life especially in the public sector universities so that we are able to produce quality human resource and formulate apt policies at the national and provincial level.

Imran requests to dismiss NAB amend. intra court appeals

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has filed written reply in Supreme Court (SC) on intra court appeal against declaration of NAB amendment null and void.

Raising objection on sitting of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa in the bench it has been said in the reply he should not sit in bench in the light of decision of the past.

Imran Khan requested in his reply to dismiss intra court appeals on Wednesday. Amending law to save corruption of any one even is not done in Banana Republic. Corruption leaves negative and disastrous effects for economy. During hearing justice Athar Minallah said to the amendments will benefit you too. My stance is very clear that this is not matter related to myself but this is issue of the country.

Guiding Balochistan's youth crucial for country's development: Shahid

QUETTA (APP): The spokesperson for the Balochistan government, Shahid Rind said on Wednesday that guiding the youth of Balochistan in the right direction was crucial for the country's greater good. Speaking to a private news channel, he said that the provincial government was committed to launching numerous initiatives and projects for the youth.

He stated that a socio-politically stable Balochistan can help mitigate the ongoing issues in the province.

Rind stressed that vocational training programs tailored to the needs of Balochistan's youth could address these challenges by equipping them with practical skills. He said that the provincial government has prioritized sectors including education, health, and climate change, as reflected in the announced budget.

The provincial government's efforts aim to foster a more stable and prosperous Balochistan, contributing positively to the nation's overall progress.



ISLAMABAD: Head of PkMAP and Chairman Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aain Pakistan Mehmooh Khan Achakzai and others talking to media persons.

Pak-US Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024 ends at NCTC Pabbi

RAWALPINDI (INP): The closing ceremony of Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi.

The "Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024" between Pakistan and United States has been conducted for the 1st time in Counter Terrorism domain. The two-week exercise commenced on June 29 at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi. One company each from both professional Armies participated with efficiency and zeal.

General Officer Commanding 17 Division attended the closing ceremony as chief guest. Major General Charles G Kemper, Commanding General, 34 Infantry Division from United States Army also witnessed the closing ceremony. The troops displayed highest standards of professional excellence during the conduct. The Infantry Rifle Company Exchange was aimed at refining drills procedures besides sharing counter terrorism experiences vital for countering perpetual terrorism threat faced by both nations.

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Policed state

Pakistan is under grave threat from its own citizens, or so the interior ministry would have us believe. According to a recent statement made before the Sindh High Court on behalf of the ministry, the government feels it necessary to keep the ban on X in place because it considers the social media platform a "threat to peace and national security".

The statement reads: "hostile elements operating on X have nefarious intentions to create an environment of chaos and instability, with the ultimate goal of destabilising the country and plunging it into some form of anarchy". For anyone aware of Pakistan's sociopolitical context, it is not difficult to guess who is being described as 'hostile elements'. There are many disgruntled and disillusioned citizens who have taken to using the platform to vent their frustrations against state institutions that clearly appear unnerved by the unchecked criticism and would like to see them silenced.

The ban on X, the interior ministry says, does not curtail freedom of expression or restrict access to information. In fact, 'it is a measure aimed at ensuring responsible use of social media platforms'. But how does completely blocking access to a global platform encourage responsible use of social media? And how does silencing all Pakistani citizens on X contribute towards national stability and democratic governance? The government does not shed light on these questions. Meanwhile, another recent development provides a fresh example of how extensively constitutional freedoms are being encroached upon. Following the uncovering of a mass surveillance apparatus spying on potentially millions of citizens, the government has, through an SRO, formally allowed intelligence personnel to intercept and trace calls of any citizen "in the interest of national security". To be clear, this was already being done, albeit without warrants or legal sanction. It will now continue with legal sanction, but likely still without warrants. The PML-N-led government must be asked: what is it thinking, giving up important personal protections under the pretext of 'national security'? Even if the circumstances demand enhanced powers for security institutions, these should not be conceded without adequate checks and balances in place. There are many seasoned politicians within its ranks who should know better than to expect such measures to yield positive results in the long run. Likewise, silencing social media is no solution to the actual problem of growing public discontent, which is being augmented by the government's poor policies.

What is needed most right now is for Pakistan to be as accommodative of competing narratives as possible. It would be prudent, therefore, to spend more energy understanding and addressing public concerns rather than treating everyone as an enemy. Suppressing a restless public and blocking dissent will only create more frustrations, which may spill over in unforeseen ways.

Rafia Zakaria

One of the most enduring mysteries of life is the capacity of human beings to believe that everything will go well. Most of us grow up imagining that the course of life will proceed without any hiccups. It is this belief that things will proceed as we expect them to that inevitably is the material of tragedy. It is as if we walk along the path of life and expect that we will proceed on course without many hurdles — and when a wild animal jumps out of the bushes and confronts us, we are frightened and eventually disappointed.

The difference between what we expect of life and what life dispenses during our journey is the measure of human suffering.

Another one of the ironies of life is that even though we all confront surprises along our path, and thus experience suffering, we somehow imagine suffering to be unique to ourselves. When faced

by unfortunate events, such as the loss of a loved one, an unexpected illness, being fired from a job, etc, we automatically ask ourselves what it is that we have done to deserve sorrow, illness or anxiety.

We review our actions; we consider our decisions, and we imagine that we have tremendous control over averting unexpected events in the future. This is simply not true; life is as it is, and living involves having to put up with unexpected events that will inevitably befall us.

This is not to say that suffering is futile or that we have no control over it. The story of our suffering or the narrative around it is entirely within our control. If we submerge ourselves in its specifics, in the unfairness of it all, in the feeling that it is exclusive to us then the impact of suffering is to isolate us from the rest of the living beings who surround us.

One example of this

can be found in Russian author Leo Tolstoy's book *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. The novel is told from the perspective of a man who knows that he will soon die. Because of this, he is on his sickbed alone while life goes on around him. Instead of considering the remainder of his time as precious, he is immersed in self-pity, and feels like

his family members including his wife are already planning for a life without him. He feels that there is no one at all who understands how he feels.

All of it is, of course, interpretation and perspective. Such are the delusions of self-pity that they blind him from considering things from the perspective of others. He cannot, for instance, see the fear his wife has of becoming a widow and for having to provide for the family and for her children by herself. He cannot see the concern of his children who now have to deal with the prospect of being orphans. Instead, he

does what we all do — we

place ourselves at the centre of the drama that is life and imagine all others as incidentally present and beyond the suffering that is so real in our own case.

If the narrative and interpretation that we impose on our lives is of such crucial importance, then it follows that literature is of greater service to the task of living life than most people might think. The central goal of good literature is to enable the reader to do what may otherwise be impossible, ie, to inhabit the life of another person.

In this sense, good literature provides, at least to an extent, an escape from the self and a chance to immerse ourselves in perspectives and narratives other than our own.

In a secondary sense, literature equips those that read it with an ability to create more varied narratives about their own lives; it enables flexibility and variety in interpreting suffering in a constructive way. The greater

our ability to inhabit the lives of others, the more we can escape our own self-centredness and the limiting belief that it is only our own suffering that is real. The more we can understand that suffering unites all human beings and that all of us are in some way or another engaged in struggles, the more likely it is that we can endure life without becoming bitter and intransigent in the face of constant change.

It is a testament to the curious psychology of human beings that we persist in believing that if we can somehow amass enough wealth, or have a certain number of children or marry the right partner that we can put an end to suffering in our lives. Our behaviour resembles that of a baby sitting on a high chair, who drops an object but then begins to cry when he can't retrieve the object. Yet when you give the object back to the baby he will often drop it again. The experience of

suffering or pain is in this sense dependent on the absence of pain — we only know freedom from suffering because of the existence of suffering.

None of this makes life's challenges any easier when we are in the midst of them. The more focused we are on ourselves the more acute suffering can be; the more focused we are on the good of others the easier it is to endure life's challenges.

One antidote to suffering then is to cultivate the selflessness that comes from focusing on the greater good. Few of us can achieve this, sadly, and so most of the rest of us plod on wearily on the path of life, deluded into believing that once we achieve X or Y or Z we can somehow avoid the curveballs thrown our way and the catastrophes whose regular occurrence is an ironic testament to the fact that we are indeed alive. -- Courtesy Dawn

Targeting upright judges**Zahid Hussain**

It can't get more sordid than this. The judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) who dared to speak out against the interference of intelligence agencies in judicial matters are now the target of a sleazy campaign questioning their integrity. It's not hard to fathom who is behind this character assassination drive. The deep state, it seems, has struck to silence resistance. But that may not be so easy with the bench and the bar rallying behind upright judges.

It all started with trolling on social media, particularly of two of the six IHC judges who had earlier this year penned a letter to the Supreme Court chief justice, detailing the harassment that they had allegedly experienced at the hands of the intelligence agencies. Then complaints were filed by some obscure persons against two of the judges — Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri — in the Supreme Judicial Council on fabricated charges.

It is apparent that

the move was meant to pressurise the two who are hearing politically sensitive cases. Lately, questions were also being raised about Justice Jahangiri's law degree. The judge is heading an election tribunal in Islamabad. Nothing could be more preposterous than such suspicions being levelled at a high court judge who has previously served as advocate general. The timing makes the allegations more dubious, with the judge hearing appeals against the election of PML-N MNAs.

Similarly, Justice Sattar has been hearing the audio leaks case. He seems to have drawn the ire of the deep state for questioning the role of the intelligence agencies in unauthorised phone tapping. In a letter to the IHC chief justice sometime ago, Justice Sattar said he was asked by a top security official not to pursue the charges. Before withdrawing its plea, the Intelligence Bureau had sought the judge's recusal from the case.

While slapping a fine of Rs500,000 each on FIA, PTA and Pemra, Jus-

torism court in Sargodha alleging harassment by the agencies.

All that raises questions about the motive behind the complaint, which was based on a car accident, which took place some two years ago, and that allegedly involved a family member of the judge. There is something devious about the timing of the reference. It is not just the security establishment; there are also questions about the role of the executive in orchestrating the campaign against the judges. The government is completely silent on the matter. In fact, remarks by some cabinet ministers and PML-N officials give credence to suspicions of the government's encouragement to the campaign by sections of the media.

Meanwhile, there seems to be no cessation of the harassment of judges by the establishment or the executive's meddling in the judicial process. The media trial of upright judges on concocted charges is the independent judiciary's biggest challenge. The campaign indicates the growing shadow of the se-

curity establishment over the system. It also threatens whatever is left of the democratic process. The resistance of the judges against intimidation is indeed commendable.

A full IHC bench has initiated contempt proceedings against the FIA and some other federal agencies. The court has warned that there would be an institutional response to the smear campaign. The IHC chief justice has rightly pointed out that it was the responsibility of Pemra, PTA, and FIA to stop such campaigns. Bar associations have also extended support to the targeted judges.

Most worrisome is the role of a section of the electronic media, which is being used to malign the judges who refused to bow to pressure. It also shows the blatant misuse of social media in spreading fake news. But the main question revolves around stopping the security establishment's alleged meddling and harassment of judges. The rot is much deeper than it seems. The main responsibility lies with the apex court and its chief justice to safe-

guard the independence of the judiciary. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has yet to take action on the letter by the six IHC judges narrating incidents of intimidation. It is certainly not the first time that cases of harassment and interference by the security establishment in the judicial process have been reported. But the collective letter by the IHC judges was most damning.

After some apparent hesitation, the chief justice took suo motu notice of the letter and initially a seven-member bench was formed to hear the case. Later, it was decided to bring the case before a full court. But some three months on, the hearing is yet to begin. Delaying such an important issue is beyond comprehension. The inaction provides impunity to the illegal action by the establishment and the executive. The smear campaign against the judges who dared to speak out is one such example. The IHC judges have refused to surrender before the blackmailing and intimidation and now it is up to the chief justice to uphold the sanctity of the judicial institution.

France unbowed?**Mahir Ali**

In the run-up to last Sunday's second round of French parliamentary elections, opinion polls and much of the media commentary chiefly focused on whether the far right would succeed in its aim of securing an absolute majority or fall short by a couple of dozen seats. Either way, it was widely assumed that Rassemblement National (RN) leader Marine Le Pen's youthful protégé Jordan Bardella would be the next PM.

Ice buckets with bottles of champagne lay in waiting for a cork-popping moment that never came, as exit polls on election night revealed that not only had RN failed to repeat its first-round triumph, but that it had been relegated to third place, behind the left-wing National Popular Front (NFP) and the centrist alliance of President Emmanuel Macron. One party stalwart was overheard declaring: "The French are idiots! A nation of morons!"

Her opinion wasn't shared by the vast crowds gathered in Parisian city squares, which reacted to the projected results with rapturous applause. In the preceding week, more than 200 candidates — mostly from the centre — had stepped away from three-cornered contests in order to coalesce the anti-RN vote. The tactic worked, not least because voters spooked by the idea of a far right government turned out in their largest numbers since 1997.

A surge in turnout also appeared to propel the purportedly reformist Iranian presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian to a decisive lead over his rival in the second round. The UK, whose electoral system must be among the least democratic in Europe, propelled Keir Starmer's

Labour to a nearly two-thirds parliamentary majority with around one-third of the popular vote. The RN won an almost identical share in the French first round. We'll never know what a second round in Britain might have thrown up.

Across the Channel once you get past the justified jubiliations about thwarting the far right (for the time being, at least), what it has thrown up is a degree of incoherence and a recipe for instability. The NFP — a distant echo of the 1936 Popular Front that briefly kept France safe from fascism — combines the radical La France Insoumise with the socialists, communist and green parties. There is basic agreement on key policies, but plenty of scope for dispute on details, not to mention ructions within the LFI. The latter's charismatic leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, is invariably described as controversial in the media and smeared as antisemitic by his rivals (much as Jeremy Corbyn was, and for the same reason: a refusal to compromise on Palestinian rights).

The short-lived 1930s Popular Front under Leon Blum notched up a few significant achievements, such as annual vacations for workers, but those were based on a parliamentary majority. The NFP today, around 100 seats short of a majority, will struggle to come up with a prime ministerial candidate acceptable to the Macronists, some of whom consider the LFI more alarming than the RN (whose racism and hostility to immigrants many so-called centrists have assimilated).

RN is a rebranding of FN (Front National), the more overtly fascist party founded by Marine's dad Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose Holocaust-denying legacy she sought to disown with some suc-

cess — to the extent that some French Jews prefer a historically antisemitic entity that today approves of the Netanyahu regime's fascist tendencies to anyone who dares to challenge the Gaza genocide.

There is no easy answer to the question of whether Macron's gamble in calling a snap election after the RN did exceptionally well in European elections has backfired. It would have been much worse for France had the hard right been able to build on its first-round triumph. Its failure to do so can be credited more to the left's tactic than Macron. The president has muddled through over the past couple of years without a parliamentary majority, decreeing policies that have enraged many of his compatriots.

He might be able to cobble together some kind of a coalition with the non-RN right and the non-LFI left, but it will be inherently unstable. Besides, if the policy settings responsible for the popular antagonism to the Macron government do not shift, there's every chance that Marine Le Pen's dream of entering the Elysée Palace in 2027 could come true. Bardella, meanwhile, will head a far-right European parliamentary group called Patriots for Europe that includes like-minded MEPs from Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium.

It would be unfair to scoff at what French voters have achieved, but it was just one battle in a protracted pushback. The spectre of Europe's 1930s descent into fascism still haunts the continent. There's little excuse for complacency, but there's cause to relish last Sunday's reminder that resistance is never futile. -- Courtesy Dawn

Jamil Ahmad

The sizzling heat that parts of Asia and other regions are grappling with is a phenomenon that is now far from a climate anomaly; it is becoming the new norm. This extreme weather carries grave socioeconomic implications, claiming lives and leading to health problems that affect daily lives, jobs, and productivity. This year is set to become the hottest on record, and if current trends continue, the record may not stand for long.

Trees and green cover are part of nature's way of protecting humans and other species from extreme heat while providing essential ecosystems. Forests absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide, reduce risks from floods and landslides, and increase environmental resilience to climate change. Beyond sequestering greenhouse gases, forests offer multiple services vital for planetary health and human well-being, including water, clean air, food, biodiversity habitats, and recreational spaces.

A staggering 1.6 billion people directly depend on forests, as do countless animals, plants, insects, and other species. However, this dependence is threatened by rapid deforestation, with around 10 million hectares (25m acres) lost annually. This rate of deforestation not only threatens biodiversity but also disrupts life-supporting ecosystem services.

Approximately 4bn hectares (9.9bn acres), or 31 per cent, of the landmass is covered by forests. However, this green cover is unevenly distributed. According to FAO's State of the World's Forests report, just 10 countries account for 66pc of global forests. The remain-

Green shields

ing are scattered across more than 180 countries. Many developing countries with insignificant forest cover are at a disadvantage in combating environmental degradation.

The vulnerability of these developing countries to climate change is amplified if they suffer from high levels of deforestation, claiming lives and leading to rising temperatures, especially in regions with low forest cover.

With the global population expected to reach 10bn by 2050, the demand for food will rise. Two-thirds of the world's accessible freshwater is sourced from forested watersheds and wetlands. However, land-use changes such as clearing forests for agriculture to boost food production are flawed strategies. Without sustainable forests, prolonged high temperatures will dry up the soil, reduce crop yields, jeopardise food security, aggravate water scarcity and increase inequality.

Conserving biodiversity is another critical aspect of forests' roles. They provide habitats for plants, pollinators, and animal species, and act as barriers to wildlife interaction with humans, thus intercepting zoonotic diseases.

Pakistan's meagre forest cover, less than 5pc of its area, is dwindling fast due to deforestation at an annual rate of 0.75pc, the highest in the region. The country loses 27,000 hectares (66,000 acres) of forest per year to land-use changes and unregulated logging. Deforestation increases the risk of landslides in mountainous terrains and endangers exotic birds and wildlife. The beautiful high-altitude pheasant Himalayan monal, once abundant in mountain forests, is rarely spotted anymore.

As a party to UN environmental conventions,

Pakistan must utilise this multilateral mechanism for long-term action to halt deforestation. At the local level, improving forest management and promoting sustainable business practices that benefit local communities is imperative.

Building on earlier declarations, 145 countries at the UN Climate Change Conference in 2021 committed to "halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030". However, little progress has been made on this and a UNEP report released last month found that countries are falling short of meeting the agreed target to stop deforestation. The report outlines that pledges to reduce deforestation and financially support this transition from developed countries are insufficient to halt deforestation by 2030. This shortfall will worsen the climate and biodiversity crises and exacerbate poverty.

The report recommends developing long-term integrated policies to reduce deforestation and emphasises empowering local communities to manage their lands as a proven strategy to protect forests within their lands. Noting that deforestation is driven by complex interaction between global, national, and local factors, the report calls for coordinated action to conserve forests "for the sake of people, climate, and nature".

The escalating heatwaves and their socioeconomic ramifications underscore the urgency of addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management. As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges, preserving and restoring forest ecosystems is imperative for a sustainable future. -- Courtesy Dawn

No decision made regarding export of wheat: Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that no decision regarding export of wheat has been made.

Taking to the floor of the House, he made this clarification, while responding to points raised by the opposition benches.

The Prime Minister recalled that it is also part of the record that sugar and wheat were first exported and then imported during the reign of PTI in the past.

Meanwhile, responding to a calling attention notice, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar informed the House that providing the best health facilities to the people is priority of the government. He said there is an acute shortage of nursing staff in the federal capital. He said evening classes have been started at different nursing schools to meet the requirement.

The House today passed "the State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Bill, 2024.

According to the statement of objects and reasons, the bill is aimed at reconstituting the boards of SOEs to better align them with the reform initiatives for restructuring and the transformation as well as privatization of certain entities.

Besides, "The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment), Bill, 2024 was introduced in the

House today.

Earlier, The House offered feteiha for the departed soul of Captain Osama bin Arshad and others embraced Shahadat in South Waziristan.

The House also prayed for the victims of the Neelum Valley incident.

The House has now been prorogued. However, referring to the PTI government's sugar and wheat scams, he recalled that it was also on record that in the past wheat.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the Representatives from Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Rating Agency.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing the Seventh Agricultural Census 2024 at a ceremony held by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

FM meets Standard & Poor's Global delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday met with the delegation of Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Rating Agency at Finance Division.

The meeting was attended by a delegation from S & P Global led by Directors of Sovereign and International Public Finance Ratings Yee Farn Phua, Andrew David Wood, and senior officials of the ministry, said a news release.

The minister welcomed the S&P delegation and gave an update on Pakistan's current economic situation.

He highlighted the successful completion of the 9 month Stand By Arrangement (SBA) with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the

improving macroeconomic indicators of Pakistan.

Aurangzeb also highlighted some of the indicators including building up of foreign exchange reserves to USD 9.4 billion, robust performance of the stock exchange, declining trend of inflation rates with CPI inflation clocking in at 12.6% in June 2024, and increase in foreign remittances by 7.7% as compared to last year.

He emphasized the government's efforts to broaden the tax base as tax collection during FY 2024 increased by 30% as compared to FY 2023 and also to further improve the tax-to-GDP ratio.

During the meeting the ongoing reforms in the energy sector, and State-Owned Enterprises including privatization were discussed.

Azerbaijan eyes multi billion-dollar investment in Pak: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that Azerbaijan was considering an investment of \$2 to \$3 billion in Pakistan.

Speaking exclusively to a private news channel, he said that Azerbaijan was particularly interested in the mineral sector, including oil and gas.

The minister said that Azerbaijan was focusing on the oil and gas exploration sector, noting their keen interest in expanding investments in the LNG sector as well.

The prime minister is eager to increase economic cooperation with friendly countries, Malik said and added, the government prioritizes investment over aid from friendly nations.

He further mentioned that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Pakistan was very much expected to boost trade relations. Discussions will include increasing textile exports and promoting the IT sector between the two countries, he said.

Malik expressed optimism that these initiatives will significantly enhance economic ties between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Board of Investment Rahim Hayat Qureshi addressing at workshop on "Modernised Inspection Regime (MIR)".

Poultry sector must be facilitated for cheap protein: FCCI

FAISALABAD (APP): Senior Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FCCI) Dr Sajjad Arshad has said that the government should facilitate the poultry sector for provision of cheap protein to the public.

Addressing a meeting of the poultry farmers, he said that the poultry sector is at the verge of collapse as every poultry farmer is bearing hefty losses of Rs. 7 million. This loss has now become unbearable and if this situation continued, it would not only have an ill impact on the export of eggs and chicken meat but also

deprive people of cheap source of protein readily available in Pakistan at affordable rates, he added.

He said that Pakistan is annually producing 17,500 million eggs and 1440-million-kilogram chicken meat. In 2022, we exported 16.8 million eggs while in 2024, chicken meat and chicken products of 115,664 tons were also exported.

He said that in Pakistan the ratio of consumption of chicken meat is only 7.20 kilogram while every Pakistani take only 88 eggs per annum which is far below than the international standard.

Rupee sheds 11 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee witnessed a devaluation of 11 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 278.51 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.40.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 278.75 and Rs 280.75 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 12 paisa to close at Rs 301.29 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.17, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.72, whereas an increase of 01 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 356.40 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 356.39.

SCCI president holds meeting with federal ministers

SIKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik held a detailed meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif. Multiple matters of significance importance particularly revival of the Final Tax Regime (FTR), the launch of the new LTLD and DDT Scheme, formation of the EDF Board and the issuance of note verbale for Sialkot Chamber's Brazil delegation were discussed.

Both the ministers assured of their full support on the issues presented by the President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik and shared that the issue of withdrawal of the Final Tax Regime (FTR).

Banks to observe Ashura holidays on July 16, 17

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and all banks and financial institutions will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024 on the occasion of Ashura 1446 A.H. The central bank, in a statement issued here on Wednesday, informed that SBP will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024, (Tuesday and Wednesday) being public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9th and 10th Moharram 1446 A.H).



ISLAMABAD: Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, chairman senate standing committee on railways presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Government has to fix FBR system to increase tax revenue: Atif Ikram

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government has to fix the FBR system to increase the tax revenue, new taxes of 1700 billion rupees will bring a storm of inflation. The burden of government expenditure is being put on the public and the business class by increasing the tax rate. It is possible to reduce the government expenditure by reducing the interest rate by 550 basis points, otherwise the relief that the people got from the

reduction in inflation will not remain. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the State Bank gradually reduced the interest rate to 16%. The interest payment on loans is 9775 billion rupees in the current financial year, while 8736 billion rupees will be spent on the payment of interest rate on internal loans. Atif Ikram said that in the current budget, the tax payers have been burdened with billions of rupees of taxes, after electricity and gas become expensive, businesses will be affected. Relief should be given to the public and businessmen.

Kisan Ittehad hails PM's initiative of agri-tubewells' solarization

QUETTA (APP): Chairman of Kisan Ittehad, Khalid Hussain Bath on Wednesday lauded Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's initiative of converting 28,000 tube wells to solar panels in Balochistan.

Addressing a press conference here at Quetta Press Club, he said shifting of tube wells to solar energy will pave the way for Balochistan's development and prosperity.

"Balochistan has fertile land and making agricultural lands cultivable can increase the country's resources," he said, urging

that the province has around 40,000 tube wells, and an additional 16,000 tube wells should also be converted to solar energy.

The Chairman Kisan Ittehad thanked Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for their orders to convert thousands of tube wells to solar power.

He requested Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Balochistan to take measures to promote tourism in the province, ensuring the security of tourist areas to increase the province's resources.



QUETTA: Chairman Kissan Ittehad, Chaudhry Khalid Hussain Baath along with others addresses a Press conference at Quetta Press Club.

Decrease in power tariff for protected consumers laudable: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FCCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that

the business community supports the decision of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif regarding decrease in power tariff for 51% of consumers using upto 200 units per month.

Talking to business community on Wednesday, he was of the view that it was proper to withdraw the increase in tariff on electricity for protected consumers who are facing very high costs of living.

Mian Zahid Hussain also advocated for reducing the burden of electricity bills on other consumers.

Public protests and angry demonstrators' attacks on distribution company employees led to the decision to provide relief to lifeline consumers, he explained.

The business leader said that the move was necessary to prevent violent incidents from spreading across the country.

He said that the Prime Minister's decision will reduce the burden of electricity bills for around 15 million protected consumers by Rs 50 billion, which the government will cover by cutting the development budget. The electricity sector will receive a subsidy of Rs. 1700 billion this year, with IPP owners receiving most of it.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that consumers who use more than 200 units will have to bear higher bills for six months. This policy should be abolished as it flagrantly violates human rights and justice.

Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates 7th agricultural census

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday inaugurated the 7th Agricultural Census-2024 at a ceremony held by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In his address, he emphasized the significant achievement of conducting a highly transparent digital census with the consensus of all provinces using advanced technology, a news release said.

The minister congratulated the PBS on the successful launch of the seventh agricultural census. He highlighted the importance of agricultural statistics for a

predominantly agrarian country like Pakistan and praised PBS for introducing an automated local system. This new system will facilitate decision-making based on reliable data, helping to enhance agricultural productivity in line with the growing population. The data collected will be instrumental in formulating agricultural policies, identifying areas with potential for increased productivity and providing necessary resources to achieve better yields.

It will also support initiatives aimed at improving farmers' productivity and overall welfare. The minister further

noted that Pakistan's future economic stability hinged on increasing exports, particularly in the agricultural sector.

He stressed the need to learn from other countries, such as India, which has conducted eleven agricultural censuses compared to Pakistan's seven.

"Despite facing similar challenges, other nations have progressed, and it is crucial for Pakistan to catch up." He acknowledged the difficult economic situation, stating that any government would struggle with the current fiscal deficit, making it essential to focus on increasing revenue and exports.

SNGPL disconnects 19 gas meters

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished 19 citizens in a crackdown during two days. According to officials of Task Force, the consumers were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and had also shifted meters at different sites by themselves. Gas metres of all the 19 consumers were disconnected for violation of the laws. The department urged citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number.

Deputy Governor SBP terms skill development as key to success in financial industry

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr. Inayat Hussain on Wednesday highlighted the pivotal role of continuous learning in ensuring the long-term success of professionals within the financial industry.

He was addressing at the launch of the Treasury Management Certification, that has been jointly developed by CFA Society Pakistan and National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) in collaboration with SBP and Financial Market Association, said a statement issued here.

Dr. Inayat Hussain underscored the

importance of providing treasury professionals with the skills necessary to navigate the challenges of an evolving financial landscape. Investing in staff development enables professionals not only to effectively manage risks and ensure compliance, but also to leverage new technologies, and adapt to dynamic market conditions, he stressed.

He commended the collaborative efforts of the SBP, National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) Pakistan, the CFA Society Pakistan, and the Financial Market Association for developing the certification program tailored to meet local market requirements.

PR plans to introduce smart Railway cars on multiple routes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Pakistan Railways (PR) was informed on Wednesday that Pakistan Railways would introduce four smart railway cars on routes between Lahore-Islamabad, Lahore-Faisalabad, Lahore-Multan, and Karachi-Hyderabad at a cost of around \$45 million," stated Secretary of the Ministry of Railways, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, during the meeting. He noted that under this public-private partnership, private parties will contribute a portion of the profit to maintain the tracks.

private partnerships and is planning to introduce four smart railway cars for routes between Lahore-Islamabad, Lahore-Faisalabad, Lahore-Multan, and Karachi-Hyderabad at a cost of around \$45 million," stated Secretary of the Ministry of Railways, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, during the meeting. He noted that under this public-private partnership, private parties will contribute a portion of the profit to maintain the tracks.

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 471 connections from where customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts: Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara, on the 285th day of anti-power theft campaign.

ALESCO spokesman told the media on Wednesday that the company had also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 140 FIRs had been registered in respective police stations, while 18 accused arrested by the respective police.

On the 285th consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units.

PESHAWAR: Vendor selling and displaying colorful decoration frames to attract the customers at Sadar Bazar.

Shahid Rasheed says: Current economic policies unsustainable

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that the current economic policies are unviable. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he was of the view that in the presence of unworkable policies, production and exports will stay the same, and the country will continue to borrow. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that for the next five years, the growth rate cannot go beyond four

percent in any case. The ruling elite has targeted the urban middle class in the budget, so the troubled middle class is shrinking rapidly, he added. The business leader said that a country could only progress with the middle class, the economy's main driver.

This time, too, the people have to swallow the bitter pill while the ruling elite has increased their expenses, and the influential sectors have also been kept out of the tax net, he observed.

Pak-China strategic ties being advanced through CPEC: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong on Wednesday said the strategic relations between the two countries were moving forward under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "There are immense opportunities to increase exports through the port of Gwadar and special economic zones," he said while addressing a day-long international conference.

The conference titled "CPEC: Enhancing Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" was organized by the Ministry of Planning, Development and

Special Initiatives in collaboration with the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future and the Embassy of China to Pakistan. The ambassador highlighted the vast opportunities for growth and cooperation in areas such as green energy, oil and gas exploration, and IT, emphasizing that the economic corridor provided a platform for all countries to invest and benefit from it.

He also acknowledged the significant progress made in Pakistan-China relations during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit

to China, and expressed hope for further strengthening strategic ties through CPEC. The envoy said the decades-long friendship between China and Pakistan was strong and stable, adding both countries wanted peace and development in the region and world as well. He highlighted China's desire for peace and development in Pakistan, stressing the need for global cooperation to achieve these objectives. In recent years, Jiang Zaidong said the southern countries of the world have emerged as symbols of economic development, taking interest in

global affairs. He said Chinese President Xi has provided a forum to promote the development process in southern countries. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary of the Ministry of Planning Awaiz Manzoor Sumra highlighted the significant investments made in various sectors of Pakistan under CPEC over the past decade.

He mentioned that several important energy and infrastructure projects have been completed, and that Pakistan and China were determined for successful execution of CPEC Phase-II.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting of Core Committee regarding Security of Chinese Citizens.



QUETTA: A delegation of National Workshop Core Committee led by Sardar Qurban Jozezai meeting Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Improvement in health and education included in priorities: Dream of development can't be materialized unless health taken seriously, says CM

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that improvement in health and education sectors is included in priorities of the provincial government. He said that until and unless health is taken seriously, the dream of development can't be materialized.

He said that concrete measures are needed to be taken for bringing revolution in health sector by improving services of the neonatal children and mothers

during delivery. In a statement issued on eve of the World Population Day being observed today (Thursday) all over the globe including Pakistan and Balochistan, the Chief Minister said that the reproductive health and family planning plays important role in decreasing the mother and infant mortality rate and improving the overall health of people.

He mentioned that abundant funds have been allocated for the health sector and family planning in

the budget. He said that the provincial government reiterates its commitment to pay more focus on reproductive health and family planning, which are otherwise important components of overall health and welfare of population.

The Chief Minister said that the government is determined to work with partners for good health and well being of the people of province.

He said that the "Healthy Balochistan is our resolve."

Naqvi chairs meeting of Core Committee on Security of Chinese

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Core Committee on Security of Chinese Citizens at the Ministry of Interior. The meeting was attended by Secretary Interior, Secretary Defense, Incharge National Coordinator NACTA, Coordinator National Action Plan and senior officials of law enforcement agencies.

Chief Secretaries of all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, IGs, and Home Secretaries participated in the meeting via video link. The meeting reviewed in detail the security of Chinese citizens across the country.

The Interior Minister underlined that no compromise and negligence would be tolerated in the security of Chinese citizens. He directed that the security audit of Chinese citizens be completed within the stipulated time line and that all relevant agencies ensure 100 percent implementation of the new SOPs. He further said that the SOPs for the security of Chinese citizens had been prepared in consultation with all relevant agencies, and every effort had been made to ensure that all security aspects were considered in it.

The minister asked the departments and agencies working in the field to provide further recommendations.

Fazal, Zafar & Dastagir elected as Chairman of various standing committees

Independent Report
QUETTA: The members of Provincial Assembly Fazal Qadir Mandokhail, Syed Zafar Ali Agha and Mir Ghulam Dastagir Badini were elected as Chairman of different standing committees of provincial Assembly here on Wednesday.

According to an official press release of the provincial assembly, meetings of three standing committees were held in the assembly in which their respective members unanimously elected chairmen to lead the committees.

The Standing Committee on Social Welfare, Women's Development,

Zakat, Ushr, Hajj, and Auqaf Affairs met with its members in the attendance. The members elected Fazal Qadir Mandokhail as Chairman of the standing committee.

Similarly, the Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs, Prosecution, and Human Rights held its meeting in the Provincial Assembly, electing Syed Zafar Ali Agha as Chairman while the Standing Committee on Industry, Labour, and Mineral Development held its meeting in the Provincial Assembly, electing Mir Ghulam Dastagir Badini as Chairman.

President highlights socio-economic challenges related to population growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need to understand the profound impact that rapid population growth had on the socio-economic development of Pakistan and suggested steps to address the related challenges which directly affected country's resources.

In a message on the occasion of World Population Day being observed on 11th July, the president said on this day, they reflected on the critical importance of population dynamics in shaping the nation's future.

He said population of

Pakistan, counted as 241 million (Census-2023), and was growing at a high rate of 2.55% and this population was projected to reach 263 million by 2030 and 383 million by 2050.

"Our young population, which constitutes the majority, is a vibrant and dynamic force that holds immense potential for driving our nation towards prosperity. However, to harness this potential, we must ensure that our youth have access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities which are significantly affected by imbalance between the available resources and the size of our country's population," President Secretariat Press Wing, in a press release quoted, the president as saying.

The president said Pakistan faced significant challenges in managing its population growth, which directly affected their resources and public services.

Despite being water-abundant at the time of independence, he said, they were now one of the water-stressed countries in the world; the agricultural land was being converted into housing areas.

role in controlling maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. A healthy mother means a healthy baby. Balochistan has the highest maternal mortality rate across Pakistan and it is crucial for us to control our population and improve health related indicators while working towards improving our public sector service delivery such as provision of contraceptives, better and accessible health facilities and quality education, especially for girls.

The political parties, civil society organizations and community elders should join hands to prioritize health and family planning for a healthy Balochistan. All efforts should be made to integrate and improve service delivery at the community level for healthy outcomes.

President condoles deaths in jeep accident in Neelum

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday expressed grief over the deaths after a jeep plunged into a river in Neelum Valley of Azad Kashmir.

The president prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls, sympathized with the bereaved families, and also prayed for strength to bear the loss.

According to media reports, as many as 10 people died and another three were injured when a jeep plunged into River Neelum after the driver lost control of the vehicle.



QUETTA: Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad shaking hand with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

SSP says: Traders gives Rs 1mln to police for rehabilitation of drug addicts

QUETTA (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operation Quetta Muhammad Baloch on Wednesday said that the representatives of Anjuman Tajran have given funds Rs one million to the police for the rehabilitation of drug addicts which was admirable initiatives.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting regarding drug addicts.

The meeting was attended by Focal Person for Narcotics DIG Ali Sher Jakhrani along with the President of Central Anjuman Tajran Registered Balochistan Abdul Rahim Kakar Dad shopping center and other officials.

Balochistan Governor says: Currently exponential population increase created dilemma for Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: With regard to World Population Day, the Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that currently exponential population increase has created a dilemma for the province of Balochistan where on one hand the province is struggling to meet its needs due to limited resources and on the other hand it is facing depletion of natural resources. With the celebration of the World Population Day in our province, the public will get a chance of awareness on the importance of balanced population increase which shall further lead to a better environment.

In balancing the population in proportion of the available resources, reproductive health and family planning services play a key

role in controlling maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. A healthy mother means a healthy baby. Balochistan has the highest maternal mortality rate across Pakistan and it is crucial for us to control our population and improve health related indicators while working towards improving our public sector service delivery such as provision of contraceptives, better and accessible health facilities and quality education, especially for girls.

The political parties, civil society organizations and community elders should join hands to prioritize health and family planning for a healthy Balochistan. All efforts should be made to integrate and improve service delivery at the community level for healthy outcomes.

Bakht Kakar says: Livestock sector can be improved further due to range of rain & hills in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development, Bakht Muhammad Kakar has stated that majority of the people depend on livestock and cattle breeding for livelihood in the province. He said that the livestock sector can be improved further due to the range of rains and hills.

Besides, the agricultural areas and green belt have great potential of cattle breeding and growth.

The Provincial Minister was addressing one-day seminar organized in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank and Government of Balochistan here on Wednesday.

He noted with pleasure that the Asian Development Bank is taking steps for improvement in

the livestock sector. The initiatives like provision of soft term loans, improvement of cattle breeding and prevention of diseases in animals are welcoming, the Minister maintained.

Those who were present on the occasion were included: Secretary Livestock, Muhammad Tayyab Lehri, Director General Livestock, Farooq Tareen, senior Natural Resources Specialist Asian Development Bank besides a large number of people associated with livestock.

The representatives of Asian Development Bank and other experts also addressed the seminar and called for taking concerted measures to develop livestock sector in the province.

Pak Citizenship (Amend.) Bill, 2024 lands in NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced in the National Assembly on Wednesday.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on behalf of the Minister for Interior, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi moved the Bill to amend the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951 [The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2024].

Tarar said: "The citizenship of the country was being granted to every child of foreign nationals born in Pakistan. But it is going to be changed as globally it has been the law that anyone of the parents of the ward has to be citizen of that particular country and this is to be adopted in the country as well."



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Livestock & Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar presenting shield to Senior Natural Resources Specialist during a seminar organized by Asian Development Bank.

Commissioner eulogizes role of UNICEF

SIBBI (APP): Commissioner, Syed Zahid Shah here on Wednesday appreciated the steps of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for providing clean drinking water, education and starting other welfare projects for children in the region.

He stated this during his visit to UNICEF's office. Deputy Commissioner, Sibbi, Jahanzeb Sheikh was also present on the occasion.

The commissioner also called for initiating more projects for children's welfare in Districts, Dera Bugti and Kohlu.

Country facing shortage of nurses at national level, 0.9m required by 2030: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, and Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said the country is facing shortage of nursing staff at the national level as the country required a 0.9 million more nurses to cater the growing needs of the population by 2030.

The minister was replying to the calling attention notice moved by Member National Assembly (MNA), Sehar Kamran to invite attention of the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination to the matter of shortage of doctors and nurses in Islamabad, causing grave concern amongst the public.

Tarar informed that there was no shortage of doctors in the hospitals of the federal capital, but rather that of nurses.

"At present, 100,000 nurses are serving whereas there are 589 nursing schools and colleges operating across the country out of which 375 are private and 214 are public institutions," he said.

He added that it was an important service and evening classes policy was being introduced and imposed by 2030.

Since, there were more females opting for this profession, there were efforts underway to manage their hostel and other needs and nursing colleges were encouraged to increase their seats to accommodate increasing number of aspirants, he said.

The minister underlined that some 20,000 doctors were entering the service system per year which was satisfactory and as per the WHO guidelines to cater the population of the country.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Shoaib Noshervani and Rahila Hameed Durrani in pleasant mood during a meeting.

Pak halts operation to deport illegal foreign nationals

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has stopped operation to send back illegal foreign nationals residing in Pakistan to their countries. According to sources, the operation has been temporarily stopped.

The operation against foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan has been temporarily stopped at the request of the United Nations, sources said.

The request by the United Nations was made during the recent visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to Pakistan, sources further said. Sources said that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi recently visited Pakistan for three days.

During the visit, Filippo Grandi met Afghan refugees in Peshawar and

Hariapur, sources said. Filippo Grandi met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister Amir Muqam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interior officials, sources said.

In the meetings, Filippo Grandi was assured to stop all operations against foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan on a temporary basis, sources said. Sources further said that Filippo Grandi assured the negotiations between the Afghan Transitional Government, international aid organizations and aid partners by the end of this year.

In these talks, every action and package regarding the financial assistance of the Afghan refugees inside and outside Afghanistan will be discussed, sources said.

Quetta reports another Congo virus case

QUETTA (APP): A new case of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF), also known as Congo fever, has been reported on Wednesday in the provincial capital of Balochistan taking the total number of cases of the year to fifteen.

Shamsullah, 40-year-old, resident of Pishin district was shifted to Fatima Jinnah Institute of Chest Diseases (FJICD) Quetta having Congo virus symptoms, hospital sources said.

Later, the lab reports of Mr Shamsullah, diagnosed the patient with Congo virus.



QUETTA: Activists of National Party protesting against unannounced load shedding at Quetta Press Club.

Karim says: PM taking steps to provide relief to people in country

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) central senior leader Chaudhry Naem Karim on Wednesday said that federal government under leadership of Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif was taking all possible measures to provide relief to the people in the country. In statement issued here, he said that the relief package of Rs. 50 billion for 94 percent of Pakistan's domestic electricity consumers by the Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif was positive initiatives. Chaudhry Naem Karim said that the PM has taken out 50 billion rupees from the development budget and used up to 200 units of electricity to provide relief to the poor and inflation-stricken people saying that this decision to provide relief of Rs 4 to 7 per unit to domestic consumers.



KHARAN: Inspector General Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurates District Data Command and Communication Centre.

DC Chaman urges all mobile companies to improve internet services

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Raja Athar Abbas has urged the mobile phone companies to improve their working and so the internet services in the border district.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the traders and business community face problems to carry out their business activities due to slow mobile network in the border town and so the students while taking online classes.

The Deputy Commissioner was in meeting with the managers of mobile companies in Chaman on Wednesday.

The issue of slow pro-

cess of network of the mobile companies was discussed during the meeting. The representatives of mobile companies provided detailed information about the mobile network services.

The Deputy Commissioner said that no one can deny importance and utilization of the mobile network of life in modern era. He stressed that every possible endeavors should be made to provide better services to the people.

Earlier, the representatives of mobile companies also highlighted the issues being faced in ensuring network of their companies.