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PM orders speedy implementation of bilateral agreements with China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the concerned authorities to expedite the process of implementing the agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) made with the Chinese government and companies, saying that delay in implementation of the agreements would not be tolerated.

It was informed that the plan to send 1,000 students for modern agricultural vocational training at government expense had been completed. The first batch of students was being sent to China at the beginning of this academic year while the next batch would be sent to the Chinese modern agricultural universities after learning Chinese in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Pak-China cooperation.



LORALAI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti offering Dua after inaugurating Pathan Kot Valley Park. MPA Haji Muhammad Khan Toor Utmankhail, Parliamentary Secretary Barkat Rind and Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan are also present

KP govt to form commission for probe into Bannu incident

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Saturday announced the formation of a commission for a "transparent" investigation into the outbreak of violence at a peace rally in Bannu a day earlier, the provincial spokesperson said.

At least one person was killed and 22 others were injured when gunfire caused a stampede at a march in Bannu city on Friday. The gathering was attended by thousands who were demanding security in the district. The peace rally, organised by local traders and political parties, saw participants waving white flags as symbols of peace.

PM hails ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israel's policies in Occupied Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday welcomed the historic International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on Israel's policies in Occupied Palestinian Territory. "The ICJ ruling that Israel must end its occupation and illegal settlements is vindication of the legitimate struggle of the brave Palestinian people," the prime minister wrote on his official X handle.

Nawaz admits power bills unaffordable for everyone, laments state of affairs

PML-N president orders PM Shehbaz-led administration "to do everything to provide relief to the masses"

Monitoring Desk LAHORE: Criticising the decisions of the previous rulers, ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif said Saturday that the country "is not being treated well which was achieving development goals and got rid of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)".

not declaring a receivable salary. "What is the need [of such decisions] which increased sufferings of this country," the former premier questioned, lamenting that the country was successfully achieving the milestones of development and prosperity before his ouster from power.

JUI-F chief claims PTI ready to step down from assemblies, dissolve KP legislature

Maulana Fazal says PTI assured him of stepping down from assemblies to force govt into snap elections

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: After forming a committee to hold dialogue with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Saturday claimed that the embattled party agreed to step down from the assemblies and dissolve the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) legislature to force the government into elections.

Murtaza whose members include Maulana Lutfur Rehman, Mufti Fazal Ghafoor, Aslam Ghauri and Maulana Amjad to hold talks with the Imran Khan-founded party. The cleric, while talking to journalists in Islamabad today, said that the former ruling party assured him of stepping down from the assemblies and dissolving the KP Assembly.

However, speaking to Geo News, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan rejected the JUI-F supremo's claims that his party had agreed to resign from assemblies. "We have neither held any consultations with Maulana Fazl regarding resignations or dissolution of the assemblies nor had any decision in this regard," the PTI chief added. In the interaction, the JUI-F committee will finalise the future strategy after holding consultations with the PTI.



QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary Population Welfare Hadia Nawaz and Secretary Population Welfare Balochistan Abdullah Khan participating in a walk on eve of World Population Day

Ceremony organized on occasion of World Population Day in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): A ceremony was held at Regional Training Center Quetta on the occasion of World Population Day. Addressing at the ceremony as chief guest, Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Population Welfare Hadiya Nawaz congratulated the participants of the event and said that the Government of Balochistan was providing reliable and free family planning facilities throughout the province by the Department of Population Welfare.

Secretary Population Welfare Department Abdullah Khan while addressing the participants of the event as chief guest said that providing the same amount of resources according to the increase in population has become a big challenge for every country. He said that Balochistan was currently faced with the challenges of increasing population, family planning, increasing child birth and lack of health facilities due to increasing population.

9th polio case of 2024 reported

QUETTA (INP): The polio virus has been detected in 18-month-old boy in the Zhob district of Balochistan, taking the total number of reported polio cases in the country to nine in 2024. According to the detail, the child in the Hassan Zai Urban area of Zhob district was diagnosed with polio virus, with symptoms appearing on June 28. PM's Coordinator on Health Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed said that the genetic testing of the virus is still underway. He confirmed that so far nine children in the country have been affected by polio in the current, with seven cases reported only from Balochistan.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and President PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif being briefed about Chief Minister Solar Panel Financing Scheme during a meeting

Imran rules out talks with PPP on no-confidence motion

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan firmly ruled out any possibility of discussions with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) regarding a no-confidence motion. During an informal conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail on Saturday, Khan expressed his unwavering stance, asserting that PPP and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) were indistinguishable and both were products of "manipulated" electoral processes.

Khan criticised the current political climate, describing it as detrimental to democracy. He highlighted the restrictions placed on his party, stating that key leaders, including the chairman and vice chairman, were already imprisoned, yet the government still threatened further bans on the party.

Sheila Jackson Lee, head of Pakistan caucus in US Congress dies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sheila Jackson Lee, who was the founder and co-chair of the Pakistan Caucus in the US Congress, died on late Friday at the age of 74 after battling pancreatic cancer. According to her family sources, Sheila Jackson Lee, a member of Congress from the state of Texas, was suffering from cancer for a long time, private news channels reported.

"Today, with incredible grief for our loss yet deep gratitude for the life she shared with us, we announce the passing of United States Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of the 18th Congressional District of Texas," she said. "We must strive for a collective vision that benefits all." Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN Security Council which held a debate on Friday under the chairmanship of Russia, the 15-nation body's president for the month of July. In this regard, the Pakistani envoy underscored

Mufti Taqi Usmani urges nation to break free from western slavery, IMF dragnet

KARACHI (INP): Notable Islamic Scholar, Mufti Taqi Usmani said on Saturday that the nation would have to set itself free from the shackles of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and western civilisation. Speaking at a ceremony, he said that every child was indebted to the IMF, bemoaning that Pakistanis had just become "slaves" to the IMF as "we don't have any other choice except complying with their demands."

He further said that the Islamic law couldn't be imposed in Pakistan during these circumstances. Talking about the economy, Usmani urged the nation to give up on using imported products, instead, he stressed the need to increase the exports for reviving the economy. He called for abandoning the interest in financial matters. "Traders can compel any government to alter its decisions as they act as the jugular vein of any country," he remarked. "We couldn't extend railway tracks after partition. We couldn't even construct a road en route to the Lake Saiful Malook," he deplored.



QUETTA: Chairman Balochistan Peace Forum Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani addressing a seminar

Spokesperson says: Pak Mission in Bangladesh in contact with students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's mission in Dhaka, Bangladesh was in contact with all the Pakistani students who were safe and accommodated at safe locations. "DHM has visited Chittagong to meet the students there as well. All students are safe," the Foreign Office spokesperson on Saturday posted on X account. The High Commission had accommodated students at safe locations which included the High Commission premises, Ambassador's residence and some other safe locations, it was further added.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chairing a meeting

Pakistan pushes for preventing any state from dominating regional peace organizations

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan stands for boosting cooperation between the U.N. and regional and sub-regional organizations in maintaining world peace and security, a top Pakistani diplomat said, while also stressing that no state should be allowed to dominate regional organizations. "We must strive for a collective vision that benefits all." Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN Security Council which held a debate on Friday under the chairmanship of Russia, the 15-nation body's president for the month of July. In this regard, the Pakistani envoy underscored

that the particular national interests of member states do not hinder regional integration. "The quest for regional hegemony by one large state has undermined the potential of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)," the Pakistani said in an obvious reference to India. Established in 1985, SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) comprises: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. But India has all along been an obstacle in

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Strategy evolved to invite Chinese companies for investing in various sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Strategy for "Joint Ventures" among various companies and business organizations of China and Pakistan has been evolved and according to the details, Chinese companies will be invited here to invest in 7 major and important sectors of Pakistan.

Moreover, 78 business organizations from China and 167 from Pakistan will participate in this gigantic session which is expected to make great progress in the investment sector.

This was expressed in the briefing of the joint meeting of the Board of Investment Headed by Federal Ministers Abdul Aleem Khan and Jam Kamal Khan, said a press release.

Federal Minister of Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that it is possible to increase the trade volume of Pakistan by one billion dollars with the cooperation of Chinese companies.

He said that there is no doubt that the ground realities and current con-

ditions as compared to Bangladesh, India, Vietnam and other countries in the region, Pakistan is a more attractive and important country for China in terms of investment.

Abdul Aleem Khan directed the high-ups of Board of Investment to immediately finalize details with companies who have to go in "Joint Ventures" for mutual investment.

He added that for this purpose Pakistani Embassy in Beijing should also be taken on board so that companies in China could be facilitated as much as possible. Abdul Aleem Khan said that Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Industry and Production, Food Security and Maritime should also be taken in to loop for ensuring maximum coordinated efforts for investment.

Federal Minister of Investment Board said that new industries should be established in industrial free zones or in the areas where maximum electrical supply is possible.

He also asked the relevant authorities to submit the details for Pakistan-China trade road map to the Prime Minister and get directions for further progress in this regard.

Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan also expressed in the briefing session regarding the investments of Chinese companies and said that the Ministry of Commerce has been instructed to fully coordinate and cooperate with the Board of Investment.

Federal Secretary for Board of Investment while giving a briefing said that the 7 major sectors of Pakistan include medical and surgical equipments, plastics, clothing, leather industry, edible meat, fruits and vegetables and waste and fodder sectors are included.

He told that the Board of investment is fully prepared to invite Chinese companies and associate them with Pakistani counterparts while initial homework has also been completed. He also presented a comparative review of various sectors during the briefing.

Jazz secures landmark credit facility to enhance 4G network, promote digital inclusion nationwide



ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator has successfully secured the largest private sector syndicated credit facility, totalling up to Rs. 75 billion.

The banking consortium was led by The Bank of Punjab (BoP), and this 10-year financing arrangement will significantly support Jazz's ongoing 4G network expansion and technological upgrades while supporting its new ServiceCo model, said a news release.

The signing ceremony was attended by VEON Group CEO, Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, and the Presidents of participating banks along with their

representatives.

The consortium includes prominent financial institutions acting as mandated lead advisors and arrangers, namely Habib Bank Limited, Bank Alfalah Limited, Meezan Bank Limited, MCB Bank Limited, Allied Bank Limited, The Bank of Punjab, Askari Bank Limited, Habib Metropolitan Bank, Soneri Bank Limited, Bank Islami Pakistan Limited and MCB Islamic Bank Limited.

Jazz, a major investor in Pakistan with over 30 years of history and investments exceeding USD 10.6 billion, leads the industry with a 45% revenue market share and serves over 71.4 million subscribers, includ-

ing 49 million 4G users.

The company recently announced a major shift from a traditional mobile operator to a ServiceCo structure, creating Strategic Business Units (SBUs) focused on digital financial services, software & analytics, data centers & cloud, and entertainment & digital platforms. Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, remarked, "By investing in cutting-edge digital infrastructure, we are committed to bridging the digital divide and promoting financial inclusion across the nation. This transaction reflects the financial community's trust in Jazz's solid market reputation and our leadership on the digi-

tal front. It is a crucial step toward ensuring that all Pakistanis, regardless of location, gender, or socioeconomic status, can harness the transformative power of the internet and digital services." Zafar Masud, President & CEO of The Bank of Punjab, stated, "Leading this landmark transaction in the telecom sector exemplifies our strategic focus on digital transformation in Pakistan.

Our partnership with Jazz underscores BoP's dedication to advancing technological progress and supporting the growth of the telecom industry. This deal is a testament to our commitment to driving innovation and fostering eco-

nomics development in the country."

In June 2021, Jazz secured a Rs. 50 billion 10-year syndicated credit facility from a banking consortium led by Habib Bank Limited. Earlier on, Jazz announced the successful closure of its Rs. 15 billion Sukuk led by Askari Bank Limited, marking a milestone as the first-ever and largest short-term unsecured Sukuk by a telecom operator in Pakistan, which won global accreditations from EuroMoney Islamic Finance Awards and Asian Banking & Finance, and is expected to boost the use of Shariah-compliant financial instruments within Pakistan's capital markets.



KARACHI: Commuters are facing difficulties in transportation due to stagnant rainwater due to poor sewerage system caused by heavy downpour of monsoon season

Bangladesh A fight back after Huraira's double ton and Kamran's century

Sports Desk

DARWIN: Bangladesh A put up a fighting display with the bat against Pakistan Shaheens as their scorecard read 203-4 in 62 overs, trailing Pakistan Shaheens by 264 runs, when the stumps were drawn on day two of first four-day match at the DXC Arena in Darwin.

Shadman Islam (88, 167b, 15x4s) and Aich Mollah (70, 113b, 11x4s) resisted with a 153-run third-wicket partnership after Pakistan Shaheens had reduced Bangladesh to 23-2 in 12.1 overs. Mohammad Ali dismissed Parvez Hossain Emon for a paltry three while Khuram Shahzad got rid of Amite Hasan for eight. Shadman and Mollah batted for around 38 overs before the latter was run out by Sahibzada Farhan.

Two overs later Shah Nawaz Dahani dismissed Shadman caught by Umar Amin. Ariful Islam retired hurt as he left the ground at the end of 59th over. Shahadat Hossain (15 not out, 32b, 2x4s) and Hasan Murad, yet to open his account,

will resume the batting for Bangladesh A on day three. For Shaheens, Khuram, Ali and Dahani picked up one wicket each while Mubasir and Mehran remained wicketless.

Earlier, Pakistan added 92 runs in 17.1 overs to their overnight score of 375-2 before declaring the innings at 467-3 after facing 96.1 overs. Mohammad Huraira (218, 247b, 26x4s, 1x6) added 57 more runs to his unbeaten overnight total of 161 while also bringing up the second double ton of his first-class career.

Hasan struck to remove Huraira in the 94th over, ending 204-run third-wicket partnership, as Omair Bin Yousuf (6 not out, 13b, 1x4) joined Kamran Ghulam (100 not out, 161b, 13x4s) in the middle. The declaration call came right after Kamran brought up his 17th first-class century. Ripon Mondal, who picked up two wickets, and Hasan, who plucked one, were the only successful bowlers for Bangladesh A among the six players who bowled.

Nawaz admits power bills...

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related to the CM Solar Panel Scheme 2024 in Lahore today.

"Electricity bills become a trouble for everyone [...] not only for poor people but for everyone," he added. The PML-N president claimed that his government "eliminated loadshedding and controlled electricity rates".

He also took credit for maintaining a low inflation rate and a stable currency, as well as "getting rid of the IMF" programme but all positive efforts went in vain after the change of regime in

2018. "All of us know well, who bring the IMF to this country, again."

"The decision-makers will have to think now and care about our people," he insisted. He asked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led administration "to do everything to provide relief to the masses". Nawaz's cash-strapped Pakistan and the global lender reached a three-year, \$7 billion bailout programme "endorsed by the federal and provincial governments", the Washington-based institution announced last week.

Sheila Jackson Lee...

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Sheila's family said in a statement.

The family's statement highlighted Sheila's extensive contributions as a local, national, and global humanitarian, who was acknowledged worldwide for her courageous fights for racial justice, criminal justice, and human rights, with a special emphasis on women and children.

Sheila announced in June that she had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday expressed grief over the death of the United States Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, founder and co-chairperson of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus.

He offered his heartfelt condolences to the family members and friends of the Late Congresswoman.

The president said that Congresswoman Sheila Jackson was a remarkable leader who always advocated for human rights, with a particular focus on women and children.

He highlighted that her contributions towards strengthening the relations between Pakistan and the USA would always be remembered.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. "As Co-chair of the Pakistan Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, she was a champion for stronger ties between Pakistan and the United States," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline. "Her contributions will be remembered and missed for years to come. May her soul rest in peace. My heartfelt condolences to her family and her supporters," he added.

Visits Gurdwara Interfaith harmony crucial for peace, says KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday emphasized the urgent need for interfaith harmony, calling it pivotal for fostering peace.

He said this during his visit to Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh, Joggian Shah here.

Accompanied by provincial president PPP, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former minority wing leader and ex-PM Kishwar Kumar, Nasib Chand and regional president Misbahuddin.

Governor Faisal Kundi received a warm reception from Sikh community leaders including Peshawar's religious head Singh Sahib Sajjan, Dr Sahib Ji, Baba Mahender Singh, Baba Ameer Singh, and Magan Singh.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Faisal Kundi said that minority are the backbone of our country. He said that targeting the Sikh community in Peshawar is terrible and we condemned it.

Governor Faisal Kundi solemnly reflected, "Peshawar has witnessed sacrifices and sorrows. It

tells the tale of martyrdoms, including martyred Qamar Abbas, Bashir Bilour, and Safwat Ghayur, journalists, and others from all walks of life."

While acknowledging past efforts for peace during the united government, Governor Kundi expressed concern over current challenges, stating, "We will not be silent spectators but active contributors to restoring peace. Today, I bring a message and mission of peace restoration."

Regarding community issues, Governor Kundi assured, "Efforts are underway to resolve issues based on priority. I will meet with the Minister for Religious Affairs and will work diligently to address concerns."

He said that he personally met with DG to resolve the community passport issue. He concluded by commending the security forces, especially the police, for their dedication and ensuring a peaceful Muharram.

In a symbolic gesture, senior members of the Sikh community draped Governor Kundi and PPP leadership with shawls, signifying respect and solidarity.

JUI-F chief claims PTI ready...

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Maulana Fazl also admitted that his party had difference of opinion with political parties and had "bitterness" with the PTI with relations being normalised.

The JUI-F supremo, who was one of the political rivals of the former ruling party, opposed the cases against incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan and other politicians.

He also put forward a demand to hold parliamentary and local government (LG) elections together besides ending the concept of a caretaker set-up.

At the same time, the JUI-F chief also termed the mandate of the PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province "fake".

The politico, who headed a multi-party opposition alliance — Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — which successfully ousted former prime minister Khan from power via no-confidence motion in 2022, claimed that his fight with the PTI founder was limited to the electoral arena.

He also slammed "powerless" ruling parties in the Centre — the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) — and said that both the parties did not deserve to be in power.

After the 2024 nationwide polls, the religious party had developed differences with the PML-N and the PPP after they formed a coalition government as the former levelled serious

allegations of election rigging, interference and manipulation of poll results and demanded fresh elections.

The PTI, which ruled the country from 2018 to 2022, had also formed a negotiation team comprising top party leaders including Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Asad Qaiser, Shibli Faraz, and others for holding talks with the Fazl-led party earlier this month, sources told Geo News.

Both parties had also held multiple meetings since the February 8 polls due to their mutual concerns over the alleged interference and manipulation during the general elections.

They also found a common ground in their opposition to the recently announced anti-terror drive titled "Operation Azme-Istekham" announced by the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government.

"JUI-F desires peace and a stable economy in the country," said Fazl and announced forthcoming public events of his party in KP. He announced that a kisan convention would be organised in Mardan district on August 10, a trader convention in Peshawar on August 11, and an aman (peace) jirga in Lakki Marwat on August 18.

He expressed his views that all politicians should be provided level-playing field to continue political activities in the country. Fazl added that transparent election is only way to establish peace and stabilise the country's economy.

PCB denies NOCs to Babar, Rizwan and Shaheen for Canada's Global T20

LAHORE (INP) — The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has declined permission to Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi to play the Global T20 in Canada later this month due to workload.

The board, in a statement, said it had received NOC requests from the three players for the Global T20 event, amongst other players.

"After taking into consideration Pakistan's busy and packed cricket calendar in the period from August 2024 to March 2025, which includes nine ICC World Test Championship

matches and next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025, and following consultations with the three players as well as the national selection committee, it has been decided to decline their requests," read the official statement.

"The three are all-format cricketers and their services are expected to be required in the upcoming eight months during which Pakistan will play nine Tests, 14 ODIs, and nine T20Is. As such, and in line with the PCB's workload management policy, it is in the best interest of Pakistan cricket and the players that

they skip the upcoming event in Canada so that they are in their best mental and physical shape for the season, which commences with the two-Test series against Bangladesh."

Earlier, the PCB had declined permission to Naseem Shah for The Hundred on the same grounds.

In the meantime, the PCB has approved NOCs for Asif Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Amir and Mohammad Nawaz. The four players are predominantly white-ball cricketers, while Iftikhar and Nawaz are centrally contracted players.



QUETTA: Railway Grand Alliance leader, Majeed Zehri addresses to protesters during protest demonstration against the suspension of the privatization and railway housing society, held in Quetta

Pakistan pushes for preventing...

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promoting regional cooperation through SAARC, a body established to bring prosperity to the peoples of South Asian region.

In his remarks, Ambassador Akram said, "Regional integration represents the next phase of institutional development in international relations — particularly in the realms of trade and industry.

He therefore recognized the crucial role of three bodies — the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) — in fostering economic growth and cooperation across borders, as well as in combating terrorism and drug-trafficking.

Highlighting SCO's "immense promise and potential", the Pakistani envoy said that with some of the world's largest emerging economies as its members, this organization is poised to advance integrated regional cooperation, especially by enhancing trade and investment opportunities.

"This was evident at the recent SCO plus Summit meeting in Astana, in which Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif participated actively," Ambassador Akram said.

He said the framework for regional integration should include:

1. Adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter;

2. Respecting the

East and West, fostering a more secure region.

Ambassador Akram also said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a flagship project, noting that Pakistan will expand this effort — including to Afghanistan, to realize its full potential for investment.

Pakistan, he said, also believes that other regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), along with cross-regional groups, like the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), should also work towards expanding global integration through appropriate association agreements, and welcomed the establishment of the AU-AL-OIC Trilateral Commission.

"Such regional and inter-regional initiatives in association within the UN are crucial for fostering greater cooperation and understanding among diverse regions, and contributing to global harmony and collective progress," Ambassador Akram said.

He said the framework for regional integration should include:

1. Adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter;

2. Respecting the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of States;

3. Preventing any one, two, or few states from dominating regional organizations or imposing their will on others in accordance with the tenets of equality, mutual respect and equity in relations among sovereign States;

4. Regional cooperation should aim to provide support to less developed economies achieve their full potential, and thereby contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate goals;

5. Ensure equity and non-discrimination for all member states in the integration and regional cooperation process;

6. Accord priority to promoting connectivity projects and building sustainable infrastructure to further integration, investment, trade and development, and

7. enhance the essential role of digital integration and cooperation to accelerate regional cooperation, and investment and establish the regionally and globally integrated modern economies.

"Pakistan remains committed to these objectives and looks forward to continued collaboration with the UN and with all regional and cross-regional partners,"



HYDERABAD: A large number of visitors enjoying boating at Al-Manzar downstream Kotri barrage

Gov't determined to provide equal opportunities to all talented women: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday, appreciating the Pakistani women for rendering valuable services in every field, said that the government was determined to provide equal opportunities to all talented women across the country.

He was talking to the globally acclaimed Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiyani who called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister said providing facilities to the women in various sectors including information technology, education, professional training, sports and other sectors was part

of the government's top priorities.

The prime minister congratulated Naila on becoming the first Pakistani woman to conquer 11 peaks, above 8,000 meters, calling it a proud moment for Pakistan.

He also congratulated Naila Kiyani for recently scaling 8,485 meters high fifth-highest peak Mount Makalu.

PM Shehbaz Sharif also commended her work as an honorary ambassador for education and her efforts to promote professional training in the field of mountaineering.

Naila Kiyani thanked the prime minister for his

focus on women's development and presented proposals for specialized training and vocational education in the mountaineering sector.

The prime minister directed relevant authorities to develop a comprehensive plan to implement these suggestions.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, Chairman PM's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and other relevant high-ranking officials.



ISLAMABAD: Globally acclaimed Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiyani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Amb Zamir Akram says: Pakistan committed to maintain a strong and credible deterrence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Strategic Plans Division, Ambassador Zamir Akram, in a discussion organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), emphasized the importance of Pakistan's commitment to maintaining the credibility of deterrence. Highlighting the evolving nature of deterrence in view of advancing technologies, the eminent expert on strategic stability underscored the need to preserve deterrence credibility to enduring peace.

Reflecting on the genesis of conflicts between India and Pakistan, Ambassador Akram emphasized that the territorial disputes stemmed from India's pursuit of hegemonic policies since 1947. Consequently, Pakistan's pursuit of security was primarily motivated as a response to

India's aggressive ambitions. He contended that Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capability was essential to counter India's conventional dominance and establish a credible deterrent, which had effectively kept New Delhi from waging war on several occasions in the past.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, expressed concern that India's development and acquisition of advanced weapons was contributing to an arms race and eroding the essential strategic stability required for peace in South Asia. He warned that India's ultra-nationalistic approach was aggravating mistrust among the nuclear states, with negative repercussions for the fragile strategic environment obtaining in the region.

During a vibrant Q & A session, while elaborating on Indo-US cooperation, Ambassador Akram noted that India — leveraging US cooperation — was adopting a more aggressive stance, as evident by Balakot incident and revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A in IIOJK, while pretending to be a net security provider in the region. He noted that it was in response to India's belligerent approach that Pakistan was forced to adopt a Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) to ensure credibility of deterrence between the two states. Ambassador Akram also emphasized the importance of avoiding miscalculations in a sensitive security environment in South Asia and reiterated Pakistan's dedication to maintaining credible deterrence essential for upholding peace.

IGP Islamabad chairs vital meetings & met with US delegation

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the detail, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the meetings were attended by DIG Security Jawad Tariq, AIG Establishment Abdul Haq Imrani, Law Officer, Safe City IT Staff and officers from the Recruitment Board.

During these meetings, IGP Islamabad reviewed efforts to enhance overall efficiency within Safe City, discussed the recruitment of new staff and deliberated on providing

modern facilities. He directed senior police officers to expedite the recruitment process for Safe City staff promptly and with complete transparency.

IG Islamabad emphasized that all recruitment procedures should uphold transparency and merit, ensuring that educated youth are integrated into Safe City Islamabad.

Additionally, IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi met with the American delegation at the Central Police Office (CPO) Islamabad. During the meeting, important decisions were made to enhance the efficiency of Islamabad Police in line with modern requirements.

EX PM AJK stresses world for result-oriented efforts to resolve Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ex Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan Saturday stressed world community for result-oriented efforts towards resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and urged to continue raising the Kashmir issue on all international forums in order to ensure implementation of UN resolutions on Kashmir issue.

The Kashmiri people deserve the help of world powers to get rid of illegal Indian occupation, he said while talking on a private news channel.

The United Nations needs to play its role to ensure implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir

issue according to which the Kashmiris have the right of plebiscite, he added.

He appreciated that the Pakistan is continuing its political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmir cause and Kashmiri people have great respect for Pakistani nation as well.

He said the real face of India, particularly the fascist BJP regime, has already been exposed and needs to be countered otherwise peace and stability will be at stake. The Kashmir dispute is not a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, but a question of the State's rights, he mentioned. "The right to self-determination is a fundamental right of the Kashmiri people," he stated.

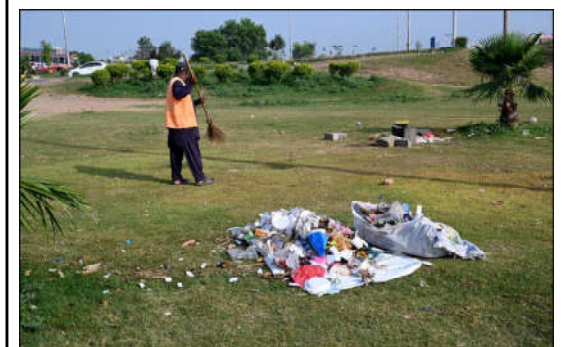
LFK for global intervention for protecting legal professionals in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Legal Forum for Kashmir (LFK) has issued a strong condemnation regarding the recent arrests of Kashmiri lawyers by Indian occupying authorities in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In a statement received here on Saturday, the Forum emphasized the urgent need for the protection of legal professionals in occupied territories and calls on international organizations to take action against the perpetrators of these human rights violations.

The LFK criticizes the arbitrary detention of prominent legal professionals, including the former President of the High Court Bar Association, Mian Abdul Qayoom and other notable lawyers such as Nazir Ahmed Ronga, Muhammad Ashraf Bhat, and Advocate Mian Muzaffar, the statement said and added, these arrests, made under the Public Safety Act (PSA), are viewed as blatant violations of human rights and attempts to silence voices advocating for the UN-guaranteed right to self-determination for Jammu and Kashmir.

It stressed the necessity for immediate action to protect the legal rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri populace. They vowed to raise this issue in various international legal forums, seeking justice for their colleagues and an end to unlawful detentions.



ISLAMABAD: ACDA sanitary worker cleans garbage at the green patch of Faizabad Interchange after Tekreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan called off its week-long protest sit-in.

Islamabad to introduce digital billboard advertising policy by Monday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad is set to revolutionize its advertising landscape with the introduction of a new digital billboard policy, finalized by CDA chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, to be implemented by Monday.

The policy aims to replace traditional advertising methods with modern digital displays, transforming the city's streets into a vibrant showcase of color and motion, reminiscent of New York's iconic Times Square, a CDA official told APP.

Under this innovative policy, digital billboards will be installed at strategic locations across the city,

including streets, avenues, malls, bus stops, public transport, and pedestrian bridges. The use of Eco-friendly materials in digital advertising will ensure a sustainable approach to this modernization effort.

The revenue generated from digital advertising will be utilized for the up-gradation, maintenance, and beautification of Islamabad, creating a self-sustaining cycle of growth and development. Chairman CDA was briefed on the policy, which promises to enhance the city's visual appeal and provide a new platform for businesses to reach their target audiences.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Administration clearing the roads, as TLP protesters wrap up Faizabad sit-in after a week in the Federal Capital.

Chairperson says: NAVTTC implementing PM's mission to produce certified skilled youth to meet Int'l demands

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) Chairperson Gulmina Bilal Ahmad Saturday reiterated the organization's commitment to producing certified skilled youth in line with Prime Minister's mission where with the coordination efforts of overseas ministry NAVTTC introducing numerous quality programs to meet international standards. Talking to PTV news channel, Gulmina said that NAVTTC is aggressively working to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills and certifications needed to succeed in the global job market.

"We are fully committed to the Prime Minister's vision of a skilled and prosperous Pakistan," she said. "Our focus is on providing high-quality vocational training and certification programs that meet inter-

national standards." Gulmina highlighted NAVTTC's initiatives, including the introduction of new vocational training programs, expansion of apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities, and enhanced industry partnerships.

"We are confident that our efforts will bear fruit and we will be able to produce a workforce that is globally competitive," she added. The NAVTTC Chairperson emphasized that the organization is working closely with industry partners, international organizations, and government agencies to ensure that its programs are aligned with market demands.

Replying a question, she said in its efforts to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the job market, NAVTTC is organizing a series of job fairs

and awareness sessions across the country.

These events aim to bring together employers, educators, and skilled youth to facilitate employment opportunities and promote vocational training, she added.

The job fairs will feature leading industries and organizations from various sectors, offering on-the-spot hiring, internships, and apprenticeships to certified skilled youth, she mentioned. Meanwhile, the awareness sessions will focus on educating students and job seekers about the benefits of vocational training, career pathways, and the latest industry trends, she added. A skilled human resource was essential for running industrial units constantly, she said, adding, technical training can play a vital role in the social and economic development of the country.

IHC directs Islamabad Police to recover missing Citizen within 3-days

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Islamabad High Court, while giving a three-day deadline for the recovery of the missing citizen Samiullah, has warned that if the citizen is not recovered, a criminal case may also be registered against IG Islamabad for incompetence and bad performance.

The Islamabad High Court has issued a written order on the petition filed for the recovery of missing citizen.

The court remarked that the report submitted by the police on the court

order is not satisfactory. According to the written order issued by the Islamabad High Court, the vehicle carrying the citizen could not be traced, which was clearly seen in the video.

Three days given to IG Islamabad for the recovery of the missing citizen, on non-recovery of the citizen, a criminal case can also be registered against IG Islamabad for incompetence and bad performance. The next hearing of the case fixed on July 23.

IK approaches court for not providing newspaper

ISLAMABAD (Online): The founder of Tehreek-e-Insaf, Imran Khan has approached the court regarding not providing newspaper in the jail on Saturday. The application was filed by Khalid Yusuf Chaudhry Advocate, said that notice should be taken of the non-supply of newspaper in the jail. And orders should be issued for the supply of newspapers to the relevant authorities. Worth mentioning here that, Jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan has a walking area adjacent to his cell.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi in a meeting with a U.S. delegation at the Central Police Office (CPO)

Secretary Information Shahera Shahid mourns PIO's father's demise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, Shahera Shahid, conveyed her profound condolences on Saturday following the passing of the father of Principal Information Officer (PIO), Mubashir Hassan.

In her message of sympathy, she expressed deep sorrow and heartfelt condolences to PIO Mubashir Hassan and his family. She shared that she was greatly saddened upon hearing the news of

Mubashir Hassan's father's demise, emphasizing the pivotal role a father plays within a family and acknowledging the irreparable void left behind.

Shahera Shahid assured that she stands in solidarity with the grieving family during this difficult time. She prayed to Allah Almighty for the departed soul's rest in eternal peace and for the bereaved family to find strength and resilience in coping with their loss.

Ministerial officers promoted to next ranks

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, has promoted ministerial staff officers based on the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC), a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this regard a formal notification regarding the promotions was issued. IGP Islamabad along with AIG Establishment Abdul Haq Imrani met with the newly promoted ministerial officers.

Islamabad Schools Go Green: 100 primary schools to be powered by solar energy

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant effort to reduce electricity costs and promote sustainability, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced a plan to convert 100 primary schools to solar energy in the next two months.

The initiative is part of a larger effort to harness renewable energy sources and reduce the city's carbon footprint. "This project will not only reduce electricity costs but also provide a clean and sustainable source of energy for our

schools," Spokesperson of the ministry revealed on Saturday.

The project, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year, will involve the installation of solar panels on the rooftops of the selected schools.

The solar energy system will be designed to meet the energy needs of each school.

The initiative is expected to save the ministry's millions of rupees utilized in electricity costs annually, which will be used to further improve educational facilities.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling clay flower pots at H-9 in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Sunday July 21, 2024

Royal tantrum

Despite the government's protestations, a constitutional crisis seems to have been averted — at least for now. After two days of deliberations, the Election Commission announced late Friday afternoon that it had 'decided' to implement the Supreme Court's verdict in the reserved seats case and had directed its legal team to immediately identify any confusion that may arise during the process.

However, in response to 11 Supreme Court justices' finding that it had grossly misinterpreted the bat symbol judgement to not recognise the PTI as a political entity and violated the law in doing so, the Commission continued to remain defiant. It was clear from its press release that the ECP still harbours reservations about the reserved seats ruling and that its implementation may not be as smooth as one would hope. Nonetheless, things seem to be moving in the right direction.

The development came amidst ominous warnings of a 'constitutional meltdown' and a 'looming emergency', which had been propagated all week by various TV 'analysts' as well as ministers, while rumours circulated that the ECP would defy the court. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif appeared on a TV talk show on Thursday to warn that a "constitutional breakdown is about to happen..."

It may be recalled that the ruling PML-N had set off a major controversy earlier this week when it announced that the largest party in parliament would be banned. It was then forced to walk back that announcement amidst heavy condemnation from friends and foes alike. Humbled publicly, the party then took to lashing out at both the judiciary and its political opponents, accusing the former of favouritism and the latter of hatching conspiracies against the country.

The PML-N's confrontational stance and overt refusal to respect court orders on arguably flimsy pretexts is a dangerous sign. The party seems to be throwing a tantrum over being denied a two-thirds majority, which it had only secured due to a series of patently unjust and illegal decisions taken by the ECP. It is unjustified for it to escalate tensions on this matter to the point where they may bring two branches of the state into direct conflict with each other. On the one hand, the PML-N wastes no time condemning the PTI for causing 'irreparable harm' to the state due to the events of May 9; on the other, it seems to have no qualms about the harm it is causing to the tripartite arrangement of power by directly attacking the superior judiciary with accusations of bias towards the PTI and saying the courts want to 'derail' the political system with their judgements. The party must dial back its rhetoric and reverse course. History will not remember it kindly if it continues down this path of confrontation.

Aurangzaib Khan

Five years after the merger of former Fata with KP, the threats to freedom of expression, journalists and journalism, which were prevalent during the 'war on terror' years, persist. Ongoing terrorist attacks in the region have impeded the progress promised by the much-vaunted merger. Journalists, tasked with reporting on the region's unending challenges and instability, have themselves become casualties of a fraught environment. Be it the state, society, government policies, or tribal attitudes towards the media and journalism, all continue to be shaped by a security outlook. Militancy and the attendant securitisation have fostered an oppressive order marked by threats, suspicion and paranoia, undermining opportunities for peace, dialogue and development. Defined and discussed in the idiom of security and combat, the region has remained trapped in an insular, combative

and conservative tribal mould that the merger promised to break free from.

This insecurity has become something of a chronic affliction. To illustrate the point, one only has to consider the threats to journalists in former Fata in the wake of 9/11, which continue decades later. From witnessing an alarming number of attacks and casualties among journalists back then, the region today remains a dangerous and volatile zone where journalists navigate a precarious profession. The recent tragic deaths of journalists Hayat Dawar and Khalil Jibran underscore this risk. Far from receiving the necessary support from the state and media organisations that journalists reporting in a fraught theatre should, they are left to their own devices when it comes to navigating hostilities from state institutions, militants, governing authorities in the tribal districts, and tribes caught between tradition and half-hearted attempts at modernisation

and mainstreaming. To quote a tribal journalist: "If there is no safety, there cannot be journalism but controlled information that serves the parties to a conflict more than the people caught in it."

Displaced, threatened or made immobile by insecurity, accessing information has become tough for journalists. Consequently, information, especially security-related, is monopolised by the security establishment and district authorities. Facts are hard to confirm independently, as journalists can travel neither safely nor freely to the site of a military operation. Little has changed since 2001, when troubles claimed the region; if anything, the culture of secrecy, of monitoring and intelligence-gathering as a source of information, has become more entrenched. And, as the control over the media to propagate state narratives about the region has become more pervasive, so has an environment marked by a lack of transparency, accountability, and, indeed,

promised to break free from.

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Budget and parliament

Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

Although an intense public debate had been going on about the contents and quality of the recently passed federal budget, there has not been much discussion on the deeply flawed process of its passage, with little to no value added to the document in parliament.

The little respect accorded to the budget has been highlighted this year more than at any other time in Pakistan's parliamentary history, although the practice of overspending and shifting allocations from one head to another after the passage of the budget has been the norm since the 1973 Constitution was enacted. This year, the overspending of the previous two financial years reached a record high, as appropriately highlighted in a front-page story in this newspaper on July 8, 2024. According to the newspaper report, the National Assembly passed Rs9.4 trillion in expenditure overruns, an amount five times higher than the one approved last year.

The expenditure overruns are post-facto presented before the National Assembly in the form of the supplementary budget; the National Assembly routinely approves them with little or no debate because members consider such debate futile in the face of expenditure already incurred. For example, this year, the House did not even debate the supplementary and excess budget and not a single cut motion was moved on any supplementary or excess budget. As a result, the supplementary and excess demands for grants for FYs 2022-23 and 2023-24 were approved without any discussion.

These major, far-reaching, post-approval changes in the budget are made by the executive using Article 84 in the case of the federal budget, and Article 124 for the provincial budgets. The powers granted to the executive through these articles make the parliamentary budget process and approval a meaningless exercise.

Pakistan and Bangladesh seem to be the only two countries in the

world which allow this kind of discretion to the executive to modify the budget approved by parliament in almost any way it likes. What is worse, parliament is not even informed at the time of making modifications to the approved budget, let alone seeking its prior consent. All changes made in the budget are collectively presented in the National Assembly at the end of the financial year, along with the budget for the next year.

In order to respect the sanctity of parliamentary approval, it is important that parliament revisit Articles 84 and 124 of the Constitution. To begin with, there is no justification for the executive to incur excess amounts and alter the budget in any manner once parliament has accorded its approval after the debate. Even if there is an emergency and modifications to the budget become unavoidable, it is not difficult in this day and age of modern communication and transport to call an emergency session of the National Assembly to consider the proposed modifications

and give prior approval if deemed fit. Seeking prior emergency approval from the National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue may be another option if convening of a parliamentary session is not possible for any reason.

The Danish parliament gave this power to its finance committee; one can assess the suitability of adopting such a measure in Pakistan, but it should be absolutely unacceptable in a democracy to allow the executive to amend the budget after it has been approved by parliament. It is rather unfortunate that our honourable parliamentarians seldom raise objections to this blatant breach of parliamentary privilege. As a matter of fact, amending the Constitution to establish parliamentary supremacy in budgetary matters should be a bipartisan concern.

The National Assembly passed two amendments to Rule 201 in its Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in 2013 and 2016. According to one amendment, which added sub-rule 201(6), each federal min-

istry was bound to share the proposals regarding the Public Sector Development Programme of the ministry with the concerned standing committee by Jan 31 each year, ahead of the finalisation of PSDP proposals. Each standing committee, according to the new rule, was supposed to scrutinise the proposals and send recommendations to the concerned ministry/division for consideration and inclusion in the PSDP by March 1 each year.

The second amendment was made by adding sub-rule 201(7) in 2016, which obligated the concerned ministries to submit a compliance report to the concerned standing committees within 30 days of the submission of recommendations. It also required each ministry to show reasons in case the committee recommendations were not included in the federal budget.

Because of the dissolution of the National Assembly and the subsequent non-existence of the National Assembly standing committees in January, the PSDP pro-

posals could not be sent to the standing committees this year. However, the status of implementation of Rules 201(6) and (7) during the past 10 years from 2014 to 2023 is extremely disappointing. According to the data obtained from the National Assembly Secretariat, the National Assembly standing committees, whose number fluctuated between 26 and 29 in different years, forwarded a total of 202 recommendations to the respective ministries during the past 10 years, but not a single recommendation was accepted by any ministry! What is even worse, none of the ministries cared to convey the reasons for non-inclusion of the recommendations in the budget, in total disregard of National Assembly Rule 201(7)(b).

These two case studies clearly manifest parliament's extremely weak role in the budget process. Can some party or, preferably, a bipartisan group of MNAs raise this alarming matter in the National Assembly with the objective of giving a meaningful role to parliament in the budget process?

HR901 and beyond

Touqir Hussain

The outcry in Pakistan over the US House of Representatives' resolution HR901 demanding a probe into the Feb 8 elections and condemning human rights violations in the country has died down. But the prospect of overreaction to any future move by the US Congress remains. For a measured response, we need to understand the American political system and its peculiarities.

Non-binding resolutions such as HR901 are almost always ignored by the administration, especially if they run counter to US interests, which at the moment are focused on steady ties with Pakistan following the turbulent years of the Afghanistan war and the aftershocks of the cyber crisis. The supporters of the resolution should not have high hopes, and its opponents should not fear its implementation.

Why the resolution then? The US Congress does have a foreign policy role under the constitution, which it often exercises in strange ways. Americans' historical experience has fostered feelings of superiority and a sacrosanct self-image of an indispensable, exceptional and saviour nation, especially since victory in World War II in the supposed cause of freedom. Coupled with the founding ideal of religious liberty, this has led to an American tendency to claim that its foreign policy is value-based, even when it largely rests on cold-blooded power politics.

Many Americans behave as if they are entitled to hypocrisy and exempt from moral scrutiny. America's actions, they feel, are righteous by definition.

The majority of the

voting public considers America to be a force for good. It makes good politics, thus, for politicians to cater to such public sentiments.

Even though America itself has fallen short of its ideals, it insists that others follow them to cover its own deficiency. But democracy- and human rights-related resolutions or rhetoric is not just politics. They can also be an instrument of pressure or a propaganda arm of policy. Initiatives like the Democracy Summit or President Joe Biden's constant refrain about US-China rivalry being a struggle between "democracies and autocracies", and Congressional rhetoric about the rights of the Uighurs, are an adjunct to the US policy of containment of China.

But HR901 was not policy-related. The resolution, a handiwork of the PTI in America, was a no-cost political move by the Congress in an election year to oblige some of the affluent PTI supporters who could be a prospective source of campaign funding. It also responded to pressures from a large swath of the wider voting public among the Pakistani diaspora, first alienated by the alleged US role in the removal of former prime minister Imran Khan, and then by the Gaza war.

Why did such a large number vote in favour of the resolution? By highlighting the importance of Pakistan as a key ally and partner of the US, the language of the resolution widened its appeal. Besides, in an election year, it was practically impossible for the Democrats to vote against a resolution whose title focused on human rights, while some Republicans who still held a grudge against Pakistan on account of the Afghan war found this

an opportunity to voice their displeasure. Congressmen saw political benefit and no cost to US interests. They knew the resolution would not affect the administration's policy on Pakistan.

It will be premature to suggest that HR901 signals the arrival of a Pakistani lobbying group. Pakistanis' real lobbying success would involve getting the US Congress to take a practical step that benefits the country as a whole, for which the Congress may also have to compromise on some other American interests. HR901 was an easy kill.

Much of the PTI's support among the Pakistani diaspora in the US comes from a dedicated group of doctors, who served as the flagship of a lobbying group for Pakistan that has been long in the making. Their present lobbying efforts have, however, been focused on helping a particular political party in Pakistan, the legitimacy of their complaints notwithstanding. HR901 may have been a useful dry run, but they should debate whether it compromises their future potential to do some real good for the country. It will pit them against those with different political affiliations.

At any moment in the future, one group or another will thus be publicising a negative image of Pakistan, thus undermining the diaspora's long-term clout.

The PTI should continue its campaign for democracy, but in Pakistan and not in America. Americans would love to be part of our conflicts, which helps them manipulate our political system to their advantage, as the PTI itself claims to have experienced. Let us not play into their hands with such resolutions. -- Courtesy Dawn

Jailhouse rockers

F.S. Aijazuddin

If 2024 will be known as the year of seismic general elections, it will also be remembered as the one of unforgettable weddings.

In India, Mumbai is still aggliter in the afterglow of the wedding of Anant Ambani, son of India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani. The festivities spread over weeks of uncapped extravagance. The total cost has been underestimated at Indian rupees 5,000 crores.

Celebrities to whom a photographer's flash is as irresistible as a flame is to a moth, gathered in their hundreds. An underdressed Justin Bieber and less costly performers entertained Ambani's over-dressed, obsequious guests. A pantheon of Bollywood idols succumbed to the gravitational pull of his wealth.

BJP's PM Narendra Modi flew in to give the couple his blessing. The pampered VIP guests included two former British PMs, Tony Blair and Boris Johnson. Rishi Sunak would have completed a hat-trick.

Notable absentees were members of the Gandhi family. They remember that when Rahul Gandhi's grandmother Indira Gandhi married Feroze Gandhi in 1942, she wore not clusters of jewellery retrieved from the vaults of Mumbai's diamond market, but earrings and bracelets made from fresh flowers. Her khadi sari had been woven from thread spun by her father Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while in jail during the freedom movement.

Sonia Gandhi chose to wear the same sari for her wedding in 1968, as did her daughter Priyanka Gandhi in 1997. In the Nehru dynasty, power passes not through the barrel of a gun, but via the palu of a khadi sari. In Pakistan, a similar

'quasi-royal' wedding took place in 1987, when Benazir Bhutto married Asif Zardari. One report mentioned: "She eliminated the dowry, had only two shalwar kameez instead of the traditional nearly 51 dresses, and wore only one layer of jewellery." (The £117,000 diamond necklace she bought from a Knightsbridge shop was a post-nuptial acquisition.)

More recently, another wedding — that between PTI leader Imran Khan and his wife Bushra — became newsworthy for the wrong reasons.

Imran and Bushra Bibi were married in 2018. It was later alleged by her former husband, Khawar Maneka, that the marriage had taken place before the completion of the requisite iddat period of three months. Unchivalrously, he also demanded that "a medical examination of his former wife" be made "to ascertain her menstrual cycle" to confirm his suspicion.

Marriages may be made in heaven; they are unravelled by earthly courts. In any other country, such frivolous litigation would have been given short shrift by any judge, with costs being awarded to the defendants. The court exonerated Imran and Bushra Bibi and ordered that they be freed. Earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled in PTI's favour in the reserved seats case.

Someone, though, behind the scenes, has a zambel of hidden tricks, a crate of unexploded mangoes. Before the court's order could be given effect, NAB filed a new application for their continued remand. How much longer will Imran Khan be kept thus confined?

Some with long memories might see an analogy between two political leaders: the Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the 1970s, and now PTI's

Imran Khan. Their crime was to win a majority. The public has had to bear the punishment.

Sociologists see Pakistan as a country still at war within itself. Its provinces are at loggerheads with each other due to the distribution of water and fiscal allocations. Its political parties lunge at each other's throats for supremacy. Its parliament considers debate and dialogue a waste of spittle. Its superior judiciary is at odds with subordinate courts.

Its elders blame their elders for societal failure. Its youth, like oppressed East Germans, sear-ches desperately for escape tunnels. The public has to surrender its civil liberties because a terrorist (like the Russian Red) lurks under every bed.

The Israeli author Yuval Harari is over-familiar with terrorism. In his book 21 Lessons for the 21st Century (2018), he writes that terrorists don't think like army generals. They are like theatre producers. They concentrate on the effect. He cites 9/11 as a prime example and uses its aftermath (Iraq, Afghanistan) to argue that "overreaction to terrorism poses a far greater threat to our security than the terrorists themselves".

There are 76 years left in Harari's century. He advises there is still time to realign our education systems towards the four Cs: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. Time to reform our thinking, time to reinvent ourselves. In the US, nearly 75 per cent of states have more prisons and jails than degree-granting colleges. In the UK, the new government proposes to release prisoners early to stop jails becoming full in England and Wales. The world needs more schools than jails, and fewer wedding dramas. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM directs for establishing combined sewerage, urban flooding control systems

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has emphasized the necessity of establishing an urban flooding control system in the city for which low-lying hotspot areas vulnerable to flooding needed to be identified, enabling the design of sewer tunnels leading to the main interceptor tunnels at Lyari and Malir River.

Lyari and Malir Rivers by making them free from all sewer outfall structures into both rivers may also be undertaken.

He said this in a meeting held here at CM House on Saturday. Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Ahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary LG Khalid Hyder Shah, CEO Salahuddin, Municipal Commissioner KMC Afzal Zaidi and others attended the meeting.

During the discussion, it was observed that some of the leading causes of urban flooding were clogging of drains with solid waste, obstruction of flow in the drains, lack of outfall infrastructures, growing squatter settlements and encroachments.

The CM said that efforts were made to tackle this problem by removing unauthorized settlements or cleaning drains and developing watershed plans but these actions remained ineffective in the long run. "We can construct new sewage tunnels in flood-prone areas which would carry a load of sewage from internal trunk sewers in the city and bring wastewater to treatment plants," the CM said.

CM said that his government was building treatment plants according to the wastewater generated in the city and its by-products may be used for agriculture and horticulture.



KARACHI: CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting of KMC to discuss a plan to bring its 28 off-road CNG buses on the road.

Nazir Abbasi reaffirms PTI gov't's commitment to public development

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Minister for Revenue and Estate Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nazir Ahmad Abbasi on Saturday reaffirmed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government's dedication to the development of the people. He highlighted that development projects for underprivileged and deprived areas will be completed through thorough consultation.

He was addressing various delegations at Jadoon House in Abbottabad. The event was attended by former Tehsil Council member Rashid Khan, Village Chairman Munir Khan, and representatives from Union Council Baldhairi, Banda Peer Khan and Union Council Mirpur.

The minister emphasized that ongoing efforts were focused on resolving public issues at their doorstep, ensuring that the people can truly experience the positive impact of change. He stressed that the PTI government was working diligently to realize the vision of Imran Khan, with a primary focus on the construction and development of backward and deprived areas.

The minister assured that development projects would be initiated through consultation to address the specific needs of these areas. During the event, elders from the Union Councils informed the minister about the issues in their regions and got the promise of complete resolution from the provincial minister.

Uplift work worth billions of rupees in progress in South Punjab: ACS

MULTAN (APP): Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani stated that developmental projects worth billions of rupees were underway across the South Punjab and efforts were also being made to complete these on time. He expressed these views during a meeting with former Director Health Services Multan Division Dr. Syedain Naqvi here Saturday.

He maintained that the timely completion of health and education projects were his top priority. Fuad also informed about the ongoing construction of road infrastructure and flyovers. The construction of Nishtar II and Nawabpur Road in Multan has provided much needed convenience to the public, he told. Similarly, he said the South Punjab Secretariat is in its final stages of completion which will benefit the common men. He added that the South Punjab Secretariat and all its officers were working tirelessly to resolve the issues of the people and to lay a network of developmental projects.

Punjab finance dept approves 197 posts for Holy Family Hospital Rawalpindi

LAHORE (APP): In a significant development aimed at bolstering the healthcare system, the Punjab Finance Department has approved 197 vacant posts for Holy Family Hospital Rawalpindi. The announcement was made by Punjab Minister for the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Khawaja Salman Rafique, in a statement issued on Saturday.

The minister hailed the approval as a positive step, stating, "The approval of 197 vacancies is very welcome." He emphasized that the completion of the human resource requirements will greatly enhance the hospital's performance and efficiency.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazeer presides over the meeting about Punjab Hepatitis Control Program.

MQM-P lawmakers call on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): The lawmakers belonging to Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Pakistan called on Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here Saturday.

Senior Deputy Convenor of MQM Pakistan Dr. Farooq Sattar, Leader of the Opposition in Sindh Assembly Ali Khurshidi, Khawaja Izharul Hasan and other members of National and Provincial Assemblies briefed the Sindh Governor about the problems and needs faced by the people in their constituencies.

They also gave suggestions for starting the Governor's initiative in their respective constituencies.

Funeral prayer of father of PIO offered; Governor KP attends

PESHAWAR (APP): Funeral prayer of Ghulam Sabir, the father of Principal Information Officer (PIO), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Mubashir Hassan was offered here on Friday.

Besides others, the funeral prayer of the deceased was attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, officers of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, media persons, civil officers, journalists and elites of the city in large number.

Later, the deceased was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard. The Qul of the deceased would be offered on Monday at Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Peshawar's colony at Jamrud Road Peshawar.

Late Ghulam Sabir was also the father of retired senior bureaucrat Ahmad Hassan and senior officer of BISE Peshawar Aftab Hassan.

The people and well wishers are coming to the residence of PIO Mubashir Hassan and are offering feteiha for eternal peace of his father who passed away due to protracted illness.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi presides joint meeting of public sectors universities VCS, GIZ and NAVTTC at Governor House.

CM Maryam lauds Ashura security arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a video link meeting here on Saturday, appreciated all ministers, cabinet committee on law & order, commissioners, deputy commissioners, RPOs and DPOs for making best administrative and security arrangements on Ashura.

The CM appreciated them all by their names one by one. "My team made me proud by making great arrangements. On behalf of Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, I congratulate everyone," she said.

Inspector General Police, Home Secretary and other relevant officers also participated in the meeting. CM Maryam Nawaz praised "Sabil on Wheels" for mourners, and commended the first-ever provision of 'Niaz' at government level. She said, "Before Ashura, provincial ministers personally met and took on board scholars of different schools of thought to ensure peace and harmony on the day. She added that law and order was ensured by following security instructions.

She said that ministers, officers and police remained in the field day in and day out, adding that drone monitoring of large processions had been very beneficial. She directed immediate arrest of those responsible for the incident in Sheikhupura.

Maryam Nawaz said that security arrangements without shutting down mobile phone and Internet services was a huge success, adding that traffic managements.



GUJRANWALA: People are enjoying bath at a tube-well to beat the heat of scorching sun to cool them from current hot weather of summer season, in Gujranwala.

Minister says: Punjab gov't introducing cutting-edge technology to transform learning trends

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat Saturday said that in a bid to revolutionize the education sector, the Punjab government has announced its commitment to introduce the latest technology in schools to cover subjects ranging from basic literacy and numeracy to advanced IT skills.

Talking to a private news channel, Hayat emphasized that this initiative is a crucial step towards preparing Punjab's youth for the challenges of the 21st century, adding, we are committed to providing our students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

The government plans to roll out the initiative in phases, starting with select schools in major cities and eventually expanding to all districts across Punjab, he added.

Education experts and stakeholders have welcomed the move, hailing it as a significant step forward for education in the province, he added.

This bold initiative is expected to benefit over million students across Punjab's remote areas, bridging the educational divide and unlocking new opportunities for social mobility, he mentioned.



KARACHI: Commuters struggle to move forward in a flooded street after heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan's port city of Karachi.

Historic milestone in breast cancer diagnosis achieved by LGH

LAHORE (APP): The Central Research Lab of Post-graduate Medical Institute at the Lahore General Hospital (LGH) has achieved a significant milestone in the field of medicine with the successful implementation of the BRCA-1 test for breast cancer diagnosis.

The LGH has now become the first public sector hospital in Pakistan to offer advanced breast cancer diagnosis and genetic identification testing using state-of-the-art facilities and imported kits. Patients have already begun to benefit from this groundbreaking advancement.

The achievement was announced by Principal of Ameer-Uddin Medical College Professor Dr. Al-Fareed Zafar, during a press briefing on Saturday. He commended the efforts of Dr. Ghazala Rubi, Director of the Central Research Lab, and her team for their dedication in launching the advanced BRCA-1 test.

He emphasized that the test was particularly beneficial for women with a family history of breast cancer or those genetically predisposed to the disease. The BRCA-1 test identifies genetic markers that indicate the likelihood of developing breast cancer by comparing normal genes with affected ones.

Governor KP chairs joint conference of VCs, GIZ, NAVTTC to provide employment opportunities abroad

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday presided over a joint conference at Governor House Peshawar, attended by Vice Chancellors of 34 public sector universities of the province, officials from the German development agency GIZ and representatives from National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC).

DG NAVTTC Irfan Yousafzai, and Tahir Khan, Qamar Sadiq, and Qaiser Khan from GIZ participated.

The conference featured detailed briefings from GIZ on the demand for skilled individuals in European countries, procedures for skilled immigration visas in Germany, and educational scholarships under German institutions' programs.

It was emphasized that there is a need for 700,000 skilled individuals in IT, medical fields including doctors and nurses, and other sectors across European countries.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed the province's commitment to providing employment opportunities abroad, particularly in European countries, to talented and capable youth and women. He highlighted the consultation session's objective between Vice Chancellors, NAVTTC, and GIZ to explore employment prospects for youth.

The Governor announced Prime Minister's allocation of PKR 4 to 20 billion for technical education programs, with a focus on empowering youth from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The Governor stressed the need for more attention to skill development programs to empower local youth, especially amidst challenging economic conditions. "It is imperative to establish language centers for learning German in all provinces, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," emphasized Faisal Karim Kundi, underscoring the importance of language proficiency for obtaining immigration visas and degrees' easy verification in Germany.

Father killed, two kids hurt in road mishap

MUZAFARGARH (APP): A person was killed while his two kids sustained injuries as a motorcycle slipped near at Head Taunsa barrage road.

According to Rescue officials, a citizen named Salman Thaheem resident of Basti Ara Daira Deen Panah was going somewhere along with kids riding on motorcycle. Suddenly they fell down after motorbike slipped near Head Taunsa barrage road Daira Deen Panah.

As a result, Salman Thaheem died on the spot while his two kids sustained injuries.

Maryam Nawaz wants prosperous and developing Punjab: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Saturday that a prosperous and developing province was the dream of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

In a statement issued here, she said that political opponents should compete with Maryam Nawaz on basis of performance. She said that education, health, employment and infrastructure development had never been priority of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government. Azma Bukhari said that there was no space of politics for those who were involved in the May 9 incident. "How those who had burnt the monuments of martyrs could claim to be patriot," she added.

"The PML-N has always played on the front line whenever the country needed it," she said and added that still the PML-N government was making sincere efforts to put the country on the right path.



GILGIT: VC Karakoram International University Attaullah Shah and President Al Khadmat Foundation Faridullah Khan signing MoU between KIU and Al Khadmat Foundation.

Reception planned for gold medal winning sisters

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Punjab Minority Wing Vice President Edwin Sohtra will host a grand reception in honour of the Christian sisters who brought pride to Pakistan by winning five gold medals. The event would include members of the Christian community from the provincial capital.

According to a PPP spokesperson, the reception would celebrate achievements of Veronica Sohail, Sabeel Sohail, and Twinkle Sohail, who are scheduled to arrive on Monday morning from South Africa. The athletes secured their gold medals in the Asian Pacific African Compound Powerlifting Championship, and they have dedicated their victories to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.

Rs750m released for families of 362 cops

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has taken a commendable step for the welfare of the families of police employees who died during service.

This initiative by IG Punjab has alleviated the financial difficulties of the families of police employees who passed away during their service. The IG Punjab has issued orders to grant Rs750 million to the families of 362 employees who died during service in various districts, including Lahore. He said that the families of every police employee who died during service would receive an immediate financial grant according to the rules and regulations. He mentioned that Rs10 million was being spent daily on various welfare initiatives for the force.

This year, over Rs1.3 billion is being spent on funds for employees and their families. The IG Punjab emphasized that the issues of police employees regarding health, education, weddings, pensions, and other matters were being resolved promptly. He instructed supervisory officers to maintain a close liaison with their subordinates and provide all possible relief.

Foolproof security provided to 13th Muharram procession in Taxila

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 13th Muharram ul Haram procession was held in Taxila with elaborated security measures put in place by the Rawalpindi Police here Saturday.

According to police spokesman, Superintendent of police (SP) Potohar Nasir Nawaz, along with the SDPO Taxila and SHO Wah Cantt visited the routes of 13th Muharram procession. The SP reviewed the security and traffic arrangements at various points and issued necessary instructions to the officers. A total of 1,200 officers and jawans from the Rawalpindi Police were deployed on duty for the central procession, along with 50 traffic police officers to maintain the flow of traffic.

The officers on duty were instructed to remain alert and senior officers should check and brief the duty staff regularly.

6 dead, 1337 injured in 1169 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least six persons were killed and 1337 injured in Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 641 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 696 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident.

Minister unveils comprehensive plan to ensure food security, digitize agriculture sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain on Saturday unveiled a comprehensive plan to ensure food security for future generations and highlighted the role of digital agriculture in improving crop management.

Talking to a private news channel, the minister highlighted the importance of adopting sustainable practices and innovative technologies to enhance productivity and competitiveness.

The landmark initiative aims to combat climate change, water scarcity, and food shortages, posing a significant threat to the country's food sovereignty, he added.

Minister

comprehensive strategy is seen as a beacon of hope for the sector's revitalization and a testament to the government's commitment to ensuring a food-secure future for all.

He said that the time has come for us to rethink our approach and adopt policies that prioritize sustainability, efficiency, and innovation, adding, we must work together to create an environment that fosters growth, creates jobs, and improves lives.

The minister argued that embracing technology and innovation is vital to transform the farming sector and meet the growing demands of a rising population.

"The traditional methods of farming are no longer sufficient to meet

our needs, the minister said, adding, we must adopt scientific approaches to agriculture, leveraging technology and research to enhance crop yields, improve resource management, and promote sustainable practices."

The minister also highlighted the sector's contribution to employment and livelihoods, noting that millions of people depend on agriculture for their income.

"We must support our farmers and agricultural workers by providing them with the resources and infrastructure they need to thrive," he said.

The minister stressed that food security remains a top priority for the government.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani in a group photo during his visit to Buffalo Research Institute Pattoki.

CM Murad wants 28 KMC air conditioned CNG buses to be renovated, put on city routes

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting directed Mayor Karachi to work out a proposal to add 28-air conditioned CNG buses of KMC to the Peoples Bus Service fleet so that they could be put on any existing or new routes in the city.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Local Government Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi and Municipal Commissioner KMC Afzal Zaidi.

Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab briefing the CM said that the defunct city district

government of Karachi had procured 75 buses.

The buses operated on CNG; of them, 14 buses were donated to different organizations. Later 10 buses were donated to Karachi University, the remaining buses remained in operation till 2017 and then the operations were discontinued due to the non-availability of CNG and poor maintenance.

He said that 51 buses were in different stages of decay and were available with KMC. 28 buses, if repaired, could be put in operation, one of them the KMC has reconditioned through private sources.

The repaired vehicle has been converted into diesel fuel and the bus has been reconditioned for Rs

ARCSP calls for lowering markup rate to 12 pc, re evaluation of IPPs

MULTAN (APP): Alliance of Recognized Chambers of South Punjab (ARCSP) has urged the government to bring the markup rate at 12 percent and reevaluation of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for fixing capacity charges keeping in view the actual value of the assets.

Addressing a crowded news conference at Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) here Saturday, President MCCI, Main Rashid Iqbal stated that the mark up rate was 20.5 percent and the inflation rate was 11 percent in the country whereas it was fixed by inflation rate plus one percent across the world. He appealed to the govt to reduce it to 12 percent and the tariff of the electricity as it had gone beyond the affordability of everyone because up to Rs 70 per unit is too high to pay.

Flanked by presidents of BCCI, Khanewal, Jhang, Vehari, DG Khan, RY Khan Chambers and Chairman APBUMA, Syed Asim Shah, PCGA Vice Chairman, Wasim Hanif, President Small Traders



FAISALABAD: Senior Vice President Chamber of Commerce Faisalabad, Dr. Sajjad holding a press conference against expensive electricity.

Hanif Abbasi announces professional courses for food sector employees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly (MNA) Hanif Abbasi on Saturday announced professional courses to be conducted under the patronage of the government for employees working in the food sector.

The announcement came after the meeting of the senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and member of the National Assembly with President Restaurants Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed here, a news release said.

President Rawalpindi Restaurants Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association, Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed welcomed the announcement of MNA Hanif Abbasi.

On this occasion, Hanif Abbasi said that the government would provide professional courses to the employees related to the food sector at the government level so that the people related to the food sector could be employed not only in Pakistan but also outside the country. He said the food sector provides the most employment to the skilled people for whom regular classes will be started in the technical colleges of the government.

Officials of the Association should also visit technical colleges in this regard whereas a formal approval will be taken from the Prime Minister House for the courses so that the people could get the best employment opportunities and unemployment could be eliminated, he said.

Minister visits Buffalo Research Institute

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Livestock Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Saturday visited Buffalo Research Institute Pattoki and inspected various sections of the institute.

According to official sources here, the minister said that the government was taking practical measures for the betterment of the sector. He said that the department was paying special attention on fitness of animals and to increase milk and meat production as per the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that a number of schemes had been started in agriculture and livestock sectors to facilitate farmers possessing 1 to 12 acres of land.

He further said that 400,000 animals would be exported, adding that 'Neeli Ravi' cow was the identity of Punjab. The minister said, "We are introducing milk and meat breeds in Punjab."

Commissioner chairs review session of LePARK

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Zaid bin Maqsood conducted a comprehensive review of Lahore Parking Company (LePARK) during a meeting at his office on Saturday.

Chief Executive Officer of Lahore Parking Company and DC Lahore Rafia Haider provided insights into the company's operations and objectives.

The commissioner was briefed that LePARK manages 150 operational sites across six zones in Lahore, encompassing a total of 244 notified sites, including three automated facilities. Lahore currently operates five out of its six rotary parking systems, with plans underway to activate the sixth.

During the briefing, it was emphasised that the

LePARK board had integrated the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) to facilitate effective policy implementation.

The officials highlighted LePARK's pivotal role in organising parking arrangements for various events in Lahore, ensuring ample and cost-effective parking facilities.

Commissioner Zaid bin Maqsood conducted a thorough assessment of LePARK's organisational structure, financial health, board governance, and parking infrastructure during the session. The General Manager and Chief Finance Officer of LePARK presented reports on enforcement activities and financial performance over the past three months.

SIAL marks over 4,840 metric ton exports in 180 days

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) announced a remarkable achievement in its operations, having exported over 4,840 metric tons of goods in the past 180 days. This milestone is a testament to the airport's growing role in facilitating international trade and supporting the region's economic development.

A press release said, Sialkot, renowned for its vibrant industrial base producing sports goods, surgical instruments, leather products, and textiles, has successfully leveraged the airport's state-of-the-art infrastructure to expand its reach in global markets. This significant volume of exports underscores the airport's commitment.



LAHORE: President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran, Khalid Pervez holding a press conference along with others against the sales tax imposed on traders in Press Club in the Provincial Capital.

FCCI demands withdrawal of IPPs agreements

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has demanded withdrawal of the agreements signed with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) "in greater national interest".

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Dr Sajjad Arshad, acting FCCI president, said the IPPs started in 1994 when the country was experiencing the worst-ever load-shedding. Hubco was the first IPP while the installed capacity of IPPs jumped from 3,000-MW to 20,000-MW in 2013. It would swell to 43,000-MW in 2024 whereas the consumption of electricity was still restricted to only 13,000-MW.

He said that some IPPs were getting billions of rupees without producing even a single unit of electricity under the head of capacity charges. Hence, the price of electricity had touched the figure of Rs. 70-80 per unit only due to the addition of unrealistic capacity charges. He said that the IMF package had further aggravated the situation which opened the floodgates of taxes and the majority of people were unable to pay their electricity bills.

The FCCI representative regretted that the FBR had been empowered to issue non-bailable arrest warrants for businessmen. He said that people following the prophetic profession of trading were being dubbed as thieves, though they were paying hefty taxes to run the state institutions. He said the situation had forced them to migrate to other countries or dump their savings and investments in banks instead of injecting them into the economy. "Bank's deposits have crossed the limit of 30 trillion due to this reason," he said and added that 25pc industry had been closed rendering millions of workers jobless and the situation was fomenting lawlessness in the country.

Abbasi's efforts lead to approval of Rs 3.3bn clean water project for Havelian

HAVELIAN (APP): Former Federal Minister and Secretary General of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, has announced the approval of a Rs 3.33 billion clean water project for Havelian Abbottabad.

Murtaza Abbasi highlighted in a press statement that while some individuals are attempting to take credit for this project for cheap publicity, the PML-N has always worked for public welfare, giving credit to Allah and those who sincerely contributed to the project. He emphasized that the public is well aware of the true efforts behind this initiative.

The project addresses Havelian's major water problem by removing ten

tube wells and providing clean drinking water to 92,000 people through a gravity flow scheme. Murtaza Javed Abbasi's personal interest and hard work in this matter have been pivotal in reaching this milestone.

Initially launched in 2016, the Havelian Water Supply Scheme faced delays due to provincial government negligence. Efforts to restart the project in 2021 were unsuccessful. However, under the PML-N government in August 2023, and with Abbasi as the Federal Minister, the project gained momentum. The CDWP approved the PC-2, leading to the project's official approval. The contract will soon be awarded, and work is set to begin shortly.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.1,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs. 250,000 on Saturday against its sale at Rs. 251,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 857 to Rs. 214,335 from Rs. 215,192 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.196,473 from Rs. 197,259, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.70 to Rs.2,920 from Rs.2,850 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.60.01 to Rs.2,503.42 from Rs.2,443.41.



ISLAMABAD: Green banana being preserved for ripening at I-11 Food and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.

Rs.1.0419bn fine imposed on electricity thieves

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has imposed Rs.1.0419 billion fine on 10,312 electricity thieves caught during last 315 days of anti-power-theft campaign in the FESCO region.

Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Saturday that FESCO had launched a vigorous anti-theft drive in six circles of its region and during 315 days of this campaign the anti-theft teams of the company caught 10312 power pilferers including 56 electricity thieves during last 24 hours.

The company had imposed a total fine of Rs.1.0419 billion on the pilferers under the head of detection units of 24.2 million in addition to getting cases registered against 10144 accused.

The police had arrested 7636 electricity thieves so far besides recovering Rs.746.6 million.

Giving further details, he said that the FESCO teams detected electricity theft at 2482 points in First Circle Faisalabad and imposed a fine of Rs.247.9 million on them under the head of 5885,000 million detection units.

In Second Circle Faisalabad, the FESCO teams caught 1926 electricity thieves and imposed a fine of Rs.195.2 million under 4963,000 detection units.

Similarly, 1143 cases of electricity theft were detected in Jhang Circle and the company handed down the power pilferers with a fine of Rs.113.4 million under 3271,000 detection units.

He further said that 1512 electricity thieves were caught from Sargodha Circle and they were imposed a fine of Rs.155.4 million under 3385,000 detection units.

In Mianwali Circle, 2582 consumers were found involved in electricity theft.

Over 4lacs bales of cotton arrival recorded at ginneries till July 15

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over four lac (4,42,041) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till July 15, 2024. According to a fortnightly report of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Saturday, Punjab ginning factories recorded cotton arrival figures of 1,14,375 bales while arrivals to ginneries in Sindh recorded at 3,27,666 bales including 2,63,282 reaching ginneries in Sanghar district alone. Arrivals in Baluchistan were recorded at 11200 bales. Out of the total arrivals, seed cotton converted into bales was recorded at 3,95,695 bales.

Exporters/traders didn't bought cotton bales while textile sector bought total 3,74,889 bales. Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has also not yet started procuring cotton in 2024,25, says the report. As many as 67152 unsold bales stock was present.

Govt urged to fulfill Goods Transport Association's demands

LAHORE (APP): The government should promptly fulfill the legitimate demands of the Goods Transport Association. Highlighting the problems of this sector amidst current economic conditions and other challenges, there is a dire need for effective security measures under Azm-e-Istehkam to ensure smooth business operations.

Laure Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry expressed these views while addressing a joint delegation of Pakistan Goods Transport Association and Pakistan Traders and Manufacturers Alliance here at LCCI on



LAHORE: Vendor displaying Children's plastic toys to attract the customers at roadside in the city.



LAHORE: Craftsmen preparing big blower fans used in big halls and for Industrials purposes in the Provincial Capital.

Trump says spoke with Zelenskyy, pledges to 'end the war'

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Friday (July 19) he had spoken by telephone with Ukraine leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and pledged to end the European country's war with Russia. "I appreciate President Zelenskyy for reaching out because I, as your next President of the United States, will bring peace to the world and end the war that has cost so many lives and devastated countless innocent families," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform. "Both sides will be able to come together and negotiate a deal that ends the violence and paves a path forward to prosperity."

The United States has provided tens of billions of dollars in military assistance for Kyiv since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 - though a Trump victory in the November election would put Washington's continued support into question. Zelenskyy confirmed the call, during which he congratulated Trump on formally becoming the Republican Party's presidential nominee, as well as wishing the 78-year-old well after an attempt on his life a week ago. "We agreed with President Trump to discuss at a personal meeting what steps can make peace fair and truly lasting," Zelenskyy said in a post on X. "I noted the vital bipartisan and bicameral American support for protecting our nation's freedom and independence," he said. Trump has repeatedly

claimed he would end the war very quickly, without offering details as to how. Last week, the ex-president hosted at his Florida estate Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who met with Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this month. Trump's frequent praise for Putin and reluctance to outright criticise the Russian invasion have stirred concerns among Ukraine's allies that he would force the country into accepting partial defeat. He has also repeatedly suggested backing away from NATO, even undermining the alliance's collective defense guarantee by saying he would encourage Russia to attack any members not who had not met their financial obligations.



Commuters move along the road as Bangladeshi soldiers stand guard following a curfew and the deployment of military forces in Dhaka on July 20 after days of violent clashes during protests against government job quotas.

Iran can produce fissile material for bomb in 'one or two weeks': Blinken

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Iran is capable of producing fissile material for use in a nuclear weapon within "one or two weeks," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday. The details on Iran's capabilities emerged following the recent election of President Masoud Pezeshkian. He has said he wants to end Iran's isolation and favors reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and global powers. Blinken said, however, that "what we've seen in the last weeks and months is an Iran that's actually moving forward" with its nuclear program.

In 2018, the United States unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal, which was designed to regulate Iran's atomic activities in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions. Speaking at a security forum in Colorado, Blinken blamed the collapse of the nuclear deal for the acceleration in Iran's capabilities. "Instead of being at least a year away from having the breakout capacity of producing fissile material for a nuclear weapon, (Iran) is now probably one or two weeks away from doing that," Blinken said.

North Korea leader Kim discusses military cooperation with Russian official, KCNA says

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un received Russian vice minister of defence Aleksey Krivoruchko and discussed the importance of the two countries' militaries to unite more firmly to defend world peace and justice, KCNA news agency said on Friday. Kim and Krivoruchko shared the need for military cooperation between the two countries to defend mutual security interests, KCNA said.

Trudeau appoints MacKinnon as new labour minister

Monitoring Desk
OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday appointed Steven MacKinnon, a Liberal member of parliament from Quebec, as the new labor minister, filling a vacancy created when Seamus O'Regan stepped down for personal reasons. MacKinnon, who had been temporarily in charge of government business in the lower chamber since January, takes over the labour portfolio at a shaky time for Trudeau's government.

UAE president discusses peace efforts in Sudan with army's Burhan

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: The United Arab Emirates' president and the head of Sudan's army have discussed an offer from Ethiopia's leader to mediate in Sudan's 15-month-old war, diplomatic sources said. It was the first public communication between the two leaders since the army began publicly criticising the UAE over its alleged support for its rival in the war, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The UAE denies the allegations although UN experts have said they are credible. The allegations surfaced in a fiery back-and-forth at the UN Security Council in June. Emirati state news agency WAM reported on Thursday that in the call UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan "affirmed the UAE's keenness to support all solutions and initiatives aimed at halting escalation and ending the crisis in Sudan".



A police car lies on its side during unrest in Harehills, Leeds.

China, Canada should work toward strategic partnership, China's Wang says

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Canada should promote normalising relations and get back on track toward establishing a strategic partnership, Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Canadian counterpart, according to his ministry. "China-Canada relations have experienced difficulties and twists and turns over the years, which is not something China would like to see," Wang told Foreign Minister Melanie Joly in Beijing, the ministry said in a statement late on Friday. Joly's three-day visit through Saturday, at Wang's invitation, is the first by a Canadian foreign minister in seven years. Bilateral relations, established in 1970,

turned icy in 2018 after Huawei's Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada and China subsequently arrested two Canadians in China. All three were later released, but Ottawa's allegations of Chinese interference in Canada have kept relations strained. The last time Chinese and Canadian leaders met was in Indonesia in 2022, when President Xi Jinping criticised Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over alleged leaks of a closed-door meeting. "We have been able to stabilise the situation with temporary solutions, but these will not be enough even for the near future," Sziijarto said.

Hungary says Ukraine halting Lukoil oil transit a threat to long-term supply

Monitoring Desk
BUDAPEST: Ukraine's decision to halt the transit of oil from Russia's Lukoil threatens the long-term security of supply for Slovakia and Hungary, Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Sziijarto told a news briefing on Friday. Slovakia and Hungary said on Wednesday they had stopped receiving oil from Lukoil after Ukraine imposed a ban on the transit of oil from the company last month. "We have been able to stabilise the situation with temporary solutions, but these will not be enough even for the near future," Sziijarto said.

Harvey Weinstein's retrial set for Nov 12

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK CITY: Harvey Weinstein could be retried on rape charges in Manhattan on November 12 after a judge set a tentative trial date at a Friday court hearing. Judge Curtis Farber said he was also open to an earlier start date in September depending on how pretrial discovery plays out. Weinstein's lawyers say they want to proceed as soon as possible. Weinstein, 72, has denied wrongdoing and has denied having any non-consensual sexual encounters with anyone. Jurors in Manhattan found him guilty on rape charges in February 2020, but the New York Court of Appeals threw out the conviction in April, finding Weinstein did not get a fair trial because a judge improperly allowed testimony by accusers he was not formally charged with assaulting.

Nigeria's unions, government agree new wage deal, averting strike

Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: Nigeria's main labour unions agreed on a new minimum wage of 70,000 naira (\$44) a month after talks with the government, ending months of deadlock and the threat of strikes. Africa's most populous nation is grappling with the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, stoking fears of Kenyan-style protests that have rocked that country for nearly a month. Nigeria's two biggest union federations, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), have argued that soaring prices and a weakening currency caused by reforms instituted by President Bola Tinubu were hitting workers hard.

Soaring inflation has eroded incomes and hurt millions of Nigerians who are struggling to meet their basic needs. The new wage announced by Minister of Information Mohammed Idris and union leaders, is more than double the 30,000 naira a month that was agreed in 2019. "We are taking this new 70,000 naira minimum wage with mixed feelings because of the situation of the economy. We have to move ahead despite the situation otherwise the negotiation can linger," NLC President Joe Ajero told reporters. He said the next minimum wage would be reviewed in three years instead of the customary five years.



Evan Gershkovich, a reporter for Wall Street Journal, stands inside an enclosure for defendants during a court hearing in Yekaterinburg, Russia

Leeds violence given racial twist

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Violence that erupted in Leeds on Wednesday has made headlines in the United Kingdom, eliciting condemnation from Prime Minister Keir Starmer. On the night of July 18, what began as a routine intervention by social workers in Harehills quickly escalated into chaos. Social workers attended to a child protection issue on Luxor Street, but were met with hostility. As the situation intensified, West Yorkshire Police were called to assist, but their presence seemed to infuriate the crowd further. This intervention turned into a flashpoint, igniting a night of violent disorder. Sky News reported that the rioting saw a double-decker bus set ablaze, a police car overturned, and rocks hurled at officers. Residents were advised to stay indoors as the situation spiralled out of control. The West Yorkshire Police confirmed several arrests and said there would be more in the following days.

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Magnitude 7.3 quake hits Chile's north, no immediate damage

Monitoring Desk
SANTIAGO: A strong 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck the mining-intensive Antofagasta region of Chile on Thursday, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre said. The US Tsunami Warning System said there was no tsunami risk from the earthquake, which was centered around 20 km (12.5 miles) south of San Pedro de Atacama, according to Chile's national disaster prevention and response service (SENAPRED).

Russian court jails US reporter for 16 years in spying case

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Russian court found US reporter Evan Gershkovich guilty of espionage on Friday and sentenced him to 16 years in a maximum security penal colony in what his employer, The Wall Street Journal, called "a disgraceful sham conviction". Gershkovich, a 32-year-old American who denied any wrongdoing, went on trial in the city of Yekaterinburg last month after being accused of trying to gather sensitive information about a tank factory. He was the first US journalist accused of spying in Russia since the Cold War.

Drone slips past Israel's air defence, hits Tel Aviv

Monitoring Desk
TEL AVIV: A long-range drone hit the centre of Tel Aviv in the early hours of Friday in an attack claimed by the Yemen-based Houthi militia that killed one man and wounded four others, the Israeli military and emergency services said. The explosion, which footage shared on social media suggested came from the sea and did not trigger air raid alarms, occurred hours after the Israeli military confirmed it had killed a senior commander of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon. Chief spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the military assessed that the drone, which hit a building near the beachfront close to US Embassy premises in Tel Aviv, was an upgraded Iranian-made Samad-3 model. "Our estimation is that it arrived from Yemen to Tel Aviv," he told a press briefing. A spokesman for the Houthis, which like

Hezbollah are aligned with Iran, said the group had attacked Tel Aviv with a drone and would continue to target Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. The attack, which took place ahead of a visit to Washington by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu next week, is likely to fan fears about further fallout from the Gaza crisis as the Houthis and other Iranian proxies side with Hamas. Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant met military commanders to review air defences and said the country had to be ready for all scenarios. "We must be prepared for defensive and offensive actions," he said, according to a statement from his office. An Israeli official said the military was still investigating why the drone did not trigger the alarm, but initial reports suggested the aircraft was identified but the sirens were not sounded due to human error.

Beijing vows to ease local government debt woes after key meeting

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese officials pledged Friday to help ease debt pressure on local governments through reforms to the tax system after a key political gathering in the capital focused on jumpstarting the faltering economy. All eyes were on how this week's Third Plenum of the Communist Party in Beijing, attended by President Xi Jinping, might tackle the deepening economic malaise. But few new policies were announced as the meeting wrapped up Thursday, with officials pledging to tackle "risks" in the economy. The world's second-largest economy is grappling with a property debt crisis, weakening consumption, and an ageing population. Adding further strain, local governments in China face a ballooning debt burden of \$5.6 trillion, according to the central government, raising worries about wider economic stability. Beijing sought to allay concerns at a Friday press conference featuring a lineup of officials. "In response to the financial difficulties of local governments and basic organisations, it is proposed to refine the financial relationship between the central and local governments," said Han Wenxiu, an official responsible for financial and economic policy planning. Authorities would seek to expand local sources of tax revenue and limit expenditure requirements on local governments that violated "regulations", Han said, without sharing specifics. Fitch lowered its outlook on China's sovereign credit rating in April, citing soaring general government debt that it forecast would reach 61.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product this year.

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South Africa leader pledges to revive economy, include the poor

Monitoring Desk
CAPE TOWN: President Cyril Ramaphosa pledged to revive South Africa's flagging economy and extend prosperity to the many left out of it, by rescuing factories and farms, building roads and seizing the opportunities presented by green energy. In his first policy speech to a new parliament since the African National Congress (ANC) lost its ruling majority in May - forcing it to team up with its rivals - Ramaphosa also pledged to get on top of the nation's debt burden. "We have a clear intention to turn our country into a construction site, as roads, bridges, houses, schools, hospitals and clinics are built ... and as new power lines are installed," the president said at the official opening of a new five-year term of parliament. He acknowledged that in the past 15 years, Africa's most industrialised economy had "barely grown," and "unemployment, poverty and inequality (remain) ... extremely high." After an optimistic decade following the end of apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela, South Africa has been mired in political troubles, including a lumbering response to its deadly HIV/AIDS epidemic, grand corruption and a systemic failure to deliver services or even keep the lights on. Voters punished the ANC for these shortcomings in the May 29 election, leaving it with just 40% of the vote and forcing it into a unity government, mostly with the main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), for the first time in three decades.

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Air India sends ferry flight to Russia for stranded US-bound passengers

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Air India said on Friday a plane with food and other essentials was on its way to pick up passengers stranded in Russia after the previous day's San Francisco-bound flight made an emergency landing there. An Air India airplane flying from Delhi to the West Coast city made an emergency landing in Russia after the crew detected a potential issue in the cargo hold area, its second such incident on the route in just over a year. In a statement, Air India said a team, including crew and security personnel, were on board the ferry flight and that it had set up a dedicated hotline for anyone wanting to reach out to passengers. Many carriers, including U.S. and European Union airlines, avoid Russian airspace following the war in Ukraine, but Air India uses that route, giving it a flying time and cost advantage on U.S.-bound flights. The Indian embassy in Russia said on social media platform X that a team of three senior officials and an interpreter have reached

Krasnoyarsk airport to assist the passengers. The Boeing 777 aircraft, carrying 225 passengers and 19 flight crew, made a precautionary landing safely in the Russian region of Siberia at the Krasnoyarsk International Airport, the airline said in a statement. The airport said the flight's crew had been moved to hotels, and passengers were in the international departure area, which angered some of those stranded, according to social media posts. Mayank Gupta, whose mother was on the flight, wrote on X he was "sad and angry" that her medicines and luggage remained on the airplane. A passenger said on X that people were struggling to get food and water, posting a photo showing some passengers sleeping on the floor inside the airport area. The airport said the plane landed due to an activated smoke detector. Shortly after the incident, Russia's civil aviation agency, Rosaviatsiya, said the aircraft had taxied to a parking spot after landing and there had been no signs of a fire or smoke onboard.



Former film producer Harvey Weinstein appears in a court in New York City for a pre-trial hearing, following his overturned sex crimes conviction.

PM directs for early completion of Islamabad Technology Park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the project team of Islamabad Technology Park and the Information Technology Ministry to complete the project within current calendar year instead of the scheduled completion date of June 2025.

The prime minister, during his visit to the under-construction site of the country's largest Islamabad Technology Park, said that the project was launched in 2022 during the coalition government of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the contract

was awarded to a South Korean company. He said the project was being completed at a cost of Rs 25 billion out of which \$70 million (soft loan) was being provided by the South Korean government.

"Soon after taking charge of my office, I issued directions to continue work on the project round the clock," he said adding that he as Chief Minister Punjab had introduced the system of 24 hours work on the development projects.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress of the project, PM Shehbaz Sharif asked the project manage-

ment to try their best to complete the project by September or October this year. He said after completion of the project, some 120 offices of different companies would be established in the Park.

Similarly, he said an incubation center with 15 offices and startups would also be part of the Technology Park with a business support center where legal marketing and financial support facilities would be provided under one umbrella. Around 10,000 productive jobs would be created in the IT Park for the skilled and knowledgeable workforce, he said.

The prime minister highlighted that as a result of the construction of the IT Park, the country's exports would be increased by around US\$70 million per year. He said a level 3 data center-one of the highest and first ever in Pakistan-would be established in the IT Park. He pointed out that Islamabad Technology Park would create synergy between domestic and foreign academia, researchers, industry and planners.

The prime minister vowed to replicate such projects in other parts of the country with cooperation of the provincial governments.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif talking to media persons during his visit to the under-construction site of Islamabad Technology Park.



KACHHI: DG PDMA Jahanzeb Khan being briefed by Deputy Commissioner Jameel Ahmed Baloch about Chandar gate

Opposition alliance to hold countrywide protest on July 26

ISLAMABAD (INP): Opposition alliance of Tehreek Tahafuz Aaen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) announced on Saturday that it will hold a countrywide protest on July 26 (Friday) for the release of all political prisoners, including PTI founding chairman Imran Khan and reclaiming the "stolen mandate".

While passing a unanimous resolution seeking immediate release of political prisoners, the TTAP leadership also demanded an empowered judicial commission to probe firing on peaceful marchers in Bannu. The opposition alliance also sought resignation from the ruling party and

demanding fresh elections. It lauded the recent Supreme Court's decision on reserved seats as well.

The meeting of the opposition alliance was presided over by senior politician and head of the movement Mahmood Khan Achakzai, which was attended by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, PTI secretary general and Leader of Opposition National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan, Leader of Opposition in Senate Senator Shibli Faraz and PTI Central Information Secretary Raaf Hasan.

Chairman Sunni Ittehad Council Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Chairman

Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen Allama Nasir Abbas and JUI Shirani Group leader Syed Qasim Agha also participated in the meeting. In the meeting, the participants held a detailed discussion over the prevailing political and economic situation of the country along with the future course of action. They also passed a unanimous resolution demanding an immediate release of Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and all other PTI's leaders and workers, stating the cases framed against Imran Khan and other party leaders and workers were a violation of laws and principles of justice.

Bangladesh imposes curfew as deadly protests over government jobs escalate

DHAKA, Bangladesh (INP): Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government announced a nationwide curfew across Bangladesh and ordered the deployment of military forces to maintain order following days of deadly clashes over the allocation of government jobs.

The announcement was made by Obaidul Quader, the general secretary of the ruling Awami League party, and came after police and security officials fired on protesters earlier Friday and banned all gatherings in the capital. Several people were killed, media reports said.

Quader said the military was deployed to help

the civilian administration keep order.

The protests, which began weeks ago but escalated sharply this week, represent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in office after elections in January. Main opposition groups boycotted those polls.

There were varying reports of the number of people killed Friday, with Independent Television reporting 17 dead and Somoy TV reporting 30.

Eye witnesses saw 23 bodies at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, but it was not immediately clear whether they had all died on Friday.



QUETTA: Activists of PKNAP, ANP and NDM under the leadership of Nasrullah Zarey holding a protest in front of Press Club

ECP to scrutinize nomination papers, affiliation certificates of 41 independent members

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission has decided to scrutinize the nomination papers and affiliation certificates of 41 independent members.

According to sources, the Election Commission will conduct a thorough examination of the affiliation certificates and nomination papers of the independent

members. There are concerns about discrepancies, including ambiguities in affidavits provided by one assembly member.

The Election Commission has instructed its legal team and relevant departments to meticulously verify the signatures on the affidavits of independent members.

Government intensifies anti-smuggling operations to stabilize economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani government has stepped up its crackdown on smuggling to stabilize the economy and ensure public welfare. From July 7 to July 14, authorities across the country seized 62.79 metric tons of sugar, 16 metric tons of flour, 1205 cigarette sticks, 14 cloth bales, and 0.03 million liters of Iranian oil.

In Peshawar, 0.74 metric tons of sugar were confiscated, while Quetta saw 62.05 metric tons seized. Multan, Karachi, and Quetta reported seizures of 136, 789, and 280 cigarette sticks respectively. Cloth bales were recovered from Multan (10) and Quetta (4). Iranian oil seizures included 0.002 million liters in Multan.

QMC, BUITEMS inks MoU to conduct survey of 2400 unapproved buildings in Qta

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) has inked an agreement with the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) to conduct survey of 2400 unapproved buildings in the city.

Talking to APP on Saturday, Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said that in Quetta city, over 2400 high rise buildings have been constructed illegally and violating the new buildings by-laws 2022.

Hamza Shafiqat said that the Metropolitan Corporation with the technical support of BUIEMS would conduct a survey of 2400 buildings in the city,

NDMA convenes follow up meeting of Disaster Response Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second meeting of the National Disaster Response Committee (DRC) was convened at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Headquarters here on Saturday.

The meeting aimed to review progress on directions given during first DRC meeting and preparations by provinces and departments for Monsoon 2024, a news release said.

Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chaired the meeting, whereas PM's Coordinator for Climate Change Romina Khursheed was also present.

The other attendees included senior officials from various ministries, NDMA, PDMA, SDMA, representatives from PMD, PCIW, NHA, FFC, Railways and relevant

stakeholders.

Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, delivered the opening remarks, which were followed by briefs on likely impacts of monsoon during upcoming weeks by officials of NEOC, preparedness on part of NDMA and updates from Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), State departments, and other relevant stakeholders on tasks assigned at the initial meeting held on July 8th.

The chair was informed of the ongoing efforts to address potential emergencies, rectify shortcomings, and resource deployment plan for vulnerable areas and regions.

After conclusion of formal updates, the Chairman NDMA directed the stakeholders to identify reserve deficiencies and leverage necessary resources available within local formations, departments and domestic/international humanitarian agencies operating in respective areas to address potential crises. PDMA Punjab and Sindh were instructed to continue surveillance of river water levels, eradicate encroachments on waterways and riverbanks, and ensure a state of readiness for potential flood emergencies.

He also urged relevant departments to secure critical infrastructure such as roads and communication networks against potential threats.

Romina Khursheed directed PDMAs/SDMAs to develop standardized response plans for effective disaster management, which will subsequently be presented to the Prime Minister during next follow up meeting.

The government would formulate a mechanism that would help to decide which building should be demolished, to be fined, and scale down over violation of building control rules, he added.

Hamza said that the government would legalize and approved the buildings on compliance of new buildings by-laws 2022, after reviewing the survey report. He said that government was taking strict measures for implementing new buildings by-laws 2022 and legal action would be taken against the violators of building code in Quetta city.

Deadlock persists in electing Chairman PAC

ISLAMABAD (Online): As many as 38 days have passed since the formation of the Public Accounts Committee, of the Parliament but the chairman could not be elected.

The notification for the formation of the Financial Oversight body was issued on June 12.

There is a deadlock between the government and the Sunni Ittehad Council on the issue of the election of the chairman. The

Bilawal grieves over death of Sheila Jackson

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday expressed his grief and sorrow over the death of Chairperson of Pakistan Caucus in the US Congress Sheila Jackson. He said, "I am saddened to hear the news of Sheila Jackson's death." Bilawal said that late Sheila Jackson's commitment to democracy.

Funeral prayer of father of PIO offered; Governor KP attends

PESHAWAR (APP): Funeral prayer of Ghulam Sabir, the father of Principal Information Officer (PIO), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Mubashir Hassan was offered here on Friday.

Besides others, the funeral prayer of the deceased was attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, officers of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, media persons, civil officers, journalists and elites of the city in large number.

Later, the deceased was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard. The Qul of the deceased would be offered on Monday at Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Peshawar's colony at Jamrud Road Peshawar.



Secretary General JUI MNA Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri condoling with MPA Mir Sadiq Sanjrani on sad demise of his uncle



The funeral prayer of the father of PIO Mubashir Hassan performed in Peshawar. The funeral attended among many, by Governor KPK, Faisal Karim Kundi and other notables.

PTI's letter to judicial commission is a 'political stunt': Tarar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar described the letter of PTI leaders Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz to judicial commission as 'political stunt'.

"It is against the parliamentary traditions to use the constitutional forums for political benefits," said the law minister.

He added that ad hoc judges were appointed on the demand of bar councils to resolve the pending cases in Supreme Court.

"It is sheer politics to write a letter to the head of Judicial Commission," said Tarar.

Punjab CM orders simplifying solar financing scheme

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif presided over a special meeting in which matters pertaining to the 'Chief Minister Solar Panel Financing Scheme' were reviewed.

The CM directed to simplify the solar panel financing scheme. She directed to ensure early completion of the required process for launching of the scheme.

Secretary Energy Naeem Rauf while giving a comprehensive briefing about the Chief Minister Solar Panel Financing Scheme said that under the pilot project, the test run of the Chief Minister Solar Panel Financing Scheme has been launched at various

Inflation high for third consecutive week in Pakistan

LAHORE (INP): The inflation rate in the country has been recorded for the third straight week.

According to the data released by the Bureau of Statistics, the inflation rate has increased by 0.76 percent weekly.

On a weekly basis, the annual cumulative inflation rate has reached 24.36 percent.

According to the Bureau of Statistics, the price of 29 essential items increased and five declined in one week.

According to the data, the price of chicken in-

creased by Rs38.29 per kg during one week from 373.25 rupees to Rs412 per kg. A bag of 390 grams of dry milk has become expensive by Rs44.89, petrol per liter by Rs10, eggs per dozen by Rs6.78, and garlic per kg by Rs10.42.

Pulses, fresh milk, sugar, rice, and curd are also among the items that have become expensive.

During the week, tomatoes became cheaper by Rs7.29 and bananas by Rs3.62. Onions, lentils and LPG are also among the items whose prices have fallen.

Complaint filed against CEC in Supreme Judicial Council

ISLAMABAD (INP): A complaint has been filed in the Supreme Judicial Council against Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and other members. The complaint was jointly filed by Haleem Adil Sheikh, Justice (Retd) Noorul Haq Qureshi, and Shabbir Ahmed. The complaint alleges that the Chief Election

Commissioner and members failed to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities and attempted to undermine PTI's mandate and judicial decisions.

The complainants accuse the Chief Election Commissioner and members of misconduct, alleging that they politically appointed bureaucrats as Returning Officers (ROs)

The complaint further asserts that the Election Commission deprived PTI of its election symbol and its nominated members of their party affiliation, affecting over 120 million voters. The complainants have requested an inquiry into the allegations and recommended the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner and members if the charges are proven.

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QUETTA: Women take keen interest at stalls during Handmade Crafters and Empower Women Exhibition organized by Balochistan Rural Support Program.