



Mega projects benefiting public: Kalmati

Staff Report

QUETTA: Former caretaker provincial minister Naveed Ahmed Kalmati has said that the present government is working on projects worth billions of rupees across Balochistan, which are benefiting the people, while laying the groundwork for development works in Gwadar and Makran.

The attitude of the opposition on the occasion of the budget meeting is highly reprehensible. He expressed these views while addressing a joint press conference along with Information Secretary Bushra Rind at Quetta Press Club on Saturday. Balochistan Awami Party leader Khalil George, Haji Noorullah Lehari and others were also present on the occasion.

Naveed Kalmati said that after coming to power, the present government, like other areas of the province, paying special attention to Gwadar, Turbat, Jeoni, Pasni and Mara. Construction of hospitals and colleges and sports complexes are being prioritized.

Billions of rupees have been saved from being spent on water supply by tankers by ensuring the construction of dams and installation of sanitation plant for the supply of clean drinking water to Gwadar. He said that the government would use all its resources to complete the projects of Gwadar and CPEC in the coming years by providing education, health facilities in the area as well as sports complexes, futsal ground, hospitals, BHUs, RHCs are providing billions of rupees for the construction of centers, supply of equipment. He said that completion of Gwadar and CPEC projects was the top priority of the provincial government.



QUETTA: Former Caretaker Minister Naveed Kalmati, Provincial Parliamentary Secretary for Information Bushra Rind and others addressing a press conference on Saturday.

Ebrahim Raisi wins Iran presidential vote

PM Khan felicitates newly elected Iranian president

AFP/Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Ultra-conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi was declared the winner Saturday of Iran's presidential election, a widely anticipated result after many political heavyweights were barred from running.

Raisi won just shy of 62 percent of the vote in Friday's election, according to official figures, on a turnout of 48.8 percent, a record low for a presidential poll in the Islamic republic.

"I congratulate the people on their choice," said outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who has served the maximum of two consecutive four-year terms and leaves office in August.

Raisi, 60, is set to take over at a critical time, as Iran seeks to salvage its tattered nuclear deal with major powers and free itself from punishing US sanctions that have driven a sharp economic downturn.

"God willing, we will do our best so that the hope for the future now alive in people's hearts grows further," said Raisi, adding that he wants to strengthen public trust in the government for a "bright and pleasant life together".

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated Ebrahim Raisi on being elected as the president of the Islamic republic of Iran.

"Congratulations to Excellency brother Ibrahim Raisi @raiscicom on his landmark victory in the Islamic Republic of Iran's 13th Presidential Elections," the premier said on Twitter. "Look forward to working with him for further strengthening of our fraternal ties and for regional peace, progress and prosperity," he added.

No interaction between Pakistan, India NSAs planned in Dushanbe

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: National Security Advisor Dr. Moed W. Yusuf is leaving for Dushanbe on Sunday to participate in the 16th meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states being held on 22-23 June 2021. During the visit, the National Security Advisor (NSA) will participate in the joint session of the National Security Advisors of the member states and also sign the Protocol of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Security Council Secretaries, official source told media.

Kumar terms Opp's protest shameful

Staff Report

QUETTA: Former Parliamentary Secretary for Minority Affairs and Senator of Balochistan Awami Party Danish Kumar termed the attitude of the opposition during the budget session as regrettable and shameful and said that the opposition for its personal interests and schemes has disgraced the historical and cultural traditions of the province.

They were and are a source of pride for the whole province. The great traditions of which the whole province is proud. The opposition trampled on these great traditions for their own interests, which is less to be regretted.

According to the opposition, these are our historical and cultural traditions which they demonstrated yesterday. Senator Danish Kumar said that yesterday the opposition not only trampled on the historical and glorious traditions of the province but also the democratic traditions.

The funeral was called off. Strongly condemn this undemocratic but also dictatorial attitude of the opposition. He said that the opposition which calls itself big nationalists and religiousists could not keep the lodge of nationalism in the past nor could they keep the lodge of religious tolerance, royalty and respect for women. He said that democracy is the name of personal interests and schemes. He said that it was unfortunate and shameful that the opposition had created a mockery in the name of democracy for personal gain. He said that the drama created by the opposition in the name of protest seemed to be following someone's agenda aimed at democracy. But we will not allow any such conspiracy to succeed. The coalition government under the leadership of Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal is strong and stable. The Balochistan Awami Party along with its allies won the next elections.

ECP expresses reservations over electoral reforms bill

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has formally expressed its reservations over the bill seeking amendments to the polls process.

The commission expressed its reservations over several clauses, including constituencies and electoral rolls. The PTI government has recently passed the electoral reforms bill in the National Assembly.

In a letter to the parliamentary affairs secretary on June 17, the commission has requested that the matter be brought to the notice of Prime Minister Imran Khan before introducing the bill in the Senate.

It opposed the inclusion of the word "open ballot" that replaced "secret ballot".

The ECP said that the inclusion of the word "open ballot" was in violation of Article 236 of the Constitution. "The Supreme Court has given a clear opinion in this regard in the case related to the presidential reference," the letter read.

The commission said electronic voting machines (EVMs) required a thorough debate in parliament. It added that there were many issues with the EVMs that remain unaddressed and therefore the ECP could not guarantee that their use would help in holding free and fair elections.

PM says absolute no to US bases in Pakistan

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan will not host bases for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or the US armed forces after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan.

"Absolutely Not. There is no way we are going to allow any bases, any sort of action from Pakistan to conduct cross border counter terrorism mission against Al-Qaeda ISIS or the Taliban".

Stunned over his clear-cut response of "absolutely not", the interviewer interrupted the Prime Minister asking "seriously?" to reconfirm his words. "Axios on HBO" is a documentary-news program that

combines the reporting of Axios journalists with the expertise of HBO filmmakers to explore the collision of tech, media, business, and politics.

Recently, in his address at Senate, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also ruled out the possibility of providing its military bases to the United States for counter terrorism operations in Afghanistan.

He rejected as unfounded the reports to this effect and made it clear that the government would never provide military bases to the US, nor would allow

Four female teachers injured in school van attack

Monitoring Desk

MASTUNG: At least four female teachers sustained injuries after unidentified assailants opened fire on a school van in Mastung area of Balochistan on a private TV channel reported on Saturday.

According to Levees sources, unidentified armed men opened fire on a school van for female teachers in the Paramangbad area of Mastung, inflicting bullet wounds to four teachers. The women were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. The sources said that personnel of the Levees force cordoned off the area and began a search operation for the suspects.

It is pertinent to mention here that violent incidents have been previously reported from Mastung besides action being taken from law enforcement authorities in the area to curb such elements.

In recent action by the LEAs, five suspected terrorists said to be associated with the outlawed BJA were killed in a CTD raid in Balochistan's Mastung. When the police reached a house in Mastung, the terrorists hiding there opened fire at the personnel, the officials who were part of the operation said on condition of anonymity. Five of the terror suspects were killed when the police returned fire while others managed to flee. 10 kilograms of explosives, detonators, and three Kalashnikovs were seized from their possession.

Development in any constituency not a crime: Buledi

Staff Report

QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Mir Zahoor Buledi has said that it is not a crime to carry out development work in the province and give schools, water scheme in any constituency. Opposition says that the government should not work in their constituencies except for them. In the financial year 2021-22, Rs. 189.196 billion has been allocated for development projects and Rs. 346.861 billion for non-development expenditure. Total revenue is estimated at Rs. 499 billion. The province will get Rs. 103 billion from its revenue. He said this while giving a post budget briefing at a local hotel in Quetta.

Provincial Ministers Mir Arif Jan Muhammad Hasani, Abdul Khalaq Hazara, Member Provincial Assembly Mubeen Khan Khilji, Balochistan Government Deputy Chief Minister Qutub Shahwani, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Hafiz Abdul Basit were present on the occasion.

Secretary Tary Khazra Na Balochistan Khan Buledi, Special Secretary Tary Fana

Nas Lal Jan Jaffer and others were also present.

Provincial Finance Minister Mir Zahoor Buledi said that Rs 346.861 billion has been allocated for the ongoing development work in the provincial PSDP. Rs 172.534 billion, Rs 16.662 billion through the Foreign Project Assistant and Rs 16.662 billion under the Federal Funding Projects. 48,025 billion has been earmarked. Thus, the total expenditure is estimated at Rs. 584.083 billion.

He said that in the budget projects have been set up in all the constituencies of the province including Quetta.

Apart from the Quetta package, Rs 5 billion has been earmarked for Quetta to improve the city, he said, adding that the government is keen to ensure that non-compliance and development is not possible. The budget of the health department was Rs 44 billion as it has now been increased to Rs 55 billion, of which Rs 44 billion has been earmarked for non-development, he said.

Sardar Yar Mohammad Rind is respected and allied to the province. He was also present in the meeting of the cabinet on Saturday but he did not discuss the schemes in PSDP.

He said that the government has proved that we can do financial management in a better way. For the first time in the history of Balochistan, we are going to present a budget of only Rs 6 billion. He said that the province will get Rs. 3 billion from its revenue. Although this target is high, the target of Rs. 103 billion will be achieved. He said that the government has increased the grant of universities for the promotion of higher education to Rs. 2.5 billion and roads are being laid across the province.

In order to provide roads to remote areas, Rs. 14 billion has been earmarked for PFI in the next financial year for local govt. Establishing law and order is the priority of the government. We have always listened to the opposition where they have members of the Assembly.

He said that it was neither a democratic nor a legal demand which could not be implemented under any circumstances.

Goons desecrated assembly: Kamal

Says he is not at all worried about attack on him by the opposition parties

Staff Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan has said that he is not one per cent worried about the attack on him but his concern is that the goons harmed and desecrated the Balochistan Assembly, Chaman, Qila Abdullah and Loralai were made new districts. Balochistan public budget includes health card, new districts and divisions, vacancies, colleges, 25% salary and many more.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan said that he was not

one percent worried or egoistic that he attacked me. And it is a matter of concern that the Provincial Assembly was harmed and desecrated by these hoodlums.

We as coalition parties including BAP, ANP, HIL, JWP, BNP (Awami), HDP. We issued health card for Balochistan, new districts including Chaman and Qila Abdullah Loralai were created and new divisions were announced.

He said that vacancies for GPE teachers, medical and other colleges, endowment funds, 25% increase in sala-

ries, boarding schools and many other issues were part of the budget. Meanwhile the Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development and Environment Mafkhalhan Kakar said that the use of anti-parliamentary and vulgar words by the opposition during the budget session was regrettable and shameful.

The provincial minister said that the ministry is a thing to come and go. If we are sitting on government benches today, you will sit tomorrow. But adopting such an attitude is against the democratic tra-

ditions.

It may be recalled that the opposition lawmakers in Quetta attacked the Balochistan Assembly ahead of the annual budget session.

They blocked the gate of the assembly and stopped anyone from entering which led to a delay in the session. The Quetta deputy commissioner requested them to call off their protest but they refused to budge. The police had to intervene after the lawmakers hurled stones and bottles at the treasury members in an attempt to stop them from entering the assembly.

Police officials were seen escorting Chief Minister Jam Kamal Awan and other ministers to the building after the supporters of the opposition parties clashed with the ruling party supporters. Someone hurled a shoe and bottle at the CM.

Police personnel baton-charged the crowd to disperse it. Three opposition members were injured. Sunullah Baloch, a member of the Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M), denied that his party supporters attacked the Balochistan chief minister.

Coronavirus in Pakistan

Confirmed Cases

947,218

PUNJAB 344,799	SINDH 331,094
KP 136,819	BALUCHISTAN 26,529
ISLAMABAD 82,313	AJK/GB 25,457

RECOVERED	DEATHS
887,095	21,913

PBC announces schedule for BHC bar elections

Staff Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) has issued a schedule for the Balochistan High Court (BHC) bar elections within three days and ordered that polling be held on July 17. BHC elections are held every year. The Council has issued orders to the High Court Bar from time to time to hold the elections of the High Court but no action was taken, for this the Balochistan Bar Council constituted an Election Board for the conduct of the elections. The Pakistan Bar Council's Appellate Committee for Balochistan ruled on the appeal of the President of the High Court Bar and directed the constituted Election Board to issue an election schedule within three days and hold the polls on July 17. He also directed the Bar Council to hold the elections of the High Court Silt and Turbat Circuit Benches immediately. He also directed for the elections of all the district bars as soon as possible under the Bar Council Act and Rules.

Govt-Opp clash causes hardship for masses: NP

Staff Report

QUETTA: Provincial spokesman of the National Party in a statement said that the political differences between government and opposition have caused trouble and hardship for the people of Quetta. In Balochistan, the opposition is only visible in the budget days. While Balochistan's political traditions, values and ethics are being trampled for personal gain and interests. The statement said that the job of the government is to govern and the job of the opposition is to monitor the governance of the government. But both sections preferred only economic matters and political points gaining instead of securing public interest.

Hot & dry weather prevails in Balochistan

Staff Report

QUETTA: The hot and dry weather prevailed in most parts of Balochistan including Quetta on Saturday while strong winds and thundershowers lashed Barkhan, Lasbela, Zhoab and surrounding areas. According to the Meteorological Department, the maximum temperature in Quetta was 34 degrees Celsius. Barkhan 30, Dalbandin 41, Gwadar 37, Kalat 30, Khuzdar 39, Lasbela 40, Nokandi 40, Sib 44, Turbat 47, Zhoab 31 and Zinat recorded 28 degrees Celsius. The weather will remain hot and dry in most districts of the province for next 24 hours.



QUETTA: A retired policeman suffering from cancer waiting for government aid.

Govt deserves appreciation for people friendly budget: Badini

Staff Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan, ministers and members of the provincial government deserve congratulations for presenting a people-friendly budget. As the budget has included all constituencies of

Balochistan in the development process. This was expressed by Hajj Mir Ghulam Dasgiri Badini, former provincial minister and central leader of Balochistan Awami Party. He said that Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Finance Minister Zahoor Baluchi are

congratulated on presenting a people-friendly and parallel budget in the Balochistan Assembly. The budget includes schemes for all areas, including Noskhi, which will make the people of Balochistan feel of change. Contrary to political and tribal traditions, instead of

dissenting on the floor of the assembly, spectacle was staged in front of the assembly which was a regrettable and frivolous act. He said that the opposition tried unsuccessfully to blackmail the government. It became clear that the opposition had no ideology or devel-

opmental vision. An attempt was made to fool the people by creating a commotion in the name of public representation. He added that the Balochistan government decides according to the aspirations of the people and does not take into account anyone's blackmail.



QUETTA: Group photo of students of Hira School and Colleges with Director Syed Agha Gul on the occasion of an event Mango Day.

Ghulam Nabi lauds services of Haji Baba Jan

Staff Report

QUETTA: On the occasion of the first anniversary of the late leader Mir Muhammad Yousof, member of the Central Committee of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) Ghulam Nabi Marri in a statement said that Hajj Mir Muhammad Yousof alias (Haji Baba Jan Shahwan) was a veteran and founding leader of the BNP and a well-known political tribal figure of Quetta. Hajj Mir Muhammad Yousof rendered sincere efforts, struggled and sacrificed for the welfare, development and prosperity of the people belonging to different religions and walks of life.

Chishti praises DC Khuzdar

Staff Report

QUETTA: Central Press Secretary of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Ideological Pakistan Abdul Sattar Chishti has thanked DC Khuzdar Bashir Barich for organizing a passing out parade of 600 Levies personnel and dispatching hundreds of personnel to their respective areas with special concentrations. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of families of Levies personnel who were undergoing training at Khuzdar Center. Abdul Sattar Chishti said that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Ideological Pakistan supports all the oppressed classes without making any difference between common people and government employees. We are the companions of every oppressed person, he added.

Training on Balochistan procurement rules

Staff Report

QUETTA: A five-day long training workshop about Balochistan Procurement Rules 2011 was held here. During the training, officers of various departments were trained on different topics of Balochistan Public Procurement. Director General Rural Development Academy Nematullah Babar, in his address, thanked the participants of the course and other guests. He urged the participants to avail facilities of the Rural Development Academy.

On behalf of the participants of the course, their representatives thanked the academy and said that the academy, despite its limited resources, is a superior, knowledgeable academy. And the expert facilitators invited the lecturers to give lectures. The information, they have acquired on important topics will be used in their respective offices and the information gained will be used in their annual affairs, participants expressed. At the end special guest distributed certificates among the trained officers and participants.

Bhootani brothers condemn chaos in assembly

Staff Report

QUETTA: Member Balochistan Assembly Sardar Muhammad Saleh Bhootani, Member National Assembly Muhammad Aslam Bhootani and Sardarzaad Shehzad Saleh Bhootani have condemned the indecent act committed by the opposition during budget session. In the tribal society of Balochistan, everyone is treated with respect and dignity no matter how much they are political opponents of each other. Sardar Saleh Muhammad Bhootani and Aslam Bhootani have said that Jam Kamal is more political opponent of their but they have always kept in mind the mutual respect cultural and tribal traditions of Balochistan. The Bhootani brothers mentioned that the protest of the opposition is a constitutional and parliamentary right. They asked the friends of the opposition to guide workers to always respect tribal traditions of Balochistan.

NP resents firing on female teachers

Staff Report

Quetta: The spokesperson of the National Party resented the firing on female teachers in Mastung, in which four female teachers were injured. The party spokesperson clarified that such steps are being taken in the presence of puppet government to deliberately push Balochistan into darkness of ignorance. Mastung, has its own historical and unique place in terms of education and the national movement of Balochistan, so this heinous act was started from Mastung which is highly regrettable. Before that, poisonous spray was used in girls' schools in Mastung last year, which affected many girls badly. However, the government did not take these incidents seriously and the mischievous elements were not brought to justice.

BRACE development initiatives in Pishin

Adnan Aamir

QUETTA: Last week, we left Quetta early in the morning and after a travel of 45 minutes, we were in district Pishin. Our first stop was the regional office of Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), which is a semi-government organization implementing the BRACE programme in collaboration with the Local Government department of Balochistan.

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme (BRACE) is a five-year European-Union-funded philanthropic programme, which was started in 2017 with a portfolio of Rs3.77 billion. BRACE covers nine districts all over Balochistan - Pishin, Loralai, and Zhoab are among them. Under this programme the local

communities are provided help by using Income Generating Grants (IGG), Community Investment Fund (CIF), Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI), Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), and Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS).

An employee of BRACE Mansoor Khan briefed us about the project. In his early 30s, Mansoor lives in Quetta but daily commutes to Pishin for work on his motorbike, a daunting task that he is doing for the last seven years. He said that a Poverty Scorecard Survey (PSC) was conducted from 2017 to 2019 to determine the poverty level in all 9 districts of the province. According to this survey, 51% fell below the poverty line in Pishin, which is the fifth most populated district in

Balochistan. After sipping a cup of tea in the BRSP office, we left to visit the local communities in Pishin. Our first stop was Union Council (UC) Toor Shah, which was just a 15 minute drive away. In this UC we met with the people associated with Local Support Organization (LSO) Abasoon. LSOs are volunteer organizations set up at the UC level to act as beneficiaries of the BRACE programme. Sidique Ullah, the soft-spoken Community Bookkeeper of this LSO, guided us to the beneficiaries. At times he also acted as an interpreter translating our conversation with the local beneficiaries in the Pashto language. We went inside the mud-wall shop of Muhammad Ismail. Barely 20 years old Ismail, was provided a 20,000 loan under the CIF component

of BRACE. He used this loan to expand the size of his shop. "Now, I earn a profit of 9,000 per month and I will repay the loan in monthly installments of 2,000, he told this scribe. Although this is a very small amount but there was no other way through which Ismail could have arranged these funds, he told me. Later, we met Hayatullah who was working in a tailoring shop in Pishin Bazar. In his mid-20s, with very little formal education, he was selected for 3 months tailoring course under the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) component of BRACE. He learned tailoring at a vocational training institute in Karachi, with all his boarding and lodging sponsored by BRACE. "Now I earn around fourteen thousand a month, he told us.

We also visited UC Kamalzaib and witnessed solar-powered water supply scheme. This project was built at a cost of Rs2.4 million and 80 percent of the cost was provided by the BRACE program under the CPI component. This water supply scheme is fulfilling water requirements of 12,650 people. After having lunch we started our journey back to Quetta. During the journey, I was thinking about the backwardness of the people. Unavailability of electricity, water shortages, and lack of job opportunities are common tales in Balochistan. Philanthropic activities of BRACE are benefiting people at the household and community level but the backwardness of these areas can only be resolved if government of Balochistan intervenes at the policy level.



NAYYAR MAHMOOD

A year ago this day you left us suddenly, unexpectedly, quietly. We have missed you ever since, every moment. Your wit, your sense of humour, your laughter, your love, your support. A broadcaster, a journalist, a friend, a wife, another, a mentor. You excelled in every role. Till the end you remained at the giving end. We cannot thank Allah enough for having given us "You". May Allah keep you in the best of Jannat al Firdaus.

Please Offer Fataha/Dua for her:

Syed Anwar Mahmood
Syeda Mariha Mahmood & Karim
Syed Bilal Mahmood, Syed Bilal Mahmood,
Shahbaz, Ibrahim, Shaban, Jalal, Hayaan

BT3

balochistanimes.pk
@balochistanimes.pk
BTimes_pk

National

Govt allocates Rs 40.5b for GB uplift, says Asad



APP
GILGIT: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Saturday said the Federal government has earmarked Rs 40.5 billion for development projects in Gilgit-Balistan under its Public Sector Development Programme (2021-22).
Addressing a press conference here along with Chief Minister Gilgit-Balistan Khalid Khurshid and the provincial ministers, Asad Umar said the total worth of the GB development package is Rs 56 billion.
He also vowed to increase the federal allocation for GB development package up to Rs 50 billion in the fiscal year 2022-24.
The Federal Minister said that the

message of the Prime Minister Imran Khan to the people of Gilgit-Balistan was that if Gilgit-Balistan develops in the true sense, then the whole of Pakistan would be prosperous.
Asad Umar said that under the integrated development plan for Gilgit-Balistan, 19 mega projects had been included in the Federal PSDP, out of which 11 projects were approved so far by ECNEC and CDWP for which Rs 56 billion was allocated this year, adding that 135 billion would be spent till completion. The rest of the projects would also be approved soon.
He said that 50 billion would be spent on Gilgit-Chitral Expressway under China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said that with the completion of these projects, Gilgit-Balistan

would develop in a real sense and prosperity would come here.
He said that apart from the federal PSDP the federal government would also take steps to take Gilgit-Balistan out of backwardness. "The projects in various sectors will not only herald a new chapter of development and progress in Gilgit-Balistan but will also help address the problems of the area and create numerous employment opportunities," said Asad Umar.
For the upgradation and betterment of Internet service in Gilgit-Balistan, the Federal Minister said that a spectrum auction would be held in the next 2-3 months.
He said that incubation centres were being set up at a cost of Rs500 million to enhance the business skills of the youth

of Gilgit-Balistan.
Responding to a question on making Gilgit-Balistan an interim constitutional province, the federal minister said that the entire national leadership agreed that Gilgit-Balistan should have constitutional rights. He said that there was no backdoor diplomacy from India in this matter, adding that soon Gilgit-Balistan will be included in the constitutional mainstream.
He appealed to the people to get vaccinated against coronavirus as soon as possible, adding that for this purpose, mass vaccination centres are being set up at 16 places in Gilgit-Balistan.
The Minister added that the federal government was providing 30 mobile units to Gilgit-Balistan which would be used for vaccines in remote areas.

302 more virus patients recover in Punjab

APP
LAHORE: As many as 302 coronavirus patients recovered on Saturday, according to the Health Department.
According to the data shared by the department, 302,706 coronavirus patients have recovered altogether so far in public sector hospitals across the province.
The Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department sources said that 7,465 beds were reserved in all government owned hospitals for corona patients, out of which 6,634 beds were unoccupied. Likewise, 1555 beds were reserved in government hospitals of the provincial metropolis and 1342 beds were vacant so far.
In view of the surging coronavirus pandemic, the Specialized Healthcare Department had arranged 3327 beds in Isolation wards of all government hospitals in the province, out of which, 3103 beds were vacant.
However, 412 beds for corona patients were reserved in isolation wards set up in the government hospitals of Lahore and 366 beds were unoccupied. In addition, 3356 beds were also reserved in HDU for patients suffering from Covid-19 in all the hospitals of the Punjab government and 2915 beds were vacant while, in the hospitals situated in the provincial capital, 865 beds were reserved in HDU and 759 beds were unoccupied.
The specialized healthcare had arranged 782 ventilators for corona patients in all hospitals of the provincial government, of which 166 ventilators were under use while 616 were unoccupied.
Around 278 ventilators were reserved in Lahore hospitals, of which 61 were occupied and 217 ventilators were vacant.

Rana Sanauallah narcotics case adjourned till July 31

APP
LAHORE: A special court on Saturday adjourned the hearing of a drug trafficking case against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanauallah till July 31.
Duty Judge Khalid Bashir conducted the brief proceedings of the case due to the transfer of the judge concerned. Rana Sanauallah also appeared during the proceedings and got his attendance marked.
On July 1, 2019, the ANF officers arrested Rana Sanauallah from Islamabad-Lahore Motorway near Sukhki, while he was traveling from Faisalabad to Lahore.
The ANF had registered an FIR against him under 9-C, 15, and 17 of the Control of Narcotic Substances Act. The ANF has claimed to recover 15-kilogram heroin and other drugs from Rana Sanauallah's car. The Lahore High Court had granted bail to Rana Sanauallah in the case.

Measures being taken to promote arts, culture: Buzdar

Staff Report
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar said on Saturday that exemplary measures were being taken for promotion of arts, culture and welfare of artists throughout the province.
Addressing a prize-distribution ceremony held in the honour of artists, who won different competitions under the Punjab Talent Hunt Programme 2021 at the CM office here on Saturday, he said the culture department remained neglected in the past.
However, he added, now all relevant departments were working wholeheartedly for promotion of cultural activities. Artists have been encouraged through Talent Hunt Programme and the scope of the project would be extended to the tehsil level, he added.
The CM said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government was taking practical steps for pro-

motion of art and culture.
Usman Buzdar promised that the government would provide funds to the department needed for promotion of culture. He said that the Punjab government had decided to launch its tv channel, where new talent would be promoted while places like Pak Tea House Lahore would also be established for intellectuals and poets in the other districts of Punjab. He termed the Talent Hunt Programme an effective platform for young artists to showcase their abilities in music, fine arts, science and literature, handicrafts and theatre.
He said that young generation was an asset and the provincial government would not only protect them but also provide them with new opportunities of development and progress.
Provincial Minister for Culture Khayal Ahmad Kastro, MPA Sadia Sohail, Secretary Information, DGFR, Executive Director Punjab

Arts Council, Director Punjab Arts Council and officials concerned, winning artists and their families also participated in the ceremony.
The CM gave away cash prizes and commendatory certificates to the winners.
Provincial Minister Khayal Ahmad Kastro said that Talent Hunt Programme was the best way to encourage young artists and the Punjab chief minister had extended full support for the success of the programme at every level.
Secretary Information and Culture Raja Jahangir Anwar said that about 10,000 young persons including women performed in seven different categories of the Talent Hunt Programme at district and divisional level.
The Talent Hunt Programme was organised by the Punjab Arts Council under the auspices of the Punjab Department of Information and Culture.

Primary schools to resume classes from June 21 in Sindh

Monitoring Report
KARACHI: The Sindh government announced on Saturday that classes for primary schools (Grade V and lower) will resume Monday, June 21, as Covid-19 cases decline in the province.
The decision to open resume classes for primary grades was taken during a meeting of the province's Covid-19 task force.
The meeting, chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, also decided to reopen shrines, amusement parks and indoor gymnasiums from June 28.
The forum was also appraised on the current Covid-19 positivity ratio in the province which hovers around 3.9pc. However, the positivity ratio in Karachi is still around 8.08pc and 4.3pc in Hyderabad. "The reduction in cases is conditional on the implementation of SOPs by the public," the chief minister said.
The forum was further informed that so far, Sindh had received around 3.2 million doses of different Covid-19 vaccines, out of which 2.8 million had been administered.
It was further decided to close all vaccination centres across the province for one day on June 20 in view of the shortage of Covid-19 jobs.

Police recover car stolen 17 years ago

APP
HYDERABAD: A car, stolen from Karachi about 17 years ago, has been recovered during the police checking in Hyderabad. The police spokesman informed here on Saturday that A-Section police also arrested the person Shaheez Khan Mari who had allegedly stolen the vehicle on September 28, 2004, from the limits of Baloch Colony police station, Karachi.
The car bears registration number AGC-219 and the engine number 8017516. The spokesman claimed that the suspect had confessed to his crime.
He told that Mari was booked in at least 7 FIRs in 3 districts for the crimes including theft, robbery, narcotic and street crimes. The A-Section police also lodged an FIR nominating Mari under sections 23-A of Sindh Arms Act and 411 of Pakistan Penal Code.

Chauburji grounds rehabilitation work reviewed

APP
LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Mian Aslam Iqbal here Saturday visited Chauburji Quarters Ground and Dungi Ground Samanabad where he reviewed the rehabilitation work of both the grounds. Secretary IEC Ehsan Bhatta, DG LDA Ahmed Aziz Tarar, Chief Engineer LDA and Directors of FHA were also present.
Talking to media on this occasion, Provincial Minister Mian Aslam Iqbal said that Chauburji Quarters Ground had been in a bad condition for the last six years. This ground was being used as a dumping site for the metro train project. He said the Chauburji Quarters Ground will be fully restored in the next one and a half months.
MAO College Ground, which had been useless for the last 20 years, was also restored, he said. Improvement and rehabilitation work of all the grounds of Provincial Constituency PP-151 was in full swing, adding, "We are grateful to Chief Minister Usman Buzdar for the provision of funds for the rehabilitation of the grounds." He said that 3.94 percent growth rate of the economy was the result of hard work of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said, "The national economy is improving while the economy of looters of national resources is sinking."

Corrupt elements want to remain in power: Gill

APP
ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Political Committee Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Saturday said that corrupt elements wanted to remain in power at any cost in the country.
Reacting to a statement of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, he said only the corrupt

governments of PML-N were favouring democratic system of the country.
He said fake champions of democracy should be held accountable for their corrupt practices.
He said the PML-N should tell about the return of Nawaz Sharif to the country. Dr. Shahbaz Gill said those people who had tarnished the image of Parliament were again

doing politics in the country.
The SAPM said the plunderers had been united again to protect their loot money. He said the corrupt elements were disturbed as the PTI led government was presenting a friendly budget 2021-22.
He said incompetent courtiers like Shahid Khaqan were worried about their political survival.
Shehryar Afridi blamed the past governments for making secret deals with the US for conducting drone strikes in Pakistan. "Today no one can dare think of conducting a drone attack in Pakistan."
Who blocked the Pashtuns' ID Cards? In past regimes, the governments used to portray Pashtuns as terrorists in the mock exercises. Debo to call Rao Anwar as his favorite son? Who blocked Pashtuns from entering NADKA offices, argued Afridi.

He asked the PPP to respond why Sindh government is not giving 3 percent share from divisible pool for development of FATA despite making a commitment.
"Why the PML-N and PPP governments did not take any measure to secure the sovereignty of the country," he questioned.
Afridi said that Prime Minister Imran Khan ordered to give Rs 12,000 to each family of Afghan refugees during the lockdown. He said that 33,000 kanalis of state land was recovered from a



LAHORE: A large number of people waiting in their vehicles for their turn at the drive-through vaccination centre at Gaddafi Stadium. —APP

Afridi urges opp not to misuse Kashmir for petty politics

APP
ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Afridi Saturday urged the Opposition parties not to misuse Kashmir dispute for their petty personal and political objectives.
Taking part in the budget debate in the National Assembly, Shehryar Afridi said that the All Parties Hariyat Conference (APHC) had requested the Pakistani political parties not to use

Kashmir cause for petty political gains as it was breaking the hearts and resolve of millions of Kashmiris fighting to free Jammu and Kashmir from illegal Indian occupation.
He said that due to the wise strategy adopted by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan was swiftly defeating the pandemic. "The whole world today is praising Pakistan and our Prime Minister's handling of the pandemic," he said.

He asked the PPP to fight the case of Muslims and raised his voice against Islamophobia at the world's top forums.
He said that PM Khan also convinced the western world at the UNGA and the OIC that the Muslims pay the top respect to the holy Prophet (PBUH).
He said that the PTI government took action against land mafia and got vacated millions of acres of state land from mafia thugs. He said that 33,000 kanalis of state land was recovered from a

property tycoon in Islamabad during the anti-encroachment drive.
"Imran Khan's government took direct action against 1000 Benami properties. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif did not utter a single word for Kashmir but he was fond of having meetings with Narendra Modi and Sajjan Jindal for his petty personal gains. Sharif also made baseless claims about our missile programme," he added.
Afridi also said that Shahid

Khaqan Abbasi threatened Speaker National Assembly of hurling shoe at him but he did not say a single word when Abbasi was mistreated at US airport despite being the prime minister of Pakistan. "After all, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was the Prime Minister of my country. Where was his pride despite mistreatment meted out to him at the American airport? It is only Imran Khan who can refuse Pakistani bases to the American administration," he said.



Budget and opposition

The coalition government of Balochistan led by Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) announced the provincial budget for fiscal year 2021-22.

First time in the history of Balochistan Assembly, the opposition members strongly protested against the budget before its announcement, upon which the government had to deploy heavy contingent of police and other civil forces to avoid any mishap.

The most shameful and embracing moment occurred when Chief Minister Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan along with his cabinet members reached assembly to attend budget session. Taking it as a chance, the opposition members not only chanted objectionable slogans but also threw heavy flower pots on cabinet members. Several people, including that of MPAs sustained injuries during the incident. The intolerance and lack of patience demonstrated by opposition members opened a new chapter of disrespect for each other and particularly for Balochistan Assembly. It is very sad that the same legislators speak nonstop about respect for each others, tribal and social values on TV talk shows but practically the situation is very different altogether. The attitude opted by opposition members to get desired schemes in the budget badly disappointed the masses and it will be prudent if the opposition mem-

bers record their protest following democratic and constitutional path. Once again the provincial government came with a deficit budget of Rs 84 billion. The total volume of the budget is Rs 584 billion. The government has increased the development spending Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) from 106 billion to a whopping 172 billion. It is thought to be an unrealistic target because there are no resources to fund the schemes. Ultimately the PSDP spending will hardly be 100 billion.

It is positive that the government has reduced the deficit from 87 billion last year to 84 bn this year but how this deficit will be financed is a big question? Bank borrowing or most probably cuts in developing and current expenditure.

Govt has allocated 88 billion for education in the budget. This makes up 15% of the budget which is really commendable. At the same time, the government is spending 53 billion on law and order which is a huge burden on the resource-starved government of Balochistan. Govt has increased the provincial tax revenue target from 20 billion to 34 billion; this means more sales tax on services, which will negatively affect the growing services sector in the province. It is also positive step that the Government has paid due focus on health sector particularly to meet Covid-19 challenge. More than five thousand new vacancies have been announced in new fiscal budget but process of appointing employees is so

Chief Editor
Syed Anwer Mahmood
Editor
Khalil Ahmed
Telephone Numbers:
+92-081-2826930
Fax: +92-081-2826931
Address
Barginja Street, Near Election Commission Office Zargoon Road Quetta.

slow that there are vacancies announced last budget yet to be filled. Agriculture which is the backbone of economy of Balochistan has not been given due focus and there is no commendable schemes and incentives for farmers.

Balochistan government announced 10 percent increase in salaries of government employees and pensions but unlike other provinces the Balochistan government announced only 15 percent disparity reduction allowances instead of 25 percent. However, keeping financial difficulties of the province it can be balanced budget to some extent if the government comes up with its announcements and commitments.

Bettering FDI

A central bank report reveals encouraging scenario of foreign investment that has increased by 63 per cent this year as compared to last one. Economists are further projecting increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) as investors are reposing confidence in government policies. FDI has been in precarious state for years, largely due to the bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Experts attributed the rise in foreign investment to improvement in the external aspects of the economy and a reduction in the current account deficit. Record inflow of remittances has lured foreign investors back to Pakistan. The current financial year has been difficult in that the Corona epidemic has affected performance of various sectors of the economy. The money allocated to the business development and production sector for concessions had to be spent on coronas, masks, oxygen cylinders, ventilators and vaccines in hospitals. The World Bank, the World Health Organization, the European Union, the G7 and the United Nations are acknowledging that the way Pakistan has protected its economy from the Corona epidemic is worthy of imitation. A positive development in recent days has been that most of the conditions of the 27 agreements that Pakistan had to implement in exchange for the GSP Plus concession have been complied with. The European

Union (EU) has expressed concern over the deteriorating state of human rights, freedom of expression and the social sector in Pakistan. Pakistan has briefed the European Union on the progress of the Journalists' Protection Bill, the Enforced Disappearances Bill and the Anti-Violence Bill. Pakistan has made its position very clear on the demands made by the European Union on the death penalty and the blasphemy laws. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and EU policy chief Borrell have discussed the issue of the country's monetary policy, it is also considered welcome that \$ 106 billion in external loans were repaid during the first nine months of this year. Debt settlement puts pressure on foreign exchange. Pakistan has been suffering from declining foreign exchange reserves for many years. The PTI government has decided to increase its foreign exchange reserves by reducing imports, increasing exports and providing administrative assistance in remittances to Pakistanis abroad. These measures have worked well and Pakistan has achieved the highest level of foreign exchange reserves. This is the background that has helped increase foreign investment. If the government continues to take investment-friendly measures, there could be a further increase in foreign investment. Last but not the least, the fruit of the rising FDI must reach the commoners otherwise such a development may widen the gap between the richest and the poorest of the country.

Foreign policy How Sino-US rivalry will impact Pakistan

Dr. Tahir Ashraf

After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, and consequently end of the Cold War, a debate started among scholars of International Relations about the possible structure of world politics and the role of the US in it. Francis Fukuyama's End of History and Huntington's Clash of Civilizations were among the major interpretations of the possible shape of the international politics. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed the American domination in the international politics in the form of unilateral actions taken by the US against Iraq and Afghanistan. However, since the last five years, the US-China rivalry has become a leading theme of international politics.

Harvard University Professor Graham Allison initiated the debate when he evaluated the possibilities of the US-China rivalry in the backdrop of Thucydides's trap-when a rising power (China) threatens to displace a ruling power (the US) and the most likely outcome is war. In his book titled "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?" finds that how close the US and China are to the unthinkable and stressed that the US and China is not inevitable. However, he revealed that what painful steps international leaders must take to avoid this possible disaster. Allison is the person who developed "foreign policy decision-making models" in his seminal piece "Essence of Decisions: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis" on the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962. Here, I am not going to assess the possibilities of war between the US and China rather to evaluate the impact that the US-China rivalry can exert on South Asia especially Pakistan.

The circumstantial evidence suggests that the Asian giant is expanding its interest in Middle East and Persian Gulf and is all willing to take pre-emptive measures to counter USA in the region.

China has agreed to invest \$100 billion in Iran over 25 years in exchange for a steady supply of oil to fuel its growing economy under an economic and security agreement signed on Saturday 27th March 2021. As per media reports, \$400 billions of Chinese investments to be made in dozens of fields, including banking, telecommunications, ports, railways, health care and information technology, over the next 25 years. In exchange, China would receive a regular and heavily discounted supply of Iranian oil.

As far as South Asia is concerned, China has a "time-tested" and "all-weather friend" Pakistan.

With signing of border treaty in March 1963 settling its border with Pakistan, Pakistan found China as a counterweight to balance Indian threats. China has always provided consistent, unconditional support to Pakistan on its nuclear program and the Kashmir issue. It has always acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in the war against terrorism even when the US and its western allies have reservations about Pakistan's commitment to the war on terror. Previously, Pakistan has maintained good relations with both. Rather, China has been extremely tolerant of Pakistan's more than needed tilts towards the US during times when China and Pakistan have converged their interest against the US. Since the Trump era, the US has changed its focus from Russia to China and started to treat China as a strategic competitor.

South Asia has become important to both the US and China for their economic objectives in Asia especially for inter-regional connectivity. The US has established strategic partnership with India which has to cater the interests of both countries i.e. containment of China. However, the Indo-US strategic partnership is going to imbalance the power ratio in South Asia. As this situation in South Asia has become important for Pakistan, since China's rise has increased importance of India for the US to advance its defence cooperation, it is obvious that its leaning towards India to counterbalance China in South Asia has direct ramifications for Pakistan, thus disturbing strategic stability in South Asia.

Peace process in Afghanistan is another important challenge for regional stability and peace. Peace in Afghanistan is also essential for success of Chinese economic connectivity. Similarly, Afghanistan in the post-American era is also important for China because American presence in this region is continuous threat for China and stationing of the American troops in neighbourhood of Afghanistan (as the US is requesting to Pakistan for providing bases for operating of drones) could be used to contain China. After making huge economic investments under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) across the world, China has become influential player in international politics, acting as Pakistan Economic Corridor (PEC), being flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative in South Asia. China has enhanced its regional connectivity. Now, Pakistan has shifted from geo-politics to geo-economics and wants to connect itself economically with the rest of the world.

With rising China and picking Pakistan to be its frontline state in an economic initiative, Pakistan needs to make a choice to whom (the US or China) it gives priority. Rather, Pakistan should maintain a balanced relationship with both US and China, and, it should be Pakistan's tactical decision to secure its interests.

The author teaches the Department of International Relations, Bahaudini Zakariya University, Multan

It's time to take off partisan blinkers

Hafeez Khan

Winters in Lyalpur (Faisalabad) were always fun, especially after the annual horse and cattle show known as "MelaMawashian". It used to be a power packed event lasting for a week and attended by farmers from all over the Punjab.

Aside from trade in milking and breeding animals, we were treated to horse and dog racing, tent pegging, wrestling and other contests. It was Punjabi culture in full bloom. Evening entertainment consisted of either an Iranian or Russian circus as well as "talkies", films screened in a tent. Refreshment stalls selling cane and orange juice and a variety of food and sweets were dotted throughout. All kinds of food and refreshment stalls, however, were out of bounds, but we would surreptitiously take our pick based on whatever our moogie dice would allow.

Being the family of Dr Khan we would enjoy the circus from prime position in the front rows. It was thrilling watching the puppet shows, tight-rope walking, acrobats, jokers, jugglers and, of course, the animals. Nevertheless, the highlight remained "Maut ka Gola" ("Circle of Death") where daredevil motor bike riders caused our young hearts to nearly pop out of our chests. These memories from nearly six decades ago came flooding back when I saw the recent antics on the floor of the National Assembly.

Abusive language, physical violence, atrocious and gangster like behavior played out for all to see. It reminded me of the fights that broke out among rival gangs during that "mela" of long ago. They would beat the living daylight out of the perpetrators until they separated and skulked away. Our elders used to call them "ghundas". Unfortunately, there in Parliament, the same would be the perfect fit for the action is not possible; even if it is deserved by some of these "ghundas". This is certainly not the culture of the Punjab.

Our parliamentarians are puppets whose strings are pulled by a trio of masters: Nawaz Sharif, Maryam and Maulana Fazal. Led by an absconder, they don't give two hoots about Pakistan's future. They must be perfect fit to destroy the country to the point where the third party intervenes and dismantles the existing setup. Such lowly antics reflect the caliber of our parliamentarians. They must be perfect fit for a circus but they clearly don't fit the bill when it comes to being representatives of the people of Pakistan. They are puppets whose strings are pulled by a trio of masters: Nawaz Sharif supported by Maryam and Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman. They are convicted, disqualified or rejected by the people. Led by an absconder, they don't care for their constituents' rights but their future. They want to disrupt and destroy the country to the point where the third party intervenes and dismantles the existing setup.

The actions of some ministers and Treasury members were equally deplorable. Jumping on tables and hurling epithets is playing into the hands of those who seek destruction to resurrect dynastic rule in order to loot and plunder. They are supposed to raise the level of discourse rather than stoop to the level of that never lets me down. Numbers don't lie. Talk is cheap, especially if there are accomplished liars manufacturing falsehoods and manipulating reality. You require a sound proof environment, not just the truth. Where everybody seems to have a price, the sale comes first and verity is always secondary.

Let us cut to the chase and talk facts. It's really worth a try if we are headed for better times. CPFC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) has attracted \$25 billion in investments. It exports have grown to \$1.7 billion recording a 46-percent growth in 10 months. Digital footprints are expanding in all fields to formalize and monetize the economy. Progress is galloping towards less expensive hydro and nuclear power. The latest financing of Balakot is a shot in the living daylight.

Stock exchange value and volume has grown. Remittances were recorded at \$2.8 billion in April alone. Assistance for farmers under the 2021-22 budget is worth Rs 110 billion and will bring relief to 70 percent of the population. The farming community has already benefited from the slashes of the sugar mafia and helped through other relief packages. Manufacturing industry is seen highest growth since 2011. The growth in all areas are developing fast. Textile sector is booming leading to a shortage of trained labour. This budget has a sharp focus on providing skills to the youth to improve employability.

Positive things are happening all around for Pakistan, not just one party. As Pakistanis, we must realize that, for the first time since the 1960s, we are becoming stronger economically, gaining respect from the international community and boast impressive defence capabilities. Our future generations is turning into a reality. It's time to take off partisan blinkers and think of the country.

Abusive language, physical violence, atrocious and gangster like behavior played out for all to see

A neglected city
The Sindh government recently presented the provincial budget for the financial year 2021-22. It was disappointing to see that it has allocated only Rs8 million for various development projects in Karachi. During the last 12 years, no meaningful development work has been carried out in the city. Also, no work has been carried out for the city's maintenance. Karachi faces a host of critical issues. There is an acute shortage of water in the city and the public transport system is practically non-existent. Roads are in bad shape, and the entire city is covered in piles of garbage. Rising street crimes hint at the city's worsening law and order. The education sector remains

neglected. Billions of rupees in provincial taxes and levies are collected each year. However, we don't know how that money is being used for development. Karachi needs the immediate attention of the relevant authorities who must deal with its numerous problems.

Shameful incident
Last Tuesday, we witnessed the worst and extreme scenes of hoodliganism in the most sacred house of Pakistan - the National Assembly. Several lawmakers even threw the copies of the budget at each other. The foul and filthy language that was used on the floor of the house should be condemned by all our lawmakers across all limits and turned the NA into a battleground. The nation elected these lawmakers so that they can work for the welfare of the people. They were not elected to fight with each other. Representatives of a civilized nation never resort to such inappropriate and immature behavior. They always think about the welfare of their voters and the interest of the country. The government and

the opposition should make efforts to maintain a peaceful atmosphere in the NA.
Guldar Khan Wazir Loralai

Incendy
The recent incident in the NA speaks volumes about our elected representatives and their priorities. Never have they ever spoken for their constituents' rights with such energy. It is unfortunate that politics in Pakistan has been reduced to personalities - where a party leader and his/her interests are ardently defended. On matters that directly affect the people, these people who fiercely defend their leaders, observe complete silence.

The people of the country should also share the blame for what we are witnessing today - these lawmakers have been elected by us. Party leaders need to show some maturity. They must take action against those members who disrespected the NA. It is time we shunned uncivilized practices and adopted basic decency.
Aadil Hussain Larkana

Changing climate
Pakistan has been experiencing extreme weather conditions this summer. All cities recorded extremely hot temperatures. The reason for this abrupt change is the rapid deforestation in the country.

If we want to avoid such harsh weather patterns in the future, we need to plant more trees. The authorities must look into this matter.

Intiaz Baloch
Kech

Clogged streets
This is to draw the attention of the Balochistan government to Quetta's dilapidated infrastructure. Even though the authorities spend a large chunk of the provincial budget on the city's infrastructural development, people have to deal with traffic jams almost every day. They end up spending at least an hour to cover a short distance that can easily be covered in 10 minutes. The main reason for this problem is that the city's infrastructure so poor that government must come up with a plan to improve the city's infrastructure so that people can save their time and energy.
Zohaib Ahmed Hub

Tribal clashes
Few days ago, in the Katcha area of district Kashmir in the jurisdiction of Durant Mahar Police Station Kandh Kot, a bloody tribal feud between Sabzi-Jagirami and Chachar brothers claimed nine precious lives of Chachar community. The role of local Police and elected political figures to control these tribal clashes is very disappointing.

Both parties are fighting against each other since years but Sindh Government is reluctant to curb this menace which has played havoc with the future generation. The Katcha areas of interior Sindh are deprived of basic facilities and amenities of life. Schools are permanently closed for years while health care centres are also not functioning because of "No-Gov" areas. The people of Sindh are famous and strongly believe in mutual love, harmony, peace, tranquility and brotherhood as they have been more civilized, pacifist, hospitable people and owner of the oldest civilization of the world called Moenjodaro.
Samaughul Kashmir

letters@bt.com
Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space and should carry the writer's address, CNIC and phone numbers.



Sohai Iqbal Bhatti

In November 2018, a very friendly person holding a government post invited me for a meeting. The reason for meeting me was my news published in the Daily 92 about his subordinate government agency. Instead of denying the news, he wanted to state the background and national interest of the move.

After stating the national interest and reasons during the meeting, he asked the name of the "source" of the document and the news. After my apology for revealing the name, they insisted on revealing the name of the source, highlighting the possible unpleasant consequences. As the meeting was still going well, I asked a question, sensing the delicacy and bitterness of the situation.

The purpose of asking the question was to dissuade them from insisting on revealing the name of the source of the news and the document. I said, "Despite being a very intelligent, highly educated and a follower of social traditions, the tone and tone you use in Parliament House, Press Conferences, Media Talks and Current Affairs programs for members of the Opposition do not exactly match your personality and family dignity. Why do you prove to be an opposition member instead of a government member despite holding the portfolio of an important ministry? Everyone in your

circle of friends regrets the choice of your words and style of expression. Do you do all this out of compulsion or are you all unaware of this aspect of your personality?"

He picked up his mobile phone and quickly turned the chair of the famous brand towards me. He opened the WhatsApp and said road this. The chat contained "Hit them hard". When I asked the reason for this message, he said, "Monitoring is hard."

If we talk to the opposition leniently for two days, then we get the message from the boss. "Hit them hard". Sensing surprise and curiosity on my face, he said, "Well, let's leave this matter now. I guess now you will try to get the news out. I also answered your question and revealed my source. Now you must tell me the source of your news article." After a pause, he said, "Your monitoring and training is very strict." After knowing the name of the source, as soon as I leave your office, you should immediately call the head of your subsidiary ask him 'Hit him hard and report'. He laughed out loud and I just got out of the room feeling safe.

'Hit them hard'

After a long hiatus on Tuesday, I decided to go to Parliament House to get a glimpse of the proposals for a balanced budget and the political situation. But during the budget session, I saw sad and painful scenes beyond my imagination. Opposition's noisy protests and slogans must have been a tradition but filthy insults worse something I could never have imagined. I saw such a funeral of the honor and sanctity of Parliament for the first time in 10 years.

Whenever legislation was enacted for "mutual benefit" in Parliament, members participated as if a one-party system was in place in Pakistan. On such occasions, there was no abusing, no whistling, no insults and no foul language. During the speech of the Leader of the Opposition Shabbaz Sharif, it

seemed as if the grief and frustration of the Prime Minister over the noise and slogans of the opposition members during the first speech of the Prime Minister Imran Khan in the National Assembly was renewed among the PTI members. As per the directives issued to them in November 2018, the members of the government are still following the policy of 'Hit them hard' wholeheartedly.

On the other hand, the news of 92 News, NEPRA has taken notice of the amendment in the contracts of two IPPs AES Lal Pir and Pak In by the Central Power Purchasing Agency was also conducted by the concerned agencies. Former MD of National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC), Dr. Khawaja Rifat, formed the amendment to the contract as unconstitutional and announced of Rs. 15 billion on the people, while the Central Power Purchasing Agency is saving Rs. 19 billion to the national exchequer.

Preliminary investigations are revealing shocking revelations. Former MD NTDC, Dr. Khawaja Rifat, as a CPPIA board member, signed the summary of amendments to the agreements. With the approval of Dr. Khawaja Rifat and other board members, the CPPIA found a legal way to amend the agreements with both the IPPs. However, the CPPIA did not conduct the required legal and financial consultation with all stakeholders after receiving a report of technical impacts on the National Power Control Centre's system prior to amending the agreement.

Former General Manager Systems Operations Muhammad Ayub gave only operational comments while never agreeing to amend the Power Purchase Agreement. The GMSO had recommended full consultation with all stakeholders but unfortunately the most important recommendation of General Manager Muhammad Ayub was ignored by the CPPIA. A study was also conducted by an independent consultant prior to the operational comments.

The CPPIA has now linked the amendment of contracts without the approval of the federal government of the wider national interest. In the past, NTDC officials have gone to great lengths to reward IPP owners, but now perhaps turn around. It is changing. All this happened in the wider national interest or in the interest of the IPPs. The final decision will be made by NEPRA.

Urban planning Karachi without a mega transport project

Karachi's modern transport projects have become rolling stone between the federation and the Sindh government. The tradition of mass transit projects is that they have been part of the Prime Minister's package of the federal government and the people's package of the Sindh government. The incoming government made exaggerated claims to provide Karachi with a modern public transport system, but in practice the situation was the opposite. The general impression is that the purpose of these transport projects is limited to setting up commissions and awarding contracts to the people of one's choice. Therefore, public transport projects have become a dream for Karachi.

In the current situation, due to the Cold War in the federation and Sindh, the plan to run a modern train in Karachi, which could have been a gift to the citizens of Karachi, is also delayed. The total cost of mass transit projects announced in 2012 was Rs 60 billion. But now the cost of these mega projects Green Line, Orange Line, Red Line, Yellow Line projects has exceeded Rs 100 billion.

The cost of Yellow Line Bus project from Dawood Chowrang to Shabraz-Qasim was Rs. 16 billion. The cost of Orange Line Bus project from Orangi Town Office to Board Office Nazimabad was Rs. 35 crore which has reached 2 billion in this budget. The cost of the proposed project from Red Line bus service to Chowrang was Rs 15 billion, the cost of Green Line bus project from Surjani to Tower was Rs 16 billion, now the cost of these projects has reached Rs 100 billion due to delaying tactics. Due to this mismanagement and negligence, the international financial, research and media organizations have declared Karachi a political orphan city due to the dilapidated roads and the worst condition of public transport in Karachi and now it is counted among the 100 cities in the world. Karachi's system is considered the worst in the system.

Prime Minister Imran Khan announced a Rs. 199 billion (68 billion 91 crore) for the rehabilitation of Karachi in 2019, a 6 billion 600 crore package under an agreement with the IMF to save Pakistan from bankruptcy. The federal government had also announced funds of Rs 162 billion for mega projects in Karachi last year. However, according to official reports, the federal government has not released last year Rs. 179 billion has been allocated for Karachi in the current financial year.

However, the federal government says that by June 2020, the federation has spent Rs 2465 billion on Karachi, while Rs 179 billion has been allocated for Karachi in the current financial year.

The Sindh government has allocated Rs 288.9 billion for various projects for the development of Karachi in the budget for the new financial year 2022-21. The PPP Sindh government operated 10 buses in April 2018 which were withdrawn a year later. At the start of the current financial year, the Sindh government has announced to increase the number of buses to 30, but last year, all buses operated under the People's Bus Service disappeared from the roads. The people of Karachi are forced to travel on the roofs of Klaxtra buses, the roads are broken, they are not making demands from the city governments and despite the court order, the modern system of Karachi Circular Railway has not been restored for 15 years. Due to lack of financial guarantee from the federal government, China has not yet started work on the Karachi Circular Railway. Karachi has become a city that is being looted with both hands but no one is responsible for solving its problems.

In the recent budget, the Sindh government has also released funds for launching the 650 intra-district bus services in the province. Under the scheme, Rs 165 billion has been released for diesel hybrid electric bus service. The Sindh Finance Department has released funds to the Transport Department for the feasibility of the new bus services and purchase of buses.

The funds have been released during the current financial year 2020-21 to launch the People's Bus Service. Surprisingly, neither Sindh nor the federation has allocated any money in their budget for a modern transport system for Karachi, the capital of Sindh, which clearly means that Karachi will remain deprived of proper facilities. It also proves how sincere both the Sindh and the federal governments are for the development of the largest revenue generating city. In such a scenario, it should not be expected that any foreign investor will turn up in Karachi in the next years to come and lenders will also limit their interest in providing development funds for this mega city.

At the start of the service, the Sindh government had announced to increase the number of buses to 30, but last year, all buses operated under the People's Bus Service disappeared from the roads



Twitter

A huge milestone achieved as 10 million doses have been administered across Flag of Pakistan. It couldn't have been possible without relentless efforts of the medical staff and cooperation of the masses. The fight is not yet over. Each job makes a difference. #VaccineWorks

The HRP highlights the generosity and compassion shown by Pakistan in hosting over 3 million Afghan nationals and 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees, 0.84 million Afghan cardholders, and an approx. 0.4-0.6 ml undocumented Afghans, providing them protection, health, education. #Pakistan

Pakistan is played vital role maintaining peace in Afghanistan. #PeacefulAf. #PeacefulPak

Optimal mental health

Suppose one has all of his needs fulfilled and even if they are not fulfilled, one at least is at peace with them because he can't do anything to change them, he might have something, tugging at him, this something is curiosity, or pride or drive to achieve. This is where esteem or self-actualization comes into view, so to fulfill this level one must link towards values because values are more aspirational. The values point a person to grander, more abstract things such as mastery, service, creativity beauty, spirituality because they give you a sense of purpose.

One's mental health must be protected from toxic people. Toxic people are those people who might be good people in general but under certain circumstances, they become

harmful for one human being only. The circumstances can be unlimited but the end result is always one person draining the life from another person by projecting their own insecurities on to the other person. Adult life really asks for bare minimum we continue to realize the worth of people surrounding us, so when we finally do realize it, it becomes harder to let go of people close to you. Bear in the mind that toxic people are the ones who are very close to you. So, one should be brave enough to let go of toxic friends no matter how hard it might be for them. This is the biggest 'do' for optimal mental health because a person cannot reach their full potential while there is someone binding them to specific rules that straight up go against their personality.

Don't let shyness ruin your opportunities. One should not be shy for optimal mental health, being respectful is one thing, but the shyness I am talking is the shyness that ruins the opportunities. For

optimal mental health, the regret section of our head should carry the minimal space, which can only be achieved if a person takes on a task without binding themselves to nearly non-existent norms in their head. Shyness does not ruin the opportunities, so for efficient and optimal mental health, do that one thing that has been on nudging your head for too long. It might be a matter as sensitive as proposing your significant others but on should really think that what's the worst that could happen? (worse will happen and that you'll be busy dealing with the consequences of your actions than being shy, congratulations level up)

Stop procrastinating: Another big 'do' for optimal mental health is to get your tasks from your 'to-do list' for the day done and to stop procrastinating. The undone task usually keeps ticking, a person's brain like a time-bomb. So get that shyness I am talking is the shyness that ruins the opportunities. For

optimal mental health, the regret section of our head should carry the minimal space, which can only be achieved if a person takes on a task without binding themselves to nearly non-existent norms in their head. Shyness does not ruin the opportunities, so for efficient and optimal mental health, do that one thing that has been on nudging your head for too long. It might be a matter as sensitive as proposing your significant others but on should really think that what's the worst that could happen? (worse will happen and that you'll be busy dealing with the consequences of your actions than being shy, congratulations level up)

Just like the sociopaths who eat bad part of their food first, we shall also discuss the disadvantages of bad mental health first. Like we discussed earlier in detail that bad mental health is actually just consequences of your own actions. It is said that "we are our choices" so if we make a bad choice definitely there will be consequences such as bad self-esteem, inherent guilt, perpetual distrust towards others, or fear or anger. In short bad mental health can lead to bad lives in personal overall. While on the other hand, the advantages of good mental health are enormous. By completing your daily tasks and undertaking healthy routines one can reach towards an unmatched level of confidence boost. Optimal mental health is also "good vibes" because the air surrounding a person with good mental health is just different and healthy in general.

How olive cultivation is a step towards self-reliance

Dr. Muhammad Mumtaz

Pakistan is an attractive country for the commercial cultivation of olives due to its suitable climate conditions, quality soil, and ecological diversity. Around 10 million acres have already been identified for growing olives in the country.

The Pothwar region in the northeastern nook of the country is being developed as an "Olive Valley" after being recognized as an appropriate area for olive cultivation due to its topography and local weather. The olive plantations have multifold advantages: to meet the local demand of edible oil and contributing to the economy on one hand and on the other hand mitigating climate change and addressing water security challenges effectively.

The identified 10 million acres of suitable land for olive cultivation in Pakistan is far more than Spain, which is the largest olive oil producer. Pakistan has remained dependent on olive producer countries and that costs Pakistan 2 billion dollars per year.

However, by producing olive on its native lands, Pakistan can not only fulfill its own need but it can even export to other countries because the quality of olive oil produced in Pakistan has proved far better than that of oil produced in Italy or Spain. Pakistan has huge surplus land for the cultivation of olive. It is possible that Pakistan can even surpass Spain in production that produces 57% of olive globally. For this to happen, there is a need to initiate concerted steps by the government to promote olive production at a large scale throughout the country.

Pakistan fully understands the importance of olive production and is eager to cultivate olive because existing crops are not productive in these barren lands, where olive can easily be grown owing to its drought-tolerant nature and limited water requirements.

Climate change, along with water security, is other key factor continuously threatening the agriculture sector in the country. It has been reported that Pakistan will become a water-secure country by 2025, it is, therefore, important to set policy directions so as to meet the challenges of water crisis in the country.

Olive plants are required the least water as compared to other plants and crops. The water scarcity challenge and sustainability of olive plants are other important reasons for Pakistan to grow olive trees in large scale and to put on priority to meet edible oil requirements and to address the challenge of climate change and water security. Growing olive trees in the country will not just improve the economy, but will mitigate climate change significantly and will help in adaptation to water crisis. Olive plantation should be the focus under the 10 billion tree tsunami project.

Consistently the importance of olive plantation and my international exposure especially my experiences in olive production, countries motivated me to promote olive plantation in my native area which is fully covered by wild-olive species.

During my visits to olive rich countries such as Italy, Turkey, Morocco, and Jordan where I have seen massive olive farms and olive production, my interactions with local farmers and experts forced me to think why Pakistan is behind in olive production despite it having the potential to emerge as a major player in olive production.

When I was in Jordan for academic activity, one of my fellows took me to a farm and said that a local farmer can earn about \$2500 per annum from a land of 5-7 kanals. This was the point when I decided to take such

initiative towards olive production in my native area of Neelum Valley, Abbottabad, Pakistan which is believed to be a suitable place for olive plantation.

Neelum Valley is a beautiful valley consisting of two Uneplo Valley Councils, is about 30 miles away from Islamabad. The Valley is full of wild-olive trees and it is very likely that it is a suitable area where olive can be produced at a large scale. Thousands of wild-olive trees are spread in the area. Here the challenge was how to start the initiative and who will help us to provide sapling and helping us in grafting?

The government of Pakistan has taken various initiatives to promote olive production in the country. Thousands of trees were imported into the country, together with experts who helped to identify the most promising areas for olive cultivation. Multiple nurseries are established in different parts of the country. Olive Pakistan project has been launched to promote olive cultivation across the country especially in identified regions for olive plantation. It was, therefore, important to secure governmental assistance.

During the last 15 years, I have approached federal government bodies and contacted relevant local and provincial agencies to get their help in the promotion of olives in Pakistan. I was guided by these organizations and relevant actors but I noticed that this might be a very lengthy process and it will surely take a lot of time.

It is therefore I decided to initiate community measures on its own resources to start grafting in the area. It is important to note that grafting is one of the best techniques to promote olive in any area. In the valley, initially, it has been grafted on 2000 wild-olive trees.

Mass grafting has shown that grafting is in fact a successful experience. These efforts can be further expedited in upcoming seasons. However, it is not possible to extend the drive further at a massive scale without proper interventions by the related governmental institutions. This will not only require financial assistance but also technical support from different tiers of governmental and civil society organizations so as to attain actual objectives.

Meaningful and meaningful cooperation from the government to promote olive cultivation in these hilly areas holding the best land for olive plantation. It is important to note that grafting is one of the best techniques to promote olive in any area. In the valley, initially, it has been grafted on 2000 wild-olive trees.

Mass grafting has shown that grafting is in fact a successful experience. These efforts can be further expedited in upcoming seasons. However, it is not possible to extend the drive further at a massive scale without proper interventions by the related governmental institutions. This will not only require financial assistance but also technical support from different tiers of governmental and civil society organizations so as to attain actual objectives.

Meaningful and meaningful cooperation from the government to promote olive cultivation in these hilly areas holding the best land for olive plantation. It is important to note that grafting is one of the best techniques to promote olive in any area. In the valley, initially, it has been grafted on 2000 wild-olive trees.

Community initiatives are key to achieving the governmental targets for olive production in the country. However, there is a need to establish an institutional framework so as to facilitate the local actions. Let's work together and make Pakistan self-sufficient and a leading olive-producing country in the world.

—The writer is assistant professor at The University of Haripur

Hot on social media

harmful for one human being only. The circumstances can be unlimited but the end result is always one person draining the life from another person by projecting their own insecurities on to the other person. Adult life really asks for bare minimum we continue to realize the worth of people surrounding us, so when we finally do realize it, it becomes harder to let go of people close to you. Bear in the mind that toxic people are the ones who are very close to you. So, one should be brave enough to let go of toxic friends no matter how hard it might be for them. This is the biggest 'do' for optimal mental health because a person cannot reach their full potential while there is someone binding them to specific rules that straight up go against their personality.

Don't let shyness ruin your opportunities. One should not be shy for optimal mental health, being respectful is one thing, but the shyness I am talking is the shyness that ruins the opportunities. For optimal mental health, the regret section of our head should carry the minimal space, which can only be achieved if a person takes on a task without binding themselves to nearly non-existent norms in their head. Shyness does not ruin the opportunities, so for efficient and optimal mental health, do that one thing that has been on nudging your head for too long. It might be a matter as sensitive as proposing your significant others but on should really think that what's the worst that could happen? (worse will happen and that you'll be busy dealing with the consequences of your actions than being shy, congratulations level up)

Just like the sociopaths who eat bad part of their food first, we shall also discuss the disadvantages of bad mental health first. Like we discussed earlier in detail that bad mental health is actually just consequences of your own actions. It is said that "we are our choices" so if we make a bad choice definitely there will be consequences such as bad self-esteem, inherent guilt, perpetual distrust towards others, or fear or anger. In short bad mental health can lead to bad lives in personal overall. While on the other hand, the advantages of good mental health are enormous. By completing your daily tasks and undertaking healthy routines one can reach towards an unmatched level of confidence boost. Optimal mental health is also "good vibes" because the air surrounding a person with good mental health is just different and healthy in general.

Just like the sociopaths who eat bad part of their food first, we shall also discuss the disadvantages of bad mental health first. Like we discussed earlier in detail that bad mental health is actually just consequences of your own actions. It is said that "we are our choices" so if we make a bad choice definitely there will be consequences such as bad self-esteem, inherent guilt, perpetual distrust towards others, or fear or anger. In short bad mental health can lead to bad lives in personal overall. While on the other hand, the advantages of good mental health are enormous. By completing your daily tasks and undertaking healthy routines one can reach towards an unmatched level of confidence boost. Optimal mental health is also "good vibes" because the air surrounding a person with good mental health is just different and healthy in general.

—Madnoon Mushtaq



England's Stone out for the season with back injury

LONDON: England fast bowler Ollie Stone will miss the rest of the season after suffering a stress fracture of the back, team management announced Saturday. Stone's latest setback of an injury-blighted career has led to the uncapped George Garton being called into England's one-day international squad for the upcoming series against Sri Lanka.



The 27-year-old Stone's stress fracture was diagnosed after he played in last week's eight-wicket defeat by New Zealand in the second Test at Edgbaston his Warwickshire home ground. Stone had suffered two previous stress fractures in 2019 and this latest setback threatens his availability for England's Ashes tour of Australia later in the year.

Last-seed standing Rublev reaches first grass final in Halle

HALLE WESTFALEN: World number seven Andrey Rublev is into his first grass court final on the ATP tour after beating Georgian qualifier Nikoloz Basilashvili in the last four at Halle on Saturday. The 23-year-old Russian was made to work for his 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 semi-final victory in just under two hours. It's his first final on grass and in Halle, said Rublev, who was the only seed left in the draw from the quarter-finals onwards. "I think I can play on every surface and I will try my best again tomorrow. In Sundays final, Rublev will meet Ugo Humbert, who beat Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/5) in the other semi-final later Saturday. Humbert, ranked 31st in the world, has been in impressive form in Halle and the 22-year-old dumped out French Open semi-finalist Alexander Zverev in the last 16. Earlier in the week, Auger-Aliassime, 20, also underlined his status as one to watch on the ATP tour with a shock second-round win over childhood idol Roger Federer in Halle.

New Zealand blunt India's promising start in WTC final

UNITED KINGDOM: India were left looking to captain Virat Kohli after New Zealand struck twice in quick succession to end their promising start in the inaugural World Test Championship final at Southampton on Saturday. After rain meant Friday's first day was washed out without a ball bowled, Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill shared a fifty stand after New Zealand captain Kane Williamson won the toss in overcast conditions that promised to assist his powerful pace attack. But both openers fell shortly before lunch on the second day, with India 69-2 at the interval. Kohli was six not out and the experienced Cheteshwar Pujara unbeaten on night.



excellent start amid New Zealand's swing and seam, even if a still-wet outfield meant they did not always get full value for shots and the switched-on floodlights added to the difficulty of batting against a red ball. Sharma confidently clipped the first ball of the match, from Tim Southee, off his pads for three before hitting him for two fours in the seventh over. Gill showed his class by driving Jameson down the ground for four. But he had a nasty moment on 23 when hit flush on the grille of his helmet by a seaming delivery from Jameson that leapt off a good length. Rohit, to the delight of India's vocal supporters in the ground, brought up the fifty partnership with a stylish cover-driven four off all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme.

British Open to welcome over 30,000 spectators daily



LONDON: The British Open will have 32,000 spectators per day at St Georges, organizers the R&P said on Saturday as the British Government have granted it a test event status. The R&P said it has been uncertain how many they could allow in as the major reaches a climax on July 18, a day before the Governments hoped for total unlocking from coronavirus restrictions happens. The Open did not take place last year due to the pandemic so 2019 winner Ireland's Shane Lowry will be the defending

champion at the Kent golf links course. It has now been confirmed the Open will be included in the Governments Events Research Programme, which will enable a number of events to take place with higher capacities than present guidance permits. "We can now confirm that we will be able to welcome up to 32,000 fans on each championship day of the 149th Open at Royal St Georges and that this will include those existing ticket-holders and hospitality guests who have already purchased tickets," read a R&P A statement.

Door open for Amir's return, if he improves performance: Misbah

LAHORE: Pakistan head coach Misbahul Haq said on Saturday that the door was open for Mohammad Amir to return to the Pakistan cricket team if he took back his retirement and his performance improved. Addressing a press conference in Lahore before the team heads for the England and West Indies tours, the head coach said: "I have said this before that Amir being dropped from the team was based on his performance and injuries [...] If he takes back his retirement and his performance improves, then I've always said that the door is open for every player. I have nothing personal [against him]."



"I was the captain and later the coach when he returned," Misbah recalled. He said Amir had been accommodated before when he was facing personal issues and had been called back to the team once they were resolved. "The main thing is if Amir performs and he is available for the team and the team needs him then I never consider personal [issues] or what happened previously," said Misbah. Amir had in December 2020 announced his retirement from international cricket, alleging that he was being "mentally tortured" by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) management. He had said that the environment at the PCB and the way he was sidelined from the 35-member squad for the New Zealand tour was a "wake-up call" for him.



Defrauding Ertugrul actor TikToker remanded in police custody

LAHORE: A local court on Saturday handed over TikToker Kashif Zameer, involved in cheating Turkish actor Engin Altan Duzuntan, who rose to global fame for his role as Ertugrul in hit TV series "Dirilis:Ertugrul", to CIA police on two days physical remand. The CIA police produced the TikToker before Judicial Magistrate Rehman Elahi in Cantt courts. The investigation officer stated before the court that the police had registered a case against the accused on a complaint of Turkish actor Engin Altan Duzuntan. He submitted that the accused invited the Turkish actor to Pakistan but failed to pay him. He submitted that the accused gave fake cheques of Rs 80 million to the Turkish actor. He submitted that the Turkish actor did not complete his visit and left Pakistan. He pleaded with the court to grant physical remand of the accused for investigations. Subsequently, the court handed over the accused to CIA police on two days physical remand and directed for producing him on expiry of the remand term. Meanwhile, in another fraud case, the court ordered to send the TikToker to jail on judicial remand. Last year in December, suspect Kashif Zameer Chaudhary came to the limelight after the man's photos with Artugrul went viral on social media.

Bilal to appear in dramas soon



LAHORE: Bilal Ashraf, a renowned actor of the Pakistani showbiz industry, was advised by fans to work in Pakistani dramas along with working in Pakistani films. Replying to fans, the actor revealed that he would soon be seen in dramas as well. Bilal Ashraf shared a beautiful new photo of himself on the photo and video sharing app Instagram in which he can be seen smiling his million dollar smile. He wrote in the caption of his post, "S - See M - Miracles I - In L - Life E - Everyday"

Britney says she doesn't know whether she'll ever perform again

LOS ANGELES: Britney Spears says she has no idea whether she will ever perform again. Spears, who has not performed in public since late 2018 and is under a court-ordered conservatorship, made the statement in a video post on her Instagram page where she answered three questions that she said had been posed by her fans. "Am I ready to take the stage again? Will I ever take the stage again?" Spears, 39, said in the video posted on Thursday. "I have no idea. I'm having fun right now, I'm in a transition in my life and I'm enjoying myself. So," she said. Her comments follow repeated pleas by fans for reassurance that she is well amid growing conspiracy theories that she is being kept against her will and is sending cryptic messages for help through her profile Instagram posts. They also come a week ahead of her plans to address the Los Angeles court overseeing the conservatorship that has managed her personal and business affairs since her mental health breakdown in 2008. Spears on Thursday did not speak about the conservatorship but she answered two other questions that she said fans had asked. One was about her favorite business trip (to Italy) where she stayed with designer Donatella Versace (to Versace) The other was about her shoe size (a size 7) Spears last performed in public in October 2018 at the Formula One Grand Prix in Austin, Texas, at the end of her "Piece of Me" world tour.

HBO releases first look teaser for 'Titans' season 3



NEW YORK: HBO Max has released a first look teaser for season three of the popular superhero series "Titans", which premieres on Thursday, August 12. "Titans" follows young heroes from across the DC Universe as they come of age and find where they belong. In season three, circumstances draw our heroes to Gotham City, where they will reunite with old friends and face new threats. The first three episodes of season three will premiere on Thursday, August 12 with subsequent episodes launching weekly every Thursday through October 21. The series stars Brenton Thwaites as "Dick Grayson" aka "Nightwing", Anna Diop as "Kory Anders" aka "Starfire", Teagan Croft as "Rachel Roth" aka "Raven", Ryan Potter as "Gar Logan" aka "Beast Boy", Connor Leslie as "Donna Troy" aka "Wonder Girl", Curran Walters as "Jason Todd" aka "Red Hood", Joshua

Orpin as "Conner Kent" aka "Jonathan Crane." Television. Based on the characters from DC, the series was developed by Akiva Goldsman, Greg Johns & Greg Berlanti, with Johns, Berlanti, Greg Walker and Sarah Schechter serving as executive producers.



PSL 2021

Kings make it to play-offs after defeating Gladiators



Monitoring desk
ABU DHABI: Karachi Kings are through to the play-offs after beating Quetta Gladiators by 14 runs as they defended the 177-run target in match number 29 of the sixth edition of the Pakistan Super League at Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed Cricket stadium.

The Kings' victory means that Lahore Qalandars have crashed out of the tournament and will join last-placed Gladiators on the sidelines. The Kings got their breakthrough in the last ball of the fifth over, with Mohammad Ilyas dismissing Saim Ayub (19). The Gladiators already seemed to be struggling to score big at that time. Arshad Iqbal picked up the

second wicket for the Kings in the eighth over as he bowled Jake Weatherald (25), piling up the pressure on the Sarfaraz Ahmed-led side. In the 11th over, Mohammad Ilyas added pressure on the Gladiators when he dismissed Usman Khan (15), thanks to a good catch by the skipper Imad Wasim, while Arshad Iqbal took the wicket of Azam Khan

(15) in the 13th over. Hassan Khan was really unlucky as Mohammad Amir's touch of the ball, driven by Sarfaraz, hit the stumps and led to a run-out – sending him back to the pavilion for 24. In the 18th over, Ilyas picked up his third wicket as he dismissed Abdul Nasir (0), thanks to an easy catch by Danish Ali five yards in from the rope.

Gladiators' skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed finished the match with an unbeaten 51. Karachi Kings' innings All-rounder Danish Ali proved to be a crucial player for the Karachi Kings, as he scored 45 from 13 balls, which had paved the way for his team to set a target of 177 for Quetta Gladiators. The Kings had opted to bat first after winning the toss.

Tokyo scraps Olympics public viewing sites

AFF

TOKYO: Tokyo will cancel all public Olympics viewing events in an effort to reduce the risk of coronavirus infections, the city governor said Saturday.

Having postponed the Games for a year because of the pandemic, Japan has already banned overseas spectators – in an Olympics first – while reducing the number of participants, volunteers and guests. However, officials are forging ahead with hosting the Games from July 23.

"We have decided to cancel these live viewing sites that gather people," Yuriko Koike told reporters, after meeting Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. "On the other hand, we will make greater use of the web to create exciting atmospheres for the Games and to disseminate various cultural information."



"There had been six planned viewing sites, across the Japanese capital. The announcement came as Koike and Suga prepare to meet Olympics and Paralympics officials Monday for a key consultation during which they are expected to finalise whether to allow domestic spectators inside Games venues."

Politicians and organisers are pushing for some spectators to be allowed. But Japan's top infectious disease experts have urged them to consider holding the Games behind closed doors. Japan has had a comparatively small virus outbreak, with just over 14,000 deaths despite avoiding harsh lockdowns.

The government has recently accelerated vaccination efforts, with just over six percent of the population fully jabbed. Koike said the metropolis would turn some facilities that were marked for Olympics viewing events into vaccination centres.



Pakistani celebs mourn passing of Milkha Singh

WEB DESK

LAHORE: Milkha Singh, one of India's most famous Olympians ever, passed away at the age of 91. Sprint great Singh, who was nicknamed the "Flying Sikh", ran at three successive Olympic Games and finished fourth in the 400 metres in Rome in 1960.



His death, due to Covid-19 complications, comes days after his wife's, former India volleyball captain Nirmal Kaur. Soon after the news of his death went viral, many took to social media to pay tribute. Pakistani stars Shoaib Malik and Meesha Shaif, among others, mourned the loss of Singh. "The legendary sprinter Milkha Singh (Flying Sikh) departs at age 91. Your legacy will fly high, always," the cricketer penned. "Our heartfelt condolences to his family in this hard time."

"Before shooting Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, I researched 'The Flying Sikh'. Must be soaring gracefully in the skies today. My thoughts go out to his fan and the film fan" Shahi, who starred with Farhan Akhtar in Singh's 2013 biopic Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, stated. The popular singer played Perizaad, who is the best friend to Akhtar's iconic character of the omen sportsman.

Shafqat inaugurates "The Balochistan Sphinx" at Alhamra Museum



Staff Report

LAHORE: The six-day-long exhibition titled "The Balochistan Sphinx"

Miniature Sculpture by famous Ayesha Arshad Shahinawaz kicked off here on Saturday at Alhamra Museum, Gaddafi Stadium Lahore.

Federal Minister for Education Professional Training, Federal Minister for National History and Literary

Shafqat Mehmoos inaugurated the show. On the occasion, Federal Minister Shafqat Mehmoos congratulated

Ayesha Shahinawaz for her successful show. He said that all the provinces of Pakistan have the same importance.

He further said that the exhibition of this magnificent historical heritage of Balochistan in Punjab is a commendable effort by the Artist to create an atmosphere of harmony between the provinces.

The PTI government values this country's historical heritage and plays its best role in taking the necessary steps for its protection. Hence, promotion and restoration, he added.

Executive Director Lahore Arts Council Farhat Jabben praised Ayesha Shahinawaz for putting on display brilliant work.

Jabben stated that artists are extraordinary human beings who portray an accurate picture of society through their artistic skills. Such events are a must to highlight the country's soft image around the globe, she added.

Ayesha Shahinawaz said I am thrilled to display my work at Alhamra Art Museum first time. Talking about her work, she said that I present a miniature representation of the Baluchistan Sphinx in all its imposing glory in sculptural form.

Making this Sculpture was a matter of urgency because Balochistan is an asset of our country, which has been neglected to date. At the same time, this region is unique in every respect.

She stated that after the exhibition here for six days, it would be sent to Balochistan, where it will be installed.

Shahinawaz expressed that the exhibition's primary purpose is to acquaint the people living in Lahore, Punjab, with this glorious national heritage.

This initiative would strengthen national harmony and create a soft image around the world.

People from different walks of life attended the exhibition and appreciated the efforts of the Artist. The show will continue till the 19th to 24th of June 2021.

بلوچستان کا تاریخی بجٹ پیش کرنے پر وزیر اعلیٰ نواب جام کمال خان عالیانی کو مبارکباد



صوبائی بجٹ میں
ضلع گوادر کیلئے
ترقیاتی اسکیموں کا
جال بچھانے پر



انشاء اللہ گوادر کے عوام یونیورسٹی آف
گوادر کے قیام کی خوشخبری جلد سنیں گے

اظہار تشکر

گوادر کے عوام کیلئے 25525 ملین کی لاگت
سے 123 سے زائد اسکیموں کی منظوری

ایجوکیشن سیکٹر

ماہی گیروں کی ترقی کے منصوبے

ہیلتھ سیکٹر

ضلع بھر کو بجلی کی فراہمی

مواصلات

معذور افراد کی فلاح بہبود

فراہمی آب کے منصوبے

بین الاقوامی طرز کا اسٹیڈیم

سیاحت کا فروغ

عوامی مفادات کے عظیم تر منصوبے

ہم اہلیان ضلع گوادر وزیر اعلیٰ بلوچستان نواب جام کمال خان عالیانی کی قیادت میں بلوچستان کا 2021-22 کا تاریخی بجٹ پیش کرنے پر مبارکباد پیش کرتے ہیں، بلوچستان کو ترقی کی شاہراہ پر گامزن کرنے کیلئے وزیر اعلیٰ نواب جام کمال خان عالیانی کی قیادت اور وژن ہمارے لئے قابل فخر ہے ضلع گوادر کی ترقی اور عوام کی بنیادی سہولتوں کی فراہمی



کیلئے بلوچستان عوامی پارٹی کی حکومت نے عملی اقدامات کا آغاز کر کے ضلع گوادر کو ترقی کی شاہراہ پر گامزن کر دیا ہے۔ حالیہ بجٹ میں ضلع گوادر کیلئے کثیر ترقیاتی اسکیموں کا شامل ہونا اس بات کی غمازی کرتا ہے کہ نواب جام کمال خان عالیانی کی قیادت میں صوبائی حکومت ضلع گوادر کی ترقی میں خصوصی دلچسپی رکھتی ہے۔

منجانب اہلیان گوادر



GAZA CITY: Palestinian children wave Palestinian national flags as they play among the rubble of buildings destroyed by last month's Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip on Saturday.—AFP

Afghan president replaces security ministers as Taliban advance

KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani replaced two top ministers charged with managing the country's faltering security Saturday as the Taliban pressed on with their campaign to capture new territory in fierce battles with government forces. The shake-up of the defence and interior ministry portfolios comes as violence surges and peace talks remain deadlocked, with the Taliban claiming to have seized more than 40 districts in recent weeks across the rugged countryside.

The presidency announced in a statement that General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, who fought under the late anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud during a 1990s civil war, has been appointed the new defence minister. Mohammadi has previously held the defence and interior ministry portfolios and also served as the chief of army staff after the fall of the Taliban regime following a US-led invasion in 2001. Ghani also appointed General Abdul Sattar Mirzakkal as interior minister, the presidency said. Mirzakkal has previously held several portfolios, including defence, in the 2000s. He replaced Asadullah Khalid who has repeatedly flown out of the country for treatment to wounds suffered after a suicide bomber attacked him in 2012.

The latest cabinet changes, which have to be approved by parliament, come with violence increasing since early May after the US military began the formal withdrawal of its last remaining troops. US President Joe Biden has set September 11 — the 20th anniversary of the attacks in the United States that led to the invasion of Afghanistan — as the deadline to withdraw American soldiers. Since the Pentagon commenced the final withdrawal on May 1, the Taliban have unleashed a wave of attacks targeting government forces. The insurgents claim to have seized more than 40 districts since early May, forcing military leaders to strategically retreat from a number of rural districts. In one attack at least 20 members of an elite commando unit were shot dead by the Taliban in an ambush in

the northern province of Faryab on Wednesday, several officials told AFP. The Taliban are now present in almost every province and are encircling several major cities — a strategy the militants employed in the mid-1990s when they overran most of Afghanistan until they were ousted by invading US-led forces. On Saturday, the defence ministry confirmed that government troops had retreated from several districts but said they aimed to take them back. "There is a new, robust and effective plan to retake areas from which we have pulled back our forces," ministry spokesman Rohullah Ahmadzai said, dismissing claims that hundreds of soldiers had surrendered to the Taliban.

Ultraconservative cleric Raisi wins Iran presidential vote

TEHRAN: Ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi was declared the winner Saturday of Iran's presidential election, a widely anticipated result after many political heavyweights were barred from running. Raisi won 62 percent of the vote with about 90 percent of ballots counted from Friday's election, poll officials said, without releasing turnout figures, after the three other candidates had conceded defeat. "I congratulate the people on their choice," said outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who has served the maximum of two consecutive four-year terms and leaves office in August. Raisi, 60, is set to take over at a critical time, as Iran seeks to salvage its tattered nuclear deal with major powers and free itself from punishing US sanctions that have driven a sharp economic downturn. "God willing, we will do our best so that the hope for the future now alive in people's hearts grows further," said Raisi, adding that he wants to strengthen public trust in the government for a "bright and pleasant life together". The head of the Iranian judiciary, whose bloc urban signifies direct descent from Islam's prophet Mohammed, Raisi is seen as close to the 81-year-old supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has ultimate political power in Iran. Friday's voting was extended by two hours past the original midnight deadline amid fears of a low turnout of around 50 percent. Many voters chose to stay away after the field of some 600 hopefuls including 40 women had been winnowed down to seven candidates, all men, excluding an ex-president and a former parliament speaker.

Lebanon leaders may face sanctions unless crisis solved: Borrell

BRUSSELS: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Saturday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF. Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s. A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020. Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU". "The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, it is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said. "The Lebanese leadership must take its responsibility... a government must be formed and key reforms implemented immediately." The EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse, and there is no time to waste," he said. "You are on the edge of a financial collapse. But Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed". The council of the EU has been including other options, including targeted sanctions... we prefer not to go down this road... but it is in hands of the Lebanese leadership.

Putin promises Russians billions in spending ahead of polls

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin proposed Saturday at his United Russia party congress billions of rubles in spending ahead of September parliamentary polls that could see the deeply unpopular party struggle. Addressing several hundred of his mostly mask-wearing and socially-distanced loyalists in a Moscow convention centre as the capital set a pandemic high for new Covid cases for the second straight day, Putin proposed deploying billions towards social support.

This included 50 billion rubles (\$687 million) on public transport, 30 billion rubles for repairing roads and 20 billion rubles to clean up rivers, among other spending projects on infrastructure and healthcare. The program of the party of the leader has to be the program of the people," the 68-year-old Kremlin chief said in a speech broadcast on state television. He also said the state would be allocating payments and new forms of support for families starting next month. "Our task is to significantly increase the prosperity of Russian families and the incomes of our citizens," Putin said. The gathering, which determines the ruling party's candidates and electoral platform for September's lower house of parliament vote, comes after the party has seen support tumble in recent years amid economic stagnation, entrenched corruption and widespread voter fatigue.

On Friday, state-run pollster VTsIOM published a survey showing that 50 percent of voters support United Russia — a 10-point drop from the last lower house State Duma elections in 2016. But the party, which controls a majority of the State Duma, is projecting calm.

Turkish women rally to defend rights

ANKARA: Hundreds of women rally in Istanbul on Saturday, urging President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to reverse his decision to withdraw from an anti-violence treaty ahead of a formal exit on July 1. Erdogan sparked outrage in March by pulling out of the world's first binding treaty to prevent and combat violence against women, known as the Istanbul Convention.

The anger has not subsided with women's groups organising two big protests in Istanbul, one on Saturday and another on July 1 to pressure the government to roll back the decision before the official withdrawal. Smaller protests are planned until July 1. Over 1,000 women from across Turkey took part in the demonstration on the Asian side of Istanbul surrounded by a heavy police presence, an AFP correspondent said. "Some held rainbow flags while others held placards saying 'Istanbul Convention is ours'. Our hope is always rooted in our struggles, in our organisations," Melek Ondas, of the Women's Council association, said, adding that women came from 70 provinces to Istanbul. "We believe in the strength of our organisations. And whether the decision is overturned or not, we will continue our struggle in every way possible," she told AFP. The 2011 Istanbul Convention, signed by 45 countries and the European Union, requires governments to adopt legislation linked to the prosecution of domestic violence including marital rape and female genital mutilation. Women's rights organisations accuse the government of withdrawing from the treaty to appease conservatives who claimed the treaty violated unity. Conservatives also suggested references to equality in the treaty were accepted by the LGBT community to gain broader acceptance in Turkish society. But critics of Erdogan's decision say the withdrawal puts women in Turkey at greater risk in a country where violence against women is prevalent.

Saudi intercept 10 Huthi drones launched at kingdom

RIYADH: Saudi air defences on Saturday intercepted and destroyed 10 drones fired at the kingdom by Huthi rebels in Yemen, state media reported, quoting the Saudi-led military coalition battling the insurgents. The official Saudi Press Agency reported that seven of the drones targeted regions in southern

Saudi Arabia. Three targeted the Khamis Mushait Khaled air base in Khamis Mushait. The developments come as a diplomatic push by the United Nations, the United States and regional countries to secure a ceasefire in Yemen after more than six years of devastating conflict have failed. The outgoing UN envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths on Tuesday told the Security Council his own

efforts over the past three weeks to end the war have been "in vain". "It is with deep regret that I report today that the United Nations, the United States and regional countries have not overcome their differences," said Griffiths. Yemen has been devastated by a civil war between the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-backed Huthis since 2014, and millions of civilians are on the brink of famine, according to the UN.

Ethiopians pray for peaceful vote ahead of key election

ADDIS ABABA: Draped in sacred white cloth, the procession drifted silently towards a priest calling the faithful to celebrate the Archangel Michael, a revered saint in Ethiopia. A crowd of thousands of worshippers gathered at the church in Amhara, the second-largest region of Ethiopia, which is staging long-awaited elections on Monday. The devotees — some bent over canes and others clutching children — offered prayers to Saint Michael in a church bearing his name and topped with metal crosses and a soaring Ethiopian flag in the city of Bahir Dar. Saint Michael is one of the major saints in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, a centuries-old faith at the heart of Africa's second-most populous nation. This is a great day for us... In our faith, we pray to Saint Michael to bring us peace, and to protect us from evil," said Hulalauger Kinde, a 27-year-old worshipper. The election is broken when the priest presented a replica of the Ark of the Covenant — the chest that housed the laws of God handed to Moses. The crowd erupted into cheers at the arrival of the ark, the original of which is believed by Orthodox Ethiopians to be housed in Axum, an ancient town in the war-torn and famine-scarred region of Tigray. No mention is made of the conflict that has ravaged the mountainous northern region for seven months, or the violent ethnic unrest that afflicted other parts of the country, including Amhara.

Myanmar protesters wear flowers to mark Suu Kyi's birthday

YANGON: Anti-coup protesters in Myanmar donned flowers in their hair Saturday to mark the birthday of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest and is due to face court again next week. Suu Kyi elected government was overthrown in a February 1 coup that sparked mass protests and renewed clashes between the military and ethnic rebel armies in border regions.

Flowers tucked into a bun have long been a signature look of Suu Kyi, who turned 76 on Saturday. Many replicated the floral hairstyle and uploaded pictures onto social media across Myanmar for the occasion. Among them was Myanmar Miss Universe beauty queen Thuzar Wint Lwin, who wore red flowers in her hair and wrote: "May our leader be healthy."

"In Yangon's north, protesters put up posters on power lines wishing Suu Kyi a happy birthday and expressing solidarity. "Happy Birthday Mother Suu. We are right behind you," the signs read. Some marched with blue umbrellas and banners that read "freedom from fear" alongside pictures of Suu Kyi. In the border region of Karen state, some rebel soldiers were photographed holding their guns and yellow, white and purple posies, as well as single flowers tucked behind their ears. Demonstrators in the southern eastern city of Dawei made a giant pink birthday cake and brought it to their street protest.

The Noble Peace Prize laureate's international reputation was damaged after she defended Myanmar's military over allegations of genocide against the ethnic minority Rohingya population in troubled Rakhine state in 2017. Not all Myanmar flower protest participants were full of praise for Suu Kyi. "I am involved in this campaign because now she is unfairly detained by the military and her civilian rights and freedom is denied," a 35-year-old activist told AFP, adding it was personal support. "After she is free from her detention, she will have to take full responsibility over her silence concerning the suffering of Rohingyas and other ethnic groups." Czech Republic Prime Minister Andrej Babis sent birthday wishes to Suu Kyi from afar. "I wish you all the best for your health and strength. We stand with the people of Myanmar," he said. The civilian death toll since the coup is

estimated to be at least 870 people and close to 5,000 protesters are in detention after being arrested, according to a local monitoring group. The UN General Assembly on Friday took the rare step of calling on member states to "prevent the flow of arms" into Myanmar, part of a non-binding resolution condemning the military coup in the violence-wracked country. The resolution — which did not go so far as to call for a global arms embargo — also demands that the military

"immediately stop all violence against peaceful demonstrators". It was approved by 119 countries, with 36 abstaining, including China, Myanmar's main ally. Only one country, Belarus, voted against it. Suu Kyi is due back in country next week and has been hit with an eclectic raft of criminal charges, including accepting the military coup in the illegal payment of a global arms embargo — also demands that the military



HYDERABAD: Visitors take keen interest in various kind of mangoes during show organized by District Government. —Online

World Bank okays \$442m for Punjab's water, sanitation services

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved \$442 million in financing to support Pakistan in improving access to water and sanitation services for the most vulnerable rural communities in Punjab province.

According to a statement issued by the global lender, the Punjab Rural Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Project (PRSWSSP) will help upgrade water supply and sanitation infrastructure and services that ensure equitable and sustainable access to drinking water and safe wastewater management. The project prioritizes rural settlements where water contamination and poor sanitation practices

are more prevalent, causing high levels of illness and child stunting. The project will cover 16 districts, with 50 percent of districts drawn from south Punjab, and 25 percent each from central and north Punjab, benefiting 2,000 villages and more than six million people in rural areas. It will also provide training of village councils and community caretakers, which will have complementary responsibilities for operations and maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation, and customer service. "PRSWSSP" will help more than six million rural residents in the poorest districts of Punjab to reduce child stunting and address areas at high risk to droughts and water scarcity," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank

Country Director for Pakistan. "The World Bank is committed to the government in improving sustainable water resource management. This project will support investments that increase climate resilience, including flood protection, rainwater harvesting and water conservation in these districts." The project will implement tailored, cost-effective solutions for both large and small rural settlements, using scalable technologies that help facilitate solid and animal waste management at the household and community levels. It will also establish a water-quality monitoring system to ensure compliance with national standards for drinking water and wastewater. The PRSWSSP will promote safe water handling, hygiene, and water conservation practices at the household level, with a focus on maternal, newborn and child health. "The project is expected to yield substantial benefits to rural communities. It will help improve health outcomes by reducing water borne illnesses and ensure service quality and customer care through a financially sustainable public company," said Farhan Sami, Task Team Leader for the project. "Child stunting is endemic and a huge constraint on Pakistan's potential," said Ghazala Mansuri, co-Task Team Leader for the project. "It impacts a child's cognitive development and immune system, reducing educational attainment, making illness more likely, and leading to lower productivity and

income. Its effects are inter-generational, transmitted from parent to child. This project would provide the template for a transformational shift in human capital accumulation since it addresses all the determinants of stunting."

The project design was informed by a 2018 flagship report, When Water Becomes a Hazard: A Diagnostic Report on the State of Water Supply, Sanitation and Poverty in Pakistan and Its Impact on Child Stunting, that examined linkages in Pakistan between water and sanitation services, and child stunting. This study also supported environmental sustainability and the need to provide information and support behavioral change in poor rural communities to reduce health risks.

Pakistan Cultural Week Jewellery, carpets, handicrafts put on display in Shanghai

APP

SHANGHAI: Pakistani jewellery, carpets, home-textile, handicrafts, footballs and other products have been displayed during Pakistan Cultural Week being held to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

Consulate General of Pakistan, Shanghai and Hongqiao Pinhui Shanghai jointly organized the cultural week which will last until June 24. This cultural week focuses to showcase different Pakistani products including jewellery, carpets, home-textile, handicrafts and footballs etc.

The event will enable Shanghai citizens to appreciate charm of Pakistan's culture without leaving Shanghai. Among many exhibitors, a Pakistani Jewellery Brand WINZA, CEO, Asghar Ahmed Chaudhry showcased high couture jewelry collection of diamonds, rubies and emeralds. As an exhibitor of China International Import and Expo (CIE) for two consecutive years, WINZA has signed up to participate in the fourth CIE in 2021, and the booth area will double that of previous years. Hongqiao Pinhui and WINZA signed an agreement of intention for future brand cooperation and outlet opening. According to Asghar Chaudhry, Hongqiao Pinhui, as an important functional platform for building Hongqiao International Open hub and the main platform for Shanghai to undertake the role of one-stop trading service main platform for CIE exhibitors.

It will take multiple measures to broaden the sales channels of imported goods, and to precisely connect the upstream and downstream, to establish connection between buyers and sellers, and help more Pakistani products enter the Chinese market.

SBP, JazzCash sign MoU for increasing financial literacy

Staff Report

KARACHI: National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) – a subsidiary of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and JazzCash have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for increasing financial literacy amongst youth of Pakistan.

The two parties aim to jointly promote financial literacy through the engaging and interactive game called "PomPak – Learn to Earn" developed under SBP's project, National Financial Literacy Program for Youth (NFLPY). PomPak, utilizes a story-based narrative by following the journey of two families setting up a small entrepreneurial venture. This helps to keep the players engaged while effectively inculcating ethical behavior and financial skills such as budgeting, saving, and banking. PomPak is available in both English and Urdu for three age groups: children (9-12), adolescents (13-17), and youth (18-29). Anyone who completes the course is awarded a certificate of financial literacy jointly from NIBAF and NFLPY.

It can be played on a desktop computer or can be downloaded from Google Play and the App Store for other devices. JazzCash, under its partnership, is going to provide SBP access to more than 26 million Pakistanis by promoting the PomPak application on its platform. This will help the application reach a wider audience, thus increasing its usage and eventually promoting financial literacy of the nation resulting in a highly positive socio-economic impact. NIBAF Managing Director Riaz Nazari Channara stressed on the role of increased financial literacy for promoting financial inclusion. He said that being Pakistan's first e-learning financial literacy game, PomPak has revolutionized the way financial education is delivered. He went on to add that NIBAF is really proud of what PomPak has achieved since its launch and this partnership with JazzCash will contribute majorly towards our commitment to provide free of cost financial education to all. JazzCash Chief Executive Officer Erum Gulabari said that there was ample scope for financial enablement and education through JazzCash. Creating a strong business and building a better Pakistan in parallel are key contributors of long-term success for JazzCash.

Two gigantic CPEC projects to be completed in AJK soon

Monitoring Desk

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Pakistan's Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) President Barrister Sulaiman Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the Muzaffarabad-Mirpur motorway and a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Mirpur would be completed soon under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"Both gigantic projects have been included in the CPEC projects in AJK with the efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan," he said while speaking at a public gathering. Chaudhry said that AJK would be made the hub of tourism since it was enriched in tourism and hydro-power resources.

He said that since AJK was enjoying the massive potential of basic economic resources, PTI "would utilize these economic resources and promote the tourism industry apart from establishing scores of hydro-power projects." He underlined that the 306 MW Jagan Hydro-power Project in Muzaffarabad was contributing Rs. 600-700 million to the State's exchequer. Chaudhry said that the advent of CPEC projects in the industrial sector in Mirpur would open new vistas of jobs for the unemployed, educated, skilled, and the unskilled youth in various disciplines.

Gold falls by Rs 1,000 per tola

APP

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs 1000 on Saturday and it was traded at Rs 107,300 against its sale at Rs 108,300, Karachi Sarfaa and Jewellers Group reported.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat also decreased by Rs 858 and was traded at Rs 91,992 against its sale at Rs 92,850 whereas the prices of ten gram 22 karat gold decline to Rs 84,326 from Rs 85,112. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs 10 and was traded at Rs 1,420 against its sale at Rs 1,430 whereas price of ten gram silver also decreased by Rs 8.58 and was traded at Rs 1,217.42 against its sale at Rs 1,226. The price of gold in international market witnessed decrease of \$28 and was sold at \$1,764 against its sale at \$1,792.

Agriculture sector to achieve self-sufficiency soon: SAPM

APP

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Food Security and Research Jamshed Iqbal Cheema has said that following the effective measures taken by the present government, Pakistan is moving towards stopping the import of agricultural commodities.

In a meeting with office-bearers and members of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), he said that food demand increased with growth in population, and "We have streamlined the wheat procurement and ensured proper returns to farmers for their hard work by increasing the wheat price to Rs 1800 per 40kg from Rs 1400, besides giving subsidy on wheat flour to the end consumer. The government will continue to facilitate the common man."

Cheema mentioned that in Pakistan, wheat flour consumption was 108 kg per person per year. He explained that though wheat production was 1.5 million tonnes in surplus this year, three million

tonnes was being imported so as to meet the 120-day strategic reserves. A food dashboard was also being developed to monitor the food demand and supply as well as storage situation etc. Magistrates were being appointed in every market to control price-hike.

The SAPM said that Prime Minister Imran Khan would be holding a farmers convention on June 30, in which, farmers would give their input for policy formulation in this regard, because government was committed to maintain a balance in agriculture prices for farmers, industry and the end consumers. The SAPM mentioned that considering the need for livestock, comprehensive measures were also being put in place that would increase maize production to eight million tonnes from the current maize yield of 3.2 million tonnes.

FPCCI Regional Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Saleem Bhullar said that cotton support price should be fixed at Rs 5,000 per 40 kg and farmers should also be given soft loans.

Pakistan gifts 100MT rice to Gambia

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has gifted 100 metric tonnes of rice to Gambia to help the African country address food security issue.

Pakistani High Commissioner to Gambia Ali Ahmed Arain gifted handed over the gift to Gambian in a moderate ceremony held at the State House of Gambia. The gift was received by the Minister of Agriculture and Secretary General of Gambian Government, says a press statement received here from Dakar on Saturday. In his remarks, High Commissioner Arain underlined that the gift of rice was not only indicative of close relations and brotherhood between the two coun-

tries, but also displayed the responsibility and commitment of Pakistani government towards its friends in Africa. He hoped that this gift of rice by Pakistan would contribute to the Gambian government's efforts to ensure the food security in Gambia.

The Gambian Minister of Agriculture and Secretary General appreciated the generosity of Pakistani government to help Gambia in meeting the food shortages in the wake of drought and economic slump due to covid-19 pandemic. They conveyed the thanks of their President to the leadership of Pakistan for this friendly gesture. They also appreciated the recent focus of Pakistani government on strengthening its relations with Gambia.

FBR unearths massive under invoicing case

Staff Report

KARACHI: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Directorate General of Customs Post Clearance Audit has unearthed a case of massive under invoicing and trade-based money laundering on the case forwarded by Chief Collector of Customs Appraisement South Karachi.

Divulging the details, the Board stated that an importer based in Lahore imported goods by declaring values massively less than actual val-

ues. "The exporter of the goods in a foreign country has confirmed that invoice value declared by the importer is grossly under invoiced and actual invoices have not been declared with customs instead fake and tempered invoices have been presented," reads a statement issued by FBR. The Board said that after detailed audit and investigation of the case an FIR has been registered against the importer. "The duty and taxes evaded in the case are to the tune of Rs 186 million," FBR added.

CROSS TALK
WITH IRSHAD ARIF
ASAD ULLAH KHAN
شام : 07:03

92 @ 8 WITH SAADIA AFZAL
رات : 08:03

MUQAABIL WITH HAROON UR RASHEED SARWAT VALIM
رات : 10:03



Newest Boeing 737 MAX makes first test flight

WASHINGTON: The newest version of Boeing's 737 MAX made its first test flight over Washington state on Friday, just months after the plane returned to service following a worldwide grounding after two fatal crashes.

Boeing said the 737 MAX 10 departed Renton, Washington at 1707 GMT into clear skies, flew over the central part of the state and landed about two-and-a-half hours later in Seattle. The airplane performed beautifully. The profile we flew allowed us to test the airplanes systems, flight controls and handling qualities, all of which checked out exactly as we expected," Chief Pilot Jennifer Henderson said in a statement. The mid-range jet initially was targeted to enter commercial service in 2020, but the timeframe slipped during the MAX's 20-month grounding, and the delay was compounded by the aviation industry downturn caused by Covid-19. Boeing currently projects commercial deliveries of the MAX 10 will commence in 2023. Between now and that time, there will be additional test flights, as well as back-to-back flights between the company and regulators at the US Federal Aviation Administration.

"The 737-10 is an important part of our customers fleet plans, giving them more capacity, greater fuel efficiency and the latest seat economics of any single-aisle airplane," said Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

China's cryptocurrency crackdown spreads to Sichuan

HONG KONG: China's crackdown on cryptocurrency "mining" has extended to the southern province of Sichuan, where authorities ordered cryptocurrency mining projects closed in the major mining centre.

Cryptomining is big business in China, accounting for more than half of global bitcoin production. But the State Council, China's cabinet, last month vowed to clamp down on bitcoin mining and trading as part of a series of measures to control financial risks.

Other popular mining regions, such as Inner Mongolia, have cited cryptocurrency mining's use of electricity generated from highly polluting sources such as coal in sources targeting the industry.

Friday's move in Sichuan - where miners mostly use hydro-power to run the specially designed computers and equipment used in verifying bitcoin transactions - suggests the crackdown is more broadly based. The Sichuan Provincial Development and Reform Commission, and the Sichuan Energy Bureau issued a joint notice, dated Friday and seen by Reuters, demanding the closure of 26 suspected cryptocurrency mining projects in the province, according to data compiled by the University of Cambridge. —Agencies

Australia takes China to WTO over wine duties



SYDNEY: Australia will take China before the World Trade Organization (WTO) over Beijing's imposition of crippling tariffs on Australian wine exports, it announced Saturday, in the latest sign of worsening tensions between the two countries.

The decision to defend Australia's winemakers' comes six months after Australia lodged a separate protest at the WTO over tariffs on Australian barley and is in line with the government's "support for the rules-based trading system", it said in a statement. It added, however, that "Australia remains open to engaging directly with China to resolve this issue". It is the latest incident in an escalating tussle between Australia and its largest trading partner and follows warn-

ings by Prime Minister Scott Morrison that his government would respond forcefully to countries trying to use "economic coercion" against it. China in November slapped tariffs of up to 218 percent on Australian wines, which it said were being "dumped" into the Chinese market at subsidised prices. The crackdown virtually closed the Australian wine industry, according to official figures. The actions taken by the Chinese government have caused serious harm to the Australian wine industry," Trade Minister Dan Tehan said at a press conference announcing the decision to lodge a formal dispute with the WTO. "We would love to be able to sit down and be able to

resolve these disputes" directly with the Chinese, he said, but added that lower-level official contacts had failed to make progress. "We will use every other mechanism to try and resolve this dispute and other disputes that we have with the Chinese government," he said. Tehan acknowledged that the dispute process within the WTO was difficult and estimated it would take two to four years for any resolution.

Coercive behaviour

Beijing has imposed tough economic sanctions on a range of Australian products in recent months, ranging from high tariffs to disruptive practices across several agricultural sectors, coal, wine and tourism. The measures are widely seen in Australia as punishment for pushing back against Beijing's attempts to impose influence in Australia,

rejecting Chinese investment in sensitive areas and publicly calling for an investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. Saturday's move came just a week after a summit of the G7 grouping of advanced economies echoed Australia's call for a tougher stand against China's trade practices and its more assertive stance globally. The G7 summit ended on June 12 with the announcement of US-led plans to counter China's trillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative", the hallmark of its efforts to extend economic influence around the world. The grouping promised hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure investment for low- and middle-income countries in a "Build Back Better World" (B3W) project. The B3W was seen as aimed squarely at competing with China's efforts, which has been widely criti-

cised for saddling small countries with unmanageable debt. Morrison attended the summit as part of a G7 plus formula that also brought in the leaders of South Korea, South Africa and India, and made clear he would push the other nations for joint action against China's aggressive trade policies.

"The most practical way to address economic coercion is the restoration of the global trading body's binding dispute-settlement system," he said in a speech just ahead of the summit. "Where there are no consequences for joint action against China's aggressive trade policies, there is little incentive for restraint," he said. Morrison has received explicit backing in his government's confrontation with China from the US as well as from French President Emmanuel Macron during a visit to Paris following the G7 meeting.

Wall St week ahead: Fed shift causes rally in value stocks to wobble

NEW YORK: The Federal Reserve's hawkish shift is forcing investors to reevaluate the rally in so-called value stocks, which have taken a hit in recent days after ripping higher for most of the year.

Shares of banks, energy firms and other companies that tend to be sensitive to the economy's fluctuations have tumbled following the Federal Reserve's meeting on Wednesday, when the central bank surprised investors by anticipating two quarter-percentage-point rate increases in 2023 amid a recent surge in inflation.

The Russell 1000 Value Stock Index is down 4% from its June peak, though still up 13.2% this year. Its growth counterpart is up 9.8% year-to-date.

One factor driving the move is the idea that a Fed more strongly focused on preventing the economy from overheating may begin unwinding easy-money policies sooner than previously expected. On Friday, St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard said the central bank's shift was a "natural" response to economic growth and inflation moving quicker than expected, bolstering that view.

"Value stocks had gotten ahead of themselves, particularly in energy and financials, and the folks that are caught offside are starting to unwind their positions," said Patrick Conner, managing partner at Harris Financial Group.

The post-Fed meeting slide in value has been accompanied by a retreat in some commodity prices, a surge in the dollar and a rally in US government bonds

that dragged down yields on the benchmark US Treasury to around 1.44% on Friday afternoon.

Investors will be keeping a close eye on next week's economic data for clues on whether the recent surge in inflation - which saw consumer prices accelerate at their fastest pace in 12 years last month - will persist.

New home sales and mortgage applications are due out June 23, while July consumer spending numbers are expected on June 25.

Investors piled into value stocks in the latter half of 2020, as signs of breakthroughs in vaccines against COVID-19 bolstered the case for a powerful economic rebound in 2021. Value stocks have outperformed growth stocks by nearly 7 percentage points since the start of November 2020, backing a trend that saw technology and other growth sectors regularly outshine value in the last decade.

An unwinding of the heavy positioning in value shares could exacerbate the recent slide. Mutual funds are overweight value names to a larger degree than any time in the last eight years, according to a Goldman Sachs (NYSE:GS) report published on June 9.

Some big-name investors such as Cathie Wood, whose ARK Innovation ETF was the top-performing US equity fund last year, have suggested that growth stocks will resume their market outperformance as investors rotate away from value sectors such as energy that are up 38.5% since the start of the year. [L2N2Q27]

Wood's flagship ETF is down 4.8% year-to-date.

Others, however, believe the recent wobble in value stocks is a pause, rather than a turning point.

"Cyclical companies remain the least over-valued in the US stock market, according to Jonathan Golub, chief US equity strategist at note. Credit Suisse (SIX:CSGN). High sales-growth companies are trading at valuations nearly double their 10-year averages, while cyclical companies are trading at valuations approximately 40% more than their historical levels, he wrote in a research note.

The prospect of rising interest rates should also benefit higher quality value stock names that held up better in last year's downturn but have lagged during the recovery, said John Mowrey, chief investment officer at NFI Investment Group.

He has been increasing his positions in utility and consumer staples stocks that have underperformed value stocks as a whole, betting that they will increase their dividend payouts, which would make them more attractive even if Treasury yields eventually rise.

Among his holdings are consumer companies Church & Dwight (NYSE:CHD) Co, which is down 4% for the year to date, and McCormick & Company (NYSE:MKC) Inc, which is down 9.7% for the year to date.

"The idea of dividend growth has been largely sidelined because we've all been enjoying stock appreciation," he said. "We think this will be the next leg of the value stock rally." —Agencies

Lebanon leaders may face sanctions unless crisis solved: EU's Borrell

BRUXELLES: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Saturday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF.

Borrell has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s. A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020. Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU". "The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said.

"The Lebanese leadership must take its responsibility as a government must be reformed and key reforms implemented immediately," the EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse... and there is no time to waste," he said. "You are on the edge of a financial collapse." Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed".

"The council of the EU has been including other options, including targeted sanctions... we prefer not to go down this road, but it is in the hands of the Lebanese leadership," Borrell said. In April France imposed sanctions by restricting the entry on its territory of Lebanese figures it says are responsible for the political crisis. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said at the time that talks were underway with France EU partners on how to increase pressure on Lebanese who are "obstructing a way out of the crisis".

immediately," the EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse... and there is no time to waste," he said. "You are on the edge of a financial collapse." Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed".

"The council of the EU has been including other options, including targeted sanctions... we prefer not to go down this road, but it is in the hands of the Lebanese leadership," Borrell said. In April France imposed sanctions by restricting the entry on its territory of Lebanese figures it says are responsible for the political crisis. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said at the time that talks were underway with France EU partners on how to increase pressure on Lebanese who are "obstructing a way out of the crisis".

SCO International Round Table held to promote economic cooperation

LIANYUNGANG: The 2021 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) International Round Table was held successfully in Lianyungang city of Jiangsu province of China.

The conference was co-hosted by the Secretariat of the SCO and Lianyungang Municipal People's Government, with the theme of "enhancing inter-city cooperation in economy and trade, and promoting facilitation in merchandise exports and imports among SCO member states". The SCO Secretariat and relevant officials from SCO member

states, observer countries, Eurasian Continental Bridge Economic Corridor, Lianyungang assumes the role of a two-way opening window and a sea-land connection hub. In recent years, with the vigorous economic development of the SCO countries and the in-depth implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, Lianyungang has become an important overseas base and the China-Kazakhstan logistics cooperation base. The cooperation efforts achieved cause widespread concern. —Agencies

Bagging groceries for extra cash, Mexican elderly told to pack up

MEXICO CITY: The coronavirus pandemic and changing consumer habits threaten to put an end to a decades-old practice of allowing elderly people in Mexico to earn extra income as grocery store baggers.

Baggers over 60 had expected to return to stores last month as pandemic restrictions eased in Mexico City. But Walmart de Mexico, the country's biggest retailer, announced this week that they wouldn't be allowed back.

The retail chain said Mexico City's ban on plastic bags and the pandemic meant customers no longer want other people touching their groceries.

"Due to the health emergency, we have seen that our customers want to avoid third parties having contact with their purchases," Walmart de Mexico said in a statement. "Added to this is the fact that

under current law to protect the environment, we have stopped giving free, single-use plastic bags."

"For this reason, our customers now bring their own reusable bags and they have become used to packing their own groceries," the statement continued.

Elderly baggers have held a series of protests over the last two weeks outside grocery stores and government offices, holding signs reading "We Want to Work".

"It's not fair," former grocery bagger Maria Guadalupe Garcia told the Telediarrio news programme. "I don't have anything to do, I'm not working."

Lourdes Cua put it this way: "I need to work, because it is my emotional support." The "jobs" - they are considered "volunteers" - not company employees - are hardly lucrative. Some customers give bag-

gers tips of about one percent of the grocery bill or less, with many just leaving five or ten cents.

In some places in Mexico, teenagers are baggers, but in others, the elderly were given spots under a programme arranged many years ago with the government's National Institute for the Elderly. Walmart said it had notified the institute in December that the arrangement would not be renewed.

But the baggers only got word of the change in May, when Mexico City loosened pandemic restrictions amid a drop in case numbers. That is because the elderly baggers - whose age puts them at higher risk for severe COVID-19 - had not been working at the stores since March 2020, and many had only recently contemplated the possibility of going back to work.

It's not just Mexico City; in early June, the legislature in the northern state of Tamaulipas approved a resolution urging that fully vaccinated elderly adults be allowed to return to work as grocery baggers, "to obtain some more income for themselves and their families."

Fadlala Akabani, Mexico City's secretary of economic development, said there are about 35,000 elderly baggers nationwide, and about 4,400 in the capital.

"Of the 4,400 that the company had [in the capital], only 2,209 have tried to go back to work," Akabani said. "So we are trying to relocate them in some [other] stores."

But if consumer habits really have changed that much, it's not clear how many other grocery store chains will be open to the idea.

Under a programme started by President

Andrés Manuel López Obrador, people over 68 in Mexico receive a monthly supplementary income payment of about \$65 per month. But given Mexico's woefully insufficient and spotty pension programmes, many elderly people can't make ends meet.

At the same time, they complain that most employers are unwilling to hire them, a situation that will probably only get worse in the wake of the pandemic.

"A weak pension system, an increase in under-the-table work and unfavorable labour market conditions are factors that affect the wellbeing of elderly people," the institute said in a statement. "A lot of elderly people are still independent and able to function, and they want to continue working and earning money, to make them feel useful and fulfilled." —Agencies

Under a programme started by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, people over 68 in Mexico receive a monthly supplementary income payment of about \$65 per month. But given Mexico's woefully insufficient and spotty pension programmes, many elderly people can't make ends meet.

At the same time, they complain that most employers are unwilling to hire them, a situation that will probably only get worse in the wake of the pandemic.

"A weak pension system, an increase in under-the-table work and unfavorable labour market conditions are factors that affect the wellbeing of elderly people," the institute said in a statement. "A lot of elderly people are still independent and able to function, and they want to continue working and earning money, to make them feel useful and fulfilled." —Agencies

Jhagra foresees early release of net hydel profit funds



APP
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Minister Taimur Jhagra Saturday said that budget figures were based on facts and the federal government had promised to release overdue funds under the net hydel profits.
He said this while addressing a post-budget press conference here at Civil Secretariat. Additional Chief Secretary KP Shahab Ali Shah was also present on the occasion. Jhagra said that the details of the expenditure had also been made public.
Payments of pending dues under net hydel profits have been a thorny issue between federal and provincial government.
The constitution of Pakistan guarantees the right of net hydel profit for the federating units. Article 161 (2) says, "the

net profit earned by the federal government, or any undertaking, established or administered by the federal government from the bulk generation of power at a hydro-electric station shall be paid to the province in which the hydro-electric station is situated".
As per provincial government recent months statements, the lack of payments has seriously impacted the progress on the ongoing development projects. On the same issue, Awami National Party few days back demanded of the federal government to release pending dues of net hydel profit amounting to Rs650 billion to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for initiation of development projects in the province.
However, on the very contrary, Jhagra said the federal government had made significant progress in paying

KP share of net profit of hydropower, adding, for the first time in last 8 months, net profit of hydropower was being paid regularly.
The federal government has agreed to pay Rs 36 billion in arrears of net profit of hydropower, Jhagra disclosed.
Jhagra in his press conference said the budget of the incoming local governments had been increased by 20 to 30 percent. The government has increased TMA's budget from Rs 9 billion to Rs 15 billion in the other, mega projects of development level on one hand and on the other, mega projects of development level to be initiated, he informed.
He said, the element of trust in the government was low in the past. About the tax collection he said, steps had been taken for reducing tax collection

rates to boost tax collection. Another key step of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken is to give interest-free loans to the youth. About the increase in salaries of the government employees, he said that the issue was under serious consideration in view of difficulties of government employees besides granting a record Rs 10 billion subsidy on food items.
The KP Finance Minister said, hard times had passed and in time to come, economic situation would be much better. Regarding reservations on salaries and allowances, he said that a committee had been formed to look into the matter. All reservations and issues will be resolved after careful consideration and the government employees would not be deprived of their rights. Regarding debt burden on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said,

that the government had taken two types of short and long term loans; interest rates on short term loans were very low for which there was a transparent method of repayment while long term loans with a term of 30 to 40 years did not come with harsh conditions either.
He said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was not facing any difficulty in repayment of loans which was two percent of the total budget. He said that Rs 100 billion had been allocated for merged districts and not a single penny would be wasted. We are trying to vaccinate 7 to 9 million people by September and that is why the vaccination of 18-29 year old citizens and women has been started, he said. The health department and the KP govt will not allow the shortage of coronavirus, he underlined.

TCKP reviews transfer of assets to Culture & Tourism Authority

APP
PESHAWAR: The 23rd meeting of the Board of Directors of Tourism Corporation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (TCKP) was held on Saturday with Chief Minister Mahmood Khan in the chair.
The meeting reviewed in detail progress on the implementation of the decisions taken in last board meeting regarding the transfer of assets and employees of TCKP to the newly established Culture and Tourism Authority. Chief Secretary Dr. Kazim Niaz, Advocate General Shumail Butt, concerned administrative said an issued press release.
Secretaries and other senior officials attended the meeting. The meeting was told that all the ongoing Annual Development Program Schemes of Tourism Corporation had been transferred to Culture and Tourism Authority.
Similarly, all the movable and immovable assets of the corporation have also been transferred to the authority. Moreover, the meeting approved the transfer of endowment fund of the Tourism Corporation to the Culture and Tourism Authority which was established for the payment of salaries to employees who have been transferred to the Culture and Tourism Authority.

Make public part of policing team, IGP directs

APP
PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Moazzam Jah Ansari Saturday directed the officers concerned to make general public part of their team for eliminating crimes on grassroots level and to create crime-free society.
He issued these directives while chairing a high-level meeting in Central Police Office here. The meeting besides others was attended by Additional Gs, DCS, CCPO, DG PCU, and IGs of police department. The meeting discussed in detail several matters pertaining to improvement in policing standard, serving the masses and increase in employment besides capacity building of existing policemen.
Addressing the participants, IGP said to keep a vigilant eye on movement of anti-social elements and take stern actions against those sabotaging the peace in the province. He said serving the masses was main responsibility of the police department and added that KP police are always ready to maintain peace and stability in the region at any cost.

Govt presented development-oriented budget: Minister

APP
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Environment, Syed Ishtiaq Umar said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government had presented tax-free, public welfare and development-oriented budget for financial year 2021-22.
In his comments on the provincial budget, he said that the people-friendly and pro-poor budget reflected the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief Minister Mahmood Khan that will bear far-reaching and positive results. On provincial government's afforestation campaign to revive the lost greenery, he said that the provincial government while following the vision of PM had planted over one billion trees on a vast area that received worldwide commendation.
He said that government had allocated hefty amount in the budget for financial year 2021-22 for plantation of olives in the newly merged districts.
The plantation of olive plants in the newly merged districts will not only make KP self-sufficient in olive production rather would also increase the revenue generating base of the province.

UoT arranges 2-day workshop on civic education

APP
PESHAWAR: University of Technology (UoT), Nowshera arranged two-day training workshop in collaboration with Empowerment Through Creative Integration (ETCI) on "Civic education and social action drives" funded by UNDP on Saturday.
Total 300 students from six departments participated in the workshop and presented their proposals regarding overt social action drive. During the closing ceremony Vice Chancellor UoT Prof. Dr. Zafar M. Khan shared his views with the students and apprised the efforts of organizers for arranging the workshop. He has assured his full support for future activities.

Kohat Textile Mills First industrial unit to set up solar energy park

APP
PESHAWAR: Kohat Textile Mills of the Saif Group of Companies become first industrial unit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to set up 1 megawatt solar energy park to minimize its cost of production.
The clean and green 1 MW first mega solar project was completed in collaboration with Sky-Electric Private Limited with the financial support of the Bank of Khyber and Meoan Bank.
The solar park was inaugurated by KP Minister for Finance, Taimur Saleem Khan Jhagra in a ceremony held at Kohat Textile Mills at Kohat on Saturday.
Addressing the ceremony, KP Minister for Finance said that for the first time in the history of province, a business friendly government had come into power and environment was highly conducive for investment.
He further said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was following Open for Business policy and announced an economic package for business community through the Bank of Khyber.
Appreciating the initiative of the Saif Group of Companies for establishment of first solar energy park, he termed the promotion of solar energy and hydropower inevitable for industrialization of the province. He said that government was working on fast track for the purpose. He said that as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the transforming of the business sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was his mission. On this occasion, former federal minister & chairman KPTMA, Saleem Saifullah highlighted the background and history of the Saif Group of Companies and Setting up Kohat Textile Mills in late 1960s. He reiterated the pledge of generating employment opportunities for the residents of Sohan Districts and urged upon the provincial government for focusing on the development of the region and allocation of maximum budget for it. Former Senator and CEO Sky Electric Osman Saifullah Khan stressed for adoption of solar energy to protect the environment and development. The CEO Kohat Textile Mills, Barrister Assad Saifullah Khan hinted at the shifting of the mills on solar energy and its further expansion to create maximum employment opportunities for the locals.

KP CS for timely completion of Dasu Dam

APP
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Dr. Kazim Niaz lauded Commissioner Hazara Division, Deputy Commissioner and other district administration officials for making best arrangements for making best arrangements on the occasion of Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent visit to Dasu Dam.
The chief secretary said Dasu Dam was an important national project and directed that all-out efforts must be made to ensure its timely completion. He said completion of Dasu project would provide cheap electricity to the industries and usher a new era of social and economic development in remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is pertinent to mention here that Dasu Hydropower Project has a generating capacity of 4320 MW.
Earlier in the day, Chief Secretary Dr. Kazim Niaz visited Kaghan and inaugurated a biodegradable shopping bags campaign. He directed the Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) to take steps for making tourist destinations plastic free. In addition to banning polythene bags, he stressed it was important to encourage tourists to use eco-friendly bags in order to keep tourist sites clean and protect them from pollution. On the occasion, the Chief Secretary met with a large number of tourists and locals. He distributed eco-friendly shopping bags among locals and tourists for free and urged them to take special care of the environment and cleanliness of tourist spots. The Chief Secretary directed relevant authorities to ensure practical measures for prevention of environmental pollution including making tourist spots plastic-free. At the end, the Chief Secretary released trout fish - an endangered marine species - in the water and planted a tree as well.

NEPRA Chairman satisfied with work on energy projects in KP

APP
PESHAWAR: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Chairman Tauseef H. Farooqi said the energy projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would help in overcoming the economic and energy crisis of the province.
He said this during his visit to the sites of the energy projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Apart from NEPRA Chairman, the delegation was accompanied by NEPRA's KP member, Engineer Masood Ahmad, Baloch, Rehmatullah Baloch, and members of Sindh Rafiq Ahmed Sheikh.
On the occasion, a comprehensive briefing was given on various projects in the province. Chairman expressed his satisfaction over the pace of work on ongoing projects and termed those projects as important for the future development of the province and overcoming the energy crisis.

Allocation for tourism in budget 2021-22 marks 300% increase

APP
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government allocated Rs 12 billion for tourism, culture in provincial budget 2021-22, marking a 300 percent increase against last year's allocation of Rs 250 billion.
Following the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to provide sports infrastructure at grassroots level, about Rs 3 billion were earmarked for the said purpose at Union Council level across the province, along with allocation of Rs 500 million for the merged tribal districts, besides the allocation of huge amount for the 113 ongoing projects in the province. The Minister in his budget speech in the provincial assembly said that a key project to have separate female

indoor gymnasiums in all divisions, including the merged areas was already underway according to the decision of KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.
The cost of the project would exceed Rs one billion, he added.
He said that keeping in view the tourism potential, the government had increased tourism and culture allocation grant in the budget-2021-22 from Rs 2 billion to record Rs 12 billion for the completion of the key projects, including Madaklaskh Chair Lift, Pakistan's first motor sports arena, Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium, Hayatabad Cricket Stadium and International Cricket Stadium in Kalam. He said that the construction of roads in Malakand and Hazara were included in the budget. According to the budget speech of Jhagra, innovation fund of Rs 3.8 billion had been set up for the entrepreneurs, including small businesses and provision of interest free loan to the youth to set their own businesses.
A quick look at the budget told that Rs919 billion earmarked for settled district, Rs374 billion for salaries, Rs921 billion for pensions, Rs203 billion for emergencies and district expenses, Rs199.3 billion for merged areas, Rs142 billion for health sector, Rs48 billion for construction of roads, Rs42 billion for category-C hospitals including Allied hospitals, Medical Teaching Institutes, and Medical College, Rs40 billion for construction of four new hospitals under Greenfield Public Partnership Program, Rs14.9 billion for rehabilitation of all major hospitals in the province. Similarly, government allocated

Rs14.2 billion for improvement in Water and Sanitation Services Program, Rs132 billion for Agriculture sector, Rs12 billion for Tourism and Culture, Rs10 billion subsidy on wheat, Rs10 billion for food basket for poor people, Rs10 billion for restoration of small business affected by corona pandemic, Rs104 billion for District Development Program, Rs2.8 billion for Rescued122 which also included purchase of new vehicles, Rs2.5 billion for Science and Technology. Rs2.6 billion funds allocated for monthly honoraria of Khatbees of mosques.
Accordingly, government announced 10% increase in Adhoc Relief Allowance, 7% in house rent and 20% increase in Functional or Sectoral Allowance. Medical insurance plan for government employ-

ees, minimum wages of labourers increased to Rs230, tax exemption to improve economic activities in the province, tax reduction measure whereby Rs1 would be charged on every vehicle registration, construction and rehabilitation of 2100 schools, appointment of 2000 school teachers and 3000 school leaders, supply of equipment to 97 IT laboratories and establishment of 276 science laboratories.
Furthermore, appointment of 4300 school teachers in merged districts and construction of 10,000 model classrooms under Early Childhood Education Program.
Spokesman of Tourism Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Latifur Rehman on Saturday said so far 500 people had been trained from public and private sector for the promotion of safe tourism in the province.
Talking to a private news channel, he said that the main purpose of these trainings was to ensure the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and other safety measures against Coronavirus. He said that KPK Government was committed for the promotion and development of tourism industry.
The training was imparted collectively to the police, health workers, Rescue 1122, hotel operators, tour operators and other stakeholders.
He went on to add that the sessions of training were held in Peshawar, Naran, Kalam, Swat, North Waziristan, Kaghan and Behrain. The provincial government has taken various steps to provide all basic facilities to the tourists including introducing a helpline, he said.