

QUETTA VOICE

Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com

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A Balochistan board official suspended for allegedly harassing a female candidate



Attack on a polio team, 2 policemen martyred in Quetta

Govt hikes petrol, diesel prices by nearly Rs20

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday announced a massive hike of Rs19 in petrol and diesel prices, taking them to Rs272.95 and 273.40 per litre, respectively.



Petrol rate hiked to Rs272.95 per litre for the next fortnight

He said that the government had checked the "working" of Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) until the late hours of the night.

Ishaq Dar says the government is bound by IMF's conditions

"The delay in the announcement, the basic reason was that we were looking at if there were ways to reduce it, if there was some leeway," Dar said.

The minister said that the matter was then discussed with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif earlier today. "We all know that the international commitments we have with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the petroleum levy, if they weren't there [...] then we would've announced a smaller increase but

everyone knows we have a standby agreement," he said as he highlighted how the previous PTI government had reneged on its promises with the money lender.

The revised prices have come into effect immediately

"So in the country's interest, it is necessary

that the minimum increase calculated be passed and HSD is being increased by Rs19.90 and the new price will be Rs273.40. And petrol price is being increased by Rs19.95 to Rs272.95," the minister said. Dar added that the new prices would be effective towards the revival of the country's economy saying, "We must never lose hope."

Elections to be held on 2023 census: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said upcoming elections would be held on the basis of the 2023 digital census and a meeting of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) — the body that approves census results — was expected.



The premier, whose government is expected to hand over the country's reins to a caretaker setup this August, shared this during a recorded interview on Aaj News show 'Baais Aap Ka' which was aired on Tuesday. "We have to hold the elections on the basis of the new census. When a census has been conducted the [polls] should be held on its basis unless there is an obstacle that cannot be overcome. But I don't see [any such] hurdle," he said.

he assured them that any decision on the matter would be made after consultation with all coalition partners.

Assemblies to dissolve before Aug 12

During the interview broadcast today, PM Shehbaz also said assemblies would be dissolved before August 12. The five-year term of the National Assembly commenced under a PM-Shehbaz-led ruling coalition on the same date this year following the ouster of former premier Imran Khan through a no-confidence vote in April last year Web Desk.

Army urges all stakeholders to play role in revival of economy

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir has called upon all stakeholders to fulfill their social responsibility of contributing towards the revival of the country's economy saying, "We must never lose hope."



Army chief says there are vast mining opportunities in Pakistan

The premier regretted the country's journey of 75 years was dotted with bitter factors as they could not fully exploit the precious natural deposits estimated at worth \$6 trillion. "The day gives an opportunity self-contemplation over a journey of last 75 years and the reason why Pakistan is in this situation with a begging bowl," he added. Elaborating his viewpoint, he said with Russian support, Pakistan's Steep Mountains were mined during 70s while in Reko Diq a hefty penalty of \$10 billion Web Desk.

COAS urges all stakeholders to fulfil their social responsibility

Addressing the "Pakistan Minerals Summit" in Islamabad on Tuesday, the army chief invited foreign investors to play their due role in exploring the hidden reserves of Pakistan and to fully utilise this potential as the country is blessed with rich mineral resources. The army chief said there are vast mining opportunities in our country that will be realised through joint

efforts. He said the authorities will ensure an investor-friendly system to soften terms and avoid unnecessary delays. Gen Munir invited foreign investors to explore 'hidden reserves' Gen Munir said Pakistan's first mineral summit laid down new rules of ease of doing business for domestic and foreign investors in Pakistan as mineral projects are keys to success. He said the government of Pakistan in collaboration with all the institutions assured the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which brings all the stakeholders on one platform. He said it is our social responsibility to play our role in unison for the country's economy. Addressing the ceremony, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for exploring the untapped

resources including the vast natural minerals and reserves and developing the agriculture, information technology and industry sector.



TWO DROPS, EVERY CHILD, EVERY TIME

A Balochistan board official suspended for allegedly harassing a female candidate

QUETTA — The Chairman of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE), Ejaz Baloch suspended an official for allegedly harassing a female candidate and ordered an inquiry against him.



and Deputy Controller Faridullah Shah were also present on this occasion. Controller of Examinations Balochistan Abida Kakar said that yesterday taking immediate notice of the viral post on social media, Balochistan Board

Chairman Ijaz Azeem Baloch has ordered an impartial investigation and has formed a high-level committee in which the Controller of Examinations is the Chairman while Haji Muhammad Anwar, Additional Controller, is among the members.

Inquiry committee formed

Controller of Examinations Abida Kakar spoke to the media on Tuesday and briefed the reporters about the incident. Additional Secretary Board Shamsulrahman Khan, Additional Controller Haji Muhammad Anwar,

Faridullah Shah Deputy Controller is also part of the committee. This committee will review all the motives and submit its report within three days. Also, if a woman has a complaint of harassment related to an official of the board office, then she should approach the committee, keeping her information confidential, she will be provided full protection and justice and action will be taken against the officials involved, the Controller Examinations made it clear. Otherwise, if none reasons are stated and lodges a report, the board the management would be right to understand that this is an organized conspiracy to tarnish the reputation of the board office, she concluded.

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Attack on a polio team, 2 policemen martyred in Quetta

QUETTA — An attack on a polio team in the city left two policemen martyred on Tuesday afternoon. Police sources said a gunman opened fire at policemen guarding the polio team members in the Sili Shalam area of the city. The firing left two policemen martyred on the spot. The attackers escaped unhurt from the spot. Police said the polio team members were unhurt in the attack. The dead bodies of the policemen were rushed to the civil hospital Quetta. Police and other law



enforcement agencies personnel reached the spot and started an investigation into the incident. "Polio campaign is underway and not suspended," an official of the Balochistan health department said. He said the government has provided sufficient security to

make the campaign a success. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. In the past, the militants have targeted the polio team in the Quetta, Chaman, Pishin and Loralai districts of Balochistan. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo has strongly condemned the attack and directed the police to investigate the attack. In a condemnation statement, Mr. Bizenjo said some elements were trying to disrupt the traditional peace of Balochistan through such terrorist attacks. He said the perpetrators of the attack would be brought to justice soon.

CM Bizenjo condemns the attack

Drinking Water Quality Status And Its Sources Of Contamination

By Aaryl Khan panizai

Floods expose construction quality of dams in Balochistan

Editor Asim Khan

Floods unleashed by torrential rains exposed the construction quality of dams across Balochistan. Heavy rainfall wreaked havoc in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan recently. Floods swept away dozens of small delay and check dams in different parts of the province.

Over the years, the provincial and federal governments constructed hundreds of dams to check the passage of rainy water. Successive governments merely celebrated the completion of projects rather than focusing on the construction quality of dams. Although, the dams and lakes constructed by British colonial rulers in different parts of Balochistan are still intact even after more than a century.

Breaching of dams puts human lives at peril. Breaching of dams not only failed to save rainy water rather it also put human lives at peril in Pishin, Barkhan, Lasbella, Kohlar, Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah and other districts of the province. Rains-related incidents have claimed 65 lives till the filing of this editorial. This is simply disastrous and a failure from all concerned quarters.

Floods Flood also swept away poorly constructed roads and standing crops in various parts of the province. This all needs a thorough investigation. Irrigation and Communication Works (C&W) departments are known for commission and corruption.

This is a good opportunity for a common work in C&W and Irrigation departments. This is a good opportunity for the helm of affairs to make sure transparency in the utilization of funds by the two departments. Since water commission is an open secret in the two departments, the Chief Secretary of Balochistan should form a high-powered committee comprising committed and honest retired and serving officers to probe into the breaching of dams.

The quality of construction of roads in Quetta and all districts of Balochistan should also be probed to improve socio-economic conditions. The irony with Balochistan is that first the province has meager resources and second they too are ruthlessly used/ swallowed.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo and his coalition partners must go beyond words and launch an inquiry into the breaching of dams and damage to roads.

Due to intimidating increase in population and rapid-fire industrialization, drinking water quality is being deteriorated day by day in Pakistan. This review sums up the issues of colorful exploration studies conducted for drinking water quality status of different areas of Pakistan by taking into account the physicochemical parcels of drinking water as well as the presence of colorful pathogenic microorganisms. About 20% of the whole population of Pakistan has access to safe drinking water.

The remaining 80% of population is forced to use unsafe drinking water due to the failure of safe and healthy drinking water sources. The primary source of impurity is sewerage (fecal) which is considerably discharged into drinking water system inventories. Esculent source of pollution is the disposal of poisonous chemicals from artificial backwaters, fungicides, and discards from husbandry sources into the water bodies.

Anthropogenic conditioning beget waterborne conditions that constitute about 80% of all conditions and are responsible for 33% of deaths. This review highlights the drinking water quality, impurity sources, sanitation situation, and goods of unsafe drinking water on humans. There's immediate need to



Microbiological contamination in the mixing of the common sewerage and the domestic water supply. In most rural areas of Pakistan surface water is used for drinking after slow sand filtration, and chlorination, or simple percolation filtration stations. In most rural areas, there is no pre-treatment facility for water purification. All this deficiency is due to microbial contamination and poor water quality.

take defensive measures and treatment technologies to overcome hygienic condition of drinking water inventories in different areas of Pakistan.

Drinking water is mainly taken from surface and underground aquifers near rivers and canals. Surface water quality is rapidly declining due to the addition of raw municipal and industrial wastewater as well as agricultural runoff to the water source. When river water flow is at its maximum, it contains a highly concentrated suspension. Most rivers are long and thin and do not support aquatic species.

It is clear that these waters are contaminated with faeces and need to be treated appropriately to remove the contaminants for human consumption. In Pakistan, four major cities use surface water, these are Islamabad, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Hyderabad.

The main cause of microbiological contamination in the mixing of the common sewerage and the domestic water supply. In most rural areas of Pakistan surface water is used for drinking after slow sand filtration, and chlorination, or simple percolation filtration stations. In most rural areas, there is no pre-treatment facility for water purification. All this deficiency is due to microbial contamination and poor water quality.

runoff, i.e. pesticides and fertilizers, enter water sources. Pakistan's use of fertilizers and pesticides is around 5.6 million tons and 10,000 tons respectively according to gross profit (GOP) figures.

These chemicals, used by insecticides, leak into groundwater by mixing with irrigation water and rainwater. Between 1988 and 2000, about 107 samples were taken from groundwater and 2 samples showed clear pesticide contamination above the limits set by the International Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WHO. Another significant problem for groundwater in Pakistan is higher salt concentration, which is mainly caused by irrigation activities, salt dissolution in soil, seawater intrusion, and industries. Salinity affects major areas of Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh.

Floods Cause Major Damage to Drainage System. In Pakistan, floods have created serious environmental problems. They have damaged pipes and eventually cause sewage to overflow from water bodies. Severe flooding destroyed buildings and crops. All these substances can cause toxic chemicals and oils to be discharged into rivers, streams, lakes, and can lead to the death of aquatic organisms. Many chemical pollutants enter floodwaters in their path. Current severe floods (2010) and heavy rains have damaged drainage systems, destroyed 40% of infrastructure. The total number of houses destroyed and damaged during the floods is estimated at 1.5 million. Due to the poor sanitation system, treatment, and monitoring of wastewater, quality deteriorates. The presence of toxic chemicals and untreated wastewater causes adverse effect on human health.

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Syed Saifdar

Flood is one of the most devastating natural hazards throughout the globe. According to CREDD-Data Base, from the 19th century to the present day thousands of people have lost their life due to flood disasters. Further, the million people were displaced, injured, and homeless.

Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters including floods. The 2010-11 floods adversely affected the economy of Pakistan. The geographical location of Balochistan is prone to many natural disasters, like drought, floods, and earthquakes. The recent monsoon spells have adversely affected the rural communities of the province. Dam and reservoirs can minimize the initial pressure of flood on one



Impact of flood and drought in the province.

side whereas, on the other hand, such storage of water can recharge the depleted groundwater table in those particular areas. Due to a lack of proper management and planning, we always face catastrophic events in terms of floods drought, etc. The relevant stockholders like PDMA, Agriculture Department, and Irrigation Department need to revisit their policies in terms of water storage to minimize the adverse

Climate affairs

By Chloe Atkinson

Scientists have long clamored that human activity on Earth has led to the calamitous weather intrusions we are experiencing today. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that climate change makes heatwaves, both more frequent and more intense.

According to the research, greenhouse gas emissions have heated the planet by an estimated 1.1 degrees Celsius (2.0 degrees Fahrenheit) over the last two centuries. The Nature journal published an article this month detailing what its authors predict are the heatwaves in Europe have increased three-to-four times faster than in the United States. The reason for this is that the west-to-east air stream, which carries heat from the north, is being disrupted by the heatwaves in Europe.

More scientists are predicting that the frequency and intensity of heatwaves will continue to rise as the atmosphere warms. In the way mankind could agree that temperatures will continue to rise and that we need to take action with a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. If we invest \$10 in the pre-phase of a disaster so we can save \$100 in the post-phase of a disaster.

ing at three times that rate. The 2015 Paris Agreement and last year's Glasgow climate conference have intended to bring the issue to global attention and generate more momentum. But current climate policies are not sufficient to avoid the dangerous effects of global warming. More must be done. Today, wildfires are raging in Spain, Greece, Portugal, Morocco and Italy. Over one billion people have died so far and many thousands more have been evacuated from their homes out of concern for their safety. Climate change plays a major role in the increase of wildfires since it increases the hot and dry conditions that help fires start and then spread quickly. Less precipitation means dry land and vegetation, which means that when a fire starts, it burns faster and more intensely. Drier conditions are a perfect recipe for a massive inferno.

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Global energy security and the false narrative around SOEs

By Maximilian Hess

By Sarmad Khawaja

Not since World War II has the threat to global energy security been as severe as it is today. Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and the consequent geo-economic war between the Kremlin and the West disrupted global gas markets at a scale unprecedented in recent history. The Kremlin's use of its power over energy markets as leverage and Europe's efforts to wean itself off Russian natural gas and avoid a massive shortage this winter are triggering price hikes and surging flows around the world.

Europe further, saying it plans to reduce gas supplies through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to its own capacity. In response, European Union energy ministers swiftly announced an agreement for the bloc's members to cut gas usage by 15 percent this winter. This was an attempt by Europe to reduce its dependence on Russian pressure and abandon Ukraine in order to fill up its gas reserves. Such conflict-driven demand reduction, however, means that an already tight gas situation is now all but guaranteed. Following Gazprom's latest cuts, analysts already predict the EU will not be able to reach its own target of refilling gas storage to 80 percent capacity by winter. Now that Europe has made it clear that it is finally - and perhaps much belatedly - ready to take the steps to cut its need for Russian gas at any cost, the Kremlin will do everything it can to inflict maximum pain on Europe in the short term. A recent German poll found that 58 percent of the population is supporting sanctions against Russia despite the economic and potential negative impact on Germany. President Vladimir Putin is working to bring that number down to the point that it becomes

example, can pump billions of cubic meters of extra natural gas across Europe by increasing production at the Groningen gas field. Bewilderingly, however, it is still planning to take the entire operation offline next year over the risk of minor earthquakes in the surrounding area and some push-back from environmentalists. Germany's leaders are now facing the herculean task of simultaneously helping their industry, providing a reduced energy supply, supporting Ukraine's war effort and maintaining public support for the sanctions regime amid a cost-of-living crisis.

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So, what's going on here? Why do our economic managers who peddle state companies when they should be fighting our real problems, which are poverty, illiteracy, child malnutrition and unemployment? You might think it is because selling 'loss-making' state companies makes them look like tough-minded people earnestly fighting budget deficits. That's surely part of the answer. But the bigger picture, I would argue, is that they believe their false belief that 'business is not the business of the state' is false. Because we have several decades worth of work and experience showing otherwise.

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Further, more, and it furthered the case. Last year, OGDC contributed Rs207 billion to the national budget. In the last six years, these are colossal amounts of money. In perspective, consider this: the Rs250 billion that the government last year is about 70 percent of the cost of servicing our external debt, it exceeds BISP's expense by Rs79 billion. And it is ample proof that the privatization Commission used a false premise of OGDC. As a result, just 67 percent of the new left in our ownership.

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Sarhadi hails govt for allowing exchange companies to bring cash US dollar

PESHAWAR: Zia ul Haq Sarhadi, former Senior Vice President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) has hailed the issuance of a circular by the government, allowing all exchange companies to bring US dollars in cash into the country.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Zia ul Haq Sarhadi who is also Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI) and a central leader of the Customs Clearing Agents Association (PCCA)

termed the decision as 'very timely' and welcoming. He was of the opinion that the easing of dollar scarcity in the country as a result of which import and export businesses are under severe stress. The provision of importing dollars by exchange companies will help in reducing the difference between rates of the US dollar and local currency and open market, he added. Sarhadi said due to the shortage of US dollars



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends Pakistan Mineral Summit as Chief Guest held in Islamabad.

PM conveys condolences on loss of lives in Beijing's torrential rains

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, conveyed heartfelt condolences on the loss of precious lives in the ongoing torrential rains in Beijing.

Taking to his twitter handle on Tuesday, the prime minister said "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who lost their loved ones. Pakistan and China are enduring friends and partners sharing weal and woe. The entire Pakistani nation stands by our Chinese brothers and sisters in this hour of grief."

Premier Shehbaz Sharif also extended his best wishes for the ongoing relief and rescue efforts and extended all possible assistance.

According to the Chinese state broadcast and other global media, at least 11 people were killed and 100 others injured as a result of the torrential rains lashed the Capital city causing massive damage in its outskirts INP.

Chinese workers' role in implementing CPEC highly commendable

ISLAMABAD: Vice Premier He Lifeng and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded CPEC for its profound positive impact on Pakistan's socio-economic development and the progress of both nations.

They acknowledge the exceptional efforts of Pakistani and Chinese experts, engineers, and workers for their commendable contributions to the timely completion of all CPEC projects in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported.

Tuesday, Pakistan and China celebrated the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Islamabad.

CPEC has notably transformed Pakistan's economic landscape by effectively addressing critical infrastructure challenges and power shortages.

Expressing their contentment with CPEC's achievements, both leaders reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to build upon the progress of the last decade and foster continued cooperation to elevate CPEC to exemplify the highest standards of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The ceremony also acknowledged the exceptional efforts of Pakistani and Chinese experts, engineers, and workers for their commendable contributions to the timely completion of all CPEC projects in Pakistan.

President Xi sent congratulatory message on CPEC 10th anniversary

Islamabad: Chinese President Xi Jinping has said that Beijing will work with Islamabad to build the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into an exemplary project of high-quality Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In a congratulatory message to mark the 10th anniversary of CPEC, Chinese president Xi highlighted that CPEC is an "important pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative." Speaking about the bilateral ties, President Xi stressed that both countries will continue to expand and deepen cooperation. President Xi also reiterated China's unwavering support to Pakistan, saying: "No matter

how the international landscape may change, China will always stand firmly with Pakistan."

He added that both countries will work to aim for high-standard, sustainable and livelihood-enhancing outcomes.

Xi's message was launched in 2013, China and Pakistan have been advancing CPEC under the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and have achieved a number of early harvests," he added.

This has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration, he said, adding that it is a vivid testament to the all-

weather friendship between China and Pakistan, and provides an important underpinning for building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era. Xi added China and Pakistan will continue to work hand in hand and forge ahead in solidarity to carry forward the ironclad friendship, coordinate development and security, pursue the cooperation of higher standards, broader scope and greater depth, and take the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to new heights, so as to make an even greater contribution to peace and prosperity in the two countries and the broader region INP.

A special event was meticulously organized to commemorate the completion of the first decade of this vital initiative.

Distinguished guests from both countries, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Xi Jinping's Special Representative, Vice Premier He Lifeng, presided over the ceremony with their presence.

During the event, they underscored that, as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative,

the substantial benefits of CPEC for Pakistan include the creation of over 200,000 jobs, the addition of 8,000 MW of power to the national grid, the construction of 510 kilometers of highways and 932 kilometers of road network, and the second-largest export-orienting optical fiber line.

Under Phase-II of CPEC, both countries have expanded their cooperation into new areas INP.

OIC expresses grave concern over rising Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressed grave concern over the despicable acts of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark.

The 57th Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the OIC adopted a comprehensive resolution expressing grave concern over increasing incidents of intolerance, discrimination, and rising Islamophobia, a statement from the Foreign Office said.

It reaffirmed the importance of the 8-point action plan unanimously agreed upon by UN Human Rights Council to counter incitement to hatred, discrimination, stigmatisation, and violence based on religion and belief.

It also called on all governments to fully implement the existing legal and administrative frameworks and adopt new legislation to protect all individuals against hatred and violence based on religion and belief.

FM Bilawal also attended the 18th extraordinary meeting held in a virtual mode in Rome.

Addressing the CFM, FM Bilawal condemned, in the strongest terms, the Islamophobic and hateful acts of desecration of the Holy Quran, which manifested religious hatred and intolerance.

He underscored that these acts, and the permission to carry them out, did not constitute free-

dom of expression.

The foreign minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work closely with OIC member countries, especially in Jeddah, Geneva, and New York to highlight concerns about the willful acts of the burning and desecration of the Holy Quran.

He welcomed the adoption of resolutions in the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly advocating inter-religious dialogue and shunning religious hatred. He also called for promoting inter-faith harmony and peaceful coexistence.

The foreign minister reiterated his proposal, made earlier this year on the occasion of the International Day INP.

Maid Torture Case: Judge's wife gets interim bail

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court of Islamabad on Tuesday approved the interim bail of Somalia Asim, wife of a civil judge named as the key accused in a torture case of 14-year-old housemaid Rizwana till August 7.

Additional Sessions Judge Abida Sajjad heard Somalia's plea and granted the bail after the accused submitted Rs100,000 worth of surety bonds.

The accused in application submitted by her stated that Rizwana was employed at her house with her parents and her parents. Furthermore, she adamantly denies any claims of torture or mistreatment inflicted upon her young girl. Somalia Asim asserts that Rizwana was always treated with care and affection, similar to her own children. Pledging her full cooperation with the investigation, Somalia Asim affirms her willingness to provide a detailed statement before the investigating officer to prove her innocence. She expresses confidence in the upcoming inquiry, hoping that it will shed light on the truth of the matter. In her application, Somalia Asim raises concerns about the impact of her potential arrest on her honor and dignity INP.

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the substantial benefits of CPEC for Pakistan include the creation of over 200,000 jobs, the addition of 8,000 MW of power to the national grid, the construction of 510 kilometers of highways and 932 kilometers of road network, and the second-largest export-orienting optical fiber line.

UAF signs Lol with QAU to promote Pak-China agro collaboration

BEIJING: The University of Faisalabad (UAF) signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Qingdao Agricultural University (QAU) to carry out academic exchange and cooperation in teaching, research, and training for the advancement and dissemination of learning.

Both institutions agree to encourage exchanges of faculty and staff, students, joint research activities, and the exchange of academic materials based on their respective resources and needs, Gwadar Pro reported.

During the signing ceremony, Prof. Dr. Tian Yike, Vice President of QAU, presented an overview of the university's discipline building, personnel training, and international cooperation efforts.

He expressed QAU's willingness to engage in in-depth cooperation and exchanges with UAF to contribute jointly to the implementation of the 'Belt and Road Initiative', especially the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In his video speech, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice President of UAF, praised the achievements made in the construction and development of QAU in recent years.

He expressed his willingness to work with QAU to promote faculty and student exchanges and academic cooperation INP.

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ISLAMABAD: A Vice Minister for Mining Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources KSA, Khalid Saleh Al-Mudairif calling on Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjani.

Bank of China opens Islamabad branch

ISLAMABAD: "The opening of the Islamabad branch of the Bank of China is another milestone in deepening financial and economic cooperation between the two countries and holds great significance in expanding bilateral economic and trade cooperation," said Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Pakistan at the opening ceremony of the Bank of China branch in Islamabad, the minister congratulated the Bank of China on further expanding its service network in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported.

The Pakistani government will promote the development of Pak-China cooperation with more firm determination and more effective measures and will continue to cons-

olidate and deepen the all-weather strategic partnership," said Chinese Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, Changeng. He highlighted the cooperation between the two countries. Liu Jin, president of the Bank of China, stated that the Bank of China will continue to leverage its advantages in global operations, actively promote the high-quality cooperation between the two countries, and play a greater role in supporting Pakistan's infrastructure construction, industrialization transformation, and international trade development.

Li Yong, counselor of commercial affairs at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, mentioned that China has been Pakistan's largest trading partner for consecutive years, serving as the largest source of imports and the second-largest export destination for Pakistan.

He also highlighted that China is the biggest source of foreign direct investment in Pakistan. He expressed hope that the Bank of China would seize the opportunities for cooperation between the two countries and contribute to the facilitation of the CPEC construction.

Nearly 100 representatives from government departments and enterprises of both countries attended the opening ceremony INP.

Coalition govt announces massive hike in prices of petroleum products

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday announced a massive hike of Rs19 in the prices of petroleum products.

In televised remarks, the finance minister said that the price of high speed diesel (HSD) set in the international market had increased over the last 15 days.

He said that the government had checked the working of Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) until the late hours of the night. "The delay in the announcement, the basic reason was that we were looking at if the market would rise or fall in some time," he said. Dar said the minister said that the matter was then discussed with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif earlier on Tuesday. "We all know that the international commitments we have with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the petroleum levy, if they were to be increased, it would have a significant impact on the economy. However, we have a standby agreement," he said as he highlighted how the previous PTI government had reneged on its promises with the IMF. "So, the country's interest is more important than the IMF's. The minimum increase calculated be passed and HSD is being increased by Rs19.90 and the new price will be Rs273.40 INP."

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Pakistani students laud China-SCO institute of Economy and Trade for professional training

BEIJING: "The China-SCO Institute of Economy and Trade has provided us international students with a broader platform to acquire professional knowledge and we have more choices in our study and career," said Ahmed Bilal, a Pakistani student who recently completed his Ph.D. in Geology from Shandong University of Science and Technology (SDUST).

During the inauguration ceremony of the International Exchange Center at the China-SCO Institute of Economy and Trade held last week, Ahmed Bilal highly appreciated the joint efforts of the institute and Chinese universities in providing comprehensive and practical training, including language, business, and preparatory courses.

"As a science student, the curriculum was designed to be easily understandable and interesting. My university fellows and I all wish we could attend more of these courses," he said in an interview with China Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area.

The institute was inaugurated in Qingdao in January 2022. The institute, which is based on the China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area, aims to have a national influence and serve SCO countries and the countries along the 'Belt and Road' initiative.

Its objectives include nurturing international talents, conducting research on countries' economies and trade INP.

August 5, 2019 darkest day in Kashmir history': Ghulam Azad

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of Peoples Political League (PPL) Ghulam Ahmed Azad, has said that August 5, 2019, is the darkest day in the history of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) when the Modi regime repeated Kashmir's special status and imposed a military siege in the territory.

According to Kashmir Service, the minister Ghulam Ahmed Azad in a statement in Srinagar said that the Hindu rulers in India are conspiring to change the demography of the territory by accommodat-

ing non-state residents to transform Kashmir into a Hindu-occupied territory. He said India's unjust, undemocratic and unconstitutional actions have affected every aspect of the lives of the Kashmiri people. Thousands of Kashmir youth, including Hurriyat activists, have been languishing in different jails of India and India, he lamented.

Ghulam Ahmed Azad said Jammu and Kashmir has now been turned into the biggest prison of the world, where millions of Indian forces have been deployed. The forces are protected under black laws like Public Safety Act (PSA) and Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), he added.

He said there is lawlessness and jungle rule in the Indian-occupied Kashmir and the Indian forces are wreaking havoc on the Kashmiri people.

He maintained that the morale of the Kashmiri people was dropping as the Indian forces were not going to accept the illegal domination of India in any price.

Ghulam Ahmed Azad also expressed concern over the deteriorating public safety and international community and said that the United Nations should take the lingering Kashmir dispute according to its own resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. According to Ghulam Ahmed Azad in a statement in Srinagar said that the Indian forces in India are conspiring to change the demography of the territory by accommodating non-state residents to transform Kashmir into a completely Hindu territory.

He said India's unjust, undemocratic and unconstitutional actions have affected every aspect of the lives of the Kashmiri people. Thousands of Kashmir youth, including Hurriyat activists, have been languishing in different jails of India and India, he lamented.

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KARACHI: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Syed Amin ul Haque, witnessing during the MoU Signing Ceremony for the Establishment of the Health Creator & Science Technology Park at the ICCBS under Minister of IT and Telecommunication & ICCBS University of Karachi.

Senate Body probes NHA on readiness for any predicted floods

ISLAMABAD: Chaired by Senator Prince Ahmed Umar Alhmedzi, the Senate Standing Committee on Communication on Tuesday examined in detail progress of various on-going and completed projects, total revenue generated by the NHA and other administrative matters pertaining to NHA. The committee also took briefing on the progress, repair and renewal of work on projects effected by the devastating floods last year and inquired about the preparedness of flood this year. The committee was informed that the NHA along with NES-PAK is working on a complete new structure and alignment of bridges affected by floods. The committee was apprised that the NES-PAK will furnish the structural design and NHA will give a presentation to the committee in a meeting on August 10. The said project will take around 2 years to complete. The committee was apprised that a complete hydrological study of the NHA network is required to address floods in the country. It was also briefed that the NHA restored the roads affected in the flood. The officials from the Ministry of finance said that NHA has spent 2.4 billion rupees on repair/rehabilitation of the side roads out of NHA network in all provinces but not a single penny has been received from the government till date. It was further informed by the NHA officials that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has decided that expenditure incurred on roads in provinces, funds may also be provided by the respective province. The committee also received briefing on the details of revenue generated by NHA since January 2018 including toll tax and other sources mentioning annually, monthly break along with its utilization. It was apprised that a total of 135,488.43 million rupees was earned by toll revenue (national highways & Motorways for the period of January 2019 to June 2023 out of which motorways earned 144,376.84 and National Highways earned 91,111.59 million rupees. The committee was also briefed that the 112,187.1 million rupees were utilized on maintenance and 4,277.2 on establishment. While tak-

ing briefing on the details of on-going projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan since 1st January 2023-to-date, the committee showed concern over the incomplete on-going projects. The Chairman committee said that each project only gets 10 to 15 pc of funds annually which causes delay in its completion, price escalation and disputes amongst the authority and contractors. He said this delay causes great loss to the country as the NHA has to pay liability of escalated rates to the contractor. The Chairman Committee sought details of all the delayed projects in the last 5 years and cost of liability of each project paid to the contractor in next meeting. The committee was told that bidding is continued on around 10-15 new projects in last 6 months. The Senate body also took briefing from the NHA on the current status of recruitment process of jobs advised on 6th May and 21st May, 2023. It was briefed that NHA advertised 90 projects posts of different cadres on 7-5-2023, total number of applications received against the post was 6851 out of which 4756 candidates were shortlisted after shortlisting of candidates written tests of shortlisted candidates were conducted on 19, 20 of July, 2023 the paper checking is in progress and the eligible candidates will be called for interview. Similarly NHA advertised 37 vacant post regular post of different cadres against Baluchistan quota on 21.05.2023 against which 309 application were received. And shortlisting of candidates is in progress. The committee remarked that much recruitment work is pending in Baluchistan quota to candidates benefited for Balochistan. However, the local community as well as the real deserving candidates remain unprivileged in this regard. The committee recommended that test should be conducted in the local city and also an office should be established in the city to process recruitments so that the recruitment process of jobs advised on 6th May. The Chairman committee also constituted a sub-committee comprising of Senator Danesh Kumar INP.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with COAS General Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Dignitaries attended Pakistan Mineral Summit as Chief Guest held in Islamabad.

FBR surpasses July revenue collection target

Dresses designed by talented Pakistani designers liked across globe: Amanullah

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has collected net revenue of Rs 528 billion against the target of Rs534 billion in July 2023. According to a statement released by the tax collection body, FBR has collected net revenue of Rs528 billion during July 2023, which has exceeded the target of PKR 534 billion. The data showed an increase of 30% in tax collection in July. The FBR spokesperson applauded the efforts of the tax collection body amid the financial crisis in the country. Earlier, Mr. Naveed Hussain, Country Director of the World Bank, and Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue Mr. Asim Ahmed praised the progress of Pakistan's Revenue Program during the last financial year INP.

KARACHI: Chief Operating Officer PIA Amanullah Qureshi has said that Pakistani designers are very talented and their designed dresses are liked all over the world. He was speaking as chief guest along with Chief Executive SRF Zia Zafar during Style Runway Fashion Show (Season 13) held at The Airport Hotel in collaboration with PIA and Spotlight Salon under SRF Pakistan's patronage. Memorandum Grand PIA was guest of honor. Designers My Apparels, Asma Naz Director Spotlight Salon and others participated. The colorful fashion show was attended by eminent personalities of the fashion industry including Sunita Marshall, Aruba Mirza, Benita David, Saima Haroon, Zameen Ikram, Saanchi Raiput, Tamia Farid, Tajj Ahmed, Zeeshan Shafi, Shoab Hasan, Akhyar Khan, Adeel Khan, Ali Raza and others. Speaking on the occasion, Amanullah Qureshi said that dresses designed by Pakistani designers are opportunities for growth with the fashion industry and youth can benefit by paving attention to it. Addressing the fashion show, Zia Zafar said that the fashion industry is a vast field and Pakistani fashion designers are world famous. He said that SRF Pakistan is taking great steps to highlight the work of designers, he added. Model Fauzan Khan said that Zia Zafar is playing an important role in the development of the fashion industry. It is commendable that he organizes fashion shows frequently. INP.

CTP launches awareness campaign on traffic rules

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi on Tuesday launched an awareness campaign to educate the citizens about traffic rules. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan said the students of different schools, colleges, universities and other citizens were educated to follow traffic rules and regulations in real spirit. The students were also being informed about the traffic rules and road safety measures, he said adding, the mobile education unit of CTP was arranging special briefing sessions. In this regard, CTP had also displayed banners to guide the road users about traffic rules on important roads of the town, he added. In order to make the campaign more effective and meaningful, traffic wardens and officers had been issued special instructions, he said and informed that the Education Unit of CTP was making efforts to spread awareness so that the road journey could be made safe and sound. Traffic rules should not be violated as such violation with negligent driving may lead to fatal accidents, he added. INP.

Maid torture case: Rizwana's health shows improvement

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the condition of 14-year-old housemaid Rizwana, who was subjected to brutal torture by a civil judge's wife in Islamabad, showed signs of improvement, according to the medical board's latest report on Tuesday. The incident of alleged violence against the housekeeper, Rizwana, who served at the residence of the Administrative Officer of Islamabad Judicial Complex, had sparked outrage and concern across the nation. During a crucial meeting held at Lahore General Hospital to assess Rizwana's health, the head of the medical board, Professor Jodit Saleem, informed the media that the young girl's health had notably improved since yesterday. "Thanks to the application of oxygen, Rizwana's breathing difficulties have significantly decreased," he said. He also communicated Professor Jodit Saleem disclosed that Rizwana had been facing complications due to infection, but her condition had shown positive progress. The medical team's attentive care and treatment have helped alleviate some of the immediate health concerns. Today, Rizwana has even expressed her desire to eat solid food," Professor Jodit Saleem said, highlighting the encouraging news. Rizwana has also been started on a soft diet to aid her recuperation. The medical board has been providing Rizwana with juices and water to maintain INP.

Rehabilitation of flood victims reviewed

LAHORE: Senior Member board of Revenue (SMBR) Nabeel Javed on Tuesday chaired a meeting to assess rehabilitation needs of flood victims in Sambal Lodia and Thatta of Bhowna Tehsil. The SMBR said that all available resources would be utilized to rehabilitate the affected people. The victims would not be left alone during this challenging time. The government was committed to providing support and assistance, he vowed. INP.

Sindh schools reopen after summer vacations

KARACHI: After a refreshing summer vacation, educational institutions across Sindh reopened on Tuesday after the summer vacations. According to details, schools and colleges throughout Sindh have resumed educational activities following the two-month summer holidays, while the teaching process has officially begun. The new academic year in schools has also commenced from Tuesday, bringing back the lively atmosphere to educational institutions after the two-month break. The children's faces lit up with joy as they returned to school to rely on old textbooks, while private schools could only provide half of the required materials. Despite these challenges, the enthusiasm INP.

More monsoon rains predicted this week

ISLAMABAD: Met Office on Tuesday forecast another rain spell in upper parts of the country from 03rd to 05th August. Pakistan Meteorological Department has said that a westerly wave will likely to enter in upper parts of the country, which may cause rain from Arabian Sea are also penetrating in these areas. After the influence of these systems, rain or wind-thundershower with isolated heavy falls expected in Karachi, Gligli, Barisal, Waziristan, Gulliyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Lahore, Chitral, Dir, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Peshawar, Mardian, Swabi and Nowshera from the evening of night of 02nd to 07th August with occasional rains. Rain or wind-thundershower is expected in Kurram, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Waziristan, and south Punjab districts from 04th (evening/night) to 07th August with occasional gaps, according to the IMD. INP.

Military trials of civilians: SC reserves verdict on fresh plea for full court

ISLAMABAD: A six-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday reserved its verdict on a fresh petition seeking the formation of a full court to hear and challenge the trial of civilians by military courts. The bench comprised Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Jazal Ahsan, Justice Waqar Akbar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Mansoor Akhtar, Justice Yashfa Aftab, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha A. Malik. Earlier, the apex court had rejected the federal government's plea to constitute a full court for the case. However, a fresh application pertaining to the case was moved yesterday by senior counsel Faisal Siddiqi on behalf of civil society members. "The full court should include all judges willing and available for the adjudication on the fundamental and complex constitutional and legal questions," it said. The petition further stated that the petitioners would have no objection if all the judges of the Supreme Court were part of the proposed full court. "It is categorically stated that unlike the government's malafide intentions, the petitioners have no objection, whatsoever, on any judge willing and available to hear this case," it added. During the hearing, the CJP discussed the plea with other petitioners in the case and then reserved the verdict. He said that while the government's plea would announce the decision after discussion, Justice Bandial added that lawyers would be informed in the

instance of a delay in the verdict. At the outset of the Tuesday hearing, the CJP noted that senior counsel Faisal Siddiqi had petitioned the court a day earlier to hear and hear pleas against the military trial of civilians. Justice Bandial then said that the bench would first hear the arguments of ex-CJP Jawad S. Khawaja's lawyer, senior counsel Justice Mansoor Akhtar, Advocate Khawaja Hussain Ahmed said, "My client wants to take me like a common citizen, not a special person. He wants ex-judice justice to be rendered from his name." Here, Justice Bandial said that the former chief justice was a prominent personality and his petition was non-political. At one point, the apex court judge also asked if Faisal Siddiqi was hiding, to which he was told that the counsel was outside the courtroom for some work and would return soon. As the hearing continued, Justice Najafi said the law didn't give permission to pick and choose, asking why the inquiry [against civilians] was not brought on record. For his part, the AGP replied that a lot of caution was exercised. "Only people directly involved were sent to military courts. Those who entered the Lahore corps commander's residence have been sent to military courts. Justice Bandial subsequently remarked that Awan's claim could be proven if there was content on the trials available at any forum INP.

Sherry demands restoration of Islamabad Airport name to Benazir Bhutto IN'l

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday demanded the government to restore the original name of the Islamabad Airport to Benazir Bhutto International Airport, which was approved by the federal cabinet. In a meeting of the Standing Committee on Aviation, the federal minister said that the airport was named after the world leaders around the world and there may have been a change of it. She regretted that the previous government had envisioned the licence deal and their so-called accusation alleged the national flag carrier PIA of corruption. "It was very difficult to restore the confidence of pilots, their salary increase is justified. However, the salary of IA grade 1 to 4 workers should also be increased," Sherry Rehman said. On the legitimate demand of the public flights to Mohenjo Daro Airport should also be restored, the minister said. INP.

Fawad Chaudry submits written apology to election commission

ISLAMABAD: Ex-federal minister Fawad Chaudry on Tuesday submitted written apology to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the ECP contempt case against former PIA leader. The ECP reserved its decision over the contempt case against former PIA leader. Talking to the media at the election commission, Fawad Chaudry urged general charter of democracy before general elections in the country. "How could the election be possible without addressing the issue of estrangement between chairman PTI and Nawaz Sharif," he questioned. "If elections held without addressing the issue of estrangement, nothing will be solved," he added. INP.

Two-day National Conference on Women & Digitalization begins in Capital

ISLAMABAD: A two-day event being organized by the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCWS) in collaboration with UNDP, UN-WOMEN, UNFPA and Jazz to create a national policy framework and launch the report "Digitalization & Women in Pakistan" started on Tuesday. The event was inaugurated by former Chief Minister of Islamabad on Tuesday. On the opening day, the NCWS with its consortium partners, UNDP, UN-WOMEN, UNFPA and Jazz produced a comprehensive report "Digitalization and Women in Pakistan" as a result of a rigorous country-wide consultative process, engaging public and private sectors, civil society, academia, media and think tanks etc. The report was presented during the 67th session of the Global Commission INP.

SC resumes hearing pleas against military trials of civilians

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressed the closing session of Pakistan Miners Summit "Dust to Development: Investment opportunities in Pakistan". Ahmad, requested the top court to declare the trial of civilians by military courts unconstitutional. The bench comprised Section 2(i)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Pakistan Army Act were inconsistent with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and therefore void, and should be struck down. As an interim measure, all proceedings against civilians based on the sections should be suspended or, in the alternative, any military court should be restrained from passing a final order in any case against civilians based on the sections, the petition stated. Before this petition, five members of civil society from different cities, led by former Chairman Faisal Siddiqi, sought illegal the trial of civilians in the military courts in connection with the recruitment in the country of May 9 INP.

Bajaur bast: UN Security Council seeks stern action against perpetrators

NEW YORK: The United Nations Security Council on Tuesday denounced the blast at the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazi (JUI-F) workers' convention in Khar, the capital area of Bajaur on Sunday afternoon urged all concerned countries to take decisive action against the perpetrators of the incident. In a strongly worded statement, the Security Council emphasized that terrorism, in all its forms, poses a serious threat to global peace and security. The Council called upon all concerned countries to take decisive action against the perpetrators behind the vicious attack in Bajaur. UN individuals and entities involved in this act of terrorism, including their financial supporters and facilitators, must be brought to justice promptly," the statement read, highlighting the necessity for swift and decisive action against those responsible for perpetrating such acts of violence. The UN Security Council also made a earnest appeal to all nations to cooperate closely with the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to apprehend and prosecute culprits in line with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. By calling for intensified cooperation, the Council demonstrated its commitment to stand united against terrorism and bring the perpetrators to justice, regardless of their location or affiliations. The Council reiterated that any act of terrorism, regardless INP.

SC resumes hearing pleas against military trials of civilians

ISLAMABAD: A six-member Supreme Court (SC) has resumed hearing a set of petitions challenging the trials of civilians in military courts. The bench comprised Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Mansoor Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha A. Malik. At the previous hearing, the federal government had assured the SC that convictions over May 9 violence would not entail capital punishment, but sought time to ponder granting a substantive right of appeal against military court decisions. The petitions were filed by former Chief Minister of Islamabad, Senator Karamat Ali, and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Khawaja, who filed the petition through his counsel Advocate Khawaja



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy, Engr. Khuram Dasgiri Khan held a meeting with Saudi delegation at the Pakistan Mineral Investment Summit including Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudia Arabia to Pakistan, Commercial attache and coordination staff.