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RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir presiding over 258th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at the General Headquarters.

COAS presides over 258th Corps Commanders' Conference Sanctuaries, liberty for TTP in neighbouring country impacting Pak security: Army top brass

We must always remain prepared to guard against any threat says COAS; Commanders resolve to provide all possible support for economic revival

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) on Monday noted that "the sanctuaries and liberty of action available to the terrorists of proscribed TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) and other groups of that ilk in a neighbouring country and availability of the latest

weapons to the terrorists" were major reasons impacting security of Pakistan.

The 258th CCC, presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir here at the General Headquarters, was given a detailed briefing about the prevailing internal security environment, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices persistently being offered by the valiant sol-

diers in the defence of their motherland against the threat of terrorism.

It also deliberated in detail upon the operational preparedness and training aspects of the army.

The CAOS, on the occasion, said, "Objective training remains the hallmark of our professionalism and we must always remain prepared to guard against any threat to our national security."

The forum was also apprised about the government's economic re-

vival plan and role of the Pakistan Army in uplifting agriculture, information technology, mining and mineral, and defence production sectors under the ambit of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The participants vowed to fully support the strategic initiatives planned by the Government of Pakistan for the revival of the economy by providing all possible technical and management support for the overall good of the people of Pakistan.

PM, Sri Lankan President reaffirm to continue long-standing cooperation in diverse fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday agreed to continue the long-standing cooperation in areas of mutual interest and further strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The prime minister held a telephone call with the Sri Lankan president.

The prime minister emphasized the need to work together to fight poverty and promote economic growth and development for the benefit of the entire region, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also expressed his desire to promote peace

and enhance connectivity through regional cooperation.

The two leaders fondly recalled the close and cordial relations and immense goodwill between the people of the two countries.

The president of Sri Lanka thanked the prime minister for conveying warm sentiments on behalf of the people of Pakistan.

Separately on his Twitter handle, the prime minister said that the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka were underpinned by reservoirs of goodwill and good neighbourliness between our two countries.

"I had the pleasure of speaking to H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of Sri Lanka, earlier today

to thank him for his support to Pakistan during my meeting with MD IMF," he added.

Over the decades, the prime minister further said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka had been close allies and friends and stood by each other through thick and thin.

"I remember how a team of Sri Lankan doctors stayed in Lahore and helped the Punjab government deal with dengue epidemic which was devouring precious human lives in Lahore," the prime minister said in a tweet.

He also expressed his desire to working with the Sri Lankan president to further build on the friendly relations between the two countries.

Govt seeks dismissal of petitions challenging military court trials

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government (FIRs) registered against the Supreme Court to dismiss petitions seeking to challenge trials of civilians accused of various offences emanating from the events of May 9.

The government, in its concise statement, stated that violence against military and vandalism of military installations was a direct attack on the national security of Pakistan, and was, therefore, prejudicial to security, interests and defence of Pakistan.

It said the May 9 events, which were neither localised nor isolated, indicated a premeditated and intentional attempt to undermine the country's armed forces and inhibit its internal security.

The total damage incurred on the day was Rs 2,539.19 million, including a loss of Rs 1,982.95 million to military establishments, equipment and vehicles, the government added.

It further stated that

while some of the first information reports (FIRs) registered against the suspects did not explicitly mention provisions of the Army Act, the Supreme Court had previously held that the contents of the FIR and not the mentioning of a particular statutory provision determined the nature of the offences made out.

The federal government further argued that the petitions against the military trial of civilians were not maintainable before the apex court in its original jurisdiction under Article 184(3) of the Constitution.

Article 184(3) of the Constitution sets out the SC's original jurisdiction and enables it to assume jurisdiction in matters involving a question of public importance with reference to the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights of Pakistan's citizens, it added.

The government said that the challenges raised in the plea could only be heard by the high courts in their original constitutional jurisdiction under Article 199.

Senator Talha Mahmood emphasizes collaboration for national progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Monday participated in the oath-taking ceremony of the recently elected Hazara Journalists Association.

The event, attended by journalists from Hazara and various parts of the country, aimed to promote welfare and prosperity among journalists based in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The Hazara Journalists Association's new professional panel, elected under the leadership of Syed Luqman Shah, took an oath to diligently serve the journalistic community in the region. Representatives from other media organizations also attended the ceremony, further highlighting the spirit of cooperation and collaboration

among various journalistic bodies.

During his address to the gathering, Senator Talha Mahmood praised journalists from all across Pakistan and emphasized equal respect for journalists in his constituency.

He assured the government's cooperation with the media for the betterment of the nation.

While acknowledging that he prefers to focus on his duties as Minister for Religious Affairs rather than frequent media appearances, Senator Talha Mahmood highlighted his efforts in refunding more than four billion rupees to this year's Hajj pilgrims, indicating a cost-effective Hajj policy.

He emphasized the need to improve the country's situation and provide better opportunities for the people, thus discouraging emigration.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM, Shazain Bugti discuss political situation, other issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti on Monday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

During the meeting, they discussed the current political situation in the country at length, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The matters related to the relevant ministry also came under discussion.

Pervaz Khattak forms 'PTI Parliamentarians'

PESHAWAR (INP): Former prime minister Imran Khan's aide Pervaz Khattak has formed a new party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians, days after being thrown out of PTI.

According to media reports, former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Mahmood Khan and ex-lawmakers Shaukat Ali and Syed Muhammad Ishaq Umar are among 57 ex-assembly members who have joined the party.

Chairman NAB regrets to appear before NAB

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI has once again regretted to appear before NAB and has filed written reply.

He has taken plea in his written reply he has to appear in the courts of Islamabad on July 19 and then he can appear before NAB. "I travel less from Lahore to Islamabad due to security reasons, he added.

In his written reply he further said only he only can receive inquiry report under section 18-C of NAB laws. "when my reply is received by NAB then inquiry report be given to my counsel Barrister Gohar Khan.

When Supreme court ordered to release me in Al-Qadir Trust case then I had forgotten to bring inquiry report. The inquiry report then too was received by barrister Gohar Khan from your his officer. Barrister Gohar Khan will receive inquiry report in Toshakhana case on my behalf, he added.

Registered voters cross 126m figure: ECP report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday issued a report that revealed the number of registered voters in the country had reached over 126 million, as of June 30, 2023. The ECP also released the percentage of voters in terms of age, according to which, the highest number of voters remained within the age group of 26 to 35 years.

According to the report, the ratio of male and female voters in Pakistan stood at 54.02 per cent and 45.98 per cent respectively.

The total number of registered voters in Islamabad was over one million while Punjab topped with 71.60 million voters.

The number of registered voters in Balochistan is over 5.27 million of which 2.96 million are male and 2.31 million are female. The number of registered voters in K-P is over 21.62 million of which 11.79 million are male while 9.82 million are female.

In Punjab, the largest province of the country population-wise, the number of registered voters is 71.60 million, of which 38.41 million are men and 33.19 million are women.

Similarly, the number of registered voters in Sindh is 26.52 million, of which 14.38 million are male and 12.14 million are female.

FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan addressing to a public gathering.

PM AJK says: European Union resolution criticizes human rights violations in India

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Monday said that the resolution of the European Parliament condemning the violations of human rights and persecution of religious minorities in India has left Modi and his party exposed at the international level.

"India has always tried to hoodwink the world through its policy of deceit and deception", the PM said in a statement.

"The ruthless persecution of minorities in India was an eye-opener for the world", PM emphatically said.

While welcoming the European Parliament for condemning human rights violations in India, the AJK premier demanded the European countries link trade with India to the improvement of the human rights situation in the country.

He said that "India was an extremist state where religious minorities have been deprived of their basic human rights".

The AJK premier, while referring to continued bloodshed and violence in the Indian-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir, said that India had been involved in massive human rights violations in the region.

He said that the Kashmiri people have been the worst victims of India's fascism for the past several decades. He, however, maintained that after August 5, 2019, India has turned the occupied territory into a military garrison, where people live in a state of perpetual fear and anxiety. Terming India's 5th August action as a violation of the UNSC resolutions, the PM said that after stripping the region of its special status.



ISLAMABAD: A trilateral Working Group Meeting of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) on Railways Project held at Ministry of Railways

Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan finalize inter-regional railway track

ISLAMABAD (APP): The route of the trilateral railway track Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) project has been finalized and its joint protocol will be signed tomorrow.

The route was finalized during a high-level meeting between the officials of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

The key objective of the UAP project was to build a missing rail link by

connecting Uzbekistan railways with Pakistan railways via Termez- Mazar e Sharif-Logar- Kharlachi route, said a press release.

The UAP railway project would not only facilitate the regional, transit and bilateral trade amongst the participating countries but also provide better people-to-people connections to the entire region.

The line would support both passenger and freight services and would

contribute in regional trade and economic growth. The parties also agreed on a roadmap for conducting technical studies, financing sources and other key aspects for early implementation of the project.

The parties appreciated the professional work of the experts of the three railways in achieving consensus on the final route and its implementation modalities.

Mariyum Aurangzeb says

Masses bearing brunt of economic destruction brought by 'project Imran'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the devastation caused by the four-year misrule of the inefficient and incompetent rulers.

The PTI chief's 44-month reign was a period of economic destruction, inflation, theft, loot and plunder, she added.

His government signed the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on tough conditions, first violated it and then suspended, pushing the country to the brink of default.

The PTI chairman had, in fact, crossed all limits to harm national interests as he and his cronies wanted the country to default like Sri Lanka, she added.

The petrol price was, she said, reduced by the PTI chief in 2022 in violation of the IMF programme and it was done intentionally to get petty political mileage.

The minister recalled that when the present gov-

ernment came to power as a result of the first ever successful no-confidence motion in country's history against the former prime minister, the economy was completely in ruins with jobless youth and unprec-

edented inflation.

There was acute shortage of energy and there was hardly any fund to purchase petroleum products and liquefied natural gas (LNG), she added.

"When we came to power, the country was close to default, on the contrary when they (PTI) were brought in the government in 2018, it was developing

at a growth rate of over 6.2 per cent."

The minister said when the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government ended its tenure in 2018 with surplus electricity, but, ironically,

present coalition government, she said sugar was not only expensive but also out of stock, and similarly flour and electricity were also not available in the market despite not being expensive.

Elderly women used to stand in long queues to buy a kilo of sugar during the PTI government, she recalled.

The minister said during Covid-19, the price of LNG had fallen to as low as \$3, but that historical opportunity to buy cheap LNG was missed. The country was left at the mercy of gas and flour mafia during the PTI regime. She said the current government not only saved the country from default in its 14-month tenure, but also put the derailed economy back on track.

Mariyum said that for the first time, the IMF programme was successfully completed in 2016 during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif.

Comparing first 14 months of the PTI regime with the same period of the

PTI leaders used to mock the party for producing surplus energy.

Mariyum said the PTI rulers destroyed every sector, including the foreign policy during their 44 months tenure and incumbent government faced great difficulties.

Comparing first 14 months of the PTI regime with the same period of the



Mariyum Aurangzeb speaking at a press conference.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Power price hike

Pakistan's business community is dismayed over yet another increase of Rs4.94 per unit in electricity prices. The new hike pushes the base unit power tariff from Rs24.82 to Rs29.78. Businesses are worried that the fresh hike will adversely hit their competitiveness by spiking their costs, making them a lot more expensive both for domestic consumers and foreign buyers. With the economy reeling because of the balance-of-payments crisis, high energy prices and soaring inflation, several industries have shut down or slashed production to reduce costs.

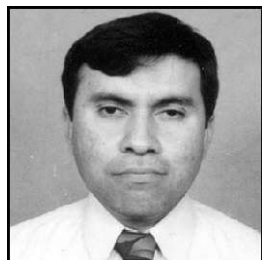
The expected recovery in manufacturing after the IMF-mandated tariff increase may remain elusive at least in the near term. It is a dilemma for the government. On the one hand, it has to meet the conditions of the new, short-term \$3bn IMF programme needed to avert default and improve Pakistan's debt repayment capacity over the next several months. On the other, it is under tremendous pressure to revive industrial activity for economic growth and job creation.

The Stand-by Arrangement stipulation to produce a primary budget surplus of 0.4pc this financial year has restricted fiscal space as well as the government's ability to continue financing massive power tariff price losses beyond a specific threshold to prevent power sector debt from increasing more rapidly than it already is. Indeed, the business community has a point when it holds successive governments' failure to execute long-standing politically unpopular and tough structural reforms responsible for Pakistan's economic predicament. For example, we have increased power tariffs multiple times over the last several years but still cannot contain the growth in circular debt. It is because no government has had the political will to fix the distribution losses, recover bills from powerful defaulters and control theft.

Businesses are spot on when they emphasise that we seem content with managing the symptoms rather than addressing the causes of the ailment. The increase in power tariffs will not only hurt businesses but also every citizen as electricity becomes more unaffordable and the hike unleashes a new round of inflation.

The question is, what other options did the government have? Many. For starters, it could have designed a framework to fix the deep-rooted energy sector to cut losses, taxed undertaxed sectors — real estate, retail and agriculture — to bridge the fiscal gap, and launched a credible privatisation plan to offload loss-making public sector businesses like PIA to reduce pressure on the budget. But it didn't. That shows the weak resolve of our politicians and policymakers to stick to reforms. No wonder the IMF Board has communicated its concerns over Pakistan's poor track record in fulfilling its commitments to the Fund, and advised the authorities to complete the new programme. As the lender has warned, this is Islamabad's last chance to improve its poor track record on reforms.

Ranking Karachi



Dr. Noman Ahmed

The Economist Intelligence Unit's rating of Karachi as one of the world's least livable cities is not surprising. Five categories were reviewed to arrive at this conclusion: stability, healthcare, education, culture and environment, and infrastructure. Karachi's ranking was an abysmal 169th out of a total of 173 cities.

Karachi may be Pakistan's largest city, but it has an uneasy existence in this context. It comprises a third of the total population of Sindh. The bulk of monetary resources and revenues originate in Karachi. In order to benefit economically, successive rulers have worked out controversial administrative arrangements to deprive Karachi of self-governing options.

After the 18th Amendment in 2010, Sindh's chief minister and cabinet have acted like the mayor, deciding on almost every development and management prerogative — from garbage collection to running public transport. City inhabitants have hardly any say in decision-making that is pertinent to their daily lives.

Karachi's political affairs are complex. It may appear that it is political groups and parties and the military and civilian establishment that call the shots. In reality, there are many more godfathers. Formal and informal developers ensure that whatever they need to keep their businesses going is made available without interruption. So we see unabated land supply for investment, albeit at the cost of farmlands, or-

chards and dwellings as indigenous settlements are uprooted and people evicted from planned localities and katchi abadis.

While a few thousand investors accrue exponential profits, millions of people see their lives altered for the worse. Realtors are ably assisted by the city administration, professional engineers, architects, contractors and service providers. Utility agencies bend the rules to extend their services to their schemes.

People in central city neighbourhoods are affected by erratic water supply while some of the remote real estate developments along the M-9 Motorway have no problem in receiving piped water supply.

In public transport, the old-fashioned transporters who ran buses and minibuses are now being replaced by trading enterprises that procure expensive buses and hardware for visibility on the city streets.

Officialdom claims that the bus rapid transit system will revolutionise city mobility, but the reality is otherwise. Even if all seven BRT lines were operational, they would cater to only nine per cent of total passenger trips at a hefty cost of over Rs170 billion.

In fact, BRT benefits large consulting firms, civil and other contractors, suppliers, service providers, etc. Ordinary citizens, especially along University Road and allied locations, are braving the inconvenience caused due to work on the BRT, which will significantly reduce active road space for all manner of vehicles.

Given that thousands of motorcycles and cars are registered every day and carry millions of commuters, how can one justify the exclusive right of way for BRTs ferrying a few thousand? Karachi's roads are in a state of disrepair, with vehicles and passengers facing huge

problems. Commuters frequently display road rage, frustration and helplessness.

Karachi has an 'elected' mayor, town council chairmen, union committee chairmen, councillors and other elected representatives who must operate under a legal regime that empowers them. If they are lucky, some funds will be granted to them to operate. These funds are expected to foot essential expenditure.

For management, repair and rehabilitation work, the local government entities will have to approach the provincial government. A familiar tug of war will begin between various tiers of government.

It is, however, possible that elected local entities take a different approach and change the situation to their as well as the city's advantage. Using the status of their elected office, councillors and UC chairs may consider reaching out to their respective constituents, listening to their problems, and engaging with them. These elected representatives can also liaise with civil society activists, public-spirited professionals, business and commerce leadership and academia to evolve a platform where core city matters can be debated.

To improve Karachi's livability, the administration, political elite and business leadership would have to evolve a consensus on core matters.

Defining the metropolitan boundaries of the city, regulating the built environment, documenting and safeguarding heritage, repairing roads, engaging with communities for maintaining law and order, with the assistance of the agencies concerned, and improving water and air quality by controlling pollution can become the starting agenda for this broad-based conversation. — Courtesy Dawn

White noise



Zarrar Khuro

Security at the White House tends to take its job pretty seriously, and so when a packet containing an unknown white powder was found somewhere in the White House, it was cause for serious alarm and led to a temporary evacuation. Could this be anthrax or some other biological agent? Had Putin finally had enough of the US arming Ukraine to the teeth and decided to poison Biden? After much scrambling and testing it turned out that the said white powder was in fact cocaine.

We don't know whose cocaine this was, as despite having round-the-clock surveillance and sweeping CCTV coverage (not the kind we have in our safe city projects) and DNA and fingerprint testing of the packet itself, Secret Service was unable to determine who had left the cocaine, which was reportedly found in a cubbyhole in the visitors' section which is usually frequented by tour groups.

Naturally, former US president Donald Trump wasted no time in declaring that it was 'obvious' that the drugs belonged to Joe Biden and/or his son Hunter Biden, both of whom are the former president's favourite targets.

Even if that were to be true it really wouldn't be all that unbelievable; a few years back the bathrooms in the UK Houses of Parliament were swabbed for cocaine and it turned out that cocaine had been snorted off the basins and toilet tops of 11 out of 12 bathrooms

tested in the parliamentary estate. These weren't publicly accessible bathrooms, and many of these could only be accessed if you had a designated parliamentary pass. As per Britain's Sunday Times, cocaine was also found "close to rooms used by the opposition Labour Party, as well as a sedate dining room in the House of Lords".

One bathroom that tested positive for cocaine was also rather close to then-prime minister Boris Johnson's office, which goes a long way in explaining the former British PM's antics, policies and hair. In any case, it does show you that lawmakers are also people, and given that in 2015 London sewers were found to contain the highest concentration of cocaine in all of Europe, the possibility of the members of the Houses of Parliament being coked out of their minds only shows how deeply in touch UK's parliamentarians are with the people they govern.

Buckingham Palace has also seen some cocaine use, though this isn't really linked to the royals but to legendary British actor Stephen Fry who, while admitting to a 15-year addiction, confessed to having snorted cocaine in the palace, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, Windsor Castle, Clarence House, Sandringham House, the BBC Television Centre and just about anywhere else he had been.

Politicians and heads of state doing drugs isn't anything new, but the absolute poster child for this sort of thing is none other than Toronto's former mayor Rob Ford. Rumours about his out-of-control drug habit had been doing the rounds for some time and some reporters were approached by an individual who offered to sell them a video of Ford smoking crack cocaine, with media outlet Gawker even setting up

a fund they named 'crackstarter' to raise money to buy the video. While Ford, already known for his drunken antics, originally denied the claim, the video of him smoking crack while discussing politics was soon made public, along with a photo of him posing with known gang members, one of whom was later shot dead on a Toronto street. Later, it emerged that the video was recorded and put on sale by none other than his smoking buddies, which just goes to prove that you really can't trust anyone.

When confronted by reporters about his lies and evasions, Ford re-plied that he had smoked crack "probably in one of my drunken stupors". And that he hadn't admitted to it under questioning because reporters had not asked the "correct questions". The usual round of apologies, promises and rehabilitation followed but Ford's antics continued, with more and more accounts and videos of his intoxicated behaviour emerging. Ford passed away at the age of 46 in 2016. Another politician who was partial to crack cocaine was former Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry. In 1990, Barry, who had been elected mayor thrice, was arrested for possession of crack after a sting operation by the FBI and local police; a video was recorded of him smoking the drug with a woman who had set him up in exchange for a reduction in her own previous drug-related sentence. Claiming to have overcome his "personal adversities" after serving six months in prison, Barry re-entered politics and was elected mayor for an unprecedented fourth time, perhaps proving that voters respond well to an honest admission of human failures and also, that people love a good redemption story. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Mishal, Organic Pak sign MOU to work on agro economy, climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Organic Pakistan and Mishal Pakistan on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), decided to work together to address critical issues related to agro-economy, climate change, and food security.

The collaboration of organizations will involve the exchange of updated and timely data, media training, capacity-building workshops, and the creation of knowledge resources to foster public discourse and develop key opinion-makers, said a press release issued here.

Organic Pakistan, a pioneering organization dedicated to promoting

organic agriculture and sustainable practices, and Mishal Pakistan, a leading institution in the development sector specializing in research and communication strategies, are thrilled to announce a collaborative partnership aimed at revolutionizing the agriculture landscape in Pakistan and enhancing the country's international rankings.

The MOU sets the framework for joint initiatives, including the development of key opinion-makers, advocacy campaigns, and the sharing of resources and expertise.

Both organizations are committed to creating knowledge resources through seminars,

interactive workshops, and thematic reports to promote public awareness and understanding of sustainable agriculture practices and related subjects.

As the Country Partner Institute of the New Economy and Societies Platform, World Economic Forum, Mishal Pakistan plays a pivotal role in measuring and improving Pakistan's global rankings on various indicators. The collaboration between Mishal Pakistan and Organic Pakistan will support the World Economic Forum's initiatives by providing essential data and narratives related to sustainable agriculture, urban farming, and other crucial areas.

Banking Mohtasib designate calls on finance minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Banking Mohtasib/Ombudsman (Designate), Sirajuddin Aziz called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here Monday.

The minister greeted the guest and extended his best wishes to him, according to a statement issued by the finance ministry.

PSX loses 25 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday lost 25.37 points, a negative change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 45,042.61 points against 45,067.98 points the previous trading day. A total of 314,785,498 shares were traded during the day as compared to 267,514,280 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.770 billion against Rs 6.783 billion on the last trading day.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz, Banking Mohtasib/Ombudsman (Designate) called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.

Domestic edible oil, ghee output grew by 12.75% and 10.44% in 11 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Domestic production of cooking oil, and vegetable ghee during the 11 months of the financial year that ended on June 30, 2023, increased by 12.57 per cent and 10.44 per cent respectively as compared to the output of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-May, 2022-23 about 513,206 metric tons of edible oil were produced locally in order to fulfil the

domestic requirements as compared to the manufacturing of 455,884 metric tons of same period last year.

Meanwhile, during the period under review, about 1.421 million tons of vegetable ghee were locally manufactured as against the production of 1.286 million tons in the same period last year, which was up by 10.44 per cent, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

AEDB formally merged with PPIB

ISLAMABAD (APP): Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) has formally merged with Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB).

Upon promulgation of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (Amendment) Act, 2023 notified through the Gazette of Pakistan, Extraordinary, Part-I, as one entity on behalf of the Government of Pakistan," it further said. Managing Director PPIB Shah Jahan Mirza said that the whole team is excited to take fresh responsibility as a challenge for achieving new horizons of excellence and fully poised to harness the indigenous.

Gold rates increase Rs.1,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,600 and was sold at Rs 214,800 on Monday against its sale at Rs 213,200 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,371 to Rs 184,156 from Rs 182,785 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 168,810 from Rs 167,553, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

SMEDA to organize webinar on July 19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is going to organize a webinar on "How to sell on Daraz" for profitable business growth on July 19 (Wednesday).

The session is being offered by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to a source in the authority.

The programme will provide opportunities to the SMEs on high trending and most demanding e-commerce tools and platforms.

Pakistan' trade with Korea flourishes as exports doubled: Sung Jae Kim

KARACHI (APP): The bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea witnessed a significant boost with Pakistan's exports to Korea doubling to reach \$306 million in the previous year.

It was stated by Director General of Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) in Karachi, Sung Jae Kim, during his visit to the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), said a statement issued here on Monday.

Kim highlighted growing trade relations between the two countries and emphasized the need for further bolstering cooperation as well as technology transfer from

Korea to Pakistan. He noted that promising growth in trade and investment between Pakistan and Korea bodes well for strengthening bilateral relations and fostering economic growth in both nations.

Kim mentioned that Korean companies were working in Pakistan in fish food processing and chemical sectors while YouTubers from Korea were showcasing the beauty of Pakistan to the world.

He said that over 10 thousand Pakistanis were residing in Korea while there were opportunities of investment in Fisheries and Textile sectors in Korea available to Pakistanis.



KARACHI: Women and children selecting and purchasing old toys at a roadside stall in Empress Market.

Zong 4G celebrates 15 years of pioneering excellence in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecom giant, marks a momentous milestone as it celebrates 15 years of unwavering excellence in the country's digital landscape.

Guided by the motto "Let's Get Digital," Zong 4G has revolutionized the nation's connectivity through its widest 4G network and cutting-edge technology, leaving an indelible mark on Pakistan's technological future.

Over a decade and a half, Zong 4G has been at the forefront of technological advancement, pioneering the introduction of 3G and 4G networks and successfully testing 5G. The company's commitment to technological progress has transformed the way Pakistan connects and communicates, propelling the nation's digital revolution. Investing significantly in expanding its network infrastructure, Zong 4G has erected over 14,000 towers nationwide, extending its services to even the remotest corners of the country.



RAWALPINDI: A laborer cutting woods at Chakbeli Road.

Proposed Energy National Action Plan can help save \$ 6.4 bln annually: MD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Underscoring the need for energy conservation in the country, Managing Director of National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) Dr Sardar Mohazzam on Monday said that the proposed Energy National Action Plan (ENAP) could help save \$ 6.4 billion annually.

Out of total annual imports of \$ 80-82 billion, the share of energy stood at around \$ 27 billion and the Energy National Action Plan could reduce it by \$ 6.4 billion, he added.

The NEECA managing director was briefing media persons about key initiatives including National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) Dr Sardar Mohazzam on Monday said that the proposed Energy National Action Plan (ENAP) could help save \$ 6.4 billion annually. He said the NEECA Policy 2023 was approved in May this year, while the NEECA Board had also given its consent to the revision of Energy.

Punjab Governor says:

Govt determined to completely eradicate polio from the country

Independent Report
LAHORE: Dr. Christopher Elias, Head of Polio Oversight Board delegation called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today at Governor House Lahore. Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan, representatives of UNICEF and World Health Organization were also present. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the government of Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is determined to completely eradicate polio from the country. He said that the efforts of caretaker chief minister Punjab,

Mohsin Naqvi and the team of health department to eradicate polio in Punjab province are commendable. Governor Punjab said that the polio workers who are working on the front line to eradicate the polio virus, including a large number of women, have rendered commendable services for the prevention of polio. He said that he is grateful to all global partners including Gates Foundation, UNICEF, World Health Organization and Rotary International for helping to eradicate polio. Governor Punjab said that eradication of polio is indispensable to give a healthy and safe future to our new generation. He said that the government is taking all possible



LAHORE: Dr. Christopher Elias, Head of Polio Oversight Board delegation in a group photo with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Punjab govt following zero tolerance policy to ensure peace during Muharram

MULTAN (APP): The Punjab government has a zero-tolerance policy to ensure exemplary peace on the occasion of Muharram-ul-Haram. Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has formed a special cabinet committee for monitoring the law and order situation. Provincial Minister of Higher Education Mansoor Qadir said this while presiding over the review meeting of Muharram arrangements in South

Punjab. He said that the Punjab government wants the cooperation of scholars of all schools of thought for peace. The district administration has assigned full powers for peace. He expressed satisfaction over all arrangements made to maintain peace during Muharram in South Punjab. The minister while appreciating the mutual cooperation of the district administration and police, said that the issues could

be resolved easily with the best coordination.

Provincial Minister for Health, Dr Javed Akram said that Muharram teaches us tolerance, patience and brotherhood. The government has united ulema of all schools of thought on one platform by promoting inter-faith harmony and all of them assured their cooperation.

Provincial Minister for Information, Aamir Mir, said that we all have to play a key role.



RAWALPINDI: View of badly damaged vehicles struck by an out of control Dumper Truck near Lahore High Court Bench at Swan area in the outskirts of the city.

Mother dies, 3 people injure in a car, m/c collision

MANAWALA (Online): A mother died and 3 people including daughter and son were severely injured as a result of collision between motorcycle and car on Manawala Nankana Road. A high speed bus went out of control and collided with a truck in Nankana Motorway M3 near Colony Canal. A person died while 11 people were severely injured.

As incident was reported, rescue teams 1122 reached the scene and shifted the injured to hospital. The deceased was identified as 22 years old woman Rafiya Bibi.

2 years old girl Asifa and 4 years old son Zaigham and brother Wikran are included among the injured. The deceased in Bus accident was identified as 51 years old Mohammad Safder. 35 years old Abuzar Ghuffari, 25 years old Ramzan, 25 years old Shehbaz, 18 years old Shahzaib, 23 years old Mohammad Asif and other are included among the injured.

UoP's Department of Journalism plays key role in KP's uplift: Feroze

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister of Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Monday said that the Department of Journalism, University of Peshawar has played key role in the development of the province.

He expressed these views on the occasion of his visit to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of Peshawar here. Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar, Dr Muhammad Idris, Chairman Journalism Department Dr. Faizullah Jan, Assistant Professor

Two policemen injured during exchange of fire in Katcha area

DG KHAN (APP): Two constables and an outlaw here on Monday got injured during exchange of fire between the accused and police in the Katcha area.

Other unidentified accused succeeded to escape the scene by crossing the river, the police said.

The police on tip-off condoned off the area to arrest the criminals.

The exchange of fire continued for at least an hour, the police said. The injured policemen Constables Mushtaq and Qazi Shahbaz were immediately shifted to the hospital. The District Police Officer (DPO) Muzaffargarh termed the incident as a 'routine matter'.

Naqvi expresses satisfaction over healthcare facilities being provided at RIC

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Monday expressed satisfaction with the medical facilities being provided at Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC).

During his visit, the CM in detail inspected the hospital's emergency, CT scan, X-ray room, Fluoroscopic, and other departments of the institute. He directed the RIC administration to open the VIP ward for the general public and ensure the availability of medicines at the institute. The CM interacted

with the admitted patients and inquired about Angiography and Angioplasty treatment and other facilities being provided to them.

The patients uttered pleasure over the treatment facilities at the RIC.

On a Twitter handle, he said that state-of-the-art heart treatment facilities were provided to the patients at the RIC.

During my recent visit to the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, I was impressed by how effectively the management and doctors handled the large influx of patients.



MOHENJO DARO: Classical Dancer, Sheema Kirmani along with her team are visiting and expressed keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro

WWF President urges action on climate change

LAHORE (Online): Climate change is no longer a future issue, we are experiencing it right now, said Adil Najam, President of WWF International, who is also a globally recognized academic and policy expert.

He was addressing an invited talk on "Now or Never: The Urgent Need to Take Climate Action for a Sustainable Future" at GC University Lahore. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Asghar Zaidi was also present.

Adil Najam stated that it is high time we face

the realities of climate change and take bold, immediate actions to protect our only home, planet Earth. He also emphasized that humans, as a species, are very good at adaptation, and we should look at the climate change not only as a problem but also as an opportunity.

He mentioned that while we may think globally about climate change, we need to act locally and see this as our individual responsibilities. He also raised his voice against the increasing use of plastic in human lives.

International News

Xi tells ex-Philippine president Duterte to promote ties with China

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping told former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to continue to promote cooperation between the two countries, after bilateral relations cooled with Duterte's successor seeking closer ties with Washington.

Ferdinand Marco Jr was elected as president for a six-year term in 2022, taking over from Duterte who had adopted a more pro-China stance. "I hope you will continue to play an important role in the friendly cooperation between China and the Phil-

ippines," state media cited Xi as saying during a meeting at the Diaoyutai state guest-house in Beijing on Monday.

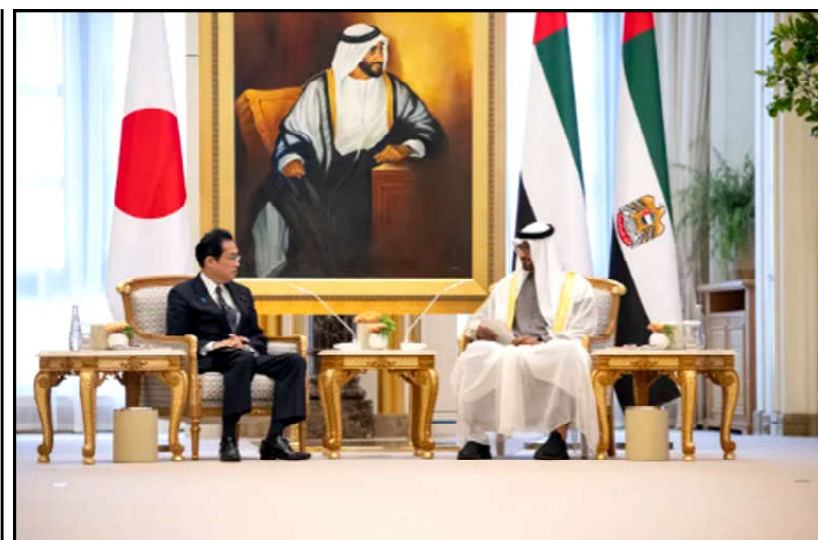
Under Marcos, relations between China and the Philippines have grown tense, with Manila pivoting back to its traditional ally, the United States.

The Philippines and the U.S. reaffirmed a decades-old security alliance during a trip by Marcos to the U.S. in May, where he met with President Joe Biden, who said the U.S. commitment to defending its ally was "ironclad".

Washington has pledged to defend the Philippines, which allowed the U.S. access to four additional military bases this year, angering Beijing.

Marcos also said granting U.S. access to the bases was a defensive step that would be "useful" if China attacked democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory.

China has always insisted on being friendly with its neighbours, which it sees as its partners, Xi said, without commenting on the state of current bilateral ties.



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan meet at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Exclusive-USAID chief to announce over \$500 million in aid in visit to Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. aid chief Samantha Power is set to announce more than \$500 million in humanitarian assistance for Ukraine on Monday during a visit to the war-torn country, where the United Nations says some 17 million people need help following Russia's invasion.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Power in Kyiv will announce the assistance to respond to the needs of Ukrainians affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to an announcement shared in advance with Reuters.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides have been killed and millions have fled their homes since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, triggering Europe's

biggest land war since World War Two.

The aid, which will be provided through the United Nations and other non-governmental organization partners, will increase support for those who have been displaced or otherwise affected by the war with emergency food assistance, health care and safe drinking water, among other assistance, according to the announcement.

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy said the aid would be a "lifeline" for Ukrainians. He said the aid would help Ukrainians cope with the humanitarian crisis caused by the war.

USAID Administrator Power said the aid would be a "lifeline" for Ukrainians. She said the aid would help Ukrainians cope with the humanitarian crisis caused by the war.

Japan's prime minister visits the UAE as part of a Gulf trip focused on energy and commerce

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the United Arab Emirates on Monday as part of a swing through the Arab Gulf states focused on energy and commerce.

He met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president of the UAE, which will be hosting the COP28 U.N. climate summit later this year.

A joint statement said they were committed to "enhancing cooperation on climate ambition, decarbonization, and clean energy."

Kishida visited Saudi Arabia over the weekend, where he met with Crown

Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The two launched a joint initiative aimed at promoting clean energy. He will visit gas-rich Qatar on Tuesday.

Japan is the fifth-largest oil consumer in the world and relies on imports to meet around 97% of its demand. It imports more than 75% of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Japan and the UAE have pledged to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and Saudi Arabia aims to do so by 2060. It's unclear how the two Gulf nations — which rely on massive oil exports — will reach those goals.



Rescuers search through the rubble of a collapsed five-story apartment building in Cairo, Egypt.

A 5-story apartment building collapses in Cairo and kills at least 9 people

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: A five-story apartment building collapsed Monday in the Egyptian capital of Cairo, leaving at least nine people dead, authorities said, as rescuers searched through the rubble.

Building collapses are common in Egypt, where shoddy construction and a lack of maintenance are widespread in shantytowns, poor city neighborhoods and rural areas. The state-run MENA news agency reported that rescue teams recovered at least nine bodies from under the

rubble of the building in Cairo's neighborhood of Hadaeq el-Qubbah, roughly 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from the city's center.

Four survivors were also taken to a hospital and authorities evacuated a neighboring apartment building, MENA said.

Following an initial inspection, Cairo's deputy governor, Hossam Fawzi, said the collapse was caused by one of the ground floor residents who removed a number of walls during earlier maintenance work. The man has been detained and will be investigated, he said.

China's economy misses growth forecasts

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: China's economic growth missed forecasts in the second quarter of the year, adding to worries over surging youth unemployment and a weak property sector and raising the likelihood the government will double down on support for the faltering post COVID-19 recovery.

The world's second largest economy grew at a 6.3% annual pace in the April-June quarter, much slower than the 7% plus growth analysts had forecast given the anemic pace of activity the year before.

Unemployment of youths aged 16 to 24 rose to a record 21.3% in June, up from 20.8% the month before. Investment in property development, a vital driver of both industrial and consumer demand, sank 7.9% in the first half of the year compared to a year earlier in a troubling sign of persisting weakness in an industry that slowed even before the pandemic as the government moved to rein in excessive borrowing.

Erdogan says he believes Putin wants continuation of grain deal

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that he believed Russian President Vladimir Putin wants the continuation of a deal allowing the export of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, after Moscow suspended its participation.

Erdogan added that he hoped for progress on the issue after Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov talk on Monday. The grain deal, brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last

July, aimed to alleviate a global food crisis by allowing Ukrainian grain blocked by the Russia-Ukraine conflict to be exported safely.

Russia suspended its participation in the deal on Monday, the Kremlin said, adding that the part of the agreement concerning Russia had not been implemented.

"Despite the statement made today, I believe Russian President Putin wants the continuation of this humanitarian bridge," Erdogan said, adding that the two men would speak on Erdogan's return from his trip to Gulf countries on Wednesday.

US special envoy Kerry holds talks in China aimed at reviving climate diplomacy

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: US climate envoy John Kerry held four hours of talks with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing on Monday, reviving stalled diplomacy on reducing planet-warming emissions.

Climate talks between the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters came to a halt last year after Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, enraged Beijing by visiting self-ruled Taiwan, which China considers to be part of its territory.



South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol (C) visits a village, where more than a third of houses were damaged in landslides and two people remain missing, in Yecheon.

EU may update climate pledge to show faster progress on CO2 goals

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: European Union countries are debating whether to update their climate pledge ahead of this year's COP28 summit, to show they expect to exceed their current goal for CO2 emission cuts, a draft document showed.

The 27-country EU has one of the most ambitious climate targets among major economies - having agreed in law to cut its net greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels. A draft document, seen by Reuters, said EU countries may notify the United Nations that they can reach a 57% emissions cut. The text was in brackets, indicating it is not yet

agreed by all countries. The overshoot would only happen if countries comply with recently-passed EU policies to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change.

They include obligations to expand renewable energy, and higher fees for companies that pollute. An updated pledge from Europe - the world's fourth-biggest emitter after China, the United States and India - could increase the pressure on other countries to improve their green goals ahead of this year's United Nations climate summit in November.

Pakistan put on road to progress again: Ahsan Iqbal

Says Shehbaz-led government saved country from default

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has said, "Today we have put Pakistan back in its place", as Pak Rupee is gaining strength, stock exchange is improving and country's economy is stabilising.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Nisar Fatima Auditorium, Jamia Masjid and Innovation Centre at the UET Narowal Campus on Monday, he said that on July 14, China made investment of \$3.5 billion in Chashma nuclear power plant, and bil-

ions of dollars more investment would come to the country in the coming weeks. He hoped that people would make a right decision in the next general election, and then Pakistan would be put on the road to development again.

Ahsan Iqbal said the UET Narowal was making a place for itself among the best universities of the world. Students would play a proactive role in the country's development after getting education from this university. He said that in the year 2009, he dreamed of setting up

an engineering university campus, which had been fulfilled today.

He said the government wanted the youth to excel in all spheres of education and that was why it was giving the brilliant students laptops. He said the UET Campus Narowal Innovation Centre had Rs1 billion, which would be spent on research and higher education of students.

Meanwhile Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that working day and night under

the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the incumbent government saved the country from default and revived the development projects, which were stopped by the previous government.

Addressing a public gathering after laying the foundation-stone of Sialkot Cantt to Jassar Cantt Road at Phalora on late Sunday night, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had always accomplished development projects and tried its best to place the country in the list of developed countries.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman WAPDA, Lt. Gen. (R) Sajjad Ghani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



NAROWAL: Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Federal Minister for Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives unveiling the plaque to inaugurate Nisar Fatima Auditorium and Jamia Masjid UET.

Chairs security meeting Citizens' safety our foremost priority: CPO/DIG Operations

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: A high level meeting was held to review the security arrangements made by Islamabad capital police to shield Muharram ul Haram processions in the capital, a Police Public Relation officer said.

According to the details, a security meeting was held to review security arrangements for "Muharram ul Haram" and establish an atmosphere of communal harmony during Muharram and to make the fool-proof security of the Majalis and processions. The meeting was chaired by CPO/ DIG Operations, while SSP (Operations), AIG Special Branch, Zonal DPOs, DSP Security, Chairman, members of peace committee and organizers participated.

On this occasion, CPO/ DIG (Operations) Islamabad Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari issued instructions to further improve the security arrangements and said that no lapse in security matters will be tolerated.

He said that cooperation of organizers should be ensured with police and law enforcing officials. He directed to maintain high vigilance of processions through safe city cameras, surveillance cameras and drone cameras.



He said during the majlis, there should be proper closure of lights, under-construction buildings and sewage should be cleaned together with the relevant authorities so that nothing remains hidden.

He requested the peace committee members and organizers of the majlis that processions would pass through the fixed routes and timings of processions to be observed strictly. He also directed for effective patrolling and use of commando vehicles for patrolling purposes.

CPO/ DIG Operations said that, bomb disposal squad would conduct checking of routes through robots and modern technology while entry of participants in the procession would be ensured after complete checking.

He further directed the police officials that maintain the atmosphere of peace and order during Muharram al-Haram, and perform the duties with honesty and passion.

SAPM for urgent collective action to combat climate change

ISLAMABAD (INP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) and Convener of the National Parliamentary Taskforce on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday called for urgent collective action to combat climate change to save the planet earth and future generations.

She said, "Pakistan is one of the worst hit countries by the climate induced catastrophes but despite resources constraint, the country remains firm in its commitment to accomplish all SDGs to save planet earth and to provide a secure and safe environment for future generations."

She made these remarks while representing Pakistan in the 'Fourth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', in New York, a news release said.

In her remarks, the Convener emphasized the importance of collective action in combating climate change. She drew attention to the Resolution passed unanimously by the National Assembly on June 23, 2023, which while appreciating the contributions of the United Nations and its agencies in supporting Pakistan's fight against climate change called for climate justice and provision of adequate resources to combat climate induced challenges.

She urged conference participants to leverage their collective experiences and expertise to establish a consortium focused on disaster risk reduction strategies for the Asia-Pacific region.

Besides the conference, the Convener will also present Pakistan's case at other prestigious forums arranged at the United Nations. She intends to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the SDGs at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development by highlighting the government's policies focused on education, poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth including the Prime Minister's Youth Programme.

She expressed these views while addressing a day-long seminar titled "The role of geosciences in the mining industry" organized by the Varsity here.

The director asserted that illegal mining in Pakistan has caused significant environmental degradation and imbalances, affecting natural resources, including minerals like coal, copper, gold, and precious stones.

He further pointed out that the adverse effects of illegal mining include deforestation, water pollution, land degradation, air pollution, disruption of wildlife and ecosystems, and social implications.

Kaira stresses electoral reforms with consultation of all political parties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira Monday stressed for legislative election reforms soon after completing a comprehensive consultations with all political parties as any democratic system, without the sanctity of a ballot box could not deliver.

"It is a symbol of a vibrant democracy to move forward only after consultations and discussions", he said while talking to a Private news channel.

Replying a question, he said a politician should be appointed as caretaker

prime minister, adding, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has started consultations with allied parties on the selection of interim setup. He said that the prime minister would consult with the opposition leader after deliberations with coalition partners.

To another question, he replied that the government will hand over the reins to the interim rulers next month, before the completion of the assembly's tenure. To another question, he said the election reforms could be completed in a few days and that the election commission had started.

Election on 2017 census unacceptable: MQM-P

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Monday came out strongly against the decision of the coalition government to hold elections on the basis of the old census.

Addressing a press conference, MQM-P Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui whose party is a stakeholder in the government said the population of Karachi is around 30 million, which was about 14.9 million in the 2017 census, and his party would not accept figures less than this.

The MQM-P leader vowed to resist the move after Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah announced that the government would not notify the recently concluded census as the results are not authentic and the Election Commission of Pakistan needs at least four months to complete the delimitation process. Under

laws, the census is done after every 10 years, but the last one becomes controversial, and it was decided to conduct a fresh exercise to address reservations and carry out a fresh delimitation process.

However, objections were raised to the enumeration by the Sindh government and MQM-P. Demanding to rectify the flaws in it, they refused to accept the results. MQM-P is a key coalition partner in the ruling alliance and had joined the government on certain conditions, including a transparent census.

Raising their reservations on the federal minister's statement, Siddiqui said that they had chosen the right path against injustices and tried in every situation to ensure peace in Karachi. "MQM-P is the representative party of the urban areas of Sindh, especially Karachi; the impression being spread by the



MULTAN: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman, Shah Mahmood Qureshi talking to media persons after court case hearing, at District Katchery in Multan.

Corruption case: IHC approves protective bail plea of Asad Qaisar

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has accepted protective bail plea of former speaker National Assembly (NA) Asad Qaisar for 10 days in corruption case registered in Swabi against him.

approving protective bail of 10 days in respect of Asad Qaisar wrapped up the petition.

The court has wrapped up petition. The protective bail plea came up before single bench of IHC led by Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri Monday.

Asad Qaisar appeared in the court along with his counsel.

Later talking to media men Asad Qaisar said "I am not in contact with Pervez Khattak since two months. He is from among my old friends. He has his own thinking. He will do what looks good to him."

After hearing the arguments the court ordered anti corruption not to arrest Asad Qaisar for 10 days besides directing former speaker NA to file surety bonds of Rs 50000.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri while

PM briefed about hydro electric projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday held a meeting with Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Lt General Sajjad Ghani and received briefing about the ongoing hydroelectric projects and the projects for producing energy at a lower cost.

During the meeting, he also briefed the PM about the pace of progress on all mega dam projects including Dasu, Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand dams.

He also apprised him about the effect of recent rains on the water reservoirs in the country.

LHC suspends order restricting transfer of land to Pak Army for farming

LAHORE (APP): A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench on Monday suspended a single bench order that struck down a decision of the interim government to hand over 45,000 acres of land in three districts of Punjab to the army on a 20-year lease.

The division bench, headed by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, passed the orders while hearing an intra-court appeal, filed by the Punjab government against the single bench decision. The court also issued notices to the respondents on the appeal and sought a reply.

The interim government, through the appeal, had pleaded with the court to set aside the single bench order. The government submitted that the project was initiated by the previous elected government and not by the interim government. As per law, the interim government was empowered to implement or finalise any pending decision and policy of the previous government, it added.

The government further contended that the court was not empowered to regulate agricultural policies. It submitted that the order of the single bench was not only in violation of the law but also had contradictions in it.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel inaugurating ground breaking ceremony of Cancer Hospital in PIMS.

Patel performs groundbreaking of National Cancer Hospital at PIMS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Monday inaugurated the 200-bed cancer hospital project at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

services for cancer patients.

Addressing the ceremony, the minister said that a large number of people living in surrounding areas and other cities will get direct benefits from this hospital with having all the necessary medical

He said that an amount of Rs one billion has been proposed initially to utilize for the construction of this modern hospital, where all concerned necessary services will be provided. He said that besides initiating new projects in major hospitals, the government has upgraded the basic health units and rural health centres where daily several hundred patients can visit for the treatment of various dis-

ease and added that more such modern centres will be established in the federal capital.

He said that the aim of the government was to provide all basic health services in every place and village so that citizens have all such services at their doorsteps. He said that the major hospitals of the federal capital have been facing a burden of patients and with the setting of new basic health centres, this burden will gradually decrease.

BISP conducts E-Katchehri to address beneficiaries' concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), held an E-Katchehri on Monday to engage with the programme's beneficiaries and resolve their complaints in real-time.

Qureshi says Shehbaz, Zardari sit-in ratified Dubai decisions

MULTAN (INP): Vice Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that the meeting of Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari in Model Town has ratified the decisions of Dubai.

The PTI vice chairman, taking a dig at the ruling alliance, said other parties of PDM would be invited at a lavish tea party. They would take other PDM parties into confidence over the decisions which had been taken already.

He said it was quite clear now that new caretaker prime minister would be affiliated to which party.

During the E-Katchehri, Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad listened to the issues being faced by the beneficiaries.

The E-Katchehri witnessed an overwhelming response from beneficiaries across the country.

Talking to media here, Qureshi said that everyone knew what was discussed in the meeting in Lahore. On the issue of dissolution of assemblies, caretaker setup, two major political parties held consultations and decisions were taken.

The Secretary BISP also held a follow up meeting after three hours to verify the resolution of the remaining complaints.

The PTI leader said, "Now they will take other

Traffic police directed for enhanced public services and convenience to citizens

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer on Monday conducted inspection of various departments at the traffic headquarters in Faizabad and directed for enhanced public services and convenience to citizens.

commitment of the Traffic Police to serve road users with professional competence. In line with the special instructions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, a particular focus was placed on digital driving licenses, the one-window hall, driving tests, and other relevant branches during a special checking at Traffic Headquarters, Faizabad.

During this inspection at the traffic headquarters in Faizabad, various citizen-oriented initiatives were evaluated across different departments. The performance of the traffic staff was commended, and measures to further improve their efficiency were directed.

He stressed the importance of courteous and polite interactions between officers and personnel of Islamabad Capital Police and citizens during duty, as the force is regarded as a model force across the country.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mohsin Aziz, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on interior presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.