

# Independent

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## Bilawal denies arms support to Ukraine Pakistan, Ukraine agree to expand cooperation in areas of mutual benefit



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Ukraine on Thursday agreed to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual benefit including trade, investment, agriculture, food security, defense cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts.

"In our meeting today, we agreed on the importance of regular dialogue and engagements to further strengthen the bilateral ties. We have also agreed to hold meetings of various institutional mechanisms in due course.

"We will continue to build on our conversation to add more substance to our relations," Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a joint press conference here

along with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. He said Pakistan also affected by this dispute and we are not providing any kind of arms to Ukraine.

"These kind of news are fake and misleading. He said building bilateral trade and economic ties was a priority area for Pakistan. The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said the both sides agreed to reinvigorate the bilateral mechanisms as both looked forward to holding the inaugural meeting of the Ukrainian and Pakistani Commission of the economic cooperation.

"Pointing to an important issue of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Dmytro Kuleba said during the meeting he briefed the minister about the Russian withdrawal from this initiatives.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressed the National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir attended the seminar as guest of honor.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir attended the seminar as guest of honor.

## Terrorists' attack at Bara foiled; two cops martyred, two attackers killed

President, PM and others condemn suicide blast in Bara

PESHAWAR (APP): The police here Thursday foiled a terrorist attack in Tehsil Bara by killing two suicide bombers in the encounter while two cops were martyred and six others got injured. The police spokesman, Muhammad Asim told APP that constables namely Tayyab and Noor Bahadar were martyred during the encounter with terrorists and six cops and two civilians received injuries. The injured constables are Jamil, Hadi, Bakht, Nawaz, Zubair and Gul Said. He said two civilians also sustained injuries.

He told the gathering of diplomats, IT experts, investors, entrepreneurs, professors and students that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would sit with them to discuss issues and find out solutions, and

## PM vows to boost IT exports to \$25b; assures all-out facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was required to boost its IT exports to \$25 billion and investment to \$20 billion within a span of two to three years, as the government had already devised a mechanism to ensure one-window operations to facilitate the investors.

"This is something doable. This is difficult but not impossible. We have to achieve this target under all circumstances through your support and expertise," the prime minister said addressing an information technology (IT) seminar and launching ceremony of multiple IT-related projects.

move forward like a corporate culture. He said Pakistan was rich with immense youth potential having modern skills, particularly IT, but the export figure hovering around \$2.5 billion did not justify it — owing to lack of support and archaic procedures. Citing the example of a neighbouring country that had excelled in the IT field and its exports, the prime minister said Pakistan was also positioned to claim its space.

He urged all the stakeholders to march with unity and do everything in their capacity to change history as "we have expertise and energy to do the wonder".

He said the government would act as a partner and catalyst to provide all kinds of support to the investors.

Mentioning the "wastage of energies" during the last four years of the previous government, the prime minister urged to move forward to change the landscape of history.

He said the government would extend all-out facilities to them through the SIFC as he himself chaired the Apex Committee meeting and Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir was also playing his full role.

He said the SIFC would focus on boosting investment in agriculture, IT, mining and defence production.

"This is seriously a one-window operation

## Quetta lawyer murder case: SC directs PTI Chairman to appear in person on July 24

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed chairman PTI to appear in person before it on July 24 in Quetta lawyer murder case.

The court while accepting plea of Prosecutor General (PG) Balochistan seeking time for filing reply adjourned the hearing of the case till next Monday.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Khan Afridi took up for hearing petition of chairman PTI Thursday.

During the hearing of the case, Justice Yahya Afridi inquired from Latif Khosa, counsel for chairman PTI has the petitioner to surrender before court by

appearing in person for seeking relief. Ask chairman PTI to appear before the court in person.

Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi inquired can chairman PTI appear today.

Counsel Latif Khosa said he will come to SC within an hour.

Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi remarked we say to chairman PTI to come today. Justice Yahya Afridi remarked it will be better that state counsel reply comes first in this case. Then Chairman PTI should appear. Aman Ullah Kanrani counsel for complainants told the court there is matter of appearing of chairman PTI before JIT.

## ECP announces to hold next elections on old delimitations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced to hold the next general elections on the old delimitations.

Talking to the media on Thursday, ECP Special Secretary Zafar Iqbal said that the elections would be held before October 11 if the assembly is dissolved on the completion of its tenure on August 12. "We are fully ready for the elections. We have purchased water mark paper. We are in contact with all institutions. We have approached the judiciary for the appointment of the DROs and ROs," he announced.

ECP Secretary Umar Hameed said that the commission had made arrangements to hold the elections on the old delimitations.

## IHC declares imposition of Super Tax as illegal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Accepting the petitions filed by various companies, the Islamabad High Court (IHC), while pronouncing a reserved verdict on Thursday, declared the imposition of billions of rupees of Super Tax illegal. The court also declared all the notices issued for the recovery of the tax null and void. Similarly, it also declared section four C of the Income Tax Ordinance illegal. In a detailed judgment, Justice Sardar Ishaq Khan also explained the court's objections to the section. Salman Akram Raja and Adnan Haider Randhawa represented the petitioners in the case.

## Govt drops bombshell of electricity

ISLAMABAD (Online): Once again shock of expensive electricity has been given to inflation stricken people by increasing electricity rates.

The price of electricity has been increased by Rs 1.90 per unit.

NEPRA has issued the approval notification under the head of fuel price adjustment for May.

According to notification, the hike in tariff will be applicable on the bills for the month of July.

Increase in cost of electricity will not be applicable to life line and K-electric consumers.

CCP had requested an increase of RS 2.05 per unit.

NEPRA had heard the request on July 5th.

It is to remember that the Central Power Chasing Agency had submitted a complaint to NEPRA for increasing the price of electricity just a few days after the largest hike in the country's history in the basic electricity tariff.

## Attempt being made to put Balochistan democratic forces against wall: Agha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch Thursday urged the Federal Government, provincial government, military leadership and journalists to play a positive role in resolving the issue of terrorism in Balochistan. He was addressing a press conference today along with Minister of State Hashim Notezai, Member of Balochistan Assembly Miss Shakeela Naveed and other BNP leaders.

Expressing his grave concern over the situation in Khuzdar and Wadh, the minister, who is also Central Information Secretary of Balochistan National Party (BNP), said mortars and shells were being fired at schools and colleges in those areas.

"Due to such terrorist activities, mass graves were discovered in Tutak in 2015," he added.

Agha Hassan Baloch said several cases were registered against Shafiq Mengal as he was responsible for the terrorist acts but he had not been caught as yet while the complainant were beaten and threatened.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch, flanked by Mr. Hashim Notezai Minister of State for Energy addressing a press conference at National Press Club.

## Enhancing education standards primary aim of EPC: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Services Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here on Thursday said that the primary aim of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus established in the Senate was to foster collaboration among provinces, federation and educational institutions to enhance education standards in the country. Addressing a seminar on education jointly organized by the Education Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Pakistan Institute for

interim foreign ministry, said in a tweet. Durrani visited Kabul after Islamabad urged the Taliban to take action against terrorists.

using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan.

The US State Department also warned the Taliban against using its territory from being used as a "safe haven" for terrorist attacks.

"I will say we have made very clear that we believe the Taliban has the responsibility to prevent — Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press briefing on Monday.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a group photo with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi and ship crew during induction ceremony of two newly constructed PNS Shahjahan & Tippu Sultan held at Karachi.

## Pak Navy inducts two modern naval ships in national fleet

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Navy Thursday inducted two newly constructed Type 054A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN into the national fleet.

The induction ceremony of two newly constructed Type 54 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN was held here at Karachi.

Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif attended the ceremony as Chief Guest who was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on arrival at PN Dockyard, a

Pakistan Navy news release said.

The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors having capability to undertake naval operation under multi threat environment.

The induction of ships in PN Fleet will significantly enhance the Combat Readiness of Pakistan Navy.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region.

The minister emphasised geo-strategic

and geo-economic significance that necessitate a potent Naval Force to safeguard maritime frontiers of the country and induction of these modern naval ships would significantly strengthen the defence capabilities of Pakistan.

He also appreciated the efforts of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China for timely construction and delivery of the ships to Pakistan.

Earlier during the welcome address, the Chief of the Naval Staff termed the induction of modern ships a major milestone in modernizing PN Fleet.

## Army to be deployed across country for Muharram security

ISLAMABAD (Online): Home Ministry has decided to deploy army across country in Muharram.

It has been said in a letter issued by Home Ministry that decision has been made to deploy army across country under article 245. Home Minister has issued the letter to Gilgit and Azad Kashmir government including 4 provinces. Home Ministry said that on the request of the four provinces, the army has been deployed. The authorities in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber

Paktunkhwa, Islamabad, and Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir had sought the deployment of the military to control the law and order situation. Following up on their request, the Centre — under Article 245 of the Constitution — authorised the "deployment of army troops/assets and civilised forces troops/assets" to ensure peace. The holy month, marking the beginning of the new Islamic year 1445 AH, will begin today (July 20) and the Youm-e-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday).

## Govt decides to charge radio fee of Rs 15 through electricity bills

ISLAMABAD (Online): Government has decided to charge radio fee to the tune of Rs 15 through electricity bills. The finance ministry authorities have disclosed radio fee will also be included in electricity bills along with TV fee.

Information ministry has worked out summary in this regard.

Now both TV fee amounting to Rs 35 and radio fee amounting to Rs 15 will be included in electricity bills.

This step has been taken on the recommendation of Senate committee.

## Dastgir says: Imran violated Official Secrets Act of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power Engineer Khuram Dastgir Khan Thursday believed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan violated the Official Secrets Act of Pakistan by disclosing the cipher in public, alleging that US had conspired against his government.

"The former Prime Minister (Imran Khan) has violated the Secrets Act of Pakistan. He had also breached his oath to the constitution by disclosing a secret document (cipher) in public," he said in a press conference here.

Dastgir was of the view that when a Prime Minister took an oath it stated he would not disclose anything secret.

"Imran violated rule of

law, people and country, just for his political gains.

The PTI chairman destroyed Pakistan's diplomatic relations with other countries," the minister said. He said receiving cipher from different countries and calling their ambassadors to discuss on the subject were a routine matter, but the former prime minister painted the US cipher for his political gains.

"Now the other countries have warned their officials not to share anything with Pakistani diplomats as it can be waved in public just like Imran disclosed the cipher in the public gathering. "We brought vote of no confidence against the PTI chief but we are still trying to bring the diplomatic relations back on track which he destroyed," he said.



KABUL: Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani called on Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

## Taliban assure Pakistan Won't allow use of Afghan soil against anyone

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: Taliban on Wednesday told Pakistan that Kabul will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against another country.

Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani, who arrived in Kabul on Wednesday to discuss the latest security situation in the region.

"[Muttaqi] said that Afghans will never harm anyone; we will allow none to use our soil against another country; & our efforts will always be directed at working for regional security & stability," Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman for the

interim foreign ministry, said in a tweet. Durrani visited Kabul after Islamabad urged the Taliban to take action against terrorists.

using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan.

The US State Department also warned the Taliban against using its territory from being used as a "safe haven" for terrorist attacks.

"I will say we have made very clear that we believe the Taliban has the responsibility to prevent — Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press briefing on Monday.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### IMF report

The IMF's staff report on its new, short-term bailout loan of \$3bn for Pakistan is a damning indictment of the Shehbaz Sharif government's economic and financial policies that deepened the trust gap between Islamabad and the lender, and pushed the country towards the precipice in the last nine months. Policy missteps and breach of the previous Extended Fund Facility programme had compelled the lender to halt the disbursement of funds, closing the door on other multilateral and bilateral financing.

The IMF document, released on Tuesday, also spells out the programme's goals, many of which, such as increased energy prices, will directly burden the people. It blames the finance ministry and State Bank for their frequent tinkering with the market-based exchange rate mechanism, leading to the growth of a large foreign exchange black market. It is also critical of the central bank for resisting a timely increase in interest rates. That is not all. The report points out that the government balked at maintaining fiscal discipline, cutting non-essential spending, broadening the tax net, controlling the drivers of the power sector's circular debt, and improving SOE governance.

In view of its experience with Pakistani authorities, the IMF has warned that continuation of the new programme will depend on the implementation of fiscal discipline, a return to a market-determined exchange rate and proper functioning of the foreign exchange market, a tight monetary policy aimed at disinflation, and progress on structural reforms, particularly with regard to the energy sector, SOEs and climate resilience.

The report also cautions against the "exceptionally high" downside risks to the Stand-by Arrangement goals emanating from a tense political environment and potential deviation from agreed policies. Such risks could undermine the programme's implementation, and jeopardise macro-financial and external stability and debt sustainability, leading Pakistan to seek foreign debt restructuring.

Additionally, it says that external financing risks remain high, and delays in disbursement of external financing from IFIs and bilateral creditors would endanger the fragile external balance given limited buffers. Spillovers from Russia's invasion of Ukraine through high food and fuel prices, and tighter global financial conditions continue to put pressure on the budget.

Highlighting Pakistan's large gross financing needs of \$28.3bn, including the \$6.4bn current account deficit, during this fiscal year, it stresses that multilateral and bilateral support will remain critical for Pakistan beyond the upcoming elections and the SBA. It is a foregone conclusion that the next government will need another, longer-term IMF programme to resolve structural challenges and meet high external debt obligations over the next few years. For that to happen, the country has to achieve the SBA goals, come what may.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan have signed an agreement to build a 760-kilometer-long (472-mile-long) railway track connecting the three nations. The railroad would travel from Termez, Uzbekistan to Kharlachi, Pakistan via Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2027 at a cost of \$2.8 billion. The success of the rail link will depend on a number of factors, including the political stability of the region, the availability of financing, and the continued, unconditional, and willing cooperation of the three countries. Nonetheless, the potential advantages of the rail link are substantial, and the initiative has the potential to transform the region.

The concept of a rail connection between Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan dates back many years. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union proposed constructing a railroad connecting the three nations. Due to the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, however, the project was never completed. The ratification of the agreement on July 18 in Islamabad, in the presence of "high-ranking" railway officials from the three countries, brought the age-old concept to fruition. According to plan, the rail route will traverse Termez, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan's Mazar-i-Sharif and Logar provinces, and conclude in Pakistan via the Kharlachi border crossing in the Kurram tribal district near the Afghan border.

Reportedly, the financing for this 760 km railway track has not yet been finalized, however, the World Bank, the Asian Development

Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have all expressed interest in lending support to the project, but no formal commitments have been made. Russia has also said that it would be willing to assist in laying down the railway and supplying locomotives and rolling stock, provided the project is able to attract fundings. In the absence of any firm commitments from international financial institutions, it is possible that the signatory countries will have to fund it themselves which seems uphill task keeping in view the dilapidated financial outlook of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, but if financial arrangements are made, it would be a major boost to regional trade and economic development.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2027, and by 2030, trains will be able to transport up to 15 million tonnes of products annually. The line will facilitate both passenger and freight services, reduce cargo delivery periods between Uzbekistan and Pakistan by approximately five days and transport costs by at least 40 percent. With the signing of the protocol, it would begin the phases of meticulous planning, resource allocation, and project implementation, as well as a concerted, coordinated effort to establish robust regional connectivity.

The project's strength rests in its capacity to stimulate regional trade and economic growth, generate employment, and provide cost-effective industrial raw materials and utilities to enhance the competitiveness of

industrial services and agricultural outputs. The project is expensive and may be difficult to finance, is likely to encounter security challenges, particularly while passing through Afghanistan, and may require years to complete. It will create numerous opportunities, including the possibility of linking with the Gwadar port, which would provide Central Asian countries with access to a warm-water port, and extending to other nations in the region.

It may also face hazards such as political instability in one or more of the involved countries and imminent economic challenges, such as a decline in global trade and a dearth of export substitutes.

This project would provide Pakistan with an efficient and time-saving way to export its agricultural products, such as wheat, sugar, rice, maize, and vegetables and fruits such as apples, oranges, tomatoes, and potatoes, dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, meat and poultry, such as beef, chicken, and lamb, and a variety of processed food products, including canned food, spices, frozen food, and snacks. Pakistan can export cotton, wool, and silk in the textile industry, as well as a variety of home appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and electronics besides sports goods and surgical instruments.

Uzbekistan is a major producer of cotton, which is used to create textiles such as clothing, home furnishings, and other products. In addition to cotton, Uzbekistan also produces grapes, melons,

and tomatoes. In addition, it is a significant producer of meat and dairy products, including beef, lamb, and milk. It grows wheat and other cereal grains. It also produces gold, silver, and copper, among other minerals. It has a developing manufacturing sector and produces a range of appliances, including refrigerators, televisions, and washing machines, as well as mobile phones, computers, and televisions, as well as a range of construction materials, including cement, steel, and lumber.

Afghanistan's mineral wealth allows it to export copper, iron, gold, and lithium for use as basic materials in the production of finished goods. In addition to being a significant producer of agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables, it can also export carpets and other similar items. Afghanistan has oil and gas reserves that could be used to produce gasoline, diesel, and aviation fuel for export to Pakistan and Uzbekistan, where they could be used to fuel automobiles, generators, and other machinery.

The rail link could also be connected to the strategically located Gwadar port in Pakistan for the benefit of the entire region and the globe by giving Central Asian countries access to a warm-water port and giving Pakistan a new route into Central Asia and beyond. Once fully operational, it would help reduce poverty by creating a significant number of employment opportunities in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the rail link, and its increased trade and transportation efficiency would make it more attractive to investors.

The signing of the contract occurs at an important time. The somewhat shaky peace in Afghanistan may have been a major factor in the other two countries' decision to move forward with the project, despite the fact that other nations of the world may view it with skepticism due to the unrecognized status of the interim Afghan government and its deliberate refusal to adhere to the Doha Agreement. Nonetheless, the region is presently experiencing a period of relative peace and stability, which has made the signing of this and other high-value projects such as CASA 1000 and TAPI gas pipeline possible.

The success of these essential initiatives will establish a regional ecosystem to promote economic industrial, trade and investments.

The success of the project will also depend on the strong political will of the states and should not be affected by the change of governments in the respective countries, the allocation of sufficient and timely resources to it, and the hiring of credible, experienced, and resourceful contractors who have the ability, expertise, and resources to adhere to the project's timelines in letter and spirit.

Importantly, the success of the project would largely depend on the security and safety of the entire region, the eradication of terrorism from all countries, the destruction of terrorist safe havens, especially in Afghanistan, and the creation of a law and order situation that ensures the safe, secure, and effortless movement of goods along the route and to its destinations.

The security situation in Afghanistan will be the most difficult barrier for this project. Contrary to the Doha Agreement, Afghanistan is providing safe havens to over 6000 fully armed and trained Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists who are carrying out terrorist attacks all along the border, putting the lives and properties of people living in border areas in great danger and in constant state of fear.

They have also martyred scores of civilians and security personnel in recent days, prompting the Army Chief to warn Afghanistan to eliminate these terrorist groups which have ransomed the security and stability of the entire region.

These terrorist groups pose a significant risk to all such projects traveling through Afghanistan, necessitating the Afghan government's efforts to rid the country of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

The donor agencies' commitment of huge funds will also be contingent on the security and safety and establishment of law and order in Afghanistan, in the absence of which the donor agencies will naturally shy away from making any commitment for provision of funds, and one does not need rocket science to understand that cash starved Afghanistan and Pakistan are unable to fund this initiative with their own funds. With Afghanistan's security issues resolved, the project makes a lot of economic sense. --- *The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC*

# A rail link to reshape the region

By Qamar Bashir

## Commerce News

### Speakers at Houston conference call for boosting US-Pakistan economic ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Speakers at a "Conference on Diplomacy for Development", held in Houston, Texas, called for deepening the economic relationship between Pakistan and the United States in order to bring the two countries even closer together.

The Conference was organized by the International Academy of Letters USA, the Rupani Foundation, and the Ismaili Council for the South Western USA.

Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, and the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and

Central Asian Affairs, Elizabeth Horst, jointly chaired a session on the "Role of Trade Diplomacy in Pakistan-US relations".

The session was attended by thirty-five prominent Pak-American businessmen, entrepreneurs, professionals and area experts having successful business ventures and who are also investing in different projects in Pakistan, according to a press release of the Pakistan embassy.

Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, a businessman, underscored the importance of investment in education and health sector which he said was critical in

enhancing productivity of the young population.

Dr. Azeem-ud-Din, a pediatric hematologist-oncologist in Houston, highlighted his efforts in promoting and projecting Islamic art. He emphasized the need for greater efforts to introduce Pakistan, its culture and its products to the US audience.

Muhammad Saeed Sheikh, President, Houston Karachi Sister City Association, underscored the need for greater exchanges, especially trade delegations between Pakistan and the US for building strong linkages between the business communities of the two countries.

### PSX gains 303.20 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 303.20 points, a positive change of 0.67 percent, closing at 45,398.31 points against 45,095.11 points the previous trading day.

A total of 464,226,100 shares were traded during the day as compared to 245,453,654 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10.104 billion against Rs 9.402 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 344 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 227 of them recorded gains and 90 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 185,190,828 shares at Rs 1.43 per share; Bank of Punjab with 19,500,000 shares at Rs 4.20 per share and K-Electric with 15,889,256 shares at Rs 2.01 per share. Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 61.00 per share price, closing at Rs 1295.00.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

### Word Bank, FBR reviews progress on PRR Project

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine and the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad held a meeting on Thursday at FBR Headquarters to review the progress of the Pakistan Raises Revenue (PRR) Program during the last financial year.

The World Bank team included the Operations Manager Gailius Draugelis, the Lead Country Economist Tobias Haque, the Senior Economist Lucy Pan, the Public Sector Specialist Irum Touqeer, and the Manager Shabih Ali Mohib.

### Dar reviews progress on outsourcing of airports' operations

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of the Steering Committee to review the progress of work related to outsourcing of airports' operations, at Finance Division, today.

Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Law & Justice Azam Nazir Tarar, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Aviation,

Member Reforms, FBR, Ardesher Tariq and members of the project team were also present in the meeting, said a press release issued here.

It was noted that during the four years of the project, significant achievements have been made for sustainable revenue mobilization, taxpayer facilitation, and reducing the cost of doing business under the PRRP.

In particular, the harmonization of Sales Tax laws and procedures among provinces and the federal government was a landmark achievement with benefits for taxpayers and all revenue authorities.

### Gold rates decrease Rs 5,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 5,300 and was sold at Rs 221,100 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 226,400 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 4,544 to Rs 189,558 from Rs 194,102 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 173,761 from Rs 177,926, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver and 10-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2900 and Rs 2485.28 respectively.

### Senate body on Finance meets Finance Bill 2022-23 empowers bureaucracy to formulate zero taxation regime

Senate body briefed on 55 recommendations for Financial Budget, 2023

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance met on Thursday under the Chairmanship of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla here at the Parliament House.

The committee received briefing on the inclusion of Budget recommendation of the Senate in the Budget 2023-24.

It was briefed that the Finance Division budget wing received 55

recommendations for Financial Budget 2023 from the Senate Committee, however, most of recommendations were related to Federal Board of Revenue.

The Ministry briefed that recommendations related to Privatization of loss making enterprises, increased budget allocation for health sector, funds for rehabilitation of flood victims, availability of

food items at subsidized rates, rise in TV Fee from 35 to 50 RPs and mechanism for subsidies on fertilizers, solar energy production and daily food items were fully adopted, however the Ministry partially adopted recommendations such as grant of tax holidays to export industry, laptops schemes etc, explaining that government is providing all necessary support to IT sector and export oriented industries.

### FTO launches helpline to address taxpayer grievances countrywide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah on Thursday launched a helpline to guide, facilitate and address the genuine grievances of the aggrieved taxpayers without loss of time especially the business community on top priority across the country. Addressing the orientation and awareness session of the business community Coordinator to FTO Meher Kashif Younis and Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, said "The FTO has been endeavoring for

redressing grievances of the aggrieved tax-payers in the wake of maladministration of the tax functionalities of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). "The helpline will fully ensure uninterrupted speedy and free-of-cost relief to the aggrieved taxpayers. In this regard, the FTO has launched a public awareness campaign to reach out the existing and prospective taxpayers for building their confidence to fulfill their national obligation by paying due taxes timely in national exchequer."



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik addressing the press conference.

### Energy sector reforms need of hour: Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Energy Economy Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday said that PML-N-led coalition government over the last year had launched several important development initiatives in diverse sectors including the energy sector for the well-being of the people and stressed comprehensive power reforms.

The government had given clear directions to all power distribution companies to ensure accurate billing and to avoid overcharging the consumers, he said while talking to a Private News channel. The

government had devised a plan and submitted recommendations for reforms in power distribution companies to control the Theft of energy, he added. "The government is focusing on bringing reforms along with deregulation of the energy sector in a bid to put the country on a sustainable path leading towards economic sovereignty," he added.

He further mentioned that during the previous PML-N government, efforts were made for the production of cheap hydel electricity, which were long-term measures to generate affordable power in the country but unfortunately,



## CM visits Nullah Lai to inspect water situation

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Nullah Lai at Rawalpindi to monitor water flow near Katarian Bridge and inspected surrounding localities and issued necessary directions to the administration in this regard.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaqat Ali Chattha briefed the CM about water situation in Nullah Lai.

Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that more rain has been forecasted till July 23<sup>rd</sup>, adding that all concerned departments should remain alert, said a handout issued here.

He directed that dewatering pumps and heavy machinery should remain fully functional and all relevant staff should remain present on their

duties and evacuation of people should be the foremost priority in case of any untoward situation.

Commissioner Rawalpindi apprised the CM that 205 mm rainfall occurred in Rawalpindi on Wednesday however water from banks of Nullah Lai did not spill over. The maximum level of water at Katarian remained at 19 feet.

CM Mohsin Naqvi while talking to the media said that Rawalpindi administration did a commendable work despite unusual downpour, adding that he has paid a visit to encourage the administration. The city received 205 mm rainfall as funds amounting to Rs.120 million are being spent on the cleanliness of nullahs in Rawalpindi, he added.

Mohsin Naqvi said the government would

make an endeavour to launch a project so that the problem of Nullah Lai could be resolved on permanent basis. An operation against encroachments surrounding nullahs is underway, he remarked.

To a question, the caretaker CM said the Punjab government is taking measures to improve treatment facilities in the hospitals of Punjab including Rawalpindi. Funds for hospitals have been allocated whereas more funds to other hospitals would be provided within one week, he added. He outlined that all necessary resources are being assured for other projects of Rawalpindi. Provincial Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, RPO, CPO Rawalpindi, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were also present.



**RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Liaqat Ali Chattha briefs the caretaker CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi during the visit of Katarian Bridge in City.**

## ANP expressed concern over recent wave of terrorism in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party Provincial President Aimal Wali Khan on Thursday expressed concerns over three consecutive terrorists' attacks on police and FC in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last three days.

In a statement issued here he said that the suicide attack on FC vehicle in Hayatabad, target killing of two police officials in Regi area of Peshawar and suicide attack on Tehsil Compound in Bara district were strongly condemnable and matter of grave concern.

He said that the terrorists were targeting police and the general public in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with full force while the business community were also receiving calls for ransom due to which the residents of the province were feeling insecure.

He said that strict action should be taken against those who were calling the terrorists fighters and brought them back under secret agreement, adding that exemplary punishment should be given to the perpetrators of the recent attacks. The ANP leader expressed grief over the losses of precious lives in the terrorist attack and sympathized with the bereaved families.



**BAHAWALPUR: Floodwater forced people to travel in overloaded boats along with motorcycles in Patan Mangwani Mouza.**



**GILGIT: Massive traffic jam after land sliding near Shingus Paari at Juglot-Skardu Road (JSR).**

## KPCM inquires after health of injured cops of terror attacks

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here on Thursday visited Hayatabad Medical Complex and inquired after the health of the injured police personnel of terror attacks in Peshawar and Khyber.

The chief minister strongly condemned the attack on Regi check post and Bara blast.

Azam Khan was saddened by the martyrdom of police personnel in these heartbreaking incidents. He said that the government and all institutions were taking steps to prevent such incidents.

He said that Jawans of the security forces were sacrificing their lives to protect the innocent lives and the nation was paying homage to the sacrifices of the martyrs.

Azam Khan directed to provide the best medical facilities to the injured.

## Amir Mir lays foundation stone of Information Complex

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Information, Culture and Local Government Amir Mir said that the first phase of the Information Complex would be constructed during the current financial year which would be completed at a cost of Rs 100 million.

He said that the Complex would be the first field office of the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) which would have its own state-of-the-art building.

He was addressing at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Information Complex here Thursday.

Amir Mir said that modern facilities were being provided to the field offices of DGPR and it would help further strengthen the bridge between the people and the government.

Rawalpindi Directorate is functioning as a media liaison office in the federal capital, Amir Mir said.

## Feroze condemns blast at Tehsil compound Bara

PESHAWAR (Online): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has strongly condemned the explosion in Tehsil Compound Bara.

He said that no religion allows to play with the blood of innocent people. The caretaker provincial minister expressed his condolences to the family members of martyred police officer Tayyab and said that the bravery and sacrifice of Tayyab will always be remembered. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have made immense sacrifices in establishing peace in the province.

The sacrifices of security forces will be written in golden words in history. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that the policemen showed great bravery and stopped the attackers outside the police station and killed them. If the attackers entered the police station, there would be a huge damage. He said that the investigation of the incident and the identification of the two dead suicide attackers is in process and after getting the investigation report, strict action will be initiated against the anti-state elements and will be dealt with iron hands and in any case.

## Providing patients with facilities at govt hospitals top priority: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram has said that the patients who come to the public sector hospitals for treatment are the first priority for the government.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a facilitation centre, established at Kot Khawaja Saeed Teaching Hospital (KKSJH), here on Thursday. He said that various government hospitals were being visited on the instructions of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

He said that every patient who comes to the government hospitals was like a VIP [very important person] for the hospital administration.

He said that the KKSJH would make it easier for patients to get treatment without botheration.

## EIDHC project launched to provide best treatment to diabetic patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir, on Thursday launched the Expanded Integrated Diabetes-Hypertension Care (EIDHC) Project including foot care in 171 Rural Health Centers (RHCs) located in 20 districts of Punjab.

According to a handout issued here, the programme was being implemented by National Communicable Diseases Control Programme and Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department in collaboration with Association for Social Development (ASD). Giving details of the project, the minister told that foot care and suitable footwear intrusion would help prevent foot complications to happen besides better management of any severe foot condition that happens in diabetic patients. He informed that 20 District Headquarters Hospitals would also be enabled for secondary-level diabetes foot care under this programme.

## Working of Punjab Police developed on modern technology: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the working of Punjab Police has been developed on modern technology through software, applications and other programs. He expressed these views while talking to the under-training officers participating in the 37<sup>th</sup> Mid-Career Management Course who came on a study visit to the Central Police Office, here on Thursday.

He said police service centers across the province have provided fast and efficient service to the citizens. The IG Punjab said that equal attention and provision of additional resources have been ensured for anti-crime operations as well as investigations.

Thousands of officers have been promoted according to the merit and seniority to raise the morale of the police force, he added. Dr. Usman Anwar further said that the health screening of the force is complete, vaccination is ongoing, bravery medals are being launched for successful completion of dangerous operations.

# International News

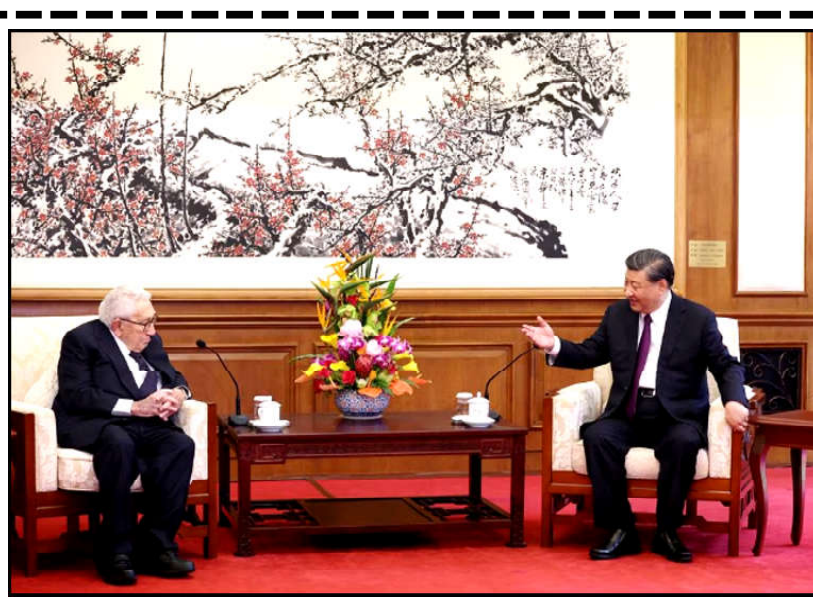
## China's Xi Jinping meets with Henry Kissinger in Beijing

**Monitoring Desk**  
HONG KONG: Chinese President Xi Jinping met with veteran U.S. diplomat Henry Kissinger in Beijing on Thursday, calling him an "old friend," Chinese state media reported.

Xi said the visit by Kissinger, who has been to China more than 100 times and recently turned 100, had special significance because of the two "hundreds." Kissinger, who was Richard Nixon's national security adviser, made a secret trip to China to 1971 that laid the groundwork for a historic trip by the president the following year and the formalization of relations between the United States and China in 1979.

"[Not only] changed the two countries, but also changed the world," Xi said, according to the state-run broadcaster CCTV. Xi said the Chinese people value their country's friendship with Kissinger and the U.S. "We will never forget our old friend and your historic contribution to promoting the development of Sino-U.S. relations and enhancing the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples," he said.

Kissinger said it was a "great honor" to visit China again, noting that his meeting with Xi at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where many important diplomatic events are held, was the same place where he met in 1971 with Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier at the time.



**Chinese President Xi Jinping and Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, attend a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China.**

## Russia bombards Ukraine ports, threatens ships, jolting world grain markets

**Monitoring Desk**  
MYKOLAIV: Russia jolted world grain markets with an escalation in the Black Sea, mounting a third straight night of air strikes on Ukrainian ports and issuing a threat against Ukraine-bound vessels to which Kyiv responded in kind.

At least 27 civilians were reported hurt in the air strikes on the ports, which set buildings ablaze and damaged China's consulate in Odesa.

The United States said Russia's warning to ships indicated Moscow might attack vessels at sea following Moscow's withdrawal this week from a U.N.-brokered deal to let Ukraine export grain. The signals that Russia was willing to use force to reimpose its blockade of one of the world's biggest food exporters set global prices soaring.

Moscow says it will not participate in the year-old grain deal without better terms for its own food and fertiliser sales. The United Nations says Russia's decision threatens food security for the world's poorest people. Kyiv is hoping to resume exports without Russia's participation. But no ships have sailed from its ports since Moscow pulled out of the deal on Monday.



**Emergency services personnel work at the site of a building that was damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine.**

## North Korea threatens nuclear retaliation over U.S. displays of military force

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korea said on Thursday that the deployment of U.S. weapons like aircraft carriers, bombers, or missile submarines in South Korea could meet the conditions for its use of nuclear weapons, state media KCNA reported, citing a statement by the country's defense minister Kang Sun Nam.

The comments raise the stakes as each side steps up displays of military force in a standoff over the isolated country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

The defense minister's statement also accused the United States and South Korea of escalating tensions in the region while criticizing the first meeting by their nuclear consultative group. "The ever-increasing visibility of the deployment of the strategic nuclear submarine and other strategic assets may fall under the conditions of the use of nuclear weapons specified in the DPRK law."

## Iran warns against unloading Iranian oil from seized tanker

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Iran would retaliate against any oil company unloading Iranian oil from a seized tanker, the Revolutionary Guards' navy commander Alireza Tangsiri said on Thursday, according to state media. In April, the U.S. confiscated Iranian oil on a tanker at sea in a sanctions enforcement operation, according to a maritime security firm. Tangsiri added that Tehran would hold Washington responsible for allowing the unloading of the tanker's content.

## Iraq expels Sweden envoy after another act of Holy Quran's desecration in Stockholm

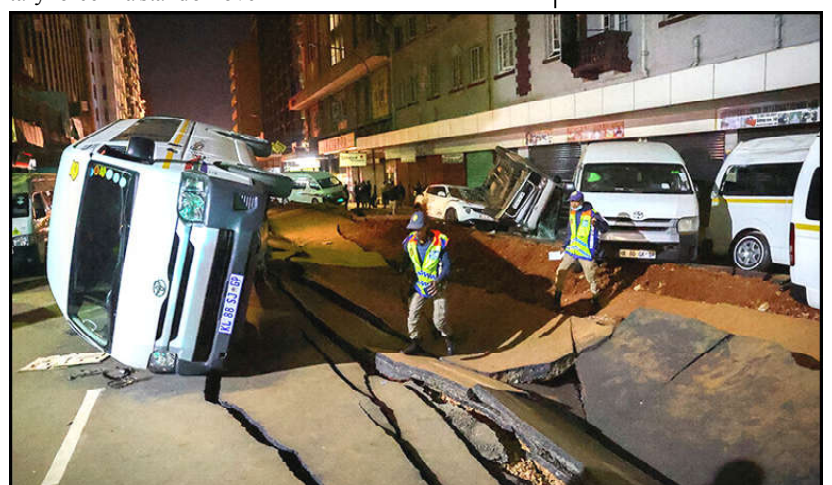
**Monitoring Desk**  
BAGHDAD: Iraq on Thursday expelled Sweden's ambassador after a man stomped on a copy of the Holy Quran at a Stockholm demonstration just hours after the Swedish embassy in Baghdad was torched over the planned protest.

Sweden-based Iraqi refugee Salwan Momika, 37, stomped and kicked the Holy Quran but left the protest without burning it, just weeks after he set fire to pages of the holy book outside Stockholm's main mosque. Sweden and other European countries have previously seen protests where far-right and other activists, citing free speech protections, damage or destroy religious symbols or books, commonly sparking protests and heightening diplomatic tensions.

Around the time of Thursday's protest in Stockholm, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani "instructed the Swedish ambassador in Baghdad to leave Iraqi territory," according to a statement by his office.

It said the decision was "prompted by the Swedish government's repeated permission for the burning of the [Holy] Quran, insulting Islamic sanctities and the burning of the Iraqi flag."

Overnight protesters had breached and set fires within the compound of the Swedish embassy in Baghdad and clashed with riot police, prompting an emergency meeting with the prime minister.



**Police officers inspect damaged cars and the road after a suspected gas explosion injured people and caused significant damage, in the central business district of Johannesburg, South Africa.**

## Modi says India 'shamed' after video shows mob parading women naked

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that the country has been "shamed" by a video showing a mob parading women naked in a northeastern state where ethnic violence has claimed at least 120 lives.

Speaking publicly about the Manipur clashes for the first time since they erupted in May, Modi said his "heart is filled with pain and anger."

"The Manipur incident is shameful for our civilised society," Modi told reporters.

"It has shamed the whole nation."

The video clip showed two women walking naked along a street and being jeered and harassed by a mob in the state, where the authorities have imposed an internet shutdown. It was reportedly filmed in early May but went viral on social media on Wednesday.

## China, Russia begin joint drills in Sea of Japan, Chinese state media report

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China and Russia have begun their joint naval and air drills in the Sea of Japan, Chinese state media CCTV reported on Thursday.

The two sides will mainly focus on sea and air escorts, deterrence and repulsion, anchorage defence and other courses to carry out drills, CCTV reported.

## More than 40 nations interested in joining BRICS - South Africa

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: More than 40 countries have expressed interest in joining the BRICS group of nations, South Africa's top diplomat in charge of relations with the bloc said on Thursday.

Anil Sooklal and officials from the department of foreign affairs were addressing journalists in the main commercial city of Johannesburg, a day after South Africa confirmed Russia's Vladimir Putin would not attend the BRICS summit due to take place on Aug. 22-24.

The question of how far and fast to expand the club - centred around Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - is top of the agenda at the summit of nations seeking to offset the perceived hegemony of the U.S.-led West in global affairs. Aside from the 22 countries that had formally asked to join, Sooklal said there was "an equal number of countries that have informally expressed interest in becoming BRICS members... (including) all the major global south countries".



## Speakers say: SCO member states unite to promote "Shanghai Spirit" for global progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the face of various challenges confronting countries in the region and across the globe, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are united to promote the "Shanghai Spirit" for Global progress and prosperity.

These views were expressed by speakers during the Webinar on "SCO Summit 2023: Implications, Challenges, and Future Prospects." The event was organized by the Pakistan-SCO Friendship Forum and the Center of SCO Studies,

Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS). During the webinar, speakers highlighted the significance of people-to-people collaboration and collective efforts in finding effective solutions to complex global challenges, including climate change, extremism, technological advancements, and economic stability.

They emphasized that through collaborative action, the SCO member states have the power to create a more interconnected and sustainable future.

The President of IPDS, Dr. Farhat Asif, underscored the importance of the webinar and the center's vision to promote research, cooperation, and people-to-people ties within the SCO.

Throughout the event, discussions revolved around analyzing the challenges and prospects faced during the SCO summit, with a strong emphasis on promoting the "Shanghai Spirit" by fostering stronger connections among people.

The webinar also emphasized the need for field

cooperation and enhanced community collaboration to address challenges, as proposed by Kang Jie from the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS).

Kabuljon Sabirov, Director of the SCO Centre for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan, advocated for essential initiatives such as a unified corridor map, climate change coordination, tourism development, and collaborative measures to counter regional challenges, all aimed at fostering regional connectivity, peace, and stability.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with former president FPCCI Abdul Raufon Aurangzeb Rauf and daughter of PML-leader Sheikh Arslan after wedding ceremony during visit at Abdul Rauf residence.



Maulana Abdul Wasay, Federal Minister for Housing and Works chaired executive board meetings of the Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAFA) and Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) in Islamabad

## No escape for PTI chairman even if Azam Khan retracts from his confession: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman was guilty of "making public an official secret document" as he exploited the "cipher" for political point scoring.

Addressing a press conference, he said the former prime minister would have no escape, even if his principal secretary

Azam Khan retracted from his confessional statement on that count.

The PTI chairman, he added in a sheer violation of the Official Secrets Act, waved the cipher in a public meeting in the Federal Capital and continued the practice across the country.

He persistently alleged that the United States had conspired against his government and later claimed that the cipher had

been misplaced, Musadik said. Whether misplacing an official secret document was a trivial matter, he questioned. In accordance with the law, he said, the punishment for making a secret document public was 17 years imprisonment and for misplacing three years.

He said the PTI chief had been claiming that his government was removed due to a US conspiracy, and at the same time was seeking help from Washington.

He said the PTI chief had hired a lobbyist in the US who always conspired against the nuclear weapons of Pakistan.

## Javed Latif demands action against 9th May facilitators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal minister and senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mian Javed Latif Thursday said that if the mastermind of May 9 gets any concession, and urges all political parties to revive the nation's confidence.

"The May 9 day is the blackest chapter in the 75 years' history of Pakistan, and 'it brought shame to us across the globe', he said while talking to a Private news channel.

pushed to the wall, but they faced all the ordeals and never thought to mount any attack on any civilian or military installation.

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) has lost popularity among public for promoting uncivilized language, adding, PTI had also been involved in spreading unethical culture in the society.

To another query, he said after May 9 incident the delayed elections are not in favor of the country, adding, elections in the



"Our nation knows how to protect the honour of their martyrs, he said, adding, the tragic is heart-rending events of May 9 and we need to show unity".

Replying a query, he replied that during the previous tenure of the PTI, the entire opposition was

country would be held on time. He said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership faced jails even in tough situations, but never raised hue and cry like PTI chairman.

There were many people in the PTI who did not support the politics of its leadership, he added.

## HEC-RWN seminar stresses steps to promote socio-religious harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Resilient Women Network (RWN) jointly organised a seminar titled Social Cohesion and Inclusivity on promoting socio-religious harmony in educational institutions.

The seminar attended by eminent parliamentarians and academicians stressed the need for taking practical steps to encourage activities that promote family values, the ability to empathise and encourage tolerance in all spheres of life.

On the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and Member of National Assembly Dr. Nafisa Shah emphasised promoting diversity in society so as to spread the true teachings of Islam in the world. They

were of the view that through diversity and tolerance, the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah can be turned into a reality.

The roundtable participants reiterated that both parents and teachers must work together in the upbringing of students. They emphasised the need to make the young generation aware of the gap being created by the rising trend of intolerance and non-acceptance of one another in society. The vice-chancellors assured HEC and RWN of full cooperation on behalf of their institutions in the promotion of inclusivity, harmony, tolerance, and cohesion on their campuses.

Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and Chairperson RWN Asia Nasir also expressed their views.

## Call to release Mirwaiz, remove restrictions on him

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar while extending greetings to Muslims on the advent of new Islamic year - 1445 AH, has demanded release of its incarcerated President Mirwaiz Umar Farooq from house detention.

According to Kashmir media service, the Anjuman in a statement issued in Srinagar said, "Every new year provides us with an opportunity to go for self-introspection and reflect upon what is happening around us and as such, we need to learn lessons from our past and strive for the betterment of our present and future."

Alongside U.S. State Department representatives, INL Acting Director, INL Gender, Security and Law Advisor participated actively during the dialogue.

In June 2023, the U.S. Secretary of State presented Pakistani Police Officer, Zaheer Ahmed, Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Hero Award

## Abrupt ban on bike entry to red zone irks commuters

ISLAMABAD (Online): Thousand of bikers were facing hardship as Islamabad police closed the entry of all kind of bikes into red zone without any prior warning on first day of Islamic month.

Bikers were forced to park their motorcycles outside each entry point and go ahead on their feet which created problem for citizens especially for senior citizens. Most of people are unaware about government shuttle service. Islamabad police said on twitter bikers are ban in red zone due to security reason.

For entry into red zone shuttle service was provided from three spots: Serena Chowk, Parade Avenue and Marriot Chowk, ICT tweeted around 12pm however most of most of employees enters into red zone between 8 to 9am.

## Religious scholars commemorate Hazrat Umar's martyrdom day highlighting his achievements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ulama and Mashaykh from all corners of the country on Thursday gathered to observe the solemn day of the Martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (Radhi Allah Anho) with unwavering religious fervor.

The commemoration, which took place on the first day of Muharram, saw numerous religious gatherings organized across the country, including in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The purpose of these gatherings was to remember and reflect upon the life and sacrifice of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), the second caliph of Islam, and a

revered figure in Islamic history. Born in the year 584 CE in the city of Makkah, Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), also known as Umar ibn al-Khattab, embraced Islam during the early years of the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Throughout his life, he played a significant role in the development and propagation of Islam. Following the passing of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiqi (RA), he assumed the mantle of leadership as the second caliph and exhibited wisdom and fortitude in his responsibilities.

Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, shed light on the numerous achievements of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA).

He stated that his martyrdom had a profound impact on the Muslim Ummah, however, despite the grief of losing their beloved leader, the Muslims remained united and steadfast in their commitment to the principles of Islam, fostering a sense of community and solidarity among believers.

He emphasized

Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) as a symbol of justice and fairness, stating that his martyrdom reinforced the importance of upholding these values in the eyes of Islamic law.

During his caliphate, he said the Islamic Empire experienced significant territorial expansion, with his successors continuing his legacy by further spreading Islam to distant lands.

Furthermore, he said Hazrat Umar's (RA) caliphate played a crucial role in the codification of Islamic law and jurisprudence, with his rulings serving as the foundation for the development of the Shariah.

The late caliph's dedication to education was also highlighted by Ashrafi, noting that he established schools and institutions to promote learning and his martyrdom inspired a renewed commitment to knowledge and scholarship within the Muslim community. He said the principles and leadership style of Hazrat Umar (RA) continued to inspire future Muslim leaders, guiding them in their governance and decision-making.

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## Toshakhana case IHC issues written order on chairman PTI petition against trial court decision

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued written order on the petition of chairman PTI against the decision of trial court for declaring Toshakhana criminal case maintainable.

IHC Chief Justice (CJ) Amir Farooq issued the written order.

It has been said in the order the counsel for the petitioner said in his arguments this is second round

of review. In the first phase this learned court accepted chairman PTI plea. According to counsel for the petitioner the learned court sent back the matter to trial court with 8 legal questions. The petitioner is of the view trial court announced the decision before the time given by IHC.

This is too stance of the petitioner proper opportunity was not given to him for hearing in trial court.

## 3-day training of master trainers concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 3-day Training of Lead Trainers (ToLT) for the Training of Master Trainers (Polling Personnel) has been concluded on Thursday.

The training was conducted at Pakistan's Electoral Academy for Democratic Practices, Research and Management (PADRM) in ECP Secretariat Islamabad for the upcoming general elections.

Twenty officers from ECP were imparted training as lead trainers.



ISLAMABAD: Rana Tanveer inaugurated 400KW Solar System at main campus of Allama Iqbal Open University.

## Khan's ego put diplomatic relations at stake, split his own party: Qaiser Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Thursday lashed out that the national economy was ruined, diplomatic relations were at stake due to the ego of Imran Khan during his four-year rule and his own party was being split now.

"PTI government did nothing for the welfare of poor masses during the four years in the government", he said while talking to a Private News Channel.

The economy was in a downward trajectory when the PML-N led-government took over last year, he said, adding, during the last 15 months due to the personal efforts and vision

of the Prime Minister, now the economic situation is much under control. Replying to a question, he said the coalition government after coming into power diverted all its attention on putting the economy back on track, adding, the PTI regime's deviation from the IMF agreement resulted in the delay of the program.

The current government is trying its best to provide relief to the masses where the previous regime did nothing for the poor masses, he added. He urged all political parties must realize that the bailout package is a deal between the IMF and the state of Pakistan and the new government will have to honor it.

## SSDO organizes dialogue on 'Combating Child Trafficking and Bonded Labour'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) here on Thursday organized a successful national dialogue on 'Child Trafficking in Persons and Bonded Labor'.

In collaboration with the US State Department, the dialogue aimed to address the critical issue of child trafficking and bonded labor in Pakistan.

The event focused on strengthening partnerships among stakeholders, promoting human-centered approaches to prevent child trafficking, and developing a National Referral System for victim protection and rehabilitation.

The national dialogue provided an exceptional platform for various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, law enforcement authorities, international partners, academia, and the media to come together and collectively address the multi-

faceted challenges posed by child trafficking and bonded labor.

The conference featured insightful speeches from key figures in the field, including the Chairperson of Punjab's Child Protection Bureau, the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCR), the Additional Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and the Director-General of the National Police Bureau.

Counselor of Cultural Affairs at the US State Department, Brad Parker, also spoke at the event.

Alongside U.S. State Department representatives, INL Acting Director, INL Gender, Security and Law Advisor participated actively during the dialogue.

In June 2023, the U.S. Secretary of State presented Pakistani Police Officer, Zaheer Ahmed, Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Hero Award

for his instrumental role in guiding the Government of Pakistan to implement anti-TIP laws and reforms, capacity building, and training initiatives that were instrumental in Pakistan's promotion from TIP Tier 2 watchlist to Tier 2 in 2022 when he was the Director of Federal Investigative Agency's Anti-Human Smuggling Unit. Secretary Blinken presented Ahmed the award on June 15th during the 2023 TIP report launch ceremony.

Ahmed and his fellow TIP heroes participated in the TIP-focused U.S. International Visitor Leadership Program. In addition to speeches, the event included panel discussions, a documentary screening, and breakout sessions, enhancing the depth and impact of the discussions. Minister of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Kundi, emphasized on the occasion the challenges faced in curbing child trafficking.



ISLAMABAD: Police Personnel stops the bikers at D-chowk, following the instructions as authorities imposes ban on the entry of Motorcycles to Constitution Avenue till 10th Muharram-ul-Harramin Federal Capital.

## Police launch massive crackdown on drug peddlers in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police conducted an operation within the jurisdiction of the Phulgrah police station and arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the crackdown on drug peddlers and liquor sellers aims to create a drug-free environment in the city and to safeguard the future of the young generation.

During the operation, numerous suspicious vehicles and individuals were thoroughly inspected, leading to the identification of several key individuals involved in drug supply.

During the search operation, police teams arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers, and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

The arrested accused were identified as Shahid Mehmood, Pervez Akhtar, Zaeen Pervez, Ghulab Hussain, Manzar Hussain, Muhammad Imran, Muhammad Ramzan, Muhammad Ishtaiq, Khawar Ishtaiq, Muhammad Rizwan, Muhammad Waqas, Jabbar Ahmed and Babar Hussain.

The CPO/DIG (Operations), Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, emphasized the continuous commitment to transforming Islamabad into a drug-free city.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo with Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi during seminar on National Dialogue on Child Trafficking & Bonded Labor