

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

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Felicitates PLA on 96th Anniversary

PLA, Pakistan Army brothers in arms: COAS

Pakistan-China relationship is unique & robust that has proven its resilience in the face of all challenges; Friendship stood test of change of int'l landscapes: Chinese diplomat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China and Pakistan Army are brothers in arms and our relationship would continue to contribute towards safeguarding our collective interests. He made these remarks as Chief Guest during the 96th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China commemorated here at General Headquarters (GHQ), an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Republic of China, Pang Chunxue, Defence Attache', Chinese Embassy Major General Wang Zhong, officials and Officers from tri-services of Pakistan attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese Charge d'Affaires thanked COAS for hosting the event for the 96th anniversary of the founding of the PLA. "This all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China & Pakistan has stood the test of the time and change of international landscapes", the Chinese Charge d'Affaires remarked. "China & Pakistan have just jointly celebrated the

10th anniversary of the launch of CPEC and in the past months, COAS and other military leaders paid successful visits to China, which has strongly promoted the relationship between the two militaries", the Chinese Charge d'Affaires endorsed. The COAS felicitated the PLA and lauded the PLA's role in China's defence, security and nation-building. While highlighting various facets of the deep-rooted ties between the two states, militaries and the people, COAS said that the "Pakistan-China relationship is unique & robust that has proven its resilience in the face of all challenges."



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir attending 96th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China commemorated at General Headquarters (GHQ)

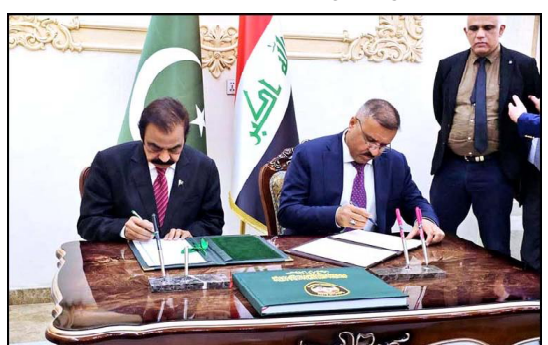
Rejects IK's request to stay Toshakhana trial

We cannot interfere in trial court proceedings: Supreme Court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while rejecting PTI chairman petition filed against High Court (HC) order in connection with Toshakhana trial has remarked supervisory jurisdiction on trial courts is of high court only. "We cannot interfere in proceedings of trial court at this time. Let Islamabad High Court (IHC) decide. Possibility is there high court gives order for stopping trial tomorrow, the SC further remarked. The matter came up for hearing before a 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Afridi Wednesday. During the hearing of

the case Justice Yahya Afridi inquired the case is fixed for hearing in High Court on what date. Khawaja Haris told the court the case is fixed for hearing tomorrow in high court. Justice Yahya Afridi remarked what relief you had sought we had given. It is surprising that even then you resorted to SC. Khawaja Haris told the court the real question is of jurisdiction. Justice Yahya Afridi remarked your petition had become in-fructuous. Even then we heard it and gave order. We are understanding the situation. We had thought high court would

give you better order. We had written in the order the high court should hear the petitions together. May be what relief you are demanding high court gives that decision. Khawaja Haris told the court high court did not give stay. Therefore, we have come to SC. The SC maintained let high court decide first. If you don't get relief then the case is pending hearing in SC. The court while rejecting Chairman PTI plea for immediate relief adjourned the hearing of the case till August 04. The court also issued notices to the respondents.



BAGHDAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan and Interior Minister of Iraq Abdul Amir Al Shammari during an agreement signing ceremony.

Pakistan stands with Kashmir: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Wednesday said that entire Pakistani nation stands beside their Kashmiri brethren till they achieve freedom. Pakistan has a deep-rooted relationship with Kashmiris and their just struggle for the liberation of Indian Occupied Kashmir will continue, Advisor to PM said in an exclusive interview with PTV news. He further highlighted that younger foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is not shy away from raising the voice for Kashmiris rights at all world forums, adding, he had exposed Indian prime minister Narendra Modi at international forums, adding, he had fulfilled the rights of Kashmiris the way he raised his voice for

Kashmiris. He urges the international community and organizations to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its gross and widespread human rights violations in IIOJK. In a message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day on August 5, he said we should pay tribute to the unparalleled commitment of the Kashmiris to the attainment of their legitimate right to self-determination. "Every Pakistani is firmly standing with Kashmiris, he said, adding, it is our firm belief that the Kashmiris will soon succeed in their valiant struggle to secure freedom from oppression and illegal occupation". Pakistan's every citizen will continue playing its constructive role toward a peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, he added.

Caretaker PM: Shehbaz contacts Nawaz, Zardari on proposed names

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif contacted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari and held consultations on the proposed names for the caretaker prime minister and the caretaker set-up. During consultations, the leaders agreed to complete the process of appointing the caretaker prime minister according to the Constitution and the law. Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari also agreed to present all the proposed names before the leaders of allied parties. The leaders also agreed to deal with the issue of formation of a caretaker set-up as soon as possible.

Iranian FM arrives Pakistan on first bilateral visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir Abdollahian, will undertake his first bilateral visit to Pakistan from August 2-4 to discuss entire gamut of bilateral ties and the emerging regional situation with the leadership of Pakistan. Foreign Minister Abdollahian will hold talks with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Türkiye's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi applaud after cutting a rope to launch Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Class Corvette "PNS Tariq" into sea at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works.

MILGEM-IV launched: High time for Pak-Turkiye enhanced strategic cooperation, says PM

Shehbaz Sharif again invites Turkiye to join CPEC; Pakistan, Turkiye agree to maintain close coordination for improved ties

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauding the leadership role of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said that it was high time for Pakistan and Turkiye to enhance their bilateral strategic cooperation for the prosperity of the two nations. The prime minister, addressing the launching ceremony of the fourth MILGEM Class Corvette - PNS Tariq here, said the joint venture project was an example of cooperation and support between the two brotherly countries. Earlier, the prime minister and visiting Vice President of Turkiye Cevdet Yilmaz launched the fourth MILGEM warship.

Initiated in 2018, the MILGEM project envisages the construction of four Corvettes for the Pakistan Navy - two in Pakistan and two in Turkiye. The prime minister said Recep Tayyip Erdogan was a great leader which was reflected by his "wonderful" victory in the recent poll. Therefore, the prime minister said it was high time for both countries to enhance their strategic cooperation add more joint ventures in other fields. The prime minister earlier attended the launching ceremony of the third Naval Corvette, PNS Khyber, in Istanbul, in November 2022. The first two Corvettes, PNS Babur and PNS Badar were launched in Istanbul and Karachi, in August 2021 and May 2022 respectively.

The MILGEM project represents an enduring symbol of Pakistan-Turkiye collaboration in the maritime domain. It is a tangible step towards self-reliance and indigenization and would fulfill the critical security needs of the Pakistan Navy. The prime minister said that Pakistan and Turkiye were tied with the commonality of faith, heritage and civilisation with both sharing perspectives on regional and global issues. Referring to the tremendous support by the people of the subcontinent during Khilafat Movement, the prime minister said the bilateral ties predated the establishment of Pakistan. "We celebrate each others' success stories and also stand together in the face of challenges... This is the level of our relations as we share each others' bounties and sorrows," he remarked.

The prime minister re-called Turkish President Erdogan and Turkish First Lady's visit to Pakistan after the floods as well as the generous contribution by the Turkish people for the flood victims of 2010 as well as last year. The prime minister said that Pakistan Navy was fully dedicated to ensuring the high-quality maritime activities. He said following the increasing burden on Port Qasim of Karachi, Pakistan was needed to create linkages between Karachi and Gwadar ports as Gwadar was about to become a business center for the country as well as the region. Calling the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a "roaring success" the prime minister said Pakistan and China had agreed to launch the second phase that would comprise green cor-

ridor, business corridor, special economic zones and IT corridors. He said the second phase was bound to increase the quantum of business transactions and Turkiye was a "natural partner" and reiterated his invitation for the country to join that joint that wonderful opportunity of prosperity. Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked Turkish President Erdogan, Naval chief, head of Karachi Shipyard and the ministry of defense production as well as the workers for their hard work and contribution to make the MILGEM project a success. He said that following the said achievements, certain actors were trying to establish their hegemony, so it was important to strengthen our navy and maritime activity.

NA passes amended PEMRA & Press Council bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday approved the major legislation - the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Press Council of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023 - marking a significant stride towards enhancing the media landscape, and upholding transparency and responsibility. Moved by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, the House passed the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 along with amendments with the prime objective to benefit journalists and foster a free and responsible media environment. The minister also introduced the Press Council of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023, advocating for the replacement of the term "Government" with the phrase "secretary of the division to which business of the Council stands allocated" in section 8, in sub-section (1), in clause (xiii) of the Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance, 2002 (XCVII of 2002). The two bills underwent a thorough examination by the Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting and its reports were presented in the House. After their third reading, the bills were subsequently passed by the legislators.

President gives assent to two bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday granted his assent to two bills after they were passed by the parliament. The president signed Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amendment) Bill 2023 providing for amending the Qanun-e-Shahadat of 1984. He also signed into law the Control of Narcotics Substances (Amendment) Bill 2023 which provided for amending the Control of Narcotics Substances Act of 1997.



KARACHI: Vice President of Türkiye, Cevdet Yilmaz meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Dr Faisal assumes office of Pakistan HC to UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Mohammad Faisal has assumed the office of the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom. On his arrival at the airport, he was received by Kathryn Colvin CVO FCIL, Special Representative of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, a press release on Wednesday said.

SC rejects plea for formation of full court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected the petition seeking formation of full court to hear pleas against trial of civilians in military courts under army act. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial remarked the full court bench is not available till September. We will continue our work if any one likes it or otherwise, he observed. The matter came up for hearing before a six members larger bench of SC presided over by CJP Wednesday. At the inception of hearing CJP inquired from Attorney General (AG) do you want to say something. AG said we have made all assurances including meeting of arrested persons with their families. We have assured no one is awarded death sentence or life imprisonment. Guarantee is given for dignity and respect of all 102 persons. No ill treatment has been given to any one.

BISP board approves record Rs. 471bn budget for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant development towards empowering women and enhancing social protection measures, the board of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), in its 60th meeting, approved a record Rs. 471 billion budget for FY 2023-24. The board met under the chair of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and Chairperson BISP, Shazia Marri. The BISP Board approved Rs. 471 billion budget for FY-2023-24 which included Rs. 361.5 billion for Benazir Kafalaat Programme, covering 9.3 million families, Rs. 32.27 billion for Benazir Nashonuma Programme

covering 1.5 million individuals, Rs. 55.4 billion for Benazir Taleemi Wazaif which would benefit 9.2 million children. In addition, six billion rupees have been earmarked for Benazir Scholarships for Undergraduates. The board was further briefed that only 1.20% of the total budget is for employees including administrative expenses while the rest of the budget is programme based. Wrapping-up the 2022-23 revised estimates it was highlighted that 99.98% of the budget for the programme has been utilized. The board was also apprised of the performance of last one year, whereby, the number of Benazir Kafalaat beneficiaries was increased from 7.6 to nine million

along with increase in cash stipend from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8750 per quarter per family. The Board was briefed that the beneficiaries of Benazir Nashonuma Programme were increased from 0.2 to 0.77 million and beneficiaries of Taleemi Wazaif were increased from 2.6 to 7.52 million. The board was further informed that two major steps have been approved. One of the major decisions taken was to expand the scope of the recently launched Benazir Social Protection Account. The existing payment system of the Benazir Income Support Programme faced challenges due to its reliance on two banks and their agents, leading to complaints and discrepancies.

UNDP resident Representative calls on Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar welcomed Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative UNDP called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division today. SAPM on Revenue Me. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Ms. Ammara Durrani, Assistant resident representative UNDP, Special Secretary Finance and senior officers from Finance Division attended the meeting.

Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative UNDP called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division today. SAPM on Revenue Me. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Ms. Ammara Durrani, Assistant resident representative UNDP, Special Secretary Finance and senior officers from Finance Division attended the meeting.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Intelligence failure

Bestial violence once again stalks the land. There have been 18 suicide bombings already this year, surpassing the 15 such attacks during all of 2022. The horror of the latest one, in Bajaur district's Khar tehsil on Sunday, continues to unfold as poignant details about the victims come to the fore and the critically injured breathe their last in hospital.

So far, over 50 people have lost their lives, almost half of them minors. The militant Islamic State-Khorasan group claimed responsibility for the attack at the JUI-F rally in which the principal target appears to have been the party's Khar ameer, Ziaullah Jan: the event had been underway for two hours but the attacker detonated his explosives-laden vest only after the former arrived at the venue. Maulana Ziaullah and his 22-year-old son died in the attack.

On Monday, MNAs denounced the attack as the result of "complete failure" on the part of Pakistan's multiple intelligence agencies. It is difficult to disagree, considering these agencies have now had decades of experience in dealing with terrorist groups and security forces have carried out a number of 'intelligence-based operations' against them.

Their inability to prevent the Bajaur bombing has handed IS-K its biggest mass casualty 'success' since the sectarian attack on a Peshawar mosque last year, in which at least 64 people perished.

A recent UN report noted that in Afghanistan, distinctions between members of Al Qaeda and affiliated groups, including TTP, and IS-K are sometimes fuzzy and that there is a "tendency for people to gravitate towards the dominant or ascending power". Attacks such as the Bajaur bombing are thus useful for terrorist outfits to 'burnish their credentials' and attract recruits.

Moreover, there had been consistent indications of IS-K's presence in Bajaur, which is contiguous with Afghanistan's Kunar province — well known as a locale for terrorist training camps. The militant outfit had made an assassination attempt on Maulana Ziaullah last year as well and slain at least another cleric in the district. Had the attackers been tracked down, perhaps Sunday's tragedy could have been averted.

Some experts believe that IS-K militants, under pressure from the Afghan Taliban, have moved from their bases in Afghanistan and set up cells in major cities in Pakistan where they can more easily avoid detection. Several targeted killings in Peshawar this year of religious scholars as well as members of minority communities were traced to a network of IS-K militants — all Afghan nationals — in the city.

With an election around the corner, political parties must have security protocols in place in coordination with law-enforcement agencies. The intelligence apparatus should be streamlined and work in concert under an empowered Nacta. We cannot afford blurred lines between politics and national security — or a bloodbath could be in store.

External hazards



Fahd Humayun

With the government's tenure ending and an economic lifeline in hand after months of costly instability, it may be tempting to believe that the worst is over. But considerable uncertainty remains, not least on the question of the country's ability to complete a successful democratic transition later this year.

Pakistan is no stranger to the template of the hybrid regime. Indeed, hybridity occasionally seems to tide us over, eg, by buying us the outward appearance of stability, and momentary stakeholder convergence on key macro policy issues. But continuing hybridity comes with clear long-term costs. While the costs to Pakistan's own democratic health are fairly obvious, it is worth specifying a steep set of foreign policy costs likely to accrue over time, not least because of the singular importance the establishment tends to afford to Pakistan's external relations.

The first external area that ever-deepening hybridity at home will impact will be Pakistan's relations with the US. On paper, hybridity ought to work well because the relationship with the US is extraordinarily complex, and because hybridity is essentially a political arrangement that creates a single-window operation for interlocutors in D.C., who will have little trouble interpreting where the balance of power lies. In fact, hybridity may even allow for clearer, more effective conversations on Paki-

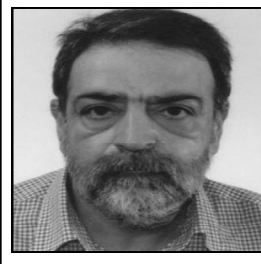
stan-US military coordination, the main benefit of which will be a further erosion of civilian power. A related diplomatic area that hybridity will directly hurt will be Pakistan's ability to effectively keep the Kashmir dispute alive abroad. Since August 2019, drawing attention to the Modi government's revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A has been a mainstay of successive Pakistani governments' foreign policy agendas. But questions around even the most basic tenets of procedural democracy in Islamabad will curtail the ability of both the country's diplomats and the establishment to speak truth to power abroad — especially when that truth is geared towards calling India out for illiberal behaviour.

Finally, consider the very legitimate and growing issue of internal and external security. We currently face a resurgent terrorist threat emanating, quite possibly, from two fronts, and claiming the lives of citizens from Bajaur to Balochistan. While hybridity may give the impression of intense coordination and consultation on CT and national security, it is ultimately untenable. With the establishment distracted by extra-domain affairs such as the economy, or worse still configuring electoral outcomes, national security is likely to get the short end of the stick.

The most attractive solution to fixing capacity constraints will be for an overstretched security apparatus to start demanding an even larger share of the resource pie to keep Pakistan and Pakistanis safe.

For these reasons, if not more, it is worth paying careful attention to not just the path that is currently being laid internally, but to the external consequences that may follow. -- Courtesy Dawn

American tentacles



Mahir Ali

Not long ago, a writer discussing Churchill's legacy singled out Britain and Australia as appendages to a rampaging Uncle Sam. The analogy might have been unkind, but it wasn't inaccurate. The thesis was verified by last weekend's Australia-US ministerial consultations in Brisbane, where the extent to which Canberra has embedded itself in Washington's alimentary canal became clearer.

The talks were overshadowed by a helicopter crash that claimed four lives during the Talisman Sabre joint military exercises. It should have served as a symbol of the human cost entailed by rampant militarisation. Predictably, what poured out, instead, were the usual blandishments about sacrifice in the service of a bigger cause.

Not to put too fine a point on it, that cause primarily involves the revival of what was instituted in the wake of World War II — Seato and Cento. Pakistan, to its eternal discredit, was a member of both. The 1954 Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation boasted only two members from the specified region, Thailand and the Philippines, alongside the US, New Zealand, Australia and former colonial powers Britain and France. Cento, formed in 1979 and also known as the Baghdad Pact, coupled the UK with Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan. Both were Nato outshoots with the primary aim of pushing back against Soviet-Chinese communism. Both withered away in the 1970s, following the American defeat in Viet-

nam and Iran's revolution. So, there's nothing new about Nato's expansion into Asia, at least indirectly. This time it's likely to be a lot more direct, with a willing Australia as the key conduit. That makes it a direct target in the event of any confrontation between China and the West. In a sense, there is nothing particularly new about this strategy from Canberra's point of view. After all, it continued to consider itself part of the British Empire for decades after its ostensible independence, contributing manpower to every imperial endeavour from the Boer war to the Malaya insurgency and beyond. But during and after World War II, its eyes shifted from London to Washington.

There was a period after the Vietnam war — in which Australia participated, ob-v-iously on the losing side — when there was an effort to distance this colonial outpost from its genetic heritage, and to establish a comfort zone on the southern flanks of Southeast Asia. But the endeavour was half-hearted, and when the then prime minister, John Howard, found himself stranded in the US as 9/11 and its aftermath unfolded, he offered up his nation as a deputy sheriff to Uncle Sam in Australia's neighbourhood.

Not much has changed since then. The present Labor government would resent being associated with Howard and his successors in the Liberal-National party coalition, but Labor doubled down on its predecessors' policies when it came to power in 2007. Its first 21st-century PM, Kevin Rudd, is now the ambassador in Washington, and it was his successor as PM — Julia Gillard — who embellished the military relationship with the US by authorising more boots on the ground in Australia's north. That led to the Aukus

deal, whereby Australia expects to receive nuclear-powered submarines in the 2030s. Notwith-standing Canberra's claims about sovereignty, both the Pentagon and some members of Congress expect that underwater boats will be beholden to US interests — much like the nuclear weapons in western Europe.

Australia is also expected to manufacture long-range missiles for the Pentagon. It asked for almost nothing in return, apart from floating the idea that it might be worthwhile to bring the case of Julian Assange to a conclusion. He's an Australian journalist in a top-security British prison, seemingly likely to be extradited to the US, where he faces decades of imprisonment — effectively a death sentence — for daring to publicise American atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken effectively told the Australians to go stuff themselves. His claim that Assange had jeopardised US security is nonsense, in the absence of any evidence that the information released by WikiLeaks harmed any individual. The motive for Assange's persecution is revenge for embarrassment.

No one expected Australia to push back against Blinken's nonsensical bluster. The US would be only too happy if Assange were to perish in Britain's Belmarsh prison, in which case, Canberra would offer thoughts and prayers, but acquiesce to America's prerogative. America's poison tentacles, after all, are sacrosanct, no matter how far they stretch. That does not exonerate China as a potential threat in its region, but for Australia to almost unquestioningly sign up again as a deputy sheriff to the American lord and master is folly that could lead to disastrous results long before the first nuclear submarine surfaces. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Facilitating business community, resolution of their issues among govt's priorities: Shehbaz Sharif

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that provision of facilities to the business community and resolution of their issues were among the top priorities of the government.

During a meeting with a delegation of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) led by its President Tariq Yousaf and Chief Executive Officer of Trade Development Authority Zubair

Motiwala, the prime minister lauded the contribution of traders in addressing the economic issues of the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, federal ministers Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Ameenul Haque, Ahsan Iqbal, Eng. Khurram Dastagir Khan and Musadiq Malik, special assistants Tariq Bajwa, Tariq Pasha and Jahanzaib

Khan, State Bank governor, FBR chairman and other relevant authorities attended the meeting.

The prime minister maintained that the incumbent government had taken steps for the creation of business friendly environment in the country and had set up a project of generating 10,000MW of solar power in which the foreign investors were showing keen interest.

He also welcomed the suggestions regarding

equitable distribution of electricity and gas.

With constitution of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), he said, huge foreign investment would be secured. The prime minister, during the meeting, directed the State Bank and Federal Board of Revenue to resolve the business community's issues with their cooperation.

He assured that the government would provide electricity to the traders in Karachi at similar rates.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a meeting organized by Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI).



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited FBR (Hqr) today and extended felicitations to Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana on assuming the charge of Chairman FBR.

ICCI president lauds excise to facilitate business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director, Excise & Taxation Department ICT during his visit to ICCI. Bakhtawari said that trackers should be embedded in the number plates of vehicles to control their theft.

He said that a penalty should be imposed on those buyers who delay the registration of vehicles to ensure their timely registration.

He urged the Excise Director to set up facilitation desks in ICCI and markets for the convenience of the business community in the registration of vehicles.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday weakened by Rs1.84 against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 289.38 against the previous day's closing of Rs287.54.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 289 and Rs 292 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.71 to close at Rs 317.71 against the last day's closing of Rs 315.77, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Rupee sheds Rs 1.84 against US Dollar

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SCCI rejects massive increase in fuel prices

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi while rejecting the recent massive increase in fuel prices and feared the government's moves will prove detrimental to the national economy, businesses, and industrial growth.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Ijaz Afridi said the economy, businesses, and industries are reeling owing to the flawed economic policies of the incumbent government.

Advisor to US President, PCJCCI discuss trilateral ties

LAHORE (APP): Advisor to President of the United States of America, His Excellency Shahid Ahmed Khan discussed trilateral relations among America, Pakistan and China here at Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Secretariat, on Wednesday.

The meeting was also attended by PCJCCI executive committee members and many top

Bank Alfalah disburses Rs.970m for flood-impacted communities in second phase

KARACHI (APP): Bank Alfalah, a leading commercial bank in Pakistan, reported the highlights of the first half of 2023 during Phase-2 of its comprehensive rehabilitation and rebuilding initiative, which started with immediate rescue and relief in phase-1 in 2022.

With a steadfast commitment to empowering communities and promoting sustainable development, the bank has joined forces

Gold rates up by Rs 800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.800 and was sold at Rs.223,000 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs.222,200 on the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also increased by Rs686 to Rs 191,187 from Rs190,501 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs175,254 from Rs.174,626.

PTCL Group introduces 6 months maternity, 30 days paternity leaves

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's largest telecommunication and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has achieved a momentous milestone in organizational culture by introducing 6 months of Maternity and 30 days of Paternity leaves for its employees. The policy guidelines provide ample time for new mothers and fathers to bond and care for their newborns through availing fully paid maternity and paternity leaves, respectively said a news release. To make it more flexible and convenient, paternity leaves can be availed on a staggered basis during the first year of childbirth.

Naqvi vows to improve health infrastructure in province

Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday vowed to improve health infrastructure in the province to provide best health facilities to the citizens.

He was addressing the senior doctors at the auditorium of Services Institute of Medical Sciences in Services (SIMS) Hospital here.

The CM emphasized that the responsibility for errors did not solely rest with leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats. He reminded everyone that despair was a sin and, as Pakistanis, 'it is our duty to remain hopeful and

strive for better conditions'. He encouraged the belief that even small individual efforts could lead to significant positive changes.

After assessing the condition of Services Hospital, he firmly asserted that no enemy should even think of visiting the hospital. The CM mentioned that he had visited hospitals all over Punjab and had not encountered any facility in worse condition than Services Hospital. He emphasized that doctors alone were not accountable for any faults; the government also shared responsibility for any deficiencies. The provision of essentials such as soap,

floor cleaners, and air conditioning lies within the government's domain, he said and added creating a clean and conducive work environment for doctors was also the government's responsibility.

Mohsin Naqvi shared an incident he witnessed at a hospital in Multan where five children were being treated on a single bed. He made it clear that it was not the fault of the doctor but rather a testament to the dedication of doctors who worked diligently to treat multiple patients under challenging circumstances. He expressed gratitude to doctors for their unwavering commitment despite the unfavorable conditions in hospitals.

Hurdles in overseas employment of nurses removed: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr. Jamal Nasir on Wednesday informed that hurdles in overseas employment of nurses had been removed.

In a statement issued here, the minister said that on direction of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, the Primary and Secondary Healthcare department had also decided to process the

applications of the nurses for ex-Pakistan leave on urgent basis.

He observed that on return of these nurses from abroad, the local patients and hospitals would be able to benefit from their experience, adding that the foreign remittances sent by the nurses during their employment would also be a service for national cause as Pakistan was in need for precious foreign exchange.

12 dead, 1153 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least twelve people were killed while 1153 injured in 1120 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Of whom, 614 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 539 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams. Analysis show that 553 drivers, 30 underage drivers, 127 pedestrians, and 485 passengers.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing during Women Excellence Award 2023 ceremony at Governor House.

Governor emphasizes vital role of Women in promoting women's entrepreneurship

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday emphasized the significant role of the Women Chamber in promoting and facilitating women's entrepreneurship and business activities.

He said this in a special ceremony was held at Governor House to honor women entrepreneurs with the Women Excellence Award, organized by the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peshawar Division.

During the event, awards were distributed to women from various fields for their remarkable contributions and services in different sectors.

Prominent figures attending the ceremony included Provincial Minister Fazlullah, Women Chamber Azra Jamshid, Iranian Consul General Ali Banafsha Khawah, Head of UNHCR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghairat Ahmad, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Nigar Johar, female police officers, and other dignitaries.

The Governor encouraged women to embrace modern technology to advance further in line with Islamic principles, highlighting that women play the most crucial role in shaping the future of their families and society.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also praised Islam for granting women a dignified position and inheritance rights, acknowledging that while business ventures are essential, the upbringing of families is primarily the responsibility of women.

WHO donates 15 motorbikes ambulances to enhance emergency services in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): In a significant stride towards strengthening emergency medical services and fortifying disaster relief capabilities, the World Health Organization (WHO) has generously contributed 15 motorbike ambulances and two vehicle ambulances to the Relief Department KhyberPakhtunkhwa.

This benevolent donation marks a remarkable milestone in advancing healthcare accessibility and rapid response within the province. The official handover ceremony took place on Tuesday at the Rescue 1122 headquarters in Peshawar.

Equipped with essential medical tools such as a backpack, pulse oximeter (CE/FDA), BP apparatus, cervical collar, nebulizer, glucometer, portable oxygen cylinder set, tourniquets, digital clinical ear thermometer, silicon Ambo bags, CPR mask, and dressing scissor.

unwavering dedication to safeguarding public health and providing swift assistance during crises.

Motorbike ambulances have emerged as invaluable assets for delivering critical medical aid, particularly in areas with challenging terrains or limited accessibility. These agile and well-equipped vehicles will empower Rescue 1122 first responders to navigate rugged landscapes and swiftly reach remote communities, drastically reducing response times in life-threatening situations.

Equipped with essential medical tools such as a backpack, pulse oximeter (CE/FDA), BP apparatus, cervical collar, nebulizer, glucometer, portable oxygen cylinder set, tourniquets, digital clinical ear thermometer, silicon Ambo bags, CPR mask, and dressing scissor.



GILGIT: Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate in a meeting with Minister Home Gilgit-Baltistan Shams Lone at Assembly Secretariat.

Govt constructs 37 small dams for storage of rains, flood water in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has constructed 37 small dams for storage of flood and rains water to bring arid lands under agriculture cover.

The approval was granted in a meeting held with Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed in the chair. The meeting approved a scheme of expansion of a road from Sargodha-Jhumra bypass road with Rajbah Chak 188/R-B Nullywala at a cost of Rs 75 million.

Hangu having a total accumulative water storage capacity of 13,014 AF with 14,935 acres CCA were completed. He said 24 small dams with accumulative water storage capacity of 75,008 AF having 49,523 acres CCA were being built in different districts of KP with assistance of Federal government. He said that 37 small and medium dams were constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including 15 operated by the provincial government.



LARKANA: Candidates who passed the IBA Sukkur test for Grade 5 to 15 grade government jobs are holding protest demonstration against the grading policy and interview call, held in Larkana.

Ombudsman Pb takes 152 notices to resolve public issues in June

LAHORE (APP): In response to 152 notices taken by Ombudsman Punjab Maj (ret) Azam Suleman Khan in June, the administration of the various districts spent Rs 836,546,776 to resolve 45 diverse problems of people. However, 107 other public issues did not incur any government expenditures for the actions taken by the relevant departments.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the spokesman for the

Ombudsman Punjab shared financial breakdown of actions taken. An amount of Rs 57,644,089 was spent to address eight complaints related to sewerage lines repair while a modest outlay of Rs 35,992 was made to cover open manholes. A significant amount of Rs 778,832,995 was invested in resolving 27 complaints regarding waste disposal and cleanliness of streets and roads in different districts. Additionally, Rs 33,700 was utilized to attend three complaints.

DDWP approves 3 schemes of public welfare

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Development Working Party (DDWP) approved three schemes of public welfare here on Wednesday.

The approval was granted in a meeting held with Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed in the chair.

The meeting approved a scheme of expansion of a road from Sargodha-Jhumra bypass road with Rajbah Chak 188/R-B Nullywala at a cost of Rs 75 million.

International News

Putin reaffirms Russian stance on grain deal in call to Erdogan

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin told his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday that Moscow was ready to return to the Black Sea grain deal as soon as the West met its obligations with regard to Russia's own grain exports.

The deal, brokered by Turkey and the United Nations in July 2022, allowed for the safe export of grain from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Last month Moscow exited the deal, accusing the West of hampering Russia's own grain and fertiliser exports.

In a statement on Putin's call with Erdogan,

the Kremlin said: "It was noted that in the conditions of a complete lack of progress in the implementation of the Russian part of the 'grain deal', its further extension has lost all meaning."

It added that Russia would return to the deal "as soon as the West actually fulfils all the obligations to Russia" contained within it.

Russia's grain and fertiliser exports are not subject to Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over its military actions in Ukraine. But Moscow has said restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance have been a barrier to shipments.

The U.S. envoy to the United Nations said on Tuesday there were "indications" that Russia might be interested in returning to talks about the deal. Asked about those comments on Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stressed the need for the West to honour parts of the deal concerning Russian exports.

Erdogan's office said the Turkish leader had emphasised the importance of avoiding steps that could jeopardise the resumption of the Black Sea grain deal, which he described as a "bridge of peace".

The two leaders also agreed that Putin would

visit Turkey, it said. A senior Turkish official said that discussions between Ankara and Moscow were ongoing for a visit in late August.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russia attacked Ukraine's main inland port on the Danube River, sending global food prices higher as Moscow ramps up its use of force to reimpose a blockade of Ukrainian grain exports. The port, across the river from NATO-member Romania, has served as the main alternative route out of Ukraine for grain exports since Russia reintroduced its de facto blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports in mid-July.



A general view of damaged property, following a Russian drone attack, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, at Izmail, Odesa region, Ukraine.



Pope Francis and Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, right, converse at the Welcome Ceremony at the Belem presidential palace in Lisbon.

North Korea calls US human rights envoy a 'political house maid' in protest of criticisms

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: North Korea hurled misogynistic insults Wednesday at a newly confirmed United States special envoy to monitor the country's human rights issues and warned of unspecified security consequences if Washington continues to criticize its human rights conditions. The statement published by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency described Julie Turner as a "wicked woman"

who was picked by the Biden administration as a "political housemaid" to launch groundless attacks on the country's human rights record. The U.S. Senate confirmed Turner's appointment July 27. She previously served as the director of East Asia and the Pacific at the State Department. The statement said the Biden administration's public criticism of North Korea's human rights situation highlighted its hostility.

Tunisia's president sacks prime minister, the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation

Monitoring Desk

TUNIS: Tunisia's president has sacked the country's prime minister, who was the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation. A brief statement from the presidential office late Tuesday did not give reasons for the dismissal of Najla Bouden Ramadhane.

Suspected militant attack in Yemen kills 5 troops loyal to secessionist group, spokesperson says

Monitoring Desk

SANAA: A suspected militant attack early Tuesday in southern Yemen killed at least five troops loyal to a secessionist group, in the latest such assault blamed on an affiliate of al-Qaida, a military spokesman said.

The attack took place in Wadi Omran in Abyan province and also wounded four troops from the Southern Armed Forces, which is loyal to the secessionist

Southern Transitional Council, spokesman Mohammed al-Naqib said in a statement.

The separatist council is backed by the United Arab Emirates and controls much of Yemen's south. It is at odds with the internationally recognized government.

Al-Naqib said suspected militants attacked their forces using mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

China replaces nuclear force leadership in surprise shake-up

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China's Xi Jinping has replaced two generals overseeing the country's nuclear and missile arsenal, a move that analysts say represents a major shake-up of the elite force's leadership.

State media reported that Gen. Li Yuchao, chief of the People's Liberation Army's rocket force unit, and his deputy, Gen. Liu Guangbin, were replaced by a naval officer and an air force officer. The new lead-

ers, former deputy Chinese navy chief Wang Houbin and party central committee member Xu Xishen, have not previously served in the force — a dramatic break with practice, experts said.

"It's unprecedented in the history of China's missile forces," said M. Taylor Fravel, a professor of political science and director of the security studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

For decades, com-

manders were selected from within the rocket force, a highly technical and specialized service that oversees the country's land-based nuclear weapons and its vast conventional missile arsenal, he said.

It also was unusual to have the commanding officer and the unit's political commissar — Xu — named at the same time, China experts said.

The two generals who were removed have not been seen in public for months.

Taiwan detains army officer suspected of leaking military secrets to China

Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: Taiwan has detained an army officer and several collaborators on suspicion of handing military secrets to China.

The defense ministry said Wednesday that a lieutenant colonel surnamed Hsieh and other defendants were suspected of having been recruited by China to leak national defense secrets and other information.

Pope Francis urges Europe to work for peace as he lands in Portugal for World Youth Day

Monitoring Desk

LISBON: Pope Francis challenged Europe to retake its role as a peacemaker and bridgebuilder as he arrived Wednesday in Portugal to open World Youth Day, hoping to inspire the next generation of Catholics to work together to combat conflicts, climate change and other problems facing the world. Francis was spending five days in Lisbon, blending a state visit and pilgrimage to the Catholic shrine at Fatima with the

raucous trappings of World Youth Day, the Catholic jamboree that aims to rally young Catholics in their faith. More than 1 million young people from around the world were expected to attend the gathering, which culminates with a papal Mass on Sunday. As he was traveling to Lisbon, Francis vowed to continue urging young people to "make a mess" — a reference to his now-famous exhortation at his first World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013.

Lawmakers rally behind four bills, unanimously approved in Upper House

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Upper House of the Parliament unanimously approved four bills during Wednesday's session, all introduced with specific objectives and receiving widespread support from the attending members.

Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, introduced The Pakistan Civil Aviation Bill 2023, which proposes a division of the Civil Aviation sector into two separate entities: the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) responsible for regulatory functions, and the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) in charge of commercial and operational aspects of airports.

The primary goal of this division was to enhance efficiency, improve services, and ensure compliance with international standards set by International Civil

Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The bill comes in the wake of the suspension of Pakistan International Airlines' flight operations in the UK and Europe, triggered by an irresponsible statement made by a former Aviation minister, Ghulam Sarwar Khan.

The Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, successfully had another bill titled The Pakistan Air Safety Investigation Bill, 2023, passed by the House.

Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain, presented The National Commission for Human Development (Amendment) Bill, 2023. The bill's objective is to enhance the effectiveness of over 7,000 employees of NCHD (National Commission for Human

Development).

Minister for Finance, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, moved The Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds Bill, 2023, in the National Assembly. The bill aims to establish Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds to promote sustainable economic development through the management of fund assets, following the best international standards, policies, and practices. The objective is to maximize the value of these funds for the benefit of future generations.

The Minister mentioned that Pakistan possesses the largest gas pipeline valued at 40 to 50 billion dollars and has reserves of minerals and mines worth \$600 billion. To start with, seven such valuable assets, amounting to \$8 billion, will be placed in the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Turkiye's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and other dignitaries in a group photo at the launching ceremony of Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Corvette "PNS Tariq".

President emphasises Muslim world coop. in S&T, innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed the need for enhancing cooperation among the Muslim countries in the fields of science and technology as well as innovations. The president said this while talking to a delegation of the management committee of the COMSTECH Nobel Festival.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Islamabad Yerzhan Kistafin also attended the meeting.

The committee members briefed the president about the objectives of the Nobel Festival aimed at ensuring access of everyone to education and science.

The Festival is participated by Nobel laureates, scientists and representatives of international organisations.

The ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country gave special importance to educational cooperation with Pakistan. The establishment of direct aerial linkage between the two countries was welcoming, he added. The president appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH for enhancing cooperation among the Muslim nations in the field of science and technology.

NA Speaker says: Ensuring merit key to transform PIPS into center of excellence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that observance of merit is key to transforming the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Service (PIPS) into a centre of excellence.

While Chairing the Board of Governors' Meeting of PIPS in Islamabad, he said that purpose of PIPS was to provide qualitative legislative support to Parliamentarians across the country. Moreover, he stated that qualitative research is key to ensuring the promotion of public-friendly legislation.

The Members of the Board of Governors PIPS unanimously emphasized ensuring merit while making appointments, particularly in PIPS and all other parliamentary institutions.

The Members also stressed the need to create strong links among provincial legislators and federal legislators.

The Members also urged the need to enhance the research capacity of PIPS in order to provide detailed research-based inputs to legislators.

WHO striving to eliminate hepatitis from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala has said that the organization was striving to eliminate the hepatitis from Pakistan.

In a message, Dr Palitha said that Pakistan is facing a considerably high disease burden due to viral Hepatitis B & C.

He said that Pakistan has the highest prevalence of Hepatitis C (7%) globally and has the highest number of people suffering from HCV.

"Viral hepatitis affects 360 million people worldwide and claims 3,000 lives every day." He said that in 2015, the World Health Assembly adopted a strategy to eliminate hepatitis by 2030 through prevention, testing and treatment.

Around 15 million people are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis C in the country. Another 5 million are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis B in the country, he added. Dr Palitha said, "Unfortunately, our response to viral hepatitis has stagnated in recent years." He added testing for viral hepatitis has not been scaled up as tests and treatment are considered expensive.

He said that the theme of world hepatitis day this year was 'Hepatitis Medicines are Cheaper - Treat to Save Lives' aims to raise awareness to scale treatment for people living with viral hepatitis.

He said that now the manufacturers have announced to lower the price of WHO prequalified hepatitis B and C drugs in low-and middle-income countries. This has been a concerted effort by partners to ensure affordability and accessibility to hepatitis treatment, he added. He said that these new drug prices will significantly reduce the cost of treatment to low and middle-income countries, and scale up hepatitis programs to meet growing demand, all towards eliminating hepatitis. He said that the WHO and all stakeholders will ensure the affordability and accessibility of medicines, testing and treatment to millions in low and middle-income countries.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dastagir, Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Ameen-ul-Haque, MQM Pakistan senior leaders Farooq Sattar and Mustafa Kamal in a meeting with K-Electric Management at the KE head office.

Sherry accuses PTI chief of hiding his corrupt practices through baseless arguments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief had been exposed in the Toshakhana case for committing corrupt practices and concealing the facts but he was hiding his misappropriation under hoax arguments.

The federal minister took to Twitter to respond to the recent statement of the PTI chief who appeared earlier in the hearing of the Toshakhana reference filed against him.

Senator Rehman wrote on her official Twitter handle, "Ever since the facts of Toshakhana came to light, PTI chief had taken U-turn (retracted from his statements) continuously. In the beginning, he challenged the powers of the Election Commission itself."

The Minister said the PTI chairman maintained that he did not sell the gifts of Toshakhana, but now he claimed to sell those gifts through his military secretary.

"PTI chief, who called others thieves and robbers, is now presenting arguments for stealing gifts worth billions of rupees. Instead of proving himself innocent, he is accusing the government of disqualifying him," Sherry Rehman alleged.

The Minister said PTI chief had already been disqualified as a result of his extremist politics, the government had no interest in disqualifying him.

She demanded that the PTI chief should hold himself accountable in the same way as he wanted for his opponents for the past four years.

Alleged suicide bomber dead in Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: An alleged suicide bomber died in a compound near Sabzal and Spinnay roads' intersection on Wednesday night.

According to reports, the alleged suicide bomber was attempting to carry the suicide jacket to some where when it exploded by the time due to the reasons not known immediately.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf chairing meeting of the PIPS Board of Governors at PIPS.

Disqualification of 5 years period of Talal ends

ISLAMABAD (Online): Five years disqualification period of PML-N leader and former state minister Talal Chaudhry has expired. Supreme Court (SC) had awarded punishment of five years disqualification to him on August 02, 2018 in contempt of court case.

Former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar took suo motu notice of speech delivered by Talal Chaudhry in a public meeting in 2018 in Islamabad Talal Chaudhry had criticized judges who had provided legal shelter to dictatorship. Upon it a 3-member bench of SC had declared that Talal Chaudhry committed contempt.

SAPM holds PTI govt responsible for current crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Wednesday held the PTI chief responsible for the current crisis in the country, saying the PDM-led government has saved the country from economic default and shattered his "dream".

The current government had taken tough decisions to improve the economy, even risking its political capital, he said while talking to a private news channel.

These steps were vital to stabilize the economy and the government was supported in these measures by the PDM coalition partners, he added.

It is the fruit of the IMF bailout package that the donor countries have started sending money to Pakistan and as a result, there has been an improvement in foreign exchange reserves of the country, he said, adding that political stability is vital for economic development and all the stakeholders must chalk out the way to bring the country out of crises. Replying to a question, he said the present government is trying its best to provide relief to the masses, adding, it is now the responsibility of the coming political government to honor the IMF agreement.

CJ IHC summons meeting of Justice Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq on Wednesday summoned the meeting of Justice Committee on Thursday.

The Registrar Officer had written letters to the concerned officials in this regard. The meeting would discuss the matters pertaining establishment of Prosecution Wing, law & order situation and problems in way of construction of model jail in Islamabad.

The matter of revenue court was also part of the agenda of the meeting. The police officials would present the report pertaining award of sentences to the accused and acquittals in criminal cases.

Tosha Khana will not be allowed to escape under any circumstances, Atta

ISLAMABAD (Online): He said that the accused had taken gifts of Tosha Khana and sold them. That's how gambling money has been invested elsewhere. He said that 35 questions regarding Tosha Khana gifts were asked by court and he did not have any answer. He said that lawyer of accused Ali Zafar admitted in the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday Atta Tarar said that there is a notorious criminal who is facing treason case and is also involved in theft of Tosha Khana and 9th May incident.

He said that sometimes accused makes different excuses and he has attended 3 out of 40 hearings so far.

He said that the case was heard in the Supreme Court at 11:30 and in the Election Commission (EC) at 9:30, but no one appeared in the court and we will not let him run away.

Govt takes steps for prevention of trafficking in persons: Dr. Ehsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General National Police Bureau Dr Ehsan Sadiq, Wednesday said that in recent years, the government undertook a range of measures for the prevention of trafficking in persons.

Dr Ehsan Sadiq expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

The event was participated by senior officials of FIA, the Police, relevant Government ministries, UN agencies, the diplomatic community, academia, and civil society.

Highlighting the steps, he said the government has promulgated the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018, issued TIP rules 2020, ratified TIP protocols to UNTOC and collaborated with TIP communities at the provincial level. He induced the need for all stakeholders to work together to reduce trafficking in person cases. He was of the view that the recent Rizwana case highlighted the need of recognizing the importance of child protection and assessing the true magnitude of the issue.

He informed that National Police Bureau is compiling a database and working closely with FIA and police to enhance coordination and collaboration.



KARACHI: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi presenting a model of a ship to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during the launching ceremony of PNS Tariq.

FIA nabs 470 human smugglers in last four years: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on Wednesday told the National Assembly that Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested 470 human smugglers and convicted 364 during the last four years.

Replying to a question during Question Hour, the minister said the FIA has been taking action against those involved in human smuggling and registered 889 cases under Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018 during 2020, 2021, 2022 and April 30, 2023. Some 2016 Pakistanis were identified travelling on fake/ forged documents against whom 971 cases were registered and arrested 104 smugglers/agents during the said period, he said.

He said seven Airline Staff members who were involved in facilitation to paxes on fake travel documents have also been arrested. Legislation has been done to punish human traffickers as well as safeguard the rights of victims. The minister said we were also strengthening international cooperation to curb the menace of human smuggling.

To another question, the minister said that the federal capital witnessed 20 per cent reduction in crimes cases.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Ms. Shazia Fatima Khawaja addressing a seminar on "Rights of Domestic Workers and the Ratification of ILO Convention C-189" organized by Pakistan Workers Federation.

Senate body on Science and Technology meets

ISLAMABAD (Online): Meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology was held here at Parliament House on Wednesday with Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen in Chair. The Senate Committee deliberated on the recruitment process in Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen expressed reservations on acquiring the services of UTS and inquired as to why the Services of Public Testing Service (NTS&NUST) have not been acquired. He further stated that the irregularities have also been observed in the recruitment process, and several candidates have approached the standing committee in this regard. PSQCA officials apprised that the contract is being awarded to the lowest bidder as per government policy. The Chairman Committee raised concerns about the 'Promotion vacancies' issue, which were advertised by the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA).



Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairs the 60th BISP Board of Directors Meeting in Islamabad.