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dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Pakistan firmly upholds one-China principle: Asif

President Zardari's remarks on One-China principle, highly appreciable: Wang Wenbin

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has reiterated that Pakistan firmly adhered to the one-China principle as the coun-... In-law, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the nation to look East, to look towards China.

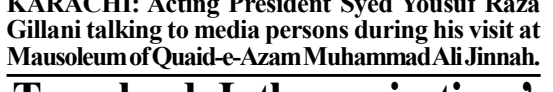
ways stand with China and safeguard China's core interests. Commenting on the development of Gwadar Port, a starting point of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Zardari said a lot of work had been done at the Gwadar Port since the launch of the CPEC 11 years ago, noting that the Port would always welcome investors from all over the world.



TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of Islamic Revolution.

Meets Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei PM expresses unwavering solidarity with Iran at time of national tragedy

TEHRAN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met the Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and expressed condolences on the tragic death of Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions. The prime minister underlined that President Raisi was a visionary leader who manifested steadfast dedication to serving his country and people.



KARACHI: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani talking to media persons during his visit at Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Dialogue only way to solve problems, says Gilani

KARACHI (INP): Acting president and Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani says dialogue is the only way to solve the problems. He expressed these views during his visit to the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Father of the Nation on Wednesday.

Gilani, Bilawal discuss political situation

KARACHI (INP): Acting president and Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani called on PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the Bilawal House on Wednesday. Both the leaders deliberated on the matters of mutual interests and overall situation of the country.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori condoling with Iranian Ambassador Dr. Reza Amiri on sad demise of Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi in helicopter crash.

Sindh govt establishes rapid response unit to combat drug trafficking

Ban on transfer/posting, leaves of Excise Dept staff to achieve tax collection target

KARACHI: The Sindh government on Wednesday established the rapid response unit to combat drug trafficking in the province. According to details, Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon had ordered the establishment of a rapid response unit within the Sindh Excise Department.

Turkish Consul General calls on Sindh Culture Minister

KARACHI: Turkish Consul General in Karachi, Cemal Sangu, here on Wednesday met with Provincial Minister of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Archives Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and discussed the promotion of bilateral tourism and matters related to culture.



In the first phase, the Turkish government will set up a cultural center in the Liaquat Memorial Library, while in the second phase, cultural centers will be established in the libraries at the division level, he said.

PM to visit UAE today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising key ministers of his cabinet, on Thursday, will pay a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This will be the prime minister's first visit to the UAE since his election.

Ministry of Interior launches 'No Hajj Without a Permit' mobile exhibition

MADINAH (SPA/APP): The Ministry of Interior is holding the mobile exhibition "No Hajj Without a Permit" in Madinah, between May 20 and 25, 2024, to raise awareness among the residents about safe and secure Hajj practices.



KARACHI: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi chairing a meeting with the representatives of various federal government departments/agencies at the Ombudsman Secretariat.

Federal Ombudsman resolves over 0.2 million complaints in past year, sees increase in public trust

KARACHI (APP): Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi announced on Wednesday that the Ombudsman's office resolved over 200,000 complaints last year, with 150,000 coming from overseas Pakistanis. Addressing a news conference, Ejaz Qureshi highlighted that most complaints were related to electricity and gas bills, as well as issues with passports and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) services.

PM meets Turkish VP, FM, Emir of Qatar

TEHRAN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met Vice President of Turkiye Cevdet Yilmaz and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidani at a commemoration ceremony organised in honour of late Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions.

Tarar lauds Intl organizations' support to strengthen electoral process in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that the cooperation of international organizations to strengthen the electoral process in Pakistan was commendable. During a meeting with the United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment Mission, the minister appreciated the services rendered by the mission for the transparency of electoral process in Pakistan.

Over 9100 SIM cards of non-filers blocked

ISLAMABAD (INP): The telecommunication companies on a recommendation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) blocked over 9,100 SIM cards of non-tax filers. Talking to a private TV channel on Wednesday, FBR Spokesperson Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan said that they have provided data of 30,000 non-filers to cellular companies, hinting that more SIM cards will be blocked.

Fact-finding committee formed on Bishkek violence as over 4,000 students return: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the return of around 4,000 students to Pakistan from Bishkek consequent to an incident of violence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formed a fact-finding committee to look into the factors leading to the happening besides assessing the role of Pakistan's mission there in handling the situation. "For our own satisfaction, for the satisfaction of the ministry and the prime minister, we have decided to form an inquiry committee under Additional Secretary (Admin) Muhammad Saleem. This will carry out the fact-finding as how these developments took place.

29 terrorists killed in operations along Pak-Afghan border since April 21: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces, in addition to other areas along Pakistan-Afghanistan border, are conducting effective operations in general area Sambaza in Zhob District of Balochistan, since April 21, that helped in neutralising 29 terrorists successfully in the past one month. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday, "Off late, Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist incidents orchestrated from Afghan soil, wherein, terrorists from Afghanistan attempt to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan Border and target Security Forces as well as the innocent civilians."

Raooof Hasan attack case registered

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad police on Wednesday registered a case into attack over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) spokesperson Raooof Hasan by transgender persons. Four individuals—who were apparently transgender persons—launched the assault. The assailants used a sharp blade to target the PTI leader, inflicting injuries on his face. The case was registered at Aabpara police station at the complaint of Raooof Hasan under charges of attempt to murder and others.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Bulldozed bill

Why is the Punjab government so keen on imposing dangerous legislation that would be unacceptable to any self-respecting society? The forced passage of the Defamation Bill 2024 over the protestations of both journalists and opposition lawmakers in the Punjab Assembly on Monday is a troubling reminder of how the PML-N has abandoned its principles ever since it returned to power. Where once the party was championing the people and their voices, it is now devising new means to silence them. It has been said before but needs to be stressed again: this new law will likely come back to bite it. The party had previously introduced the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act, which became a noose around its neck once it fell out of favour with the establishment. Those who were urging the Punjab government to get all stakeholders on board merely wanted it to avoid repeating that mistake. In a demonstration held after the Monday session of the Punjab Assembly, the Lahore Press Club president recalled that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had joined the protests when the PTI had been attempting to strengthen Peca to make it more effective in suppressing public criticism. But here she was now, going ahead with equally condemnable legislation "aimed at gagging the media". Was her earlier position based merely on political expediency? Has her party considered what the consequences of such a law would be in case it once again runs afoul of the powers that be? The last time this happened, its leadership was still able to vent its frustration and publicly name those whom it held responsible. The ability to do so kept it alive politically. The next time it happens, the party and its leaders would be condemned to suffer in silence thanks to the law they have just passed. Defamation is a societal problem, not something that concerns the Punjab government alone. The journalists' community had merely asked the Punjab government for a week to reconsider the law and arrive at a consensus. Meanwhile, the opposition had suggested certain changes to the law, some of which, it seems, could have improved it considerably. By involving these two stakeholders in its deliberations, the government in Lahore would have had the opportunity to make the law fairer and acceptable to everyone. That it chose to push them aside suggests a disinclination to honour the democratic principles of the legislative process and, instead, a tendency to impose its will on the people. This disregard for the opposition and other dissenting voices — now seen in multiple successive governments — is the primary reason why the Pakistani political process seems unable to deliver. The Punjab government must withdraw this dangerous bill and engage with other stakeholders. There is still time.

Preparing for crises

Naveen Hussain

If the society you live in was about to experience catastrophe or collapse due to climate change, rising geopolitical tensions and all-out war, or growing inequality leading to civil unrest, what would you do to protect yourself and your family? A Karachiite of my acquaintance owns a small farm which has previously been used for weekends in the country. He fears that with rising inequality and hunger, civil unrest will increase. And if the US initiates another regional war, Pakistan may get dragged in again. He is preparing to move to his farm to become a full-time homesteader. He believes that this will be the safest place to ride out any coming storm. Homesteading is an off-grid, self-reliant lifestyle. His farm is well stocked with fruit and vegetables, and he rears a few chickens and other animals. Solar panels provide electricity, and he has a water bore for clean drinking water. This is classic homesteading. All that's needed is to store non-perishable foods and pickle and preserve surplus fresh foods. Adapting our lifestyles to survive is human nature, and yet popular culture depicts homesteaders as eccentric and possibly extremist. The Good Life, a popular BBC comedy, which aired in the 1970s, depicted a couple who gave up corporate life to start homesteading in their middle-class suburban house, much to the dismay of their wealthy neighbours. More recently, the Netflix film Leave the World Behind showed us what life might look like if the world we knew became hostile to us. Not everyone owns a farm they can retreat to. Most city dwellers live in urban settings like apart-

ment blocks. These people are more likely to be 'preppers' rather than homesteaders. Preppers stockpile essentials against inevitable economic and climate crises. In the past, the most prepping an urban person might do was to carry a map, a torch, a spare tyre, and a tyre iron in their car boot. Drivers in harsh climates might also have kept blankets, dry clothes, energy bars, and water, as a precaution against the car breaking down. Covid-19 was the first time that most people born into a globalised world experienced a truly global supply chain disruption. People in Europe began stockpiling dry pasta while those in Asia stockpiled rice. Hand sanitiser became a luxury item; my personal supply was stolen from my desk by 'persons unknown' and replacing it became a mission that took weeks for more sanitiser to be shipped, at great cost, from abroad. Most of us stockpiled something. Online prepper guides and videos focus on the US and Australia, which are now regularly subject to large uncontrolled forest fires or hurricanes and require emergency evacuation from their homes. Increasing flooding in the UK has locals turning to prepping. The basic needs of the prepper relate to water, food, and energy. They stockpile bottled water, tinned foods, dry rice, batteries, candles, matches, first aid equipment and essential medication. They have backup torches, solar-powered lamps, and a solar panel charger for mobile devices. Travel documents and ID are kept with other essentials in a 'go' bag or 'bug out' bag which can be grabbed easily if evacuation becomes necessary. You may be surprised to discover that your neighbours in Pakistan are also prepping. I have met families in ground floor apartments who have installed solar panels on their patios. Those who cannot install solar are ensuring they have portable, affordable solar lanterns. Increasingly, families who can afford to are stockpiling essentials and non-perishables, hedging against ever-increasing food prices. They may not discuss prepping, but they are taking common-sense precautions against uncertainty. Climate shocks, rising geopolitical tensions, and a global cost-of-living crisis mean many people cannot afford to stockpile essentials. As rising prices force the middle class to devolve into the working poor, they become as vulnerable as the unemployed. The gap between the haves and have-nots becomes ever more extreme. When disaster strikes such unequal societies, what happens next? How far will people go to save their family? Our species thrived because we lived in communities. Homesteading succeeds when the fruits of your labour are shared with labourers and other homesteaders. Prepping works best when people share their skills and pool their knowledge within their neighbourhood. As climate events become more brutal, individual survival becomes more difficult; we must look to our distant past and recognise that the manual labourer is as critical to our survival as the scientist or strategist. We need community leaders within neighbourhoods and apartment blocks to build trust and put disaster provision plans in place now. It will be too late after a disaster strikes. -- Courtesy Dawn

Unusual trifecta

Mahir Ali

There appears to be no reliable source for the quote that there are decades when nothing happens and weeks when decades happen, commonly (and possibly apocryphally) attributed to Vladimir Lenin, but the beginning of this week felt a bit like that. The likelihood that Iran's president and foreign minister had perished in a helicopter crash alongside seven others seemed obvious long before Tehran officially acknowledged the tragedy and announced five days of mourning. This was followed by reports that the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) chief prosecutor had sought warrants against leading figures in Israel and Hamas. Soon afterwards came the news that a pair of British judges had allowed Julian Assange the right to appeal against the British government's determination to extradite him to the US for a trial on patently absurd and politically motivated espionage charges. Ebrahim Raisi, elected president in 2021 on a low turnout, and his foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, were guests in Islamabad last month after a period of tensions between the two countries and an exchange of hostilities targeting purported militants on both sides of the Balochistan border. Last Sunday, they were returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan also attended by the latter nation's president, Ilham Aliyev — the scion of Heydar Aliyev, who segued easily from a reliable Soviet apparatchik to a typical Central Asian potentate. For the Iranians, the transport back to Tabriz relied on an old, US-designed helicopter, flying through hilly terrain in poor weather. A 'hard landing' was the initial official description in Tehran, although segments of Iranian media were talking about a crash early on, and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, tried to reassure the nation that the consequences would not be disruptive long before official sources admitted that there were no survivors. Raisi will be succeeded by his unelected first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, in an interim capacity, with fresh presidential elections due within 50 days. There is no reason to expect the pattern will be any different from the recent past, with the clerical hierarchy effectively picking the favoured candidate while offering the mirage of a democratic contest. It hasn't always been easy, though, with the clergy occasionally facing mild resistance from the likes of Rafsanjani, Khatami and Rouhani. Even the militantly conservative Ahmadinejad was too much of a loose cannon for it. With Khamenei now 85, Raisi was considered a contender for the top job. The former is the second supreme leader since 1979. When Ruhollah Khomeini died 10 years later, the Khaleej Times put out a special edition. The only picture we could find of Khomeini with a foreign leader featured Yasser Arafat soon after the revolution. That found a prominent place in the paper — and one of the KT's photographers came close to being roughed up by Iranian mourners at a mosque in Dubai because of that image. The Palestinian leader had apparently turned into persona non grata since the early days of the revolution, after which the regime had welcomed arms from Israel as part of the Iran-Contra deal under the Reagan set-up. Iran has lately stood out as the only significant Middle Eastern power to meaningfully rage against the genocide in Gaza, but its motivations are suspect. Raisi had been implicated for decades in the repression that has stood out as a key characteristic of the regime that smothered the best aspects of the rebellion against the Pahlavi monarchy 45 years ago. Iran might have been a very different country had the US not conspired seven decades ago to turn it into an Israel-friendly Middle Eastern satellite. Today, it is determined to defend Israel, with Joe Biden denying any 'equivalence' posited by the ICC between Hamas and the Zionist regime, notwithstanding their deadly inclinations — let alone the Israeli Defence Forces' military supremacy, courtesy of a steady supply of US military hardware. A s s a n g e ' s WikiLeak exposed the brutal absurdity of America's military endeavours in places where it has no right to be, which is why the Trump and Biden administrations have conspired to permanently silence him. It would make sense for Biden's government to drop the ridiculous charges, given that the British establishment would reprehensibly be unwilling to liberate him without Washington's imprimatur. The ICC's endeavour has been condemned by Hamas, Israel and Biden. That alone suggests it might be worthy, even though the prosecutor's request is yet to be processed by the judges. It is, of course, highly unlikely that either the Israeli or the Hamas leadership will ever find itself in the dock at The Hague, but pushing this genocidal conflict in the direction of accountability just might bring it to a halt. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Gemstones.

Gold rates dip by Rs 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 300 and was sold at Rs 248,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 248,500 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 236 to Rs 212,791 from Rs 213,048 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 195,059 from Rs 195,295, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41, respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2,415 from \$2,418.

PM for steps to grant industrial status to gems, precious stones sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): He said that most of the country's areas particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir were rich with immense natural resources which needed to be fully exploited. Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for ensuring the international certification of stone products and their display at international exhibitions. He also instructed for launching training programs to promote value addition of the stone products, and carry out the geological mapping of KP, GB and AJK on the availability of precious stones. The participants of the meeting were told that a strategy was being formulated to promote investment in the fields of gems and rare stone. Federal ministers Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan and Dr Musaddik Malik, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Musadik Malik says: Govt. to enhance indigenous production of petroleum products

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik said on Wednesday that the government will enhance the indigenous production of petroleum products, including gas and crude oil. He said that investment processes and information regarding oil and gas exploration have been digitized and simplified to facilitate this. To reduce electricity tariffs, the government is working on various proposals, he said. By supplying local gas to efficient power plants, the cost of electricity could be reduced to Rs 12 per unit, compared to Rs 24 per unit when using LNG. He acknowledged the high theft and losses in the gas sector, particularly in Balochistan, where gas losses have increased in Sui-Southern. To combat urban gas theft, modern systems, including comprehensive monitoring of the gas network using technology, are being implemented. He advocated for

Atif Ikram says: Govt should make border management system more active to prevent smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government should make the border management system more active to prevent smuggling. Movement of smuggled goods into the country is affecting tax revenue which can be increased only through prevention of smuggling. We support the government's measures against non-filers in the upcoming fiscal year budget. Tax should be collected from those who are not in the tax net. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the tax target should be kept closer to reality in the next financial year. The business community is ready to help the government in increasing the tax net. ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at the Green Financing Summit held here on Wednesday underscored the need for Pakistan to embrace a paradigm shift in its policy to achieve renewable energy transition through subsidized energy frameworks helping to achieve a sustainable economy. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under its



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun called on Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, Hope Island, Conti Courage, Tethis-7, Al-Thakaira and Advantage Paradise carrying Container, Palm oil, LNG and Gas oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Elergy Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile two more ships, Marathopolis and Torm Venture carrying Container and Gas oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships.

Industries Minister meets Korean envoy, discusses bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Ki Jun to discuss the bilateral cooperation. The delegation from leading South Korean companies also accompanied the ambassador, said a news release issued here. The minister assured the visiting delegation for prompt resolution of all pending matters. Rana Tanvir apprised the visiting ambassador that the government had taken a number of steps to boost up industrial activities in the country. The matters of mutual interest, including bilateral cooperation and the challenges faced by Korean companies in Pakistan also came under discussion. The minister assured the visiting delegation for prompt resolution of all pending matters. Rana Tanvir apprised the visiting ambassador that the government had taken a number of steps to boost up industrial activities in the country.

Green Energy Transition to help Pakistan build sustainable economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Network for Clean Energy Transition organized the virtual conference titled "Green Financing Summit: Driving Energy Transition through alternate and Green Financing Mechanisms". In his opening remarks, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Sajid Amin said the discourse on clean energy transition was crucial as shift over green energy was the country's journey.

