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Pak condemns US resolution, cites misunderstanding of political landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday said that the resolution 901 passed by the US House of Representatives was neither constructive nor objective for showing a lack of understanding of its political situation and electoral process.

In response to media queries regarding the passage of the resolution on Tuesday, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan had taken note of it. "We believe that the timing and context of this particular resolution does not align well with the positive dynamics of our bilateral ties, and stems from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Pakistan," she remarked.

The spokesperson said that Pakistan, as the world's second-largest parliamentary democracy and fifth-largest democracy overall, was committed to the values of constitutionalism, human rights and rule of law in pursuance of its own national interest.

The spokesperson said that Pakistan believed in constructive dialogue and engagement based on mutual respect and understanding.

Such resolutions are therefore neither constructive nor objective. We hope that the U.S. Congress will play a supportive role in strengthening Pakistan-U.S. ties and focus on avenues of mutual collaboration that benefit both our peoples and countries," she added.



President Global Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Mr. Chris Elias called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.

PM greenlights Pakistan-China JV project for industry relocation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday gave the green light to the joint ventures between Chinese and Pakistani companies for relocating the Chinese industries to Pakistan.

Chairing a meeting to discuss the matters of the Board of Investment (BoI), he said that promoting both local and foreign investment in Pakistan was among the government's priorities.

He said the government was taking all possible steps to create a business-friendly environment for traders and investors.

The prime minister directed the concerned to submit a comprehensive report on the follow up of

Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies in Shenzhen during his recent visit to China.

He also instructed a review of the draft law for the Special Economic Zones One Stop Shop in light of the developments following his China visit.

Prime Minister, Shehbaz said there was significant potential for relocating China's textile, leather, footwear, and other industries to Pakistan.

Meanwhile, during the briefing, the BoI Secretary said that the steps were being taken to relocate Chinese industry to Pakistan.

Heat wave kills 10 in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi, on Wednesday confirmed that ten persons lost their lives in two days due to severe heat wave conditions in Karachi division.

The commissioner, while briefing the media persons here at his office, refuted the reports regarding number of reported deaths due to severe heat in the metropolis and said

that data collected from different sources confirmed demise of ten individuals due to heat wave conditions. He said that administration collected data regarding deaths occurred in Karachi division from different sources which included patient information from hospitals, data of graveyard burials from Karachi Municipal Corporation and information from mortuaries.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacting with JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and leaders of SIC Asad Qaiser & Umar Ayub during National Assembly session.

PM invites opposition to hold dialogue for country's betterment

Says let us sit together to take the country ahead. Let us talk for the betterment of the country. There is no other way forward; Dialogue with govt possible only after release of PTI founder: Omar Ayub

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited the opposition political parties to join heads for a dialogue to discuss the ways for taking the country ahead.

"Let us sit together to take the country ahead. Let us talk for the betterment of the country. There is no other way forward," the prime minister said addressing the National Assembly, while responding to a point of order by Sunni Ittehad Council Ali Muhammad Khan.

He recalled that in the past too, he had invited the political parties to evolve a consensus on a Charter of Economy but that idea was ridiculed just for political point-scoring.

He said the way the sloganeering was done on the offer, was the darkest chapter in the country's history.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the House should also fix the responsibility on those who contributed to such a bitterness in the society.

The prime minister also recounted his ordeal of facing victimization and that he was in jail when his mother passed away. Despite request to the jail superintendent,

he was not given exemption from court appearance, he added.

He said that despite being a cancer survivor and with a backbone ailment, he used to be driven to courts on the ordinary prison van just to exacerbate the condition, but he never complained.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that other PML-N leaders like Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Rana Sanaulah also faced humiliating treatment despite being the under-trial prisoners.

But he said, having faced all the victimization, he would never want his political adversaries to face an identical situation.

INP adds: Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub has said that dialogues with the government are precondition with release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and other detainees.

Responding to the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer of talks, he clarified that the talks will be held only after PTI founder and other detainees were set at liberty.

Ahsan Iqbals says:

Govt presented balanced budget aimed at steering economy towards development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, said on Wednesday that under the prevailing circumstances, the government has presented a balanced budget aimed at steering the economy towards development and social prosperity.

Addressing the concluding session of the All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference, organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the minister emphasized that overcoming the prevail-

ing economic challenges hinges on effective resource mobilization, budget balancing, and reducing non-developmental expenditures.

Ahsan Iqbal noted that Pakistan faces external challenges, highlighting a historical failure to cultivate export-led industries, resulting in increased imports and pressure on foreign exchange reserves over the past 75 years.

The minister underscored the necessity of fostering export-led industrial growth to compress imports and alleviate strain on foreign exchange reserves,

AGP prays SC to dismiss SIC's appeal for reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan on Wednesday submitted written arguments to the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the case of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding reserved seats.

The AGP requested the top court to dismiss the SIC's appeal and uphold the verdict of Peshawar High Court (PHC) in the matter.

He said, "A political party that participates in elections and wins at least one seat can get reserved seats. According to the law, a list has to be provided for certain seats to the ECP (Election Commission of Pakistan)." The SIC neither participated in the elections nor submitted the list for the specific seats, "which are only reserved for minorities and women", he added.

The AGP said, "Independent candidates can join the political parties that have representation in the Parliament." He argued that the SIC was not a parliamentary party at the time of the allocation of reserved seats, and its demand for reserved seats was unconstitutional.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participating in a rally observing the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking organized by Anti Narcotic Force at F-9 Park.

Security forces bust terrorist network in Balochistan, arrests TTP's commanders

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langau on Wednesday revealed that the security forces had busted an important network of terrorists in the province, arrested the head of the banned TTP's defense council, Nasrullah alias Maulvi Mansoor and commander, Idris.

He felicitated the security forces for foiling the plan to create a base for operating terrorist activities in Balochistan and the arrest of two commanders of terrorist organization.

The minister, who was flanked by spokesperson of Balochistan government, Shahid Rind, DIG Police Quetta, Aitzaz Goraya, said, "These terrorists have nothing to do with the rights of Balochistan. It is rather a nefarious attempt to spread terrorism on foreign agenda in the province."

Mir Ziaullah said that there should be cleared that India was behind terrorist activities and which was also involved in such terrorism in Canada and America.

He said India had been spreading terrorism in Pakistan from Afghanistan since 20 years.

The minister urged the United Nations to impose restriction on India to eliminate the terrorist network working across the world for the sake of humanity.

In recent days, there has been a great success regarding eliminating terrorism as the law enforcement and intelligence agencies have conducted a complicated operation and the main terrorist commanders Nasrullah and Idris were arrested in the operation.

Mir Ziaullah urged the people of Balochistan to recognize such elements and their nefarious designs.

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Fazal decries burden of taxes in budget 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the burden of taxes has been imposed on salaried persons as well as businessmen in the budget.

Speaking on the National Assembly floor during the budget debate, Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the government demands taxes from the citizens but is not ready to give their rights.

He said that everything would be fine when the 'interference' in politics ends. Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the country is currently being ruled by a minority as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

(PML-N) led federal governments "lacks a majority in the parliament."

"Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is not part of the coalition government hence the PML-N lacks the majority," the JUI-F chief added.

Speaking on the vision Azm-e-Istehkam, Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that it will further destabilise the country. "Azm-e-Istehkam will not bring stability rather instability," he added.

Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the people were asked to vacate the area for the operation and the tribal women who migrated back to their areas were sent to the deserts.

Azm-e-Istehkam:

Achakzai threatens to take issue to International Court of Justice

PESHAWAR: Mahmood Khan Achakzai, leader of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and the opposition alliance Tahreek-e-Tahafuz Aain Pakistan, has issued a stark warning against being compelled to take their grievances against Operation Azm-e-Istehkam to the International Court of Justice.

Speaking at a jirga organised by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Peshawar on Wednesday, Achakzai emphasised the necessity for the decisions in the country to reflect the clear majority of the people's will, which is currently not the case. Achakzai recalled that when the constitutional amendment to merge

FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) was presented in Parliament, it was not included in the official agenda.

He argued that with peace, the region could attract tourists from around the world, noting that K-P is a significant center for Buddhism. He stated that the people of K-P are hospitable, which would further boost tourism.

He pointed out the exploitation since Pakistan's formation, mentioning the thousands of miles of railway lines consumed, marble from Mohmand, and the gold-filled lands of Waziristan. He urged President Zardari to ensure that the natural resources benefits go to the local people.

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PESHAWAR: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chairman, Mahmood Khan Achakzai addresses during Tribal Aman Jirga arranged by Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Peshawar.

NA passes Rs 6,101bln demands for grants for FY 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday passed over Rs 6,101 billion for 103 demands for grants relating to various ministries, divisions, and departments for the fiscal year 2024-25.

The Demands for Grants were moved by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb. No cut motions were moved on these demands for grants.

These demands were related to Aviation Division, Cabinet, Intelligence Bureau, Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Prime Minister's office (Public), National Disaster Management Authority, Federal Public Service Commission, Civil Services Academy, Council of Common Interest (secretariat), Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division, Commerce Division, Communications Division, expenditure of communication divisions, Pakistan Post Office Department, Defence Division, Defence services, Defence Production division, Economic Affairs Division, miscellaneous expenditure of economic Division, Geological survey of Pakistan, Federal Education and Professional Training division, Higher Education Commission, National Rahmatul-Lil-Allameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyyin Authority, National Heritage and Culture Division, other expenditure of finance division, controller general of accounts, superannuation allowance and pension, Housing and works division, Human Rights division, National Commission for Human Rights, National Commission on the right of Child, National Commission on the Status of Women, Industries and Production Division, Information and Broadcasting division, miscellaneous expenditure of Information and

Broadcasting Division, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, Combined Civil Armed Forces, National Counter Terrorism Authority, Inter-provincial Coordination Division, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division, Federal Judicial Academy, Federal Shariat Court, District Judiciary, Islamabad Capital Territory, Maritime Affairs, Division, Narcotic Control Division, National Assembly, the Senate, National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Devising, Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Division, Parliamentary Affairs Division, Planning Development and Special initiatives division, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Benazir Income Support Programme, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Privatization Division, Railways Division, Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Division, Science and Technology Division, States and Frontier Regions Division, Water Resources Division, Federal miscellaneous investments and other loans and Advances, Development Expenditure of Aviation Division, Development expenditure of Board of investment,

Development Expenditure of Special Technology Zones Authority Division, Development Expenditure of Establishment Division, Development Expenditures of Supraco, Development Expenditure of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division, Development expenditure of commerce division, Development expenditure of communications Division, Development expenditure of Defence division, Development expenditure of

Power Division, Development Expenditure of Federal Education and Professional Training Division, Development expenditure of Higher Education Commission, Development expenditure of National Heritage and Culture Division, Development Expenditure of Revenue Division, Development Expenditure of Human Rights Division, Development Expenditure of Information and Broadcasting Division, Development Expenditure of Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, Development Expenditure inter Provincial Coordination Division, Development Expenditure of Law and Justice Division, Development Expenditure of Narcotics Control, Development Expenditure of National Food Security and Research Division, Development expenditure of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Division, Development expenditure of planning Development and Special Initiatives Division, Development expenditure of Science and Technology Division, Development Expenditure of Stats and Frontier Regions, Development Expenditure of Water Recourses Division, Capital Outlay on development of Atomic Energy, Capital outlay on Development of Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Capital Outlay on Petroleum Division, Capital Outlay on Federal Investments, Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government, External Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government, Capital Outlay on Civil Works, Capital outlay on Industrial Development, Capital Outlay on Maritime Affairs Division and Capital Outlay on Railways divisions.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Extremist threat

As the state continues to explain to the nation what exactly the Azm-i-Istehkam campaign will entail, particularly in the realm of counterterrorism measures, there is also a need to discuss steps to counter violent extremism in the country.

While the military and civil law-enforcement agencies battle militants in the field, a similar campaign should be waged to deradicalise society, as both terrorism and extremism are joined at the hip, and feed off each other. Just over the past few months, we have witnessed lynchings based on doubtful allegations of blasphemy, as well as the persecution of minority communities for practising their faith even within the privacy of their homes.

Thus, while the state takes on what it calls the 'remnants' of terrorist outfits, it should not ignore the extremism threat. There may be some realisation of this at the top, as a recent statement from the PM Office, while discussing Azm-i-Istehkam, specifically mentions the need to implement the revised National Action Plan.

Indeed, a blueprint for the deradicalisation of society exists in the shape of the updated NAP. But until NAP's goals are implemented to the letter, deradicalisation will simply remain a theory, as extremists continue to further their toxic narratives in society. Point number three of the updated NAP mentions "taking effective measures against religious/sectarian persecution & terrorism".

As noted, there has been no shortage of incidents of religious and sectarian persecution in Pakistan. The question is: do those who control the levers of state intend to confront the extremist elements that are fanning the flames of hatred in society? Will those who encourage lynch mobs and the persecution of religious minorities be brought to justice?

Unless these bold steps are taken, it is difficult to see Azm-i-Istehkam succeed, and a few years down the line we may witness the launch of a new CT operation.

The key to successfully implementing a CT plan, along with kinetic measures, lies in a practical scheme to counter violent extremism. NAP contains most of these elements, and experts in the field can be consulted to fine-tune the plan. But perhaps the single biggest step that needs to be taken to counter extremism is to bring to heel the groups that are promoting murderous vigilantism in society. Moreover, some political parties have said 70 'banned' organisations have resurfaced with new names. While there could be a difference of opinion over the actual figure, there is little argument with the fact that 'banned' groups are back in business not long after their supposed proscription. This cat-and-mouse game has been continuing since the Musharraf era. Proscription of violent groups must mean that they are unable to access funds or organise at any level. Anything less would be inadequate.

Assange is free

Mahir Ali

Julian Assange was already on a flight to Australia by the time the news broke early yesterday of a plea deal with the US, whereby he would plead guilty on a single count of violating the Espionage Act in exchange for being liberated.

This isn't an ideal outcome — he ought never have to be incarcerated in the first place, and cannot conceivably be compensated for the seven years he spent holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, let alone the nearly five years he endured in a tiny cell in Britain's high-security Belmarsh prison.

Nonetheless, it's a delightful alternative to what might have unfolded: extradition to the US; facing a court that may well have concluded that punishing those who expose crimes was more in keeping with the ideals of 'the land of the free' than pursuing the actual criminals; and a prison term effectively tantamount to a death sentence. What hopefully turns out to be the final scene in the last act of a sordid drama should be over by the time you read this. It was scheduled to unfold this morning in a courtroom on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, an American Pacific territory closer to Australia than to the continental US. A federal judge is expected to sign off on the deal, whereafter Assange will return home as a free man. No one can guarantee that nothing will go wrong, but the chances are small.

In recent years, there has been a bipartisan Australian push to secure Assange's freedom — combined with a bipartisan consensus on geo-strategically subordinating Australia to the very same empire whose depredations WikiLeaks

helped to lay bare — which may have played a role in influencing the Biden administration's decision-making. The primary consideration, though, is likely to have been that pursuing Assange's prosecution could compromise what had already been achieved by persecuting him: to deter anyone contemplating the idea of following in WikiLeaks' footsteps.

Throughout its existence, the American empire's primal urge has been driven by the fear of any individual or nation setting an anti-imperial example that others might seek to emulate: from Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s, to Cuba, Vietnam, Chile and innumerable others. Among whistleblowers, Daniel Ellsberg — who exposed the deep state's actual thinking on Vietnam — stands out as a worthy exemplar who escaped extended incarceration only because the Nixon administration slipped up.

WikiLeaks' key collaborator, Chelsea Manning, a soldier during the US deployment in Iraq, was sentenced to 35 years in prison after a court martial. She served seven years before being reprieved by Barack Obama in one of his few acts of decency shortly before he handed over to Donald Trump. The Obama administration also decided against pursuing Assange on the sensible grounds that the logical consequence of targeting him would entail similar proceedings against The New York Times and other outlets that had republished selections from WikiLeaks' trove of documents.

It would be difficult to argue that the 'Iraq War Logs', the 'Afghan War Diary' and the more than two million diplomatic cables (which helped to trigger the short-lived Arab Spring)

did not serve the public interest. The main US argument has been that the unredacted names of operatives and collaborators exposed them to retaliation, but there has never been any corroborating evidence of dire consequences. The main consequence for the empire was embarrassment, as its routine war crimes and frequently indefensible diplomatic machinations were publicised.

The US Democratic National Com-mittee leaks on the eve of the 2016 polls particularly incensed the losing party, but suggestions that he should be assassinated had been made even before that. When Assange faced extradition to Sweden over allegations of sexual misdemeanours, he claimed it was part of a ploy to extradite him to the US. Many of us were sceptical, but subsequent events bore out his suspicion.

His refuge at the Ecuadorian embassy became more uncomfortable after a change of government in Quito, and he was spied upon and maligned before the UK authorities were invited in to cart him away to Belmarsh. Whatever his flaws as a human being, the WikiLeaks founder and editor has done the world a great service by ripping off the empire's last shreds of self-ordained respectability. Amid the American war-mongering in Europe and the Middle East — with Biden's ill-disguised backing for the genocidal Zionist project — the world needs more revelations and clarifications of the WikiLeaks variety, and far greater freedom for journalists from Palestine to Pakistan, India and far beyond. Fresh revelations are unlikely to come from Assange — and Julian undoubtedly deserves to be left in peace. But, hopefully, the seeds he has sowed will bear fruit time and again. -- Courtesy Dawn

Eradicating torture

Rabiya Javeri Agha

It is often said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. This statement was starkly illustrated in October 2022, when the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) conducted an inquiry based on a complaint of custodial torture in Adiala Jail Rawalpindi, filed before the Islamabad High Court.

The NCHR report uncovered numerous complaints of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment suffered at the hands of jail authorities. Out of 35 inmates who recorded their statements, 26 prisoners (74 per cent) alleged various forms of torture and inhumane treatment. Every single inmate (100pc) spoke about financial extortion for accessing genuine facilities available at the jail. There was little to no oversight by the then Oversight Committee, and over the past five years, only one prison official had been dismissed for violating human rights — a mere dispenser at the jail. At that point, Pakistan had no substantive law criminalising torture.

Today, in compliance with its domestic and international commitments, and due to strong lobbying by civil society and NCHR, Pakistan has a stand-alone law on torture: the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022.

Torture is an act of physical or psychological violence committed by, or at the behest of, a public official for the purpose of coercion, confession, or any other specific objective. These elements must exist for an act of torture to be proven, and the penalty must be commensurate with the gravity of the crime. As

such, the passage of the Act in November 2022 was an important step towards justice and accountability that specifically defined and criminalised torture. Sadly, however, nearly two years have passed, and the law remains non-operational.

For the government and relevant actors to commit effectively to the eradication of torture in Pakistan, two crucial components must be implemented. The first is the passage of operational rules under the Act, which clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. These rules are necessary to establish a procedural framework for complaint redressal, investigation, prosecution, and compensation under the law. To date, no one has yet been convicted under the new law. While the Federal Investigation Agency holds exclusive jurisdiction to investigate complaints against public officials, the nature of this supervision is unclear. No functional wing dedicated to investigating custodial torture has been established at the FIA, and there is no complaint mechanism for such cases on the FIA's official website, unlike for all other federal offences falling under its ambit.

Delay in the passage of such rules and procedures with regard to complaints of torture has prevented the citizens of Pakistan from utilising this vital legislation for their protection and the realisation of their rights. It is imperative that these rules be passed immediately. The second, and perhaps more complex, aspect of this issue is the matter of resources. The country faces numerous pressing challenges, each demanding its own focus and funding. The eradication of

torture and the realisation of human rights are, however, matters of absolute urgency. Robust legal resources, including a dedicated team of legal advisers, are crucial to ensuring compliance with international standards on investigating and documenting torture, particularly the Istanbul Protocol. Financial resources are critical for supporting investigative procedures, including independent forensic examinations and medical assessments. Equally crucial are technological resources, such as secure databases for case management and digital tools for evidence collection and analysis.

Additionally, public awareness and education campaigns are necessary to inform citizens of their rights, particularly those deprived of their liberty and at most risk of torture or ill-treatment, and encourage the reporting of torture. Partnerships with civil society organisations and international human rights bodies can also provide support and advocacy, and contribute to an effective system of checks and balances. Finally, all personnel involved in the arrest, interrogation and detention of persons should receive training on human rights and, in particular, on the absolute prohibition of torture. The people of Pakistan deserve freedom from torture and cruel treatment. There is a trust deficit in our system that must be bridged to restore confidence in the state's ability to protect its citizens. Today, on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the NCHR stands ready to champion accountability, justice, and human rights in Pakistan. However, the government must also take a proactive and swift role in this crucial endeavour. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM calls for a special focus on promotion of alternative energy

Says promotion of investment Gov't top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday called for a special focus on the promotion of alternative energy, particularly solar energy, besides directing the authorities concerned to formulate a strategy for Thar coal gasification.

He, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters related to the Petroleum Division, said Thar coal

was significant to cope with Pakistan's energy needs and instructed taking measures to transport Thar coal to other parts of the country through rail network.

During the briefing, it was highlighted that despite minimal carbon footprints, Pakistan was among the top five vulnerable countries and that measures were being

taken to mitigate the climate change impacts by promoting products based on alternative energy.

It was told that a strategy would be formulated to enhance production of tight gas and smart meters would be installed to curb gas and oil theft.

The meeting was told that a policy was being formulated to promote

electric bikes and vehicles, and domestic electric appliances. Moreover, the proposals for deregulating the petroleum sector would be worked out besides digitizing the petrol and gas exploration.

The Petroleum Division authorities said that steps were being taken to enhance competitiveness in the petroleum sector, promotion of bio-fuels.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on matters related to Petroleum Division.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing the all Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference "Performing Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development" organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Islamabad.

Engineers must be part of campaign for 'Made in Pak' products: PEC chairman

FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Chairman Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon said on Wednesday that engineers must be included in the decision-making process at the highest level for establishment of the import substitution industry and promotion of 'Made in Pakistan' products.

Addressing the business and industrial community during a meeting in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he stressed the need to enhance quality and employability of the registered engineers and said that in this connection

the PEC had launched a six-month internship course for the young engineers.

He urged the industrialists to avail from this project as PEC would pay the stipend while their placement in industries would help engineers to understand the engineering related intricacies and present their workable and cost effective solutions.

He said that PEC was also funding innovative projects. "Last year, it had undertaken 250 research projects while this year it was funding 600 tasks," he said and added that next year approximately 1,000 projects would be launched in collaboration with the registered engineers to promote research culture.

WB team reviews progress on KP tourism project

PESHAWAR (APP): A high-level delegation from the World Bank's Implementation Support Mission visited the Planning and Development Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to review the progress of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project (KITE).

The meeting, chaired by Secretary Planning and Development Department, Shahidullah Khan, discussed the project's milestones and timelines.

The Secretary emphasized the need for expediting project activities to ensure timely completion and optimal impact. The KITE project aims to enhance tourism infrastructure.

Governor reaffirms to encourage women entrepreneurs of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Wednesday reaffirmed his strong commitment to encourage educated and vocationally trained women entrepreneurs of the province to achieve heights of economic prosperity.

Talking with a representative delegation of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) here at Governor House, the KP Governor underlined the need of providing business opportunities to educated

and vocationally skillful women of KP imperative for their financial autonomy and economic empowerment. Appreciating the role of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in bringing women folk forward in business, trade and vocational entrepreneurship in KP, the Governor said that advancement of women of the province in business and trade sectors besides proving their mettle in different fields including entrepreneurship was highly encouraging and positive advancement.

PSX turns bullish, gains 335 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend, on Wednesday, gaining 335.07 points, a positive change of 0.43 percent, closing at 78,275.65 points against 77,940.58 points on the last working day.

A total of 469,756,007 shares were traded during the day as compared to 292,186,284 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19,777 billion against Rs 11,414 billion on the last trading day.

Around 454

Gilani calls for united effort to improve economy

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Wednesday called for a united effort to improve the economy, stimulate business activities, and attract investment.

Addressing the concluding session of a conference organised by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce titled "Improvement of Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development", he highlighted the significance of such events in ad-

ressing contemporary economic challenges, stating, "Our economy stands on cross roads and the decisions we make now will have long-lasting implications." He expressed his gratitude to the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, the organizers, and the distinguished guests, acknowledging their pivotal roles in making this significant event possible.

Chairman Senate identified several key factors contributing to the current economic difficulties.

He referred to inflation adversely affecting the welfare of low income groups. He said, the decade-long economic stagnation that has impeded national progress. However, he recognized the recent positive trend in the stock market's performance and expressed optimism that this will continue and stabilize.

Regarding energy crisis, particularly the surge in electricity and gas prices, Chairman Senate called for an effective strategy to manage these issues.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Atlantic Ibis, Maersk Kinloss and Serenity carrying Containers and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile another LPG carrier 'Bateleur' also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on Wednesday morning. Eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Atlantic Ibis, Gaslog Geneva, Sinar Mendawai and Baustella left the port on Wednesday morning and three more ships, Chemtranslonian, Serenity and Maersk Kinloss are expected to sail on today afternoon.

SBP to observe UN MSMEs Day today

KARACHI (APP): The United Nations' Day on Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (The UN MSMEs Day) will be observed on Thursday, to highlight their valuable contributions towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations General Assembly, recognizing the important role of MSMEs in SDGs particularly in promotion of innovation, creativity and decent work for all, designated 27 June as "Micro-, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises Day" by a resolution on April 06, 2017.

On the occasion of the UN MSMEs Day, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will

organize an MSMEs seminar. The seminar to be held under the theme "MSME Finance: Catalyst for Inclusive Growth" is aimed to acknowledge the vital role of MSMEs in inclusive economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction. During the ceremony, the SBP and the financial institutions will reiterate their commitment to support and catalyze the MSMEs' growth through sustained increase in MSMEs financing, a SBP spokesperson informed adding that special events will be organized across the country in 16 field offices of SBP-Banking Services Corporation to provide a platform to prominent MSMEs, banks.

Political stability vital for boosting economy of the country: Governor

Independent Report
LAHORE: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, Qamar Zaman Kaira, met Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and the overall situation of the country was discussed in detail.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that stability in the country is related to democracy. He said that political stability is vital for boosting the economy of the country. Governor Punjab further said that promotion of higher education in remote areas of the country is his priority.

Senior leader of PPP Qamar Zaman Kaira congratulated the Punjab Governor on assuming the office. He said that Pakistan People's Party has strived for the stability and development of country and welfare of the people. He said that every one should play positive role for political stability in the larger interest of the country. Meanwhile, Director SOS Children Village Lahore, Almas Butt and Assistant Director Munazza Sheikh called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab gave a check of 01 million rupees to the resident children of

SOS Children's Village Lahore. It is pertinent to mention here that the Governor Punjab had announced a donation of one million rupees during his visit to SOS Children's Village Lahore on the day of Eid-ul-Azha.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that it is our national duty to serve the destitute and orphan children. Governor Punjab said that Islam also teaches us to treat helpless children with compassion and love. He said that we should collectively contribute to make such children responsible citizens of the society.



LAHORE: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, Qamar Zaman Kaira, called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Punjab health ministers laud improvements in govt hospitals OPDs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir highlighted the improving conditions of Outpatient Departments (OPDs) in government hospitals during a joint meeting on Wednesday.

The meeting, held at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, focused on the performance of these hospitals.

Salman Rafique, minister for Specialised

Healthcare and Medical Education, emphasised the commitment to maintaining the honor of vice chancellors, principals, and medical superintendents (MSs).

He stressed that patients should not face difficulties in government hospitals and announced measures against staff absenteeism starting Thursday. Reflecting on recent efforts, he noted significant improvements in hospital conditions over the past three months.

One killed, three injured in firing incident

SARGODHA (APP): A man was killed while three others sustained bullet injuries in a firing incident in Salum area, in the jurisdiction of Phularwan police station on Wednesday.

Police said that Sarfraz (50), Azz (44), Ali (40) and Afzal (39) were going to Sargodha by a vehicle when their rivals opened fire at them in Salum area. Resultantly, Muhammad Sarfraz died on the spot while three others sustained bullet injuries.

Hearing of May 9 cases against PTI leaders others adjourned

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has adjourned till July 5 hearing of May 9 cases against PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid, Umar Sarfraz Cheema and others.

Judge Arshid Javed of ATC Lahore heard 6 cases including torching PML-N office, containers in Kalma chowk.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a representative delegation of Bajaur District at Governor House.

Meeting discusses progress on targets assigned to TEVTA

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A meeting to review progress on targets assigned to the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) for bringing improvement in its performance was held in the Committee Room of the Department of Industries with Special Assistant to KP Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordhir in the chair here on Wednesday.

Besides, the Additional Secretary

Industries Shama Nimat, Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Basit Khalil and Directors TEVTA Munir Gul, Khalid Usman, Haider Ali and Syed Sajjad Ali Shah, others also attended the meeting.

The CM aide was briefed about progress on the achievement of the targets of digitization, sustainability, human resource, financial affairs, procurement, technical and vocational training, business and education and training, business production and other issues.

Protection of minorities' rights top priority of PML-N: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Information and Culture Punjab Azma Bukhari said on Wednesday that religious minorities' had always been very important for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

While talking to the media persons at DGPR, she said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz considered religious minorities as her priority, adding Pakistan was being praised all over the world for this act. She said that many important decisions had been taken in the

yesterday provincial cabinet meeting added that 400 billion rupees of Kisan card had also been approved.

She said the CM was working on projects that were not even promised in the election campaign adding 100,000 houses would be built in all the districts of Punjab and the CM would inaugurate this project on August 14.

The information minister said that the previous government had taken billions of rupees in loan but did not build a single house.

Former UC chairman killed in Bhalwal

BHALWAL (APP): Former Union Council (UC) Chairman Sarfaraz was shot dead by firing on his vehicle while three others were injured in the Salem area of Bhalwal, a private news channel and police reported on Wednesday.

According to the details, as soon as the incident was reported, the police reached the incident site and started the investigations.

The police lodged the first information report.

One kidnapped person recovered

Independent Report
SHIKARPUR: One of Kidnapped person Kashif Dharejo was recovered by Shikarpur Police from the katcha area of Jahan Wah on Wednesday.

According to Press Release issued from SSP Shikarpur Office that the Special Team of Shikarpur Police succeeded in safely recovering of one Kashif Dharejo when the team received the secret information of availability of the kidnapped person there and the kidnappers were shifting the kidnapped Kashif Dharejo towards other place and the kidnappers fled away while seeing the police close to them by leaving him. It may be recalled that the kidnapped youngster tailor master Kashif Dharejo was Kidnapped easily from his shop situated in city Garhiyaseen.

Governor KP emphasizes commitment to get rights of merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday emphasized his commitment to representing the interests of merged districts and acting as an advocate to get their rights.

He said this while addressing a Bajaur Jirga, led by central leader of PPP Akhunzada Chatan. Former Provincial President PPP Engineer Humayun Khan, Secretary Coordination Farzand Ali Khan, and Peoples Party Bajaur President Haji Sher Bahadur, among others participated.

Governor Faisal Kundi stressed the importance of maintaining

peace for the province's development. He criticized the provincial government for worsening conditions in education and healthcare, noting that even university vice chancellors remain unappointed.

He expressed disappointment that despite a significant Pashtun presence in Pakistan's cricket team, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not hosted a first-class match in the past 15 years.

Regarding development funds allocated after the 18th Amendment, Governor Kundi highlighted that special provisions were made for tribal areas, but these were mismanaged, exacerbating local issues.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Information Azma Bukhari and Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora addressing a Press conference at DGPR office.

LHC announces Sweeping reforms to enhance public service delivery, judicial efficiency

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has unveiled a comprehensive package of reforms aimed at revolutionising public service delivery, enhancing judicial efficiency, and implementing IT-based initiatives.

The reforms, announced on June 26, 2024, during a meeting, chaired by the Acting LHC Chief Justice, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, says an LHC press release issued here. The

meeting was attended by all the District & Sessions Judges of Punjab via video link, while Registrar LHC, Ch. Abdul Rashid Abid, Director General District Judiciary Abhar Gul Khan, Sessions Judge Human Resource Sajid Ali Awan, Director General Judicial & Case Management Tanvir Akbar, District & Sessions Judge Lahore Syed Ali Imran, District & Sessions Judge Bahawalnagar Shazib Saeed, and others.

International News

US warns Israel over Lebanon as UN sounds alarm on Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States warned Israel on Tuesday that a conflict with Hezbollah could spark a regional war, as UN agencies said 10 children a day are losing one or both legs and half a million Palestinians suffer "catastrophic" hunger in Gaza.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin met his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant at the Pentagon, saying diplomacy is the best option as fears of a major war against Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon have grown after months of cross-border fire.

"Another war between Israel and Hezbollah could easily become a regional war, with terrible consequences for the Middle East," Austin said. "Diplomacy is by far the best way to prevent more escalation."

Gallant, speaking at the opening of the meeting with Austin, said: "we are working closely together to

achieve an agreement but we must also discuss readiness on every possible scenario."

Israel's military said last week that plans for an offensive in Lebanon were "approved and validated" amid escalating cross-border clashes, but Washington is seeking to lower the temperature and head off another major Middle East conflict. In Beirut, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned that "miscalculation" could trigger an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah, and urged "extreme restraint."

Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly urged her Israeli counterparts to leave "while they can." Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, warned of the war's dire impact on children in Gaza in a briefing in Geneva. "Basically we have every day 10 children who are losing one leg or two legs on average," Lazzarini told reporters.

Citing figures from UN children's agency Unicef, he said that figure "does not even include the arms and the hands, and we have many more" of these. "Ten per day, that means around 2,000 children after the more than 260 days of this brutal war," Lazzarini said.

He said amputation often takes place "in quite horrible conditions", sometimes without anaesthesia. The UN's Rome-based World Food Programme, meanwhile, said a new report "paints a stark picture of ongoing hunger."

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership said its March warning of imminent famine in north Gaza had not materialised. "However, the situation in Gaza remains catastrophic and there is a high and sustained risk of famine across the whole Gaza Strip," the report said, warning against complacency.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivers a government declaration in parliament on the upcoming EU and NATO summits in Berlin, Germany.

Israeli airstrikes kill at least 24 in Gaza City, health officials say

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli forces killed at least 24 Palestinians in three separate airstrikes on Gaza City early on Tuesday and the death included a sister of Ismail Haniyeh, the chief of militant Islamist group Hamas, Gaza health officials and medics said.

Israeli tanks also pressed deeper overnight into western areas of Rafah in the enclave's south, blowing up homes, residents said.

Two of the Israeli airstrikes hit two schools in Gaza City, killing at least 14 people, medics said.

Another strike on a house in the Shati (Beach) camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 10 others.

The house in Shati belonged to the extended family of Hamas political chief Haniyeh, who is based in Qatar. One of his sisters was killed along with other relatives, family members and medics said.

Hassan Kaskin, a neighbour, said the Haniyeh family house was hit without advance warning before dawn on Tuesday. Footage obtained by Reuters showed the multi-floor building reduced to rubble.

A Palestinian was shot, beaten and tied to an Israeli army jeep

Monitoring Desk
JENIN: When Mujahid Abadi stepped outside to see if Israeli forces had entered his uncle's neighborhood, he was shot in the arm and the foot. That was only the start of his ordeal. Hours later, beaten and bloodied, he found himself strapped to the searing hood of an Israeli military jeep driving down a road.

The army initially said Abadi was a suspected militant, but later acknowledged he had not posed a threat to Israeli forces and was caught in crossfire with militants. Video showing the 24-year-old strapped to the jeep circulated on social media.

Gaza Project exposes Israel's systemic killing of journalists

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: In what has become the deadliest period for journalists since records began in 1992, the UN and independent observers are reporting a "systemic pattern" of targeting journalists and media workers in the Israeli-occupied territories. A major global cross-newsroom collaboration produced a series of reports this week on the systematic targeting of journalists by Israel. The reports also highlight how journalists in Gaza are defying death threats to perform their duty. According to the reports, surviving Gaza journalists have long known that their "press vests do not protect them. Worse, the protective gear might further expose them". Local reporters know, too, that "they are on their own, with the Israeli authorities banning foreign journalists from entering the Gaza Strip", the report adds.

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Russia orders Austrian ORF journalist to leave

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday that it had ordered the Moscow correspondent for Austrian state broadcaster ORF to leave the country after Vienna revoked the accreditation of TASS's chief correspondent in Austria. Russia's foreign ministry said it had summoned ORF's chief Moscow correspondent, Carola Schneider.

US, Russia defense chiefs speak as tensions rise over Crimea attack

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US and Russian defense chiefs spoke by telephone on Tuesday in rare communication between the two powers and with tensions rising after Moscow blamed Washington for a deadly Ukraine attack over the weekend on the Russian-annexed Crimea.

The two sides gave widely divergent accounts of the conversation – the first one between US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Russia's new Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, who replaced Sergei Shoigu in May. The Pentagon said Austin and Belousov discussed the importance of open lines of communication.

Austin initiated the conversation and it was the first such call since March 2023, Pentagon spokesperson Air Force Major General Patrick Ryder told reporters. Russia's Defense Ministry, however, said

that Belousov warned Austin of the dangers of continued US arms supplies to Ukraine in the 28-month-old war. "A.R. Belousov pointed to the danger of further escalating the situation through continued supplies of American weapons to the Ukrainian armed forces," the ministry statement said on the Telegram messaging app after the call. Relations between Moscow and Washington have plunged to their lowest level since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Diplomatic contacts between President Vladimir Putin's government and President Joe Biden's administration are now at "an absolute minimum," Moscow said last week.

Over the weekend, Russia said the United States was directly responsible for a Ukrainian attack on the Crimean peninsula with five US-supplied missiles that killed four people.

North Korea fires ballistic missile into sea: South Korean military

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the sea on Wednesday (Jun 26), the South Korean military said, according to the Yonhap news agency.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launch but gave no details, saying an analysis is underway.

The office of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida confirmed on social media platform X that North Korea launched a suspected ballistic missile.

"The suspected ballistic missile from North Korea is not expected to reach Japan," it said of the projectile filed toward the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan.

This launch comes amid increased cross-border tension as the reclusive communist state has been

sending balloons carrying garbage into South Korea.

North Korea's last missile launch prior to this one came on May 30, when Seoul accused Pyongyang of firing a volley of around 10 short-range ballistic missiles.

One day later, North Korean state media released images of leader Kim Jong Un supervising tests of a multiple rocket launcher system.

Analysts have suggested the nuclear-armed North could be testing and ramping up production of artillery and cruise missiles before sending them to Russia for use in Ukraine.

In a report last month, the Pentagon said it had confirmed this behaviour. North Korea has sent more trash-filled balloons southward this week, Seoul's military said on Tuesday.

South Korean authorities order battery maker to halt operations over deadly blaze

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean authorities on Wednesday ordered a lithium battery maker to halt factory operations indefinitely after a fire killed 23 people and said three company officials were under investigation on suspicion of having violated industrial safety laws.

The fire at unlisted battery maker Aricell on Monday was one of the deadliest industrial accidents in recent years. Each year dozens of workers in South Korea lose their lives on the job despite tougher laws and other efforts to improve safety. The company, located in Hwaseong, an industrial hub southwest of Seoul, was ordered to shut

Gun violence a 'public health crisis': US surgeon

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US surgeon general on Tuesday issued a landmark advisory declaring gun violence a "public health crisis" and calling for wide-ranging firearm controls that have historically met stiff political opposition. The advisory by Vivek Murthy, who was nominated by President Joe Biden, is the first such major report on gun violence from a surgeon general, whose office has limited authority but plays a significant role in public health issues.

A similar report on tobacco in the 1960s is viewed as a key first step to altering the perception of the substance's danger, ultimately leading to new regulations and a steep decline in consumption.

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Muqam meets with Tribal jirga's elders to end sit in

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday met with the elders of the Tribal Jirga and they ended the ongoing sit-in at Islamabad.

During the meeting, the minister assured the Jirga that he would seriously take up the issue of compensation for damaged houses in the Prime Minister's Steering Committee for the merged districts, said a press release.

The official decision of ending the protest demonstration was taken in the Tribal Jirga chaired by Javed Mehsud here while PML-N Tank President Samiullah Khan Barki was also accompanied by Jirga members.

Amir Muqam said that the government has no objection regarding any demand of the tribes and the tribes were the protectors of the borders. The minister said that he was personally playing a role in resolving their problems.

The elders thanked the federal minister for the assurance and said that they were confident that their issue will be raised in the relevant committee.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad: Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam and Tribal elders offer 'Dua' after the latter announced to end their sit-in protest.

NCHD, French embassy join hands to combat child labour, abuse, boost school enrollment

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), in collaboration with the Embassy of France has launched a comprehensive awareness campaign to address critical issues affecting children in Pakistan: child domestic labour, child sexual abuse and the enrollment of out-of-school children. The campaign's primary goal was to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of child domestic labour, targeting the demand side while promoting education as a key factor in eliminating child labour, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), one in four households in Pakistan employed a child for domestic work, often in hazardous conditions. The campaign aims to shed light on these practices, advocating for the protection and rights of these vulnerable children.

Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, emphasized the importance of this initiative:

"France is committed to promoting children's rights throughout the world, alongside all our partners. Our collaboration with the NCRC represents a significant step towards addressing the pressing challenges faced by children in Pakistan. Our shared vision is to safeguard the rights of children and ensure they grow up in environments free from exploitation and abuse," the ambassador added. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, said "With over 26.2 million out-of-school children, Pakistan confronts a severe challenge. Economic pressures and limited access to quality education drive many children into the workforce, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. This campaign is a call to action for all of us to ensure that every child has access to their fundamental right to education".

The campaign also tackles the distressing rates of child sexual abuse in Pakistan. According to the "Cruel Numbers Report 2023" by SAHIL, 11 children are sexually abused every day in the country. The NCRC is committed to advocating for stronger legislation and societal awareness to combat this abhorrent crime. In response to the increasing exploitation of children in domestic work, the NCRC has drafted the "Bill on the Prohibition of Child Labour in Domestic Work 2024".

This proposed legislation seeks to explicitly ban the employment of children under 18 as live-in domestic workers and introduce stricter penalties for violators.

NCSW launches first phase of transformative consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) has launched the first phase of its transformative consultation conference series titled 'The Next Horizon', aiming to create a comprehensive National Agenda for Women and Girls in Pakistan.

The series began with a conference on health 'Inclusive Healthcare for Women: Paving the Way Forward', organized in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Pathfinder.

Chairperson of NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar, opened the session by highlighting the urgent need to address the pressing health issues, facing women in Pakistan.

Speaking at the conference Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the government's dedication to advancing women's health.

He stated, "Our commitment lies in implementing strong policies and investing in healthcare infrastructure to guarantee that every woman in Pakistan has access to quality healthcare."

On this occasion, Special Secretary, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination, Waqar Ul Hassan and Lt. General (Rtd) Nigar Johar, also addressed the participants. Moreover, renowned actress and activist, Nadia Jamil shared her inspiring personal journey through breast cancer.

The conference featured thematic working group sessions that delved into various aspects of women's health.

The sessions included discussions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), nutritional disparities, common communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and emotional and mental health.

The recommendations include: Advocate for increasing the health budget allocation to at least 10 percent of the development budget.

Rubina emphasizes lifting beneficiaries out of poverty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid on Wednesday emphasized the critical role of skill development in lifting the programme's beneficiaries out of poverty.

She was speaking during a meeting with Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates. The discussion focused on key initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty through skill development and economic empowerment of women. She stated, "Economic empowerment is a prerequisite for the overall empowerment of women. Financial independence is the key to their freedom and success. Taking beneficiaries out of poverty is our top priority, and BISP is committed to various projects to achieve this goal."



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid meets Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss initiatives on skill development, health and economic empowerment.

ICT admin continues crackdown against price hike; arrests five traders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has launched a strict campaign against traders violating official price of essential commodities in the Federal Capital.

In a recent operation directed by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, Magistrate Saddar Zone, Mir Yamin led a price inspection of essential goods in the area covered by Police Station Tarnol, said the spokesman of ICT's administration.

During the inspection, Magistrate Saddar Zone visited fruit and vegetable shops, dairy stores, and grocery outlets from No. 26 Chungi to Tarnol railway crossing. The focus was on ensuring that shopkeepers adhered to the official pricing of essential commodities.

The magistrate arrested five shopkeepers while heavy fines were also imposed to the violators. These traders were found guilty of not displaying the official prices and were involved in wholesaling without proper authorization. They were handed over to Police Station Tarnol for further legal action.

The district administration has made it clear that it will continue its rigorous checks and actions against any vendors found violating the established price norms.

It is pertinent to mention here that operations are going on against price hike, professional beggars, illegal petrol filling agencies, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) filling stations and others on daily basis.



ISLAMABAD: A view of a massive traffic jam clogs the Islamabad Expressway, with a seemingly endless queues of cars, buses, and motorcycles stretching as far as the eye can see.

Wanted member of lady thief gang arrested; cash & valuables recovered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Women police team arrested a member of a former jail bird lady thief gang involved in numerous theft activities and recovered cash and valuables from her possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directions, the Women police station team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a lady thief gang involved in numerous theft activities. The accused were identified as Bhago Bibi.

Police team also recovered a mobile phone and cash from her possession. Case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is underway. DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and ensured the safety of lives and property of citizens on priority basis.

Citizens are urged to report any suspicious individual or activity through the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via "ICT-15" app.

Juvenile accused should undergo rehabilitation programme instead of being punished: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday declared that juvenile accused should not be punished rather they should undergo a rehabilitation programme and given special treatment so that they become responsible citizens in future.

The three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, granted the post-arrest bail of a 14.5 years juvenile accused in a murder case.

The court, in its order, observed that the accused Mehran was 14 years and 5 months old at the time of the incident according to the school certificate.

It further said that according to the first information report, two persons were travelling in the vehicle and during the journey accused Mehran along with one companion tried to stop the vehicle.

As per the case, the accused Mehran opened fire due to the failure of the vehicle to stop, killing one person, it added.

The SC said that the Peshawar High Court (PHC) had rejected the bail application due to the delay in the trial on the heinous charge.

The order said, "There is a law to treat juvenile accused differently from adult accused. According to the law of juvenile accused, they should not be punished but they should undergo a rehabilitation programme and they should be given special treatment so that they become responsible citizen in future."

NSU joins global initiative to enhance skills education

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad, a pioneer in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the country, has taken a significant step towards global leadership in skills education.

According to the University, this week, the university proudly announced its participation in the Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project's self-reflection process, developed by UNESCO/UNEVOC and the German Education Ministry.

The NSU's unique role in this project, setting a precedent for educational innovation on an international scale, is a testament to its leadership in the Pakistani technology university landscape.

The inaugural meeting, held on June 25 and attended by national and international members, including Ms. Alexandra Filippova of UNESCO/UNEVOC and Professor Yang Wenming of Shenzhen Polytechnic University, marked the commencement of a collaborative effort.

This effort, which includes NSU and a dedicated team of eight members that will be extended to 40, is ready to leverage digitalization and global partnerships to enhance learning outcomes. This collaborative spirit ensures that NSU's educational offerings are refined with a worldwide perspective.

Ms. ZHONG Zhuoyu, Programme Officer at UNEVOC Centre, Shenzhen Polytechnic University China, and Ms. Spogmai Shahab, National Skills University team coordinator, will jointly facilitate the program's implementation. "This partnership underscores NSU's commitment to fostering a dynamic learning environment responsive to emerging global competencies," remarked Ms. Filippova, praising NSU's proactive readiness.

AIOU to host Int'l moot on Pak-Iran academic cultural dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organise the Second International Conference on "Iran-Pakistan Academic-Cultural Dialogue" on the 2nd and 3rd of July in collaboration with Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan.

Vice chancellors of six universities of the Islamic Republic of Iran along with delegations will participate in this conference, a news release said on Wednesday.

Vice chancellors of 20 major universities in Pakistan will also participate in this international conference.

The conference will play an important role in further strengthening Pakistan-Iran academic, research and cultural relations and promoting the relations between the two brotherly countries.



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly, Raja Usama Sarwar calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Ministry introduces 'Cleaner Future for ICT Schools' initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced to launch an initiative to install wash stations in government schools, starting with 100 schools, aims to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and a healthy environment for the students. According to the details, under the initiative 'Cleaner Future for Our School' two wash stations per school will be installed, one strategically placed at the school entrance, which will encourage students, teachers, and visitors to clean their hands before entering or leaving the school.

However, the second wash station will be located next to the sports arena, which will promote cleanliness and hygiene among students engaging in physical activities. Under the plan a cleaner future for all, the ministry planned to expand this initiative to more schools in the future. "Our goal is to create a culture of cleanliness and hygiene, empowering our students to grow and learn in a healthy environment".

The ministry in a message said that "Join us in shaping a cleaner tomorrow. Together, let's create a brighter future for our students and our community".

IG honors female police athlete; pledges to provide better opportunities

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir other senior police officers were also present.

The IG Islamabad appreciated the lady constable and awarded her with commendation certificates and a cash prize. He said that Constable Umaira Sherazi success highlights her strength of perseverance and dedication to outstanding performance.

Rizvi, met with the promising athlete of Islamabad Police, Umaira Sherazi, in his office.

On this occasion, DIG Training and Commandant Capital Police College, Shakir Hussain Dawar, and



Commemorates international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking

ANF reaffirms commitment to fighting drug abuse and trafficking

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan (ANFP) on Wednesday observed the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, a day of profound importance dedicated to raising awareness and strengthening our resolve against drug abuse and illegal drug trade.

This significant day calls for global solidarity in addressing the challenges of drug addiction and trafficking, striving towards a drug-free society.

The day began with a Wreath Laying Ceremony & heartfelt tribute to the martyrs of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), who sacrificed their lives in the fight against drug trafficking. Their courage and dedication continue to inspire us in our relentless pursuit of a society free from the dangers of drugs. DG ANF Major General, Abdul Moeed (HI) M was present at the ceremony along with families of Shuhada.

During later half of the day a cycle rally and anti-drug awareness walk, were also organized which underscored the collective determination of the community, media representatives, diplomats, DLO's of various countries to combat drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Participants carried banners and posters with messages advocating for a drug-free future, spreading awareness among the public. The event was organized at the F-9 Park, Islamabad.

Director General Anti-Narcotics Force, Major General, Abdul Moeed (HI)M emphasized the critical role



of the ANF in combating drug abuse and trafficking. He acknowledged the sacrifices of the ANF martyrs and highlighted the ongoing efforts to create a safer and healthier nation.

The event was graced by the Chief Guest, Captain Muhammad Khuram Agha, Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control. Mr. Jeremy Milsom, the Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, Shahzad Roy shared his insights regarding today's event and highlighted the significance of raising awareness among youth and communities about the dangers of drug abuse.

Throughout the day, various activities were carried out across the country these includes: Awareness Walk in Peshawar, Martial Arts Competition in Quetta, Sports activity and Awareness walk in Punjab, and another Awareness walk/ Marathon in Karachi.

These activities were organized by ANF to mark the International day against drug abuse and Illicit Trafficking on national level. The activities aimed to educate the masses about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of preventive measures. ANF reaffirmed its commitment to fighting drug abuse and trafficking and urged all the participants to continue joint efforts to create a safer, healthier world for future generations.