

# Independent

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## Pak-China friendship vital for peace, development of both countries & region: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the Pakistan-China friendship was indispensable for peace and development of both the countries as well as the region and beyond.

Emphasizing on historic and unique significance of bilateral relations between the two countries, the prime minister reaffirmed that the Pakistan-China friendship was time-tested and enduring.

He was talking to Minister of International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao who along with a delegation called on him at the PM House.

While welcoming the Chinese dignitary and members of his delegation to Pakistan, the prime minister congratulated him as well as political leaders

of Pakistan on the successful organization of Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and the 3rd round of Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) of Political Parties on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said it was a matter of great satisfaction that there was complete political consensus in both countries on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Reflecting on his recent visit to China where he held fruitful and productive meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, the prime minister commended the vision of the Chinese leadership for the continued growth of Pakistan-China strategic relations and the shared desire of both countries to work together to ensure success of the CPEC and its upgradation to the next

## PM vows all-out support for KP's development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said the federal government would provide utmost assistance and resources for the welfare of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He expressed these views in a meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, who called on him here at the PM House.

The meeting discussed the matters related to the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a group photo with participant's of 3rd Pakistan-China joint consultative meeting of political parties on CEPEC, in the Federal Capital.

## Cross-party consensus backs CPEC, stronger China ties as Pakistan hosts first JCM

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the mainstream political parties of Pakistan on Friday displayed exemplary consensus to back the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the leaders reiterating their unwavering commitment to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China by thwarting all nefarious designs.

The political consensus was shown at the CPEC Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and 3rd Meeting of CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister

of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and member of the Communist Party's Central Committee Liu Jianchao who is on a three-day visit here.

Besides Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the senior leadership of all major political parties attended the event including Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, MQM's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Maulana Fazlur Rehman of JUI-F, Hina Rabbani Khar of PPP, Senator Syed Ali Zafar of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Munazza Hassan of Istehkam Pakistan Party,

National Party's Senator Jan Muhammad, senior politicians Afrasiab Khattak and others.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said the CPEC played a catalytic role in Pakistan's socioeconomic development.

He said besides ridding the country of a chronic issue of load-shedding, the development projects under the CPEC helped create hundreds of new employment opportunities for the Pakistani people which the people of Pakistan would never forget.

Recalling the recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China, the deputy prime minister said

both sides showed unanimity to execute the second phase of CPEC besides signing the modalities for third-party participation in the project.

He reiterated that Pakistan was committed to promoting people-to-people linkages as both countries stood with each other through thick and thin.

Dar said the CPEC constituted a vital pillar of the Pak-China economic and strategic partnership and that there was complete unanimity on its significance as it catalyzed Pakistan's endeavors toward socioeconomic prosperity and regional connectivity.

He said that the two countries were witnessing a high-quality second phase of CPEC with both sides prioritizing the agriculture, information technology, industry and mining and mineral sectors.

In his remarks, Chinese Minister Liu Jianchao said the agreements signed during the "very successful" visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif provided an opportunity for the two countries to upgrade their ties to bring about desirable changes.

He said the determination of both countries' leaderships sent a clear message to the world that the China-Pakistan friendship was unbreakable.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends a session of National Assembly.

## Budget 2024-25: PPP excuses unconditional support to PML-N

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has excused unconditional support to Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government on Budget 2024-25.

According to media reports, the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), did not yield any positive results as PPP did not assure the Prime Minister of their cooperation on the budget. Sources said that the party has stuck to its previous stance on its demands. The government had

requested PPP's support in passing the budget 2024-25, but PPP has demanded implementation of the written agreement on their demands before offering any support. Sources said that the government has not provided a deadline on accepting PPP's demands.

Yesterday, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the former's reservations over the budget 2024-25. The prime minister urged all political parties to work together for the development and prosperity of the country and public welfare.

## NEPRA proposes fixed charges up to Rs 1,000 for domestic electricity users

ISLAMABAD (INP): NEPRA has proposed introducing fixed charges for domestic electricity consumers, starting from July 1, potentially impacting millions of households nationwide.

According to sources, the proposal has been submitted to the federal government for final approval. The proposed fixed charges are integrated into the average basic electricity tariff.

The charges are tiered based on monthly consumption: Rs 200 for 301-400 units, Rs 400 for 401-500 units, Rs 600 for 501-600 units, Rs 800 for 601-700 units, and Rs 1,000 for usage above 700 units. Previously, fixed charges were not included in the tariff for domestic customers. The final decision on the new tariff structure will be made following the federal government's review.

## COAS Asim Munir pledges full support for CPEC

Liu Jianchao lauds Pakistan Army's role in providing security to Chinese nationals

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao on Friday met Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here at General Headquarters.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest, including regional peace and stability, and reviewed progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the strategic partnership with China and pledged full support for the successful implementation of CPEC, a flag-

ship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Liu Jianchao highlighted that he is visiting Pakistan as a follow up of the successful meetings between the leadership of the two countries in China.

He emphasized the significance of the longstanding brotherly relations between the two nations and expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved on CPEC, reiterating China's commitment to its timely completion.

The visiting dignitary also commended Pakistan's efforts in maintaining regional peace and stability, acknowledging the support of the Pakistan Armed Forces in providing security to Chinese nationals and projects in Pakistan.



LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari showering petals over the grave of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 71st birth anniversary, in Garhi Khuda Baksh Bhutto.

## New political party AP launched

LAHORE (Online): Former leaders of PML-N Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail have launched new political party in the name of Awam Pakistan (AP). A video has been shared on X account of APP with the tagline of "Awam Pakistan badlain ga nizam" which has been reposted by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Miftah Ismail.

The frustrated people were seen questioning in the video about inflation, shortage of gas and electricity, corruption, unemployment and shortage of girls schools.

Sources have claimed Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Miftah Ismail and former senator of PPP Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar were working on this project after quitting their parties in 2022 and 2023.

## Imran claims negotiations may result in toppling of PML-N govt

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan stated on Friday that any negotiations with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) could result in the downfall of their government.

During an informal media chat at the hearing of the £190 million reference case, the incarcerated former PM expressed his desire to negotiate for Pakistan's benefit, not for personal or governmental interests.

"I want to negotiate for Pakistan, not for myself or the government," he said.

Imran reiterated his willingness to step back if it benefits the country, saying, "Convince me it benefits the country, and I will step back."

He criticised the current government for not reducing expenses and failing to create an investment-friendly environment. "The country is in crisis," the ex-PM said.

"The government has not reduced its expenses, which is troubling. The current government has failed to create an environment for investment."

## Ambassador Munir exposes anti-Pakistan propaganda

NEW YORK (INP): Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram highlighted that several countries including Pakistan have been a victim of disinformation and cyber warfare.

Akram made these comments while speaking to the Security Council's High-Level Open Debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing Evolving Threats in Cyberspace".

The ambassador reiterated Pakistan's stance, emphasising on the necessity of a legally binding global document formed on the guidelines provided by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

While explaining, Akram referred to the 2019 and 2020 reports by EU DisinfoLab, which exposed

anti-Pakistan propaganda including disinformation activities, and cyber warfare. He said, "The 2019 report provided proof of 15 years of massive disinformation operations against Pakistan, involving more than 10 so-called NGOs fraudulently accredited to the UN Human Rights Council, over 750 fake media outlets, and 550 fake websites, even resurrecting dead people."

The Pakistan envoy stressed that the EU DisinfoLab's exposé on disinformation campaigns requires global attention.

Furthermore, Ambassador Akram discussed the Pakistan sponsored UN General Assembly resolution, titled "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."

## US supports direct talks between Pakistan, India

WASHINGTON (APP): The United States support "direct discussions" between India and Pakistan, saying the two neighbouring countries should work out the mode for the talks themselves, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller has said.

"We value our important relationships with both India and Pakistan," he said in response to a question from a Pakistani TV channel reporter at his daily news briefing on Thursday.

"As we have said, we support direct discussions between India and Pakistan, but the pace, scope and character should be determined by those two countries, not by us," Miller added. Relations between India and Pakistan have deteriorated since August 5, 2019, when New Delhi unilaterally annexed the disputed Himalayan region of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to heightened tensions between them. Official talks between the two countries have remained suspended since then.



RAWALPINDI: Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao, met with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, at General Headquarters.

## Five soldiers martyred in Kurram district landmine blast

RAWALPINDI (APP): Five soldiers of Pakistan Army on Friday embraced martyrdom after an improvised explosive device exploded on a vehicle of the Security Forces in general area Sadda, Kurram District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, five brave sons of soil identified as Havildar Aqeel Ahmed (age: 33 years, resident of District Okara), Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer (age: 30 years, resident of District Poonch), Sepoy Anosh Rufun (age: 24 years, resident of District Attock) and Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan (age: 26 years, resident of

District Haripur) and Sepoy Haroon William (age: 29 years, resident of Islamabad Capital Territory), made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

"Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists present in the area and perpetrators of this heinous act will be brought to justice."

Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

President Asif Ali Zardari strongly condemned the attack and lauded the martyrs.

## Total expenditures estimated in budget are Rs. 930.206 billion: Balochistan's surplus budget for FY 2024-25 presented with total outlay of over Rs. 955.602 bn

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan's annual surplus budget having total volume of Rs. 955.602 billion for the next financial year 2024-25 was presented in the provincial assembly here on Friday.

The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani unveiled the maiden budget of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti-led coalition government while the Speaker, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai was in chair and the Chief Minister in attendance.

Unveiling the provincial budget, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani said that while the total volume of provincial budget for the next financial year is over



Rs. 955 billion, the total expenditures are estimated as over Rs. 930.206 billion in the budget showing surplus Rs. 25.395 billion.

The Minister Finance mentioned that the budget allocated over Rs. 321 billion for development expenditures.

As per the budget docu-

ments and mentioned in the Finance Minister in his budget speech, Balochistan is set to receive Rs. 862 billion from transfers and the divisible pool.

The budget has allocated over Rs. 93 billion for law and order, over Rs. 146 billion for education, and over Rs. 67 billion for health sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Sahibzada Hamid Raza along with delegation of Sunni Ittehad Council called on speaker NA Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, SIC presented the name of Zartaj Gul for the newly Parliamentary Leader of National Assembly.

# Daily Voice of Masses Independent

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## Killing of terrorist commander in Afghanistan

Certainly, the killing of a high value target terrorist commander Abdul Manan alias Hakimullah in Afghanistan is a serious blow to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a designated global terrorist group, involved in multiple acts of terrorism including target killings, IED blasts against security forces and other heinous crimes like extortion.

According to the reports, the terrorist Commander Abdul Manan alias Hakimullah was neutralized by unknown men in Chagasarai, District Asadabad, Kunar province of Afghanistan the other day.

Needless to mention is that Abdul Manan also remained involved in facilitating terrorist activities in different areas of the country including Bajaur.

He was an important figure of TTP and member of TTP Shura Malakand, who is reported to be a close associate of TTP's Malakand Chapter Commander Azmat Ullah Mehsood (Azmat Lala).

As per the reports, Abdul Manan remained involved in multiple acts of terror including target killings, IED blasts against Security Forces, extortion and played a key role in facilitating terrorist activities in Bajaur.

The reports coming from across the border suggest that Abdul Manan's killing is result of internal conflicts within different groups operating inside Afghanistan. His presence in Afghanistan further reinforced TTP's use of Afghan soil to perpetrate terrorism in Pakistan.

Pakistan has mentioned time and again that the fugitive commanders and combatants of the TTP are using havens in Afghanistan to launch deadly cross-border attacks against Pakistanis, including security forces.

As a matter of fact, a report released by The Washington-based Center for a New American Security last month had mentioned that the TTP and other regional militant groups "are active and face few constraints on their activities from the Taliban—with whom they share core ideological beliefs."

The study warned that terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan "are intensifying and an Afghan-based Islamic State affiliate, the Islamic State-Khorasan, or IS-K, "constitutes the main international concern."

The given situation although manifests bad governance by the so-called government in Afghanistan but still needs prompt action against the terrorist groups operating inside country and using the soil for the cross-border attacks against Pakistan.

Undoubtedly, it would be a test case for the Taliban regime to take result-oriented action against the terrorists' groups and prove their ability to improve governance in the country.

### Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

The finance bill or proposed budget for the next fiscal year has refused to commit any resources or even set the national direction for climate resilience.

It has failed to acknowledge that Pakistan is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, and perhaps the least prepared. It has missed, once again, the opportunity to determine the course of action for Pakistan's sustainable economic development. Worse, the proposed budget has not outlined a vision for climate-resilient investments.

The finance bill has not shown any particular appetite for institutional or policy reforms that could help stop the economic bleeding caused by repeated climate-induced disasters or the slow onset that is threatening GDP growth rate and per capita incomes. Ironically, despite heavy losses, Pakistan has not explicitly adopted climate considerations into the budgetary process.

The government has, instead, opted for a simplistic formula for generating

tax and non-tax revenues, particularly by cutting subsidies. Economic development is a secondary target, and climate-resilient development is not even on the horizon. As seen in several other countries, the government can ensure that public finance is aligned with climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

The Planning Commission has still not embedded adaptation and mitigation in PC-1s that are the backbone of annual public sector investments. The finance ministry has not initiated the tracking of climate expenditures, despite attempts over the years by several development partners. The office of the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues has not climate-proofed reporting of federal transactions, nor has the Auditor General upgraded its auditing standards and disclosure rules.

The FBR is not tracking and reporting climate-related tax expenditures, nor has it supported the development of climate-resilient infrastructure by ensuring that tax policies and regulations promote investments in climate-resilient projects and infrastructure. In fact, none of the major govern-

ment players have strengthened climate-smart budgeting by embedding climate considerations into their processes. These lacunae are mirrored in the provincial budgets.

Some of Pakistan's neighbours have begun to climate-proof their annual budgets. Bangladesh is now graduating from least developed country status to become, like Pakistan, a low-middle income country. It stands out for its long journey towards human development and climate resilience. As part of broader efforts to mainstream climate finance across its public financial management systems, Bangladesh set up the Climate Change Trust Fund in 2010 with a governmental equity of \$350 million. Designed to help communities recover from climate disasters by supporting the construction of houses in cyclone-affected areas, the CCTF has supported the construction of embankments and provision of solar home systems.

While our finance bill has announced the government's intent to set up a similar fund, following the Climate Change Act of 2017, the finance minister

has clouded its future by not committing any equity from the government, without which it will remain a fictional fund.

Another example is the Climate Fiscal Framework that Bangladesh has implemented since 2014. Revised in 2022, the CFF emphasises institutional co-ordination between the planning, finance and other divisions to ensure effective implementation of climate fiscal policies and programmes. The CFF is designed to ensure that their vulnerabilities are integrated into national development and resource mobilisation strategies. It made way in 2018 for a budget-tagging system that tracks and reports on all climate-related expenditures, enabling them to identify, classify, and mark climate-relevant allocations in the budget system. There is a lesson for Pakistan: such tracking systems not only help improve policymaking to address climate vulnerabilities, but also add to transparency and accountability in its budgeting.

A climate-smart budget would typically rest on five anchors: i) an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change on different sec-

tors and regions, ii) a mechanism to track and report on related expenditures, iii) an alignment with national policies and targets, such as the Nationally Determined Contributions, iv) prioritising resource allocation for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building, and v) accessing domestic and international climate finance to fill the resource gaps.

In other words, rather than treating it as a stand-alone issue, Pakistan needs to integrate its climate considerations into the overall budget-planning processes. Governments across the world are routinely focusing on domestic financing through national budget reallocations, the establishment of national/subnational climate funds, and partnerships with the local private sector, civil society, and local authorities. No such intent is outlined in the proposed budget. Likewise, the budget bill has not committed to systematically pursuing innovative green finance mechanisms, such as green bonds, green loans, and green guarantees to mobilise climate finances.

True, Pakistan's fiscal space is narrow, yet we still

follow traditional debt relief involving rescheduling, forgiving, or reducing a portion of a country's debt, often through bilateral or multilateral agreements. This approach focuses on reducing debt burdens without necessarily addressing environmental and climate concerns. Debt-for-climate swaps, on the other hand, involve converting debt into funds dedicated to environmental conservation and climate mitigation. This approach addresses both debt distress and climate change by redirecting debt payments towards climate-smart projects.

Several developing countries have used debt-for-climate swaps to finance climate projects. This approach focuses on reducing debt burdens without necessarily compromising environmental or climate concerns. Debt-for-climate swaps, on the other hand, involve converting debt into funds dedicated to environmental conservation and climate change mitigation. This can help address both debt distress and climate change by redirecting debt payments towards climate projects. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Accounting for change

### Khurram Husain

The resistance to change in Pakistan is an old problem but it wears a new face every few years. These days the resistance to change is wearing the face of an accounting problem. In other words, everything from our debt management to reforms in the power sector and tax machinery appears to us as little more than an accounting problem.

This resistance to change has been the country's key defining theme for decades now. It was laid down by Ghulam Ishaq Khan as the principal strategy with which the country would deal with the massive changes sweeping the world, starting in the 1980s and accelerating through the 1990s. GIK and a small coterie of bureaucrats around him, including but not limited to people like A.G.N. Kazi, H.U. Beg, V.A. Jafarey, Saeed Qureshi, I.A. Hanfi among others, practically ran Pakistan's economic management in those years.

They were serious men, rightly famous for

their professionalism and intellect, and they operated like an exclusive club of power-wielding civil servants where admission was by invitation only. Mahbub ul Haq hovered on the outer edges of this group, a one-man army, trying to champion change at a time when this coterie manned the ramparts to keep all change at bay and protect the status quo.

What was the change they were trying to keep at arm's length? In a nutshell, it was the declining ability of the state to shoulder all the responsibilities it had picked up, first during the heady growth years of the 1960s, and then again following the disastrous nationalisations of the 1970s.

From financing the development of the country's infrastructure to maintaining a pricing regime for agriculture and energy, to deciding who gets how much credit and on what terms, and who gets to invest how much and where, and fetch what returns on that investment, the state played an overriding role in the country's economy in

those days. And this coterie of bureaucrats selected all winners and losers in the economy.

Pakistan was not alone in facing this pressure for change in those days. It was near universal. Around the world, governments were finding their power to hold a pre-eminent position in all national economic decision-making challenged. Some responded by digging in, others by searching for a way out, and yet others by trying to externalise the costs of staying the course. It was not until the late 1980s and the early 1990s that proper reform strategies began to appear in the global conversation about breaking out of this confinement and finding new ways for economic growth to continue.

Crucially, those strategies included a template for tax and power sector reforms. But they also included a more general withdrawal of the state from areas administering pricing, credit allocations, ownership of commercial enterprises and more. Taken together, these strategies came to be called 'the

Washington Consensus'.

In those days, GIK laid the foundations of how Pakistan would tackle the growing crisis of state and economy. It was his approach to first agree to wide-ranging reforms, then find ways to blunt their impact, stymie their implementation and where necessary, simply renege on commitments once the funds promised under the agreements had been released.

The first Benazir Bhutto government was overwhelmed by the scale of the challenges it had to face — the aftermath of the Afghan jihad was smouldering to the west, while to the east, an Indian arms build-up had drained Pakistan's coffers. A bankrupt economy at home and a strident IMF programme signed by the interim government prior to her taking power necessitated structural reforms so deep that governments since her time have struggled to implement them.

The first Nawaz Sharif government brought in some of the changes envisaged. They changed the debt management strategy, brought in

the first non-DMG State Bank governor in the person of Muhammad Yaqub, undertook the first privatisation, liberalised trade, passed the Sales Tax Act (by a sleight of hand where they disguised it under a money bill), and opened up the capital account to free up the flow of capital into and out of the country. They also successfully wrested control of economic policy from GIK and his coterie and brought their own people into key positions, such as Sartaj Aziz and Ishaq Dar.

This is what lay at the heart of the big fight between president Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif, ending eventually with both being brought down. But what started as a fight over changing the direction of the economy, eventually became little more than a changing of the guard. The reforms of the first Nawaz Sharif government were not built to do much, other than spur short-term growth, and encourage an inflow of dollars through the foreign currency deposit scheme that became an albatross around the

government's neck by the end of the decade.

What emerged from all this is a type of economic management that today goes under the name of 'Daronomics', and whose principal aim is not that different from that of GIK. Daronomics aims to find ways to retain the state's pre-eminent role in the economy, while allowing enough space to private sector energies to continue the process of investment and growth. This strategy rarely works, and when it does, it racks up a tremendous bill that eventually lands up in the fiscal and public debt part of national accounts. The challenge of our times has been to find a way to pull the state out of this role and, instead, have empowered regulators to safeguard the public interest. But the nature of the political power struggle in our country is such that all power has to flow upwards and be subservient to the requirements of this struggle. The non-stop struggle for power has paralysed the state at the top, and stymied its attempt to develop a sound reform strategy.

## Food, with thought

### F.S. Aijazuddin

It is not a novel idea: which interesting personality would you want to share a meal with? From 2012, The New York Times has run a weekly column 'By the Book', in which famous authors are asked to identify three writers (dead or alive) they would like to invite for a literary dinner. Predictably, most choose William Shakespeare — provided he spoke modern English.

Even earlier, since 1994, the UK's Financial Times ran its series 'Lunch with the FT', in which a singularly important living personality was invited for an interview over lunch at a location of their choice, at FT's expense. Out of 1,000 or so lunches, the FT selected 50 interviews, publishing them as Lunch with the FT — A Second Helping (2019).

Intended to be a one-to-one, the FT occasionally had to pay for accompanying security details. One brought five guards. Modest by Pakistani standards, where no leaders worth their salt travel without a 50-strong police escort, not counting the ambulance team.

Not every interviewee honoured FT's open-palmed largesse. The newspaper tycoon Richard Desmond, for example, ordered a bottle of wine before the FT host could open the menu. It cost \$580.

The Brexit spoiler Nigel Farage (who now threatens to disrupt the forthcoming UK general elections) preferred to drink before, during and after his meal, and then between meals.

Donald Trump for his interview in 2013 chose his own Trump Grill, in the basement of his own Trump Towers on Fifth Avenue, New

York. The bill for two came to a modest \$74.

His fellow American Edward Snowden released CIA's and NSA's classified documents to The Guardian and to The Washington Post and then had to seek asylum in Russia. (Putin has since granted him Russian nationality.) Snowden asked his interviewer Alan Rusbridger (formerly editor-in-chief of The Guardian) to meet him in the latter's room in the secluded Golden Apple Hotel in Moscow.

Snowden's choice of food was unexpected: spicy chicken curry, followed by ice cream. His trenchant remarks about the limited choices before the US voter in 2016 — Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton — will resonate among voters of recent elections across the world. He complained: "We're a country of 330 million people and we seem to be asked to make a choice between individuals whose lives are defined by scandal."

Particularly moving is the interview with the juvenile Bana al-Abed, trapped at Aleppo in the war between the Syrian regime and opposition militias. In the absence of coverage by journalists, she became the voice from the carnage through her Twitter feeds, managed by her mother.

Especially poignant were her tweets in December 2016: "My name is Bana. I am seven years old. This is my last moment to live or die." Earlier she had posted: "I am sick now, I have no medicine, no home, no clean water. This will make me die before a bomb kills me." She spoke for every child in Gaza.

Readers of the FT book who savour the pickle of corruption should read the interview with Sepp Blatter, the controversial head of FIFA

1998-2016. He admits being startled at the 14-8 decision in December 2010 to award the Soccer World Cup 2022 to Qatar. He had tried to rig the vote 'behind the scenes' to ensure that the 2018 and 2022 competitions would go to the 'two superpowers' Russia and the US.

Blatter griped that French president Sarkozy had let him down. After an indecent interval, in April 2015, Qatar bought 24 French Dassault Rafale jets for \$7 billion. (Pakistanis will recognise overtones in the infamous French Agosta 90B submarine deal in 1994. Sarkozy was then budget minister.)

Many of the FT interviews themselves border on literature. The novelist Hilary Mantel who has written best-sellers on the Tudors and Thomas Cromwell was asked whether she was the greatest English prose writer. Her reply was artfully simple: "You're only as good as your next sentence."

The best interview — it is a personal view — is the one of Roger Federer by Simon Kuper, conducted on board a private jet flying from Zurich to Madrid. Federer talks movingly about balancing the demands of world-class tennis with the imperative of playing Lego with his young son.

Kuper concludes with this paragraph that is an ace in itself: "Federer throws an arm around me, and I put my hand on his back. Every other back I've touched felt like a single undefined mass. On Federer's back you feel every bone and muscle. It's like reading an anatomy textbook in Braille."

It is sentences like these which subordinate the locale, the food consumed, and the price of the meal. Such interviews elevate reportage into an art form. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Rule of violence

### Khadim Hussain

With 245 terror attacks on security forces, police check-posts and public places — mostly in KP and Balochistan — in the first quarter of 2024 alone, it is obvious that terrorism is once again eating into the vitals of Pakistani state and society. However, what is more horrendous is the repetition of the pattern of violence that Pakistan, especially KP, witnessed a few decades ago; terror is once again stalking various parts of the country, especially Malakand Division and the former Fata region.

On May 9, a girls' school was set ablaze in the scenic Shawa valley of South Waziristan. On May 17, the people of lower South Waziristan awoke to the terror of a bomb attack on another girls' school. On May 29, a girls' school was torched in Shakhmir village in Razmak, North Waziristan. Thirty-four schools, mostly girls' schools, are on the verge of closure in central Kurram district due to lack of funds. All this has happened a year or so after Afghanistan banned secondary and higher education for girls there — as happened under the first Afghan Taliban regime. In the latter case, some two decades ago, the terror syndicate in KP followed suit.

The terror syndicate and violent extremists see gender diversity as a threat to their discourse of homogenisation. They are scared of gender diversity as much as they are of aesthetics and cultural diversity. The religious militant discourse constructs women as objects devoid of any human agency. Women must have no public role in the worldview of the proponents of this discourse, who wish to de-

stroy every space that women can use for a public role. Their destructive tendencies start with torching and bombing girls' schools. Destroying girls' schools with impunity at this time marks the beginning of another phase of the rule of violence.

On May 30, a student of Malakand University, Musa Khan, died in a heart-wrenching motorbike accident. It was later revealed that the circumstances that led to the accident may have been created inside the university. Musa Khan had been issued a show-cause notice and then an expulsion letter by the university, because he had allegedly brought a rubab to a university event. This had put the young student under severe mental pressure, which might have resulted in his accident. On May 31, renowned folk artist Said Wali Wazir of Janikhel, Bannu was manhandled and his musical instruments broken by the local police. This seems to have been on account of the dread spread by the terror syndicate that is opposed to music. Said Wali Wazir's music concerts are already banned in his area.

Like women, primary victims of the empire of violence include music, art and poetry. The terror syndicate demonstrated its abhorrence for music, art and poetry two decades ago; the pattern is now being repeated: as they are an expression of aesthetics and the beauty of life, music, art and poetry must be banished from the social structure and cultural norms. Instead, the narrative of ugliness must be injected into life. This entire discourse hinges on erasing our natural feelings for beauty and artistic expression. Music, art and

poetry are powerful tools to encourage socio-cultural gatherings; the terror syndicate wishes to keep the people isolated. Music, art and poetry keep the people rooted in their home soil, while the terror syndicate wants them to be uprooted.

When one looks at this saga, along with the attacks by violent mob r a n s a c k i n g several churches in Jaranwala town, Faisalabad, in August 2023, and an attack on a Christian home and factory in Sardogha on May 26, 2024, one reaches the conclusion that religious diversity is also under severe threat in Pakistan. The torching of girls' schools and targeting music, art and poetry by the terror syndicate in KP and attacks on religious minorities by extremists in Punjab clearly indicate a pattern of the rule of violence in the country.

Political parties, civil society organisations, the intelligentsia, media persons, women associations and youth groups need to wake up to the danger zone ahead. Folk music concerts, poetry recital sessions, cultural fairs, arts exhibitions, study circles and other cultural activities need to be regularly organised in educational institutions and public places, especially in KP. Policies that facilitate violent extremist private militias and the use of religion for political interests need to be challenged. A paradigm shift in foreign policy formulation needs to be advocated at all forums. Genuine federalism and a constitutional dispensation need to be underscored. Lastly, sociopolitical and socio-cultural activism must be facilitated in educational institutions and the larger society. -- Courtesy Dawn



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of leading exporters of Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Economic growth directly linked with fast sustainable upsurge in exports: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said the country's economic growth was directly linked with the fast sustainable growth of exports. He was talking to a delegation of exporters, which called on him here at the PM House.

The prime minister said the exporters being the back bone of national economy, were extremely important for the government as they were playing a key role in the country's development. The country's economy would

attain sustainable growth when the export sector showed fast growth, he added. PM Shehbaz said the government was providing all possible facilities to promote the non-traditional exports. He expressed the government's resolve to take all the decisions in the larger interest of the people and the country. The government, he said, was taking measures to boost the export to GDP ratio. The payment of sales tax refund to the traders and industrialists was also being ensured timely, he added. The prime minister warned the relevant authorities that no laxity would be tolerated in that regard.

He directed the federal ministers to make consultation with the delegation to ensure resolution of all their issues.

The exporters expressed gratitude to the prime minister and the government for announcing a historic cut in the electricity prices for the industrial sector, terming it a breath of fresh air.

They also expressed their full confidence in the government's economic policies and assured their

## Lawmakers urge govt to provide more relief to agriculture, IT sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Friday urged the government to focus on people-oriented policies and provide more relief to the agriculture and Information Technology sectors.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) leader Muhammad Feroq Sattar, while participating in the budget debate, termed the budget for 2024-25 as traditional, reflecting a continuity of policies from the past 77 years.

"The country's current debt servicing issues, noting that most budget allocations are used for this purpose," he highlighted.

He said, "It is the government's responsibility to prepare the budget with the public's issues in

mind."

He said, "Unfortunately, every budget seems to favor the wealthy."

Sattar urged the government to focus on the agriculture sector and criticized the imposition of more taxes on salaried individuals.

He called for relief measures for the poor in the budget and asked the government to revise the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award.

He stressed the need to resolve Karachi's water issues and to allocate more funds to improve the city's drain system.

He also advocated for more incentives to attract Foreign Direct Investment and for policies that encourage a growth-oriented economy.

Sunni Ittehad Council's Rana Atif thanked his party for giving him the opportunity to contest the elections and promote the party's vision.

He highlighted the issues of his constituency and asked the government to solve these issues of every district without discrimination.

He called for the government to address the issue of IPP capacity payments and to take steps to further enhance the country's import.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Asia Naz Tanoli said that in 2018, the government solved the issue of load-shedding and that during the PML-N tenure, more funds were allocated for development projects.

## Weekly inflation up by 0.94 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.94 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 20, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 316.88 points as compared to 313.93 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review

witnessed an increase of 23.78 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16=100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, increased by 1.58 per cent and went up to 309.10 points from the last week's 304.28 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175, increased by 1.44 percent, 1.20 percent, 1.11 and 0.69 percent respectively.



ISLAMABAD: The delegation of All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealers Association (APFDA) calls on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain

## Shaza appreciates Google for creating local assembly of Chromebooks in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday appreciated Google for Education for creating local assembly of Chromebooks in Pakistan, saying that provision of digital tools to both teachers and students will help in reducing education divide in the country.

During a meeting with high-level delegation of Google matters related to effective use of technology in the field of education, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital economy were discussed, said a news re-

lease.

The Google delegation comprised Andrew Ure, Head of Trade and Economic Affairs, Asia-Pacific for Google, Kyle Gardener, Government Affairs and Public Policy Lead, South Asia, and Farhan Qureshi, Google's Country Head for Pakistan.

The delegation briefed the Minister of State for IT about Google literacy programs.

Shaza Fatima said that equipping the youth with digital skills for their capacity building is the need of the hour. Both teachers and

students must be trained in using digital tools, she said, adding that better employment opportunities can be acquired through digital literacy.

She said smart schools are vital for remote learning. Ministry of IT and Telecommunication will fully cooperate and support Google in the implementation of its initiatives, she added.

Additional Secretary, MOITT Aisha Humera Moriani, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam and Member Telecom Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim were also present in the meeting.

## Investment of approx. \$50m Engro fertilizers completes largest-ever En Ven plant turnaround

ISLAMABAD (APP): Engro Fertilizers has invested approximately USD 50 million in a plant turnaround to enhance its reliability and operational efficiency and the company successfully completed the largest-ever scheduled maintenance activity for the EnVen Plant, spanning 55 days, as planned on June 18, 2024. Established in 2011 with an investment of USD 1.1 billion, the EnVen Plant has an annual production capacity of 1.3 million tons and is the most energy efficient fertilizer plant in Pakistan, with the lowest consumption of gas per ton of urea, said a news release.

The project scope of the turnaround included over 5,000 technical activities, including the first-ever replacement of the waste heat boiler, overhaul of the furnace convection section, ammonia storage tank inspection and a comprehensive overhaul of six major turbo trains and gas turbines.

At peak, more than 6,000 people were engaged round-the-clock at the Plant site for these turnaround activities.

According to Ali Rathore - CEO of Engro Fertilizers, "The safe and successful completion of this major turnaround, despite extreme weather conditions, showcases the engineering excellence of the Engro Fertilizers team in executing large-scale projects within planned schedules and budgets, while prioritizing the safety of everyone involved in the activity. These critical projects were executed in-house by our talented engineers using innovative techniques and global best practices of safety and quality."

He added that, "The meticulous planning and execution ensured that the availability of urea to our hardworking farmers was not impacted, demonstrating the entire Engro Fertilizers team's firm commitment to our purpose of enabling the food security of Pakistan. We would like to thank our employees, contractors, global technical partners, local administration, and all other key stakeholders for their seamless support and guidance that contributed to the success of this major turnaround."

## Gold rates up by Rs.1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was sold at Rs.242,900 on Friday against its sale at Rs. 241,300 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,372 to Rs.208,248 from Rs. 206,876 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.190,894 from Rs. 189,636.

## PSX gains 8.96 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday gained 8.96 points, a positive change of 0.01 percent, closing at 78,810.49 points against 78,801.53 points the previous trading day.

A total of 471,344,897 shares valuing Rs.20.475 billion were traded during the day as compared to 452,637,253 shares valuing Rs. 20.675 billion the last day.

Some 436 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 137 of them recorded gains and 237 sustained losses,

whereas the share prices of 62 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 43,051,185 shares at Rs.1.27 per share, Hum Network with 41,927,277 shares with 11.13 per share and Pervez Ahmed Co with 37,352,634 shares at Rs.1.84 per share.

Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.75.60 per share price, closing at Rs.1,026.91, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile Mills Limited with a Rs.40.83 rise in its per share price to Rs.582.49.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with Google delegation.

## SNGPL disconnects four more connections

MULTAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) disconnected four more connections over different charges here on Friday.

The Sui Gas Task Force continued its daily operations, disconnecting four more meters and removing five extensions.

Four consumers had illegally transferred their meters from the service to their homes, causing leakage losses to the department. After thorough inspection, the task force disconnected all four connections. Additionally, a meter of a non-billing consumer was also disconnected and sent to the laboratory for further departmental action. Five consumers who were illegally supplying gas to more than one house had their extensions removed.

## FPCCI holds FBR's top anomalies committee meeting: Atif Ikram

Independent Report  
KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI and Dr. Gohar Ejaz, former federal commerce minister - who are jointly chairing FBR's Anomaly Committee 2024 from the business side - called a high-profile meeting of all chambers, trade bodies and associations at FPCCI; and, discussed the glaring anomalies in the Finance Bill and federal budget 2024-25 in detail on a sector-to-sector basis.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, will be presenting the dossier of anomalies from the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan to the federal minister

for finance and revenue to be reviewed by federal government's economic team and the prime minister to remove or resolve anomalies from the federal budget 2024-25.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh explained that, being the apex body, FPCCI will provide the government with the collective, aggregated, comprehensive and descriptive list of anomalies that are creating confusion, discontent and apprehensions. We deserve a friendly budget for the businesses, industry, exporters and the economy as a whole, he added. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh maintained that one of the primary measures in the budget that need to be reviewed immediately.

## Fertilizer dealers meet with Minister for Industries

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealers Association (APFDA) delegation, led by Chairman Ghulam Ahmed on Friday met with Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain to discuss specific issues of the fertilizer industry.

The minister said that government was committed to support the fertilizer industry for the betterment of farmers.

He pointed out that expanding the tax base to generate revenue was also a priority of the government.

## SBP injects over Rs2.6trln into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Friday, injected Rs2,601.55 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Purchase (Injection) on June 21, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted all the 31 received bids amounting to Rs2,471,550 million.

The central bank received 20 quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs1,984.7 billion offered at the rate of return ranging between 20.56 to 20.63 percent. For the 28-day tenor an amount of Rs486.85 billion was offered through 11 quotes at the rate of return ranging between 20.55% to 20.59%.

The SBP accepted all the 20 bids for 7-day tenor at 20.56% and 11 bids for 28-tenor at 20.55% annual rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also injected Rs130 billion in the market through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors.

The SBP received one quote amounting to Rs130 billion (face value of collateral) at 20.58% rate of return while no bid was received for 28-day tenor.

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## Minister for providing egg-laying hens to farmers at subsidised rates

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Dairy Development Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Friday directed the Rawalpindi Poultry Research Institute (RPRI) to resume its programme of providing egg-laying hens to farmers at subsidised rates.

During his visit to the institute, the minister said, "We are committed to supporting our farmers and promoting the poultry industry in the province. Resuming this programme will help reduce the cost of production for farmers and increase egg production, making eggs more affordable for consumers."

The minister emphasised the need to increase the growth of egg-laying hens to meet the demand of eggs in the province.

He directed the RPRI to take steps to increase the growth of egg-laying hens, including improving breeding and nutrition programmes.

Agriculture and Livestock Minister Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that last year 91 thousand sets of chickens were distributed among the farmers by the institute and the number should be increased this year.

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KARACHI: A vendor is preparing Falsa juice for customers at his roadside setup, in the Provincial Capital.

## CCP approves acquisition of Luxembourg firm with presence in Pak solar market

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the 100% acquisition of M/s. Actis Holdings S.a.r.l (Actis Holdings), a Luxembourg-based company having a presence in Pakistan's solar power market, by M/s. General Atlantic Partners, L.P. (GA), a US-based firm.

Actis Holdings is a sustainable infrastructure investor with a diverse portfolio in energy infrastructure, long-life infrastructure, digital infrastructure, real estate, and private equity sectors. Funds managed by Actis hold a majority interest in Solis, which is a majority shareholder in Yellow Door. Yellow Door is actively engaged in the solar electricity business in

Pakistan.

The acquirer General Atlantic Partners, L.P. (GA), founded in 1980 and headquartered in New York, is a growth equity firm that provides capital and strategic support for global growth companies. GA boasts an impressive portfolio of 225 companies across six global sectors: climate, consumer, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, and technology.

The CCP's Phase-I competition assessment identified "Power Generation - Solar" as the relevant product market. The assessment revealed Actis Holdings indirect presence in Pakistan via Yellow Door which has a market share of less than 1%, remaining unchanged post-transaction.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Maersk Chicago, Navios Constellation, OM Shanghai and Khaipur carrying Container, Chemicals and Gasoline, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, High Loyalty and Canopus with Edible oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day. Seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Simaisma and Navios Constellation left the port on today morning while four more ships.

## IESCO examines 1,310,874 meters across all six operational circles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) in the light of government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division directives has checked 1,310,874 meters since September 7, 2023 during anti-power theft campaign in all its six operational circles.

Sharing details, Chief Executive Officer of IESCO, Dr Muhammad Amjad said that fines amounting to Rs 627.75 million have also been imposed on the power pilferers. Some 1,872 FIRs have also been registered against

the electricity thieves while 1450 individuals have been arrested so far.

Dr Amjad said that a sum of Rs 3,338.66 billion has also been recovered from 130,019 running and dead defaulters during the campaign.

He said crackdown against electricity theft and the recovery of dues would continue across all operational circles, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantonment, Attock, Chakwal, and Jhelum, with the cooperation of the FIA, police, and other law enforcement agencies.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in packing mangoes in wooden boxes at fruits market.

## Ahsan Iqbal highlights Pak-China partnership as beacon of stability amidst global uncertainties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Friday highlighted the importance of Pakistan-China cooperation under CPEC amidst global uncertainties.

Addressing the China-Pakistan Political Parties Forum and the Third Meeting of CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism, the minister, "China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) serves as a beacon of stability, regional integration, and economic interdependence."

The event, attended by high-ranking officials and dignitaries, including Minister for International Department Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Liu Jianchao and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Honorable Mohammad Ishaq Dar, underscored the enduring strength of the Pakistan-China relationship and the pivotal role of CPEC.

Ahsan Iqbal said, the development of Gwadar Port, a crucial component of CPEC, was noted for its strategic significance, providing China direct access to the Arabian Sea and promising economic revitalization for Pakistan, the minister added.

He said, CPEC was envisioned as part of a broader vision for regional prosperity, fostering economic cooperation with neighboring countries. Phase-II of CPEC aims to enhance Pakistan's manufacturing capacity through industrial cooperation, attracting Chinese investment, and relocating industrial units to Special Economic Zones.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed profound gratitude to the Chinese leadership for their steadfast support in fostering bilateral cooperation and advancing the CPEC initiative and emphasized the unique nature of the meeting, which demonstrated national consensus on Pakistan-China relations and CPEC, transcending domestic political divisions.

He appreciated the Chinese leadership for hosting the Prime Minister of Pakistan during his recent visit, resulting in a strong consensus on bilateral matters, with both sides agreeing to enhance the strategic partnership and economic cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Lawyers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council calls upon Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah cutting the birthday cake of former Prime Minister (late) Benazir Bhutto, along with others parliamentarians at Parliament House.

## Holds crime meeting with officers No tolerance for illegal activities; officers to work solely on merit; IG Islamabad

Says Islamabad Police will not succumb to illegal pressure

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza chaired an important crime-related meeting with Islamabad Police officers at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by SP Investigation, Zonal SPs, SDPOs, SHOs, investigative officers, and computer operators stationed at police stations.

IG Islamabad emphasized modernizing the Islamabad Police stations under the "Special Initiative Police Station" protocols, making processes easier and more convenient for citizens, and striving to make the federal capital a crime-free city.

He urged all officers to work on merit and resist il-



legal pressures. He added that under the Special Initiative Police Station, an inquiry officer will be appointed 24 hours a day at each station to listen to public issues.

All SHOs should form their teams and utilize them effectively, gearing up against crime. He directed all officers to increase patrolling in their areas and ensure their presence, making lists of wanted and proclaimed offenders to trace and arrest them.

At this occasion, DIG Islamabad directed to place guide constables at the gates of all police stations to assist complainants and direct them to the inquiry officer. Trained officers will be stationed at the front desk to serve the public 24/7.

## Primary schools to introduce child-friendly policy in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to alleviate the burden on young students, government primary schools have decided to introduce Child-Friendly Policy in Islamabad Capital Territory. According to a source of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the federal government primary schools in the ICT are set to introduce a new policy from August 1. As per the policy, students will no longer be required to carry their school books back and forth between home and school.

Instead, the schools will provide pigeon holes and book racks in the classrooms to store the books, making it a child-friendly and convenient learning environment. This initiative aims to reduce the weight of heavy school bags and promote a healthier and happier learning experience for the students.

## AIOU announces schedule for online w'shops

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced workshop schedule for M.A/M.Sc, BS, and B.Ed (ODL programs) offered in semester spring 2024.

According to the AIOU, the workshops for the first batch will be held from June 24 to June 29. Each course workshop will be held for 6 days.

It should be noted that workshops will be conducted online on Microsoft teams through AIOU's Aaghi Learning Management System (LMS) portal. According to the Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan, login information (username & password) has been shared with the students and they are instructed to participate in these workshops through Aaghi portal.

All those students who have not received their user-name and password have been instructed to contact their nearest AIOU regional office. As per the instructions of Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the workshops of remaining batches of these programs will be announced soon.

## Lawyers' delegation meets Law minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of lawyers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council met with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday.

The delegation included KP Bar Council Vice Chairman Sadiq Mohmand, Ahmad Farooq Khattak, former Vice Chairman, Syed Amjad Shah and Tariq Afridi Member of Pakistan Bar Council, said a press release.

He said the posts of judges will be increased according to the necessary legal regulations after the budget.

It was expected that the said decision would make it easier for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to get justice.

In the meeting it was discussed that after the merging of Tribal Districts, the demand for filling additional posts in Peshawar High Court has not been fulfilled.

However, the minister assured that the government has decided in principle to create five more posts of judges in the Peshawar High Court.

## Kundi, Rana discuss KP related matters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday met with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaulah and discussed matters pertaining to the province.

During the meeting, Rana Sanaulah said that the Federal Government would fully cooperate with KP Government as all issues could be addressed with mutual consultation and talks.

"Peaceful protest is the constitutional and basic right of every citizen but no one can be allowed to use it for political motives," he added.

The provincial government, however, was on the path to challenge the state's writ for its nefarious designs, he added.

## Senators demand broader economic dialogue, people's centric approach in Finance Bill, 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senators on Friday demanded the government and the opposition to initiate broader economic dialogue and embrace people's centric approach to provide relief to the masses battered by economic crunch and inflation in the Budget 2024-25.

The members of the Upper House of the Parliament were presenting recommendations to the National Assembly on the Finance Bill, 2024.

The session commenced 22 minutes late from the scheduled time with the verses of the Holy Quran's Surah Al-Furqan that detailed the characteristics of the virtuous and

the followers of Rehman (The Almighty Allah) who walk politely on the earth and bear the best virtues of starting conversation with Salam (Salutation), seekers of the Almighty's forgiveness from the Hell and are not extravagant nor thrifty but maintain balance in their spending.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar while initiating the House business allowed Senator Poonjo Bheel to raise a matter of importance.

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP), Senator Poonjo Bheel urged the House to allocate some time to pay tribute to former prime minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her

birth day. Deputy Chairman, Sedaal Khan Nasar on behalf of the House paid tribute to Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 71st birth anniversary and directed Senator Sagid Mir to hold feteha for the departed soul.

Senator Bilal Ahmed Khan of PPP also paid tribute to his leader Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

He hoped that the government would consider the recommendations of the House on the Finance Bill, 2024 to provide relief to the masses.

"The current budget of Rs18 trillion was tabled before the House whereas the government had established its stance that the people did not pay taxes," he informed.

## IRSA releases 338,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 338,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 298,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarela Dam was 1457.18 feet and was 59.18 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 190,000 cusecs and 195,000 cusecs respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Rana Sanaulah.

## PUC condemns tragic incident in Swat

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Friday strongly condemned the tragic incident in Swat emphasizing that neither Islamic Shariah nor the Constitution and laws of Pakistan permit the killing or immolating any human being.

This was stated in a joint statement by PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Asad Zakariya Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Tahir Hassan, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, and others.

The Council expressed deep regret over the increasing frequency of such incidents, highlighting that the measures taken against the perpetrators have been insufficient.

The Council believed that it is the responsibility of the state and judiciary to administer punishment to an accused of blasphemy acts or discretion of the holy book.

The Council condemned the ongoing trend of individuals taking the law into their own hands, acting as judge, jury, and executioner, as wholly unacceptable.

The Council urged the government and all state institutions, particularly the police and judiciary, to handle such cases decisively and without any compromise, vested interests, or fear.



ISLAMABAD: People riding motorcycles as looking wrong side at a road in the Federal Capital, which may cause any incident any time.

## Talal urges Coalition partners to work together for extending maximum relief to poor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator of Pakistan Muslim League-N, Talal Chaudhry on Friday urged the coalition partners and Opposition members to come forward with better suggestions for providing maximum relief to poor people.

Reducing inflation and creating better life opportunities for common man should be the main goal of the political parties, he said while talking to a private television channel.

"We had spent sixteen months in a congenial atmosphere with coalition partners including Pakistan Peoples Party and run the government during that period for restoring economy and reducing inflation, he said.

Expressing similar hope, he said that Pakistan Peoples Party and other coalition partners should bring positive proposals so that reservation of Opposition could be addressed in a proper manner.

To a question about passing the budget from the House in the coming days, he said that government with the help of coalition parties would pass the budget without facing any difficulty.

All the political parties are highly mature, he said adding that we hope to resolve the issues of the Opposition for bright future of the people of this country.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted 9th Avenue due to Eid Al-Adah holidays in the Federal Capital.

## Randhawa commends CDA staffers for their services on Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Friday commended the officers and staff who sacrificed their own celebrations to serve the community during Eid-ul-Azha acknowledging their dedication and commendable services.

During the meeting to review the emergency services provided during Eid days, Muhammad Ali emphasized that serving the citizens is the top priority.

## PMSCO to hold math & computer science competition in September

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Maths and Computer Science Olympiad (PMSCO) would be conducting a Math & Computer Science Competition in September with aim to identify and nurture talented students in the said subjects.

PMSCO wants to promote STEM education and excellence in Pakistan. STEM is a type of education that integrates the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, said a press release.

## Rank Pinning ceremony of newly promoted SP held

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi along with DIG Islamabad on Friday pinned the badges to the newly promoted Superintendent of Police (SP) Majid Iqbal, a public relations officer said. In this regard a ceremony was held at CPO, which was attended by IG Islamabad as chief guest, while DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, DIG Headquarters Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer and CTO Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk were also present on this occasion.

The IG Islamabad congratulated the officer on his promotion and wished him all the best for his future endeavors. He said that promotion and increase in rank in the police service actually reflects an increase in responsibilities therefore, the promoted officer should make equal implementation of law, observance of merit and best service delivery and protection to citizens their motto and goal, he added.

He further said that the role of supervisory officers is of paramount importance in maintaining the writ of state, eradication of crime and ensuring timely measures for the service of the citizens adding that the promoted officer should play the role of best team leader in order to make full use of abilities of their subordinates so that the problems of the citizens could be solved on priority basis.

The SP Majid Iqbal thanked the IG Islamabad and said that he would spare no effort for the rule of law, merit policy and service to the citizens.

## APHC flays Modi's IIOJK visit, terms it cruel joke on Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has strongly condemned Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), calling it a cruel joke with the struggling Kashmiri people.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement in Srinagar, called the visit a cheap gimmick aimed at deceiving the international community about the dire situation in the territory.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy people searching valuables in a heap of garbage outside fruit and vegetable market at sector I-11 in the Federal Capital.