

# Independent

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KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing about Hutchison Ports Pakistan Terminal at Karachi Port.

## Country's ports being developed for regional corridor: PM Shahbaz

Directs enhancing seaports' efficiency to tap full potential

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the government was taking steps for the development of seaports for provision of shortest corridor to the regional countries, especially to the Central Asian States.

He said that with a spur in sea trade by the Central Asian States, China and other countries of the region would have inter-connectivity via Pakistani ports that would enable the country to earn worth billions of dollars as foreign revenue every year.

The prime minister expressed these views during a visit to Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal at Karachi port where he was given a briefing, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

On the occasion, he directed the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to prioritize installation of latest scanners on Pakistani ports.

The prime minister said that the customs authorities in collaboration with the ports authorities should take immediate steps for complete utilization of the seaports in Pakistan.

The prime minister was briefed that the process for installation of latest scanners on ports by the FBR was in

the final stages which would enable rapid scanning of containers in the short time with assistance of latest gadgets and artificial intelligence.

The prime minister said that for the progress of the country, it was imperative that its ports were also developed. He said that for increasing country's exports, the government was taking measures on priority basis.

Federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tesori, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chairman FBR and other concerned officials accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister was apprised that Hutchison Port, South Asian Pakistan Terminal was amongst the few global terminals located in deep seas which was being automatically operated upon.

The terminal had been equipped with latest technology and scanners and its operations were of the international standards.

The prime minister was further informed that the port had the capacity to handle the shipment of 35,000 containers annually.

## President calls for promotion of national unity, interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon the nation to nurture the qualities of affection, forbearance and tolerance by shunning all differences and play role for strengthening of national unity and interfaith harmony in the country.

In a message on the advent of new Islamic year 1446 Hijrah, the president felicitated the nation on the arrival of new Islamic year and prayed for the peace, stability, progress and prosperity of the country, President Secretariat Press Wing, on Sunday said in a press release.

The president said that Muharram-ul-Haram signified special importance in the Islamic history, adding that prayers and the worship of Allah Almighty in this month had been of great significance.

This month called for avoidance of sins, following the Islamic teachings and devotedly worship-

ping of the Creator, besides reminding about holding of introspection of the Islamic teachings, he added.

President Zardari said



that Muharram-ul-Haram also reminded them of the unprecedented sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his faithful companions and gave a lesson for the real objective of struggle in life which was linked with sacrificing everything in the path of religion.

Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions laid down their lives while facing the evil and atrocious forces of cruelty and in this

way, they had always been referred as beacons of determination and sacrifices, he added.

The president said this

In an official statement issued here on Sunday, the Governor said that not only the agricultural revolution would be brought by converting the agricultural tube wells on the solar energy in the province but the long-standing demand of the zamindars and poor farmers of the province would also be met.

This would also cast positive results on the agriculture and livestock sectors all over the province, adding the Governor believed.

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail also said that the Prime Minister is determined to provide new opportunities of livelihood and other necessary facilities to the traders, zamindars and industrialists of the province. He said that the public

## PM has special interest in development & prosperity of Balochistan: Governor

Independent Report

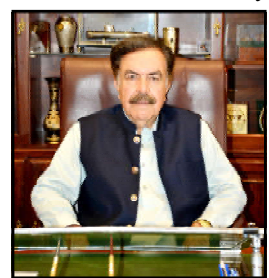
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has special interest in development and prosperity of the province.

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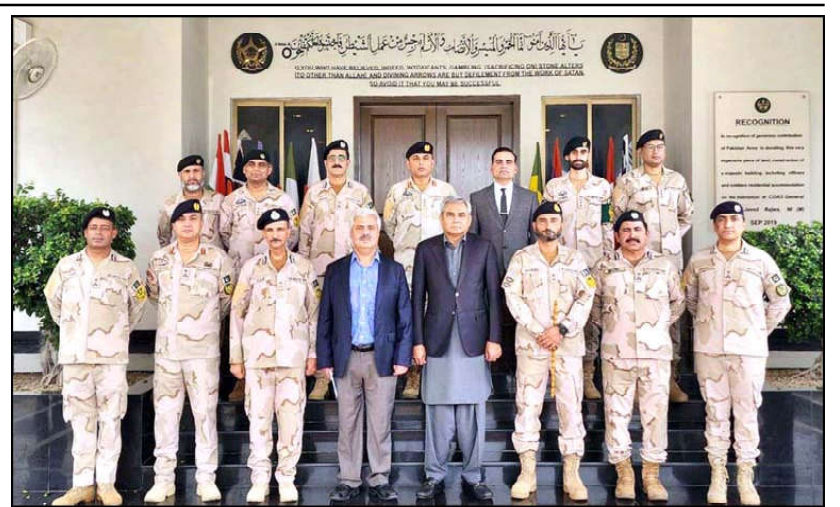
friendly policies of the federal government under leadership of Shahbaz Sharif are gaining extent appreciation at the public level. He said that Prime Minister is busy



in coping upto expectations of the masses from the day first besides diverting attention of the investors of the world toward Balochistan.

In addition to this, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is also taking special interest in provision of the new opportunities of livelihood to the unemployed youth of province.

He believed that the visit of Prime Minister would prove to be result-oriented for solution to the issues being faced by the province.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi in a group photo during his visit to ANF Headquarters.

## Premier to visit Quetta today

Independent Report QUETTA: The Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is due to arrive in Quetta today (Monday) on one-day visit.

During the visit, Prime Minister would inaugurate the project of solarization of over 29,000 agricultural tube wells in Quetta.

The sources said that the project of solarization of the agricultural tube wells is pending for last 10 years.

## Naqvi directs to launch crackdown against drug mafia

RAWALPINDI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi here on Sunday visited Anti-Narcotics Control (ANF) Headquarters.

The minister was welcomed by Director General (DG) ANF, Major General, Abdul Moeed and senior officers of the Force.

Mohsin Naqvi visited the Martyrs Memorial at ANF Headquarters and laid floral wreath. He offered Fatiha and paid tribute to the great sacrifices of the mar-

## Normalcy returns to Chaman with implementation of one document regime

QUETTA (INP): Following the implementation of the One Document Regime, life in Chaman city has resumed its regular pace after enduring an arduous 8 month-long sit-in that disrupted daily activities and exacerbated unemployment.

The city responded with enthusiasm to the new regime, with a surge in applications at the Chaman passport office. Currently, 9,500 tokens have been issued, resulting in 7,500 passports being successfully issued to applicants.

## MoU signed to promote gender equality, women's health & basic rights in Balochistan

QUETTA: The Forum for Dignity Initiatives Pakistan, Commission on the Status of Women Balochistan, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's provincial chap-



ter, and MHM Technical Working Group have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote gender equality, women's health, basic rights, and empowerment in Balochistan.

Under the agreement, the parties will work together to provide equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life, raise awareness about women's rights, and implement laws and policies related to women's empowerment. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Uzma Yaqoob, Fauzia Shaheen, Dr. Tahira Kamal Baloch and Farukhanda Orangzeb emphasized the need for practical implementation of laws and policies related to women's rights.

## Digitalization of fisheries dept. completed: Govt starts ambulance service for relief of fishermen stranded in sea

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has started the sea ambulance service for the relief of fishermen stranded in the sea.

According to an official hand out issued here, the sea ambulance service includes the green and patrolling boats to be equipped with the necessary facilities.

Besides, the process of digitalization of the fisheries department has been completed in the province.

The digitalization of fisheries department cost Rs. 100 million, mentioned in the official hand out.

It was also mentioned that around 600,000 persons are associated with the fisheries sector in Balochistan. Out of them, 82,583 per-

sons are officially registered.

Moreover, at present 36 cold storage plants have been established in the province. According to the hand out, the fisheries industry has the potential to provide livelihood to around 2 million people in the province.

As per the official data, a total of 137,000 metric tons of fish was caught in Balochistan during year 2023. The fish caught from sea of the province cost US \$ 105 million.

Meanwhile, new projects have been approved in the fisheries sector in Balochistan for the new financial year 2024-25.

The projects included in the PSDP are: establishment of complexes in Atal and Surbandar.

## Around 98% target of polio immunization achieved as special drive concludes

Independent Report

QUETTA: Almost 98 percent target of special polio immunization campaign was achieved till its last day in 16 districts of the Balochistan province on Sunday.

The sources of Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication informed that the special anti-polio campaign came to an end in 16 out of total 36 districts of the province on Sunday.

During the seven-day campaign, around 98 percent target of the campaign has been achieved in 16 districts of the province.

However, the EOC sources informed that some 3,000 parents have been reported who refused to administer the anti-polio drops to their children in the province.

The sources said that

there are also some parents, who didn't cooperate during the campaign to get their children vaccinated against the crippling disease.

It may be mentioned here that the campaign was run in the districts including Pishin, Chaman, Killa Abdullah, Sohbatpur, Killa Saifullah, Zhob, Shirani, Usta Muhammad, Lasbela, Ziarat, Barkhan, Musakhail, Sibi and Naseerabad.

It was targeted to vaccinate over 951,000 children below five years of age during the special campaign.

Needless to mention here is that in all six polio cases have been reported in the current year.

Three of the polio cases were reported from Killa Abdullah while one each was reported from Chaman, Quetta and Dera Bugti.



QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Mili Awami Party (PKMAP) Leader, Nawab Ayaz Jozgazi addresses during the condolence reference on the occasion of the death anniversary of martyr Dr. Abdul Samad Achakzai, at Quetta press club.

## Punjab police raids Umar Ayub's residence, leader escapes arrest

ISLAMABAD (INP):

Punjab Police raided the residence of National Assembly opposition leader Umar Ayub in an attempt to arrest him, but he evaded capture as he was not present at home.

In a message on social media website X, Umar Ayub revealed that the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Sargodha had issued a bailable warrant for his arrest. He stated that police from Islamabad and Mianwali had recently conducted a raid at his house.

He described the raid as evidence of the lack of rule of law in the country and reaffirmed his commitment to continuing the struggle until PTI founder Imran Khan becomes the prime minister.

The opposition leader resides in Islamabad's F-10 sector, where the raid took place. The incident highlights ongoing tensions and legal battles faced by political figures in Pakistan.

## Increase in electricity demand in Iran: Electricity supply suspended to all grid stations of Makran Division

Independent Report

QUETTA: The electricity supply was suspended to grid stations of all three districts of Makran Division of Makran Division from Iran.

According to the sources of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), the electricity supply was suspended from the 132 KV Jeki Gormand and 132 KV Polan-Jiwani transmission lines due to increase in the demand of electricity in Iran.

The grid stations affected due to the situation are included: 132 KV Mand, Tump, Turbat,

Hoshab, Panjgur, Jiwani, Gwadar Dor, Gwadar deep sea port, New Gwadar International airport, Pasni and Ormara.

However, Panjgur and Turbat are being supplied electricity after connecting them with the national grid system.

The QESCO sources said that the concerned authorities of the Company are in constant coordination with the Iranian authorities for restoration of electricity.

It is expected that the situation would turn normal soon after restoration of electricity from Iran.

## 'No plan to abolish Ministry of IT'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication here on Sunday clarified that no directions have been issued to abolish the Ministry and its other departments.

The news item in a section of media giving the impression that the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, among others, is being abolished is distorted and fabricated, the Ministry said in a press release.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Political prerogative

On the question of national security at least, the PTI is willing to lend an ear to the government. The party's decision to participate in a political stakeholders' conference on Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, confirmed to the media by the PTI's incarcerated chief Imran Khan on Friday, has been welcomed by the PML-N-led government and is being seen as a significant development with respect to the prospects of the proposed military action. The PTI has been one of the strongest critics of the operation and has resisted it strongly, along with other opposition parties. The party and those aligned with it on the matter believe that another military operation may destabilise the country further by disrupting the economies of the affected areas and precipitating the kind of social uprooting and upheaval that became part and parcel of earlier military operations against militants and terrorist forces.

Despite those reservations, Mr Khan has instructed party leaders to hear the government out and present the PTI's concerns through the forum of the proposed multiparty conference. "It is good to hear the PTI founder's statement [...] this is a matter of national importance, and all political parties should be taken on board," the information minister said. However, the government should announce a date for the conference as soon as possible in order to capitalise on the opportunity. Since the PTI rules KP and represents a large section of the national electorate, its buy-in is critical for the operation's success. Encouragingly, some in the ruling party seem to be taking the PTI's willingness to participate as an opportunity for engagement on broader issues as well. The defence minister, while commenting on the matter, has said the government remains open to engaging with the PTI and that the PML-N president, too, has kept the doors for negotiations open.

However, the government and opposition's tentative steps towards political engagement on Operation Azm-i-Istehkam may face difficulties. The Corps Commanders' Conference, held on the same day the multiparty conference was being considered, was followed by a terse public rebuke to those criticising the operation. The military command reportedly considers the critics to be engaging in "deliberate misrepresentation of the [military's] vision, only for furthering their vested interests", according to a statement issued by ISPR. This perspective seems to completely overlook the concerns held by the residents and representatives of the areas that are most likely to be affected by the proposed operation.

To avoid the social instability that the politicians have voiced their concerns about, it would be better if the proposed counterterrorism operation starts only after a political consensus has been reached. It should be left to parliament to decide how the country must proceed on the matter.

## Chinese investment

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Since 2015, China has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan. Has that bolstered our economic development? Opinions vary. Most people feel that Chinese investments, led by CPEC, have contributed to improving the country's road, electricity and port infrastructure. A smaller segment is sceptical, arguing that these investments have contributed to Pakistan's debt trap. A dispassionate analysis is needed.

When President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan in April 2015 to launch CPEC, Pakistan was in the throes of transnational terrorism. Operation Zarb-i-Azb was underway in North Waziristan. In 2016, the US, India and Afghanistan commenced efforts to isolate Pakistan diplomatically. Naturally, no country was ready to invest here at that time. Under these circumstances, the \$46 billion worth of promised investments from China were a breath of fresh air.

An early CPEC harvest was the reduction in electricity shortage and load-shedding, which had made everyday life difficult and had choked industrial production. The other benefit was an improved road infrastructure. Work was also initiated on Gwadar port and allied projects, many of which have since been completed.

Under the grand design, once energy shortages had been met and infrastructure developed, Pakistan was supposed to move to the industrialisation phase, for which work had to start on establishing special economic zones. However, we failed to seamlessly transit to the second CPEC phase for two reasons. One, the development of SEZs was inordinately delayed. Consequently, Chinese industry shifted to other

countries in the region. Two, from 2017 onwards, Pakistan entered into another round of political instability. Chinese confidence for investing in Pakistan was shaken gravely. The investments that were once expected to rise to \$92bn tapered at around \$26bn.

The present government has decided to upgrade CPEC. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China last month, the Chinese side agreed to help boost industrialisation in Pakistan, digitise the economy, and open new corridors for growth, livelihood, innovation, and the green economy. Decisions were taken to rehabilitate the Karakoram Highway, optimise the port at Gwadar, and train Pakistani experts in tech and agriculture.

This is a welcome agenda. However, there are big challenges to its implementation. First, evolving geopolitics, particularly the US-China competition, is making it difficult for Pakistan's policymakers to strike a delicate balance in its ties with the US, which is a destination for large Pakistani exports, and China, whose investments and financial help are important. The US is doing all it can to check China's economic rise through trade tariffs, investment curbs, and export controls, and is advising allies and friends to avoid Chinese investments.

The second challenge is the security of Chinese personnel working on China-assisted projects in Pakistan. Several attacks have been carried out against them, mostly by TTP and BLA. While China and Pakistan have decided to "enhance counterterrorism cooperation", Pakistani authorities would be well advised to mobilise the support of local people by addressing their grievances and making them a

partner in countering this menace.

In order to sustain China's economic engagement with Pakistan, a number of steps would need to be taken. First, Pakistan must find a way to stabilise its politics. A politically unstable country, with weak institutions, is unlikely to attract foreign, or even local, investment.

Second, there should be a long-term development plan with all major political groups on board so that continuity of the plan can be ensured across governments.

Third, given that CPEC is now open to third countries, we may explore the possibility of multinational joint ventures that include Chinese businesses. As is often said, no candle loses its light while lighting other candles. In a recent roundtable at a Lahore university, one Chinese expert mentioned that Chinese companies would be ready to work with transnational investors for projects in Pakistan.

Fourth, Pakistan would need to expedite the SEZs, without which major investment is unlikely to trickle in. Fifth, Pakistan needs an early solution to the IPP conundrum. Our treasury is bleeding while heavy taxes are imposed on the people to make 'capacity payments' to IPP owners. Chinese investors, who had set up IPPs in Pakistan, are also complaining that their repatriation of \$1.8bn is being held up.

Finally, all good ideas will remain on paper unless implemented in earnest. In this regard, government functionaries and regulators must recognise that facilitating foreign and local firms to do flourishing business in Pakistan is critical for our economic future. -- Courtesy Dawn

## So lonely together

Muna Khan

I cannot count the number of times I was made to give up my bedroom for a relative visiting wherever we were living as expats in the '70s to '90s. It was not a choice. In fact, I didn't even know I had a choice until I turned 21. It was pretty common for people to turn up unannounced — aunts and uncles who helped raise us — and we were expected to be there, irrespective of homework, exams etc. We were scolded if we complained about unexpected guests.

Now, I can't remember the last time we had an unexpected visitor drop by. I myself have not dropped in on anyone without calling to check if they are available. I guess we're all just that busy now. Technology has undoubtedly changed our lives and made the world smaller; we can talk to friends and family anywhere, anytime. You can attend birthdays, weddings, even funerals online. You can find everything you need online; you may even be safer online. But you are also cocooned in your own world online and the internet has made us more self-absorbed.

Yet paradoxically there's a loneliness epidemic all over the world. The UK was the first to announce a minister for loneliness in 2018, with the aim of reducing feelings of isolation, anxiety, and suicide ideation. Japan followed in 2021 as it sought to address the social isolation caused by Covid-19 which also saw the first uptick in suicide in 11 years.

Maybe we're ashamed to say 'I'm lonely' because loneliness is seen as taboo, something to feel embarrassed about. Perhaps because we are seen as a family-oriented society, with a strong sense of com-

munity, it's hard to say you're lonely when you're surrounded by people, even when you don't want to be.

As sad as that is, I'm more worried about younger folks who may not even know they are lonely because they believe their community is online. But as their elders, we know better: it is not the same as showing up for someone in their time of grief and happiness or just to shoot the breeze.

"The liminal spaces of our new world are massive — easy for us to be swallowed into — and disorienting," writes Athena Dixon in *The Loneliness Files*, part memoir, part critique on technology's impact on our lives.

Loneliness is personal but it's also the result of technological advancement in communication. By now, most of us have experienced some form of isolation courtesy the pandemic. In fact, isolation was mandated; quarantine was essential for one's survival. Some isolated with families while others were on their own — both faced issues: either wanting space or craving company.

Back in the day, artists and writers sought solitude and produced great works of art. Today, if you have a minute to yourself, you reach for your phone, as if being left alone with your thoughts is too awful a task to bear. Solitude is necessary for creation but look around you and everyone is scrolling on their phones, bookmarking places we'll never travel to or books we'll never read. We are simply 'liking' posts, not living lives. We're moving away from what made us human in the first place.

Given the current economic crisis, which makes it harder to meet

up with friends because we simply cannot afford to, could we begin to see a loneliness epidemic among youngsters, the largest demographic in the country and one that is always online?

We won't even get a minister to care about this. They would probably find tax loneliness if they could. Or happiness. Or breathing, bad air at that too.

Simone Heng, who wrote a book on loneliness, told Al Jazeera English: "Online connection is the junk food of connection." How can we find our way back to that time when we showed up for each other and didn't have so many boundaries that are isolating us? Dixon writes about her overwhelming loneliness. "I know there are those who feel the world is always just a little too far away or a little too close — never comfortable in either situation," she writes.

Loneliness is more than a mental health issue; it has serious health consequences. Loneliness can increase our chances of dementia, heart disease, depression, early death.

The internet is filled with tips on how to manage it — finding hobbies, volunteering, exercise. But my non-expert, tried and tested tip is to embrace it. To resist Netflix, true crime podcasts, the news — all these 24/7 connections are geared to keep you distracted from facing up to something you're avoiding. I believe a period of solitude helps you reflect on things that matter, which in my case, was relationships with friends. We meet to talk about how we're doomed, but at least we are doomed together. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### 5G-AI Revolution: Huawei leads next-level human facilitation towards intelligent future

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the coming decade, the transformative potential of 5G and AI technologies promises to revolutionize every facet of human existence. From smart kitchens that anticipate our culinary needs to autonomous vehicles that redefine travel safety and efficiency, the integration of advanced AI into daily life will streamline processes, enhance productivity, and elevate experiences.

In the recently concluded Mobile World Congress in Shanghai, where the transformative potential of artificial intelligence took center stage, Huawei emerged as the vanguard of the 5G AI revolution, pioneering

next-level human facilitation and ushering in an intelligent future.

The event, a convergence of global leaders and tech giants, highlighted groundbreaking advancements poised to redefine connectivity and human interaction in the era of 5G and AI.

Among the prominent unveilings was Honor's breakthrough technology designed to combat deepfake scam calls — an increasingly prevalent threat in the age of generative AI. These fraudulent calls, which manipulate audio and video to deceive victims, underscore the critical need for AI-driven solutions to safeguard authenticity. Honor's real-time detection

system, set to debut this year, employs AI to scrutinize minute details such as eye contact and lighting, swiftly alerting users to potential scams.

George Zhao, CEO of Honor, emphasized the empowering potential of on-device AI, addressing concerns over AI's impact on authenticity and security. His remarks echoed sentiments shared by industry leaders who see AI as pivotal in shaping the future landscape.

At the forefront of these discussions was Huawei, whose executives outlined a vision where AI's omnipresence is supported by robust telecom networks, particularly the forthcoming 5.5G.

### Result-oriented policies vital for attracting investment: Iftikhar

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik said on Sunday that results-oriented policies promoting good governance are crucial for building investor confidence and attracting foreign investment in diversified sectors of Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Muslim Khan Buner, he said, "Good governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, and efficiency, creates an environment where investors feel secure and confident in the stability and predictability of their investments."

He said in Pakistan, result-oriented policies could play a transformative role in achieving and maintaining economic stability, said a

press release issued here. Transparency reduces the risk of corruption and builds trust between the government and the business community, he said and added that accountability mechanisms must be strengthened which include establishing independent regulatory bodies to oversee financial markets, ensuring that laws and regulations were enforced fairly and consistently. Iftikhar Ali Malik said that streamlining procedures for starting and operating businesses could reduce the time and cost associated with investment whereas simplifying tax codes, reducing red tape, and enhancing the ease of doing business could make Pakistan a more attractive destination for both domestic and foreign investors.

### PFF delegation visited SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): President Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Haroon Ahmed Malik along with the delegation visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) Wahub Jahangir, Vice President (VP) SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh and President Sialkot Football Association Ch. Muhammad Ikhtlaq welcomed the distinguished guests.

During an important meeting scheduled at SCCI Auditorium, discussions were held regarding the promotion of football in Sialkot.

On the occasion, President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik in his welcome address said that Sialkot was an important economic hub and totally export-oriented city of the country.



QUETTA: Adviser on Environment and Climate Change to Chief Minister, Naseem-ur Rehman Khan Mulakhel addresses during the inauguration of My Abbas Industry held in Quetta.

### Cosmetics, agro based industry exports can fetch billions of dollars to Pak: MCCI president

MULTAN (APP): Exporting cosmetics, utilities and agro based industry products can bring foreign exchange worth billions of dollars to Pakistan to strengthen the economy which is undergoing troubled times the government should introduce business friendly policies to attract maximum investment to increase exports.

"Cosmetics and utilities are a huge sector for export. It has potential of 10 to 12 billion dollars.

### Call for overhaul of export training infrastructure

LAHORE (APP): Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejazur Rahman has stressed the need for a major overhaul of existing institutions and the establishment of new ones to provide specialized training in export-related fields. He cited that current setup is inadequate to meet the demands of the industry.

He was talking to a delegation of technical and vocational training experts in a meeting, in which a detailed discussion was held regarding the shortage of skilled workers for the hand-woven carpet industry and other issues.

If we shift its certification from Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), we can inject these dollars to our economy overnight, Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President, Mian Iqbal suggested during an exclusive interview with APP here on Sunday.

Moisturizing lotions, whitening creams, beauty

soaps, facials and scrubs are basic utilities which are in daily usage for everyone, he said and added that if rules are relaxed for its exports in the market, these can add billions of dollars to Pakistani exports.

He informed that fruits and vegetables are perishable and these can be transported to foreign countries with different means. Some countries who import fruits and veggies have set their standards and criteria for it.

### 9 arrested for overpricing essentials

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move to enforce official prices, the Price Control Magistrates have conducted inspections at 2,862 locations, leading to the arrest of 12 individuals for overpricing fruits, vegetables, and other essential items.

Lahore Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider told media on Sunday that 11 cases have been registered for violations of government-set prices. Furthermore, fines totaling Rs 400,000 have been imposed for 95 instances of non-compliance.

### Governor KP underscores railway line expansion to Uzbekistan under CPEC

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday highlighted the plans to extend railway connectivity to Uzbekistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said this during discussions with Sajid Hussain Turi, former federal minister and provincial vice president of Pakistan Peoples Party at the Governor House.

The proposed expansion aims to lay tracks from Rawalpindi to Kohat and from Kohat to Parachinar, ultimately

connecting to Uzbekistan. The Governor expressed optimism that this initiative would significantly benefit both regions, enhancing economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Regarding local concerns, Governor Faisal Kundi addressed the issues related to Kohat division, including delayed project of Kohat University campus in Parachinar.

He assured of resolving these issues promptly, promising to engage with the Higher Education Commission's officials for necessary actions.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing seasonal fruit displayed by vendor at Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.

### Collectorate of Customs achieved the target set by FBR

SIALKOT (APP): The Collectorate of Customs Sambrial, Sialkot achieved the revenue target set by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Islamabad for the financial year 2023-24. According to a press release issued by Deputy Collector Javeria Shahid here on Sunday, under the supervision of Collector Customs Saima Aftab, Additional Collector Customs Liaqat Ranjha, Deputy Collector Javeria Shahid, Chief Accounts Officer Amara Farooq, Assistant Collector Muhammad Khalid, Assistant Collector Amir Hamza and Assistant

Collector Humayun Mukhtar worked tirelessly together with their staff and the result was received in the form of achieving the target.

Anti-Smuggling Organization, Recovery Branch, Bank Guarantee Branch, DTRE, Export Facilitation Branch and Auction Branch played prominent role to get the target. Apart from this Rs. 852,369 million was recovered due to administrative measures, while a total of Rs. 1356.250 million was collected as customs duty and other revenue in the financial year.

**Meeting held for reforms in education, health sectors**  
**CM KP underscores need of digitizing the health, education depts for better utilization of resources**

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur regarding reforms in Health and education sectors in which important policy

decisions were taken. Directives were issued by the CM to improve and streamline the existing system of education and health aimed at ensuring efficient management and improving service delivery to the desired level. The chief minister stressed the

need of devolution of management in these sectors to lower level and further directed to post additional director general at the regional level for better and efficient management. He remarked that such large departments

with huge human resources could not efficiently managed from provincial level, adding that service delivery can be improved only when managed and looked after at local level; and therefore, it is necessary to shift the workload to regional level

. He further directed that teachers and paramedical staff recruited on domicile basis should be posted in the areas of their respective domicile where they are supposed to serve and necessary amendments be proposed in the relevant laws for this purpose.



PESHAWAR: Former MNA Usman Khan Tarkai meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.



PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) Leader, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour addresses during ceremony to mark the 6th death anniversary of his nephew Haroon Bilour, in Peshawar.

**Federal Minister receives UNHCR's high level delegation**

PESHAWAR (Online): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam warmly received UNHCR's high level delegation led by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on arrival at his residence. The Federal Minister welcomed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan. Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam also

presented a flower bouquet to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on this occasion. During the meeting, they discussed various issues pertaining to refugees. Later, the Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions & Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam also hosted a luncheon reception in honour of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in Peshawar at his residence.

**Swindler Gang busted, gold ornaments recovered**

MULTAN (APP): Old Kotwali police have arrested a gang of swindlers and recovered gold ornaments from their possession during a crackdown launched here on Sunday. In line with special directives of the City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali Dogar, Old Kotwali police under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO) Shabana Saif, launched a crackdown against a gang involved in depriving citizens of valuables. The police busted a gang and recovered gold ornaments from their possession, however, further investigations.

**Governor KP stresses on quality education through collaboration with international institutions**

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized that the provision of technical education under the supervision of globally renowned institutions will yield positive results. He underscored the need to focus on quality education rather than quantity in the province. These views were expressed during a meeting with education experts, including the prominent educationalists Nasir Qasuri and his wife, renowned educationist Amina Wattoo. Education experts from Beaconhouse School System were also

present at the meeting. Congratulating Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the constitutional office, Nasir Qasuri, and his wife praised his efforts and vision for promoting education and combating unemployment. Governor Kundi highlighted the urgent need for modern and professional education in line with current global requirements. He anticipated fruitful outcomes from enhanced collaboration between the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission and Beaconhouse School System.

**Climate changes to have wide-ranging impacts on DI Khan**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): DI Khan District has faced catastrophic floods, droughts, and cyclones in recent years that have killed and displaced thousands, destroyed livelihoods, and damaged infrastructure. Climate change raises the prospect that these and other natural hazards will increase in frequency and severity in the coming decades—a stark reminder that the district is one of the country's most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Addressing these risks requires the mainstreaming of climate change into national strategy and policy; and climate-smart investments in infrastructure, businesses, and skills. Adapting to these impacts may include: development or use of crop varieties with greater heat and drought tolerance, modernizing irrigation infrastructure and employing water-saving technologies, integrated watershed management, reforestation of catchment areas and construction of additional water storage, diversification of energy mix including investment in renewable and small hydropower projects, improved weather forecasting and warning systems, retrofitting of critical energy infrastructure, and construction of dikes or village protection walls.

Crops are categorized into two: Rabi and kharif. Rabi crops are sown in autumn i.e. October–December and is harvested in spring (March–April). Wheat is the major Rabi crop. Crops sown in summer are called kharif crops. The kharif crop season is generally longer in Pakistan, starting with sugarcane in February, cotton in March–May, rice in June–July and maize in July–August.

The model predicted the largest decrease of around 14 days for 10C rise in temperature in the growing season's length of wheat in the northern mountainous region compared to southern Pakistan, the agriculture expert said. The climate change has impacted and strained the agriculture sector in the region and has disrupted the entire pattern of cultivation. The sowing and harvesting of different crops especially wheat, has changed considerably in terms of months depending on rain

patterns and weather. The causes and effects are: First of all, in the rain fed/ flood irrigated areas, the availability of water is dependent on rains, which has changed its pattern. The monsoon rains are either scarce or too heavy impacting on rain fed/flood irrigated areas. Scarce rains make the area barren and heavy rains benefit the rain fed areas and damages the flood irrigated regions resulting in damage to flood channels and causing floods. Similarly, the winter rains required in the months of December and January when the crops need water the most have shifted to March and April which instead of doing good adversely affects the crops. Second, The sowing of wheat and grain used to be done in the month of October but due to severity of weather has been shifted to November.

**PFA seizes 200 kg expired snacks**

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has seized 200 kilogram expired snacks during a special operation launched on Sunday. In line with special directives of Director General (DG) Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Muhammad Asif Javed, the food safety teams striving hard to ensure good quality food items to the masses. In this regard, a special operation was conducted by Muzaffargarh food safety team and seized 200 kilogram expired snacks. The expired snacks were going to be supplied at different shops.

**Floods, glacier bursts likely in 11 districts of KP: Monsoon Alert**

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a monsoon alert, warning of potential floods and glacier bursts in eleven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PDMA has instructed all district administrations in the province to remain vigilant, reported a private news channel. According to the PDMA alert, thunderstorms and heavy rains are expected in the mountainous areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There was also a

possibility of dusty winds and floods in low-lying areas. Districts that may be affected include Swat, Chitral Lower, Chitral Upper, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Charsadda, DI Khan, Nowshera, Tank, and Shangla. The PDMA highlighted that rising temperatures and melting glaciers could lead to flooding. Despite the alert, the situation is currently normal in all districts of KP. PDMA said that to mitigate potential disasters, control rooms will be established in the affected districts.

**International News**

**Israeli strike kills 16, injures over 50 at UN school in Gaza**

CAIRO: At least 16 people were killed in an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in Al-Nuseirat in central Gaza on Saturday, the territory's health ministry and the official Palestinian news agency said. The Israeli military said it was looking into the report. The health ministry said the attack on the school killed at least 16 people and wounded more than 50. Mahmoud Basal, spokesman for the Gaza Civil Emergency Service, said the number of dead could rise because many of the wounded were in critical condition. The attack on the school meant no place in the enclave was safe for families who leave their houses to seek

shelters, he said in a statement. Al-Nuseirat, one of Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, was the site of stepped-up Israeli bombardment on Saturday. An air strike earlier on a house in the camp killed at least 10 people and wounded many others, according to medics. In its daily update of people killed in the nearly nine-month-old war, the Gaza health ministry said Israeli military strikes across the enclave killed at least 29 Palestinians in the past 24 hours and wounded 100 others. Among those killed in separate air strikes were five local journalists, raising the toll of journalists killed since October last year to 158, according to the Hamas-led Gaza government me-

dia office. Gaza health authorities say more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive. Israeli forces, which have deepened their incursions into Rafah, in the south of the enclave near the border with Egypt, killed four Palestinian policemen and wounded eight others, in an air strike on their vehicle on Saturday, health officials said. A statement issued by the Hamas-run interior ministry said the four included Fares Abdel-Aul, the head of the police force in western Rafah neighbourhood of Tel Al-Sultan. The Israeli military said forces continued "intelligence-based operations" in Rafah.



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli air strike on a UN school sheltering displaced people at Nusairat in central Gaza Strip.

**Hamas says it's waiting for Israeli response on Gaza ceasefire proposal**

CAIRO: Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, two officials from the militant Islamist group said on Sunday, five days after it accepted a key part of a US plan aimed at ending the nine-month-old war in Gaza. "We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be named. The three-phase plan for the Palestinian enclave was put forward at the end of May by US President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt. It aims to end the war and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas. Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris. "They have discussed

with them Hamas' response and they promised to give them Israel's response within days," the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters on Sunday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that negotiations would continue this week but has not given any detailed timeline. Hamas, which controls Gaza, has dropped a key demand that Israel first commit to a permanent ceasefire before it would sign an agreement. Instead, it said it would allow negotiations to achieve that throughout the six-week first phase, a Hamas source told Reuters on Saturday on condition of anonymity because the talks are private. A Palestinian official close to the peace efforts has said the proposal could lead to a framework agreement if embraced by Israel and would end the war.

**Scorching heat expected in US West, Southeast over weekend**

MARIPOSA: Dangerously hot conditions will dominate over the rest of the July Fourth holiday weekend in much of the U.S. West Coast, Southeast and Middle Atlantic seaboard, forecasters said on Friday, as California firefighters battled one of the first big wildfires of the season. Around 108 million Americans will spend the remainder of the weekend under excessive heat advisories, with record-breaking temperatures forecast for many spots in California, southern Oregon and the Southwest, the National Weather Service said. The West Coast will hover 15 to 30 degrees above average, reaching 110 Fahrenheit (43 Celsius) on Friday. "Expect only subtle changes to our daily high temperatures through the

weekend," the National Weather Service in Flagstaff, Arizona, said on X. "Where did you go, monsoon? Hurry back," it said, referring to a recent bout of torrential rain in the area, which is usually bone-dry this time of year. Some of the hottest spots will include Phoenix where it will be 115 F (46 C), Washington D.C. where it is expected to climb to 100 F (38 C), and Palm Springs, California, where it will reach 119 F (48 C). That is almost three times as hot as it will be in Yellowstone National Park in Montana, where the forecast was for temperatures to dip to 37 F on Friday night. The weather service urged people to stay hydrated, out of the sunlight, and in buildings with sufficient air-conditioning.

**Tokyo Governor Koike set to win re-election, exit poll shows**

TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has won re-election to a third term on Sunday, fending off challenges from dozens of candidates vying to unseat the ruling Liberal Democratic Party-backed incumbent, according to an exit poll from public broadcaster NHK. Koike, 71, got more than 40% of the vote, followed by Shinji Ishimaru, 41, a former mayor of a town in Hiroshima prefecture, who was in second place, the exit poll showed. Renho, 56, who was supported by the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), came in third. A victory for Koike could help embattled Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida resist calls from within the LDP to step down as public support for him and his ruling group ebbs amid a political donations scandal.

**NATO is spending more on defence, but it's likely not enough**

BRUSSELS: Spurred on by Russia's war in Ukraine and the spectre of Donald Trump's potential return to the White House, more of NATO's European members are finally hitting the alliance's defence spending target. But as leaders gear up to celebrate at a NATO summit in Washington there is a clear feeling that will not be sufficient to tackle the challenges it faces. "Even in countries historically reluctant to spend more on defence, there is now a growing

sense of the importance of greatly increased defence spending," said Ian Lesser, from the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank. "I think, broadly speaking, in the next years we're looking at levels of defence spending that will begin to approach those of the Cold War." A decade after setting a spending goal at two percent of gross domestic product, just over two-thirds of NATO's 32 countries are now expected to reach or top that threshold this year.

**13 injured as elephant goes on rampage in Sri Lanka**

KATARAGAMA: An elephant went on a rampage during a religious event in southern Sri Lanka, injuring 13 people, local media reported on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday night during the Ruhunu Kataragama Mahadevala procession, a major religious and cultural event held at Kataragama, in the Uva province, local English daily The Sri Lanka Mirror reported. The injured are being treated at the local hospital, and no one was critically injured.

**Floods and landslides kill 14 in Nepal: police**

KATHMANDU: Lashing rains in Nepal causing flash floods and landslides have killed at least 14 people across the country, with disaster teams searching for nine missing, police said on Sunday. Flooding in neighbouring India, as well as in downstream Bangladesh, has also caused widespread damage and impacted millions. "Police are working with other agencies and

locals to find the missing people," Nepalese police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki told AFP. Those killed and missing are in multiple locations. Monsoon rains from June to September bring widespread death and destruction every year across South Asia, but the number of fatal floods and landslides has increased in recent years. Experts say climate change and increased road construction are exacerbating the problem.

**Brazil says G20 sherpas to avoid thorny issues at prep meetings**

RIO DE JANEIRO: G20 diplomats have agreed to avoid prickly geopolitical issues during their ministerial meetings preparing for the summit of the world's largest economies in November, host Brazil's sherpa said on Friday. Meetings through October will avoid geopolitical discussions so that agreements can be advanced on issues such as climate change.

**France votes, with far right seeking power**

PARIS: France voted on Sunday in a parliamentary run-off election with the far-right National Rally (RN) bidding for power but likely to fall short of a majority, raising the spectre of a chaotic hung parliament. A hung parliament would severely dent President Emmanuel Macron's authority and herald a prolonged period of instability and policy deadlock in the euro zone's second biggest economy. Should the nationalist, eurosceptic RN secure a majority, it would usher in France's first far-right government since World War Two and send shockwaves through the European Union at a time populist parties are strengthening support across the continent. Voting closes at 6 pm (1600 GMT) in towns and small cities and 8 pm in big cities. Pollsters will de-

liver initial projections based on early counts from a sample of voting stations at 8 p.m. Opinion polls forecast Marine Le Pen's RN will emerge the dominant force in the National Assembly as voters punish Macron over a cost of living crisis and being out of touch with the hardships people face. However, the RN is seen failing to reach the 289-seat target that would outright hand Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella the prime minister's job with a working majority. The far right's projected margin of victory has narrowed since Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) pulled scores of candidates from three-way races in the second round in a bid to unify the anti-RN vote. "France is on the cliff-edge and we don't know if we're going to jump."

## JI to arrange IT courses to empower millions of youngsters: Naeem

MULTAN (APP): Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman said that JI would arrange Information Technology courses for millions of youngsters in order to empower them economically.

He said this while holding a press conference during his maiden visit to city after assuming charge of Ameer Jamat e-Islami, on Sunday.

He stated that youth was pinning hopes with Jamat-e-Islami and JI will not let youth disappointed, he added.

He feared that people would shift industry abroad due to high prices of electricity. He urged government to bring landlords and other influential under tax net instead of the poor.

He also called for provision of due share in resources allocation for south Punjab. South Punjab is comprised of small farmers. Government should ensure

maximum benefits and subsidy towards the peasants, Naeem ur Rehman stated.

He stated that government should investigate wheat scandal and punished the persons involved in the scandal.

Ameer Jamat-e-Islami also stressed for initiating talks with owners of IPPs in order to lower electricity tariff.

Responding to a question about democracy, he stated that JI believed democracy in letter and spirit. He however added that other political parties lacked democracy within their ranks. Local government bodies should be given proper constitutional cover and these should operate independently, without interference of provincial governments as it could help resolve masses problems. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman also supported reforms in judiciary to solve public problems.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation.

## Speaker, Dy Speaker extend warm felicitations to Muslim Ummah on occasion of new Islamic year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah on Sunday extended their warm felicitations to the Muslim Ummah on the advent of the new Islamic year Hijri 1446.

On this occasion, the Speaker said that this day was a divine blessing, affording an opportunity to rejuvenate faith, resolve and recommit to noble values of peace, justice and compassion. He expressed the hope that this occasion would inspire people to rededicate themselves to the service of humanity and the pursuit of excellence.

The Speaker said that the Muslim Ummah was

facing numerous challenges, including conflicts, terrorism and economic inequality, which required united efforts to address. He emphasized the need for Muslim countries to stand together in solidarity and work towards peace, stability and prosperity.

He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination and urged the international community to play its role in resolving the conflict.

The Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring peace, prosperity and harmony to the country and the world at large, and urged the people

to work together for the progress and development of the country.

Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa said that the new Islamic year heralds new hopes and opportunities.

He urged the people to harness this momentum to propel themselves towards a brighter future, built on hard work, dedication, and service to humanity. He also stressed the need for unity and cooperation among Muslim countries to overcome the challenges faced by the Ummah.

The Deputy Speaker prayed that the new Islamic year may bring happiness and prosperity to the people of Pakistan and the world at large.



MULTAN: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing a press conference at Islamic Center.

## Mohsin Naqvi takes notice of overbilling complaints from protected consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday took strict notice of the increasing complaints of overbilling of protected consumers and ordered legal action against the officers and staff involved in it.

The Minister issued directions to all Directors of FIA to immediately redress the injustice being faced by consumers using up to 200 units.

He has strictly prohibited the inclusion of protected consumers in the non-protected category, terming it a criminal act that

will not be tolerated.

Mohsin Naqvi ordered FIA to review the entire situation and take action against those responsible without any discrimination, in light of the facts.

He reiterated that adding protected consumers in the list of non-protected consumers is unacceptable under any circumstances.

He further said that the overbilling has put an additional burden of millions of rupees on consumers, and protected consumers who are already facing difficulties have been further affected.

## Chairman Senate greets newly elected Iran President

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, extended his felicitations to Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, the newly elected president of Iran.

Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed hope that Pakistan and Iran's historic ties would further strengthen under new leadership, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between the two nations in promoting regional stability and prosperity.

## AJK PM unveils Rs4b uplift package for Poonch division

RAKALAKOT (INP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has announced Rs4 billion development package, in a bid to promote the scenic beauty and positive image of Poonch division.

The package aims to highlight the region's picturesque landscape and promote tourism.

PM Haq announced this while meeting with a delegation from Tain area of Poonch, led by Sardar Mumtaz and assured his

full support for the construction of the Tain Majeed Gula to Thorar Road. He emphasised the need for good governance and criticized previous rulers for failing to address the region's problems. The PM stressed the importance of promoting a positive image of Poonch division and urged the delegation to organise festivals to boost tourism.

He also expressed concern over negative propaganda on social media and its impact on society, calling for a long-term plan to tackle unemployment.

## Pak upcoming IMF bailout will 'not be our last' if tax revenues don't rise: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan will keep seeking financial assistance packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if it does not significantly boost its tax revenues, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said.

Aurangzeb's comments come days after Pakistan's president signed the federal budget for the current fiscal year, which has been criticized by the opposition, trade bodies and even the government's allies, for its ambitious tax targets.

The tax-heavy budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion (\$46.6bn) by July 2025, a roughly 40 percent increase from the current financial year. Financial experts say the budget is aimed at satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly asked Islamabad to bring tax reforms to ensure growth in its fragile economy.

Speaking to British newspaper Financial Times, Aurangzeb said he was "relatively confident" of reaching a staff-level agreement with the IMF this month for a loan his government has estimated to be between \$6-\$8bn.

"But it will not be our last fund program if we don't bring our tax revenues up," the minister said.

Pakistan hopes the IMF bailout package will stabilize its economy, one of the worst-performing ones in Asia, that has been troubled by double-digit inflation, slow growth and low foreign reserves.

Pakistan's economic indicators have recorded an improvement over the past few months, with inflation dropping down to 12.6 percent in June from the record-breaking 38 percent in May 2023. Pakistan's stock market has registered

high growth in recent weeks while the central bank's foreign reserves have risen to over \$9 billion.

"The direction of travel is positive, and investors are showing confidence in the stock market," Aurangzeb said.

However, he acknowledged Pakistan's tax collection authority, the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR), was viewed negatively by the masses.

"People don't want to deal with the tax authority because of corruption, because of harassment, because of people asking for speed money, facilitation money," Aurangzeb noted. "That's not sustainable."

The finance minister lamented how Pakistan's economy was reliant on imports, stating that Islamabad had to borrow to pay off existing or accumulating debt.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar listening problems of people at his residence

## Pak Army organizes grand summer camp for school children in Gwadar

GWADAR (Online): Pakistan Army organized a grand summer camp for school children in Gwadar.

The main objective of the summer camp was to promote harmony among children of different schools.

Fifty-one students participated in the summer camp and received training in computer, arts, culture and painting.

## Blome says: US to continue backing fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions

LAHORE (INP): US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Armin Blome reaffirmed America's commitment to strengthening fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions during his visit to Lahore.

Celebrating the 248th anniversary of American independence in Lahore, Ambassador Blome emphasized the importance of religious freedom and underscored the significance of the US-Pakistan partnership.

The celebration on July 5th saw attendance from government officials, business tycoons, and civil society representatives highlighting key areas of cooperation between the United States and Pakistan.

These included robust trade and investment relations and advanced collaboration through the US-Pakistan "Green Alliance."

In his address, Ambassador Blome reiterated America's commitment to strengthening fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions. He emphasized that the United States would remain a steadfast partner in expanding economic opportunities for the Pakistani people.

## Hefty electricity bills making lives miserable

ISLAMABAD (INP): An anchor of a private TV channel in a report disclosed alarming revelations regarding the heavy electricity bills. The report revealed that the common people are grappling with the heavy electricity bills but on the other hand, the president, prime minister and CJP are provided with unlimited electricity units.

Even after retirement, the president of Pakistan is provided with 2,000 free electricity units per month. After the president's death, his spouse also receives

2,000 free electricity units. The prime minister of Pakistan is also provided with unlimited free electricity.

The Chief Justice receives 2,000 free electricity units per month during and after their term.

The poor are so distressed by the hefty electricity bills that they are attempting suicides. Recently, a rickshaw driver named Ghulam Muhammad attempted to commit suicide by sprinkling petrol after receiving an electricity bill of over 19,000 rupees.



RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi laying floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in ANF Headquarters.

## School Meals Program to be extended to Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Food Programme (WFP), the Government of Balochistan, and the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) are partnering to extend the successful School Meals Program to Balochistan.

This partnership aims to improve the nutrition and education of thousands of children across the province, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The program will provide nutritious meals to students in targeted schools, promoting better health, education, and overall well-being.

## PM pays tributes to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (NH) on his 25th martyrdom day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tributes to Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on the 25th anniversary of his martyrdom day.

In a statement issued by the PM Office, the prime minister said Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed showed great courage and bravery and sacrificed his life for the country's security. He said Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed's great sacrifice symbolized Pakistan armed forces' unwavering resolve and dedication to protecting the country.

The prime minister said that Havaldar Lalak Jan Shaheed and his family were a source of pride for the entire Pakistani nation.

He also saluted the passion and sense of duty of every Pakistani soldier who was dedicated to protecting the country's borders, from the deep seas of the Arabian Sea to the harsh cold of Siachen.

He vowed that the Pakistani nation would never forget the great sacrifice of its martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for the country.

## Sir Syed Express to resume operation from Sept 01

LAHORE (INP): Sir Syed Express train, dormant since 2022 due to devastating floods, is set to resume operations from September 1 on the Karachi-Rawalpindi route, under a private sector partnership, announced Pakistan Railways. According to railway officials, an agreement has been finalized between Pakistan Railways and a private logistics company, facilitating the revival of Sir Syed Express. The agreement, valued at Rs. 38,000 annually, stipulates that the railway department will provide new bogies, engines, drivers, and diesel to the private operator.

## Pakistani boxer Shahir beats Indian opponent to become Asian champion

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani boxer Shahir Afridi Khawar clinched the title of Asian champion in the professional middleweight category by defeating Indian boxer Ronit Solankhi in a bout held in Thailand on Saturday.

Afridi achieved a dramatic victory by knocking out Solankhi in the third round. In the closing moments of that round, Afridi delivered a powerful punch that caused Solankhi to stagger and ultimately fall to the canvas.

The match, which was part of a series of professional boxing events in the region, took place in Bangkok. Afridi's stellar performance has once again highlighted Pakistan's strength and skill in the realm of boxing.

In a Facebook post celebrating his victory, Afridi expressed his gratitude, saying, "Alhamdulillah, I won my fight with a huge knockout against India. Thank you for the appreciation. JazakAllah to everyone." His win not only earned him the Asian champion title but also reinforced Pakistan's growing reputation in the sport.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Hamudur Rehman meeting with journalists during his visit to Gwadar Press Club

## Three Turkish NGOs to serve in Pakistan's education, health, culture sectors

ANKARA (INP): Three prominent Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of Türkiye have announced of providing services in education, health, culture and social uplift sectors in Pakistan to facilitate its people.

This was announced during a ceremony organized to award certificate of appreciation to President Turkish-Pakistan Women Forum Shabana Ayyaz by four-member directors of Anatolian Union, Turkish World Association of Academics and Bureaucrats, and World Reporters Association in recognition of her services to enhance Pak-Turkiye brotherhood and friendship.

The ceremony was also attended by the directors of all three organizations, Ismet Ta?, Professor Dr. Issa Eleri, Dr. Mehmet Tekin, and President of the Women's Wing, Nur Dilce.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General Ismet Ta? said that President Shabana Ayyaz of the Turkish-Pak Women Forum did not leave us alone in our event "Be the Voice for the Silent Children's Scream" and supported us in every possible way. She said, "We acknowledge that Shabana Ayyaz has led many programs for women and children in Pakistan and is doing further research on how Turkish women are improving themselves in the fields of culture, health, and education, in which areas they have achieved successes, and how to transfer their experiences to Pakistani women."

She stated that people of both countries harmonize with each other in pain, sorrow, trouble, and happiness and Turkish people want Pakistan and Türkiye to fully support each other in every field. In this regard, the people of Turkey are ready to support the Pakistani people at every opportunity.

The DG said that Türkiye's achievements in science and technology, art and culture, economy, and human rights are widespread around the world, especially the effort "Silent Children's Silent Scream" has been broadcast in many countries worldwide.

She said that certifi-



QUETTA: National Party Chief, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch along with Zahoar Agha, Former Governor Balochistan, Naseem-ur Rehman Khan Mulakher, Adviser on Environment and Climate Change to Chief Minister and others inaugurating the My Abbas Industry in Quetta.