

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 138, Zil Hajj 27, 1445 AH Thursday July 04, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15

## PM proposes tripartite mechanism to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan economic, commercial coop.

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday proposed to establish tripartite institutional mechanisms particularly in economic and investment areas to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan trilateral economic and commercial cooperation.

Sharing his views during an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, the prime minister underscored that Pakistan deeply valued its fraternal ties with Azerbaijan and Turkiye which were grounded in deep-rooted cultural, historic and religious bonds as well as mutual respect and support towards each other on core issues.

The summit was attended by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President of Turkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Heydar Aliyev.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the convening of inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Meeting at the summit level, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He termed it a natural progression of trilateral engagements amongst the three brotherly Muslim countries which shared a similar outlook on a host of issues of mutual interest and common concern.

While noting excellent

trilateral cooperation in political, parliamentary and defence domains since the First Trilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the three countries held in Baku in 2017, he affirmed Pakistan's commitment to working together with Turkiye and Azerbaijan to elevate the tripartite cooperation into a strong multifaceted partnership across all areas of mutual interest including economic, energy, tourism, cultural, educational, technology and innovation, healthcare and

environmental cooperation. Emphasizing strong bonds of friendship and robust people-to-people contacts amongst the three countries, the prime minister also outlined significant potential for collaboration in the areas of culture, tourism, academia as well as science and technology.

Pakistan, Turkiye and Azerbaijan have previously held trilateral consultations at the level of foreign ministers, speakers of parliament and defence personnel.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the President of Turkiye H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.



ISLAMABAD: Group Chief Executive of the Standard Chartered Bank Bill Winters, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Chief Minister Balochistan tells World Bank's delegation: Govt. taking measure to cope with challenges of good governance, energy and climate change

WB delegation praises endeavours of CM for establishing good governance in province; pledges of assistance of international and national investors for investment in different sectors

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that his government is taking measures to cope with the challenges of good governance, energy and climate change in the province.

He said that we are desirous of working on the sustainable strategy in collaboration with the international and national institutions.

He said that we fully support the World Bank's 10 year programme, and adding hoped that the long-term programme would bear positive results.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the delegation of World Bank who called on him under leadership of its Director in Pakistan, Mr. Najy Benhassine here on Wednesday.

The World Bank delegation apprised the Chief Minister about the assistance projects being continued in collaboration with the Bank in Balochistan.

During the course of meeting, there was also discussion on the mines and minerals as well as fisheries, agriculture health and rehabilitation of flood affected people in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that work is continued on education, health and rehabilitation of the flood affectees.

## Meets Russian President PM emphasises expanding bilateral trade, defence cooperation

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met with Russian President Vladimir Putin wherein he emphasised the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Russia across all areas of mutual benefit including trade, energy, defence and security.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Head of States meeting, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work with Russia to further expand and strengthen the growing multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries. During the 'warm and cordial' meeting, the two leaders had a wide ranging exchange of views covering bilateral relations with a special focus on trade and economic relations, energy as well as important regional and global issues, a PM Office press release said.

The prime minister, in his opening remarks at the outset of the meeting, said the bilateral trade stood at around \$1 billion which could be expanded by overcoming the financial and banking matters. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who arrived here to attend the twin Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State (CHS) and SCO Plus summits, expressed his pleasure to meet the Russian leader and recalled their earlier interaction in Samarkand.

## Courts can't abolish right for votes' recounting CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Wednesday observed that the right of votes' recounting was given by the Parliament in the laws related to elections and the court could not abolish it.

The CJP was heading a three-member bench, which heard the appeal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's candidate against the verdict of election tribunal to set aside the Election Commission's decision for recounting of votes in NA-154 Lodhran.

During the course of hearing, the chief justice said that the top court was scheduling election related cases early. However, the cases got delayed as the lawyers usually did not preparations, he added.

The CJP said, "If we start hearing every case for hours, then the number of pending cases will increase."

The court consequently adjourned the case till July 8.

PML-N candidate Abdul Rehman Kanju NA-154 Lodhran has challenged the verdict of election tribunal before the top court.

The election tribunal, in its decision, had terminated the success notification of Abdul Rehman Kanju and declared an independent candidate Rana Faraz Noon as the winner. The tribunal also set aside the ECP's decision of recounting in the said constituency.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with the President of Russia H.E. Vladimir Putin.

## Ex-senator Hidayatullah among 4 killed in Bajaur explosion

BAJAUR (APP): Former senator Hidayatullah Khan and three other persons were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Bajaur on Wednesday. Bajaur District Police Officer Muhammad Ali Khan Gandapur confirmed the deaths and, said that the former senator's car was targeted in the IED

attack in Bajaur's Damadola area.

He told reporters that no one had claimed responsibility for the attack as yet. Bajaur District Police Officer Sajjad Ahmad said that the bomb disposal unit was conducting its investigation and the situation would become clear after its report.

## Terrorist commander killed in Bajaur IBO

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces on Wednesday conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Bajaur District and killed a highly wanted terrorist commander during an intense exchange of fire.

According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the killed terrorist commander was identified as Irfan Ullah alias Adnan. He was actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as extortion and target killings of innocent civilians, and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies.

## Barrister Aqeel appointed advisor in law ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice on Wednesday issued notification regarding the appointment of Barrister Aqeel Malik as advisor in the ministry on honorary basis.

The notification said that he shall perform such functions as assigned to him by the Minister for Law and Justice in accordance with the rule 5(8) of the Rules of Business, 1973.

## Quetta Safe City Project would be helpful in elimination of terrorism, believes Mir Ziaullah Langove

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has expressed the hope that the Quetta Safe City Project would prove to be helpful in elimination of terrorism.

He said that the security forces would wipe out terrorism through modern technology like Quetta Safe City Project.

Mir Ziaullah Langove was on visit to the Command and Control Quetta Safe City Project here at the Central Police Office on Wednesday.

The Provincial Minister Home was briefed about the Quetta Safe City Project. Also present on the occasion were the Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other senior police high ups.

Chief Operating Officer Quetta Safe City Project and Superintendent of Police, Adeel Akbar briefed the Provincial Minister about the Project. He said that the Safe City Project would strengthen the digital security in Quetta. Besides, maximum data is being maintained for monitoring and risk management through the safe City Project.

Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister Home said that it was a big challenge to complete the Quetta Safe City Project. He mentioned the Project is aimed at eliminating the crimes and arresting the criminals.

He prayed that the Quetta Safe City Project would prove to be beneficial for the masses.

The Minister Home also said that it is the government's top priority to protect the life and property of the masses mobilizing all available resources.

## Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari arrives in Quetta today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is scheduled to arrive in Quetta today (Thursday).

The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, the provincial ministers, MPAs belonging to the PPP and its other leaders would welcome the Chairman PPP upon his arrival in the metropolis.

During the two-day visit, Chairman PPP would be meeting the Chief Minister, provincial ministers and other party's leaders.

## Met Office forecasts heavy monsoon rains for parts of Balochistan

QUETTA (INP): The weather department on Wednesday said that heavy rains were expected in Naseerabad, Sibbi and Lasbela divisions of Balochistan during the next 24 hours as a new monsoon system would enter the province today.

The department also forecast rains for the upper parts of the country and areas of Sindh Mithi, Badin, Umarmkot, Tharparkar and Mirpurkhas during the aforementioned period.

## Real development & prosperity can become fate of peaceful nations: Governor Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the development and prosperity can become fate of the peaceful nations, therefore, every one has to contribute in it.

He said that there are invaluable services of our political elders in bringing the people of the four provinces and putting them on the path of sustainable development and prosperity.

The Governor was speaking to the Secretary General of PML-Nawaz and Member National Assembly, Jamal Shah Karkar who called on him here at the Governor House on Wednesday.

During the course of meeting, the latest political situation of the province and country as well as the ongoing development projects and economic changes taking place in the region were discussed.

The Governor said that it is responsibility of the government to maintain peace and law and order all over

the province.

He said that all political elders are respectable. He sought wholehearted cooperation of the political leaders to tackle the big challenges being the constitutional head of province.



QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the development and prosperity can become fate of the peaceful nations, therefore, every one has to contribute in it.

## Pakistan pursues \$6 bln IMF bailout amid controversy over tough budget targets

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Minister of State for Finance, Ali Pervez Malik, has announced Pakistan's ambitious bid to secure a staff-level agreement with the IMF for a bailout package exceeding \$6 billion by the end of this month.

This move follows Pakistan's commitment to meeting all IMF demands in the federal budget, including stringent revenue targets despite facing public backlash over anticipated new taxes.

According to foreign media, Pakistan aims to garner IMF approval by setting challenging tax revenue goals in its budget for the fiscal year starting July 1, amounting to 130 trillion rupees (\$47 billion). The budget, characterized by Minister Malik as necessary for IMF program satisfaction, targets reducing last year's fiscal deficit from 7.4 percent to 5.9 percent.

Minister Malik emphasized that all prerequisites, including budgetary measures, have been fulfilled, signaling readiness for the IMF's evaluation and approval. However, analysts caution that while the budget may align with IMF expectations, it risks deepening public discontent.

Acknowledging the economic burden of these reforms, Malik reiterated the stabilizing role of the IMF program amidst growing pressures on Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. Saqib Sherani, head economist at Macroeconomic Insights, stressed the urgency of securing the IMF package to prevent potential economic volatility, including the reintroduction of import and capital controls by the central bank.

Since the budget's announcement on June 12, the Pakistan Stock Exchange's SE-100 index has surged approximately 10 percent, reflecting cautious optimism amidst economic uncertainties.

Since the budget's announcement on June 12, the Pakistan Stock Exchange's SE-100 index has surged approximately 10 percent, reflecting cautious optimism amidst economic uncertainties.

## Pakistan-US security cooperation to continue: Pentagon

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has declared that the security cooperation with Pakistan with chief focus on counter-terrorism is ongoing.

Addressing a news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, Pentagon Press Secretary Major-General Patrick S. Ryer said that the US and Pakistan do share a security cooperation relationship, particularly focused on counter-terrorism. "We have a long history of working together in that regard. And so as opportunities present themselves in the future, I'm sure those conversations will continue to be ongoing," he added.

A day earlier, US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while briefing the newsmen in Washington said that PTI founder Imran Khan's detention is Pakistan's internal matter. When asked about the US House of Representatives resolution asking for a thorough and independent investigation into interference allegations in Pakistan's 2024 elections, Patel said that in the US democratic system Congress is a separate but coequal branch of government.

He said that we fully support the World Bank's 10 year programme, and adding hoped that the long-term programme would bear positive results.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the delegation of World Bank who called on him under leadership of its Director in Pakistan, Mr. Najy Benhassine here on Wednesday.

The World Bank delegation apprised the Chief Minister about the assistance projects being continued in collaboration with the Bank in Balochistan.

During the course of meeting, there was also discussion on the mines and minerals as well as fisheries, agriculture health and rehabilitation of flood affected people in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that work is continued on education, health and rehabilitation of the flood affectees.

## 5 children drown in Awaran canal

AWARAN (APP): Five children drowned while taking bath in a canal located in the vicinity of Tehsil Chaona area of Awaran district of Balochistan, tv channels quoting police reported on Wednesday.

According to details, five children of the same family went to Tehsil Chaona area for taking bath and to beat the heat when suddenly, they could not maintain balance in a deep water and drowned.

Local divers after receiving the reports rushed to the site of incident to retrieve the bodies. Later, all the bodies were handed over to legal heirs.

According to details, five children of the same family went to Tehsil Chaona area for taking bath and to beat the heat when suddenly, they could not maintain balance in a deep water and drowned.

Local divers after receiving the reports rushed to the site of incident to retrieve the bodies. Later, all the bodies were handed over to legal heirs.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine meeting with Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Orwellian state**

It seems that the goings-on in judges' homes is not the only thing that piques Big Brother's curiosity. Our security apparatus also listens to what ordinary citizens are talking about on their phones, reads the messages they exchange with other people, and watches what they do on the internet.

This startling revelation has come to light recently, thanks to a submission to the Islamabad High Court. The information given to the court revealed that the country's telecom regulator, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, has forced telecom companies to implement a mass surveillance system through which up to 4m citizens can be monitored at any given time with the click of a button.

Called the 'Lawful' Intercept Management System in true Orwellian nomenclature, this system is being run without any regulatory checks and balances or legal controls, allowing the intrusive eyes and ears of unnamed intelligence agencies to spy on anyone they want.

'Leaked' phone calls involving prominent citizens had dominated news headlines and social media not so long ago, prompting petitions from some of the affected individuals against intrusive surveillance by the state. The existence of LIMS may not have come to light had the IHC's Justice Babar Sattar, who heard a petition on the matter, not insisted on demanding answers from the state about who had the power and resources to conduct such surveillance of civilians.

What has since been uncovered is chilling for anyone who cherishes personal freedoms. The judge noted in his order that citizens' data was being collected without any human intervention or legal warrant, with "the entire content of communication between consumers undertaken through the network of the telecom licensee, including audio and video content and web page records", being shared with unnamed agencies, according to news reports. The potential for abuse of such detailed information collected on citizens is immense. The fact that any citizen at any time can be made vulnerable by the state simply listening to and watching what they are doing and using that information to blackmail them would make anyone feel insecure.

Many serving judges have recently complained about the pressures they face, and this should be warning enough that the powerful in our country do not respect any moral or legal boundaries when it comes to implementing 'orders from above'. There are good justifications for keeping an eye on known criminals, terrorists and foreign spies, but implementing a system to spy on one's own people is a perverse abuse of power and should be stopped forthwith. The state must be made to secure legal warrants as a necessary requirement for initiating surveillance of any individual. Such immense power should not be accumulated by any institution as the potential for abuse and the consequences for personal freedoms can be disastrous.

**Pity the nation**

Mahir Ali

The Tory devastation in the 1997 UK election was a delight to behold, but it was somewhat blunted by suspicions that New Labour was neither equipped nor inclined to reverse the destructive thrust of nearly two decades of Thatcherism. Margaret Thatcher subsequently picked Tony Blair as her favourite heir and New Labour as her greatest achievement, given its dedication to advancing her agenda.

That agenda included steadily dismantling the social welfare state that the postwar Attlee government had installed despite financial exigencies, and which subsequent Conservative governments did not substantially tinker with until the advent of Thatcher, who declared that there was no alternative to neoliberalism. New Labour embraced that absurd declaration, and implemented it in places that Thatcherite Conservatism had failed to reach, not least in the health and education sectors.

Popular enthusiasm for Labour dwindled after 1997, but the lack of a viable alternative enabled it to secure majorities based on declining turnout until 2010, when the Tories returned to power. Five disastrous prime ministers later, voters' aspiration for change is expected to be rewarded tomorrow with the biggest Labour landslide since 1997. At the new government's helm will be someone who looks back on the Blair years as an inspiration rather than a cautionary tale. Keir Starmer earned his legal spurs as a 'human rights advocate' before he was propelled to the post of director of public prosecutions, a position in which his service to the Tory-ruled state was sufficiently ap-

preciated to win him a knighthood before he became a Labour MP in 2015. His task thenceforth was to undermine Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, who threatened to return the party to its social democratic origins.

Corbyn had first won his north London seat in 1983 in an election that broadly reduced Labour to a parliamentary rump. He remained an active backbencher for the next 32 years, popular among his constituents but occasionally threatened with expulsion from his party for embracing stances that militated against the Labour leadership's dedication to the status quo. He was occasionally hauled away by policemen for protesting against South African apartheid or Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, long before it became fashionable to do so.

Corbyn's empathy for the oppressed also extended to the Palestinians. Not long after it began to become clear that his policies might actually pave the way to Downing Street, he was assaulted by absurd allegations of antisemitism. Corbyn tended to be politely apologetic in the face of such charges; he ought, instead, to have gone on the offensive against the Zionist lobby. To his credit, he never resiled from his stance nor disguised his abhorrence of the genocide in Gaza.

For his pains, he was expelled from Labour — by no means the only one. Diane Abbott, the first black woman to sit in parliament, also elected in 1983, was permitted to run again only after a backlash against a typically Starmerish smear-and-discard campaign. Corbyn is running as an independent, and senior Labour figures in his Islington constituency have resigned from the party to

support his candidacy. In other jurisdictions, many activists have been expelled, often for opposing Starmer's support for genocide, including Faiza Shaheen. It seems as if wherever the Zionist lobby chips in, Starmer bends down and asks 'What do you want?'

Starmer insists his wife and children are "not Jewish for reasons I won't bore you with" to an interviewer from The Guardian, a newspaper that played a huge role in defenestrating Corbyn with the aid of associated nitwits, but admits that "half of the family are Jewish", and "they're either here or in Israel". That might help to explain why his leadership campaign was partly funded by the Zionist lobby, which also provided pocket money to other Labour MPs for undermining Corbyn.

Starmer returned to the Corbyn shadow cabinet after resigning from it in 2016, and helped to set up the Brexit trap by insisting on a second referendum that was successfully designed to demolish Labour's chances in 2019. In his leadership campaign, he claimed he would hang onto much of Corbyn Labour's legacy, but discarded much of it soon afterwards. Since then, he has also had no qualms about serially shrinking or diluting his own proposals. The inevitable upshot is that Labour will attain office by tomorrow night, and embrace a platform not radically different from its predecessors. Starmer can't name a favourite book or poem, and claims he has no dreams, but his notions of magical 'economic growth' and 'wealth creation' chime with the Tory-lite attitudes that have attracted Tory donors and even a couple of Conservative MPs to his den. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Hot and dangerous**

Aisha Khan

The rise in mercury has a human cost. With each decade getting warmer since 1980, the risk of breaching critical tipping points is getting alarmingly closer. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessment reports have repeatedly reiterated the perils of crossing the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold and issued advisories for urgent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to keep the planet safe. However thus far 1.5°C has just been used as reference number to make strong political statements with very little to show for any measurable reduction in emissions at scale.

The heat this year is just a preview of what is likely to follow. Extreme events in past years and the health pandemic (Covid-19) are tangible proofs of the enormity of the crisis and its lingering effect on the economy. Other factors like biodiversity loss and climate-induced conflicts may not as yet be visibly relatable to people but are insidiously disrupting the social fabric of society.

Under the current patterns of emissions, it seems more than likely that the world is headed for 2.5 to 2.9°C temperature increase from pre-industrial levels this century. The beginning of summer in four continents in the northern hemisphere has already scorched cities leaving millions to swelter as temperatures soar to new highs.

For vulnerable countries like Pakistan, this means high-risk scenarios and need for urgent adaptive action. The hidden cost of past emissions trapped in the atmosphere will add to the unfolding crisis. Even if global emissions peak before 2025, their

long-term lingering impacts will continue to destabilise the climate, making it extremely difficult to cope with known threats and unknown risks. Fragility and crises will be the new norm as Earth heats up to challenge human actions and its impact on life systems.

In South Asia, the rising mercury is also a cryospheric crisis. The water towers that are a source of life to people from Bhutan to Afghanistan are under threat from the scorching heat. According to a report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, snow levels are a fifth below normal in the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalaya (HKH) region. This can result in excessive flooding initially and end with drought and desertification. Given its geography, the effect of deadly and repeated heatwaves will hit the region in multiple ways from the mountains to the coastline. As extreme heat also traps more moisture in the air, the monsoons this year are predicted to be 33 per cent more intense, amplifying the problem.

The world is on a collision trajectory with nature and time is running out for course correction. The good news is that everyone knows what needs to be done and there is still time to reset the future.

Meanwhile, the rise in atmospheric temperature will also result in a concomitant increase in heated debates over climate justice and moral mandate. Heat stress is not limited to physical effects, nor is it only about a food, water and energy crisis. It has a psychological dimension that manifests itself in behavioural change and altered response mechanism. This chain reaction is often over-

looked in planning. Historically, prolonged depravations, inequality and injustices have resulted in social upheavals and system change. A heat-induced, drought-driven response to thirst, hunger and lack of basic amenities is likely to be even more cataclysmic.

The quantitative difference in resources between the Global North and the Global South and the qualitative difference in absorptive capacities of both will set the stage for conflict and pitched battles if two issues are not addressed quickly. The first underpins the need to address climate justice and the second calls for expediting reform in climate finance. There can be no more delays or debates on these two issues if the global community is serious about keeping its climate promise. Mitigation remains the number one responsibility of high-emitting countries to save the planet and reduce hardships for the already struggling millions around the world.

The scorching heat has an added dimension of peril for Pakistan. The country adds five million people to its population each year. Under this scenario the gap between supply and demand is going to increase beyond the state's ability to provide food, water and energy to 380m people by 2040. The spectre of shrinking resources and a burgeoning discontented youth population is something that needs to be factored into climate and human security planning.

A hot temper is a dangerous thing to deal with at a wider community scale. It is time to cool down the planet and for responsible countries to reduce emissions rapidly. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**PM invites Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for transit trade; calls for road, rail connectivity**



BEIJING: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a group photo with the panelists representing Pakistani and Chinese companies at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum-2024.

DUSHANBE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for the transit trade besides emphasising the promotion of regional connectivity by constructing rail tracks and roads between the two countries.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his Tajik counterpart Qohir Rasulzoda here.

The prime minister is on a two-day official visit to Tajikistan at the invitation of the President

of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the steadily expanding bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest and reaffirmed their shared desire to further strengthen the existing fraternal ties.

Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated the Tajik prime minister on the successful organization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> High-Level Water Conference and appreciated Tajikistan's leading role in water diplomacy.

Hailing the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement as a historic

moment in bilateral ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan, the prime minister expressed the hope that this elevation of the relationship between the two countries would open up new areas of mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz underlined that Pakistan would continue to pursue enhanced engagement with Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan, in line with its "Vision Central Asia" policy. He also stressed that enhanced regional connectivity and integration would remain

key components for sustainable long-term socio-economic development of the region.

Emphasising the importance of regional ties in the South Asian and Central Asian region, the prime minister suggested that Pakistan host a regional connectivity summit to provide trade corridors to Central Asian countries and promote regional trade.

The prime minister welcomed the recent start of international flights between Pakistan and Tajikistan and emphasised increasing the number of flights.

**Pakistani IT companies offers diverse range of products, services: Shaza Fatima**

BEIJING (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said the Pakistani IT companies offered a diverse range of products and services from software development and cybersecurity to artificial intelligence and data analytics.

complement the strengths of four global counterparts, paving the way for extensive collaboration," she said while addressing the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum.

The minister said that China had made remarkable advancements in artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and 5G technology.

Initiative and the Digital Silk Route project were clear indications of the country's commitment to building a connected and technologically advanced world, she added.

Dr Baige Zhao, Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress, said Pakistan and China were enhancing cooperation in digital technologies.

**Jazz, Google, Tech valley mark milestone achievement with 'Digital Safar'**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz Pakistan's leading digital operator, in collaboration with Google and Tech Valley, a social enterprise, celebrated the remarkable success of their flagship initiative, Digital Safar.

Launched in 2023, Digital Safar equips young minds in Pakistan with essential digital skills and online safety education through Google's Be Internet Awesome and CS

First programs said a news release.

Major General @ Hafeezur Rehman, Chairman PTA, Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz; Kyle Gardner, Government Affairs and Public Policy Lead for Google South Asia; Umar Farooq, CEO of Tech Valley; and the Minister of the School Education Department, Punjab also attended the event.

**Gold rates up by Rs.800 per tola**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.800 and was sold at Rs.242,300 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs. 241,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.686 to Rs.207,733 from Rs. 207,047 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.190,422 from Rs. 189,793, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

**KP Governor meets Tajik energy minister**

DUSHANBE (APP): The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here Wednesday met with Tajikistan's Energy Minister and discussed the CASA-1000 energy project.

The KP Governor exchanged views with Tajikistan's Energy Minister Juma Dalair Shofakir on KASA 1000 project that after completion would give stability to energy sector in Pakistan.

Tajikistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf, Member of Provincial Assembly Arbab Zarak Khan, prominent businessman Shahbaz Zaheer, and officials from Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy attended the meeting.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the significant CASA-1000 energy project involving Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

**PCJCCI keen on strengthening academia, CPEC linkages**

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan-Chin Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Wednesday showed keen interest in strengthening academia-CPEC linkages.

Sharing his view at a think-tank session, held here at PCJCCI Secretariat, the joint chamber's President Moazzam Ghurki highlighted that CPEC not only benefits the economy and bilateral trade

between the two countries but it also offers opportunity for Pakistan to adopt and access more policies to strengthen the educational sector of the country. He added that throughout the world, the developing economies are struggling for the better progress and advancement of the education sector for rational economic growth and substantial development.

**MD PSIC visits SCCI**

SIALKOT (APP): Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) Managing Director Sidra Younas and CEO of Urban Unit Aman Anwar Kidwai visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Wednesday. SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir, Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh welcomed the guests. The business community stressed that internationally accredited laboratory need to be established in Sialkot.

**Rupee weakens against dollar**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 03 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 278.40 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.37. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.9 and Rs 280.7 respectively.

**Mobilink Bank champions sustainability-driven leadership with ESG training**

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has taken a leap forward in solidifying its position as a

part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six



front-runner in sustainable banking practices. The Bank announced the successful completion of an external training program on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices explicitly designed for its leadership team. This in-depth training initiative equipped the Bank's top decision-makers with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate ESG principles into the core of their operations.

Mobilink Bank is

dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population. The training was held in Islamabad and conducted by Zero Point Partners, a leading environmental consultancy and led by founder and CEO, Maha Qasim and Senior Associate, Aliza Aijaz, both experts in providing strategic and advisory support to banks and financial institutions on developing GHG emissions inventories, net zero target-setting.

## KPCM directs implementation of monsoon plan

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the concerned provincial departments and district administrations to ensure implementation of the Monsoon Contingency Plan of the provincial government and to remain high alert at all times in order to effectively deal with any untoward situation across the province.

In his special directives, issued here on Wednesday in this regard, the Chief Minister said that monsoon contingency plan is mainly aimed at safeguarding the lives and properties of the people, minimizing the disaster risks and ensuring swift and accurate response to any emergency due to expected rains in the current monsoon season.

“All the tiers of disaster management and relief activities would have to play their proactive role in this regard,” he said and directed the authorities concerned to strictly follow the guidelines laid down by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority in this effect, adding that all the prerequisites should be completed in all respects to reduce the disaster risks and damages to the public life and properties across the province.



MULTAN: Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khahir Azad is addressing the meeting of Ittehad Bain ul Muslimeen.

## KP Law Minister directs timely completion of people welfare projects

**Independent Report**  
KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has directed the authorities concerned of nation building departments to ensure timely completion of development projects without compromising on the quality of work. He further directed to submit a progress report so far made on the ongoing projects to the Deputy Commissioner office as soon as possible.

He gave these instructions while presiding over a review meeting on developmental projects held in the office of Deputy Commissioner Kohat on Wednesday. Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Shafiq Jan, Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Kohat Reena Suhrawardy and authorities concerned of nation building departments attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in detail on progress so far made on ongoing development schemes.

## Governor KP condemns bomb blast incident in Bajaur

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday condemned the remote-controlled bomb blast in the Dama Dola area of Bajaur District, which resulted in the tragic loss of lives, including former Senator Hidayatullah Khan and three others.

Expressing heartfelt sorrow over the casualties, Governor Faisal Kundi extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families, including the family of former Senator Hidayatullah Khan.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique addressing the conference of CEOs of Waste Management Companies.

## Governor KP visits Nurek Dam, Power Station Tajikistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday highlighted Pakistan's potential for economic growth and resolution of public issues through collaboration with Central Asian countries.

Situated on the Vakhsh River, the dam serves primarily for hydroelectric power generation, boasting a capacity of 3,015 megawatts.

He said this during his visit to Nurek Dam Tajikistan, one of the world's highest human-made structures, and its power station. Officials from Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy briefed the Governor on the Nurek Dam, located approximately 75 kilometers from the capital, Dushanbe.

Construction on the dam began in 1961, with the first generator coming online in 1972 and the project completing in 1980, making it the world's second tallest human-made structure. The Governor commended Tajik authorities, project developers, and engineers for their role in this monumental project.

## Five of a family killed, 13 injured in accident

SARGODHA (APP): Five members of a family, including two women, were killed while 13 others injured when two vehicles collided with each other near here on Wednesday.

The police said a van was heading towards Haiderabad Thal when its tyre burst which collided with a vehicle (mini-truck) in Mankera area, Jhang Bhaker road. Resultantly, Zainab Bibi, Faqeer Hussain Shah, Rana Qadeer, Muhammad Rafique and Njima Bibi died on the spot while Rana Adnan, Rana Imran, Imran Shafique and others sustained injuries.

## Minister for early completion of outsourcing waste management program

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique chaired the conference of CEOs of waste management companies across Punjab to review progress in the pilot programme of outsourcing of sanitation systems. Secretary Local Government and Community Development (LG & CD) Department Shakeel Ahmed Khan also participated in the conference held at the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) office here on Wednesday.

Addressing the CEOs conference, Minister Zeeshan Rafique said that it was the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to introduce a uniform sanitation system throughout the province. “Under this vision, a long-lasting and effective sanitation system is being implemented in Punjab”, said the minister.



MUZAFFARABAD: The heirs of Shahzeb, who was abducted from Langarpura, are protesting with placards at Azadi Chowk for the recovery of the child.

## LHC seeks arguments on maintainability of petition against success of Hamza

LAHORE (APP): Punjab High Court (LHC) Election Tribunal (ET) has sought arguments on maintainability of the petition filed against the success of Hamza Shehbaz Sharif son of Prime Minister (PM) Shahbaz Sharif and vice president PML-N as Member of National Assembly (MNA) from NA-118.

Justice Anwar Hussain has remarked the procedure of ET has been made perfect under election act. But this perfect procedure is for perfect system. Appeal plea against success of Hamza

## PHC halts tax collection by Abbottabad Canttt Board

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Peshawar High Court (PHC) Abbottabad bench on Wednesday has ordered to suspend the tax collection by the Abbottabad Cantonment Board (ACB) from small industries in the region.

The decision came in response to a petition filed by local industrialists, citing overreach and distress caused by the ACB's actions since 2022. President Abbottabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Association Abdul Rashid Khan highlighted the grievances of industrialists, accusing the Cantonment Board of exceeding its authority.

## Rs. 1.38b spent on welfare of police force

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police spokesperson said on Wednesday that Rs. 1.38 billion had been spent on welfare of the police force, benefiting thousands of employees' families, in the first six months of the current year.

## International News

## Gazans seek shelter after evacuation order, Israel carries out new strikes

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Many Palestinians were seeking shelter on Wednesday after fleeing their homes in southern Gaza and complained of water shortages as Israel pressed on with its military offensive in the densely populated enclave.

Deir Al-Balah is crowded with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians forced to flee homes elsewhere in Gaza, and residents complain of acute shortages of drinking water and inflated prices for basic foodstuff. “There is no clean water to drink. We are forced to buy salty or unclean water at a high price,” said Shaban, 47, a father of five.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas burst into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killed about 1,200 people and seized around 250 civilians and soldiers who they took back in Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.



Palestinians react, following an Israeli strike near a UN-run school sheltering displaced people, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Putin, Xi vie for influence at Central Asian summit

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: The leaders of Russia and China were in Kazakhstan for a regional summit, seeking to harden anti-Western alliances and press their influence in the strategic Central Asian region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Wednesday morning for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)—a Beijing-led regional bloc that covers Central Asia, India and Iran.

## Panama to launch migrant deportation flights in coming weeks, US says

**Monitoring Desk**  
PANAMA: Panama will launch deportation flights for irregular migrants in the coming weeks, part of a deal with the United States, a US official said, after the new president in the Central American country pledged to bolster its borders.

## Russian missiles and drones strike eastern Ukraine's Dnipro in a daylight attack that kills 5

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: A Russian missile and drone attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro on Wednesday killed five civilians and injured 47 others, including a 14-year-old girl, authorities said.

Blasts blew out some windows of a shopping mall, raining shards onto the street, photos published by local officials showed. Mayor Borys Filatov said the daytime attack also shattered windows in two schools and three kindergartens. Debris struck the intensive care unit of a children's hospital, and a fire broke out in another hospital.

## Egypt has agreed long-awaited cabinet reshuffle, local media report

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly's cabinet is set for a long-awaited reshuffle, local media reported, with changes including new finance and foreign ministers expected to be sworn in on Wednesday.

Authorities in Russia's mostly-Muslim North Caucasus region of Dagestan on Wednesday temporarily banned women from wearing the niqab, after simultaneous attacks targeting churches and synagogues killed 22 last month.

## Iran's Khamenei urges turnout after voters shun first presidential round

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Wednesday for voters to participate in Friday's presidential ballot, saying that historically low first-round turnout was not an act “against the system”.

## Iran's Khamenei urges turnout after voters shun first presidential round

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Wednesday for voters to participate in Friday's presidential ballot, saying that historically low first-round turnout was not an act “against the system”.

Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian and ultraconservative Saeed Jalili will face off after leading the pack in the first round last week, in an election cycle brought forward by the death of former president Ebrahim Raisi in a May helicopter crash.

## Nepal PM Dahal faces crisis as key ally drops parliamentary support

**Monitoring Desk**  
KATHMANDU: Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal faced a crisis on Wednesday after a key ally in his multi-party coalition withdrew support, pushing his government into a minority in parliament four months after the coalition was formed.

## US has 'undeniable complicity' in Gaza war killings, say former US officials

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A dozen former US government officials who quit over their country's support for Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday accused US President Joe Biden's administration of “undeniable complicity” in the killing of Palestinians in the enclave.

They urged the US government to use its “necessary and available leverage” to bring the war to an end and to ensure the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners in Israel. They also demanded that the US government support Palestinian self-determination and fund an “immediate expansion of humanitarian assistance” in Gaza.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with President of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

## PM, Uzbek President reaffirm commitment to multifaceted relations between two countries

*Both leaders meet on sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Kazakhstan*

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Wednesday reaffirmed commitment to the multifaceted relations between the two countries and expanding of mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and people to people contacts.

The two leaders expressed confidence that operationalization of the Preferential Trade Agreement and Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement would further

enhance bilateral trade and economic relations.

The prime minister met with the Uzbek president on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit being held in Kazakhstan, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Recognizing the importance of Uzbekistan as a transit point for trade expansion for other countries, the two leaders agreed to focus on this particular area and to this end initiate an examination of the various options available.

The Karachi Port's connectivity to Tirmez was also discussed to enhance

trade between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed Pakistan's eagerness to see a prosperous Central Asia and enhanced regional connectivity.

The two leaders also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the common interest of both Pakistan and Uzbekistan for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan which could be a partner in the development and prosperity of the region.

The early realization of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project was also discussed.



DUSHANBE: Prime Minister of Tajikistan H.E. Qohir Rasulzoda called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Minister for promoting religious harmony ahead of Muharram-ul-Haram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday presided over a crucial meeting focused on promoting religious harmony and ensuring peace during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Addressing the meeting attended by prominent scholars and religious leaders from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, he emphasized their significant role in maintaining peace during Muharram-ul-Haram, as observed in previous years.

Minister Salik highlighted that a joint strategy had been worked out in consultation with religious scholars to foster unity, brotherhood, and tolerance in the society.

He stressed the need for similar meetings at provincial and district levels to strengthen sectarian harmony.

## Ahsan highlights enduring US-Pak friendship on occasion of US Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday highlighted long-standing United States (US) and Pakistan friendship on the occasion of US Independence Day.

Federal Minister Prof Ahsan Iqbal said this while addressing as the Chief Guest at the celebration of the 248th anniversary of American independence hosted by the American Embassy in Islamabad, according to a press release issued here.

While addressing a gathering of diplomats, business leaders, and academics to celebrate US Independence Day, the minister emphasized the resilience of 76 years long Pak-US partnership.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid, shares insights on BSP's core and newly launched initiatives during a media talk hosted by WE News.

## Gaza students to complete education in Pakistan: PMDC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The PMDC president said that it is expected that around 100 medical and dental students from Gaza will come to Pakistan, with the first group of 20-30 students arriving soon.

The students will be adjusted in Pakistani medical and dental colleges, and the committee will ensure the smooth completion of their education, he added.

The approval came after the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees estimated that a quarter of a million people had been impacted since Israel's army issued a new evacuation order for parts of southern Gaza a day earlier.

## Imran summons disgruntled PTI lawmakers amid forward block rumors

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged to attend the crucial meeting. The gathering aims to address the concerns and grievances of the PTI lawmakers and to reaffirm party unity in the face of growing speculation about a forward block.

According to sources, notable PTI members including Shehryar Afridi, Junaid Akbar, and Shandana Gulzar are set to meet with Imran Khan tomorrow. The meeting, scheduled to take place at Adiala Jail, follows reports of internal dissent within the party ranks.

## President for women empowerment, improved access to financial services

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday called for financial autonomy of women and improving their access to financial services and credit to encourage women entrepreneurs.

The president, talking to the Group Chief Executive of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Bill Winters, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that economic empowerment of women would not only strengthen them financially but would also help uplift their families, besides contributing to the national economy.

He said that banks should support women en-

trepreneurs as well as enhance their representation in the banking sector.

The delegation briefed the president about SCB's contributions to Pakistan's economy, the development and evolution of the banking industry, and the socio-economic development of the country.

Welcoming the delegation, President Zardari highlighted that Pakistan had taken steps to protect the environment and promote forestation. He informed that the Government of Sindh had planted mangrove forests and earned millions of dollars by trading carbon credits in the international market.

He suggested that in-

vesting in the climate sector would help protect the environment.

The president also called for investing in the agricultural sector as well as financing infrastructure projects in the country, especially small dams, barges and power plants.

He said that banks should extend financial services and loans to farmers to increase their access to agricultural inputs.

The president congratulated the bank on the completion of 160 years of successful operations in the subcontinent.

He said that the bank had played a commendable role in the evolution of the country's banking sector.

## Governor lauds role of minorities for development of country, province

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the Constitution of Pakistan is guarantor of equal rights and religious freedom of all citizens, as such we have to make combined efforts for the rights and powers of all citizens instead of representing majority or minority.

The Governor was speaking to the delegation who called on him under leadership of President of Hindu Panchayat, Balochistan, Raj Kumar, here at the Governor House

on Wednesday. Speaking to the delegation, Governor said that we are equal citizens in the eyes of Constitution.

Besides, adding he said that the people of Balochistan value the human being remaining above the colour, cast and religion.

The Pashtoon and Baloch nationalities care all the minorities a lot, the Governor added.

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail appreciated the role of all minorities in development of the province and promotion of trade.

## PM expresses grief over deaths in Bajaur blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Hidayatullah, a former Senator, and three other persons in Damadola, Bajaur blast. The prime minister prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with equanimity, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also directed for identification of those responsible for the terrorist incident leading to exemplary punishment.

## Pakistan says: India must combat 'dangerous' Islamophobia trend in country

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has told the United Nations General Assembly about India's "abysmal" treatment of religious minorities, with a forceful call for New Delhi to reverse the "dangerous" Islamophobic trend in the South Asian country, as also advocated by U.N. human rights experts.

"Can the representative of India justify the recent incident where a BJP leader openly threatened to slaughter 200,000 Muslims," Pakistani delegate Rabia Ijaz asked India's representative who earlier accused Pakistan of mistreating its minorities, while also alleging that it was involved

in terrorism. "We witnessed India's leadership's unabashed use of anti-Muslim rhetoric for political gain, including their Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) calling Muslims 'infiltrators' during one of his (recent) campaign speeches. Moreover, Hindu preachers have openly called for genocide of Muslim minorities in India," Ms. Ijaz, a second secretary in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said while exercising her right of reply to the Indian representative during the 193-member Assembly's debate on "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)."

India's representative, Kajal Bhat, a counsellor in

the Indian Mission to the UN, said the allegations in response to Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram's sharp speech on Monday in which the Pakistani envoy, apart from New Delhi's atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir, also highlighted the grave human rights abuses of Muslim in India.

"Muslims face systematic, officially sanctioned, discrimination, violence and oppression," Ambassador Akram said. "The law-enforcement and judicial machinery was complicit in this oppression as lynching of Muslims by cow vigilantes and RSS thugs goes unpunished", the ambassador said.



QUETTA: A delegation of Hindu community led by Raj Kumar meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## CM takes notice of incident of death of children in Awaran district

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has taken notice of the death of children in Awaran district.

According to the spokesman of provincial government, Chief Minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of children due to drowning in a stream in Awaran.

The Chief Minister issued orders of inquiry of the incident, adding mentioned by the spokesman of Government of Balochistan.

He said that we are standing with aggrieved families of the deceased children. He announced that the sorrowful incident would be investigated from all aspects.

## Federal govt decides to shut down Pak Steel Mill

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has decided to shut down Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), a state-owned enterprise that has been incurring heavy losses for years.

In a statement on Wednesday, Secretary of Industry and Production said that the Sindh government has been offered to take over 700 acres of the total 19,000 acres land of the PSM and establish its own steel plant on the site.

Last year, the secretary claimed, they found out that there was no buyer for the Pakistan Steel Mills. "Apart from 700 acres, the land will be used for industrial purposes", he added.

Meanwhile, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Arif Sheikh claimed that the federal government has decided to close down PSM due to its poor performance and financial losses.

The mill, which was established in 1974, has been facing financial difficulties for the past decade. The CFO claimed that the volume of PSM employees' annual salary is Rs3.1 billion and in the last 10 years, the government has paid Rs32 billion in salaries.

## Meeting held under She-The-Peacebuilder Project in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): A networking and coordination meeting was held under the She-The-Peacebuilder Project, here on Wednesday. Ms Shania Khan from Aurat Foundation, a partner organization of the project, met with Managing Director B-TEVTA, Mr Tariq Javed Mengal to discuss gender equality initiatives in B-TEVTA.

During the meeting, Ms shania Khan briefed MD BTEVTA on the project's objectives, SEED Grant, and its activities

aimed at promoting gender equality and empowerment. She also discussed the enquiry committee formed under the Anti-Harassment Act and requested Mr Mengal to notify the enquiry committee in B-TEVTA and increase women's representation in the committee.

Mr Mengal assured his full support and instructed his staff to notify the enquiry committee in the department and include two Women's Protection Agency (WPA) members.



QUETTA: Provincial Adviser of Climate Change and Environment Naseem-ur-Rehman Mulla Khel is being received the plant during seminar on Climate Change and Environment Protection, held in Quetta.

## Effective legislation and policy making essential to combat climate change, say Experts

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The political leadership of Balochistan, civil society representatives, and organizations working on gender equality have stressed the need for effective legislation and policy making to combat climate change, aligning with gender equality.

Speaking at the second day of the "Her Climate" National Conference organized by the Forum for Dignity Initiatives Pakistan, panelists including Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Environment Nasim ur Rehman, Chairperson of

the Commission on the Status of Women Balochistan Fozia Shaheen, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Balochistan Chapter Farukhanda Aurangzeb, Head of UNFPA Balochistan Dr. Sarmad Ayesha Wadood, and prominent political and social leaders, emphasized that climate change is the biggest challenge of the present time, with severe impacts already being felt in poor and developing countries, particularly by women.

## Balochistan spends Rs. 3.39b extra on operating expenses in FY 2023-24

QUETTA, July 02 (INP): Balochistan's fiscal management comes under scrutiny as it emerges that the provincial government exceeded its operating expenses budget by Rs. 3.39 billion in the financial year 2023-24.

Originally allocated Rs. 31.93 billion for expenses including vehicle fuel and office costs, the final expenditure soared to Rs. 35.32 billion, reflecting a significant budget overrun.

## Ruet body meets on July 6 for Muharram moon sighting

QUETTA (INP): The central moon sighting body will meet on July 6 in Quetta for the sighting of Muharram crescent — the beginning of new Islamic calendar.

The meeting will be presided over by Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad.

Zonal committees will also hold meetings for the sighting of Muharram moon in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar on the same day.

## ATC summons PTI founder, others in Kahna police station cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday summoned PTI founder Imran Khan and other accused on July 31, in two cases registered against them at Kahna police station. The hearing of two cases registered against the PTI founder and other accused was held at the ATC, in which Mirza Asim and Talat Rizwan appeared on behalf of the former prime minister.



QUETTA: Different delegations meeting with Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani