

# Independent

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## 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 Or-

ganization (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 parliaments, and defence person-



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.

## 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 entrepreneurs 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 investing 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.

## 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 Heads 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.

## 'Belarusian President to visit Pakistan in October'

ISLAMABAD (APP): First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Sergey Lukashевич, on Monday said that the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko will visit Pakistan in coming October to sign multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He said this in a meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsin, Secretary of Commerce Ahsan Ali Mangi and other officials and diplomats.

Mr. Lukashевич also announced a Joint Trade Commission meeting in mid-September to enhance bilateral trade relations.

## Non recovery of missing persons: IHC rejects appeals against imposition of fine on defence secretary, interior secretary others

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has rejected the appeals filed against imposition of fine on secretary defence, secretary interior, chief commissioner and police officers in the case of non recovery of missing persons.

The Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amir Farooq while expressing resentment over Additional Attorney General (AAG) due to lack of progress in the case has remarked several years have passed. Where are missing persons. Every time you say progress is being made. We have given time to you on several occasions. Should the fine be not doubled or should we not summon Prime Minister (PM).

He gave these remarks while presiding over two members bench of IHC during the hearing of recovery of missing persons including IT expert Sajid Mehmood, Umar Abdullah, Mudassar Naro and others. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb is the part of the bench.

AAG appeared in the court.

The CJ IHC inquired from him AAG Sahb, is any good news. Missing persons have come. AAG replied no progress has been made in recovery of missing persons.

The CJ IHC expressed annoyance over AAG on the non recovery of missing persons remarking several years have elapsed. Where are missing persons. Every time you say progress is being made. How much time we should give you. You seek time in every hearing. Attorney General (AG) has appeared several time earlier. Khalid Javed Khan has also appeared. What should we do. What fine has been imposed earlier we double it. What should we do. We summon PM.

## 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 prepare them, 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.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Marilina Armellini at Parliament House.

## Protest against decision of EC case: Imran, Qureshi, Sheikh acquitted

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan, former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid have been acquitted in the case registered against them in police station Aabpara.

The case registered against former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan and others in police station Aabpara for staging protest against the decision of Election Commission (EC) came up for hearing before Sessions Court Islamabad Wednesday. The court announced the reserved decision. The court in its decision acquitted Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid. Former speaker National Assembly (NA) Asad Qaisar, Khurram Faisal Javed Khan, Khurram Nawaz and Shehr Yar Afridi were also acquitted.

## 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.

## 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 Sajjad Ahmad said that the bomb disposal unit was conducting its investigation and the situation would become clear after its report.

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.

## 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 con-

versations will continue to be ongoing," he added.

A day earlier, US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vasant 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.

## 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 adviser 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.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain chairing a meeting regarding inter-religious harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram.

## Appeal pleas by Imran, Bushra Bibi: We have to decide the case till July 12 at every cost: Judge

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judge Afzal Majoka of district and sessions court Islamabad while adjourning hearing of the central appeal pleas of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi against their conviction in Nikah during iddat case has remarked decision of this case has to be announced till July 12 at every cost.

He gave these remarks during hearing of appeal pleas of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi against sentence in Nikah during iddat case Wednesday.

Suleman Akram Raja counsel for Imran Khan while completing his arguments took the plea the lady can solemnize nikah without the certificate of union council. If it continues like this then thousands of marriages will have to be declared null and void. There are thousands of inheritance related problems in the family.

Suleman Akram Raja and Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry counsels for Imran Khan appeared in the court.

At the inception of hearing, Suleman Akram Raja counsel for Imran Khan invited reference to section 7 of Muslim family law. Judge Afzal Majoka remarked you are saying section 7 is not applicable in this case.



## 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 turnouts 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 depredations, 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.

### 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.

"These capabilities complement the strengths of our 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. The Belt and Road 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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

### 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 Rs 278.37. 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

ISLAMABAD (APP): 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.

He also directed them to ensure all time

availability of the required manpower, machinery, relief items and medical teams along with necessary medicines with special focus on the most vulnerable areas of the province as they need to have extra ordinary arrangements and rapid response mechanism to deal with any emergency in an effective manner.

Ali Amin Khan Gandapur further directed the quarters concerned to devise an effective mechanism of coordination among the relevant departments and rescue agencies, adding that control rooms should be established at provincial level and high-risk districts in the province for this purpose.



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

## 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.

He said that the main objective of outsourcing was to implement uniform sanitation system. "No government in the past tried to focus on sanitation at villages", he regretted.

All Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) provided details regarding pre-qualification of private

companies interested in outsourcing in their respective areas.



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

## 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.

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.

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

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.

During his visit, he discussed potential technical collaborations with Tajik energy officials.

## 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.

The Rescue 1122 and police reached the spot.

## 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.

## 20 dead, 1450 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 20 people died while 1450 injured in 1314 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of the injured, 651 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 799 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot.

## 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. This move, he claimed, had adversely affected small industries in Abbottabad.

The High Court's Double Bench, upon reviewing the petition presented by prominent lawyer Gul Sherin Khan Jadon Advocate, issued a stay order. This order temporarily prevents the Cantonment Board from collecting taxes until further hearings take place.

The court has directed to submit records from both the ACB.

## 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.

He said more than Rs. 500 million were released for education scholarships for children of police employees. A sum of Rs. 146 million was granted for medical assistance to employees facing health issues.

Daughters of police employees received wedding gifts worth Rs. 326.9 million. The police employees were provided with Rs. 12.3 million.

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

LAHORE (Online): Lahore 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

Shahbaz Sharif in NA-118 of National Assembly (NA) came up for hearing in LHC ET. The ET sought arguments from respondents on maintainability of petition.

Counsel for Hamza Shahbaz Sharif raised objections on the maintainability of the petition. The counsel for Hamza Shahbaz while raising objection on the maintainability of petition said the petitioner has not attached the relevant documents with the petition and several pages of petition don't carry the signatures of petitioner.



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 Shafi 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.

The Law Minister declared that unnecessary delay or negligence in projects of public interest will not be tolerated in any way.

# 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.

Israeli forces carried out new military strikes in the southern city of Rafah amid fierce fighting with Palestinians overnight, residents said. At least 12 people were killed in new strikes in central and northern Gaza, health officials said.

Israel's leaders have said they are winding down the phase of intense fighting against Hamas, the Islamist group that has governed Gaza since 2007, and will soon shift to more targeted operations in the nearly nine-month-old war in Gaza.

But fighting continued

overnight in two locations at the centre of Gaza, where tanks have seized several districts and advanced further west and north of the city in recent days, and concerns about the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced people are growing.

The Israeli military said its forces had continued targeted, military-based operations in Rafah, dismantled several military sites and killed Palestinian militants.

In Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, two Israeli airstrikes killed five Palestinians, health officials said. In Shejiaa, an eastern suburb of Gaza City in the centre of the enclave, an airstrike killed four and wounded 17, medics said.

Another airstrike hit a car in the southern city of Deir Al-Balah, killing three people, health officials said.

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. "Most of the displaced suffer from abdominal pains and diseases such as because of the unhealthy water, the lack of decent food and the pollution as many live near sewage pools," he told Reuters via a chat app.

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.

Moscow and Beijing

have deepened their political, military and economic ties since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Alongside Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who arrived in Kazakhstan on Tuesday, the pair see the SCO as a key forum for advancing their strategic interests across Eurasia.

"We attach great importance to partnership cooperation within this organisation," Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told Russian state media outlets ahead of Putin's arrival.

## 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.

"We hope to start as soon as possible," said Eric Jacobstein, a Western Hemisphere official with the US State Department, at a press conference in Panama City.

## 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.

A video posted on social media by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy showed a missile with a fiery trail streaking over buildings in Ukraine's fourth-largest city, and debris flying into the air from its

impact. The war, now in its third year since Russia invaded its neighbor, has killed more than 10,000 civilians and wounded around 20,000 others, the United Nations says.

In the Kharkiv region in the northeast, Russian shelling struck a village council building, killing one person and injuring two others, regional head Oleh Snychubov said.

Elsewhere in the region, a Russian glide bomb struck a residential building in the village of Ruska Lozova, injuring at least two people. Others could be trapped under rubble, Snychubov said.

Trump says he can end the Russia-Ukraine war in one day. Russia's UN ambassador says he can't. Also Wednesday, Ukraine received \$2.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund under an ongoing credit facility, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced.

## 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.

The new government faces challenges including the Gaza war on its border, economic woes and persistent power cuts which have frustrated Egyptians and shut down some factories.

State television reported that Ahmed Kouchouk was set to become finance minister and faces perhaps the biggest challenge in managing a stumbling economy and sky-rocking debt. At the foreign ministry, state TV citing local channel ExtraNews reported that Egypt's ambassador to the European Union, Badr Abdelatty,

would replace Sameh Shoukry, who has steered Egypt's diplomatic efforts to contain the impact of the war in Gaza. Karim Badawi will be appointed as petroleum minister, Mahmoud Esmat as electricity minister and General Abdel Majeed Saqr as defence minister, Egypt's ExtraNews reported.

Rania al-Mashat, former minister of international cooperation, will be re-appointed as minister for planning, economic development and international cooperation, the outlet said. Sherif Farouk, chairman of Egypt Post, is set to take over at the supply ministry, media reports said. Egypt has often been the world's biggest wheat importer. Farouk would be tasked with overseeing those purchases as well as a sprawling food subsidy programme that feeds more than 60 million people.

## Islamic authorities in Russia's Dagestan ban full-face veil after attacks

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: 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.

In a statement posted on the Telegram messenger app, the Dagestan Muftiate said it was introducing a "temporary" ban on the niqab after an appeal from Russia's ministry of nationality policy and religious affairs. Reports following the attacks on June 23 said one of the gunmen had planned to escape wearing a niqab. The muftiate, a religious organisation representing Dagestani Muslims, said that the ban would remain in place "until the identified threats are eliminated and a new theological conclusion is reached".

## 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 elec-

tion cycle brought forward by the death of former president Ebrahim Raisi in a May helicopter crash.

Only 40 per cent of Iran's 61 million eligible voters cast their ballots in the first round, representing the lowest turnout in any presidential election since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Khamenei, in a video published by state TV, said it was "completely wrong to think that those who did not vote in the first round are against the system."

## 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. The liberal Communist Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) party, which withdrew support and was the biggest group.

## 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.

In a joint statement, the 12 former government officials said the administration was violating US laws through its support for Israel and finding loopholes to continue shipping weapons to its ally.

"America's diplomatic cover for, and continuous flow of arms to, Israel has ensured our undeniable complicity in the killings and forced starvation of a besieged Palestinian population in Gaza," the former officials said in the statement.

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.

Both the White House and State Department had no immediate comment on the statement. There has been mounting international criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza and of US military and diplomatic support for its ally in the war, which began on October 7 when the Palestinian terror group Hamas led a devastating cross-border attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage to the Gaza Strip.



## Pak, Tajikistan reaffirm commitment to promote economic ties, explore new avenues for cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Tajikistan have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the longstanding fraternal ties and increase bilateral economic cooperation by exploring new avenues, opportunities and ventures.

The bilateral relations were discussed during the official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the Republic of Tajikistan on July 2-3 at the invitation of Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, according to a joint statement issued following the visit.

In order to strengthen trade relations, both parties also committed to exploring the possibility of granting preferential market access to each other's goods, including through discussions on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).

Emphasizing the significance of enhancing road, rail, and air connectivity between the two nations, they agreed to conduct expert-level consultations on the matter. Underlining the importance of reliable electricity supply for sustainable economic growth, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment for early completion of the flagship power project CASA-1000. It was agreed that completion of the project would open new avenues for future energy corridors, leading to prosperity for the two sides and the whole region.

Recognizing the significance of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation, both parties expressed their preparedness to convene the 7th Session of the Joint Commission in Islamabad at the earliest opportunity.

The President of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan inked the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This agreement symbolizes the deepening mutual trust and partnership between the two nations, opening new avenues for advancing bilateral cooperation. "The Pakistan Prime Minister also expressed support for Tajikistan's initiative to establish the SCO Anti-Drug Centre in Dushanbe," said the joint statement. The two sides reviewed the existing inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries.

The two leaders underscored the importance of Tajikistan-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the respective parliaments and supported increasing frequency of parliamentary delegations' visits to boost productive inter-parliamentary cooperation. Noting the current level of bilateral trade, it was underlined that there is a vast potential that needs to be tapped through mutual efforts.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to Pakistan, Andrei Metelitsa cutting the cake on the occasion of the Independence Day the Republic of Belarus and the 30th anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Belarus and Pakistan at a local hotel in Federal Capital.

## PM loan scheme has a crucial role in fostering economic growth; Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, on Wednesday, emphasized the significant role of the PMYP Loan Scheme in fostering economic growth by empowering the youth.

The meeting discussed the current Prime Minister's Youth Loan Scheme (PMYLS), its impact on creating employment opportunities, and strategies to enhance its reach.

"Empowering youth is key to driving economic development and ensuring a prosperous future for our nation," Rana Mashhood said, adding, "The PMYLS has already made a substantial impact, and with increased support from the State Bank, we can reach even more young individuals and help them realize their entrepreneurial dreams."

On the occasion, State Bank officials provided insights into the scheme's current status, sharing data on loan disbursements and success stories.

They discussed the measures taken to streamline the application process and address challenges faced by applicants.

## Pak consumes 55 bn plastic bags at expected 15% increase in usage annually: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson, Senate Standing on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on World Plastic Bag Free Day said that the country was consuming 55 billion plastic bags annually at an expected increase by 15 percent in its usage every year.

The Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Senator in her message on the International Plastic Bag Free Day urged the nation to review the environmental impact of plastic bags and its indiscriminate use in Pakistan.

Senator Rehman said Pakistan is facing a serious problem of plastic pollution as single-use plastic bags caused water stagnation, littering and damage to human, aquatic and wildlife.

"Plastic bags take hundreds of years to decompose and their accumulation poses serious risks to the environment and health. All our small and big cities face major challenges in plastic waste management," she said.

She underscored that several attempts were made to stop the use of plastic bags, however, due to lack of alternatives, slow implementation and lack of public awareness.

## Aleem flays Bajaur blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communication, Board of Investment and Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday condemned the remote-controlled bomb blast in Bajaur District, which resulted in the tragic loss of lives, including former Senator Hidayatullah Khan and three others.

Expressed heartfelt sorrow over the casualties, the minister extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families, including the family of former Senator Hidayatullah Khan, said a press release. He prayed for the departed souls to rest in peace and for grant of strength and patience to the affected families in this difficult time.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with state bank officials.

## CDA to launch 30 electric buses on Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is likely to launch the operation of 30 electric buses on different routes of the federal capital to facilitate the residents on July 5 (Friday).

"The buses had arrived in Islamabad last month which will be operational to mitigate the problems being faced by the travelers of the twin cities," official sources in the CDA told APP. The sources said that the inauguration ceremony is likely to attend by senior dignitaries, officials of CDA and other relevant departments. Chairman CDA, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa is not only putting maximum efforts to facilitate the residents of the federal capital by enhancing facilities but also beautifying the city on modern lines. They said that these buses would run on two routes including National University of Science and Technology (NUST) to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and PIMS to Bari Imam. The first route would start from NUST and end at PIMS after passing through G-11 Markaz, G-10 Markaz, G-9 Markaz, and G-8 Markaz, they added. They said the second route would start from PIMS and conclude at Bari Imam after passing through G-7, G-6, Melody, Aabpara, Ataturk Road, Serena Hotel, Foreign Office, Radio Pakistan, and the Diplomatic Enclave.

## Police foil major terrorism plan

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, Islamabad Police are conducting daily intelligence-based search and combing operations in the federal capital Islamabad in view of security during Muharram-ul-Haram.

During the search operation in the Sangjani police station jurisdiction, unknown accused fired at police teams. The police responded in self-defense, but the accused took advantage of the darkness and bushes to escape while firing.

The police team recovered a Kalashnikov rifle, two hand grenades, safety fuse wires, two detonators, ball bearings, and empty shells from the scene.

## CDA chief urges modernization via PP Partnership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that adopting the practices of the Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) would transform the Authority into a dynamic institution.

While chairing a meeting here Wednesday, he said that P3A would provide technical support to the CDA for investment in the real estate sector. "We aim to utilize the assistance and expertise of the P3A to initiate major projects for the promotion of tourism in Islamabad," he added.

The P3A and international consultants attended the meeting. The Chairman CDA said that instead of auctioning assets, a policy to create permanent sources of income would be implemented. "Through the platform of the Public Private Partnership Authority, the CDA is keen to work on projects that generate permanent income," he added. Muhammad Ali said the CDA is considering to initiate the projects for permanent sources of income through a professionally strong platform.

## Motorway Police returns two cell phones to a traveler

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) officials found and handed over two lost mobile phones worth Rs 140,000 to its owner here on Wednesday. According to details, a traveler near Palian on the Swat motorway contacted Motorway police and said that during a stay at a petrol pump in a service area, he had forgotten to leave his mobile phones. The NHMP North zone officials took immediate action on his request and after tracing the lost phones.

## CUI, CERN to strengthen, expand collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) and European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) would strengthen and expand collaboration in the field of science and technology. This was discussed during an interaction of the CERN delegation and senior officials of CUI. Hosted a two-member delegation of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) at its Islamabad Campus. The two member delegation from CERN was comprised of Dr. Luciano Musa, Project Leader ALICE, (A Large Ion Collider Experiment) CERN, alongside Dr. Luca Malgeri, Senior Researcher. They were joined by Dr. Zafar Yasin, Director CERN Secretariat, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Dr. Altaf Ur Rahman, Director, CERN, Switzerland.

It was informed that since joining ALICE in 2008 and achieving full membership in 2012, COMSATS University Islamabad has been integral to advancing scientific research in collaboration with CERN. To revive and expand this partnership, the university leadership recently formed a specialized CERN Liaison Group. Heading this initiative Dr. Tahir Naeem, Director Planning, Development, and Human Resource Development (P, D and HRD), CUI was designated as Focal Person to manage all collaborative efforts and future programs with CERN.

## EPA finds subpar waste management practices at Capital's various hospitals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) on Wednesday during its inspection visit found subpar waste management practices in various hospital of the federal capital. A joint inspection exercise under the directives of the prime minister was conducted by the Pak-EPA and the Islamabad Health Care Regulatory Authority (IHRA), a news release said.

The assessment, carried out by four teams, found significant lapses in waste segregation, storage, and incineration, posing risks of infection spread and environmental contamination.

The hospital management had pledged to rectify the issues and implement proper waste management protocols. Moreover, Pak-EPA and IHRA would continue monitoring health facilities in Islamabad to ensure compliance with the Hospital Waste Management Rules 2005, taking necessary actions to safeguard public health and the environment.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with state bank officials.

## Randhawa directs action be taken against defaulters of commercial properties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Operation Directorate remained open until midnight on Saturday and Sunday at the end of the financial year.

The CDA chief said that despite numerous opportunities, the properties of those who fail to pay their installments will be canceled.

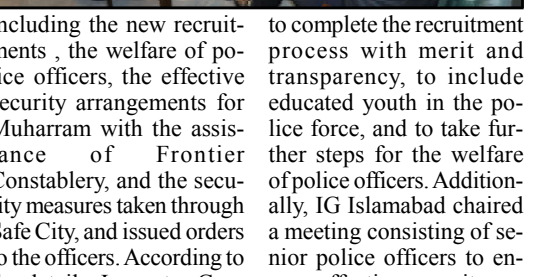
On the instructions of the CDA Chairman, the process of canceling the allotments of various commercial properties due to non-payment of dues by June 30, 2024, has commenced.

The cancellation process has begun after fulfilling the legal requirements, including newspaper advertisements and notices.

Similarly, for the convenience of the public, he said the CDA One Window

## FC to assist police in strengthening Muharram security: IG Islamabad

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General Police (IGP) Islamabad reviewed various on going initiatives reviewed the implementation of measures taken for new recruitments and the welfare of police officers. He also issued orders to complete the recruitment process with merit and transparency, to include educated youth in the police force, and to take further steps for the welfare of police officers. Additionally, IG Islamabad chaired a meeting consisting of senior police officers to ensure effective security arrangements in the federal capital during Muharram-ul-Haram. He reviewed the responsibilities of FC and the role of Safe City Islamabad for comprehensive security arrangements during Muharram-ul-Haram. FC will assist Islamabad Police in fulfilling its duties during Muharram, he added. In the meeting, new targets were assigned to the IT and Technical teams regarding the installation of more cameras for better functionality.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with state bank officials.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, talking to media after visiting Federal Government Employees Housing Authority Bhara Kahu Sky Garden scheme.

## SC nullifies death sentence 2 convicts after 12 years

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while nullifying the decision of death penalty after 12 years has issued orders for releasing the 2 accused.

These orders were issued by SC bench presided over by Justice Jamal Mandokhail and comprising Justice Hassan Akhtar and Justice Naeem Afghan Wednesday.

The court annulled the decision of trial court, high court.

The court maintained in its written order that it wondered that the subordinate judiciary declared it illicit relations without any evidence.

The court in its order nullified death sentence of convict Muhammad Ijaz alias Billay and life imprisonment of co-convict Nasim Akhtar.

The charges of murdering the husband of the co-accused Nasim Akhtar was proved against convict Muhammad Ijaz in 2010.

According to the case both of the culprits had established illicit relations.

According to the claimant of the case the two culprits were found giving electric shocks to the victim. The claimant caught them red handed. Culprit started firing.

According to case the husband of convict Nasim Akhtar was killed due to firing of convict Muhammad Ijaz.

According to defence counsel the case of suicide was declared murder case.

According to defence counsel the illicit relations between the two convicts don't stand proved.

## Custom officials visits NH&MP office

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of 33 under-training inspectors from Pakistan Customs visited the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) Central Police Office here on Wednesday.

During the visit, Additional Inspector General (AIG) Shah Asad, along with DSP's Asma Naqvi and Asad Abbas, provided a comprehensive briefing on the professional performance, operations, role, and structure of the National Highways and Motorway Police. The inspectors also visited the 130 heliports and command centre.

AIG Shah Asad highlighted that the National Highways and Motorway Police and Pakistan Customs are collaborating to modernize procedures to prevent smuggling on national highways and motorways.

## Int'l Plastic Bag Free Day observed

ISLAMABAD (Online): International Plastic Bag Free Day was observed Wednesday to create awareness among public about fight against plastic pollution. In her message on International Plastic Bag Free Day, Chief Minister of the Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif highlighted the serious threat of plastic pollution and called for decisive action to address the issue. She reaffirmed the government's commitment to ending the use of plastic bags in Punjab.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif urged citizens to support the government's efforts by ensuring the implementation of the law banning the production, sale, and use of plastic bags. She emphasized the goal of creating a plastic-free Punjab, where rivers, parks, and cities are free from plastic pollution.

## Preparations finalized to prevent water logging in city

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has finalized all the arrangements needed for preventing water-logging in the city due to rain which will fall as a result of Monsoon.

"With the monsoon season approaching, the authorities in Islamabad are gearing up to ensure the city is prepared for the rains," said a news statement by the ICT administration.

The ICT administration shared a comprehensive plan in this regard which spelled out a series of activities that were aimed at keeping the city functioning smoothly.

"Firstly, the cleaning of drains has been completed as part of the pre-monsoon plan. Ongoing work in various areas will soon be finished," it said, adding all the machinery needed for cleaning the city during the monsoon "is ready to go".

The ICT administration said equipment had been distributed to both urban and rural areas, with a particular focus on residential zones. "Should there be heavy rainfall, standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be enacted in all these areas."

According to the local administration, rescue teams equipped with de-watering sets would be on standby during the rains.

"In case of water accumulation, especially in basements, residents can call emergency numbers 15 or 16," it said, adding the teams would respond promptly to any standing water issues.

"Areas that experienced significant water logging last year are under close watch," the administration stressed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood in a group photograph with the participants during seminar on National Championship Final Year Projects (NCFYP) 2022-23 of National Grassroots ICT Research Initiative.