

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 159 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Thursday July 11, 2024, Muharram 04, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

PM Shehbaz tells ministries

Roll up your sleeves as nation wants results; won't tolerate laxity in downsizing plan

Calls for coordination b/w federal, provincial Govts to ensure peace during Muharram; Federal cabinet approves action plan for Pak PWD abolition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, warning against any laxity in the implementation of the government's downsizing agenda, asked the ministries to work hard for making a difference and meeting the nation's expectations.

"I will not allow my time to waste and I am sure you will not allow your time to be wasted. The only thing that will make the difference is action and implementation. Roll up your

sleeves as this is a matter of country, its resources and resolution of its issues," the prime minister said in his remarks while chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet.

Apprising the members of his visits to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, he referred to his interactions with world leaders particularly Russian President Vladimir Putin, and said he had formed a committee under Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal for follow-ups.

Similarly, he said he had chaired a meeting a couple of days ago to review the progress on the follow-up of "very productive" discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang during his China visit and would hold another meeting on July 20.

The prime minister said the government had launched solarisation of 28,000 tube-wells in Balochistan to save bleeding of annual Rs 80 billion.

He also appreciated the Balochistan chief minister and other relevant ministries and departments for taking the project to the implementation stage.

He told the meeting that the finance ministry had been tasked to work out a business plan for solarisation of a million tube-wells in the country which were currently running on imported fuel, putting a burden of \$3.5 billion in the form of foreign exchange.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors try to save their belongings from their shops after a massive fire erupted at H-9 Sunday weekly bazaar in the Federal Capital. More than 100 shops were gutted in the fire that broke out in Sunday weekly bazaar.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the federal cabinet.

Establishment 'must step back' to ensure transparent elections: Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) incarcerated and beleaguered founding chairperson Imran Khan emphasised the urgent need for the establishment to step back to ensure transparent elections in the country. "If we want to save the country, the establishment must step back to move towards transparent elections," the former premier asserted during an informal talk with media in the Rawalpindi's Adiala jail today.

He criticised the current government for failing the nation, saying, "The current government has destroyed Pakistan's hope; no one trusts this government anymore." Imran pointed out the severe economic burdens on the common people, noting, "The poor who used to have a 2,000 rupees bill now face a 10,000 rupees bill."

In a previous media talk, Imran emphasised that the IMF cannot solve the country's issues, asserting that the solution lies in fair and transparent elections.

He expressed concern that Pakistan, which once led until 1990, is now being surpassed by other nations.



Planning Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal meets with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Jiang Zaidong, to discuss ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Islamabad

Pak-US Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024 ends at NCTC Pabbi

RAWALPINDI (INP): The closing ceremony of Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024 was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi.

The "Infantry Rifle Company Exercise-2024" between Pakistan and United States has been conducted for the 1st time in Counter Terrorism domain. The two-week exercise commenced on June 29 at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi. One company each from both professional Armies participated with efficiency and zeal.

General Officer Commanding 17 Division attended the closing ceremony as chief guest. Major General Charles G Kemper, Commanding General, 34 Infantry Division from United States Army also witnessed the closing ceremony. The troops displayed highest standards of professional excellence during the conduct.

The Infantry Rifle Company Exchange was aimed at refining drills procedures besides sharing counter terrorism experiences vital for countering perpetual terrorism threat faced by both nations.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in a meeting with JUI Secretary General Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri.

Justice Tariq received 'suspicious calls and messages'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The office of Islamabad High Court judge Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri received "suspicious calls and messages", days after IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq had declared that the court cannot tolerate any malicious campaign against any judge any longer.

The person behind the suspicious calls introduced himself as director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the sources said and added, the caller wanted to talk directly to Justice Tariq Jahangiri. The sources said after an investigation it was learnt that FIA DG did not make any call to the IHC judge. Later, Justice Tariq Jahangiri summoned IHC Registrar and directed him to immediately report the mobile phone number from which the call came to the FIA.

Defence Minister accuses Asad of double-faced attitude

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday accused former National Assembly Speaker, Asad Qaiser of dual-faced attitude for nagging the current Speaker over alleged silence on Police raid at the Opposition Leader's residence. Responding to Asad Qaiser's allegations, the Defence Minister said a day earlier the Police raided the Leader of the Opposition's residence but the Speaker National Assembly intervened and assisted him. "However, Asad Qaiser did not make any protest or supported us during our detentions in the regime of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)," he said.

CDA fetches record revenue of Rs 52bln for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an unprecedented achievement, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has recorded a revenue of 52 billion rupees for the financial year 2023-24, exceeding target by 23 per cent.

Under the leadership of Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa and the strategic direction of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, innovative steps were implemented to boost revenue generation, its spokesman said on Wednesday.

Terrorist Commander among three killed, four soldiers martyred in Peshawar IBO

RAWALPINDI (APP): A terrorist commander among three were killed in a joint intelligence-based operation conducted by the Security Forces and Police in Hassan Khel area of Peshawar District while four brave sons of the soil embraced martyrdom amid gallantly fighting against the terrorists. During conduct of the operation, after intense exchange of fire, three terrorists including high value target, Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem were killed whereas weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Terrorist Commander Abdul Raheem was highly wanted by the Law Enforcement Agencies and the government had fixed head money of Rs 6 million on him, as he remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, and was also responsible for Shahadat of Captain Hussain Jehangir Shaheed and Havildar Shafiq Ullah Shaheed on 26 May 2024.

"Today's operation has avenged the heinous act and has brought the main perpetrator to justice," the ISPR said. The martyred soldiers were identified as Sepoy Muhammad Idrees (age: 34 years, resident of Swabi District), Sepoy Badam Gul (age: 34 years, resident of Kohat District) of Pakistan Army and Sub Inspector Tajmir Shah, (age: 38 years, resident of Peshawar District) and Assistant Sub Inspector Muhammad Akram (age: 34 years, resident of Mansehra District) of CTD KPK.

Maulana Fazal says We are waiting for court's decision on reserved seats case

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Online): JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said we are waiting for court's decision on the matter of reserved seats case.

Approval of resolution in US Congress has no importance but it is weakness of our diplomatic mission. Instead of operation Azme Istehkam we should sit together to ascertain basic reasons to the problems related to terrorism and move towards its solution, he said this while talking to media men here Wednesday. He went on to say Supreme Court has now to give decision on the matter of reserved seats. It is hoped the court will give the best decision.

To a question he said the approval of resolution in US Congress does not hold importance because resolutions continue to be passed about other countries in the world parliaments.



ISLAMABAD: Head of PkMAP and Chairman Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aain Pakistan Mehmood Khan Achakzai and others talking to media persons.

Ahsan, Chinese Envoy discuss CPEC-2 progress, future initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to discuss the ongoing and upcoming initiatives under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase 2.

Chinese investment in Pakistan. Ahsan Iqbal is scheduled to visit China to attend the high-level forum on the Action Plan for Global Development and a Shared Future, organized by the China International Development Cooperation Agency.

This visit follows up on the agreements reached during the recent visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to China.

The follow-up meeting will focus on mutually agreed projects, with special attention to agriculture scholarships, IT training programs, the ML-1 railway project, and the Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase 2 (Thakot-Raikot Section).

500 shops gutted as fire sweeps through Sunday Bazaar in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): As many as 500 shops were destroyed after a massive fire broke out in a Sunday Bazaar in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The cause of the blaze could not be ascertained as yet while a large number of fire engines including from the Pakistan Navy and Air Force were rushed to the site. A pall of thick black smoke can be seen from a distance.

According to rescue officials, a number of rescue vehicles were engaged in extinguishing the fire and more vehicles of fire brigade have been called up.

According to the rescue personnel, the fire broke out in the shoes and clothes section and spread quickly engulfing more shops in the bazaar. The firefighters of Pakistan Navy also reached the scene and started rescue work.

CDA Chairman and Commissioner Islamabad, Deputy Commissioner

and other officers of administration also reached the spot and monitored the entire operation.

The blaze has been brought under control in the shops located on Srinagar Highway side and process of cooling has been started there while the process of extinguishing fire in remaining portions of the market was under way.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi took notice of the fire incident and contacted Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and directed him to rush to the spot.

The Interior Minister instructed the federal capital administration to use all resources to douse the fire.

The number of rescue and fire brigade teams should be increased and steps should be taken to control the fire by deploying additional resources, Mohsin Naqvi directed.

Mohsin Naqvi called for a report from the Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad while ordering inquiry into the fire incident.

The fire in H-9 Sunday Bazaar was brought under control after 31 fire tenders were called to control the blaze, said Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon.

Talking to the media, the DC said the fire started in the garments section of the H-9 Sunday market. The flames quickly spread to the nearby crockery and utensils section.

To bolster the firefighting efforts, additional support was requested from the Pakistan Navy, Air Force and Rawalpindi administration. Chief Commissioner (CC) Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited the H-9 Sunday Bazaar on Wednesday after a fire broke out around 11 am and formed a committee to investigate the incident.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting of Core Committee regarding Security of Chinese Citizens.

Imran requests to dismiss NAB amend. intra court appeals

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has filed written reply in Supreme Court (SC) on intra court appeal against declaration of NAB amendment null and void.

Naqvi chairs meeting of Core Committee on Security of Chinese

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Core Committee on Security of Chinese Citizens at the Ministry of Interior. The meeting was attended by Secretary Interior, Secretary Defense, Incharge National Coordinator NACTA, Coordinator National Action Plan and senior officials of law enforcement agencies.

Chief Secretaries of all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, IGs, and

Raising objection on sitting of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa in the bench it has been said in the reply he should not sit in bench in the light of decision of the past.

Imran Khan requested in his reply to dismiss intra court appeals on Wednesday. Amending law to save corruption of any one even is not done in Banana Republic. Corruption leaves negative and disastrous effects for economy. During hearing justice Athar Minallah said to me amendments will benefit you too. My stance is very clear that this is not matter related to myself but this is issue of the country.

He added that the PTI regime had passed 52 bills in an hour which was in unprecedented desecration of the House under his (Asad Qaiser) leadership.

He alleged that Asad Qaiser had never issued production orders for any detained member of his party during his tenure.

13 die, Jeep plunges into river Neelum

MUZAFFARABAD (Online): As many as 13 people were killed and several injured after a jeep plunged into river Neelum in AJK capital Muzaffarabad.

The passenger jeep was on its way from Lawat Bala to Muzaffarabad when it fell into River Neelum on Neelum highway.

The rescue teams are facing difficulties in rescue work due to rain. The victims include men, women and children. The bodies of 13

persons have been pulled out and rescue process is underway. People were travelling in the jeep beyond its capacity, therefore, more casualties are expected. 3 persons have been injured who have been shifted to hospital.

The locals are pulling out the people on self help basis. Incharge SDMA Neelum Muhammad Akhtar Ayoub said police and Rescue teams have been sent to the scene.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Thursday July 11, 2024

Policed state

Pakistan is under grave threat from its own citizens, or so the interior ministry would have us believe. According to a recent statement made before the Sindh High Court on behalf of the ministry, the government feels it necessary to keep the ban on X in place because it considers the social media platform a "threat to peace and national security".

The statement reads: "hostile elements operating on X have nefarious intentions to create an environment of chaos and instability, with the ultimate goal of destabilising the country and plunging it into some form of anarchy". For anyone aware of Pakistan's sociopolitical context, it is not difficult to guess who is being described as 'hostile elements'. There are many disgruntled and disillusioned citizens who have taken to using the platform to vent their frustrations against state institutions that clearly appear unnerved by the unchecked criticism and would like to see them silenced.

The ban on X, the interior ministry says, does not curtail freedom of expression or restrict access to information. In fact, 'it is a measure aimed at ensuring responsible use of social media platforms'. But how does completely blocking access to a global platform encourage responsible use of social media? And how does silencing all Pakistani citizens on X contribute towards national stability and democratic governance? The government does not shed light on these questions. Meanwhile, another recent development provides a fresh example of how extensively constitutional freedoms are being encroached upon. Following the uncovering of a mass surveillance apparatus spying on potentially millions of citizens, the government has, through an SRO, formally allowed intelligence personnel to intercept and trace calls of any citizen "in the interest of national security". To be clear, this was already being done, albeit without warrants or legal sanction. It will now continue with legal sanction, but likely still without warrants. The PML-N-led government must be asked: what is it thinking, giving up important personal protections under the pretext of 'national security'? Even if the circumstances demand enhanced powers for security institutions, these should not be conceded without adequate checks and balances in place. There are many seasoned politicians within its ranks who should know better than to expect such measures to yield positive results in the long run. Likewise, silencing social media is no solution to the actual problem of growing public discontent, which is being augmented by the government's poor policies.

What is needed most right now is for Pakistan to be as accommodative of competing narratives as possible. It would be prudent, therefore, to spend more energy understanding and addressing public concerns rather than treating everyone as an enemy. Suppressing a restless public and blocking dissent will only create more frustrations, which may spill over in unforeseen ways.

Rafia Zakaria

One of the most enduring mysteries of life is the capacity of human beings to believe that everything will go well. Most of us grow up imagining that the course of life will proceed without any hiccups. It is this belief that things will proceed as we expect them to that inevitably is the material of tragedy. It is as if we walk along the path of life and expect that we will proceed on course without many hurdles — and when a wild animal jumps out of the bushes and confronts us, we are frightened and eventually disappointed.

The difference between what we expect of life and what life dispenses during our journey is the measure of human suffering.

Another one of the ironies of life is that even though we all confront surprises along our path, and thus experience suffering, we somehow imagine suffering to be unique to ourselves. When faced

by unfortunate events, such as the loss of a loved one, an unexpected illness, being fired from a job, etc, we automatically ask ourselves what it is that we have done to deserve sorrow, illness or anxiety.

We review our actions; we consider our decisions, and we imagine that we have tremendous control over averting unexpected events in the future. This is simply not true; life is as it is, and living involves having to put up with unexpected events that will inevitably befall us.

This is not to say that suffering is futile or that we have no control over it. The story of our suffering or the narrative around it is entirely within our control. If we submerge ourselves in its specifics, in the unfairness of it all, in the feeling that it is exclusive to us then the impact of suffering is to isolate us from the rest of the living beings who surround us.

One example of this

can be found in Russian author Leo Tolstoy's book *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. The novel is told from the perspective of a man who knows that he will soon die. Because of this, he is on his sickbed alone while life goes on around him. Instead of considering the remainder of his time as precious, he is immersed in self-pity, and feels like

his family members including his wife are already planning for a life without him. He feels that there is no one at all who understands how he feels.

All of it is, of course, interpretation and perspective. Such are the delusions of self-pity that they blind him from considering things from the perspective of others. He cannot, for instance, see the fear his wife has of becoming a widow and for having to provide for the family and for her children by herself. He cannot see the concern of his children who now have to deal with the prospect of being orphans. Instead, he

does what we all do — we

place ourselves at the centre of the drama that is life and imagine all others as incidentally present and beyond the suffering that is so real in our own case.

If the narrative and interpretation that we impose on our lives is of such crucial importance, then it follows that literature is of greater service to the task of living life than most people might think. The central goal of good literature is to enable the reader to do what may otherwise be impossible, ie, to inhabit the life of another person.

In this sense, good literature provides, at least to an extent, an escape from the self and a chance to immerse ourselves in perspectives and narratives other than our own.

In a secondary sense, literature equips those that read it with an ability to create more varied narratives about their own lives; it enables flexibility and variety in interpreting suffering in a constructive way. The greater

our ability to inhabit the lives of others, the more we can escape our own self-centredness and the limiting belief that it is only our own suffering that is real. The more we can understand that suffering unites all human beings and that all of us are in some way or another engaged in struggles, the more likely it is that we can endure life without becoming bitter and intransigent in the face of constant change.

It is a testament to the curious psychology of human beings that we persist in believing that if we can somehow amass enough wealth, or have a certain number of children or marry the right partner that we can put an end to suffering in our lives. Our behaviour resembles that of a baby sitting on a high chair, who drops an object but then begins to cry when he can't retrieve the object. Yet when you give the object back to the baby he will often drop it again. The experience of

suffering or pain is in this sense dependent on the absence of pain — we only know freedom from suffering because of the existence of suffering.

None of this makes life's challenges any easier when we are in the midst of them. The more focused we are on ourselves the more acute suffering can be; the more focused we are on the good of others the easier it is to endure life's challenges.

One antidote to suffering then is to cultivate the selflessness that comes from focusing on the greater good. Few of us can achieve this, sadly, and so most of the rest of us plod on wearily on the path of life, deluded into believing that once we achieve X or Y or Z we can somehow avoid the curveballs thrown our way and the catastrophes whose regular occurrence is an ironic testament to the fact that we are indeed alive. -- Courtesy Dawn

Targeting upright judges**Zahid Hussain**

It can't get more sordid than this. The judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) who dared to speak out against the interference of intelligence agencies in judicial matters are now the target of a sleazy campaign questioning their integrity. It's not hard to fathom who is behind this character assassination drive. The deep state, it seems, has struck to silence resistance. But that may not be so easy with the bench and the bar rallying behind upright judges.

It all started with trolling on social media, particularly of two of the six IHC judges who had earlier this year penned a letter to the Supreme Court chief justice, detailing the harassment that they had allegedly experienced at the hands of the intelligence agencies. Then complaints were filed by some obscure persons against two of the judges — Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri — in the Supreme Judicial Council on fabricated charges.

It is apparent that

the move was meant to pressurise the two who are hearing politically sensitive cases. Lately, questions were also being raised about Justice Jahangiri's law degree. The judge is heading an election tribunal in Islamabad. Nothing could be more preposterous than such suspicions being levelled at a high court judge who has previously served as advocate general. The timing makes the allegations more dubious, with the judge hearing appeals against the election of PML-N MNAs.

Similarly, Justice Sattar has been hearing the audio leaks case. He seems to have drawn the ire of the deep state for questioning the role of the intelligence agencies in unauthorised phone tapping. In a letter to the IHC chief justice sometime ago, Justice Sattar said he was asked by a top security official not to pursue the charges. Before withdrawing its plea, the Intelligence Bureau had sought the judge's recusal from the case.

While slapping a fine of Rs500,000 each on FIA, PTA and Pemra, Jus-

torism court in Sargodha alleging harassment by the agencies.

All that raises questions about the motive behind the complaint, which was based on a car accident, which took place some two years ago, and that allegedly involved a family member of the judge. There is something devious about the timing of the reference. It is not just the security establishment; there are also questions about the role of the executive in orchestrating the campaign against the judges. The government is completely silent on the matter. In fact, remarks by some cabinet ministers and PML-N officials give credence to suspicions of the government's encouragement to the campaign by sections of the media.

Meanwhile, there seems to be no cessation of the harassment of judges by the establishment or the executive's meddling in the judicial process. The media trial of upright judges on concocted charges is the independent judiciary's biggest challenge. The campaign indicates the growing shadow of the se-

curity establishment over the system. It also threatens whatever is left of the democratic process. The resistance of the judges against intimidation is indeed commendable.

A full IHC bench has initiated contempt proceedings against the FIA and some other federal agencies. The court has warned that there would be an institutional response to the smear campaign. The IHC chief justice has rightly pointed out that it was the responsibility of Pemra, PTA, and FIA to stop such campaigns. Bar associations have also extended support to the targeted judges.

Most worrisome is the role of a section of the electronic media, which is being used to malign the judges who refused to bow to pressure. It also shows the blatant misuse of social media in spreading fake news. But the main question revolves around stopping the security establishment's alleged meddling and harassment of judges. The rot is much deeper than it seems. The main responsibility lies with the apex court and its chief justice to safe-

guard the independence of the judiciary. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has yet to take action on the letter by the six IHC judges narrating incidents of intimidation. It is certainly not the first time that cases of harassment and interference by the security establishment in the judicial process have been reported. But the collective letter by the IHC judges was most damning.

After some apparent hesitation, the chief justice took suo motu notice of the letter and initially a seven-member bench was formed to hear the case. Later, it was decided to bring the case before a full court. But some three months on, the hearing is yet to begin. Delaying such an important issue is beyond comprehension. The inaction provides impunity to the illegal action by the establishment and the executive. The smear campaign against the judges who dared to speak out is one such example. The IHC judges have refused to surrender before the blackmailing and intimidation and now it is up to the chief justice to uphold the sanctity of the judicial institution.

France unbowed?**Mahir Ali**

In the run-up to last Sunday's second round of French parliamentary elections, opinion polls and much of the media commentary chiefly focused on whether the far right would succeed in its aim of securing an absolute majority or fall short by a couple of dozen seats. Either way, it was widely assumed that Rassemblement National (RN) leader Marine Le Pen's youthful protégé Jordan Bardella would be the next PM.

Ice buckets with bottles of champagne lay in waiting for a cork-popping moment that never came, as exit polls on election night revealed that not only had RN failed to repeat its first-round triumph, but that it had been relegated to third place, behind the left-wing National Popular Front (NFP) and the centrist alliance of President Emmanuel Macron. One party stalwart was overheard declaring: "The French are idiots! A nation of morons!"

Her opinion wasn't shared by the vast crowds gathered in Parisian city squares, which reacted to the projected results with rapturous applause. In the preceding week, more than 200 candidates — mostly from the left, but also from the centre — had stepped away from three-cornered contests in order to coalesce the anti-RN vote. The tactic worked, not least because voters spooked by the idea of a far right government turned out in their largest numbers since 1997.

A surge in turnout also appeared to propel the purportedly reformist Iranian presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian to a decisive lead over his rival in the second round. The UK, whose electoral system must be among the least democratic in Europe, propelled Keir Starmer's

Labour to a nearly two-thirds parliamentary majority with around one-third of the popular vote. The RN won an almost identical share in the French first round. We'll never know what a second round in Britain might have thrown up.

Across the Channel once you get past the justified jubiliations about thwarting the far right (for the time being, at least), what it has thrown up is a degree of incoherence and a recipe for instability. The NFP — a distant echo of the 1936 Popular Front that briefly kept France safe from fascism — combines the radical La France Insoumise with the socialists, communist and green parties. There is basic agreement on key policies, but plenty of scope for dispute on details, not to mention ructions within the LFI. The latter's charismatic leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, is invariably described as controversial in the media and smeared as antisemitic by his rivals (much as Jeremy Corbyn was, and for the same reason: a refusal to compromise on Palestinian rights).

The short-lived 1930s Popular Front under Leon Blum notched up a few significant achievements, such as annual vacations for workers, but those were based on a parliamentary majority. The NFP today, around 100 seats short of a majority, will struggle to come up with a prime ministerial candidate acceptable to the Macronists, some of whom consider the LFI more alarming than the RN (whose racism and hostility to immigrants many so-called centrists have assimilated).

RN is a rebranding of FN (Front National), the more overtly fascist party founded by Marine's dad Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose Holocaust-denying legacy she sought to disown with some suc-

cess — to the extent that some French Jews prefer a historically antisemitic entity that today approves of the Netanyahu regime's fascist tendencies to anyone who dares to challenge the Gaza genocide.

There is no easy answer to the question of whether Macron's gamble in calling a snap election after the RN did exceptionally well in European elections has backfired. It would have been much worse for France had the hard right been able to build on its first-round triumph. Its failure to do so can be credited more to the left's tactic than Macron. The president has muddled through over the past couple of years without a parliamentary majority, decreeing policies that have enraged many of his compatriots.

He might be able to cobble together some kind of a coalition with the non-RN right and the non-LFI left, but it will be inherently unstable. Besides, if the policy settings responsible for the popular antagonism to the Macron government do not shift, there's every chance that Marine Le Pen's dream of entering the Elysée Palace in 2027 could come true. Bardella, meanwhile, will head a far-right European parliamentary group called Patriots for Europe that includes like-minded MEPs from Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium.

It would be unfair to scoff at what French voters have achieved, but it was just one battle in a protracted pushback. The spectre of Europe's 1930s descent into fascism still haunts the continent. There's little excuse for complacency, but there's cause to relish last Sunday's reminder that resistance is never futile. -- Courtesy Dawn

Jamil Ahmad

The sizzling heat that parts of Asia and other regions are grappling with is a phenomenon that is now far from a climate anomaly; it is becoming the new norm. This extreme weather carries grave socioeconomic implications, claiming lives and leading to health problems that affect daily lives, jobs, and productivity. This year is set to become the hottest on record, and if current trends continue, the record may not stand for long.

Trees and green cover are part of nature's way of protecting humans and other species from extreme heat while providing essential ecosystems. Forests absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide, reduce risks from floods and landslides, and increase environmental resilience to climate change. Beyond sequestering greenhouse gases, forests offer multiple services vital for planetary health and human well-being, including water, clean air, food, biodiversity habitats, and recreational spaces.

A staggering 1.6 billion people directly depend on forests, as do countless animals, plants, insects, and other species. However, this dependence is threatened by rapid deforestation, with around 10 million hectares (25m acres) lost annually. This rate of deforestation not only threatens biodiversity but also disrupts life-supporting ecosystem services.

Approximately 4bn hectares (9.9bn acres), or 31 per cent, of the landmass is covered by forests. However, this green cover is unevenly distributed. According to FAO's State of the World's Forests report, just 10 countries account for 66pc of global forests. The remain-

Green shields

ing are scattered across more than 180 countries. Many developing countries with insignificant forest cover are at a disadvantage in combating environmental degradation.

The vulnerability of these developing countries to climate change is amplified if they suffer from high levels of deforestation, a major contributor to rising temperatures, especially in regions with low forest cover.

With the global population expected to reach 10bn by 2050, the demand for food will rise. Two-thirds of the world's accessible freshwater is sourced from forested watersheds and wetlands. However, land-use changes such as clearing forests for agriculture to boost food production are flawed strategies. Without sustainable forests, prolonged high temperatures will dry up the soil, reduce crop yields, jeopardise food security, aggravate water scarcity and increase inequality.

Conserving biodiversity is another critical aspect of forests' roles. They provide habitats for plants, pollinators, and animal species, and act as barriers to wildlife interaction with humans, thus intercepting zoonotic diseases.

Pakistan's meagre forest cover, less than 5pc of its area, is dwindling fast due to deforestation at an annual rate of 0.75pc, the highest in the region. The country loses 27,000 hectares (66,000 acres) of forest per year to land-use changes and unregulated logging. Deforestation increases the risk of landslides in mountainous terrains and endangers exotic birds and wildlife. The beautiful high-altitude pheasant Himalayan monal, once abundant in mountain forests, is rarely spotted anymore.

As a party to UN environmental conventions,

Pakistan must utilise this multilateral mechanism for long-term action to halt deforestation. At the local level, improving forest management and promoting sustainable business practices that benefit local communities is imperative.

Building on earlier declarations, 145 countries at the UN Climate Change Conference in 2021 committed to "halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030". However, little progress has been made on this and a UNEP report released last month found that countries are falling short of meeting the agreed target to stop deforestation. The report outlines that pledges to reduce deforestation and financially support this transition from developed countries are insufficient to halt deforestation by 2030. This shortfall will worsen the climate and biodiversity crises and exacerbate poverty.

The report recommends developing long-term integrated policies to reduce deforestation and emphasises empowering local communities to manage their lands as a proven strategy to protect forests within their lands. Noting that deforestation is driven by complex interaction between global, national, and local factors, the report calls for coordinated action to conserve forests "for the sake of people, climate, and nature".

The escalating heatwaves and their socioeconomic ramifications underscore the urgency of addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management. As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges, preserving and restoring forest ecosystems is imperative for a sustainable future. -- Courtesy Dawn

No decision made regarding export of wheat: Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that no decision regarding export of wheat has been made.

Taking to the floor of the House, he made this clarification, while responding to points raised by the opposition benches.

The Prime Minister recalled that it is also part of the record that sugar and wheat were first exported and then imported during the reign of PTI in the past.

Meanwhile, responding to a calling attention notice, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar informed the House that providing the best health facilities to the people is priority of the government. He said there is an acute shortage of nursing staff in the federal capital. He said evening classes have been started at different nursing schools to meet the requirement.

The House today

passed "the State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Bill, 2024.

According to the statement of objects and reasons, the bill is aimed at reconstituting the boards of SOEs to better align them with the reform initiatives for restructuring and the transformation as well as privatization of certain entities.

Besides, "The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment), Bill, 2024 was introduced in the

House today.

Earlier, The House offered feteha for the departed soul of Captain Osama bin Arshad and others embraced Shahadat in South Waziristan.

The House also prayed for the victims of the Neelum Valley incident.

The House has now been prorogued. However, referring to the PTI government's sugar and wheat scams, he recalled that it was also on record that in the past wheat.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the Representatives from Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Rating Agency.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal addressing the Seventh Agricultural Census 2024 at a ceremony held by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

FM meets Standard & Poor's Global delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday met with the delegation of Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Rating Agency at Finance Division.

The meeting was attended by a delegation from S & P Global led by Directors of Sovereign and International Public Finance Ratings Yee Farn Phua, Andrew David Wood, and senior officials of the ministry, said a news release.

The minister welcomed the S&P delegation and gave an update on Pakistan's current economic situation.

He highlighted the successful completion of the 9 month Stand By Arrangement (SBA) with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the

improving macroeconomic indicators of Pakistan.

Aurangzeb also highlighted some of the indicators including building up of foreign exchange reserves to USD 9.4 billion, robust performance of the stock exchange, declining trend of inflation rates with CPI inflation clocking in at 12.6% in June 2024, and increase in foreign remittances by 7.7% as compared to last year.

He emphasized the government's efforts to broaden the tax base as tax collection during FY 2024 increased by 30% as compared to FY 2023 and also to further improve the tax-to-GDP ratio.

During the meeting the ongoing reforms in the energy sector, and State-Owned Enterprises including privatization were discussed.

Azerbaijan eyes multi billion-dollar investment in Pak: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that Azerbaijan was considering an investment of \$2 to \$3 billion in Pakistan.

Speaking exclusively to a private news channel, he said that Azerbaijan was particularly interested in the mineral sector, including oil and gas.

The minister said that Azerbaijan was focusing on the oil and gas exploration sector, noting their keen interest in expanding investments in the LNG sector as well.

The prime minister is

eager to increase economic cooperation with friendly countries, Malik said and added, the government prioritizes investment over aid from friendly nations.

He further mentioned that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Pakistan was very much expected to boost trade relations. Discussions will include increasing textile exports and promoting the IT sector between the two countries, he said.

Malik expressed optimism that these initiatives will significantly enhance economic ties between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Board of Investment Rahim Hayat Qureshi addressing at workshop on "Modernised Inspection Regime (MIR)".

Poultry sector must be facilitated for cheap protein: FCCI

FAISALABAD (APP): Senior Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FCCI) Dr Sajjad Arshad has said that the government should facilitate the poultry sector for provision of cheap protein to the public.

Addressing a meeting of the poultry farmers, he said that the poultry sector is at the verge of collapse as every poultry farmer is bearing hefty losses of Rs. 7 million. This loss has now become unbearable and if this situation continued, it would not only have an ill impact on the export of eggs and chicken meat but also

deprive people of cheap source of protein readily available in Pakistan at affordable rates, he added.

He said that Pakistan is annually producing 17,500 million eggs and 1440-million-kilogram chicken meat. In 2022, we exported 16.8 million eggs while in 2024, chicken meat and chicken products of 115,664 tons were also exported.

He said that in Pakistan the ratio of consumption of chicken meat is only 7.20 kilogram while every Pakistani take only 88 eggs per annum which is far below than the international standard.

Rupee sheds 11 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee witnessed a devaluation of 11 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 278.51 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.40.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 278.75 and Rs 280.75 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 12 paisa to close at Rs 301.29 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.17, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.72, whereas an increase of 01 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 356.40 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 356.39.

SCCI president holds meeting with federal ministers

SIKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik held a detailed meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif. Multiple matters of significance importance particularly revival of the Final Tax Regime (FTR), the launch of the new LTLD and DDT Scheme, formation of the EDF Board and the issuance of note verbale for Sialkot Chamber's Brazil delegation were discussed.

Both the ministers assured of their full support on the issues presented by the President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik and shared that the issue of withdrawal of the Final Tax Regime (FTR).

Banks to observe Ashura holidays on July 16, 17

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and all banks and financial institutions will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024 on the occasion of Ashura 1446 A.H. The central bank, in a statement issued here on Wednesday, informed that SBP will remain closed on July 16 and 17, 2024, (Tuesday and Wednesday) being public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9th and 10th Moharram 1446 A.H).



ISLAMABAD: Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, chairman senate standing committee on railways presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Government has to fix FBR system to increase tax revenue: Atif Ikram

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government has to fix the FBR system to increase the tax revenue, new taxes of 1700 billion rupees will bring a storm of inflation. The burden of government expenditure is being put on the public and the business class by increasing the tax rate. It is possible to reduce the government expenditure by reducing the interest rate by 550 basis points, otherwise the relief that the people got from the

reduction in inflation will not remain. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the State Bank gradually reduced the interest rate to 16%. The interest payment on loans is 9775 billion rupees in the current financial year, while 8736 billion rupees will be spent on the payment of interest rate on internal loans. Atif Ikram said that in the current budget, the tax payers have been burdened with billions of rupees of taxes, after electricity and gas become expensive, businesses will be affected. Relief should be given to the public and businessmen.

Kisan Ittehad hails PM's initiative of agri-tubewells' solarization

QUETTA (APP): Chairman of Kisan Ittehad, Khalid Hussain Bath on Wednesday lauded Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's initiative of converting 28,000 tube wells to solar panels in Balochistan.

Addressing a press conference here at Quetta Press Club, he said shifting of tube wells to solar energy will pave the way for Balochistan's development and prosperity.

"Balochistan has fertile land and making agricultural lands cultivable can increase the country's resources," he said, urging

that the province has around 40,000 tube wells, and an additional 16,000 tube wells should also be converted to solar energy.

The Chairman Kisan Ittehad thanked Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for their orders to convert thousands of tube wells to solar power.

He requested Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Balochistan to take measures to promote tourism in the province, ensuring the security of tourist areas to increase the province's resources.



QUETTA: Chairman Kissan Ittehad, Chaudhry Khalid Hussain Baath along with others addresses a Press conference at Quetta Press Club.

Decrease in power tariff for protected consumers laudable: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FCCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that

the business community supports the decision of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif regarding decrease in power tariff for 51% of consumers using upto 200 units per month.

Talking to business community on Wednesday, he was of the view that it was proper to withdraw the increase in tariff on electricity for protected consumers who are facing very high costs of living.

Mian Zahid Hussain also advocated for reducing the burden of electricity bills on other consumers.

Public protests and angry demonstrators'

LESCO detects 471 power pilferers in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 471 connections from where customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts: Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara, on the 28th day of anti-power theft campaign.

ALESCO spokesman told the media on Wednesday that the company had also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 140 FIRs had been registered in respective police stations, while 18 accused arrested by the respective police.

On the 28th consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units.

Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates 7th agricultural census

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday inaugurated the 7th Agricultural Census-2024 at a ceremony held by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In his address, he emphasized the significant achievement of conducting a highly transparent digital census with the consensus of all provinces using advanced technology, a news release said.

The minister congratulated the PBS on the successful launch of the seventh agricultural census. He highlighted the importance of agricultural statistics for a

predominantly agrarian country like Pakistan and praised PBS for introducing an automated local system. This new system will facilitate decision-making based on reliable data, helping to enhance agricultural productivity in line with the growing population. The data collected will be instrumental in formulating agricultural policies, identifying areas with potential for increased productivity and providing necessary resources to achieve better yields.

It will also support initiatives aimed at improving farmers' productivity and overall welfare. The minister further

noted that Pakistan's future economic stability hinged on increasing exports, particularly in the agricultural sector.

He stressed the need to learn from other countries, such as India, which has conducted eleven agricultural censuses compared to Pakistan's seven.

"Despite facing similar challenges, other nations have progressed, and it is crucial for Pakistan to catch up." He acknowledged the difficult economic situation, stating that any government would struggle with the current fiscal deficit, making it essential to focus on increasing revenue and exports.

Deputy Governor SBP terms skill development as key to success in financial industry

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr. Inayat Hussain on Wednesday highlighted the pivotal role of continuous learning in ensuring the long-term success of professionals within the financial industry.

He was addressing at the launch of the Treasury Management Certification, that has been jointly developed by CFA Society Pakistan and National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) in collaboration with SBP and Financial Market Association, said a statement issued here.

Dr. Inayat Hussain underscored the

importance of providing treasury professionals with the skills necessary to navigate the challenges of an evolving financial landscape. Investing in staff development enables professionals not only to effectively manage risks and ensure compliance, but also to leverage new technologies, and adapt to dynamic market conditions, he stressed.

He commended the collaborative efforts of the SBP, National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) Pakistan, the CFA Society Pakistan, and the Financial Market Association for developing the certification program tailored to meet local market requirements.

PR plans to introduce smart Railway cars on multiple routes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Pakistan Railways (PR) was informed on Wednesday that Pakistan Railways would introduce four smart railway cars on routes between Lahore-Islamabad, Lahore-Faisalabad, Lahore-Multan, and Karachi-Hyderabad at a cost of around \$45 million," stated Secretary of the Ministry of Railways, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, during the meeting. He noted that under this public-private partnership, private parties will contribute a portion of the profit to maintain the tracks.



PESHAWAR: Vendor selling and displaying colorful decoration frames to attract the customers at Sadar Bazar.

Shahid Rasheed says: Current economic policies unsustainable

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that the current economic policies are unviable. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he was of the view that in the presence of unworkable policies, production and exports will stay the same, and the country will continue to borrow. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that for the next five years, the growth rate cannot go beyond four

percent in any case. The ruling elite has targeted the urban middle class in the budget, so the troubled middle class is shrinking rapidly, he added. The business leader said that a country could only progress with the middle class, the economy's main driver.

This time, too, the people have to swallow the bitter pill while the ruling elite has increased their expenses, and the influential sectors have also been kept out of the tax net, he observed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Education and Professional Training Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani in a group photograph with principals during closing ceremony of Summer Fiesta-2024 at IMCG F-7/2.

Romina Khurshid urges gender equity, population management to boost climate resilience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday has emphasized the need to address gender equity and population management to reduce emissions and build climate resilience.

In a message on World Population Day to be observed on Thursday, tomorrow, Romina Khurshid Alam stressed the importance of understanding the intersections between population dynamics and climate change.

She noted that this intersection was vital for developing effective strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a warming planet. She said this day is a timely reminder of the need for urgent action to address the challenges posed by climate change, population growth and gender inequality.

The Coordinator high-

lighted the opportunity to reflect on the implications of population growth and demographic trends, particularly in relation to climate change. She said as the global population grows, there is greater demand for energy, food, and resources, which leads to higher emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial activities.

Romina Khurshid Alam noted that demographic changes like aging populations and urbanization could also exacerbate or mitigate climate impacts, but the primary driver of climate change is emissions.

She expressed concerns about climate change disrupting food production, especially in regions like South Asia, which may lead to food insecurity and malnutrition. The PM's aide also emphasized that promoting gender equity and managing population growth in vulnerable countries is essential for imple-

menting a potential climate resilience strategy.

She urged for a collective effort to address these critical issues and develop sustainable solutions to combat climate change. She said climate-related disasters like droughts, floods and extreme heat put more people at risk, especially those living in poverty with limited resources to adapt.

Highlighting the need for effective population management strategies to mitigate climate impacts, Romina Khurshid Alam said the increasing population has far-reaching consequences on various aspects of sustainability, including environmental conservation, water efficiency, energy conservation and tree plantation programs. She said larger populations heighten the number of individuals vulnerable to climate-related catastrophes such as floods, droughts, and severe weather events, rendering disaster management more complex.

SC declares petition regarding medical colleges fee non maintainable

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while declaring the petition regarding medical colleges fee non maintainable has directed the petitioner to resort to the relevant quarter.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked "go to regulatory. What is job of SC to see fees of medical colleges. Have you gone there while regulatory is established? Can we constitute commission over it."

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah took up petition of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta advocate for hearing on Wednesday.

During the hearing of the case Justice Mansoor Ali Shah questioned what law applies on the fees of medical colleges. SC can not hear the case this way.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned from the petitioner has he contacted Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) with reference to fee.

The petitioner replied he has written letter to President and Prime Minister with reference to medical colleges fee.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah questioned talk to them. Who does regulatory of fee.

The petitioner replied Pakistan Medical Dental act was enacted after SC decision. SC decision was taken for wrong.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar said if it is your personal matter then you should resort to regulatory.

The court dismissed the petition declaring it non maintainable.

CAT upholds CCP penalty on Collusive bidding

ISLAMABAD (APP): Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has dismissed the appeal filed by M/s Creative Engineering against the order of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP).

The CCP held in its order that M/s Creative Engineering and four other undertakings were involved in collusive bidding for a Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) tender, thus violating Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010. As a result, the CCP imposed a total penalty of PKR 10 million on the five entities (PKR 2 million each) involved in the collusion, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

Previously, the Commission took suo moto notice of potential bid rigging in PESCO's tender for the procurement of power distribution equipment.

SHOs directed to ensure presence at police stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) operations, Islamabad, Syed Ali Raza on Wednesday directed the station house officers (SHOs) to ensure their presence at police stations to address citizens' grievances effectively.

The DIG chaired a meeting to review crime situation in the federal capital. SSP Investigation, Zonal SPs, SP Investigation, SDPOs, SHOs, and in-charge Car Cell attended the meeting.

DIG Raza directed to intensify efforts to arrest individuals involved in serious crimes, including murder, robbery, and vehicle theft.

To combat the narcotics, He ordered a stringent crackdown on drug dealers, stressing the need for expedited actions against organized and active gangs.

SC declares stone crushing near populated areas threat to human life

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while declaring stone crushing near populated area a threat to human life has made it clear that we are giving 24 hours time that all the respondents including KP government should file their replies otherwise court will announce its decision.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked during the hearing of the case that power stone crusher near populated areas are threat

to human life. These power stone crushers be shifted to some other location. The issue of stone crushing in KP is very serious issue.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah heard the case against stone crushing plants.

The counsel for power crushers Aitzaz Ahsan took the plea we should be given time to review commission report. It is requested that the case be fixed after Muharram.

Interior Minister directs Chairman CDA to Ensure Swift Water Drainage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday directed Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa to ensure swift water drainage in low-lying areas of the city following the torrential rainfall.

He directed the Chairman CDA to utilize all resources to drain water from the streets and to personally oversee the drainage work. He also instructed the

police to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

On the Minister's directives, Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa visited various locations to review the drainage work.

The Chairman directed CDA, MCI, and district administration officials to remain in the field until the drainage work is completed.

He further said that CDA's team is working diligently to drain water from the roads.

Two weeks long Summer Fiesta 2024 concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two weeks long "Summer Fiesta" arranged in the public schools and colleges by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training concluded on Wednesday after engaging a number of students in meaningful activities.

A ceremony was held to mark the culmination of the summer camp with presence of Federal Secretary for Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani.

The ministry celebrated the conclusion of the Summer Fiesta 2024, a two-week-long summer camp initiative aimed at providing a comprehensive learning experience to students across Islamabad.

The Summer Fiesta, conducted in collaboration with the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), engaged over 5,000 students from grades 1-12 in a variety of learning activities. The free camp, supported by 60 partner organizations, featured 60 guest speakers and utilized

20 different venues. Heads of institutions, focal persons, and teachers played a crucial role in the success of this initiative.

The summer camp offered a wide range of benefits, including extended learning, character development, socialization, exposure to new experiences, personal growth and development of essential life skills.

These activities were designed for the students in line with the modern requirements so that the students can find these useful in determining their future interests.

The camps included Tech Boot Camp, Digital Art, Rumi Camp, Skills based courses, Public speaking, Language Laboratory, Cosmetology and personal grooming, Content creation, Greening education, Mind games, sports, Drama and Theater, Young Entrepreneurs, Photography, Videography and Podcasts, Climate change and Environmental literacy and art and craft etc.

NA passes State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): After Senate, the National Assembly on Wednesday passed the State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aimed at strengthening the provisions for the removal of directors under the Act, amid the opposition uproar.

Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on behalf of the Minister for Finance and Revenue piloted the bill in the House to amend the State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Act, 2023 [The State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2024] as passed by the Senate.

Earlier, Chairman NA Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue Syed Naveed Qamar presented the report of the committee to amend the State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) Act, 2023 [The State-Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2024

in the House.

The minister said that the amendment was brought to enhance the efficiency of Board of Directors (BoDs) of all State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) besides ensuring good governance.

In the proposed changes, future board directors, including government and independent members, would undergo performance evaluations by the board's nomination committee.

Recommendations for removal would be sent to the federal gov-

ernment for approval.

The act would empower the government to nominate independent directors through an institutionalised mechanism and provide for the majority of independent directors, security of tenure, removal criteria, enhanced board independence, and appointment of chief executive officers on the recommendations of the boards.

The Statement of objects and reasons of the bill says that the SOEs (Governance and Operations) Act was promulgated in February 2023.

Governor KP calls on Amir Muqam

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday met with Federal Minister for SAFRON, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam and discussed the political situations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Parliamentary leader of PPP, KP Assembly Ahmed Karim Kundi and former MPA Jamshed Khan were also present on this occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi call on Federal Minister SAFRON, Kashmir & Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Amir Muqam.

EC gives assurance to IHC for holding LB polls in Islamabad on Sep 29

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has given assurance to Islamabad High Court (IHC) for holding Local Bodies (LB) polls in Islamabad on September 29. This assurance was given to IHC on Wednesday. IHC ordered the respondents to file parasitic comments in details in the court. All the relevant petitions were clubbed.

The court inquired what is status of EC.

EC authorities replied this is process of four months. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani heard the case pertaining to LB polls in Islamabad.

During the course of hearing of the case EC authorities gave assurance to hold LB polls on September 29.

Amendment in Election act is necessary in connection with election. The matters related to reserved seats are not clear so far.

German delegation, Dy Speaker for strengthening bilateral ties, parliamentary cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): A parliamentary delegation from Germany on Wednesday called on National Assembly Deputy Speaker and Convener of the Pak-German Parliamentary Friendship Group, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah to further strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation.

Both sides resolved to enhancing cooperation in trade, education, science and technology, and other areas of mutual interest.

The deputy speaker emphasized the importance of enhancing parliamentary diplomacy and the historical ties between Pakistan and Germany.

The German delegation commended Pakistan for its proactive measures in advancing regional peace and stability. They highlighted specific areas of potential collaboration,

particularly in renewable energy and climate change initiatives, underscoring mutual interests and opportunities for joint efforts. Discussions included initiatives to enhance parliamentary exchanges, youth engagement, and academic programs.

The Deputy Speaker and Convener Pak-German Friendship Group briefed the delegation on Pakistan's legislative priorities and economic reforms, emphasizing the government's commitment to foreign investment.

Both sides expressed optimism about the future of Pak-German relations, agreeing to continue working closely to address common challenges and opportunities. It is expected that this visit marks a significant milestone in strengthening the Pak-German partnership.



ISLAMABAD: A motorcycle passing through rain water accumulated on IJP Road after heavy rain in the twin cities.

ISSI welcomes Estonian Delegation for wide ranging exchanges

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Roundtable Discussion with the visiting Estonian delegation led by Ambassador Kristi Karelsohn, Director General of the Department of Asia, the Pacific, Middle East and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia.

Estonian Ambassador-designate to Pakistan based in Ankara, Vaino Reinart, and Desk Officer for Pakistan, Grete Vahter were also part of the Delegation, a news release said.

The discussion focused on a range of geopolitical and security issues impacting both regions.

In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the extremely friendly and cor-

dial relations between Pakistan and Estonia, recent high-level bilateral exchanges, and the growing trajectory of mutual cooperation across various fields. He also shared a perspective on the existing global environment marked by deep polarization and fragmentation; accentuation of traditional and non-traditional security threats and challenges; and the erosion of multilateralism.

The participants engaged in a wide-ranging exchange of views on Pakistan-Estonia bilateral relations; global and regional landscapes; security and geopolitics in Europe; impacts of major-power contestation; situation in the Middle East; Afghanistan; and the future of multilateralism. Exchanges also focused on the importance of ways to strengthen international and regional peace and security.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Syed Ali Zafar, chairman senate standing committee on information and broadcasting presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.