

# Independent

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## Israeli presence in occupied Palestinian territory is illegal and must end: ICJ

**Monitoring Desk**  
THE HAGUE: The United Nations' highest court said on Friday that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements there are illegal and should be withdrawn as soon as possible, in its strongest findings to date on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The advisory opinion by judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), known as the World Court, was not binding but carries weight under international law and may weaken support for Israel.

"Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the regime associated with them, have been established and are being maintained in violation of international law," President Nawaf Salam said, reading the findings of a 15-judge panel. He court said Israel's obligations include paying restitution for harm and "the evacuation of all settlers from existing settlements".

In a swift reaction, Israel's foreign ministry rejected the opinion as "fundamentally wrong" and one-sided, and repeated its stance that a political settlement in the region can only be reached by negotiations.

"The Jewish nation cannot be an occupier in its own land," Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

The opinion also angered West Bank settlers as well as politicians such as Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, whose nationalist religious party is close to the settler movement and who himself lives in a West Bank settlement.

"The answer to The Hague - Sovereignty now" he said in a post on the social media platform X, in an apparent appeal to formally annex the West Bank.

Israel Gantz, head of the Binyamin Regional Council, one of the largest settler councils, said the ICJ opinion was "contrary to the Bible, morality and international law". The ICJ opinion also found that the U.N. Security Council, the General Assembly and all states have an obligation not to recognise the occupation as legal nor "render aid or assistance" toward maintaining Israel's presence in the occupied territories.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman H.E. Fahad Sulaiman Khalaf Al Kharusi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Govt, TLP to accelerate efforts to support innocent Palestinians

*TLP calls off days-long Faizabad sit-in after reaching agreement with govt; Govt to dispatch goods to Gaza before July 31, says Rana Sanaullah*

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Federal government and Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan have agreed to continue and accelerate efforts to support the innocent Palestinians.

This was announced by Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah while addressing a joint news conference in Islamabad this afternoon, alongside Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Islamabad Capital City administration and representatives of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan.

Giving details of the agreed upon points between the government and TLP, Rana Sanaullah said a humanitarian assistance, including food, medicines and other items, worth one thousand tons will be sent to Gaza.

He said the TLP will support government in its efforts for Palestinian people and more consignments of humanitarian aid will be dispatched for the Palestinians.

He said the government condemns in strongest terms the unabated Israeli atrocities against innocent Palestinians during which even children, schools and hospitals were not spared.

He mentioned that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has already raised the issue and condemned Israel's actions at every forum including the recent SCO Summit at Astana in Kazakhstan.

Rana Sanaullah said Israel has come out as a terrorist country and Benjamin Netanyahu has committed war crimes. He said Pakistan will use every possible mean to help Palestinians and condemn Israel as a terrorist country.

He called upon the world community and entire Muslim Ummah to hold Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accountable and bring him to justice.

The Advisor said a committee has also been constituted to identify such companies and products in Pakistan that may be directly or indirectly abetting Israel or forces, committing war crimes against Palestinians.

Rana Sanaullah said it has also been agreed that the government will provide medical assistance to the Palestinians and if possible will send its medical and paramedical staff to treat them.

## PM offers Pakistan's support to Oman in dealing with terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemned the dastardly terrorist attack on Imam Bargah Ali bin Abu Talib in Wadi Kabir district of Muscat that took place on July 16 and offered Pakistan's support to Oman in elimination of terrorism in all of its forms.

The prime minister, talking to Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman Fahad Sulaiman Khalaf Al Kharusi, who paid a courtesy call on him, appreciated Oman's swift response and cooperation with the Pakistan mission in the repatriation of the dead bodies and treatment of the injured.

The attack on Imam Bargah had resulted in the death of six people, including four Pakistani nationals, and over thirty injured, nearly all of whom were Pakistanis.

The prime minister said Pakistan had itself been the victim of terrorism for the past several decades.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz conveyed his good wishes for Sultan Haitham bin Tariq while fondly recalling his telephone conversations with the Sultan on Eid ul Adha as well as Eid ul Fitr earlier in the year.

The prime minister reiterated his invitation to the Sultan of Oman to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

On the bilateral front, the prime minister stressed that Pakistan and Oman enjoyed close, brotherly ties with a shared history, faith, and culture.

He expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly in trade, investment, energy, and defense.

In this regard, Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked the ambassador for encouraging a trade and investment delegation to undertake a visit to Pakistan next week, while assuring him that the relevant Pakistani authorities would extend full cooperation to the delegation while seeking mutually beneficial outcomes.



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah alongside Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Islamabad Capital City administration and representatives of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan addressing a joint news conference.

## ECP to implement SC's order in reserved seats case: spokesperson

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday decided to implement the Supreme Court's order in the reserved seats case.

"The Election Commission has decided to implement the decision of the Supreme Court", the ECP spokesperson said in a statement issued here.

The ECP held a meeting to discuss and implement the SC's decision, he said and added that instructions were issued to the legal team of the ECP that if there is any obstacle in the implementation of the Supreme Court's decision, then they should immediately identify it so that the Apex Court can be referred for further guidance.

In response to criticism by a political party, the ECP while condemning and rejecting the act said that the demand for resignation was ridiculous and the Commission would continue to work in accordance with the law and the constitution without any pressure, the statement said.

The spokesperson further said that the ECP did not misinterpret any decision and declared intra party election of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) invalid. The PTI challenged the ECP decision at various fora but its decision was upheld.

"Since PTI's intra-party elections were not valid. In the logical consequence of which, the symbol of the 'bat' was withdrawn under Section 215 of the Elections Act. Therefore, blaming the election commission is very inappropriate," the statement further said.

The spokesperson said that 39 lawmakers who were declared as PTI MNAs by the court had indicated their affiliation with the party in their nomination papers.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb is chairing the meeting on the Establishment of Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for the UK-Funded REMIT Programme.

## Pakistani prisoners in Sri Lanka to return home within 7 days: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sri Lankan High Commissioner Admiral (Retd) Ravindra Chandra Srivijay Gunaratne on Friday met Minister of Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi and discussed issues of mutual interest including the release of Pakistani nationals imprisoned in Sri Lanka. Both sides agreed to expedite the necessary steps for the release of Pakistani nationals imprisoned in Sri Lanka within 7 days. Sri Lanka's High Commissioner, Admiral (Retd) Ravindra Chandra Srivijay Gunaratne assured all possible support in this regard.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed gratitude to the Sri Lankan High Commissioner for his support in facilitating the repatriation process.

"All necessary steps are being finalized to ensure the swift return of Pakistani citizens imprisoned in Sri Lanka," he said.

In addition to the prisoner repatriation, the meeting also discussed anti-narcotics and border security issues. Naqvi emphasized the need to further develop mutual relations and promote cooperation in counter-narcotics and border security.

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner reiterated the importance of Sri Lanka's relations with Pakistan, highlighting the strengthening of ties between the two nations over time.

This breakthrough marks a significant milestone in the diplomatic efforts between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, paving the way for enhanced cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Algerian ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Brahim Romani at Parliament House.

## Gilani for exploring new avenues of cooperation between Pakistan-Algeria

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Friday underscored the need to further diversify Pakistan-Algeria relations and explore new avenues of cooperation to further add impetus to bilateral relations.

"Pakistan enjoys excellent relations with Algeria which are rooted in history, religion and similarity of views on various regional and international issues" he expressed these views during a meeting with Algerian Ambassador Brahim Romani.

He also acknowledged and appreciated Algeria's support to Pakistan in the United Nations and at other international fora, in particular, the support for Pakistan's various candidatures.

He called for broadening the political and economic ties. "There is a great need for closer trade and economic relations as the current level of trade is far below its true potential", the chairman stated.

He highlighted the significance of frequent exchange of business delegations to boost trade and explore opportunities for joint ventures and investment.

He said that Pakistan has one of the best quality rice in the world and Algeria may consider importing rice from Pakistan.

He underlined that there is huge potential for mutual collaboration in IT, pharmaceutical and other sectors.

Collaboration between Pakistan and Algeria in the IT sector particularly freelancing can be beneficial for both countries as there are thousands of companies in Pakistan providing freelancing services, he maintained.

## PM Shehbaz summons CCI meeting on Monday

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on Monday (July 22) to ponder over key energy projects and issues relating to the power sector.

The meeting will be attended by the four chief ministers and the federal ministers, in which CMs will put up issues relating to their provinces in the meeting. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister will raise the issue of dues the Centre owes to his provinces and other incentives.

The CCI meeting will also endorse key development projects of the Centre and the provinces. The meeting will also take decisions regarding distribution of hydel power profits, LNG import and electricity production.

The meeting will also review different wind power projects of Sindh government and matters related to the Karachi ports. The meeting will also debate legislation from the Petroleum Division regarding windfall levy. Attorney General for Pakistan will brief the CCI meeting on water accords.

## CTD arrests Osama bin Laden's security coordinator

LAHORE (APP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested on Friday a key figure of proscribed terrorist outfit al-Qaeda, Dr Aminul Haq Muhammad, one of the closest aides of the late al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden. In a statement, the CTD spokesperson said the al-Qaeda leader was arrested from Gujranwala in an Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO), adding that Aminul Haq's name was included in the United Nation's updated list of designated terrorists.

He said that investigation had been launched into the matter, stressing that the CTD would leave no stone turned to eliminate terrorists from Punjab. Osama bin Laden was killed by the American commandos on May 2, 2011.

## Policeman martyred, two injured in Takhtbhai checkpoint attack

PESHAWAR (APP): A policeman was killed and two others were seriously injured in an attack by miscreants on a police checkpoint in Takht Bhai in Mardan district between Thursday and Friday night.

According to police, the miscreants attacked the police checkpoint at Takhtbhai at Malakand Raod and fled away.

The dead body of a policeman and two injured policemen were shifted to the hospital while the local police started search operations against the terrorists in the area.

## IHC gives 72 hours for recovery of missing citizen

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court has given 72 hours to the police to recover the missing citizen from Singiani on Friday. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiani remarked that a case will be filed against the IG, if the missing citizen not recovered in 72 hours.

A hearing was held in IHC on the petition filed for the recovery of the missing citizen Samiullah from the limits of the Sangiani police station. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiani of the Islamabad High Court heard the case. SP Operations, SP Sadar, SHO Sangiani and others appeared before the court.



MUZAFFRABAD: Members of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir signatures on a banner on the occasion of Youm-e-Ilhaq-e-Pakistan, in the city.

## PML-N, PPP agree to file review petition against PTI reserved seats verdict

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) agreed on Friday to file a review petition against the Supreme Court's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) reserved seats verdict.

According to a private tv channel, a meeting was held between the ruling coalition to discuss administrative matters in Punjab, the current political situation, and the government's proposal to ban PTI.

It was decided that further consultations would be held regarding the ban on PTI, and a review petition would be filed against the Supreme Court's verdict.

The PML-N delegation included National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Rana Sanaullah.

The Attorney General and other officials were also present at the meeting while the PPP delegation comprised of Sherry Rehman, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, and Nadeem Afzal Chan.

Just days after the Supreme Court resurrected PTI, the PML-N-led ruling coalition decided last week that a reference will be sent to the top court seeking a ban on PTI, adding that the government will also initiate Article 6 (high treason) proceedings against ex-PM Imran Khan, ex-President Dr Arif Alvi and ex-deputy speaker Qasim Suri for dissolving the National Assembly back in April 2022. Tarar had announced that the ruling alliance has also decided to challenge the recent decision of the Supreme Court through which it declared that the PTI is entitled to have reserved seats in the assembly, saying the government would file a review petition against the ruling.



Daily Voice of Masses  
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### Misplaced priorities

Trouble is brewing in KP, where terrorist outfits are growing ever more emboldened in their attacks. This week, two outrageous assaults on a cantonment and a rural health centre in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, respectively, claimed the lives of 15 Pakistanis, including 10 soldiers, in the latest escalation by TTP-backed militants, who are believed to be operating from safe havens in Afghanistan.

Though Islamabad has issued a 'strong demarche' to Afghan representatives, demanding "immediate, robust and effective action" over the attack on the Bannu cantonment, it has been clear for a while that the de facto government in Kabul is failing to rein in the TTP, which is now the "largest terror group" operating on its soil, according to a recent UN report. It is imperative, therefore, for the Pakistani state to act against these terrorists and their facilitators. However, its plans have so far been frustrated by the state's poor strategising.

About two weeks ago, the government had floated a proposal for an all-parties conference to discuss Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, which had been welcomed by the opposition parties, including the PTI. However, after the early enthusiasm, there has been no development on this front, and it is feared that the initiative may be delayed indefinitely due to the breakout of fresh hostilities between the PTI and the current regime.

This is dangerous from a national security perspective, as plans for combating a major existential threat have inadvertently become subservient to the seemingly never-ending political tussle. The state must keep in mind that it is not just the PTI, but several mainstream parties that have serious concerns about the proposed operation, and it is vital to get them on board before the state launches kinetic operations. Not doing so risks provoking the citizens residing in these areas, which may create unnecessary complications.

Consider, for example, that the first reaction from Bannu residents to the assault was to issue a statement that, among other things, made it clear they would not evacuate the area in case of a military operation. Locals said they would rather stand up and fight the terrorists themselves than abandon their homes for another anti-terrorism drive. They recognise the problem, but they have no interest in the solution being proposed by the state. This is mainly a political failure, arising from the government's inability to manufacture broad-based consensus around the need for a military operation. There is an urgent need for this failure to be rectified. Too many lives are being lost to an enemy that is growing in strength the longer the infighting continues in the corridors of power. The government must call its APC at the earliest and invite all stakeholders to take part. This matter cannot be delayed further.

### Milk banks

Nikhat Sattar

From the 1950s onwards, it became common practice to feed formula milk to babies, even newborns. Many women considered breastfeeding to be outdated or unnecessary, or they were ill and unable to feed their babies in the natural way. Later, research showed that human milk was best for its nutritive value as well as bonding between mother and baby.

The WHO recommends that breastfeeding be carried out at least for the first six months, and then, preferably, for another 18 months; ie, for a total of two years. This is the exact period stipulated in the Quran for breastfeeding (2:233).

Therein lies a problem. Some mothers die soon after childbirth or they are so ill that they have no or very little milk. Some children are also born preterm or are very fragile and unable to accept formula milk. On the other hand, some babies are stillborn or die early, leaving the mother not only distressed but unable to use the milk she is producing. The Quran proposes a solution based upon a carefully designed agreement between the two families concerned. The woman who can offer her milk feeds the child for at least two years and is compensated by money or equivalent for her invaluable services. This results in a bond between the child and this mother that is almost the same as a mother and her biological child. More importantly, the children of this foster mother become foster siblings to the child, and marriage between the two is forbidden.

To manage the problem of lack of human milk for babies who need it, human milk banks have been around since 1909, and the experience has been very useful. Hu-m-an milk banking involves a detailed, intensive process that includes rigorous screening. All milk must be properly collected, stored, pasteurised and cultured in accordance with clearly defined guidelines.

Milk banks are operating in 35 countries, but the only Muslim country with extensive usage is Iran. Singapore started using them in 2017, and Malaysia is planning for 2025. In Malaysia, "after a series of consultations with the Islamic authorities, milk kinship is no longer an issue". In Pakistan, a milk bank was inaugurated at the Sindh Institute of Child Health after obtaining a fatwa from a Darul Uloom, but this facility was closed within a week when the fatwa was revised.

Why are milk banks not common in Muslim countries? The reason is that Muslims believe that if a child drinks the milk of a woman who is not its biological mother, a "milk relationship" would be established, creating a potential marriage problem. Ulama also object to this practice on grounds that this would become a commercial practice, and women would offer their milk in order to earn money.

In this controversy, a major point has been missed. This has been highlighted by the scholar Javed Ghamidi, who suggests that the 'milk kinship' between feeding mother and baby is established only when the woman has decided that she will feed this child and takes it to her breast. The entire process is extremely sensitive and involves considerable emotion and planning. The baby, as it grows up, remains attached to the foster mother and its foster siblings as if they were its blood relations. This is a carefully established arrangement. None of these elements are present in the operation of a milk bank. The late Egyptian scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi also saw no religious problem in establishing or using these banks and issued a decree to the effect in 1983.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is of the same view, saying that milk kinship is formed only if the baby is breastfed. On the issue of women making this an earning practice or the process becoming commercialised, Ghamidi says that there is nothing wrong with making payments to the women who are providing milk. In Islam, even after divorce, the ex-husband is supposed to make payment to the ex-wife if it is decided that she will breastfeed the baby. Any process can be exploited through unethical means. Milk banks need careful guidelines, SOPs and trained and sensitive staff as well as individuals with counselling experience.

Kuwait operates a modified version of the bank. Milk would be obtained from one woman for a single baby, thus making it easier to avoid possibility of marriage between 'milk siblings'. The donor and the recipient baby's biological mother or father also meet. Indonesia is also planning to establish similar milk banks. In all countries with sizeable Muslim populations, religious scholars of all sects were consulted in the early stages and only then were milk banks set up.

Pakistan would do well to study models from Iran and other countries and consult stakeholders as well as non-traditional scholars. In this, as well as in other issues, the three basic Islamic principles of public interest, necessity and doing no harm must be applied. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Strategic games

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

It is August 2021. Pakistani spymasters, pro-establishment ideologues and then prime minister Imran Khan unanimously celebrate the re-conquest of Afghanistan by the Taliban. The age-old pursuit of a 'friendly government' in Kabul has been achieved.

Fast forward three years. The shadowy entity which goes by the name of the TTP is again present in Pakhtun tribal districts like Waziristan. The same TTP and its affiliates plan and perpetrate attacks in settled districts like Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, in the former case directly targeting the army cantonment.

Many innocents perish, as Islamabad issues recriminations against the 'friendly government' in Kabul. The security establishment warns it will respond with indiscriminate military operations to crush 'terrorism', without explaining why innumerable operations in the past didn't cut off what appears to be a never-ending supply of 'terrorists'.

The train of events is both predictable and tragic. Long before the last American troops left Afghanistan, progressive voices in Pakistan — both Pakhtun and others — had warned against hailing the change of guard as some kind of anti-imperialist triumph. Many also foresaw that Islamabad's backing of the so-called Afghan Taliban 2.0 regime would inevitably translate into rejuvenated religious militancy in the Pakhtun border districts.

If the people of KP and Balochistan are again paying the price of the establishment's delusions of grandeur, they, along with millions of ordinary Afghans, are also set up to be guinea pigs in a fresh wave of geo-political sparring involving many regional and global actors.

Recall that, under the terms of the so-called Doha peace deal inked in February 2020, the US willingly handed Afghanistan back to the Taliban. Domestic political imperatives meant that the Pentagon could no longer justify extending what was already the longest war in US history. So, Washington decided to pursue its interests in Afghanistan and the wider region through other, familiar, means.

Even without troops on the ground, the US will resist China's growing influence over the Taliban government, evidenced by Beijing's offer to include Afghanistan in the billion-dollar Belt & Road Initiative. Then there are the Gulf kingdoms, Saudi Arabia in the lead, seeking to extend their expanding economic and geopolitical footprint in the region building on their historical ties with the Taliban. Finally, there is Afghanistan's immediate neighbour to the west, Iran, whose oil resources and enmity with both Washington and the Taliban also make it a party to the latest iteration of the Great Game.

The Great Game is, of course, the epithet for the strategic rivalry that played out from the 19th century onwards between the then British and Russian empires for control over Afghanistan, Persia and the wider central Asia region. A variety of hot and cold wars between the so-called Great Powers extended into the 20th century, intensifying after World War II, when the US empire sought to contain communist USSR and China.

Turkey and Pakistan were cultivated as garrison states on the frontline of this war against communism, as was Iran, until the Shah was deposed in the late 1970s.

But the biggest and most brutal confrontation played out in Afghanistan from 1977 onwards under the guise of the anti-Soviet 'jihad' against the left-wing PDPA government. Funded by Saudi Arabia and the US, and prosecuted by Pakistan, the legacy of this disastrous policy is now playing out for the umpteenth time.

Orientalist narratives in the West and racism in mainland Pakistan on both sides of the Durand Line as religious fanatics wedded to prehistoric, uncivilised mores. This provides the justification to brand them 'terrorists' to be wiped out. Even though militancy in Baloch areas is largely secular in nature, a similar totalising narrative is deployed to dehumanise the Baloch people too. Little has changed in Pakistani and imperialist statecraft since the carrot and stick days of the British Raj.

Pro-establishment types will never tell us why there is no peace despite the 'friendly government' in Kabul. On the other hand are those who still think that the US invasion of Afghanistan was a godsend and refuse to acknowledge both the historical crimes of US imperialism and its continuing complicity in the cold wars of today. And then there are the voices who think China is to be supported at all costs because it ostensibly opposes US hegemony, regardless of what that means for the Pakhtun, Baloch and other masses across the region. The least we can do is speak up for the nameless masses paying a bloody price for the strategic games waged by unaccountable states. That is the bare minimum requirement for liberation from imperialism, shadowy spymasters and the Taliban. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Huawei's Training Program set to elevate Pakistan's IT exports: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that Pakistan's Information Technology exports will rise with Huawei's annual professional training to 300,000 Pakistani students.

Talking to a four-member delegation led by Ethan Sun, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Huawei Pakistan, the prime minister stressed that collaboration with Huawei was essential for providing advanced IT training in various fields, especially for young people.

The prime minister emphasized that the government values its sustainable partnership with Huawei in Pakistan's digital economy. The government will prioritize including both women and the youth of Balochistan in this training program.

The prime minister stated that promoting the digital economy requires building a strong foundation of talented professionals within the country.

The prime minister stated that the recent visit to Huawei's headquarters in China was highly beneficial. The prime minister emphasized that digitizing government institutions was crucial for implementing a modern, automated,

and efficient governance system. The delegation briefed the prime minister regarding the progress of ongoing projects under the cooperation agreement between Pakistan and Huawei for the Digital Pakistan Program.

The prime minister was informed that a new Massive Open Online Courses system for IT training has been developed and will be launched with the support of provincial governments.

The delegation suggested backing the development of a national data center in line with Pakistan's

national cloud strategy. This initiative will improve cloud services and lead to considerable cost reductions. Huawei was interested in collaborating with the Pakistani government to transform Islamabad into a smart city. As part of the Islamabad Smart City project, various services such as traffic management, health care, education, and parking will be accessible through a digital platform.

Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ishaan Afzal, and other senior officials were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: CEO of Huawei Pakistan Mr. Ethan Sun along with a delegation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association, called on the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research.

### Jazz secures landmark credit facility to enhance 4G network, promote digital inclusion nationwide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator has successfully secured the largest private sector syndicated credit facility, totalling up to Rs 75 billion.

The banking consortium was led by The Bank of Punjab (BoP), and this 10-year financing arrangement will significantly support Jazz's ongoing 4G network expansion and technological upgrades while supporting its new ServiceCo model, said a news release. The signing ceremony was attended by VEON Group CEO, Amir Ibrahim, CEO of

Jazz, and the Presidents of participating banks along with their representatives.

The consortium includes prominent financial institutions acting as mandated lead advisors and arrangers, namely Habib Bank Limited, Bank Alfalah Limited, Meezan Bank Limited, MCB Bank Limited, Allied Bank Limited, The Bank of Punjab, Askari Bank Limited, Habib Metropolitan Bank, Soneri Bank Limited, Bank Islami Pakistan Limited and MCB Islamic Bank Limited. Jazz, a major investor in Pakistan with over 30 years of history and investments exceeding USD 10.6 billion, leads the industry with a 45% revenue market share and serves over 71.4 million subscribers, including 49 million 4G users.

The company recently announced a major shift from a traditional mobile operator to a ServiceCo structure, creating Strategic Business Units (SBUs) focused on digital financial services, software & analytics, data centers & cloud, and entertainment & digital platforms.

### Govt to introduce track and trace policy in local cotton, ginning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industry and Production, National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday said that the government has decided to introduce track and trace system in local cotton and ginning industry aimed at avoiding tax evasion. Talking to a delegation of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association, who called on minister, he said that the cotton industry has a pivotal role in the rural economy and the potential to provide employment opportunities for a large

portion of the skilled and semi-skilled workforce in the country. The meeting discussed matters relating to additional taxation measures on seed cotton and cotton seed cake in the current budget, said a press release.

The minister said that a track and trace system will be implemented on locally produced cotton bales in order to avoid tax evasion to protect local farming communities as well as the industrial sector of the country.

### US Ambassador calls on Minister for Privatisation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome Friday called on Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan. Both the sides discussed matters relating to mutual interest, especially promoting trade and business between both the countries, said a press release. The meeting held detailed discussions on various issues including fur-

### Govt taking initiatives for economic revival: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Friday that the incumbent government intended to take up short, medium and long-term initiatives to ensure economic revival of Pakistan.

The minister was chairing the first steering committee of the FCDO-funded Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade (REMIT) programme, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

British High Commissioner, Jane Marriot co-

chaired the meeting while among others it was attended by Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr. Jehanzeb Khan and senior government officials. The finance minister emphasized that the government's focus on inclusive economic growth could be complemented by the support of development partners with a focus on performance and implementation.

Reviewing the work done by the programme in the areas of revenue mobilisation, investment climate, macroeconomic governance and trade, with

cross-cutting themes of gender and climate change, the minister appreciated the overall progress to date.

He also emphasized the need for government stakeholders to be more proactive in taking up implementation.

The minister appreciated the technical assistance provided, stressed on consolidation of interventions and on speeding up on government implementation for impact. Jane Marriot, thanked the minister for his interest in the programme interventions and commitment to reform that will take Pakistan forward.

### Gold rates decrease by Rs.3,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3,000 and was sold at Rs.251,000 on Friday against its sale at Rs.254,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.2,572 to Rs.215,192 from Rs.217,764 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.197,259 from Rs. 199,617.

### Pakistani jeweler eyes bigger role in China-ASEAN trade

BEIJING (APP): In a move to bolster the global footprint of Pakistani jewelry, Pakistani jeweler Aqeel Chaudhry attended the CIE in Guangxi event held in Nanning, the provincial capital of Guangxi, China this month, highlighting his commitment to the Chinese market and exploring new horizons for business expansion within the ASEAN region.

The event, which attracted 110 international companies and investment promotion agencies in attendance, including 73 Fortune 500 companies and industry leaders, served as a platform for fostering international business collaborations and unlocking new market opportunities, local media reported. Chaudhry's presence underlined his keen interest in Guangxi's strategic position as a gateway to ASEAN countries, thereby expanding the reach of Pakistani jewelry.



## KP Governor assure to resolve problems of Wazir tribesmen

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of the Wazir tribe belonging to Bannu Domain called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Faisal Karim Kundi and informed him about their problems. Provincial President of Pakistan People's Party, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha and Provincial Secretary Coordination, Farzand Ali Wazir were also present on the occasion.

The delegation briefed the governor about the overall situation of their area and the problems being confronted by people. Talking to the delegation, the KP governor said that deteriorating law and order conditions have negatively impacted business activities in the area. Expressing concern over the situation, he assured that promises made to tribal people would be fulfilled

and efforts would be made to bring tribesmen into the national mainstream of development. He said that voice would be raised at available forums for the facilitation of tribal people and to provide them opportunities for growth and development. He also urged locals and the young generation to support the efforts of security forces in maintaining peace in the area.



**GILGIT:** Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan meets with affected individuals from the Dasu Hydro Power Project at the CM Secretariat.

## KP Govt sanctions 25pc, 20pc adhoc relief allowance to employees

PESHAWAR (APP): The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa sanctioned an Adhoc Relief Allowance 2024 at the rate of 25 percent of the basic pay as on June 30, 2024 to the employees from BS-17 to BS-22 and 20 percent to the employees in BS-03 to BS-16 falling under the civil servants of the provincial government including contingent of paid staff and contract employees employed against civil posts in Basic Pay Scales on standard terms and conditions of contract appointment, said a notification issued by the Finance Department

here on Friday. The Adhoc Relief Allowance with effect from 1.07.2024 will be subject to income and admissible during leave and entire period of LPR except extraordinary leave and will not be treated as part of emoluments for the purpose of calculation of pension/gratuity and recovery of House Rent. Similarly, it will also be not admissible to the employees on their repatriation from posting/deputation abroad at the rate and amount which would have been admissible to them had they not been posted

abroad. The term 'Basic Pay' for the purpose of Adhoc Relief Allowance 2024 will also include the amount of the personal pay granted on account of annual increment (s) beyond the maximum of the existing pay scales. The Adhoc Relief Allowance-2024 shall be accommodated from within the budgetary allocation for the Year 2024-25 by the respective Departments/organizations and no supplementary grants would be given on this account to all the government employees of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with effect from 1st July, 2024.

## Governor Punjab recognizes businessmen as backbone of economy

RAWALPINDI (APP): Governor Punjab, Sardar Salim Haider has said that businessmen are the backbone of the country's economy. Traders always played an important role in economic prosperity in the country, he said adding that the government is doing everything possible to solve the problems of traders.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), which called on him here on Friday, led by President Chamber Saqib Rafique. The delegation informed the governor regarding the problems of the business community. The governor said that business circles have always played a role in the development of the country. "We are making every possible effort to solve the problems of the businessmen", he said. Later, a delegation of lawyers also met the governor. Speaking to the lawyers, the governor said that the role of lawyers is very important for the rule of law and supremacy. Lawyers have always made sacrifices for the stability of the democratic system, the rule of law and the constitution.



**LAHORE:** A delegation of Lawyers from Rawalpindi meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan.

## KP Assembly discusses Bannu incident, law and order situation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly convened on Friday to discuss the firing incident on a peaceful procession in Bannu and the deteriorating law and order situation in the province. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) MPA Adnan Khan, speaking on a point of order, highlighted that the people of Bannu, who were peacefully demanding peace, were fired upon, resulting in 20 injuries. He urged the government to take action against the perpetrators and ensure the safety of the people.

manding governmental action against terrorism to protect the citizens. Other members of the provincial assembly also called for steps to restore peace in the province. Provincial Minister Dr. Amjad Khan reassured the assembly that the government was taking the law and order situation seriously. He announced that an inquiry into the Bannu firing incident had been ordered and a committee would be formed to investigate the incident and ensure public safety. Speaker KP Assembly Babar Salim Swati emphasized the need for a collaborative approach to address the issue, suggesting the formation of a committee comprising of the government and the Opposition members.

## Woman killed, three family members injured in accident

KHANEWAL (APP): A woman was killed while three other family members injured as their motorcycle collided with a tree near Thatha Sadiqabad road.

According to details, a citizen named Muhammad Irfan was going to home Chak No 136/10-R from Tibba Sultan Pur along with family members riding on a motorcycle. Suddenly, the motorcycle went uncontrolled and collided with a tree. As a result, his wife 30-year-old Beenish died on the spot while Irfan, his daughter Eman and minor boy Anus sustained injuries. The injured were shifted to Tehsil headquarters hospital Jehania for medical aid.

## Punjab sets up flood relief camps amid threat of flooding

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique announced on Friday that the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) had established flood relief camps in anticipation of potential flooding. The announcement was made during his visit to the PDMA Head Office here. He highlighted the risk of flooding due to recent rains in the Koh-e-Sulaiman mountains, which could lead to rising water levels in rivers and mountain streams. He assured the

public that the situation is being closely monitored around the clock in the Epidemic and District Control Rooms, and that prompt measures will be taken to protect lives. He also urged the public to take necessary precautions during the rainy season. During his visit, he reviewed various schemes aimed at preventing river erosion. He also toured the PDMA control room to assess the rain situation across the province. DG PDMA, Irfan Ali Kathia, provided a comprehensive briefing on the current weather conditions and the safety measures in place.

## Eight dead, 1,359 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least eight people were killed and 1,359 others injured in 1,204 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 600 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 759 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams. The data analysis showed that 693 drivers, 50 underage drivers, 152 pedestrians, and 522 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 226 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 264 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Multan with 77 accidents.

## Health Minister meets MSF officials, discusses ongoing projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister of Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah met with officials from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) at his office to discuss ongoing projects of international humanitarian organization. The meeting was attended by Director EPI Dr. Arif, Director MCH Dr. Khizr Hayat, DHO Khyber Dr. Zafar Ali Khan, Focal Person Health Department Dr. Mohammad Nabi Jan Afridi, and other relevant officials.

MSF officials briefed the Minister of Health on their ongoing projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the establishment of two clinics for the treatment of leishmaniasis at City Hospital Peshawar and Budh Bher Hospital. They also informed the minister about their work in Khalifa Gul Nawaz Hospital and Tirah Valley in Khyber District.

The MSF officials also discussed their plans to establish a leishmaniasis treatment center at the Dargai Hospital in Khyber district. They informed the minister that a five-year project has been designed, which will be technically and financially supported by MSF. The project will also include the establishment of a pediatric health care center and a blood bank.



**LAHORE:** Punjab Minister for Transport Bilal Akbar Khan chairs meeting regarding Marri Rail Link Project.

## International News

### Relentless Israeli attacks claim 54 lives in Gaza

**Monitoring Desk** GAZA STRIP: The Gaza health ministry said on Thursday that 54 people have been killed in 24 hours as Israel kept up its heavy bombardment of recent days. All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to their "breaking point" by the influx of casualties, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Television images showed mourners at Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central town of Deir el-Balah, where several white-shrouded corpses lay on the ground. One man cradled the covered body of a child. Also on Thursday, the Israeli parliament voted to oppose a Palestinian state as an "existential threat". The vote, which drew swift criticism from the Palestinian leadership and the international community, is largely symbolic but laid

down a marker ahead of a planned address by Netanyahu to the US Congress next Wednesday. The veteran hawk has shown little interest in efforts by the US administration to broker a truce and prisoner release deal for Gaza, insisting that "absolute victory" over Hamas is within reach and vowing to ramp up the military pressure. The White House acknowledged on Thursday that it had no firm date for any talks between Netanyahu and President Joe Biden, saying only that it had "every expectation" the two men would meet, dependent on the president's recovery from Covid.

The resolution passed by Israeli lawmakers in the early hours said a Palestinian state on land occupied by the Israeli army would "perpetuate the Israel-Palestinian conflict and destabilise the region". The resolution passed by 68

votes to nine in the 120-member parliament. The Palestinian Authority accused Israel's hard-right ruling coalition of "plunging the region into an abyss". Neighbouring Jordan said the vote "constitutes a serious violation of international law and a challenge to the international community". France expressed "consternation", noting that the text was "in contradiction" with multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

The establishment of a Palestinian state on lands occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967 has been the cornerstone of the international community's efforts to resolve the conflict for decades. UN chief Antonio Guterres was "very disappointed" by the Israeli parliament's move. "You can't vote away the two-state solution," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

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down a marker ahead of a planned address by Netanyahu to the US Congress next Wednesday. The veteran hawk has shown little interest in efforts by the US administration to broker a truce and prisoner release deal for Gaza, insisting that "absolute victory" over Hamas is within reach and vowing to ramp up the military pressure. The White House acknowledged on Thursday that it had no firm date for any talks between Netanyahu and President Joe Biden, saying only that it had "every expectation" the two men would meet, dependent on the president's recovery from Covid.

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**Republican presidential nominee and former U.S. President Donald Trump is joined on stage by wife Melania and other relatives after he finished giving his acceptance speech on Day 4 of the Republican National Convention (RNC), at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.**

### 'Isolated' Biden faces calls to drop re-election bid

**Monitoring Desk** WASHINGTON: Joe Biden still has mild Covid symptoms but is continuing to work, his White House doctor said on Thursday, a day after the US president tested positive for the disease shortly after conceding he would consider dropping his re-election bid if doctors diagnosed him with a serious medical condition. "The president is still experiencing mild upper respiratory symptoms associated with his recent Covid-19 infection," doctor Kevin O'Connor said in a letter. "He does not have a fever and his vital signs remain normal".

The 81-year-old Democ-rat gave reporters the thumbs up and said "I feel good" as he cut short a trip to Las Vegas and flew to his beach home in Delaware to go into isolation, which will take him off the campaign trail for days. The infection comes at a critical moment for Biden's campaign, with the president seeking to show he is up to the job after a disastrous debate performance against rival Donald Trump sparked concerns about his health and calls from some Democrats for him to step aside.

### Ex-CIA analyst charged with spying for South Korea

**Monitoring Desk** NEW YORK: A grand jury has indicted a former US Central Intelligence Agency analyst on charges of acting as a spy for the South Korean government in exchange for luxury goods, bags and fancy meals, the BBC reported on Thursday. Sue Mi Terry, who previously worked as a senior official for the White House National Security Council, faces two counts of failing to register as a foreign agent and conspiracy to violate the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

### Thailand says cyanide killed 6 foreigners in hotel, including perpetrator

**Monitoring Desk** BANGKOK: Cyanide poisoning caused the deaths of six foreigners whose bodies were found in a room in a plush Bangkok hotel, Thai authorities said on Wednesday, with the suspected killer among the dead. Traces of the rapid-acting, deadly chemical were found during autopsies of the bodies and on drinking glasses and a teapot in the room at the luxury Grand Hyatt

Erawan hotel where the dead were discovered late on Tuesday, according to police and a hospital. Interviews with relatives of the three women and three men who died revealed there had been a dispute over debt related to an investment, according to police, who said they were investigating how the cyanide was obtained. The six were all of Vietnamese ethnicity, two of those US nationals.

### Arson suspected as fire kills seven in France

**Monitoring Desk** NICE: Police were hunting three arson suspects on Thursday after an apartment building fire killed seven people in the southern French city of Nice, Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said. The dead include three children — 5, 7 and 10 years old — and a 17-year-old who tried to escape by jumping from a window, they added. The apartment is located in the low-income neighbourhood of Les Moulins.

### Taiwan must rely on itself for defence, foreign minister responds to Trump

**Monitoring Desk** TAIPEI: Taiwan must rely on itself for defence and is likely to keep increasing spending and modernising its military given the threat it faces from China, Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung said on Friday, responding to criticism from Donald Trump. US former President Trump, the Republican candidate in a rematch with President Joe Biden, said in an interview published this week that "Taiwan should pay for its defence", adding that the island had taken American semiconductor business. The United States is the most important international backer and arms supplier of Taiwan, which China claims as its own. Despite the lack of formal diplomatic ties, Washington is bound by law to provide the means for the island's defence. But Taiwan has no formal defence pact with the United States, as Asian neighbours Japan and South Korea do, since Washington terminated a previous treaty with Taipei in 1979 when it switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing. Biden angered China in 2022 by saying US forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion, a deviation from a long-held US position of "strategic ambiguity".

Asked about Trump's comments, Lin told foreign reporters in Taipei that "we pay great attention to" them, and Taiwan-US relations are built on the bipartisan support Taiwan enjoys in the United States. "I think everyone has a consensus on the main point, which is the China threat," said Lin, who took up his post on May 20 as part of the cabinet of newly elected President Lai Ching-te.

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### North Korea plans to launch major tourism site next year though it still blocks foreign tourists

**Monitoring Desk** SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a major tourism site being constructed on the country's eastern coast and discussed steps to open the zone by next year, state media reported Thursday, though the country still blocks visits by most foreign tourists. The Wonsan-Kalma zone is one of Kim's most talked-about tourism projects. For years, North Korea has been building luxury hotels and recreational facilities there to create a key attraction for international visitors. But the project reportedly suffered setbacks due to shortages of construction materials as a result of toughened U.N. sanctions and COVID-19 restrictions.

Kim toured the Wonsan-Kalma zone with top deputies on Tuesday and discussed preparations for its opening by May 2025 as decided by a ruling party meeting in January, according to the official Korean Central News Agency. "A coastal wonderland to be known to the world as the best tourist resort of (North Korea) will be successfully built," Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA. It cited Kim as saying construction has entered its final stages. North Korea has been slowly easing its harsh pandemic-era curbs and entry restrictions as part of its efforts to revive its economy. But it still hasn't reopened its borders to foreign tourists, except for a relatively small number of Russians who visited earlier this year as ties boomed between the two countries. A return of Chinese travelers would likely provide a much bigger source of revenue as they represented about 90% of international tourists visiting North Korea before the pandemic.

### Bangladesh TV news off air, communications widely disrupted as student protests spike

**Monitoring Desk** DHAKA: Television news channels in Bangladesh were off the air and telecommunications were widely disrupted on Friday amid violent student protests against quotas for government jobs in which nearly two dozen people have been killed this week. There was no immediate word from the government. French news agency AFP reported that the death toll in Thursday's violence had risen to 32. Reuters had reported that 13 people were killed, adding to six dead earlier in the week, and could not immediately verify the higher number. There was fresh violence in some parts of the country on Friday and police were using tear gas to disperse protesters, a Reuters photographer said. India's Economic Times newspaper reported

that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government "was forced" to call in the army late on Thursday to help "maintain order". Reuters could not independently verify the information. Although the protests were sparked by student anger against the controversial quota system, some analysts have said that tough economic conditions, including high inflation, rising unemployment, and depleting foreign reserves, were pouring fuel on the fire. The protests have also opened old and sensitive political faultlines between those who fought for Bangladesh's independence in 1971, including Hasina's Awami League. Authorities had cut some mobile services on Thursday to try to quell the unrest but the disruption spread across the country.

### Belarus to introduce 90 day visa-free regime for 35 European countries

**Monitoring Desk** MOSCOW: Belarus, traditionally a close ally of Russia, said on Wednesday it would introduce a 90-day visa-free regime for citizens of 35 European countries in a sign Minsk may be keen to ease tensions with the West. Under the new policy, citizens of the 35 listed nations - which include Germany, Britain and France - will be able to enter Belarus without a visa and stay for up to 90 days per year. Currently, travellers from those countries can only remain in Belarus for 30 days and must fly in via Minsk airport. The new policy takes effect on Friday, the National Border Service said in a statement.



## Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan Day" observed with fabulous zest, renewed pledge

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): The people of Kashmir living in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IIOJK), and around the world observed "Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan Day" on Friday. They renewed their resolve to continue the struggle for freedom from Indian unlawful occupation and to realize the idea of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. This spirit is based on the historic resolution passed in Srinagar on this day in 1947.

On July 19, 1947, the Kashmiris adopted a historic resolution in a special meeting of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at the residence of veteran Kashmiri leader and later founding President of Azad Jammu Kashmir government, Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan in Srinagar, demanding accession of entire Jammu and Kashmir state to Pakistan in accordance with the aspirations of the people of the Muslim-majority Himalayan State.

The people of Kashmir observe this historic day every year with a renewal of the pledge to continue the struggle, with full vigour, for the achievement of their birthright to self-determination and translate the idea of accession of the entire Jammu Kashmir state to Pakistan under the spirit of the historic resolution passed this day in 1947 into reality. In AJK, it was a public holiday to facilitate the masses from all sections of the civil society to participate in the ceremonies held to mark the historic day.

The representative leaders of people of all spheres of life from various parts of the concerned districts reiterated complete solidarity with the people of Pakistan with a renewed pledge to materialize the dream of accession to the entire Jammu Kashmir state to Pakistan into reality in the light of the historic resolution.

The day dawned with special prayers in the mosques for the liberation of all occupied Muslim lands including Indian-held Jammu Kashmir and Palestine, the success of the Kashmir freedom struggle and for the rest of the departed souls who laid down their lives for the cause of liberation of the motherland from the Indian Illegal rule.

Special meetings including seminars and symposiums were held in all ten districts and tehsil headquarters of AJK including in the state's metropolis - Muzaffarabad to commemorate the historic day with the renewal of the pledge to continue the struggle to attain their birthright to self-determination and accomplish the dream of the accession of entire Jammu Kashmir state to Pakistan under the spirit of the historic resolution passed. In Mirpur a grand rally was staged to observe the day, led by ADC (G) Yasir Mahmood.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Bajwa, President & CEO of Bank Alfalah, and Mr. Yahya Khan, Group Head of Digital Banking, met with Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), at BISP headquarters.

## Kazakhstan SCO chairmanship prompted Shanghai spirit: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a seminar on Friday said the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit hosted by Kazakhstan prompted the Shanghai spirit of multilateralism.

Center for SCO Studies- Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, The Riphah Institute of Public Policy (RIPP), in collaboration with the Embassy of Kazakhstan, hosted a roundtable on "Post Astana Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit 2024: Achievements and Way Forward."

The roundtable provided an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the SCO Summit 2024 hosted by Kazakhstan in Astana and discussed the future trajectory of the organization under the new chairmanship of the People's Republic of China. The speakers shared valuable insights into the achievements and strategic direction of the SCO.

President, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, Dr. Farhat Asif highlighted the significance of the event and shared about various initiatives by IPDS on SCO. Dr. Farhat Asif also shared that Pakistan, as the Chair of the Council of Heads of Government will host the meeting in Islamabad in October. The next chairmanship of SCO is now with the People's Republic of China for 2024-25. While speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafinmetuliciously shared the outcomes of the Astana Summit, the vision, and mission of the President of Kazakhstan during the whole year of Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in SCO.

## Pakistan asks Afghan authorities to take action against terrorist groups

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Friday strongly urged the Interim Afghan Government to take immediate, robust and effective action against the perpetrators of the 15 July attack at Bannu Cantonment and to prevent such attacks in the future as such attacks undermined bilateral relations and regional stability.

"We conveyed to the Afghan authorities our serious concern on the terrorist attack at Bannu Cantonment on 15 July 2024 and the continued use of Afghan territory by Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to carry out deadly attacks in Pakistan with impunity," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing.

She said the Bannu Cantonment attack underscored the urgent need for Afghanistan to take effective action against these groups and to ensure that the Afghan territory is not used for terrorism against Pakistan. Pakistan remains committed to combating terrorism and ensuring the security of its people.



Development Director, British High Commission, Jo Moore calling on Coordinator to PM on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam in Islamabad

## AJK PM says: Pakistan center of Kashmiris' hopes

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while terming Pakistan as the center of Kashmiris' hopes, has said that the historical day of July 19 had special significance in the history of freedom struggle of Kashmir.

"It was on this day in 1947 when Kashmiri leadership decided to align their destiny with Pakistan", he said in his message issued on the occasion of Kashmir's accession day to Pakistan being observed today (Friday).

The prime minister said that observance of day on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) was a reflection of Kashmiris' unconditional love for Pakistan as the biggest eyesore to India.

He expressed the optimism that the day was not far off when the Kashmiris' struggle and sacrifices would bear fruits.

## Muqam reaffirms unwavering support on 'Kashmir Accession to Pak Day'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support to Kashmiris on all international platforms. The minister in his message on 'Kashmir Accession to Pakistan Day' highlighted the significance of the day.

He recalled that on July 19, 1947, the brave people of Kashmir passed a resolution in Srinagar for accession to Pakistan.

He emphasized the enduring dedication of Kashmiris to this cause, noting the immense sacrifices they have made over the past seven decades in their quest for self-determination.

## Fifth Cohort for Women Entrepreneurs trains 100 Women Entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD (Online): The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad today held a graduation celebration for 100 women in the fifth cohort of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE). Since 2020, the AWE has mentored over 330 Pakistani women to establish and scale up their businesses.

Ambassador Blome also highlighted the broader societal benefits of supporting women entrepreneurs, stating, "The United States firmly believes that expanding opportunities for women entrepreneurs leads to more stable societies. When women entrepreneurs succeed,

and women play a vital and growing role in that process," said Ambassador Blome. "AWE remains a relevant and important tool in promoting women's economic empowerment."

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ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired important meeting regarding the security of the federal capital and new recruitment in Islamabad Police.

## IG Islamabad reviews security measures & recruitment process

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired an important meeting regarding the security of the federal capital and new recruitment in Islamabad Police, a public relations officer said.

The meetings were attended by DIG Security Muhammad Jawad Tariq, AIG Establishment Abdul Haque Umrani, AIG Special Branch Yasir Afridi, SSP CTD Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, and the Law Officer.

During the meeting, IG Islamabad reviewed the overall security situation in the federal capital. He issued orders to police officers to ensure the law and order situation in the federal capital, as well as to ensure effective security arrangements for the upcoming processions and gatherings related to Muharram.

IG Islamabad also reviewed the ongoing recruitment process in the Islamabad Police. He emphasized the importance of monitoring and ensuring transparency in the recruitment process, and said that educated young individuals driven by the spirit of service should be included in the police force.

Moreover, important decisions were made regarding the management and administration of all recruitment centers, and senior police officers were assigned key responsibilities.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used during extension work of Club Road during development work in Federal Capital.

## 10,177 accused arrested; cash, valuables worth Rs 1.40 bn recovered during six months

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police carried out an extensive crackdown against criminal elements in the federal capital during the last six months to maintain peace and tranquility, a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this regard the Islamabad police arrested a total of 10,177 accused involved in different criminal activities, and recovered cash and valuables worth over Rs 1.40 billion from their possession. Moreover, 881 accused from 365 gangs involved in robbery activities were also arrested and valu-

## U.S Embassy's AWE program trains 100 women entrepreneurs in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad on Friday held a graduation celebration for 100 women in the fifth cohort of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE). Since 2020, the AWE has mentored over 330 Pakistani women to establish and scale up their businesses.

Ambassador Donald Blome delivered inspiring remarks at the ceremony, congratulating the graduates and highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship in fostering economic growth and stability, says the press release.

"The United States is strongly committed to advancing Pakistan's inclusive economic transformation –

and women play a vital and growing role in that process," said Ambassador Blome. "AWE remains a relevant and important tool in promoting women's economic empowerment."

Ambassador Blome also highlighted the broader societal benefits of supporting women entrepreneurs, stating, "The United States firmly believes that expanding opportunities for women entrepreneurs leads to more stable societies. When women entrepreneurs succeed, they're more likely to invest back into their families and communities—into education, nutrition, well-being, and children's health."



ISLAMABAD: A vendor showcases children's garments at a makeshift stall amidst the debris of last week's devastating blaze at the H-9 weekly bazaar, which destroyed 2,743 stalls and 625 shops, causing millions in damages in Federal Capital.

## NA body on maritime affairs calls KDLB reps to resolve KPT protestors' issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs on Friday invited the representatives of Karachi Dock Labour Board (KDLB) on July 23rd to resolve the issues pertaining to the sit-in in front of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Headquarters.

The committee was briefed by the Secretary, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs regarding the organizational structure and working of the ministry and its attached departments in an introductory meeting held in the Parliament House, under the Chairmanship of Member National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Qadir Patel.

Secretary, Ministry of Maritime Affairs Dr. Iram Anjum Khan gave a detailed presentation on the organizational structure and administrative matters of the Ministry. The Chairman, Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Director, Gwadar Port and Executive Director, of Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) also briefed the Committee regarding the working and performance of their departments.

The Chairman, of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Syed Syedain Raza Zaidibriefed the Committee that the Port is administered by the Board of Trustees has 11 members headed by the Chairman KPT.

The Committee invited the representatives of the Karachi Dock Labour Board (KDLB) to resolve the issues regarding the sit-in in front of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Headquarters.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan, chairperson senate standing committee on information technology and telecommunication presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament Lodges.

Secretary, Ministry of Maritime Affairs Dr. Iram Anjum Khan gave a detailed presentation on the organizational structure and administrative matters of the Ministry. The Chairman, Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Director, Gwadar Port and Executive Director, of Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) also briefed the Committee regarding the working and performance of their departments.

## NA starts Youth Citizen Internship Program 2024

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has emphasized the importance of acknowledging and respecting social, political, and religious pluralities. He added, "Pakistan Parliament is the first regional Parliament which transformed itself into the first-ever Green Parliament of the World through solarization."

He urged youth to play their role in nation-building rather than indulging in propaganda & political polarisation.

He expressed these views during his keynote address to the orientation session of the Young Citizen Internship Program 2024 at Parliament House Islamabad on Friday.

He expressed the optimism that the day was not far off when the Kashmiris' struggle and sacrifices would bear fruits.

## AIOU announces admission schedule for Fall 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the admission schedule for the merit-based programs for the Fall 2024 semester, and details are available on their website at [www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)

According to the AIOU, the applications for BS, BSc, MBA, MS, MPhil, and PhD programs can be submitted online until August 20.

It is noteworthy that admissions to BS, BSc, and MBA programs will be purely on a merit basis, while for MS, MPhil, and PhD programs, passing the entry tests is mandatory. The entry tests for these programs will be held at the university from August 22 to 24.

The Director Admissions, Syed Zia-ul-Hassnain, stated that under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, special attention will be given to ensure transparency in conducting the entry tests and compiling the merit lists.

## IRSA releases 323,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 323,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 299,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1518.70 feet and was 120.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 157,500 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1196.45 feet, which was 148.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.