

Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 172 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Saturday July 27, 2024, Muharram 20, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

No one can claim to be Muslim without unconditional faith in Khatam-e-Nabuwat: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan in a decision on a criminal review petition No.2/2024 stated that no one can claim to be Muslim until he/she has unconditional faith in 'Khatam-e-Nabuwat' of Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH). It said that the court has clearly stated in the verdict that the both group, which called themselves Ahmadi, are non-Muslims in accordance with Sharia, Constitution and the law. These groups have no right to spread their be-

lieves in Muslims at public or private forums. The court has clarified this point while accepting the appeal of the Punjab government, it said. A press release issued by the top court said that the decision in the criminal review petition was announced on July 24, and it was written in Urdu language so general public can easily understand it. It said that the top court has sought guidance from authentic educational institutions and except this, other individuals were also given opportunity to submit written arguments

during hearing. The apex court also viewed the proceeding of Parliamentary Committee and took guidelines from on record statements of committee members including Mufti Mehmood, Maulana Zafar Ahmed Ansari, Maulana Abdul Haq, Maulana Shah Ahmed Norani, Maulana Abdul Mustafa Azhari, Maulana Syed Muhammad Ali Rizvi, Maulana Saddar Al-Shaheed, Maulana Nematullah, Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and other scholars. Except this, the writings of Syed Abul Ala Modoodi and others schol-

ars are also viewed, which has been mentioned in the order. The press release said that the decision has also been in line with the previous judgments of Supreme Court and Federal Shariat Court (FSC). Despite this, the people who didn't appear before the court after provision of repeated opportunities have started baseless allegations and presenting their opinion as more strong over the stance of worthy scholars, which is inappropriate act, it said.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Tajikistan H.E. Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM, Tajik envoy discuss regional connectivity projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir Friday paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House. The prime minister welcomed the ambassador and wished him a successful tenure in Pakistan.

Expressing satisfaction at the MoUs/agreements signed during his visit, PM Shehbaz Sharif urged that timely implementation and follow up would help to strengthen bilateral ties even further. He renewed his invitation to President Rahmon to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience, while adding that Pakistan was looking forward to Tajikistan's participation in the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad in October this year.

The Tajik Ambassador briefed the prime minister on a number of proposals aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields including education, agriculture and defence as well as connectivity through land and air routes. While noting the proposals, the prime minister tasked relevant ministries to get in touch with the Tajik Ambassador for further discussions. Regional connectivity projects including CASA-1000, also came under discussion. The Tajik Ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him, conveyed greetings of his President to him and expressed his country's desire to further enhance its relations with Pakistan.

While fondly recalling his recent visit to Dushanbe earlier this month, the prime minister said he was touched by the warm welcome extended to him and hailed the friendly and productive discussions with President Emomali Rahmon during the visit.

Pakistan Navy Commissions 3rd offshore patrol vessel PNS HUNAIN in Romania

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Navy has commissioned its Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), PNS HUNAIN at Constanta Port, Romania, where Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

Chief of the Defence Staff of Romania General Gheorghita Vlad and Chief of Romanian Navy Vice Admiral Mihai Panait also attended as guests of honour, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized on the significance of the project and highlighted the additional set of capabilities added to PN sphere of operations with the induction

of PNS HUNAIN. He expressed his confidence that induction of these multi-purpose and highly adaptive platforms; equipped with state-of-the-art weapons/ sensors suite, will further enhance PN forward presence and perpetual operational readiness vis-à-vis deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) in the Indian Ocean Region.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf commended the exceptional professionalism and dedication of DAMEN Shipyard and expressed confidence in the prospects of future cooperation in delivering cutting-edge technologies to Pakistan Navy.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf addressing the Commissioning Ceremony of Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN at Constanta Port, Romania.

CPPA seeks Rs 2.63 per unit increase in tariff for June

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) has sought Rs 2.63 per unit increase in power tariff for June under monthly fuel cost adjustment (FCA) mechanism.

In a petition submitted to National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on behalf of XWAPDA power distribution companies (DISCOs), the CPPA-G maintained the actual cost of electricity remained Rs 9.77 per unit against reference fuel charges of Rs 7.14 per unit for the month of June.

Jl announces sit-ins at three locations in Islamabad, Rawalpindi amid crackdown

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has announced sit-ins at three locations in Islamabad and Rawalpindi following the arrest of its workers and road blockages at D-Chowk. JI workers removed containers at Faizabad and opened the route, allowing a convoy to enter Rawalpindi and set up at Liaquat Bagh.

JI's central spokesperson, Qaiser Sharif, stated that due to the arrests and barriers at D-Chowk, JI decided to hold sit-ins at three locations. "We will hold sit-ins at Murree Road in Rawalpindi, Zero Point, and Chungi No. 26," he said. The sit-in at Murree Road will be led by Amirul Azeem, Deputy Amir Dr Osama Razi, along with provincial and district leadership. JI chief Hafiz Naecumur Rehman will lead the sit-in at Zero Point, with Deputy Amir Liaquat Baloch, Mian Muhammad Aslam, and other provincial and Islamabad leaders joining.

A total of 13,459 GWh electricity worth Rs 119,704 million was generated during the said period while net 13,071 GWh worth Rs 127,712 million was delivered to DISCOs.

The sit-in at Chungi No. 26 will be led by Deputy Amir Dr Attaur Rehman, Professor Muhammad Ibrahim, and provincial leaders. These sit-ins will continue until their demands, including the shutdown of IPPs and relief from tax burdens on the salaried class, are met. Qaiser Sharif declared, "Under the direction of JI leader Hafiz Naecumur, wherever there is an obstacle, participants will hold a sit-in. Jamaat-e-Islami will now hold multiple sit-ins."

He claimed that the police had arrested 1,150 of their workers and subjected dozens to violence. "Seeing the large public turnout at the sit-ins, the government is panicking and resorting to fascism," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JI) Hafiz Naecumur Rehman addressing during Jamaat-e-Islami demonstration against the country's rising inflation, at Islamabad Expressway in the Federal Capital.



Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Bilawal House, Karachi.

Ambreen Jan appointed Federal Secretary Information & Broadcasting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government on Friday appointed Ambreen Jan, a senior officer of the Information Group, Grade 21, as the Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting.



Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Prior to this appointment, Ambreen Jan served as the Executive Director General of the External Publicity Wing within the

Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin calls on President

KARACHI (APP): Head of Dawoodi Bohra community Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin called on President Asif Ali Zardari here at Bilawal House on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, President Asif Ali Zardari said that the Bohra community was playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. The President said that the Bohra community was actively participating in the economy and business sectors of Pakistan. President Zardari said the services of Bohra community in education, health and other sectors are commendable. The President also appreciated the services of Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin for Pakistan in the field of social services.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq says Proactive, inclusive parliament, pivotal for strengthening democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday said that constitutional and parliamentary supremacy was key to lead country on the path of development and prosperity.

He also said that bridging the gap between parliament and masses would render parliament stronger and more effective. "Educated and well-

nificance of proactive and effective parliament, he deliberated upon initiatives undertaken during his previous tenure as Speaker National Assembly.

He said that there was no strategy document of National Assembly and All Parties Committee was formulated to prepare a Strategic Plan. As a result, 1st Strategic Plan 2014-2018 for the sus-



awared youth is a catalyst for ensuring prosperity and economic stability" he expressed these views while addressing the Orientation Programme of Interns serving in National Assembly Secretariat at Pakistani Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Emphasizing the sustained development and growth of the National Assembly was introduced, he added. He said it was a holistic programme, which envisioned the development of technical skills like legislative drafting and creation of a well-resourced and efficient parliamentary services corps.

Armed Forces pay glowing tribute to Captain Sarwar Shaheed

Independent Report RAWALPINDI: Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJS&S & Services Chiefs pay homage to Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his 76th Shahadat Anniversary today. His courage, steadfast determination and resilience will never be forgotten.



CAPTAIN MUHAMMAD SARWAR SHAHEED

The anniversary of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed martyrdom reminds us of the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Let us remember these brave sons of the soil who sacrificed their lives to protect our motherland.

President approves appointment of two ad hoc judges to SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has approved the appointment of retired Justices Sardar Tariq Masood and Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal as ad hoc judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan for a one year term.

Both judges have previously served on the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Their appointment is made under Article 182 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Govt ready to negotiate with JI for country's dev, prosperity: Tarar

Maintaining peace, law & order provincial govt's responsibility: Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Friday announced the government's readiness to negotiate with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on their demand in a bid to end their sit-in causing inconvenience to the general public.



Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar.

"We are ready to talk for peace, security and development of the country which is the main agenda of our government," the minister said while addressing a news conference along with Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Amir Muqam.

The minister said JI Chief Hafiz Naecumur Rehman was a seasoned and far-sighted leader whose guidance would be instrumental for the government to address the existing issues within the existing framework. He said the government was ready to form a three-member committee which would comprise of him, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Amir Muqam and PML-N Senior Leader Tariq Fazal.

Tarar called upon the JI leadership to sit and guide the government in resolving the issues instead of doing the "politics of agitation". The JI was given permission only to stage their sit-in at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, he said, urging them to use only the dedicated place for the purpose. There was no need to obstructing a public servant in discharge of his/her duty and creating hurdles for the people, he said, regretting one or the other group had made it a routine to swarm the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad that caused traffic issues for the people including pa-

tients and professionals. The minister urged the JI leadership to follow the Standard Operation Procedures agreed with the local administration.

Protest at the D-Chowk would not be allowed at any cost since there was a possibility of a mischief due to involvement of any miscreant, he maintained.

The minister urged the JI leadership to have a faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who had been working 20 hours a day to implement the agenda of home grown economic reforms that included privatization of loss making entities, digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue for documentation of non-documented economy, addition of new filers in the tax net and other initiatives.

He said it was top priority of the government to achieve home grown economic reforms that had started providing fiscal space to offer subsidy to the people in electricity bills.

He said the privatization of the FBR was underway to plug loopholes in system to stop billions of rupee leakage and add new filers into the tax net. "We are moving forward rapidly on economic reforms to bring positive changes in people's life," he added.

The minister said PM Shehbaz Sharif led the government during the tenure of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and took concrete measures to stabilize the rupee, reduce inflation and on top of that successfully averted a default for the country.

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Judicial constraints

There is little wrong with the proposal in principle, even if the timing raises some concerns. During a Wednesday session, the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice agreed on the need to increase the number of Supreme Court judges, citing the growing pendency of cases before the apex court.

The law minister suggested that the backlog has grown because judges ignore timelines as they are not accountable for their performance; the committee chair, however, held that the Supreme Court is simply receiving more cases because the number of high court judges has increased, which has sped up the resolution of cases at the lower level, leading to more appeals landing before the apex court. A legislative bill on the matter has been deferred till the committee members can see 'empirical evidence' to support their decision, but the committee agrees that the number of judges could be increased at any time through simple legislation.

While the number of cases piling up at the Supreme Court does support the suggestion for inducting more judges, it would have been better if the proposal had come from the judiciary itself. The fact that it is being prescribed by the legislature will be questioned, given the political context. In too many instances, the current government has attempted to bypass challenges to its rule with tailored legislation.

Accountability laws, election laws, laws governing the armed forces and intelligence services, laws affecting the functioning of the judiciary and even laws directly affecting fundamental rights have been tinkered with and changed in the past two years to align with the ruling class's priorities, often without taking opposition opinions into account. At the same time, key government leaders have taken highly confrontational positions against the judiciary every time a decision has gone against them. The reaction to the recent reserved seats case is a case in point.

This creates doubts regarding the government's intent. Observers will ask why the authorities are suddenly worried about how many judges there are in the Supreme Court. Does it have something to do with how the bench ruled in the reserved seats case? Some critics will see this as another attempt to pack the court, given how the appointment of ad hoc judges triggered a similar controversy. These are serious questions that the government will not be able to avoid.

Of course, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan will thoroughly vet all new entrants to the Supreme Court, but perhaps it would be best if new inductees are initially tasked with solely clearing the backlog, instead of being assigned to major cases. This would forestall most of the objections that could be raised. Lastly, the judiciary, too, must be invited to give its input on this proposal.

An unsafe country

Zubeida Mustafa

How safe a place is Pakistan for young women? According to the human rights ministry, in the last three years, 63,000 cases of violence against women were reported here. This is a rough estimate as not every case of violence is brought to public notice. In fact, it is just the tip of the iceberg.

A fuller picture of the state of human security in Pakistan emerges from the Trafficking in Persons Report issued annually since 2001 by the US State Department. The 2024 report was released recently. From this document, one learns of the complexity and severity of the problems created by criminal trafficking in Pakistan.

Fundamentally, trafficking violates a victim's constitutional rights to freedom and to live with dignity in a place of her/his choice. The trafficker's basic motive is monetary gain. In today's age of neo-liberalism, trafficking has emerged as a global crime involving a transnational mafia conducting a multibillion-dollar trade reminiscent of the slave trade of yore.

Unfortunately, Pakistan as a source, transit and destination country occupies a strategic position in this heinous business. Its inability — or is it unwillingness? — to check unscrupulous elements sustains the mafia that keeps this sordid trade going. It is a lucrative source of illegal earnings for the psychopaths. As for the mass majority, poverty, gender inequality and illiteracy are the factors that make them so vulnerable.

For unexplained reasons, not many voices have been raised against this crime against humanity. The numbers affected should jolt our conscience. According to a

modest estimate, nearly 20,000 persons (80 per cent of them women) are trafficked in Pakistan every year. TIP reports from 2017 to 2021 had showed figures rising from 12,000 to 32,000. In 2022, when a kidnapped girl was recovered in Lahore and taken to court, the police spoke of 40,500 girls having been abducted in Punjab alone. For me, even one woman trafficked is one too many.

It is difficult to understand why state and society accept with equanimity a social evil with profound implications for a country that claims to be an Islamic entity, and which impacts our economy, moral fibre and national image.

The latest TIP Report confirms this trend. It informs us that in the investigating period (2023), the government probed 18,461 cases of which 15,022 were of sex trafficking and 3,439 of forced labour. Of these, only 6,178 were prosecuted, with a measly 10 convictions. The 2023 report had revealed a similar pattern of high numbers being investigated, followed by a drop in the number of prosecutions and a scanty lot being convicted. The punishment meted out is not disclosed. It would not be surprising if no one is imprisoned and a fine of only a few hundred thousand is imposed.

How has the government reacted to this annual finger-pointing exercise by Washington? One response was to neutralise the pressure by setting up the National Commission on Human Rights in 2015, which has the mandate to address suo motu cases of human rights violations, create public awareness and conduct research on human rights matters. It also makes recommendations to the government on related

issues. Consequently, Pakistan has amended existing laws and adopted new ones, the most important being the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018.

The same year, the NCHR published the report *The Menace of Trafficking/Smuggling: Pakistan's Response to the Problem*. Well documented, it focuses on the problem in its local setting. The law and order machinery dealing with trafficking problems has also been restructured, with the FIA being assigned to see to the international aspects of trafficking.

The creation of the NCHR notwithstanding, the situation vis-à-vis trafficking in Pakistan continues to be horrendous. No one in official circles talks about it. Hence it is left to the TIPReport to expose the truth.

Year after year, TIP reports have reiterated that Pakistan does not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Inadequacy, inefficiency and shoddiness in investigation is something we are all familiar with. I have experienced it whenever I have had to deal with the police.

What leaves one aghast is the charge of the government being hand in glove with the criminals. TIP 2024 states: "For the fifth year, the government did not take adequate action against credible reports of official complicity in trafficking crimes, which also continued to create a culture of impunity and inhibited anti-trafficking efforts. In Sindh, local officials continued to perpetrate bonded labour with impunity in brick kilns and on farms." In Pakistan, money can buy a criminal his acquittal and traffickers are multimillionaires. If they also enjoy the blessings of the powers that be then what do they have to worry about? — Courtesy Dawn

Mosquito attack

Naseem Salahuddin

A distressed colleague called me about what started out as an acute fever, but which progressed, within days, to pain in all the muscles. He was troubled with pain and swelling of almost all the joints of his hands, shoulders, wrists, knees, feet, and back, to the extent that he was unable to get out of bed because of severe, constant pain, "as though somebody had pummelled my body with sticks and stones". He took analgesics and plenty of fluid and rested in bed, hoping that the awful symptoms would go away, but they continued, week after week. One month into the episode, he could barely sit in a chair or hobble to the bathroom.

This bizarre syndrome is caused by the Chikungunya virus (CHIKV), spread by the same mosquito species called *Aedes aegypti*, which transmits several other viruses. In 2016 in Pakistan, there was an outbreak of chikungunya when many patients presented with fever, rash, and pain in the muscles and joints; most people recovered quickly to their original state of health, while others suffered the pain for several weeks but ultimately recovered. Chikungunya has made a comeback, but since most viral infections appear alike, it is difficult to diagnose or make a prognosis. In the case of my colleague, the disease was exceptionally severe and protracted, requiring heavy doses of analgesics and even steroids to provide relief.

Dengue hit the news in 2005 when thousands of people of all ages presented with sudden fever and pain in the back and legs. When their blood was

tested, physicians were amazed to find platelets that dropped below average and then scaled back to pre-infection levels over a week or two. Very few progressed to bleeding or shock or required intensive care and platelet transfusions.

We now know four dengue viruses belonging to subgroups (serotypes) 1, 2, 3, and 4. Surprising information evolved: if one has had dengue 1 in the past and later gets dengue with a different serotype, the body's immune system goes into overdrive, and the outcome can be severe. Over the years, more people are getting infected with other serotypes and suffer more complications, often requiring hospitalisation and blood or platelet transfusions.

In 2015, an unsettling problem was reported in Brazil: many women were delivering babies with small heads (microcephaly). Their blood tests revealed the presence of a virus called 'Zika'. This was alarming and traced to the mosquito species responsible for carrying the dengue and chikungunya viruses. Zika also presents with fever, headache, body pain, a rash, and red eyes. Most people would not be diagnosed without lab tests since it is not clinically distinguishable, and most recover without complications. However, if a pregnant woman gets Zika, the newborn is likely to be born with a small head (microcephaly), brain defects, or other malformations, and the mother suffers complications of pregnancy.

In Pakistan, lab tests have identified a few patients with Zika; it is not known to what extent it is prevalent at this time, but given the ubiquity of the *Aedes*

mosquito, rapid air travel, and global warming, it would be no surprise if Zika, too, rears its head. Pakistan, with a high burden of mosquitoes, coupled with an exceptionally high birth rate, will be significantly affected by children born with congenital defects.

While chikungunya, dengue and Zika all present with similar symptoms, only blood tests reveal the true nature of the infection. Treatment for all three remains supportive with fluids, temperature control, and rest. If complications ensue, they should be managed by experienced physicians.

Clouds of mosquitoes buzz overhead, but only the bite of a female mosquito is responsible for these infections. The male lives only to procreate. The long-legged, black-and-white striped creature looks for its prey at sundown; its sharp lance pierces the skin to inject virus-laden secretions and sucks up blood. If the victim's blood contains the virus, the mosquito reinjects it into the next victim. The deed accomplished, the female flies to find a clean haven of water, lay eggs that hatch over a week or more, and restart the cycle of life. The hardy eggs can survive dryness, humidity, and extremes of temperature.

As our population carries the burden of numerous other infectious diseases, these viruses add another bane to the health of our hapless citizens. Citizens must protect themselves against mosquitoes, but environmental cleanliness alone can save us from these and many other public health diseases. Once again, our misgovernance is responsible for the profusion of such nasty flying creatures. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Commerce minister highlights significant contributions of ECO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Friday underscored Pakistan's commitment to the ECO, highlighting its significant contributions to the organization's initiatives.

In a pivotal meeting held in Islamabad, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with Pakistani Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss regional trade dynamics and the future direction of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), said a press release

issued here. During the meeting, Minister Jam Kamal Khan lauded Ambassador Noziri for his exceptional service to the ECO and expressed confidence that his successor, Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan, would continue to advance the organization's activities.

Noziri provided an overview of ECO's recent activities and emphasized the ongoing reforms aimed at enhancing the organization's regional and global influence.

He expressed optimism that these reforms would continue under the new Secretary

General, strengthening the organization's impact.

The discussion focused on strategies to boost intra-regional trade and enhance connectivity among member states.

Both sides reviewed the progress of ECO-Vision 2025, which was adopted during the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad in 2017.

Minister Khan highlighted Pakistan's visa-free policy for 126 countries as a model to enhance trade cooperation globally and suggested a similar ECO Visa policy to facilitate trade among member states.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain launched PCI-POWERCHINA SEZ Policy Report.

NA body told Land of PSM to be used for establishment of SEZs

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Standing Committee on Industries & Production on Friday was informed 19,000 acres of the land of Pakistan Still Mills (PSM) would be utilized for the establishment of Special Economic Zone (SEZs) for the industrial development in the country.

The committee met here under the chairmanship of Syed Hafeez ud Din, which was briefed by the Federal

Secretary Ministry of Industries working and performance of the ministry and its attached departments, said a press release.

While briefing about the PSM, the Secretary said that in the meetings of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) decided to declare the PSM as scrap as it was nearly impossible to revive the PSM with existing infrastructure and out-dated technology however,

they further decided that the 19,000 acres land of PSM would be utilized for establishment of SEZs.

He further said that two SEZs of 500 and 700 acres of land was established respectively and on the request of Chief Minister, Sindh the 700 acres additional land was allocated to the provincial government for the re-establishment of state of art steel mill with modern technology and infrastructure.

No proper assessment made in PPA's with IPPs: President PBF

KARACHI (INP): President Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman has said that no proper consideration of the potential consequences was made in the power purchase agreements (PPAs) with Independent Electricity Producers (IEPs) creating economic problems for both the countrymen and industry.

Addressing the business community in South Punjab, the PBF President highlighted the

absence of unbiased consultant services and the necessary professional or technical knowledge to effectively handle the substantial number of IPPs. These contracts mandate the procurement of a set minimum quantity of power from the IPPs. If you look into Chinese IPP only, the payables touching almost \$2 billion dollars and the government is contemplating finalizing a schedule of payments to Chinese Independent Power Producers.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,000 per tola to Rs.251,500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs. 251,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 858 to Rs. 215,621 from Rs. 214,763 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold up to Rs. 197,652 from Rs.196,866, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Govt taking steps to facilitate business community: Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for industries and production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday said that the government is taking steps to facilitate the business community and common man.

The minister said while talking to a delegation of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) led by its President Atif Ikram Sheikh. He said that the government is setting up special economic zones for investment whereas he stressed that economic development could be

achieved only by increasing exports.

The government is trying to solve the problems faced by the industry, he added.

President FPCCI said that energy prices will have to be brought at par with regional countries. In order to get rid of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and increase domestic exports, we have to go towards industrialization. If the government provides relief in the electricity tariff, the business community can achieve the export target of 60 billion dollars, said Atif Ikram Sheikh.

Mobilink Bank upgrades treasury operations with AutoSoft Dynamics

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has brought on board AutoSoft Dynamics, a renowned global provider of core banking and financial application solutions, as a strategic partner to automate their treasury

financial services. Adil Ali Abbasi, Chief Financial Officer Mobilink Bank, Bilal Mahmood, M.D. Contour Software & CEO AutoSoft Dynamics formalized the partnership in Islamabad. The signing ceremony was attended by representatives from both organizations.



operations. Under this partnership, AutoSoft will facilitate Mobilink Bank's seamless integration with the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) PRISM solution through its Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system. This integration ensures secure and instantaneous fund transfers, aligning with the Bank's commitment to providing premium

Sharing his thoughts at the signing ceremony, Faisal Mahmood, Chief Information Officer, Mobilink Bank, said, "We at Mobilink Bank are continuously working on improving our customer's experience. Partnering with industry leaders like AutoSoft Dynamics allows us to utilize cutting-edge technology and create a more agile and efficient banking system."



ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. Neil Hawkins called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Over Rs. 84 bln disbursed among beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.84 billion among over 80,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till July 25, over Rs. 84 billion has been disbursed among over 80,00,000 beneficiaries which make 81 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source.

country to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families.

The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving the message from 8171. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program.

The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

Kundi lauds Zardari's contributions to democracy, political harmony

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in a special message marking the birthday of President Asif Ali Zardari, on Friday lauded his contributions to democracy and political harmony in the country. Faisal Karim Kundi described Asif Ali Zardari as a towering figure in the realm of democratic governance and political reconciliation, noting his significant role after the martyrdom of Benazir

Bhutto. He emphasized that Asif Zardari remains a prominent and challenging figure for those opposed to democracy and Pakistan's stability. According to Governor Faisal Kundi, Zardari's life has been characterized by resilience in the face of difficulties and a steadfast commitment to the stability of democracy and Pakistan. He praised Asif Ali Zardari for setting a high standard by transferring

powers to the provinces instead of concentrating them, showcasing his dedication to decentralization. The Governor highlighted Zardari's unique role in promoting Pakistan's stability, fostering regional trade, and upholding the Constitution.

Governor Kundi's message underscores Zardari's influential and enduring impact on Pakistan's political landscape. He praised Asif Ali Zardari for setting a high standard by transferring

Dr Kalyan Singh says: Collective efforts vital to strengthen Pakistan

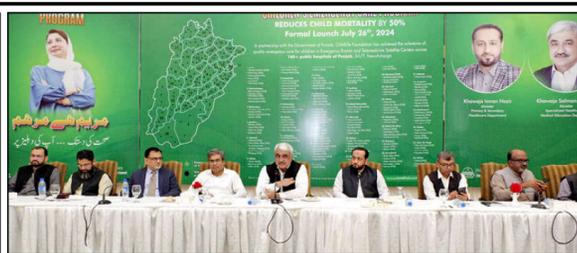
LAHORE (APP): The first Pakistani Sikh PhD scholar Professor Dr Kalyan Singh Kalyan said on Friday that it was necessary for all Pakistanis to play their due role in the development and prosperity of the country. While talking to APP here he said, "Pakistan is my pride and I am happy that I am a Pakistani Sikh." He further said, "I am Pakistani by choice as in 1947, the majority of Sikh families migrated to India, but our ancestors stayed here." He said that Government College University is a historical and great educational institution, where famous people of the Sikh community studied,

including Prof. Sahib Singh, Mir Singh and others. Sardar Dr. Kalyan Singh said that he had developed a booklet which made the Punjabi Gurmukhi script easy for students to read and learn. This manual was used in all educational institutions where Punjabi is taught, he added.

Sardar Kalyan Singh Kalyan is the first Sikh professor in Pakistan who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Punjabi at Government College University Lahore. Sardar Dr Kalyan Singh is also an author and researcher of several books while his research on Punjabi script is part of the syllabus.

Two died as a mud house collapsed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two people have died as a mud house collapsed late last night on Thursday in the Misrial Road area. A family was sleeping when the mud roof of the house collapsed, resulting in two people buried under debris. According to emergency service, Rescue 1122 teams recovered two bodies which were shifted to the hospital after necessary action. The deceased were identified as Sajid 27, and his 7 years old daughter Malaika. The locals informed that the house was an old-fashioned construction in which mud was used. The single-story building's roof was too weak to hold any extra weight, they said.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir addressing the participants of 27th CEOs and MSs conference.

Apex committee approved demands keeping in view aspirations of people: CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Friday said that all the demands presented by Bannu Aman Committee (BAC) have been approved by Provincial Apex Committee. He was addressing a public gathering in district Bannu. He said that Apex Committee in its meeting thoroughly discussed each and every point of the peace committee and accepted all the demands as per aspirations of the people.

The Chief Minister thanked the people and their leaders for co-operating with administration in handling the situation arising out of tragic incident in Bannu. He said that the children studying in seminaries are dear to us and steps would be taken for their well being. CM said that we would not accept any armed group and directed police to take actions against armed people. Provincial Minister Pakhtunyar, MNA Maulana Naseem Ali Shah, MPA Adnan Wazir and other elders also addressed the public gathering.

Couple killed as bus hits a motorbike in Chichawatni

ISLAMABAD (APP): A speeding bus crushed a man and his wife to death when they were on their way to market by a motorbike at Kassarwal by pass road in Chichawatni on Friday afternoon. According to details, Police sources informed that the bus was traveling when it lost control and hit a motorcycle coming from opposite side, in a result a couple on bike died on the spot, a private news channel reported. A police official said according to some passengers, the bus driver lost control on the vehicle which led to the incident. The police took the driver into custody and shifted bodies to hospital for further morgue for autopsy.

Rana announces ambitious matric, Inter-tech courses program for 300 schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): "In a major boost to the education sector in Punjab, Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat Friday unveiled a groundbreaking initiative, announcing the launch of an ambitious Matric, Inter-Tech project to revolutionize the learning experience for students in 300 public schools across the province which will enable them hands-on experience and skill-building in their chosen fields. Talking to a Private news channel, he said the Matric, Inter-Tech project aims to address the long-standing issue of students

graduating with theoretical knowledge but lacking the practical skills demanded by employers. To achieve this, the courses will be carefully crafted to integrate theoretical concepts with hands-on training, ensuring students are job-ready upon graduation, he mentioned. "Responding to a question, Provincial Minister for Education clarified that the government does not plan to build new school buildings for the Matric, Inter-Tech project, adding, instead, the existing infrastructure will be optimized by merging 600 to 700 school buildings, creating larger.

graduating with theoretical knowledge but lacking the practical skills demanded by employers. To achieve this, the courses will be carefully crafted to integrate theoretical concepts with hands-on training, ensuring students are job-ready upon graduation, he mentioned. "Responding to a question, Provincial Minister for Education clarified that the government does not plan to build new school buildings for the Matric, Inter-Tech project, adding, instead, the existing infrastructure will be optimized by merging 600 to 700 school buildings, creating larger.



PESHAWAR: Members of Salaried Class Alliance are holding protest demonstration against high taxes on salaried class, at Peshawar press club.

Karachi loses protected mangroves for housing schemes, development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amidst Karachi's growing concrete jungle, mangrove forests which protect the city's coastline against cyclones, strong winds, coastal flooding or other climate change induced disasters, face serious threat of destruction. A recent report by WWF-Pakistan has identified several locations along the Karachi coast where significant tracts of mangroves have been cleared for housing schemes and commercial and industrial projects. The report also highlighted areas where mangrove landscapes were still under threat of

deforestation. It proposed that to stop mangrove destruction along the coastline of Karachi, it is essential to implement strict enforcement of laws and encourage reforestation and natural regeneration programmes. It warned that if preventive measures are not taken in time, existing mangrove areas could potentially be removed or destroyed in the near future. Using Earth Observation Satellites, Remote Sensing and GIS tools, geospatial experts at the Richard Garstang Conservation Lab at WWF-Pakistan recorded data on man-

grove cover in Karachi over the last two decades. They found that land reclamation and cutting of mangroves for housing schemes and development projects have resulted in the rapid decline of mangrove cover in Karachi. Based on this report, WWF-Pakistan emphasized the need to prevent the further destruction of mangroves along Karachi's coastline through better planning, effective implementation strategies, and coordinated actions by relevant organizations and departments. The Sindh Forest Department (SFD) has

been making significant progress in the conservation and management of the mangrove forests in the province. The department planted mangroves on 55,555 hectares along the Sindh coastline, mainly in the Indus Delta, through their ambitious projects between 2020 and 2024. They also initiated various mangrove reforestation and management programmes in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Pakistan (IUCN). As a result of these efforts, Pakistan's mangrove forest cover has increased

from 1,338.16 km2 in 2016 to 1,573.57 km2 in 2020 [REDD+; Subnational GHG Inventory 2022].

Despite these efforts by the department and mangrove plantation drives by conservation organizations, Pakistan Navy and local communities dwelling in the coastal belt, mangroves are facing significant threats in Karachi. According to the SFD, approximately 200 hectares of mangrove forests along Karachi's coastline were lost between 2010 and 2022. This concerning trend is predominantly driven by land grabbing, residential schemes and development projects.



LAHORE: A delegation of National Women Journalists Forum meeting with Punjab Minister for Transport Bilal Akbar Khan.

International News

Trump discusses US wiping Iran 'off the face of the Earth'

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Thursday invoked the annihilation of US adversary Iran in a social media post reminiscent of his most incendiary outbursts while in the White House. "If they do 'assassinate' President Trump, which is always a possibility, I hope that America obliterates Iran, wipes it off the face of the Earth — If that does not happen, American Leaders will be considered 'gutless cowards!' he wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social. Trump made the remarks alongside a brief video of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu bringing up alleged Iranian plots against Trump in his address to the US Congress on Wednesday. US media reported last week that the US Secret Service had increased security for Trump weeks ago after authorities learned of an Iranian plot to kill him, although it was not linked to the recent attempt on his life in which a 20-year-old American fired shots during a campaign rally. CNN reported that US authorities received intelligence from a "human source" on a plan by Tehran targeting the former president, causing protection to be boosted for Trump. Other US outlets also reported the plot.

But it was not connected to the campaign shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which gunman Thomas Matthew Crooks opened fire, lightly wounding Trump and killing a rally attendee, they said. Relations between Washington and Iran have long been strained and reached a breaking point as Tehran sought revenge for the 2020 killing of Revolutionary Guard commander Qasem Soleimani, ordered by Trump when he was president. The US National Security Council said it had been "tracking Iranian threats against former Trump administration officials for years."



Former US President and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Humanity suffering from heat epidemic: UN chief

UNITED NATIONS: Humanity is suffering from an "extreme heat epidemic," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned on Thursday, calling for action to limit the impacts of heat waves intensified by climate change. "Billions of people are facing an extreme heat epidemic — wilting under increasingly deadly heat waves, with temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius around the world," he said. "That's 122 degrees Fahrenheit. And half-way to boiling."

According to the European Copernicus network, July 21, 22 and 23 were the three hottest days ever recorded worldwide, with July 22 holding the absolute record of 17.16°C. Guterres repeated his call for humanity to fight its "addiction" to fossil fuels. "Today, our focus is on the impact of extreme heat. But let's not forget that there are many other devastating symptoms of the climate crisis: ever-more fierce hurricanes, Floods, Droughts, Wildfires. Rising sea levels. And the list goes on," he said.

UN calls for probe into crackdown in Bangladesh

GENEVA: The UN rights chief called on Thursday on Bangladesh to urgently disclose the details of last week's crackdown on protests amid accounts of "horrific violence", calling for "an impartial, independent and transparent investigation". "We understand that many people were subjected to violent attacks by groups reportedly affiliated with the Government, and no effort was made to protect them,"

Volker Turk said in a statement. Last week's violence killed at least 193 people including several police officers, according to the source count of victims reported by police and hospitals, in one of the biggest upheavals of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure. The unrest was sparked by protests against a public jobs quota scheme that critics say gives preference to allies of Hasina's ruling party.

Netanyahu, Biden meet for tense ceasefire talks

WASHINGTON: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday he was ready to work with Joe Biden for the rest of his presidency, as the two leaders met for the first time at the White House for talks on a Gaza ceasefire. "I want to thank you for the 50 years of public service and 50 years of support for the state of Israel," Netanyahu said after they shook hands in the historic setting of the Oval Office. "And I look forward to discussing with you today and working with you in the months ahead." Biden stunned the world on Sunday when he announced that he was bowing out of the US presidential election, with Vice President Kamala Harris now set to be the Democratic Party's candidate.

Relations between Biden and Netanyahu are tense over Israel's conduct in their campaign. They have met just three times during his presidency, once in September last year in New York, and then when Biden travelled to Israel after the attacks and hugged Netanyahu at the airport tarmac at Tel Aviv.

The meetings come after Netanyahu vowed "total victory" against Hamas in a fiery speech Wednesday to the US Congress. The White House was surrounded by metal barriers and a heavy police presence, after rowdy protests broke out near the Capitol following Netanyahu's speech. Harris on Thursday condemned the "despicable" and "unpatriotic" burning of an American flag by protesters, after attempts by Donald Trump's Republicans to paint Democrats as pro-Hamas.

US vice president says she 'will not be silent' in face of Gaza suffering

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Kamala Harris said on Thursday that she expressed concern about the situation in the Gaza Strip to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their meeting at the White House. "I made clear my serious concern about the dire humanitarian situation there, with over 2 million people facing high levels of food insecurity and half a million people facing catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity," Harris told reporters after the closed-door meeting with Netanyahu.

Harris said that what has happened in Gaza over the past nine months was "devastating". "The images of dead children and desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, sometimes displaced for the second, third, or fourth time. "We cannot look away in the face of these tragedies. We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the suffering. And I will not be silent," she added.

Earlier, Netanyahu met with US President Joe Biden, who ended his presidential re-election campaign on Sunday and endorsed Harris to replace him as the Democratic presidential candidate. With her remarks, Harris reflected a major shift in Gaza policy, while urging Netanyahu to reach a ceasefire in the besieged enclave.

France's high-speed railway hit by 'sabotage' during Olympics

PARIS: France's high-speed rail network was hit by "malicious acts" including arson attacks that have disrupted the transport system, train operator SNCF said on Friday, hours before the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics. A source close to the investigation told AFP that the attacks were coordinated acts of "sabotage". "This is a massive attack on a large scale to paralyse the TGV network," SNCF told AFP, adding that many routes will have to be cancelled.

Trains were being diverted to different tracks "but we will have to cancel a large number of them", the statement said. The southeastern line was not affected as "a malicious act was foiled".

SNCF urged passengers to postpone their trips and stay away from train stations. French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said that security forces are hunting the suspects behind the arson attacks that hobbled the country's high-speed rail network. "Our intelligence services and law enforcement are mobilised to find and punish the perpetrators of these criminal acts."

Suspended UK policeman 'assaulted fellow cop's brother'

LONDON: The British Pakistani man who was kicked in the head and stamped on by a police officer at Manchester Airport, has a cyst on his brain, according to the family's lawyer. Lawyer Akhmed Yakoub made this statement outside Rochdale Police Station, following the widespread circulation of footage of the incident from Manchester Airport on social media.

Mr Yakoub identified the man as Fahir, who was found to have a cyst on his brain after a CT scan was conducted post-incident. Mr Yakoub, who is also representing Fahir's brother Amaad and their elderly mother, stated that Fahir's condition deteriorated overnight.

French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said that security forces are hunting the suspects behind the arson attacks that hobbled the country's high-speed rail network. "Our intelligence services and law enforcement are mobilised to find and punish the perpetrators of these criminal acts."

AI Policy to be presented before Cabinet for approval next month: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government that established the National Center for Artificial Intelligence in 2017 and the National Task Force on Artificial Intelligence in 2023. "We have created National Centers for Excellence in Advanced Technologies under Vision 2025 and linked each centre to engineering labs in eight to ten universities," he added.

Had these centres not been established on time, Ahsan Iqbal said the country would have been left far behind in this field.

He noted that in the past, inconsistencies in various policies had hindered development activities and the uplift of the national economy. Under a conspiracy, he said, the nation's self-confidence had been eroded, with some elements causing serious damage to its image abroad, contrary to the true depiction of an intelligent and hardworking nation.

Whenever Pakistan's economic progress began to gain momentum, he said, some elements appeared to obstruct it. Now, he added, with the initiation of the second phase of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC), the "characters of riot and anarchy" were active once again.

During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, the minister said the brotherly country pledged to provide IT training to 200,000 Pakistani youth, equipping them with the skills needed to meet modern challenges.

He said the world was developing rapidly in various aspects of artificial intelligence, and Pakistan has to catch it pace.

PML-N moves resolution against 'digital terrorism'

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has submitted a resolution against 'digital terrorism' in the Punjab Assembly. PML-N member Raheela Khadim Hussain presented the resolution.

The resolution states that 'digital terrorism' is undermining the political and social foundations of the country. It highlights that these terrorists often attack institutions and harass officers and their families.

The resolution further mentions that acts of 'digital terrorism' are also publicized internationally, tarnishing the country's image. It accuses social media vloggers of engaging in malicious activities at the behest of disruptive political parties.

The text of the resolution asserts that political leaders, workers, and institutions are not safe from digital terrorism. It also references a fake clip attributed to Uzma Bukhari that was widely circulated, which had no basis in reality. The resolution calls for strict measures to stop digital terrorists and punish them severely.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam chairing a meeting with members of Global Shield against Climate Risks, an international funding and technical capacity building organisation.

Muqam chairs meeting regarding preparations for Youm-e-Istehsal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan & SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam Friday chaired a review meeting regarding preparations for Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5 and directed all the departments concerned to work in harmony to observe the day effectively.

The representatives of federal ministries, provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir Government and various departments briefed the minister regarding preparations for "Youm-e-Istehsal", said a press release.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, Amir Muqam said that India has forcibly occupied Jammu and Kashmir for over 76 years.

Terrorist killed in N Waziristan IBO

RAWALPINDI (Online): Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in North Waziristan District on reported presence of terrorists on Friday, during conduct of the operation, after intense fire exchange, Khawarji Terrorist Razzaq was sent to hell.

He was a close associate of Khawarji Gul Bahadur and was actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area including target killing of Malik Sher Muhammad, grandson of Faqir of Ippi on 6 January 2023 as well as facilitation of suicide bombing attack in North Waziristan on 16 March 2024 which resulted in shahadat of seven brave soldiers.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as Security Forces of Pakistan remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

Police crackdown: 2 gang members arrested, cash, weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, on Friday, the Islamabad Police conducted a crackdown and arrested two wanted members of a criminal gang involved in looting citizens and snatching activities.

A police spokesman said the Sumbal police station team used technical and human resources to apprehend the two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in several incidents of looting citizens at gunpoint. They recovered snatched cash, weapons, and a dagger from their possession.

The accused were identified as Adnan and Nisar. A case was registered against the nabbed accused, and further investigation is underway.

DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza stated that the Islamabad Police are taking all possible measures to protect the lives and property of citizens, ensuring no criminal element disturbs the peace.

Sri Lankan nation esteems Pak for its support against terrorism: Amb Ravindra

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne on Friday said the people of Sri Lanka esteemed Pakistan as a friendly country unlike any other nation for its unprecedented support against terrorism. He was addressing the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)'s seminar on "Building on Pakistan-Sri Lanka Cooperation" here as the keynote speaker.

Ambassador Ravindra said Sri Lanka's Prime Minister and the world's first female premier Srimavo Bandaranaike despite her close relationship with her Indian counterpart Indira Gandhi gave safe passage and permission to Pakistan to use its airspace and Colombo air base during its 1971 War.

However, Sri Lanka fought thirty years long worst war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), he said, adding, "No nation supported us like Pakistan in this war and we have memory like elephants to keep it intact in our minds."

The Pakistan Armed Forces, he said had forged deep ties with the Sri Lankan military that played a crucial and decisive part in the war against LTTE.

Sri Lanka, he said had 74% Buddhist, 16% Muslims and the remaining part of population comprising of Hindus. "Pakistan is sitting on a goldmine of Gandhara civilization based Buddhist site whereas 9.3 million Buddhist globally visit their religious sites world over that can be tapped by Pakistan to benefit its tourism sector and national economy," he suggested.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani witnessing the Art Exhibition, at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad.

100,000 laptops to be distributed among students on merit; Chairman PMYP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Friday said that around 100,000 laptops would be given to the students on merit during the year 2024.

According to the PMYP office spokesperson, as many as 600,000 laptops have been distributed to the students under the Prime Minister Laptop scheme so far while during the last three years 64 per cent were successful in getting jobs trained under the Youth Skill Development Programme.

The Chairman PMYP said that the government was working with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission on skill development, especially the provision of education, training and IT skills to youth through youth development programmes.

"This year, we aim to provide direct training to over two lac youth and indirect training to over six lac youth to meet the demand for skilled labourers abroad which will enable Pakistan to send skilled youth abroad for positive engagement."

The Chairman also mentioned that individuals securing jobs abroad will be provided with interest-free loans to facilitate the necessary paperwork.

Additionally, through the "Laptop for All" scheme, students can obtain any laptop they want on interest-free loans with easy monthly instalments, he added.

Aleem visits under construction business facilitation center

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited the under construction business facilitation center and directed to maintaining the quality of work, besides expediting speed of work of the project with the collaboration of Board of Investment and Capital Development Authority.

A Business Facilitation Center being established under the banner of the Board of Investment, where business community will get one-window facilities and their problems of business related departments will be solved under one roof, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan directed the change in the layout plan of the Business Facilitation Center and directed that 40 counters will work simultaneously to solve the problems of businessmen in this center while for this purpose committed officers educated from universities should be deputed on these desks to attend the business community.

He said that this facility center should be a model institution as more such centers will be built later on this pattern.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment, Abdul Aleem Khan visited site of Business Facilitating Centre.

NA speaker, Italian envoy discuss bilateral ties, parliamentary coop.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday said that Pakistan and Italy enjoy a long-standing cordial relations based on a shared commitment to global peace and sustainable development.

"It is high time to enhance political, cultural, economic, and people-to-people connections between the two countries for the mutual benefit of the people on both sides, the speaker said during a meeting with the Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mrs. Marilina Armellini, who called on him.

According to news release, during the meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of regional and global developments.

They underscored the significance of continuous collaboration to maintain a positive trajectory in bilateral relations and explore new areas of engagement.

While discussing parliamentary cooperation, the speaker called for regular interaction between parliaments, mainly through parliamentary friendship groups and the exchange of parliamentary delegations, in order to share and learn from each other's experiences.

The Ambassador expressed gratitude to the speaker for his kind remarks and reiterated that Italy considered Pakistan as an important regional stakeholder.

Building disaster resilience of socio-economic sectors PM's top priority: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam said that climate change-caused various disasters mainly floods and heatwaves are now a major cause of massive socio-economic damages in Pakistan. But, the present government is taking all-out policy measures to enhance the country's climate resilience against the recurring and intensifying disasters.

Chairing a high-level meeting on Strengthening Pakistan's Shield Against Climate Change impacts here on Friday, Romina Khurshid Alam said that despite poor economic conditions, the country remains committed to overcoming environmental and climate risks through whatever financial resources are available.

"Climate change significantly impacts Pakistan, affecting various aspects of life and the environment and these negative fallouts have left no option for us but to focus on building climate adaptation and improving disaster preparedness to protect lives and livelihoods of our people and environment," the prime minister's climate aide.

She cautioned that without exploring available funding opportunities in collaboration with international organisations including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, Pakistan would not be able to overcome exacerbating climate change impacts such as increasing floods, heatwaves, water scarcity, droughts, crop failures, declining crop productivity, biodiversity loss, sea-level rise and sea intrusion and health diseases.

However, "we are coordinating with national and international organisations such as Global Shield to help Pakistan avail existing funding resources for building the country's socio-economic resilience through climate risk mitigation policy initiatives. During the meeting Deputy Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan, Van Nguyen briefed the PM's climate aide about the Global Shield and how Pakistan can avail from its funding and technical capacity-building facilities to build up the country's resilience against the various climate risks, particularly disasters.

During the meeting representatives from the ministry and UNDP-Pakistan both sides discussed at length the matters related to the climate risk mitigation, climate finance for adaptation and mitigation measures, agriculture insurance, urban flood resilience.

Briefed the PM's aide Romina Khurshid Alam, the senior UNDP-Pakistan of-

Pakistan rejects Indian PM's belligerent remarks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has denounced Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's confrontational remarks made on July 26, 2024, in Drass, Ladakh, asserting that such statements damage regional peace and impede the resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

Bravado and jingoism undermine regional peace, and are totally counter-productive for resolution of long-standing disputes between Pakistan and India, especially the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, said a press release issued by foreign office spokesperson.

The Indian leaders' rhetorical statements cannot deflect international attention from India's heavy-handed approach to suppress the Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their fundamental rights and freedoms, particularly their inalienable right to self-determination.

Instead of maligning others for terrorism, India should reflect on its own campaign of orchestrating targeted assassinations, subversion and terrorism in foreign territories.

Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any aggression, as exemplified by its robust response to India's reckless incursion in February 2019.

While Pakistan is ready to counter India's aggressive actions, it remains committed to promoting peace and stability in the region.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police in action against Jamaat Islami Dharna participants in the Federal Capital.

British HC reflects on warm hospitality & natural Beauty of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): As British High Commissioner Jane Marriott marks her first year in Pakistan, she expressed her profound gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality.

From hiking in Margalla Hills to savoring the country's culinary delights, Marriott shared her fond memories and acknowledged the current challenges Pakistan while emphasizing UK's commitment to support the country. Upon completing her first year in Pakistan, Jane Marriott in her message said that she had arrived in Pakistan with high expectations and has been impressed by the country's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and warm hospitality.

She expressed her gratitude to the people of Pakistan for making her feel at home. She fondly recalled her hiking trips to Margalla Hills and Nathia Gali, and her experiences with Pakistani cuisine, from Peshawar's Kebabs to Karachi's Biryani.

Marriott also acknowledged the challenges Pakistan was facing including economic reforms, climate change, and education.

However, she expressed the confidence in the resilience and innovative nature of the Pakistani people, and reiterated the UK's commitment to support Pakistan as a close friend and partner.

Security officers briefed for effective duty at HSZ

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Friday the police officers deputed at High Security Zone (HSZ) were briefed to perform effective duties and be ready to deal with any untoward incident in a timely manner.

Officers should remain alert during duty and keep a close watch on suspicious vehicles and individuals he added.

SP Security has further directed the officers on duty to uphold the highest standards of diligence and professionalism, cultivating a positive rapport with citizens.

The high security zone encompasses pivotal government and private es-



ISLAMABAD: Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Production presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.