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Information Minister says

Govt forms technical committee to resolve issues after positive first meet with JI

RAWALPINDI (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, Attaullah Tarar here on Sunday said that the demands of Jamaat-e-Islami would be discussed with the technical committee. Talking to media persons after talks with Jamaat-e-Islami delegation at Commissioner Office, the information minister said that the government was making all-out efforts to provide relief to the

people and in this regard, it was making earnest efforts to attract foreign investment which would help generate employment. "The government is trying to convince the foreign investors that cost of production is very low in Pakistan, so factories should be established here which would help end unemployment," he said. "Fluctuations in exchange rates were controlled and stabilized. We succeeded in bringing the coun-

try out of economic default situation," he said adding that the government's solid steps would help enhance exports and control the inflation. The government was focusing on improving the investment climate, he said and added, if petroleum prices remain stable in international market then we would be able to provide relief to the people in the rates of petroleum products. Regarding the sit-in by Jamaat e Islami in Rawalpindi, he said the lo-

cation of Liaquat Bagh was fixed, adding that the people were facing difficulties due to road closure. The minister informed that a technical committee comprising Minister of Power, Secretary Power, FBR and Finance Ministry representatives, had been formed which would hold next round of talks with the representatives of Jamaat-e-Islami. "We will make efforts to resolve the issue amicably today," he informed.



RAWALPINDI: A view of meeting with Government team and Jamaat-e-Islami delegation

China to support Pakistan securing approval from IMF Board

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb Sunday said that the Chinese Government has commended Pakistan's negotiation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and assured to play its role in securing approval from

Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari had visited China and held constructive meetings with the Chinese authorities including the Finance Minister of China and the President Bank of China. The minister further informed that he also visited China along with the energy minister at the

energy requirements and launching of Panda bonds in the Chinese markets. During the recent visit to China re-profiling of energy sector loans was also discussed, he said adding that the conversion of energy plants into coal and other aspects for affordable energy generation were also discussed during different high-level meetings.

He said that the Chinese authorities acknowledged and ensured that our issues are registered with the right forum adding that the process has to be followed to take them forward. He said they also wanted to help the country in terms of re-profiling. He added that this would be done through the context of a memorandum of understandings or various working groups which would be formed to take the matters forward during the days to come.



the Fund's board. Addressing a press conference, the minister said that he along with the Minister for Energy Sardar

start of last month (June) and held discussions on different aspects of bilateral trade and economic cooperation including local

President emphasises mass awareness, screening for a hepatitis-free Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday called for carrying out awareness and large-scale screening for timely diagnosis of hepatitis to reduce the burden on the healthcare system and rid the country of the disease.

The president, in a message to the nation on World Hepatitis Day, annually observed on July 28, said hepatitis, being a silent killer, was a great challenge for the world because of the lack of symptoms increased the risk of its spread, thus leading to a huge number of deaths globally.

He noted that Pakistan's public health sector faced serious threats from the disease as a huge number of patients put a serious burden on the healthcare system.

President Zardari warned that any failure to take timely steps could multiply the hepatitis cases in the country, therefore decisive measures to protect the citizens' health were inevitable. He called for public awareness on promoting precautionary measures to ensure prevention, large-scale screening and testing, besides highlighting the significance of treatment and increasing the number of facilities. The president also stressed the need for collective efforts for prevention and eradication of hepatitis and urged the media, educational institutions, teachers and civil society to educate people on hepatitis to achieve a hepatitis-free Pakistan.

New visa policy to boost tourism, trade activities: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said the government had introduced significant visa reforms to facilitate foreign investors, business community and tourists.

He said the step would help promoting tourism, boost foreign investment and increase trade activities in the country. In a statement, the prime minister, terming the initiative a highly positive development, said the government had approved visa-free entry for businessmen from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries,

which will increase investment and business opportunities from these countries. The businessmen, investors and tourists of 126 countries will be issued visas within 24 hours through an online system, he said. Additionally, he said the traders and tourists from these countries will be exempted from visa fees. The visa policy reforms will make Pakistan an attractive destination for foreign individuals in terms of business and tourism. The prime minister highlighted that special arrangements had also been made for Sikh pilgrims hav-

ing passports of a third country to obtain visas on arrival. Electronic gates will be installed at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports to facilitate travelers, he said and added that a dashboard would be established at the Ministry of Interior to monitor the implementation of the new visa regime, including visa-free entry, business visa list and tourist visa on arrival. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the performance of the Ministry of Interior, relevant ministries and institutions in implementing the new visa regime.

FO denies report of Germany handing over suspects involved in consulate attack

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Foreign Office (FO) on Sunday denied authenticity in the report circulating on social media about Germany handing over of those involved in the attack on Pakistani consulate in Frankfurt. When asked whether the suspects involved in the vandalism were handed over to Pakistan, as being claimed in a report on social media, FO Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch termed the report "fake news".

Dozens of miscreants had attacked the Pakistani consulate during a protest in Frankfurt on July 20. Following which, the German police had arrested two suspects. Reports indicated that German authorities had allowed Afghan nationals to hold a peaceful protest. However, the demonstration's participants turned violent, lobbed stones at the consulate building, and removed the country's flag, leading to heightened tensions. After arresting two Afghan nationals, German police had anticipated more arrests as they continued to identify additional protesters with the help of video footage.

A day after the incident, Pakistan condemned the attack by the gang of extremists on its consulate as well as the failure of the German authorities to protect the sanctity and security of the premises of its consular mission. Meanwhile, Pakistan had summoned Germany's senior most diplomat to register a strong protest over the incident. The FO statement had said that the responsibility to protect the premises and ensure the security of diplomats falls under the host government under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963.

Pakistan urges resolving Kashmir dispute under UN resolutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi led the Pakistan delegation at the 31st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial meeting where he highlighted Pakistan's perspective on the situation prevailing in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as well as Gaza.

In the meeting held on Saturday in Vientiane, Lao PDR, the foreign secretary underscored Pakistan's firm commitment to regional peace, security and cooperation and the importance attached by Pakistan to its relations with ASEAN and its member states, according to a Foreign Office press release.

He appreciated the positive role played by ASEAN in regional integration and prosperity. The foreign secretary shared Pakistan's perspective on regional conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, stressing the need for dialogue and inclusiveness instead of bloc politics. He highlighted the plight of the people of IIOJK and called for the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. He also presented Pakistan's perspective on the regional hotspots including the situation in Gaza and Afghanistan.

There's no backdoor communication with PTI

ISLAMABAD (INP): Powers that be denied that the establishment has started backdoor communication with the former ruling party the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

It reported on media that some circles in the PTI have been spreading rumours that the establishment wants engagement with the party. It has contacted the PTI leadership through backdoors and dialogues have started. Sources strongly deny such "baseless" assertions. "There is no truth in it," they told. "This impression is being created on behalf of the PTI to cause anxiety and develop mistrust in the ranks of government so that some personalities in the ranks of ruling PML-N react against the establishment," they added.

Commonwealth Secretary-General arrives in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland has arrived in Islamabad on a five-day visit. She was welcomed by Additional Foreign Secretary



Europe Ambassador Shafiqat Ali Khan at the airport. The Secretary-General will meet with Pakistan's leadership, members of the Cabinet, youth leaders, civil society representatives and other stakeholders. During Patricia Scotland's visit, the two sides would also discuss avenues to enhance cooperation between Pakistan and the Commonwealth in areas of mutual interest.

PTI to hold nationwide protest on August 5

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) top leadership on Sunday announced to hold a nationwide protest against the government on August 5.

During a press conference, Omar Ayub stated that the behaviour towards their parliamentarians has been unacceptable, pointing out that their MNAs are being picked up by agencies and presented before anti-corruption bodies. He mentioned five intelligence agencies, explaining the uncertainty over which agency is responsible for these actions. Ayub emphasized that all their associates have been subjected to legal cases, which he attributes to the affidavits they submitted when joining PTI. Recalling Imran Khan's warning, Ayub noted that the current regime aims to create conflict between the army and PTI. He accused PML-N of attempting to pit the largest party against the army and stressed that

immediate elections are the only solution to the political turmoil. Ayub further announced a meeting the next day where decisions regarding a sit-in at D-Chowk would be made. Asad Qaiser condemned the severe crackdown on their supporters, questioning the dignity of parliamentarians are humiliated in this manner. He urged the Supreme Court to take suo motu notice of the forced resignations of 41 MNAs and called on his lawyers to approach the SC, questioning the governance of the country under such conditions. Qaiser announced that decisions regarding protests would be made in their meeting, with plans for large demonstrations across the country on August 5. He highlighted that this date would mark one year of the PTI founder's imprisonment and urged the public to protest against inflation and the illegal arrest of the PTI founder.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chairs meeting regarding launching of prosperity survey "Ab Ho Ga Sub Ka Shumar" in the province.

Punjab govt to upgrade health facilities in all 43 jail hospitals

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government, on the special directive of the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, will chalk out a comprehensive plan to upgrade health facilities at all 43 jail hospitals, ensuring better health cover to all inmates across the province. Senior Superintendent of Police Central Jail Kot Lakhpat Chaudhry Ijaz Asghar, a member of the committee, headed by both health ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir, said on Sunday the initiative was aimed at ensuring better healthcare for prisoners, aligning with the government's commitment to upholding their welfare and improving public health standards. The upgrade would

include modernising medical equipment, enhancing infrastructure, and increasing the availability of essential medicines. He said both ministers, during their maiden meeting, emphasised that providing quality healthcare to prisoners was a crucial aspect of the justice system, ensuring that inmates receive the same level of care as the general population. He said this initiative reflects the Punjab government's broader strategy to reform the prison system, promoting rehabilitation over punishment. By addressing health disparities and improving living conditions, the government aims to reduce recidivism

and aid in the successful reintegration of prisoners into society. This commitment to enhancing healthcare services in jails underscores the government's dedication to creating a more just and humane correctional system. He said Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer has already ordered the deployment of mobile dental and eye camps in all jails for medical checkups of prisoners. He said first ever mobile dental camp in the history of prisons was held successfully at camp jail under the supervision of Superintendent Zaheer Ahmad Virk where screening of all 6401 prisoners was conducted in 12 days.

Hafiz Naeem warns to extend Rawalpindi JI sit-in to across country

RAWALPINDI (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman warned to extend the Rawalpindi sit-in to across Pakistan.

Addressing the sit-in, the JI chief said "No one willingly leaves their homes and businesses to sit on the streets, the government has left the people with no other choice but to protest peacefully." The JI chief criticized the government's failure to provide relief and accused the parliament of being a rubber stamp. Rehman highlighted the plight of ordinary

citizens, especially those living in small houses, who are finding it difficult to pay their electricity bills. "How can a poor man educate his children when he is struggling to pay even the rent?" He also demanded a transparent audit of the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) agreements, alleging that these deals have been made at the expense of the common people. Rehman accused the government of favoring a select few and neglecting the needs of the majority.



RAWALPINDI: Ameer JI Hafiz Naeemur Rehman addressing participants of sit-in at Marri Road.

Two cops killed as robbers attack checkpoint in Ghotki

SUKKUR (APP): Two policemen embraced martyrdom when a police checkpoint came under fire from robbers. According to SSP Sameer Noor Channa on Sunday, the robbers attacked a checkpoint situated at Andai Sandrani Protective Wall, as a result of the firing, two policemen were martyred. On receiving information, police reached the area and started a chase for the arrest of the fleeing bandits. according to law enforcers, during the chase police opened fire and injured a robber, but he could be captured. Police high-ups reached the checkpoint and formed different police teams to reach out to the outlaws. After the murder of the two policemen, security has been tightened in the area and a search operation was launched.

Daily Voice of Masses
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Modi's jingoism

Any hopes of a thaw in Pakistan-India relations should swiftly be put to rest after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's problematic comments in the disputed Ladakh region.

Addressing an event to mark the anniversary of the Kargil war on Friday, Mr Modi used the occasion to lambast Pakistan, trotting out the tired old trope of 'terrorism' in an attempt to burnish his nationalistic credentials. If such words had been used on the campaign trail, it would have been unfortunate yet understandable.

But the Indian leader's eagerness to indulge in Pakistan-bashing so early into his third term can only be construed as the ruling BJP's aversion to the idea of establishing better ties with this country. The Indian prime minister accused Pakistan of trying to stay relevant through "terrorism" and "proxy war". He said that Pakistan had "not learnt any lessons" from the past, while adding boasts and threats aimed at this country.

Perhaps the direct trigger for Mr Modi's undiplomatic and highly inflammatory outburst is the situation in occupied Kashmir, where there have been a number of recent attacks targeting Indian forces. According to one tally, at least 12 Indian soldiers have been killed in the occupied region this year so far.

However, India has no one to blame but itself for unrest in the disputed territory. India has claimed that its controversial step of stripping held Kashmir of its special constitutional status five years ago has brought peace and development to the region. If that is the case, why does India maintain over 100,000 troops in this geographically small region? The fact is that, instead of carrying forward the tripartite dialogue involving Pakistan and the Kashmiris to peacefully resolve the Kashmir question, the Modi dispensation has sought to unilaterally change 'facts on the ground', even though the region continues to be seen as a disputed territory as per international consensus.

Responding to India's tirade, the Foreign Office has said that while Pakistan is ready to defend itself, "it remains committed to promoting peace" in the region. Practically, this means that the deep freeze in relations that took hold in August 2019 will continue until India decides to approach Pakistan with respect and the desire to make peace. Sabre-rattling aside, India should avoid any misadventures, as Pakistan can and will defend itself. When New Delhi feels that it is ready for peace, it is welcome to call Islamabad.

The blueprint for peace already exists, whether in the shape of confidence-building measures, or the Musharraf-era scheme for a resolution to the Kashmir dispute. All these measures can be discussed and fine-tuned, leading to a just resolution. But first, Delhi must stop demonising Pakistan, and show a willingness for peace.

Beat the rich

Muna Khan

A small part of me agrees with actor Noman Ijaz who took to Instagram to slam critics of Anant Ambani's wedding. The family spent their own money so they should be allowed to enjoy it as they wish, he wrote. I thought this at first, as I eye-rolled my way through images of the pre-wedding in March but then cringed at the pure spectacle on display last month. I disagree with Ijaz when he said "you should pray you have that kind of money for that kind of wedding".

Err... I think going beyond one's means when planning a wedding continues to be a cause of so many problems in the subcontinent. The poor go into debt; the rich go berserk.

I think the word 'shaadi' meaning both wedding and marriage is another problem because they are not the same thing. There is an entire industry in Pakistan propped up to prepare the rich and the wannabe rich for a wedding — choreographers, make-up artists for the bride and groom's parties, photographers, video filmmakers who then release slickly edited films on social media. The focus has become on getting the right shot(s) for Instagram, and now includes invitations telling guests what colours to wear for which events.

Ijaz was not commenting on this part of the industry. He was responding to actor Arsalan Naseer who poked fun at how relationships do not last as long as this Ambani wedding. This was one of the kinder comments about an event, which by the way, is still going on. After an engagement party in January, a

pre-wedding celebration in March where Rihanna performed for \$5 million, a European cruise in Italy in May, a masquerade ball also in May in France, then back to Italy for an evening event where Andrea Bocelli performed, and the actual wedding in Mumbai, there's something happening in London, probably now.

It is Ambani's choice to put up a rather gross display of wealth but let's not forget how he got here — reportedly getting contracts, resources and protected land for a pittance and by cosying up to politicians to get loans waived off. He has exploited the system but people in power love that he makes India look good because he brings the big bucks.

This wedding was less a celebration of love and more a show of power and clout. I understand a shaadi is about two families more than the individuals. It's probably why we call it an arranged marriage, compared to love marriage which translates to families getting no benefits.

Everyone knows Ambani spent \$600m at this wedding but I'm curious to hear what he — and India plus its billionaires — will earn as a result of this wedding. If the Jamnagar airport was declared an international one in March to accommodate guests like Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, think of what else will open up for tycoons.

An Oxfam report last year said India's richest one per cent owned 40pc of the country's wealth. I was horrified to read an article in Time magazine which reported "that the gap between India's rich and poor is now so wide that by some measures, there was more equality in India under British colo-

nia rule than today", and dubbed it a "Billionaire Raj".

Indians spent \$75 billion last year in the luxury wedding market, according to LiveMint which estimated it could grow between 7pc to 8pc annually.

The message is clear: spend big, reap big — whether it's financial or social capital or pushing forward how great India is.

Lest we get ahead of ourselves and think 'this is not us' let me add: I have seen a video of a bride making a grand entrance in a crane. Then there's a groom who arrived on top of a cage-ed lion in 2017. A quick search on 'Pakistan's most expensive weddings' tells a story about the marriage of political and business interests and features destination weddings, lots of bling, and a groom's arrival in a helicopter.

The real story is about the widening economic inequality. The number of Indians living below the poverty line amounted to 10.2pc of the population in 2023 according to the World Bank, whereas the figure for Pakistan was 37.2pc. There is a boiling undercurrent of rage that no one is addressing beyond political sloganeering. Power (read: wealth) remains in the hands of a very small circle and their children are bartered in marriage to maintain that structure. There is never any talk about the redistribution of wealth. How can there be in an oligarchy? Instead, we're all fixated on 'this new level of rich people watching' as Leanne Delap wrote in Toronto Star but I assure you it's not harmless fun. It is a reminder that such weddings are a symptom of our rotten system begging for an overhaul. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan of 2047

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

What will Pakistan look like in 2047, a century after it achieved independence? Given its unstable politics, weak economy and fragile law and order, and the rapidly evolving global and regional geopolitics, it is not easy to predict Pakistan's future. Therefore, projections must be based mainly on proposed reforms the country should legislate on and earnestly implement to reconstruct the economic trajectory it had once embarked upon during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Central to the proposed reforms is a clearly articulated vision and a detailed long-term economic plan. An overview of the recent past reveals that we failed to achieve results even when the planning was sound on paper. In 1990, Pakistan launched an ambitious programme of economic liberalisation. However, this programme fell victim to the political instability of the 1990s. Another attempt was made in the late 1990s to draft a vision and long-term plan in the form of Vision 2010. This was scuttled by the military coup of 1999. In 2013, Pakistan's 11th five-year plan for 2013-18 was launched as part of the medium-term Vision 2025. This was intended to be the first stage of a long-term vision leading to 2047. It appeared that Vision 2025 would not reach its logical end because of the acute political instability since 2017 and debilitating policy reversals that have shattered investor confidence.

The World Bank published a report five years ago in 2019, titled Pakistan@2047: Shaping the Future, which predicted that Pakistan could become an upper middle-income country

by 2047, but that this aim would require accelerated and sustainable growth over a 30-year period. The report suggested several reforms: a focus on human capital through sustainable population growth and efficient public spending on education and health; a technology-savvy taxation system; a business regulatory framework free of red tape; a check on the unsustainable use of finite resources, particularly water; and fuller participation of the female labour force in the Pakistani economy.

It also recommended public service delivery be made transparent and accountable by completely devolving responsibilities and resources to local governments. Political leaders, public officials, and service providers would also be held accountable.

The present government is working on Pakistan Outlook 2035 and Vision 2047 based on a study being prepared under the auspices of the Planning Commission and aimed at drawing up a roadmap for rapid socioeconomic development. Some details are available on the website of the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives. Reportedly, the study will pick up the seven pillars on which Vision 2025 was built, including human resource development, sustained growth, democratic governance, institutional reform, water and food security, an enhanced role for the private sector, a competitive knowledge economy, and greater regional connectivity. The study is also guided by the 5Es framework: exports, e-Pakistan, environment and climate change, energy, and equity and empowerment.

According to the planning minister, if we follow a path of stable

politics and steady economic policies, Pakistan might become a trillion-dollar economy by 2035. Speaking at the Islamabad Business Summit 2024 recently, the minister affirmed Pakistan's potential to achieve the targets of \$2tr by 2047 with a growth rate of seven per cent and \$3tr with a growth rate of 9pc.

These are commendable aspirations. However, given the ground realities, are we on our way to achieve these well-intentioned goals? Do we have the political and economic stability that can generate sustained economic growth and social development? Regrettably, there appears to be no sign of our political leaders being ready to work together to build a future of shared prosperity for all citizens. The country is in need of a consensus-based politico-economic vision to be able to say with confidence that by 2047, Pakistan will attain prosperity. Everyone agrees that Pakistan has been endowed with the right mix of elements that could create a development bonanza: young human resource, fertile land, minerals-rich mountains, a great coastline, and an outstanding economic geography. With such resources, the country can certainly achieve the aspirational goals cited above, provided we can ensure political stability, law and order backed by an impartial judiciary, continuity of economic policies, a streamlined regulatory framework, tax compliance by all, an enhanced role for the private sector, efficient resource utilisation, non-partisan accountability, and a foreign policy that works for regional peace. This is indeed a tall order, but it is worth pursuing for a peaceful and prosperous 2047, the centennial year of our independence. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Haroon Sharif sys: Elite bargain for structural transformation, governance way forward for eco. progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Minister of State, Board of Investment (BOI), Haroon Sharif has said that the only way forward for economic progress is to embrace a structural transformation prevailing in the economic system of the country through elite bargaining insulating the beneficiaries of the status quo with improved governance responding developing regional trends.

The former Chairman BOI explained that the country's prevailing structure, modalities and tools to improve GDP demanded diversification in the market and business practices catering to the needs of both the regional nations and the local masses, Haroon Sharif stated that in a talk organised by Sustainable Development Policy

Institute (SDPI). "Elite bargain or political will is that elites of a country reconsider their models and bargain on shifting over new economic models and systems. We also need to include politicians and businessmen and beneficiaries of this system to change the structure," Haroon Sharif said.

The second option is to succumb to the young population's pressure either willingly or by force to change the system as for elite bargain other than the electorate pressure-based changes, and transformation mega steps are taken to change the ways of doing business like Taiwan, Vietnam and others did, he added.

"Asia's successful examples of economic

structure transformation including East Asia and Southeast Asia have been on governing the markets who had identified economic winners and supported them to deliver their economic goals. India's three decades journey where it has reformed its economic structure and built up its private sector is evident. Pakistan has to start from somewhere," he mentioned.

He said the country's financial system is unable to support new development initiatives which is the job of the development banks and not the commercial banks. For instance, to promote the agriculture sector the government should revive ZTBL with the help of Chinese investors which is lying redundant through capital and experts.



RAWALPINDI: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami hold placard and chanting slogans during 3rd day of sit in protest (Dharna) against the country's rising inflation, at Murree road, in the city.

Saigol asks govt to reduce production to make trade, industry competitive

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Faheemur Rehman Saigol has asked the government to take prompt measures to bring down the production costs for trade and industries to enable them to compete in the international market.

He said that trade and industry was currently having difficulty to compete the global market because of rapid increase in production costs. He said that the high cost of production was not good

for our exports.

"The cost of production is a major factor, which makes an industry stand out among competitors in the world market," he explained. Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that high energy tariffs, shortage of fuel for machines, high rate of taxes, and lack of skilled labor are the main reasons behind the increase in the cost of production. He expressed concern that the reduction in industries' contribution to Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) is a worrying trend.

"Manufacturing and production industries have the potential to significantly impact economic growth by reducing unemployment in the country. The government needs to take solid steps to make doing business easier," he added. He said lack of research and development (R&D) is one of the major reasons behind the increase in the cost of production in any industry. "Sometimes we have the resources, but we make poor decisions. A poor decision means poor practices of work execution," he added.

Agri dept being transformed to upgrade agri sector: Kirmani

MULTAN (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that Chief Minister (CM) Punjab is paying special focus on the agriculture sector to bring revolutionary changes.

Presiding over a meeting regarding cotton crop here on Sunday at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Agriculture University, the provincial minister said that CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is encouraging public partnership to upgrade the agriculture sector. He said that cotton had a key role

in the country's economy and a special task had been assigned to the field formation to achieve a target of 6.4 million cotton bales.

He directed officers concerned to bring more improvement in performance related to the cotton crop. He said that as per the vision of the CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, 62 Farmer Facilitation Centres have been established across the province and the number of centres would be increased after consultation with the public representatives.



MULTAN: A vendor is busy displaying tea cups at roadside setup to attract the customers.

International buyers keen to participate in carpet expo: PCMEA

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf has said that buyers from around the world have expressed keen interest in participating in the international handmade carpet exhibition scheduled to be held in Pakistan this October.

"We are looking forward to collaborative support from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and other related institutions to make this mega event a triumph," he said while addressing a review meeting regarding the

preparations for the exhibition here at the association's office on Sunday. Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejazur Rehman, senior central leader of the association Abdul Latif Malik, senior leader Riaz Ahmed, Major (Retd) Akhtar Nazir, Shahid Hasan Sheikh, Saeed Khan and others were also present.

During the meeting, participants conducted a thorough review of the ongoing preparations for the international exhibition including updates on interactions with foreign buyers and the progress achieved to date.

Call for prioritising 'caring economy' in Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik has said prioritising a 'caring economy' in Pakistan is essential for economic growth, gender equality, social well-being in the country.

Talking to a trade delegation, led by Muslim Khan Buneri here on Sunday, he said by investing in care services and infrastructure, the country could harness the full potential of its population, ensuring a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

Malik said a caring economy fosters social cohesion and well-being. Accessible and high-quality care services can reduce inequality, improve health services, and enhance the quality of life for all strata

of society. In a country like Pakistan, where social safety nets are often inadequate, building a caring economy is vital for ensuring a more inclusive and resilient society, he maintained.

Malik said the caring economy approach can help address Pakistan's demographic challenges. With a growing population and increasing life expectancy, the demand for care services is set to rise. Developing a robust care infrastructure can not only provide essential services to the elderly and children but also create millions of jobs, thereby reducing unemployment and underemployment. This shift can stimulate economic growth and enhance social welfare.

Call for renegotiating IPPs agreements

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) former vice president Chaudhry Zahid Iqbal Arain has called upon the government to review and restructure the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) contracts to align their payments more closely with actual electricity production and demand.

Speaking at a roundtable conference on 'Impact of high power tariffs and huge payments to IPPs on economy' here on Sunday, he said revisiting and renegotiating these capacity payment agreements with the IPPs could provide a solution to the problem of high power tariff, which was a major impediment to economic growth.

Railways putting efforts to retrieve its 13,972 acres land

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has accelerated the efforts to retrieve the major portion of around 13,972 acres of land worth billions of rupees found under the illegal occupation of private individuals and different government departments across the country.

"Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab,

Dera admin, PESCO continue operations against power theft

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district administration along with Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) staff is continuing to conduct operations against electricity theft across the district. Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner Sarah Rehman, Assistant Commissioner Dera Muhammad Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi.

Museums reflect history, culture of nations: Governor KpK

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that museums reflect the history and culture of nations, highlighting rich heritage includes the Gandharan civilization and various religious traditions. He said this during visit to the Peshawar Museum. Upon arrival, Dr. Abdul Samad, Director of Archaeology and Museums, welcomed the Governor. During his visit, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi inspected the Gandharan civilization artifacts and the unique cultural heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa showcased at the museum. Dr. Abdul Samad briefed the Governor on the historical and cultural significance of the

museum's valuable collection, as well as details regarding the museum's renovations. Governor Faisal Kundi praised the Archaeology and Museum Department for maintaining the museum to a state-of-the-art level and ensuring the protection of precious historical artifacts. He emphasized that museums reflect the history and culture of nations, highlighting that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rich heritage includes the Gandharan civilization and various religious traditions. The Governor suggested that special tours of the Peshawar Museum be arranged for the youth, especially students, to familiarize them with their cultural and historical heritage. Governor Kundi

described the Peshawar Museum as crucial for projecting a positive image of the province to international tourists. He stressed the need to promote Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for its peace and tourism potential. Governor Kundi also mentioned that the first session of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly was held in Peshawar Museum. He said that the museum and its artifacts are valuable assets. He asserted that while there may be political differences, the primary goal should be to advance the province's rights and public welfare. He called for a collective political effort to present the province's case at the federal level and highlighted the need for more industries to create job opportunities for youth.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi being briefed about Gandhara heritage displayed in Peshawar Museum.

Health minister mourns loss of rescuer medical technician in Sahiwal

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services, Khawaja Salman Rafique, has expressed profound grief over the tragic death of Rescuer Medical Technician Habib ur Rahman. The incident occurred at Qadirabad Stop in Sahiwal while Rahman was on duty, serving the community with Rescue 1122.

In his condolence message on Sunday, the minister prayed Allah Almighty grant Rahman a place in Jannah. He also paid tribute to the Rescue 1122 personnel, acknowledging their dedication and crucial role in providing emergency services to the public. The minister's message highlighted the bravery and commitment of those who risk their lives to protect and serve others.

Four bodies found

LAHORE (APP): Four people including three drug addicts lost their lives in different areas of the city. According to an Edhi spokesperson, 21-year-old Haseeb died due to electrocution in Gulberg. A 45-year-old man was found dead on the side of a road at Factory Area, in Walton Road. The deceased apparently was a drug addict, who could not be identified. A 37-year-old Adnan died from a drug overdose near Butt Chowk, Ghaziabad. The body of an unidentified 50-year-old man was found on a footpath in Nawan Kot. He appeared to be a drug addict. The Edhi spokesperson said that after police action, all dead bodies had been shifted to mortuary.

ANF seizes 574 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 574 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that 1.6 kg ice was recovered from two parcels booked for France and Saudi Arabia at a courier office in Lahore.

QWP opposes selling of land acquired for educational complex in Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Chairman of Quami Watan Party (QWP) Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao on Sunday opposed the selling of the land acquired for the educational complex in Mardan and said that this belied the claims of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government about declaring education emergency in the province. He was speaking at a meeting of the Party office-bearers of District Peshawar, said a press release issued from Watan Kor. The provincial Chairman QWP directed the participants to work on strengthening and reorganizing the QWP at the grassroots level. Sikandar Sherpao said that the PTI had been ruling Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the third straight term but it failed to work for the

welfare of the people. "Selling the land acquired for the educational complex is a violation of the relevant laws," he said, adding that under the law, a piece of land once acquired for a project should be used for that specific purpose. He said that the bid to sell the land was a classic example of the PTI's poor economic management. He said that this would set a bad precedent and would open a Pandora's box. "This shows the PTI has miserably failed to run the economic affairs of the province and it has now started selling off the provincial assets," he maintained. Expressing concern over the deteriorating law and order in various parts of the province, the QWP leader said the local administration in Kurram tribal district.



MUZAFFARABAD: Rescue 1122 officials transferring injured people to hospital with the help of people of the area.

July 27, 2017, the darkest day in Pakistan's history: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that July 27, 2017, was the darkest day in Pakistan's history. In a statement issued on Sunday, she said those, who had orchestrated the Panama drama to oust Nawaz Sharif on an Iqama issue and declared him disqualified for life, wanted to distance Nawaz Sharif

from his people. "Perhaps they forgot that despite their strategies, Allah also has a strategy. Alhamdulillah, my leader returned, his disqualification was overturned, and the people gave him the mandate. Despite all conspiracies, Pakistan and its largest province, Punjab, are governed by Nawaz Sharif today," she concluded.



LAHORE: Garbage-clogged rainwater drains on the roads are a testimony to the inefficiency of the WASA.

CCPO orders expediting IBOs against criminals

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique has issued orders for expediting intelligence-based operations (IBOs) against criminals, increasing pace of crackdowns on illegal weapons and drugs and ensuring swift arrest of proclaimed offenders. He was presiding over a meeting

at his office here on Sunday to review progress on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to performance of divisional officers. During the briefing, it was informed that the 15 Call Data, issued by the Punjab Safe Cities Authority, indicated a significant reduction in crime rate in the provincial capital.

CM message on World Hepatitis Day

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her message on the World Hepatitis Day, said that environment free from contamination and provision of clean drinking water save many from multiple diseases. "The number of Hepatitis B and C patients is increasing rapidly and we need to undertake collective efforts along with preventive measures for their complete eradication" she said. The Chief Minister said, "Prevention from Hepatitis becomes easier by adopting preventive measures as its treatment is prolonged and difficult. "Hepatitis is a silent killer and is adversely affecting the lives of lakhs of people. Further awareness and information regarding Hepatitis inevitably need to be imparted among the citizens."

KP Minister inaugurates water scheme in Shireen Mela

KOHAT (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate along with former MNA Qaiser Jamal Afridi Sunday inaugurated the Water Supply Scheme Shireen Mela in Bostikhel of Tribal Tehsil Dara Adam Khel, Kohat District, funded by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The inaugural ceremony was largely attended by the party workers, local elders and common people. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the Law Minister said

that he is well aware of the backwardness and deprivation of Dara Adam Khel because it remained a part of the former FATA. He said he would try to pay special attention to the area. He said that provision of basic needs like drinking water, communication, education and health to the people is at the top of his priorities. Aftab Alam said that he is preparing a separate development plan for each area keeping in view its needs with active participation of the local leadership so that the real problems faced by the people are solved.

International News

Children among 30 killed in Israeli strike on Gaza school

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: At least 30 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a school housing displaced people in Gaza on Saturday, Palestinian health officials said. The Hamas-run government media office said 15 children and eight women were among those killed in the strike in the central town of Deir Al-Balah. More than 100 people were wounded, the media office and the Gaza health ministry said. Israel's military said it had targeted fighters operating there and that it had taken steps to reduce the risk to civilians. Separately, nine people were killed in a rocket attack on a football ground in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on Saturday. At Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, ambulances rushed the wounded in for treatment. Some people arrived on foot, their clothes stained with blood. Reuters footage showed people returning to the site of the bombing to check on their belongings, and fires burning in the area. Um Hasan Ali, a displaced woman living at the school, said it had only been a couple of months since she returned to Gaza from Egypt with her daughter who had been taken there for medical treatment. Now her daughter had been wounded in the strike and taken to hospital, she said. Another woman, Ibtihal Ahmed, told Reuters she was sitting in a neighbour's tent when she heard heavy bombing. "I started running, my daughter was one place and I was at another, I saw

people running towards the place that was struck. The people sheltering in Khadija school are all wounded people, they are innocent and this should not happen to them," she said. On Saturday, the military said it had instructed Palestinians to evacuate the southern neighborhoods of Khan Younis and move to the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone. Israeli attacks in Khan Younis on Saturday killed 14 people, health officials said. UN and humanitarian officials accuse Israel of using disproportionate force in the war and of failing to ensure civilians have safe places to go, which it denies. In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokes-person for Palestinian President Ma-h--moud Abbas, blamed the Israeli attacks on the support of the US.

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Palestinians inspect the damage following an Israeli strike on the Khadija school housing displaced people in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip.

US to announce military command revamp in Japan, official says

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: The United States will unveil a major revamp of its military command structure in Japan and other measures to deepen defence ties with its Asian ally at high-level security talks in Tokyo on Sunday, a US official said. The overhaul comes as Tokyo looks to establish a new joint headquarters to oversee its armed forces by March to coordinate better with Washington on growing regional threats they see emanating from China and North Korea. US Secretary of State

Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin will hold talks with their Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Defence Minister Minoru Kihara later on Sunday. "Secretary Austin plans to announce that the United States intends to reconstitute US Forces Japan as a Joint Force Headquarters, reporting to the commander of US INDOPACOM," the US official told a briefing ahead of the talks. The command will be headed by a three-star general, the official said, not the four-star rank that Japan had requested.

Libyan court jails 12 officials over deadly floods

Monitoring Desk BENGHAZI: A Libyan court has jailed 12 officials in connection with the collapse of a series of dams in Derna last year that killed thousands of the city's residents, the Attorney General said on Sunday. The officials, who were responsible for managing the country's dams, were sentenced to between 9 and 27 years in prison by the Court of Appeal in Derna. Four officials were acquitted. Derna, a coastal city with a population of 125,000, was devastated last September by massive floods caused by Storm Daniel.

Landslide from Storm Gaemi remnants kills 12 in southern China

Monitoring Desk GUANGDONG: Continued heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Gaemi triggered a landslide that killed 12 people in southern China, causing flash floods in the northeast and railway disruptions elsewhere, state media reported on Sunday. Cyclonic winds from Gaemi, downgraded from a typhoon, had mostly dissipated by Sunday, but many parts of China remained under alert for flooding risks caused by

earlier rains. Forecasters warned that the remnants of Gaemi's vast cloudbanks could still dump rain on already waterlogged cities. The 12 were killed in the landslide near Hengyang city in Hunan province on Sunday morning that trapped 18, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Six injured survivors were rescued. Hunan provincial authorities issued a flood warning as heavy rains continued through Sunday.

Australia bans uranium mining at Indigenous site

Monitoring Desk SYDNEY: Australia moved on Saturday to ban mining at one of the world's largest high-grade uranium deposits, highlighting the site's "enduring connection" to Indigenous Australians. The Jabaluka deposit in northern Australia is surrounded by the heritage-listed Kakadu National Park, a tropical expanse of gorges and waterfalls featured in the first "Crocodile Dundee" film. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the national park would be extended to include the Jabaluka site.

Putin warns the United States of Cold War-style missile crisis

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday warned the United States that if Washington deployed long-range missiles in Germany then Russia would station similar missiles in striking distance of the West. The United States said on July 10 that it would start deploying long-range missiles in Germany from 2026 in preparation for a longer-term deployment that will include SM-6, Tomahawk cruise missiles and developmental hypersonic weapons. In a speech to sailors from Russia, China, Algeria and India to mark Russian navy day in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg, Putin warned the United States that it risked triggering a Cold War-style missile crisis with the move. "The flight time to tar-

gets on our territory of such missiles, which in the future may be equipped with nuclear warheads, will be about 10 minutes," Putin said. "We will take mirror measures to deploy, taking into account the actions of the United States, its satellites in Europe and in other regions of the world." Putin, who sent his army into Ukraine in 2022, casts the war as part of a historic struggle with the West, which he says humiliated Russia after Soviet Union fell in 1991 by encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence. Ukraine and the West say Putin is engaged in an imperial-style land grab. "They have vowed to defeat Russia, which currently controls about 18% of Ukraine, including Crimea, and parts of four regions in eastern Ukraine."

Philippines says China mischaracterised South China Sea deal

Monitoring Desk MANILA: The Philippines' foreign ministry accused China on Sunday of 'mischaracterising' an arrangement between them that allowed the unimpeded resupply of Filipino troops stationed on a beached naval vessel in the South China Sea. After repeated clashes in the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, the two countries reached a "provisional arrangement" earlier this month on resupply missions to soldiers stationed at the Sierra Madre, a naval vessel Manila deliberately grounded in 1999 to reinforce its maritime claims. Philippine foreign ministry spokesperson Teresita Daza said on Saturday the resupply mission that day was completed without incident while Chinese coast guard vessels were at a "reasonable distance". However, her Chi-

nese counterpart said that China's coast guard was notified ahead of the mission and had "let the vessel through" after an "on-the-scene confirmation". Daza said on Sunday it was "unfortunate" China "mischaracterised" the resupply mission. "Instead of acknowledging how two countries were able to manage differences in order to avoid miscalculation and misunderstanding, the spokesperson chose to misrepresent what has been agreed between the Philippines and China," Daza said in a statement. The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside office hours. Details of the arrangement between China and the Philippines have not been publicly released, but both countries have said the deal was aimed at easing tensions in the waterway.

Meloni vows to 'relaunch' Italy's cooperation with China

Monitoring Desk ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni vowed on Sunday to "relaunch" cooperation with China, signing a three-year action plan during her first official visit to Beijing since taking office. Meloni, who has led a right-wing government since 2022, made the announcement during a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, as Rome seeks to improve trade ties with Beijing after it exited President Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road infrastructure investment scheme last year. The Italian leader said her five-day trip was a "demonstration of the will to begin a new phase, to relaunch our bilateral cooperation". The action plan aims to experiment with new forms of cooperation,

she added in a video shown Italy's RAI state television network. The industrial cooperation memorandum signed by Italy and China "includes strategic industrial sectors such as electric mobility and renewables," Meloni said later in the day. Meloni, who sees Chinese investment as a way to spur Italy's anaemic economic growth, will meet Xi and China's top legislator, Zhao Leji, third in the leadership hierarchy. She also attended an Italy-China business forum, to which companies including Italian tyre-maker Pirelli, energy group ENI, defence group Leonardo, wine producers and several Italian luxury fashion groups such as Dolce & Gabbana were invited.

Oil leaking from sunken tanker in Manila Bay

Monitoring Desk MANILA: Some of the 1.4 million litres of industrial fuel oil inside a sunken Philippine tanker has started to leak into Manila Bay, the coast guard said on Saturday, as they raced to avoid an environmental catastrophe. The MT Terra Nova sank in bad weather off Manila on Thursday, killing one crew member and leaving the country potentially facing its worst oil spill disaster. The oil slick has now more than tripled in size and is now estimated to stretch 12-14 kilometres across the bay, which thousands of fishermen and tourism operators rely on for their livelihoods. Divers inspected the hull of the vessel on Saturday and saw a "minimal leak" from the valves, Coast Guard spokesman Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said, adding it was "not alarming yet".

Announces nationwide campaign to eradicate Hepatitis C PM for united efforts to ensure a hepatitis-free future

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the international community observed World Hepatitis Day on Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for united efforts to raise awareness and work towards a hepatitis-free future, also announcing a nationwide campaign to eradicate the disease.

"On this World Hepatitis Day, let us stand united in our efforts to raise awareness, support those affected by viral hepatitis, and work towards a future free from the burden of this disease. Together, we can make a difference and build a healthier and more prosperous nation," the prime minister said in his message to the nation on the Day.

and emphasised necessary actions to help eliminate the disease and ensure a healthier future for all.

The prime minister said that hepatitis was a silent epidemic that affected millions of people around the world, causing liver inflammation and potentially leading to severe complications if left untreated.

"Pakistan has a very high burden of Hepatitis C infection, having 10 million infected cases, out of 60 million hepatitis C cases globally. Our country is facing an epidemic of Hepatitis C and it is feared that we may also see an epidemic of liver cancer if necessary actions to prevent and eliminate Viral Hepatitis are not taken," he warned.

He highlighted that the country had made significant progress in combating viral hepatitis through awareness campaigns, vaccination programs, and improved access to testing and treatment. However, there

is still much work to be done. We must continue to prioritize hepatitis prevention, ensure early diagnosis, and provide affordable and accessible treatment options for all, he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the government stood firm in its dedication to overcome the challenges posed by hepatitis. "I am pleased to announce a nationwide campaign aimed at eradicating Hepatitis C. As a part of this noble endeavor, our focus will be on decentralizing testing and treatment centers, ensuring that the services provided are tailored to the needs of our citizens, in alignment with the global strategy," he said.

The prime minister reassured that every citizen would have free access to screening and treatment facilities for Hepatitis C.

He recalled that during his tenure as Punjab Chief Minister, the Pakistan Kidney & Liver Transplant Institute project.



ISLAMABAD: A plantation drive titled 'Throw and Grow' initiative started by CDA and PTC to enhance greenery in Islamabad's renowned Margalla Hills. The entrance points of Trail 3 and Trail 5, stalls offering seedballs made from native species like Sukhchain, Pine, and others in the Federal Capital.

PIMS incinerator continues spewing health hazardous dark smoke

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital incinerator established to get away with hazardous hospital waste through incineration and safe management of its remains has become a nuisance for the residents of F-8, G-7 and G-8 sectors facing dark smoke with an increased ratio of pollutants being spewed since last quarter of the year.

into gas or ash, reducing to less bulky, less toxic or less harmful material. The major products, of incineration of waste, are carbon dioxide (CO₂), water, and ash, whereas the items of serious concern are compounds containing sulfur, nitrogen, and halogens that are highly detrimental to health and the environment.

The incinerator is operated at a high temperature ranging from 850°C to 1200°C that helps convert waste into flue gas CO₂ and water as end products. When contacted, by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-

EPA), the official informed that the matter was already in the notice of the Agency and the matter was being taken as per the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997.

Suleman Bilal, a local area resident told APP that it is a usual practice during morning and evening durations when the incinerator starts working and emits thick dark smoke, making the air unbreathable for all. "The incinerator is next to the hospital where the Paeds ward, burn centre, and cafeteria are in its closest proximity where massive visitors are present.



ISLAMABAD: Metro bus service has been partially reopened after three days in the Federal Capital.

Capital Parking – Coping with a challenging issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the vibrant heart of federal capital where pulse of daily life beats against backdrop of bustling streets and evolving cityscapes, a transformative effort is underway to tackle one of urban living's most pressing challenges; the parking space.

seen stuffed with vehicles and thousands of them parked on main arteries of the city.

"Finding parking space at capital markets has become a challenge," said Asadullah Khan, a local businessman. "Daily rising vehicles number is further aggravating the situation. If timely measures are not taken travelling and parking at capital markets would become impossible."

As the space is shrinking with every passing day, Asadullah emphasized underground or multi-story parking plazas and mass-transit to address this issue.

Many residents believe that at a time when the civic authorities needed to focus such issues, they have been in other businesses and development of housing societies, for reasons best known to them.

"When this problem was surfacing, our policy makers were busy in other affairs. So, the situation

continued worsening under their nose," said Rashid Mahmood, another capital resident.

However, recognizing the urgency of situation, the present municipal authorities have embarked on a series of measures aimed at alleviating congestion and ensuring smoother traffic flow across the city.

Central to Islamabad's parking reform strategy is the development of multi-story parking Plaza in Blue Area. This plaza would be completed soon and not only accommodate large number of vehicles at a busy business center but also offer convenient and accessible parking options.

"Ensuring convenient and accessible parking is crucial for reducing traffic congestion and enhancing overall quality of life in Islamabad," remarked Azam Khan Lodhi, a traffic consultant at Capital Development Authority (CDA).



LAHORE: Leaders and members of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) are holding protest demonstration against the Supreme Court Pakistan, nearby Lahore press club.

KP requests PHC CJ to form judicial commission for May 9 probe

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhunkhwa government, led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), on Sunday wrote a letter to Peshawar High Court's (PHC) Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim for the constitution of a judicial commission to investigate the May 9 incident.

KP Law Minister Afiab Alam Afridi, while speaking to private TV news channel said: "The letter requesting the establishment of a judicial commission was sent to the chief justice by the administration department."

Afridi said that the chief justice will announce the names for the commission, adding that the judicial commission will be headed by a PHC judge.

A day earlier, the KP cabinet approved the establishment of a judicial com-

mission to probe the May 9 events during the meeting presided by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

The PTI had been demanding to hold a judicial inquiry into the May 9 protests which broke out in the country last year over party founder Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

During the protests, alleged PTI supporters damaged public and private properties and also attacked military installations in different parts of the country.

In May this year, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan reiterated his party's demand to hold a judicial inquiry into the violence.

KP CM Gandapur had also demanded to form a judicial commission to probe the violence on that day.

Hanif Abbasi's clarion call to respect the 'National Flag'

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi Sunday made a fervent appeal to the nation and all political parties to come together in reverence for the national flag and stressed that this call to unity is a timely reminder of the importance of honoring the flag, which represents Pakistan's sovereignty, identity, and freedom.

Talking to a private news channel, Abbasi said that this call to action is part of the 'Hurmat-e-Parcham' campaign, which aims to promote national unity and patriotism in these challenging times.

The campaign encourages Pakistanis to raise the national flag in their homes, schools, and workplaces throughout the month of August, he added.

"By respecting our national flag, we are not only showing love and loyalty for our country, but also reaffirming our commitment to its progress and prosperity," he said.

Ministry all set to amend government accommodation allotment rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Housing and Works is all set to modify government accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees. "A proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented as soon as possible, sources in the ministry told APP.

They mentioned that the ministry plans to eliminate Rule 20 of Government House Allotment. This rule currently allows a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter. The sources said the waiting list employees

are of the view that the rule is based on injustice to transfer the government house from father to child on retirement as it deprives the right of senior employees who have been waiting for a long time.

They said the officers and employees get their son or daughter recruited before retirement and the house is allotted to them, adding that the affected employees are demanding that the allotment of houses should be done only on the principle of seniority. In this regard, the sources said that the Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works had also constituted a committee for reforms in the rules which has recommended that Rule 20 be scrapped.

Building sustainable cities: Pakistan's push for urban transformation, Islamabad takes lead

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan is rapidly urbanizing, with projections indicating that nearly half of its population will live in cities by 2025. Urban growth comes with significant challenges cities face issues like poor planning, inadequate municipal services, insufficient housing, and substandard infrastructure and these problems hinder economic progress and environmental sustainability.

To address these challenges, the United Nations Habitat Programme (UN-Habitat) is supporting Pakistani cities to improve sustainability and resilience, focusing on Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG-11), said a press release. In collaboration with Islamabad's Capital Development Authority (CDA), UN-Habitat recently conducted a two-day training program centered on SDG-11 and the 2030 Agenda.

The training aimed to equip urban planners, engineers, and policymakers with the skills needed to integrate SDG-11 principles into city planning and development. It also focused on improving the monitoring and reporting of SDG-11 in line with the New Urban Agenda and developing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

The training, held at the Jinnah Convention Center and CDA Training Center, began with a welcome address by Habitat Program Manager, UN-Habitat, Jawed Ali Khan. He emphasized the significance of the training for Islamabad, marking a critical step toward integrating sustainable development goals into urban planning.

Acting UN Resident Coordinator, Mio Sato highlighted the importance of localizing SDG-11 for Pakistan's urban future, ensuring cities like Islamabad achieve inclusive and sustainable growth. Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP, Ammara Durrani stressed the need to include secondary cities in these capacity-building efforts, affirming UNDP's commitment to collaborate with UN-Habitat under the One UN framework.

Director General of Trainings at CDA, Dr. Zafar Ali Zafar reinforced CDA's dedication to align-

ing city planning with SDG-11 goals, ensuring Islamabad's development is both sustainable and resilient. Senior government representatives and 50 officers from CDA and ICT participated in the inaugural session.

Experts like Martino Miraglia and Riccardo Maroso from UN-Habitat presented on SDG localization and VLRs. They noted the growing global movement of VLRs, with cities worldwide using them to track and report on SDG progress. UN-Habitat views VLRs as crucial accelerators for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals, offering opportunities for peer learning, capacity building, and international engagement. The training highlighted the joint efforts of UN-Habitat and CDA to equip Pakistani cities, starting with Islamabad, with the tools and knowledge necessary to achieve sustainable urban development. CDA, responsible for implementing the Islamabad Master Plan, has committed to aligning all its projects with SDG-11 by 2030.

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ISLAMABAD: Youth line up for registration to participate in the in the race on Jinnah Avenue for recruitment in Islamabad Police.

Youngsters unite to restore 'Takht Pari Forest' with Monsoon tree planting drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a heartwarming display of environmental stewardship, a group of passionate youngsters Sunday ask every citizen to come together and join hands with the Punjab government's monsoon tree planting campaign, aiming to restore the degraded Takht Pari Forest to its former lush glory.

Talking to PTV news channel a group of youngsters said that this collective effort, driven by the conviction that small actions can spark significant change, seeks to rally individuals from all walks of life to join forces and make a tangible impact on the fragile ecosystem. As the monsoon season sets in, this dedicated band of young change-makers is ready to get their hands dirty, and they are inviting the nation to join them on this green journey.

Kashmiris will observe 5th August as Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kashmiris on the call of All Parties Hurriyat Conference will observe the 5th August as Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir to register their protest and defiance against Narendra Modi-led Hindutva Indian government's illegal and fraudulent action taken on this day in 2019.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, said the Modi regime, in gross violation of the United Nations resolutions and international law, repealed the special status of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and imposed an unprecedented

military siege in the territory on August 5, 2019.

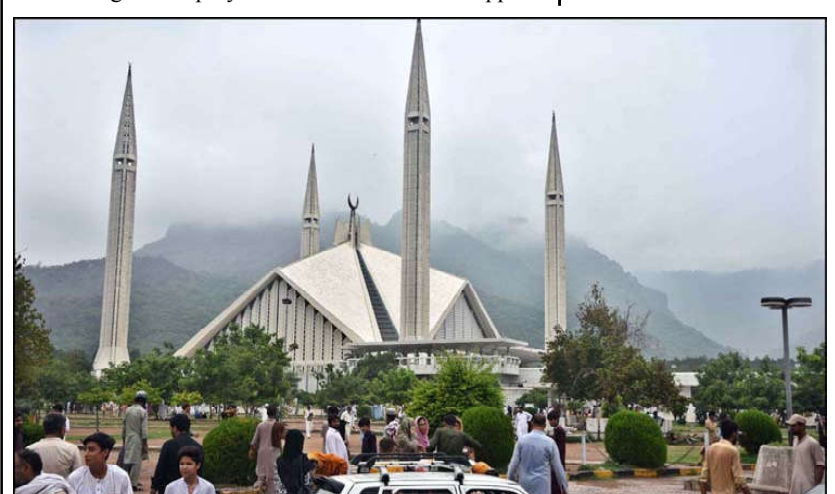
It said the observance of Youm-e-Istehsal aims at conveying a message to the world that Kashmiris do not accept India's illegal occupation over IIOJK and reject Indian illegal moves of 5 Aug 2019. It said 5th August 2019 is one of the most tragic, painful, and darkest days in the history of the occupied territory. Modi's 5th August 2019 move was an attack on IIOJK's Muslim identity, it deplored.

The report said that Modi removed the barrier for non-locals to settle in IIOJK by abrogating Articles 370 and 35A.

Right to self-determination Kashmiris' basic, absolute right: Dr Mushtaq Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Kashmiri people, but despite the passage of 77 years, the Kashmiri people are continuing to struggle and making sacrifices for achieving the right to self-determination. He said India has been working with deceit and trickery since the first day. He said that the base camp had also not played the role it should have done while the United Nations also failed to implement its resolutions. Dr Mushtaq said that on August 5, 2019 India attacked the constitutional status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and abrogated two important articles 370.

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ISLAMABAD: A large number of people visiting famous Faisal Masjid to spend their holiday during cloudy weather in Federal Capital.