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PM proposes tripartite mechanism to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan economic, commercial coop.

Shahbaz Sharif reiterates commitment to enhance collaboration in energy, tourism, climate change, education, and IT

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday proposed to establish tripartite institutional mechanisms particularly in economic and investment areas to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan trilateral economic and commercial cooperation. Sharing his views during an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, the prime minister underscored that Pakistan deeply valued its fraternal ties with Azerbaijan and Turkiye which were grounded in deep-rooted cultural, historic and religious bonds as well as mutual respect and support towards each other

on core issues. The summit was attended by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President of Turkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Heydar Aliyev. Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the convening of inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Meeting at the summit level, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He termed it a natural progression of trilateral engagements amongst the three brotherly Muslim countries which shared a similar outlook on a host of issues of mutual interest and common concern. While noting excellent trilateral cooperation in political, parliamentary and

defence domains since the First Trilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the three countries held in Baku in 2017, he affirmed Pakistan's commitment to working together with Turkiye and Azerbaijan to elevate the tripartite cooperation into a strong multi-faceted partnership across all areas of mutual interest including economic, energy, tourism, cultural, educational, technology and innovation, healthcare and environmental cooperation. Emphasizing strong bonds of friendship and robust people-to-people contacts amongst the three countries, the prime minister also outlined significant potential for collaboration in the areas of culture, tourism, academia as well as science and technology.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the President of Turkiye H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

IDEAS, a shared platform for global peace, stability and prosperity: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday said that IDEAS is a shared platform for global peace, stability and prosperity. It is an event that provides enhanced opportunities for commercial exchange between delegates, trade visitors, defence officials and manufacturers from within Pakistan and abroad," he said this while speaking at the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the 12th Edition of the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar - IDEAS 2024 here at CM House.

The provincial ministers -Sharjeel Memon, Saeed Ghani, Zulfikar Shah - Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, DG DEPO Major General Asad Nawaz, PSCM Agha Wasif, DG Rangers Major General Azhar Waqas, IG Police Ghulam Nabi

Memon, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi attended the meeting here at CM House on Wednesday. In the meeting conduct modalities of the 12th Edition of the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar; IDEAS 2024 were discussed. Murad Shah said that IDEAS 2024 was scheduled from 19-22 November 2024 at the Karachi Expo Centre. "Hosting this 12th Edition of innovation and excellence is indeed a testimony to our pledge to encourage technological growth," he said and added, "This edition of IDEAS will also pave the way for fostering and promoting Pakistan's strategic relations with the international community."

The CM said the national-level preparations for this momentous event have already commenced

in coordination with all relevant stakeholders. "Today's meeting is aimed at providing further impetus to these undertakings," he said and reiterated the full support and cooperation of the Sindh government in all its domains for the successful accomplishment of this mega-national event.

Shah said that the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar was a mega event - biennially organized by the Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO). "Since its inception in 2000, IDEAS has emerged as an international rendezvous of defence manufacturers, entrepreneurs, R&D specialists and top-level policymakers to promote cooperation, knowledge sharing and support ventures in the field of defence collaboration," he added.

Meets Russian President PM emphasises expanding bilateral trade, defence cooperation

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met with Russian President Vladimir Putin wherein he emphasised the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Russia across all areas of mutual benefit including trade, energy, defence and security. In the meeting held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of States meeting, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work with Russia to further expand and strengthen the growing multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries. During the 'warm and cordial' meeting, the two leaders had a wide ranging exchange of views covering bilateral relations with a special focus on trade and economic relations, energy as well as important regional and global issues, a PM Office press release said.

The prime minister, in his opening remarks at the outset of the meeting, said the bilateral trade stood at around \$1 billion which could be expanded by overcoming the financial and banking matters. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who arrived here to attend the twin Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State (CHS) and SCO Plus summits, expressed his pleasure to meet the Russian leader and recalled their earlier interaction in Samarkand.

He congratulated President Putin on his re-election and expressed the hope that the Russian Federation would achieve further progress under his leadership. The prime minister highlighted the importance Pakistan attached to its relations with Russia and expressed satisfaction at the steady growth of those relations, which were characterized by mutual trust and understanding.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with the President of Russia H.E. Vladimir Putin.

Courts can't abolish right for votes' recounting CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa on Wednesday observed that the right of votes' recounting was given by the Parliament in the laws related to elections and the court could not abolish it.

The CJP was heading a three-member bench, which heard the appeal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's candidate against the verdict of election tribunal to set aside the Election Commission's decision for recounting of votes in NA-154 Lodhran.

During the course of hearing, the chief justice said that the top court was scheduling election related cases early. However, the cases got delayed as the lawyers usually did not

preparations, he added. The CJP said, "If we start hearing every case for hours, then the number of pending cases will increase."

The court consequently adjourned the case till July 8.

PML-N candidate Abdul Rehman Kanju NA-154 Lodhran has challenged the verdict of election tribunal before the top court. The election tribunal, in its decision, had terminated the success notification of Abdul Rehman Kanju and declared an independent candidate Rana Faraz Noon as the winner. The tribunal also set aside the ECP's decision of recounting in the said constituency.



ISLAMABAD: Group Chief Executive of the Standard Chartered Bank Bill Winters, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

IG Sindh Police chairs Muharam arrangements

HYDERABAD (APP): The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ghulam Nabi Memon presided over a video link meeting in his office to review security arrangements regarding Muharam ul Haram.

IGP Sindh Police reviewed security arrangements made for Muharam ul Haram in Hyderabad range and issued necessary directives in this regard.

IGP directed that while implementing the contingency plan special attention should be given to improve contacts with all stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, their proposals and suggestions.

He further directed that keeping in view list of the Majalis, mourning processions and under continuous investigations in Pakistan's 2024 elections, Patel said that in the US democratic system Congress is a separate but coequal branch of government.

IGP directed DIG Hyderabad range to make bound all SSPs to educate all subordinate police officers about the sensitivity and importance of duty before deputing them on specific points and set up special control rooms in their respective districts. He also directed to ensure security of all worship places particularly minorities worship places in Mourning procession routes. He also directed to ensure presence of officers and jawans to avert any untoward incident and quick police response.

A delegation of Ulema related to different sects also attended the meeting and unanimously expressed satisfaction on security arrangements ensured for Muharam ul Haram and assured their cooperation. IGP expressed gratitude to all ulema and Zaakireen to attend an important meeting.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah chairs the 2nd Steering Committee meeting of IDEAS-2024, held at CM House in Karachi.

K Electric to reduce load-shedding timing within few days; claims Nasir Shah

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Wednesday claimed that K Electric would reduce load shedding across Karachi in the next few days. The K Electric was trying to reduce load shedding timing specially, during night and peak hours in the hot day to provide relief to the people, the minister said while talking to media on the occasion of MoU signing ceremony between Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company (STDC), K Electric and NSCL here at the office of Sindh Energy department.

Nasir Shah said that K Electric through STDC, will supply 40 megawatts of electricity to National Steel Complex through 132

KV transmission line. The energy minister said this project also includes the construction of 132 KV transmission line. Chief Executive Officer STDC Muhammad Salim Shaikh, CEO NSCL Zaigham Adil Rizvi and CEO K-Electric Monis Abdullah Alvi signed the MoU to lay transmission line of 40 megawatts electricity from Pipri Grid Station to NSCL located at Port Qasim Authority. Syed Nasir Shah said that the project will increase the confidence of private investors in the STDC and Energy Department Government of Sindh to develop projects that will benefit Sindh province by creating jobs and boosting the economy.



KARACHI: The Chief Executive Officer Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company (STDC) Muhammad Salim Shaikh, CEO NSCL Zaigham Adil Rizvi and CEO K-Electric Monis Abdullah Alvi signing a MoU for 40MW power supply from K-Electric to National Steel Company Ltd (NSCL), Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Shah and Local Bodies Minister Saeed Ghani also present on the occasion.

Solar system will be provided free of charge in underprivileged areas of Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government will provide free-of-charge solar power systems to 2.6 million such households, which are situated in underprivileged areas of the province without a proper network of electricity. Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani, stated this on Wednesday while talking to media persons at a luncheon reception hosted for him at a hotel by journalists.

According to the press release issued by his spokesperson Local Government Minister told media persons that the Sindh government

had started to implement the promise contained in the last election manifesto of PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, that free electricity would be provided to the destitute people. He said the free-of-charge solar panels to be given by the Sindh government would enable the beneficiary households to operate light bulbs and fans. Ghani said that he had talked to the Sindh Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah about launching a programme under public-private partnership mode to provide solar power systems.

President Zardari grieved over loss of lives in Bajaur blast

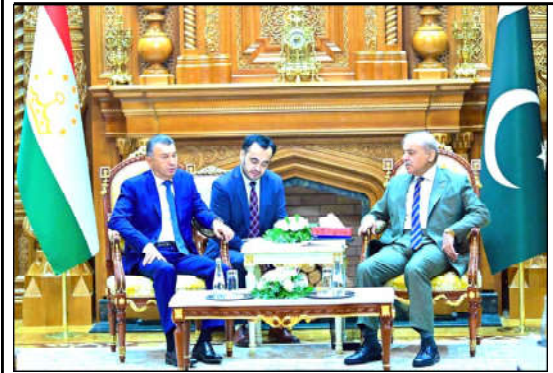
ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the deaths of former Senator Hidayatullah and other people who lost their lives in a remote-controlled bomb blast in Bajaur. While strongly condemning the terrorist incident, the president expressed condolences with the bereaved families, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. President Zardari also prayed for the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude.

Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari arrives in Quetta today

QUETTA: The Chairman, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is scheduled to arrive in Quetta today (Thursday). The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, the provincial ministers, MPAs belonging to the PPP and its other leaders would welcome the Chairman PPP upon his arrival in the metropolis. During the two-day visit, Chairman PPP would be meeting the Chief Minister, provincial ministers and other party's leaders.

Barrister Aqeel appointed advisor in law ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice on Wednesday issued notification regarding the appointment of Barrister Aqeel Malik as advisor in the ministry on honorary basis. The notification said that he shall perform such functions as assigned to him by the Minister for Law and Justice in accordance with the rule 5(8) of the Rules of Business, 1973.



DUSHANBE: Prime Minister of Tajikistan H.E. Dohir Rasulzoda called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

NY State Assembly Dy Speaker calls for promoting cooperation between US-Pak in education, health sectors

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Speaker New York State Assembly, Philip Ramos on Wednesday stressed for a need to further promoting bilateral cooperation between the United States and Pakistan in the education and health sectors.

He said this while speaking during a visit to the Karachi Press Club along with Brooklyn Assembly Member Eric Brock, Chairman, American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC), Dr Ijaz Ahmed, President APPAC Imtiaz Rahi, and board members. Philip Ramos said that there is a shortage of nurses and pharmacists in New York and, there are trained nurses in Pakistan who undergo professional training every year. We want trained nurses and pharmacists from Pakistan to work in America, he added.

He pointed out that earlier, the US visas for Pakistanis were issued in 400 days but, now this term is reduced to 100 days due to our efforts. He said that during the visit to Pakistan, the government of Punjab and Sindh has approved the sister state resolution with New York State.



KARACHI: Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Mr. Philip Ramos talking to media persons during his visit to Karachi Press Club.

'Belarusian President to visit Pakistan in October'

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

He said this in a meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsa, Secretary of Commerce Ahsan Ali Mangi and other officials and diplomats.

Pak-US security cooperation to continue: Pentagon

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has declared that the security cooperation with Pakistan with chief focus on counterterrorism is ongoing.

Addressing a news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, Pentagon Press Secretary Major-General Patrick S. Ryer said that the US and Pakistan do share a security cooperation relationship, particularly focused on counterterrorism. "We have a long history of working together in that regard. And so as opportunities present themselves in the future, I'm sure those conversations will continue to be ongoing," he added. A day earlier, US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while briefing the newsmen in Washington said that PTI founder Imran Khan's detention is Pakistan's internal matter.

When asked about the US House of Representatives resolution asking for a thorough and independent investigation into interference allegations in Pakistan's 2024 elections, Patel said that in the US democratic system Congress is a separate but coequal branch of government.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Orwellian state

It seems that the goings-on in judges' homes is not the only thing that piques Big Brother's curiosity. Our security apparatus also listens to what ordinary citizens are talking about on their phones, reads the messages they exchange with other people, and watches what they do on the internet.

This startling revelation has come to light recently, thanks to a submission to the Islamabad High Court. The information given to the court revealed that the country's telecom regulator, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, has forced telecom companies to implement a mass surveillance system through which up to 4m citizens can be monitored at any given time with the click of a button.

Called the 'Lawful' Intercept Management System in true Orwellian nomenclature, this system is being run without any regulatory checks and balances or legal controls, allowing the intrusive eyes and ears of unnamed intelligence agencies to spy on anyone they want.

'Leaked' phone calls involving prominent citizens had dominated news headlines and social media not so long ago, prompting petitions from some of the affected individuals against intrusive surveillance by the state. The existence of LIMS may not have come to light had the IHC's Justice Babar Sattar, who heard a petition on the matter, not insisted on demanding answers from the state about who had the power and resources to conduct such surveillance of civilians.

What has since been uncovered is chilling for anyone who cherishes personal freedoms. The judge noted in his order that citizens' data was being collected without any human intervention or legal warrant, with "the entire content of communication between consumers undertaken through the network of the telecom licensee, including audio and video content and web page records", being shared with unnamed agencies, according to news reports. The potential for abuse of such detailed information collected on citizens is immense. The fact that any citizen at any time can be made vulnerable by the state simply listening to and watching what they are doing and using that information to blackmail them would make anyone feel insecure.

Many serving judges have recently complained about the pressures they face, and this should be warning enough that the powerful in our country do not respect any moral or legal boundaries when it comes to implementing 'orders from above'. There are good justifications for keeping an eye on known criminals, terrorists and foreign spies, but implementing a system to spy on one's own people is a perverse abuse of power and should be stopped forthwith. The state must be made to secure legal warrants as a necessary requirement for initiating surveillance of any individual. Such immense power should not be accumulated by any institution as the potential for abuse and the consequences for personal freedoms can be disastrous.

Pity the nation

Mahir Ali

The Tory devastation in the 1997 UK election was a delight to behold, but it was somewhat blunted by suspicions that New Labour was neither equipped nor inclined to reverse the destructive thrust of nearly two decades of Thatcherism. Margaret Thatcher subsequently picked Tony Blair as her favourite heir and New Labour as her greatest achievement, given its dedication to advancing her agenda.

That agenda included steadily dismantling the social welfare state that the postwar Attlee government had installed despite financial exigencies, and which subsequent Conservative governments did not substantially tinker with until the advent of Thatcher, who declared that there was no alternative to neoliberalism. New Labour embraced that absurd declaration, and implemented it in places that Thatcherite Conservatism had failed to reach, not least in the health and education sectors.

Popular enthusiasm for Labour dwindled after 1997, but the lack of a viable alternative enabled it to secure majorities based on declining turnouts until 2010, when the Tories returned to power. Five disastrous prime ministers later, voters' aspiration for change is expected to be rewarded tomorrow with the biggest Labour landslide since 1997. At the new government's helm will be someone who looks back on the Blair years as an inspiration rather than a cautionary tale. Keir Starmer earned his legal spurs as a 'human rights advocate' before he was propelled to the post of director of public prosecutions, a position in which his service to the Tory-ruled state was sufficiently ap-

preciated to win him a knighthood before he became a Labour MP in 2015. His task thenceforth was to undermine Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, who threatened to return the party to its social democratic origins.

Corbyn had first won his north London seat in 1983 in an election that broadly reduced Labour to a parliamentary rump. He remained an active backbencher for the next 32 years, popular among his constituents but occasionally threatened with expulsion from his party for embracing stances that militated against the Labour leadership's dedication to the status quo. He was occasionally hauled away by policemen for protesting against South African apartheid or Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, long before it became fashionable to do so.

Corbyn's empathy for the oppressed also extended to the Palestinians. Not long after it began to become clear that his policies might actually pave the way to Downing Street, he was assaulted by absurd allegations of antisemitism. Corbyn tended to be politely apologetic in the face of such charges; he ought, instead, to have gone on the offensive against the Zionist lobby. To his credit, he never resiled from his stance nor disguised his abhorrence of the genocide in Gaza.

For his pains, he was expelled from Labour — by no means the only one. Diane Abbott, the first black woman to sit in parliament, also elected in 1983, was permitted to run again only after a backlash against a typically Starmerish smear-and-discard campaign. Corbyn is running as an independent, and senior Labour figures in his Islington constituency have resigned from the party to

support his candidacy. In other jurisdictions, many activists have been expelled, often for opposing Starmer's support for genocide, including Faiza Shaheen. It seems as if wherever the Zionist lobby chips in, Starmer bends down and asks 'What do you want?'

Starmer insists his wife and children are "not Jewish for reasons I won't bore you with" to an interviewer from The Guardian, a newspaper that played a huge role in defenestrating Corbyn with the aid of associated nitwits, but admits that "half of the family are Jewish", and "they're either here or in Israel". That might help to explain why his leadership campaign was partly funded by the Zionist lobby, which also provided pocket money to other Labour MPs for undermining Corbyn.

Starmer returned to the Corbyn shadow cabinet after resigning from it in 2016, and helped to set up the Brexit trap by insisting on a second referendum that was successfully designed to demolish Labour's chances in 2019. In his leadership campaign, he claimed he would hang onto much of Corbyn Labour's legacy, but discarded much of it soon afterwards. Since then, he has also had no qualms about serially shrinking or diluting his own proposals. The inevitable upshot is that Labour will attain office by tomorrow night, and embrace a platform not radically different from its predecessors. Starmer can't name a favourite book or poem, and claims he has no dreams, but his notions of magical 'economic growth' and 'wealth creation' chime with the Tory-lite attitudes that have attracted Tory donors and even a couple of Conservative MPs to his den. -- Courtesy Dawn

Hot and dangerous

Aisha Khan

The rise in mercury has a human cost. With each decade getting warmer since 1980, the risk of breaching critical tipping points is getting alarmingly closer. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessment reports have repeatedly reiterated the perils of crossing the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold and issued advisories for urgent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to keep the planet safe. However thus far 1.5°C has just been used as reference number to make strong political statements with very little to show for any measurable reduction in emissions at scale.

The heat this year is just a preview of what is likely to follow. Extreme events in past years and the health pandemic (Covid-19) are tangible proofs of the enormity of the crisis and its lingering effect on the economy. Other factors like biodiversity loss and climate-induced conflicts may not as yet be visibly relatable to people but are insidiously disrupting the social fabric of society.

Under the current patterns of emissions, it seems more than likely that the world is headed for 2.5 to 2.9°C temperature increase from pre-industrial levels this century. The beginning of summer in four continents in the northern hemisphere has already scorched cities leaving millions to swelter as temperatures soar to new highs.

For vulnerable countries like Pakistan, this means high-risk scenarios and need for urgent adaptive action. The hidden cost of past emissions trapped in the atmosphere will add to the unfolding crisis. Even if global emissions peak before 2025, their

long-term lingering impacts will continue to destabilise the climate, making it extremely difficult to cope with known threats and unknown risks. Fragility and crises will be the new norm as Earth heats up to challenge human actions and its impact on life systems.

In South Asia, the rising mercury is also a cryospheric crisis. The water towers that are a source of life to people from Bhutan to Afghanistan are under threat from the scorching heat. According to a report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, snow levels are a fifth below normal in the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalaya (HKH) region. This can result in excessive flooding initially and end with drought and desertification. Given its geography, the effect of deadly and repeated heatwaves will hit the region in multiple ways from the mountains to the coastline. As extreme heat also traps more moisture in the air, the monsoons this year are predicted to be 33 per cent more intense, amplifying the problem.

The world is on a collision trajectory with nature and time is running out for course correction. The good news is that everyone knows what needs to be done and there is still time to reset the future.

Meanwhile, the rise in atmospheric temperature will also result in a concomitant increase in heated debates over climate justice and moral mandate. Heat stress is not limited to physical effects, nor is it only about a food, water and energy crisis. It has a psychological dimension that manifests itself in behavioural change and altered response mechanism. This chain reaction is often over-

looked in planning. Historically, prolonged deprivations, inequality and injustices have resulted in social upheavals and system change. A heat-induced, drought-driven response to thirst, hunger and lack of basic amenities is likely to be even more cataclysmic.

The quantitative difference in resources between the Global North and the Global South and the qualitative difference in absorptive capacities of both will set the stage for conflict and pitched battles if two issues are not addressed quickly. The first underpins the need to address climate justice and the second calls for expediting reform in climate finance. There can be no more delays or debates on these two issues if the global community is serious about keeping its climate promise. Mitigation remains the number one responsibility of high-emitting countries to save the planet and reduce hardships for the already struggling millions around the world.

The scorching heat has an added dimension of peril for Pakistan. The country adds five million people to its population each year. Under this scenario the gap between supply and demand is going to increase beyond the state's ability to provide food, water and energy to 380m people by 2040. The spectre of shrinking resources and a burgeoning discontented youth population is something that needs to be factored into climate and human security planning.

A hot temper is a dangerous thing to deal with at a wider community scale. It is time to cool down the planet and for responsible countries to reduce emissions rapidly. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM invites Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for transit trade; calls for road, rail connectivity



BEIJING: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a group photo with the panelists representing Pakistani and Chinese companies at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum-2024.

DUSHANBE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for the transit trade besides emphasising the promotion of regional connectivity by constructing rail tracks and roads between the two countries.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his Tajik counterpart Qohir Rasulzoda here.

The prime minister is on a two-day official visit to Tajikistan at the invitation of the President

of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the steadily expanding bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest and reaffirmed their shared desire to further strengthen the existing fraternal ties.

Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated the Tajik prime minister on the successful organization of the 3rd High-Level Water Conference and appreciated Tajikistan's leading role in water diplomacy.

Hailing the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement as a historic

Pakistani IT companies offers diverse range of products, services: Shaza Fatima

BEIJING (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said the Pakistani IT companies offered a diverse range of products and services from software development and cybersecurity to artificial intelligence and data analytics.

"These capabilities complement the strengths of our global counterparts, paving the way for extensive collaboration," she said while addressing the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum.

The minister said that China had made remarkable advancements in artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and 5G technology.

The Belt and Road Initiative and the Digital Silk Route project were clear indications of the country's commitment to building a connected and technologically advanced world, she added.

Dr Baige Zhao, Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of 12th National People's Congress, said Pakistan and China were enhancing cooperation in digital technologies.

KP Governor meets Tajik energy minister

DUSHANBE (APP): The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here Wednesday met with Tajikistan's Energy Minister and discussed the CASA-1000 energy project.

The KP Governor exchanged views with Tajikistan's Energy Minister Juma Dalair Shofakir on KASA 1000 project that after completion would give stability to energy sector in Pakistan.

Tajikistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf, Member of Provincial Assembly Arbab Zarak Khan, prominent businessman Shahbaz Zaheer, and officials from Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy attended the meeting.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the significant CASA-1000 energy project involving Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

MD PSIC visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) Managing Director Sidra Younas and CEO of Urban Unit Aman Anwar Kidwai visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Wednesday. SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir, Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh welcomed the guests. The business community stressed that internationally accredited laboratory need to be established in Sialkot.

Mobilink Bank champions sustainability-driven leadership with ESG training

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has taken a leap forward in solidifying its position as a part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six



front-runner in sustainable banking practices. The Bank announced the successful completion of an external training program on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices explicitly designed for its leadership team. This in-depth training initiative equipped the Bank's top decision-makers with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate ESG principles into the core of their operations.

Mobilink Bank is dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population. The training was held in Islamabad and conducted by Zero Point Partners, a leading environmental consultancy and led by founder and CEO, Maha Qasim and Senior Associate, Aliza Aijaz, both experts in providing strategic and advisory support to banks and financial institutions on developing GHG emissions inventories, net zero target-setting.

Jazz, Google, Tech valley mark milestone achievement with 'Digital Safar'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz Pakistan's leading digital operator, in collaboration with Google and Tech Valley, a social enterprise, celebrated the remarkable success of their flagship initiative, Digital Safar.

Launched in 2023, Digital Safar equips young minds in Pakistan with essential digital skills and online safety education through Google's Be Internet Awesome and CS

PCJCCI keen on strengthening academia, CPEC linkages

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan-Chin Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Wednesday showed keen interest in strengthening academia-CPEC linkages.

Sharing his view at a think-tank session, held here at PCJCCI Secretariat, the joint chamber's President Moazzam Ghurki highlighted that CPEC not only benefits the economy and bilateral trade

Rupee weakens against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 03 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 278.40 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.37. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.9 and Rs 280.7 respectively.

KPCM directs implementation of monsoon plan

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the concerned provincial departments and district administrations to ensure implementation of the Monsoon Contingency Plan of the provincial government and to remain high alert at all times in order to effectively deal with any untoward situation across the province.

In his special directives, issued here on Wednesday in this regard, the Chief Minister said that monsoon contingency plan is mainly aimed at safeguarding the lives and properties of the people, minimizing the disaster

risks and ensuring swift and accurate response to any emergency due to expected rains in the current monsoon season. "All the tiers of disaster management and relief activities would have to play their proactive role in this regard," he said and directed the authorities concerned to strictly follow the guidelines laid down by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority in this effect, adding that all the prerequisites should be completed in all respects to reduce the disaster risks and damages to the public life and properties across the province.

He also directed them to ensure all time

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

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



MULTAN: Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khahir Azad is addressing the meeting of Ittehad Bain ul Muslimeen.

KP Law Minister directs timely completion of people welfare projects

Independent Report
KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has directed the authorities concerned of nation building departments to ensure timely completion of development projects without compromising on the quality of work. He further directed to submit a progress report so far made on the ongoing projects to the Deputy Commissioner office as soon as possible.

He gave these instructions while presiding over a review meeting on developmental projects held in the office of Deputy Commissioner Kohat on Wednesday. Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Shafi Jan, Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Kohat Reena Suhrawardy and authorities concerned of nation building departments attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in detail on progress so far made on ongoing development schemes. The Law Minister declared that unnecessary delay or negligence in projects of public interest will not be tolerated in any way.

Governor KP condemns bomb blast incident in Bajaur

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday condemned the remote-controlled bomb blast in the Dama Dola area of Bajaur District, which resulted in the tragic loss of lives, including former Senator Hidayatullah Khan and three others. Expressing heartfelt sorrow over the casualties, Governor Faisal Kundi extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families, including the family of former Senator Hidayatullah Khan.

20 dead, 1450 injured in Punjab road accidents

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



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

Governor KP visits Nurek Dam, Power Station Tajikistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday highlighted Pakistan's potential for economic growth and resolution of public issues through collaboration with Central Asian countries.

He said this during his visit to Nurek Dam Tajikistan, one of the world's highest human-made structures, and its power station.

Officials from Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy briefed the Governor on the Nurek Dam, located approximately 75 kilometers from the capital, Dushanbe.

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

Construction on the dam began in 1961, with the first generator coming online in 1972 and the project completing in 1980, making it the world's second tallest human-made structure. The Governor commended Tajik authorities, project developers, and engineers for their role in this monumental project.

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

Five of a family killed, 13 injured in accident

SARGODHA (APP): Five members of a family, including two women, were killed while 13 others injured when two vehicles collided with each other near here on Wednesday.

The police said a van was heading towards Haiderabad Thal when its tyre burst which collided with a vehicle (mini-truck) in Mankera area, Jhang Bhaker road. Resultantly, Zainab Bibi, Faqeer Hussain Shah, Rana Qadeer, Muhammad Rafique and Njima Bibi died on the spot while Rana Adnan, Rana Imran, Imran Shafique and others sustained injuries.

The Rescue 1122 and police reached the spot.

Rs. 1.38b spent on welfare of police force

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police spokesperson said on Wednesday that Rs. 1.38 billion had been spent on welfare of the police force, benefiting thousands of employees' families, in the first six months of the current year.

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

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

Minister for early completion of outsourcing waste management program

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique chaired the conference of CEOs of waste management companies across Punjab to review progress in the pilot programme of outsourcing of sanitation systems. Secretary Local Government and Community Development (LG & CD) Department Shakeel Ahmed Khan also participated in the conference held at the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) office here on Wednesday.

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

companies interested in outsourcing in their respective areas.

Addressing the CEOs conference, Minister Zeeshan Rafique said that it was the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to introduce a uniform sanitation system throughout the province. "Under this vision, a long-lasting and effective sanitation system is being implemented in Punjab", said the minister.

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



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

LHC seeks arguments on maintainability of petition against success of Hamza

LAHORE (Online): Punjab High Court (LHC) Election Tribunal (ET) has sought arguments on maintainability of the petition filed against the success of Hamza Shehbaz Sharif son of Prime Minister (PM) Shahbaz Sharif and vice president PML-N as Member of National Assembly (MNA) from NA-118.

Justice Anwar Hussain has remarked the procedure of ET has been made perfect under election act. But this perfect procedure is for perfect system. Appeal plea against success of Hamza

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

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

International News

Gazans seek shelter after evacuation order, Israel carries out new strikes

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Many Palestinians were seeking shelter on Wednesday after fleeing their homes in southern Gaza and complained of water shortages as Israel pressed on with its military offensive in the densely populated enclave.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deir Al-Balah is crowded with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians forced to flee homes elsewhere in Gaza, and residents complain of acute shortages of drinking water and inflated prices for basic foodstuff. "There is no clean water to drink. We are forced to buy salty or unclean water at a high price," said Shaban, 47, a father of five. "Most of the displaced suffer from abdominal pains and diseases such as because of the unhealthy water, the lack of decent food and the pollution as many live near sewage pools," he told Reuters via a chat app.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas burst into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killed about 1,200 people and seized around 250 civilians and soldiers who they took back in Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.



Palestinians react, following an Israeli strike near a UN-run school sheltering displaced people, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Putin, Xi vie for influence at Central Asian summit

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: The leaders of Russia and China were in Kazakhstan for a regional summit, seeking to harden anti-Western alliances and press their influence in the strategic Central Asian region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Wednesday morning for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)—a Beijing-led regional bloc that covers Central Asia, India and Iran.

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

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

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

Panama to launch migrant deportation flights in coming weeks, US says

Monitoring Desk
PANAMA: Panama will launch deportation flights for irregular migrants in the coming weeks, part of a deal with the United States, a US official said, after the new president in the Central American country pledged to bolster its borders.

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

Nepal PM Dahal faces crisis as key ally drops parliamentary support

Monitoring Desk
KATHMANDU: Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal faced a crisis on Wednesday after a key ally in his multi-party coalition withdrew support, pushing his government into a minority in parliament four months after the coalition was formed. The liberal Communist Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) party, which withdrew support and was the biggest group.

Russian missiles and drones strike eastern Ukraine's Dnipro in a daylight attack that kills 5

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: A Russian missile and drone attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro on Wednesday killed five civilians and injured 47 others, including a 14-year-old girl, authorities said.

Blasts blew out some windows of a shopping mall, raining shards onto the street, photos published by local officials showed. Mayor Borys Filatov said the daytime attack also shattered windows in two schools and three kindergartens. Debris struck the intensive care unit of a children's hospital, and a fire broke out in another hospital.

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

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

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

Elsewhere in the region, a Russian glide bomb struck a residential building in the village of Ruska Lozova, injuring at least two people. Others could be trapped under rubble, Sunichevov said. Trump says he can end the Russia-Ukraine war in one day. Russia's UN ambassador says he can't. Also Wednesday, Ukraine received \$2.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund under an ongoing credit facility, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced.

US has 'undeniable complicity' in Gaza war killings, say former US officials

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A dozen former US government officials who quit over their country's support for Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday accused US President Joe Biden's administration of "undeniable complicity" in the killing of Palestinians in the enclave.

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

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

They urged the US government to use its "necessary and available leverage" to bring the war to an end and to ensure the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners in Israel. They also demanded that the US government support Palestinian self-determination and fund an "immediate expansion of humanitarian assistance" in Gaza.

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

Egypt has agreed long-awaited cabinet reshuffle, local media report

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly's cabinet is set for a long-awaited reshuffle, local media reported, with changes including new finance and foreign ministers expected to be sworn in on Wednesday.

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

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

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

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

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

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Authorities in Russia's mostly-Muslim North Caucasus region of Dagestan on Wednesday temporarily banned women from wearing the niqab, after simultaneous attacks targeting churches and synagogues killed 22 last month. In a statement posted on the Telegram messenger app, the Dagestan Muftiate said it was introducing a "temporary" ban on the niqab after an appeal from Russia's ministry of nationality policy and religious affairs. Reports following the attacks on June 23 said one of the gunmen had planned to escape wearing a niqab. The muftiate, a religious organisation representing Dagestani Muslims, said that the ban would remain in place "until the identified threats are eliminated and a new theological conclusion is reached".

Iran's Khamenei urges turnout after voters shun first presidential round

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Wednesday for voters to participate in Friday's presidential ballot, saying that historically low first-round turnout was not an act "against the system". Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian and ultraconservative Saeed Jalili will face off after leading the pack in the first round last week, in an elec-

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

PM, Uzbek President reaffirm commitment to multifaceted relations between two countries

Both leaders meet on sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Kazakhstan

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Wednesday reaffirmed commitment to the multifaceted relations between the two countries and expanding of mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and people to people contacts. The two leaders expressed confidence that operationalization of the Preferential Trade Agreement and Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement would further enhance bilateral trade and economic relations. The prime minister met with the Uzbek president on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit being held in Kazakhstan, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Recognizing the importance of Uzbekistan as a transit point for trade expansion for other countries, the two leaders agreed to focus on this particular area and to this end initiate an examination of the various options available. The Karachi Port's connectivity to Tirmez was also discussed to enhance trade between the two countries.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with President of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.

Assembly enacted laws against gender-based violence, anti-rape, forced conversion: Murad Shah

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday highlighted the efforts of the Sindh Assembly in introducing laws aimed at implementing various innovative and citizen-centric initiatives, including capacity building of prosecutors and judiciary on laws related to gender-based violence, anti-rape measures, protection of minority rights, legislation on forced conversion and training of Sindh police in handling cases involving transgender individuals. He made these remarks during the launch of the Sindh Prosecution Roadmap 2025-20230 at a local hotel. The program, organized by the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Services Department in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was attended by lawyers, civil society members, provincial secretaries, and diplomats. Murad Shah said that the PPP believed in upholding the rule of law at the national level and has provided the constitutional framework for the country. He added that the Sindh Assembly has played a crucial role in enacting a variety of innovative and citizen-centric initiatives aimed at promoting justice and equality. The CM said that one notable achievement was the enactment of Sindh Correction Services, making the Sindh Assembly the first legislative assembly to adopt significant jail reforms in Asia. Additionally, the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Service Department has been actively participating in national causes, with the PG Sindh serving as a national legal expert on FATF. Shah said that his government has also organized meetings of the Pakistan Prosecution Forum (PPF) in collaboration with provincial chapters, with the recent 19th meeting hosted by the Federal PG in Karachi.

President for women empowerment, improved access to financial services

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday called for financial autonomy of women and improving their access to financial services and credit to encourage women entrepreneurs. The president, talking to the Group Chief Executive of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Bill Winters, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that economic empowerment of women would not only strengthen them financially but would also help uplift their families, besides contributing to the national economy. He said that banks should support women entrepreneurs as well as enhance their representation in the banking sector. The delegation briefed the president about SCB's contributions to Pakistan's economy, the development and evolution of the banking industry, and the socio-economic development of the country. Welcoming the delegation, President Zardari highlighted that Pakistan had taken steps to protect the environment and promote forestation. He informed that the Government of Sindh had planted mangrove forests and earned millions of dollars by trading carbon credits in the international market. He suggested that investing in the climate sector would help protect the environment. The president also called for investing in the agricultural sector as well as financing infrastructure projects in the country, especially small dams, barges and power plants. He said that banks should extend financial services and loans to farmers to increase their access to agricultural inputs. The president congratulated the bank on the completion of 160 years of successful operations in the subcontinent.



ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan H.E. Olzhas Bektenov at Nur Sultan Nazarbayev International Airport.

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

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judge Afzal Majoka of district and sessions court Islamabad while adjourning hearing of the central appeal pleas of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi against their conviction in Nikah during iddat case has remarked decision of this case has to be announced till July 12 at every cost. At the inception of hearing, Suleman Akram Raja counsel for Imran Khan invited reference to section 7 of Muslim family law. Judge Afzal Majoka remarked you are saying section 7 is not applicable in this case. The counsel gave reference to several court's decisions with reference to Muslim law. The counsel told family law is part of personal law. Therefore such cases come under the jurisdiction of Shariat Court. In the light of Supreme Court (SC) decision the divorce will become effective even if procedure of union council is not completed. The court remarked section 7 cannot be used for pressurizing. The counsel said this nikah was declared fraud on the evidence of domestic servant Latif and sentence was awarded. In an interview, Khawar Manika is terming Bushra Bibi righteous and her relationship with Imran Khan a spiritual relationship. He gave these remarks during hearing of appeal pleas of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi against sentence in Nikah during iddat case Wednesday. Suleman Akram Raja counsel for Imran Khan while completing his arguments took the plea the lady can solemnize nikah without the certificate of union council. If it continues like this then thousands of marriages will have to be declared null and void. There are thousands of inheritance related problems in the family. Suleman Akram Raja and Khalid Yousof Chaudhry counsels for Imran Khan appeared in the court.



HYDERABAD: Senator and Central leader of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Maula Bux Chandio addressing to a press conference at his residence.

Equipment stolen from Sindh govt hospital in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): In a shocking incident, dacoits stole parts of the CT scan machine and other equipment from Sindh government hospital in Liaquatabad area of Karachi. As per details, the equipment including wiring, circuit, UPS, batteries, and other essential components were stolen from the Advance Trauma Centre. The machine was installed at a cost of over Rs 10 million. After the incident, patients are being referred to other hospitals for CT scans. However, sources revealed that the investigation launched into the incident has been stopped by influential authorities. In a separate incident, earlier, a fake doctor was apprehended from Karachi Civil Hospital. A man named Abdullah, who is said to be a bakery worker, was found doing in the Civil Hospital's Trauma Centre by wearing doctor's gown. The security guard got suspicious of his get-up and upon verification he was found fake and handed over to the police. The fake doctor told the police that he had been dreaming of becoming a medical practitioner since childhood but could not make it through as far as his educational qualifications were concerned. So, he put on the doctor's gown and reached the hospital to treat patients. But, his college boy looks and fancy hairstyle exposed him to the guards who handed him over to the cops present at the picket set up at the Civil Hospital.



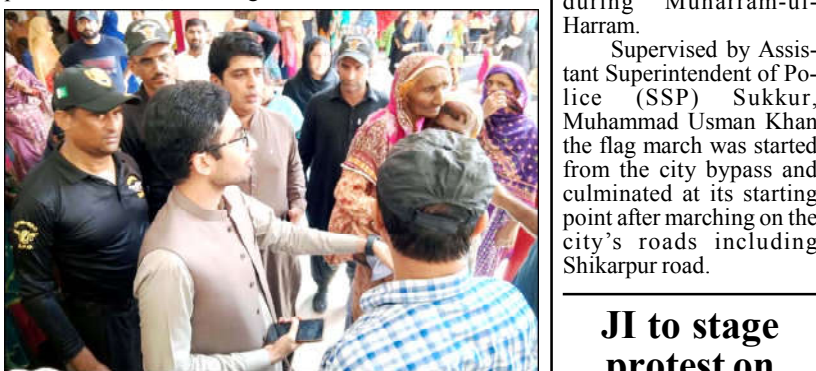
KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah addresses during the launch of the Sindh Prosecution Roadmap 2025-2030, held at local hotel in Karachi.

India must combat 'dangerous' Islamophobia trend in the country: Pak

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has told the United Nations General Assembly about India's "abysmal" treatment of religious minorities, with a forceful call for New Delhi to reverse the "dangerous" Islamophobic trend in the South Asian country, as also advocated by U.N. human rights experts. "Can the representative of India justify the recent incident where a BJP leader openly threatened to slaughter 200,000 Muslims," Pakistani delegate Rabia Ijaz asked India's representative who earlier accused Pakistan of mistreating its minorities, while also alleging that it was involved in terrorism. "We witnessed India's leadership's unabashed use of anti-Muslim rhetoric for political gain, including their Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) calling Muslims 'infiltrators' during one of his (recent) campaign speeches. Moreover, Hindu priests have openly called for genocide of Muslim minorities in India," Ms. Ijaz, a second secretary in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said while exercising her right of reply to the Indian representative during the 193-member Assembly's debate on "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)." India's representative, Kajal Bhat, a counselor in the Indian Mission to the UN, made the allegations in response to Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram's sharp speech on Monday in which the Pakistani envoy, apart from New Delhi's atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir, also highlighted the grave human rights abuses of Muslim in India.

Sindh imposes huge tax on all kinds of medicines, medical devices

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has imposed a sales tax on herbal, unani and homeopathic medicines, as well as medical devices, making essential healthcare products significantly more expensive. This decision has elicited strong reactions from the residents of Karachi, who are already grappling with high inflation and economic hardship. The newly imposed tax affects a wide range of around 200 medical supplies and devices, including thermometers, sugar strips, blood pressure monitors, surgical gloves, and wheelchairs. Abdul Samad Badhani, vice chairman of the Pakistan Chemist and Drug Association, has warned that the cost of herbal medicines will rise sharply, further straining the budgets of many households. "Inflation has already made it difficult to live. Now medicines will also be out of reach," lamented a resident of Karachi.



LARKANA: Deputy Commissioner Larkana, Sharjeel Noor Chana is visiting for inspection of facilities at the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) centers in Larkana.

Livestock dept vying to make Umerkot, Tharparkar districts animal disease free

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Livestock and Fisheries department is taking measures to make Tharparkar and Umerkot districts free from Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) to promote export and support the local population that heavily depends upon live stock as their source of livelihood. It was informed to adviser to CM Sindh for Livestock, Fisheries and Human Settlement Authority Syed Najmi Alam who was chairing a meeting of Livestock Department. The adviser was given a detailed briefing about reforms being introduced in the department as well as ongoing and new projects, said a statement issued here. Provincial Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Dr. Kazim Hussain Jatoti, Director General Livestock Dr. Hizbullah Bhutto and other officials of the department attended the meeting. The Adviser was informed steps were underway to enhance the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Vaccine coverage to 70 to 80 percent while private cattle farms will also be registered for vaccination in the new financial year. The department has decided to make Umerkot and Tharparkar districts of Sindh FMD free so that the local people could get milk and meat from animals being raised on natural food while disease free status of both the districts will also help.

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

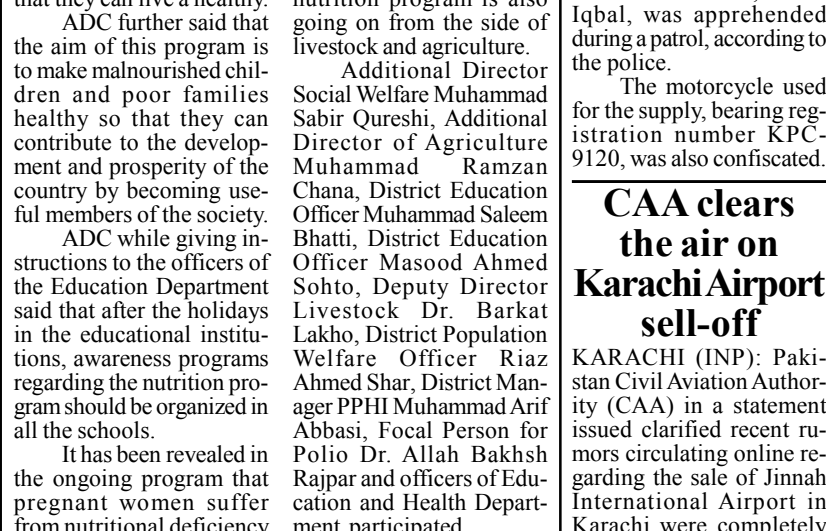
ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson, Senate Standing on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on World Plastic Bag Free Day said that the country was consuming 55 billion plastic bags annually at an expected increase by 15 percent in its usage every year. The Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Senator in her message on the International Plastic Bag Free Day urged the nation to review the environmental impact of plastic bags and its indiscriminate use in Pakistan. Senator Rehman said Pakistan is facing a serious problem of plastic pollution as single-use plastic bags caused water stagnation, littering and damage to human, aquatic and wildlife. "Plastic bags take hundreds of years to decompose and their accumulation poses serious risks to the environment and health. All our small and big cities face major challenges in plastic waste management," she said. She underscored that several attempts were made to stop the use of plastic bags, however, due to lack of alternatives, slow implementation and lack of public awareness, no success was achieved in stopping the use of plastic items. "Every citizen needs to reduce reliance on plastic items including bags, support eco-friendly alternatives and strictly follow anti-plastic policies," Senator Sherry Rehman requested.



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

ADC-I chairs meeting of District coordination committee for nutrition program

HYDERABAD (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Shaheed Benazirabad Nawab Sameer Leghari chairs meeting of District Coordination Committee for Nutrition Program today at Durbar Hall. Addressing the meeting he said that the ongoing nutrition program should be made more effective in order to improve the health of the child and mother so that the malnourished mothers and children can be provided with quality food. So that they can live a healthy. ADC further said that the aim of this program is to make malnourished children and poor families healthy so that they can contribute to the development and prosperity of the country by becoming useful members of the society. ADC while giving instructions to the officers of the Education Department said that after the holidays in the educational institutions, awareness programs regarding the nutrition program should be organized in all the schools. It has been revealed in the ongoing program that pregnant women suffer from nutritional deficiency and are also suffering from iodine deficiency due to which they get rid of many problems and give birth to weak babies due to which the newborn baby in order to keep the mother and child healthy, help is being sought from various social organizations. He further said that the women registered in the Benazir Income Support Program are being financially supported under the Benazir Development Program, while the work on the nutrition program is also going on from the side of livestock and agriculture. Additional Director Social Welfare Muhammad Sabir Qureshi, Additional Director of Agriculture Muhammad Ramzan Chana, District Education Officer Muhammad Saleem Bhatti, District Education Officer Masood Ahmed Sohto, Deputy Director Livestock Dr. Barkat Lakho, District Population Welfare Officer Riaz Ahmed Shar, District Manager PPHI Muhammad Arif Abbasi, Focal Person for Polio Dr. Allah Bakhsh Rajpar and officers of Education and Health Department participated.



KARACHI: Police personnel's trying to stop teachers going toward red zone area during a protest.

The airport remained under the management of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA). "We urge the public to rely on official sources for accurate information and to avoid spreading unverified claims," the statement reads. Earlier, a two-member team reached Karachi to check security measures for direct flights from Pakistan to the U.A.E. The team is